

THE METHOD OF LITERARY HISTORY

by

Gustave Lanson

Translated and Edited

by

George J. Ranson, A. B.  
College of Emporia, 1921

Submitted to the Department of  
English and the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of the Univer-  
sity of Kansas in partial ful-  
fillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of  
Arts.

Approved by:

S. L. Whitcomb  
Instructor in charge

March 25, 1929

W. S. Johnson  
Chairman of the Department

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge his very great indebtedness to Professor S. L. Whitcomb of the Department of English. Professor Whitcomb suggested the subject, gave invaluable assistance in developing the general plan of the work, and simplified and expedited the study by frequent helpful suggestions. At the same time he left the student with a sense of freedom in carrying out his own ideas.

The writer is also grateful to Mr. E. E. Milligan, instructor in the Department of Romance Languages, who helped him solve difficult problems in the translation.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	Page
The Essay . . . . .	1
The Author and His Works . . . . .	2
Other Works on the Method of Literary History . . . . .	10
The Translation and the Notes . . . . .	25
The Method of Literary History by G. Lanson	27
Notes . . . . .	91
Bibliography . . . . .	121

## INTRODUCTION

### The Essay

M. Lanson's essay "La Méthode de l'Histoire Littéraire" was first published in the Revue du Mois, October 10, 1910. It was later reprinted in the collection De La Méthode dans les Sciences: Nouvelle Collection Scientifique (2nd series, Paris, 1911, pages 221-264), where the writer has had access to it.

The first volume of this unusual work, issued in 1908, contains a Préface by P. Félix Thomas; a general discussion of Science by Emile Picard; and the following studies of method in particular sciences: Pure Mathematics by Jules Tannery; Mechanics by P. Painlevé; General Physics by H. Bouasse; Chemistry by A. Job; Morphology by A. Giard; Physiology by F. Le Dantec; Medical Sciences by Pierre Delbet; Psychology by Th. Ribot; Sociology and Social Sciences by Emile Durkheim; Ethics by L. Lévy-Bruhl; and History by Gabriel Monod (see

notes 10 and 14 at the end of this work).

The second volume includes, in addition to M. Lanson's article, a Préface by Emile Borel (editor of the whole work); and these essays on method: Astronomy to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century by B. Baillaud; Physical Chemistry by Jean Perrin; Geology by Léon Bertrand; Paleobotany by R. Zeiller; Botany by L. Blaringhem; Archeology by Salomon Reinach; Linguistics by A. Meillet; and Statistics by Lucien March.

#### The Author and His Works

The method of work outlined in the article presented here merits the serious consideration of all students interested in the production of literary history and literary criticism, not only because of the soundness of its ideas and the authoritative persuasiveness of their presentation, but also because of the fruit which it has borne in the career and works of its author, who has long been the chief living authority in his chosen field, modern French literature.

Achille Alexandre Gustave Marie Lanson was born at Orléans, Loiret, France, August 5, 1857. He was

educated at the Lycée of Orléans, the Lycée Charlemagne in Paris, and the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, receiving at the completion of his work in the last-named school the degree of doctor of letters.

During the years 1879-96 he taught in the lycées of Bayonne, Moulins, Rennes, and Toulouse and in the Michelet, Charlemagne, and Louis le Grand lycées in Paris. Subsequently he became chargé de conférences and then maitre de conférences at the Ecole Normale Supérieure; and in 1903 he was appointed professor of French literature in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris. In 1911-12, and again in 1916-17, he lectured as a visiting French professor at Columbia University, New York. In 1919 he was made director of his alma mater, the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Recently he has retired from active work. His present address is 282 Boulevard Raspail, Paris. During the course of his career M. Lanson has been a member and officer of a number of French literary societies and an officer of the Legion of Honor.

William A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan give the following estimate of M. Lanson's work:

He has evolved towards the historical and scientific treatment of literary texts. His early volume on Bossuet revealed a taste that was conservative, Classical, and certainly not anti-clerical. His most important work, the Histoire de la Littérature Française, still proposes culture and the savoring of individual authors as the chief aims of literary study. But the historical approach necessarily leads a critic into the development of chains of ideas and chains of influence; and the demonstration of these things is perhaps, for the advanced student, the main value of M. Lanson's Histoire. The book abounds in thought, psychological insight, judgment, and information. M. Lanson's method becomes more and more scientific in his critical editions of Voltaire's Lettres Philosophiques and of Lamartine's Premières Méditations, in which the object is to surround the author exhaustively with possible influences pertaining to his literary environment or background. These are technical monuments (as is also the indispensable Manuel Bibliographique de la Littérature Française Moderne), but M. Lanson can also please and inform the general reader with his studies on Corneille and Voltaire made for the Grands Ecrivains series. This critic does abundant justice to the eighteenth century and shows appreciation of contemporary currents as well.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunat Strowski writes:

M. G. Lanson, the celebrated professor of French literature at the Sorbonne, has

---

1. A History of French Literature (New York, 1922), page 715.

been for a long time dramatic critic of the Grande Revue. But, voluntarily, he has made this activity only a small part of his work. The great effort and the great honor of his life have been to establish, not as science, but as method, an art of studying French literature. His Histoire de la Littérature Française reveals a remarkable power of synthesis; the philosophical significance of literary works, the historical roles of authors are herein exhibited with a force of thought that no one has equaled. Poetic merit and joy in the beauties of literature are not too much forgotten, in spite of the severity of the thought and of the method.<sup>2</sup>

The esteem in which M. Lanson is held by his former students and other contemporary men of letters is evidenced by a volume Mélanges (Paris, 1922), published in his honor by a group of his friends and pupils. The book contains pieces of literary scholarship by more than fifty contributors, several of whom are scholars of international reputation.

Another testimony to M. Lanson's greatness as teacher and scholar is given by André Morize, professor of French literature in Harvard University, who writes in the Introduction of his book Problems

---

2. Tableau de la Littérature Française au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle et au XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle (Revised ed., Paris, 1924), pages 688-89. M. Strowski contributed a paper to the book Mélanges.

and Methods of Literary History, with Special Reference to Modern French Literature (Boston, 1922),

page iii:

A memory and a wish are responsible for this book.

The memory is of years, already distant, when the author was privileged to study at the Université de Paris and the Ecole Normale Supérieure under excellent masters. From these years he has brought away a feeling of special gratitude for the devotion with which these masters strove not only to communicate to their pupils a part of their own learning but also to initiate them into the actual methods of scientific work. He cannot forget the conferences on Saturday afternoons when, grouped about Professor G. Lanson, a few young men were made acquainted with the tools and the practical side of a study still new to them; or those hours when Lanson generously placed at their disposal the material destined to form the Manuel Bibliographique; or, above all, the moments of personal contact when, with his wealth of erudition, his keen penetration, his strict but kindly criticism, he guided his students, started them on the right road and kept them in it, pointed out the stumbling-blocks, and explained the best way to avoid them and to proceed with safety and success. Those were unforgettable lessons, and their memory, to which the author hopes not to prove faithless, will be found in every chapter of this book. The name of G. Lanson will appear several times, but the echo of his thought and of his very words will be heard on every page.

In the course of his busy career M. Lanson has produced a great and varied mass of scholarly work. A complete bibliography of his publications up to 1922 is to be found in the book Mélanges, referred to above, pages 7-21. This bibliography lists 226 items. His works include a considerable number of books and a large number of articles published in various periodicals and in the Grande Encyclopédie.

In his special field, modern French literature, his two outstanding works of a general character are Histoire de la Littérature Française (1894; 17th ed. 1922)<sup>3,4</sup> and Manuel Bibliographique de la Littérature Française Moderne 1500-1900 (1909-14; revised ed. 1921).<sup>5</sup> Other important general works

3. With the single exception noted, M. Lanson's books are published at Paris.

4. Up to 1922 this book had reached a sale of 195,000 copies.

5. André Morize writes of this work, Problems and Methods of Literary History, pages 16-18:

The book that should be a constant companion to the student is the Manuel Bibliographique de la Littérature Française Moderne 1500-1900, by G. Lanson. . . .

Here is a bibliography à la française, simple, clear, and methodical.

are: L'Art de la Prose (1908; 3rd ed. 1920);  
Hommes et Livres. Etudes Morales et Littéraires  
 (1895); Esquisse d'une Histoire de la Tragédie  
Française (New York, 1920).<sup>6</sup>

M. Lanson's studies of a more special nature  
 in modern French literature include: Boileau  
 (Collection des Grands Ecrivains Français. 1892;  
 5th ed. 1920); Corneille (Grands Ecrivains. 1896;  
 5th ed. 1920); Bossuet (1891; 3rd ed. 1894); Ni-

There is no wish to impress the reader  
 by accumulating titles and references;  
 throughout there is an effort to simpli-  
 fy, to blaze trails through the immense  
 bibliographical forest, and to lay out  
 paths easy to follow and always leading  
 somewhere. . . .

. . . . .  
 Taking the Manuel Bibliographique  
 as a whole, it is decidedly superior in  
 two respects to all previous reference  
 books of French literature.

On the one hand, it constantly men-  
 tions the reviews and bulletins of learned  
 societies. . . .

On the other hand, the Manuel is much  
 more, and much better, under its apparent  
 dryness, than a list of titles and names.  
 It is, indeed, a mine of valuable sugges-  
 tions for studies to be undertaken and for  
 the interpretation of great literary events. .

. . .  
 6. This book, published by the Columbia Univer-  
 sity Press, presents an outline of a course of lec-  
 tures delivered by M. Lanson as professor of French  
 literature at that University during the academic  
 year 1916-17.

velle de la Chaussée et la Comédie Larmoyante (1887; 2nd ed. 1903);<sup>7</sup> Voltaire (Grands Ecrivains. 1906; 2nd ed. 1910).

This scholar has also prepared two important critical editions, Lettres Philosophiques of Voltaire (1909; revised ed. 1918), Méditations Poétiques by Lamartine (Les Grands Ecrivains de la France. 1915), and nineteen editions of standard French works for class use.

He has issued four volumes of selections with introductions: Pages Choies de Balzac (1895); Pages Choies de Flaubert (1895); Sainte-Beuve, Extraits des Causeries du Lundi, Portraits Littéraires et Portraits de Femmes (1899; 2nd ed. 1909); Pages Choies d'Anatole France (1898).

In the field of Latin literature M. Lanson has published De Manlio Poeta Ejusque Ingenio (1887) and editions of Cicero's Seconde Philippique (1881) and De Suppliciis (1882).

The bibliography of M. Lanson's writings includes fifty studies on various questions of education and teaching, most of which have been printed

---

7. This work was crowned by the French Academy.

in periodicals. Of particular interest to us in this group is the book Trois Mois d'Enseignement aux Etats Unis (1912).

For class use he has written: Principes de Composition et de Style (1887; 2nd ed. 1890); Conseils sur l'Art d'Ecrire (1891; 10th ed. 1919); Etudes Pratiques de Composition Française (1891).

#### Other Works on the Method of Literary History

It is not the writer's aim to present here a complete or even lengthy list of treatises on historical method in literature, but rather to indicate a few select works in French and English, with which the interested student may supplement his reading of M. Lanson's essay.

The essay translated here is the fullest exposition M. Lanson has written of the method of literary history which he has advocated and practiced during his career as scholar and teacher; but in a number of other articles he has expressed himself on various phases of the subject.

Early statements of M. Lanson's ideas on method in literary studies are to be found in the "Avant-

Propos" of the original edition of his Histoire de la Littérature Française (1894) and of Hommes et Livres (1895). In the former he outlines the aims and principles which have guided him in the production of the work. In the latter he presents a criticism of the methods of Sainte-Beuve<sup>8</sup> and Brunetière<sup>9</sup> and sketches his own method as applied in the book.

In an "Allocution Prononcée à l'Ouverture des Conférences de l'Année Scolaire 1901-1902 à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris"<sup>10</sup> M. Lanson discusses the character and spirit of studies in modern French literature at the University. The address opens with a swift résumé of the "adventures" of literary history and criticism during the past three centuries. It continues with a description of the disagreement among literary historians of the day regarding the proper method of work. Then M. Lanson speaks of the correct relation between the

---

8. See note 35 at the end of this work.

9. See notes 2 and 28 at the end of this work.

10. Printed in the Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement, vol. 42, 1901, pages 385-397.

methodology of literary history and that of the physical sciences and outlines the method which he believes in and practices. He closes with the hope that the students will adopt this method for their own studies in literary history.

A pamphlet Méthodes de l'Histoire Littéraire by Gustave Lanson,<sup>11</sup> brings together three of his pronouncements. In the first section of this pamphlet are printed extracts from "Leçon d'Ouverture du Cours d'Eloquence Française," the lecture delivered by M. Lanson at the University of Paris, January 9, 1904, on the occasion of his succession to Gustave Larroumet (1852-1903) in the Chaire d'éloquence française. In this lecture M. Lanson reviews the career of M. Larroumet, a pupil of the philologist Eugène Benoist (1831-1887) and a disciple of Sainte-Beuve.<sup>12</sup> He praises and expresses personal indebtedness to M. Larroumet for the development and application of an exact, objective, historical method in his works, which include his

---

11. Etudes Françaises, premier cahier, Paris, 1925.

12. See note 35 at the end of this work.

thesis, a monumental work crowned by the French Academy entitled Marivaux, Sa Vie et Ses Oeuvres (1883), two books of a more popular nature, La Comédie de Molière, l'Auteur et le Milieu (1886) and Racine (Grands Ecrivains. 1898), and various other literary studies. "All his articles," says M. Lanson (page 18), "reveal the same breadth of information, the same solidity of construction. They are built, whenever the subject permits, upon this model: What sort of man is the author? Biography, psychology, esthetic, or social tendencies. What is the nature of the work? Its place in a genre, a group, a movement; and then in this genre, this group, this movement, its special distinction or quality. . . ."

For comment upon and quotations from the second and most important article in the pamphlet, "L'Esprit Scientifique et la Méthode de l'Histoire Littéraire," the reader is referred to notes 28 and 35 at the end of this work.

The third article in the pamphlet is "Quelques Mots sur L'Explication de Textes".<sup>13</sup> As his text

---

13. This article, written by M. Lanson while

in this admirable essay M. Lanson takes a question of an American wit, "Who was the torturer who invented the explication of texts?" He justifies college and university instruction in the interpretation of texts on the ground that few persons, even educated persons, know how to read in the true sense of the word. "Practice in explication," writes M. Lanson (page 40), "has for its object . . . the development among students of the habit of reading attentively and of interpreting exactly literary texts. It aims to render them capable of finding in a page or a book of a writer that which is in it, all that is in it, and nothing that is not in it. . . ." Continuing, he discusses the aims and methods of explication as used in the production of literary history and criticism, and gives an account of the instruction in this type of work that is given in French schools. The essential principles of this article and a more concrete exposition of the method of interpreting texts are included in the

---

he was at Columbia University as visiting professor 1916-17, was published in the Bulletin de la Maison Française de l'Université Columbia, Jan.-Feb., 1919.

essay translated here.

Other articles by M. Lanson treating the subject of method in literary studies, to which the writer has not had access, include the following: "Histoire Littéraire: Résultats Récents et Problèmes Actuels";<sup>14</sup> "Programme d'Etudes sur l'Histoire Provinciale et la Vie Littéraire en France";<sup>15</sup> "L'Histoire Littéraire et la Sociologie";<sup>16</sup> "La Méthode en Histoire Littéraire".<sup>17</sup>

An elaborate treatment of the subject in French is La Méthode Scientifique de l'Histoire Littéraire (Paris, 1900) by Georges Renard (1847- ). The spirit and aims of this book are revealed in the following paragraphs from the Introduction, pages 2-6:

The instability which it is too easy to discover in the historic monuments erected, up to this time, by the best architects

---

14. Revue de Synthèse Historique, vol. I, 1900, pages 52-83.

15. Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, April 15, 1903.

16. Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, July, 1904.

17. Revue du Mois, April 10, 1911. This article was written in response to a criticism by M. Ch. Salomon of the essay here reproduced.

results from several causes and especially from faults in method. But these faults themselves result from a confusion of ideas which it is necessary to clear up at the very beginning.

I should wish that a sharp distinction be made between history of literature and criticism in the proper sense of the word.

I do not say that they have nothing of similarity; I merely insist that they have more of dissimilarity. Sisters, if you please: but two sisters, even if they be twins, are none the less two distinct persons.

Criticism is to the history of literature what politics is to sociology, medicine to physiology; the one applies that which the other has discovered and tested; the one wishes to act immediately upon men and things; the other carries to the study of the laws of life absolute disinterestedness and scientific serenity.

The critic, in judging literary works, has the intention, avowed or tacit, of influencing his contemporaries. He is the common adviser of both the writers and the public. To the authors he says or suggests: Follow this road which is good; avoid that other which is dangerous. To spectators and readers he gives advice which can be epitomized thus: Read a certain book and you will profit from it. See a certain play and you will find pleasure in it.

He devotes himself most often to the works of living writers. His chief function is, in effect, to inform and guide the public, to make for it a primary selection from the great mass of current literary production, to designate that which deserves to be set apart. In that respect he is militant and necessarily so. The fact that he

approves or disapproves suffices to impel the public in one direction or another. He may be broad-minded or narrow, indulgent or severe, of varying opinions or dogmatic. It makes no difference! He states his preferences or lets them be divined. For him to admire is to set up a model for imitation; to scoff is to prevent sympathy from being born or declaring itself.

In so doing he exercises a right; he performs also a duty. For not only does he have charge, in some measure, of the minds of the public, but also and above all, in his capacity as thinker, artist, citizen, man, he has his role to play in the battle of ideas, the conflict between various schools, the struggle between different types of beauty. Impartiality is for him neither desirable nor possible. It is necessary, willingly or unwillingly, that he declare himself, that he take sides, that he choose between the divers fashions of conceiving art and life, under pain of condemning himself, if he does not, to perfect insignificance.

The critic occupies himself sometimes with dead writers. At times he drags them from the tomb to offer them as an example; at times he demands of them arguments with which to sustain a thesis dear to him. He uses them in every case as instruments which serve to defend his personal convictions or predilections.

The historian, on the contrary, if he wishes to eliminate a great cause of error, ought to get rid, as far as possible, of his personality. It is not for him to say that he likes or dislikes. His first obligation is to efface himself in order to leave in full light that which he attempts to understand and explain. Is he catholic or protestant, monarchist or republican, idealist or realist, classicist or roman-

ticist? That is a secret between his conscience and himself, a secret which he is forbidden to betray in his judgments. Is it not necessary for him to discover and reveal the raison d'être of all tastes, of all the theories which have in turn held sway over men? If he does not have a mind sufficiently open and a heart sufficiently calm to render justice to works the most contrary to his own temperament, let him become a polemic, let him hurl himself bravely into the mêlée, but let him renounce history! It is a domain which is not made for him. Over the door through which one enters to it should be read this inscription: You who enter here put aside every passion except the love of Truth first and then the love of Beauty.

The historian ought not even to write with a view of sustaining a thesis, of justifying a system; he takes too great a risk in so doing of falsifying the meaning of the phenomena which he studies. If he desires to insinuate among the facts arguments in support of a doctrine which he holds dear, he is led in spite of himself to exaggerate some facts and neglect others; he creates an interest, which is a sure means "of agreeably blinding the eyes," to use an expression of Pascal. He would try in vain to be true to his firm resolve to tell all that he sees, he is no longer in a condition to see clearly.

Does this mean that history, in forbidding itself every utilitarian aim, must be condemned to be only a waste of time and energy; that the immense labor which it involves must end in vain knowledge, from which humanity will never receive any advantage? That would be sad; happily, it is certain that know-

ledge of the past can serve the present and the future, and that there can be gleaned from it lessons of great value. But this is only on the condition that the facts speak for themselves, that they compel, without being strained, demonstrable conclusions. To the critic falls the task of applying them, of basing his judgments and counsels upon the discovered laws; the historian himself limits his ambition to establishing solidly their reality. Practical results can be and ought to be the result of his researches; they are not his true object. History, one would say if one were not afraid of stating a paradox, can be truly useful only when treated as if it were to be useless.

All that precedes can be summarized in a few words. Criticism is above all an art; history tends more and more to become a science. The one should remain for the most part subjective; the other strives to become as objective as possible. By what method can it approach this ideal? That is the question which is going to occupy us.

M. Renard's book is divided into three parts.

The first part, dealing with the general plan of the history of a literature, treats of the necessity for a connected history; reasons for preferring the inductive method; various questions which the historian should ask himself; and the means of determining the limits of a literary period. The second part elaborates the object of the scientific study of a literary work, and discusses the distinction between questions of fact and of taste; internal and

external analysis of a literary work; the means of acquiring knowledge about the author; three types of causes which may act upon an author; investigation of the effects produced by a literary work; objections to the scientific study of a literary work; and the question of taste, a matter which is outside the domain of science. Considering in the final part the study of literature in a given epoch and the causes and laws of literary evolution, M. Renard writes of the impossibility of restricting oneself to the study of a few great works; the search for general truths; the means of finding the general formula of an epoch; literature and the psycho-physiological, terrestrial, cosmic, and social milieus; literature in its relation to economic conditions, political life, law, family life, mundane affairs, religion, ethics, science, the arts, public education, learned societies, and coteries; connections of a literature with foreign literatures and its own past; the general formula of an epoch; the cause and essential laws of the variations in literary taste.

Probably the most useful book in English on the subject of method in literary history is the

work by André Morize already referred to,<sup>18</sup> Problems and Methods of Literary History, with Special Reference to Modern French Literature. A Guide for Graduate Students. The following paragraphs quoted from the Introduction, pages v-viii, make clear the author's intent in the book:

The aim is, first, to give to the novice in literary history a clear idea of the field he is entering--to define its characteristics and limits, its relations with the two neighboring provinces of literary criticism and history; next, to familiarize him with the indispensable implements and tools; lastly, to introduce him to the principal problems that may arise and to help him to find the solutions.

. . . . .  
Students must not suppose that they are herewith offered some variety of "Practical Receipt-Book," with the methods of literary history tabulated in rules and formulas, ready to be applied to fresh cases. Such an attempt could not be realized, and in any event would be absurd. They need not expect to be shown in these pages any short cuts for avoiding difficulties and obstacles. What they will find is a sort of atlas of literary history, a collection of maps of the country they plan to explore; on these are marked its intricacies and resources, and the safe highways from which the pioneers must start their explorations.

Lastly, this work will fulfill its author's earnest desire if it helps to develop in our young students, together with a taste

---

18. See Introduction, pages 5-6.

for literary research, the attitude of mind that insures success, and that is nothing, after all, but scientific curiosity combined with scientific conscientiousness. A love of precision joined to aspirations toward general ideas; respect for historical facts, and warm appreciation of beautiful writings; minuteness in research, and breadth of view; finesse in analysis; strictness in criticism; penetration in aesthetic judgments; lastly, exacting loyalty toward oneself, toward facts, toward the ideas and the men studied,--these are a few of the valuable qualities that, thoroughly understood and thoroughly carried out, literary studies tend to develop. For the training of students there is no better school. May this book prove an acceptable introduction.

Although, as the title suggests, the bibliographical and illustrative materials of the book bear upon modern French literature, it nevertheless has great practical value for students of English, American, or any other literature. Professor Morize has written chapters dealing with the following topics: the objects and methods of literary history; the preparation of an edition; establishing a critical bibliography; investigation and interpretation of sources; chronology in literary history; problems of authenticity and attribution; questions of verification; treatment of biographical material in the history of literature; questions of success and of influence; the history of literature in connec-

tion with the history of ideas and of manners; preparation and redaction of a thesis.

In spite of the fact that they deal primarily with literary criticism rather than literary history, the writer feels that he should include in this list An Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism. The Bases in Aesthetics and Poetics (Boston, 1899) by Charles Mills Gayley (1858- ) and Fred Newton Scott (1860- ) and Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism. Lyric, Epic, and Allied Forms of Poetry (Boston, 1920) by C. M. Gayley and Benjamin Putnum Kurtz (1877- ). A third volume proposed for this series will present tragedy, comedy, and cognate forms.

In the Preface of the first volume, page iv; the authors write:

This book does not advocate or advance a method, nor does it aim to supply the material necessary for exhaustive investigation of any one department of literary criticism. It seeks to place before those interested a conspectus of the problems to be solved, a review of the methods suggested for their solution, an indication of the materials available with reference to their sources and frequently to their quality.

And in the Preface of the second volume, page iii, Professor Gayley, the originator of the enter-

prise, sets forth the aims of the book in these words:

Obviously imperfect as it is, this introduction to the study of the lyric and epic kinds goes forth in the persuasion that it may be of use to those who desire orientation, a systematic statement of the more general problems to be solved, a quick access to the information available for the process. Those who would naturally be interested are the college student and the teacher of literature, the investigator of literary history and theory, the reviewer,--those, in short, who make of criticism a discipline, an aim, or a profession.

The work, though voluminous, is one of first aid only; it has not the effrontery to pretend to exhaustiveness. The arrangement of subjects, the problems proposed, the means suggested for their solution, the running discussion, are for practical convenience in opening up investigation rather than for the advocacy of method or the formulation of conclusions, both of which must depend upon the scholarship and mature deliberation, the judgment and skill, of the individual. . . .

The student will find in the bibliographical lists and the discussions offered in these volumes valuable aid in certain of the problems which literary history involves.

Finally, the student is referred to A List of Books and Articles, Chiefly Bibliographical, Designed to Serve as an Introduction to the Bibliography and Methods of English Literary History (4th

ed., Chicago, 1926) compiled by Tom Peete Cross (1879- ). In this publication a longer list of works dealing with method in literary history than that presented here and other helpful bibliographical guidance are to be found.

### The Translation and the Notes

In translating M. Lanson's essay the writer has produced as nearly literal a rendering of the French as was consistent with his aim of presenting to English readers clear and correct English. Everywhere, he believes, he has reproduced the thought if not the actual phraseology of the author.

The footnotes in the text, referred to by letters, were written by M. Lanson. Numbers in the text refer to notes by the editor grouped at the end of the work. In these notes such information has been given as will make the essay clear to undergraduate students not familiar with French literature; and a limited amount of supplementary material, relevant to the text, has been presented. English renderings of French material used in the

introduction and in the notes are, with the one exception noted, by the present editor.

Throughout the work the English system of capitalization has been used in writing the titles of French publications.

## THE METHOD OF LITERARY HISTORY <sup>a</sup>

by

Gustave Lanson

The method of which I am going to try to give a conception is not of my own invention: I have merely reflected upon the practices of certain of my elders, of my contemporaries, and even of my juniors.

It is not peculiar to modern French literature: it is the method which, in its spirit at least and in its principal rules, has served MM. Alfred and Maurice Croiset for the writing of their history of Greek literature, M. Gaston Boissier for his study of Latin literature, and MM. G. Paris and J. Bédier for the elucidation of French literature of the Middle Ages.<sup>b,1</sup> It is the one

---

a. This piece was written in September, 1909, and revised in May-June, 1910. Most of the notes are more recent.

b. I should say also, Ferdinand Brunetière, if his temperament as logician and orator, his evo-

which has produced in France many excellent volumes upon all the literatures of Europe and the world.

If my reflections concern chiefly French literature since the Renaissance, it is because I know it best and meditate constantly upon it;<sup>3</sup> it is also because in all the other domains the utility of exact methods is not disputed. But modern French literature is a stage for all conceits, a battleground for all prejudices, and, let us say it in a whisper, an asylum also for all weaknesses. Everyone feels himself competent to speak of it as soon as he begins to take pride in his intellect, as soon as he develops enthusiasms or aversions; and many of the literati make of "method" a bugbear. They believe themselves under the necessity of defending their pleasures and their individual modes of thought against its annoying tyranny.

---

lutionary doctrine, his literary, political, social, and even religious dogmatism had not carried this powerful spirit off the paths of historical and critical method and beyond legitimate inductions. But he presented in many articles models from which we can formulate ideas upon scholarship. And he was, on the whole, a great teacher, dangerous for some, helpful for many. He taught talent to work and never disdained exact knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

These anxieties are chimerical.

We do not threaten the enjoyment of the reader who desires in literature merely a delicate recreation wherein the spirit is refined and nourished. It is necessary that we ourselves be first of all just such readers, that we constantly return to that attitude. Systematical study is added to this activity, and does not replace it.

Nor do we abolish any of the forms of literary criticism.

Impressionistic criticism is unimpeachable and legitimate so long as it stays within the bounds of its definition. The trouble is that it never stays there. The man who describes what happens within himself when he reads a book, without asserting anything more than his internal reactions, furnishes to literary history a valuable sort of testimony, of which we shall never have too much. But rarely does a critic abstain from insinuating historical judgments among his impressions or giving his modification for the true character of the object.

As impressionism is rarely pure, so it is rarely absent. It disguises itself in impersonal history and logic; it inspires the systems which go

beyond or distort known facts.

One of the chief employments of method is to give chase to that impressionism which goes astray or does not know its own mind, and purge our work of it. But as for frank impressionism, a measure of the reaction of a mind to a book, we accept it: it is of service to us.

Nor do we bear a grudge against dogmatic criticism. It also is a document for our use. Every dogmatism, esthetic, moral, political, social, religious, is the expression either of an individual feeling or a group sentiment: every dogmatic decision concerning a literary work reveals to us the way in which an individual or a group is affected by that work, and, with proper precautions, becomes a part of its history. We insist only that dogmatic criticism, which is always biased and ardent and which willingly accepts its belief as a criterion not only for the truth of ideas but also for the reality of facts, should not set itself up as history, and should not be accepted by the public as history. We should wish that before judging Bossuet<sup>4</sup> and Voltaire<sup>5</sup> in the name of a doctrine or a religion, the critic should apply himself to the

task of becoming acquainted with them, without thinking of anything other than of bringing together the greatest possible mass of authentic information and of establishing the largest possible number of verified references. Our ideal is to succeed in bodying forth a Bossuet and a Voltaire of which neither the Catholic nor the Anticlerical<sup>6</sup> can deny the reality, to furnish them with representations of these men which they will recognize as genuine, and which they may adorn thereafter with whatever sentimental qualifications they please.

Literary history is a part of the history of civilization. French literature is a phase of the national life: it has recorded, in its long and rich development, all the gradual evolution of ideas and sentiments which has been projected in political and social events and which has become established in institutions, but more especially all that inner and hidden life of suffering or of aspiration which has not found expression in action.

Our highest office is to lead those who read, to recognize in a page of Montaigne,<sup>7</sup> in a play of

Corneille,<sup>8</sup> and even in a sonnet of Voiture,<sup>9</sup> moments in human progress, European or French.

Like all history, literary history strives to come at general facts, to pick out the representative facts, and to point out the connection between the two.

Our method is then, essentially, the historical method, and the best preparation for the student of literature will be to study the Introduction aux Etudes Historiques by MM. Langlois and Seignobos, or the essay which M. G. Monod has written for another volume of the series for which I write this.<sup>10</sup>

However, there are between the ordinary materials of history properly speaking and those of our field certain important distinctions from which there must result differences in method.

The object of the historian's interest is the past: a past of which there exist only tokens and remains from which to reconstruct a conception of what it was. Our object is the past also, but a past which still lives: literature is at once of the past and of the present. The feudal regime, the statecraft of Richelieu, the Gabelle,<sup>11</sup> Austerlitz, are of a vanished past which we recon-

struct. Le Gid<sup>12</sup> and Candide<sup>13</sup> are always current, the same as in 1636 and in 1759, not like documents from the archives, royal ordinances, or specifications of buildings, lifeless and cold. without relation to the life of today, but like paintings of Rubens and Rembrandt, ever alive and still endowed with active properties, containing inexhaustible possibilities for the moral and esthetic excitation of civilized mankind.

Our condition is like that of the historians of art: our materials are works which are before us and which affect us just as they affected their first public. There is for us in this fact an advantage and a danger, something at all events peculiar, which must be expressed in special provisions in our method.

We handle without a doubt, as do the historians, a great mass of documents. But these documents serve to supplement, to throw light upon the works which are the immediate and especial object of our interest, namely, the works of literature.

It is a rather delicate task to define a "literary work"; I must, however, attempt it. One can resolve upon two definitions, which, though separate-

ly inadequate, are complementary one to the other, and taken together embrace the entire body of material which we have to consider.

Literature may be defined upon the basis of its relation to the public. The literary work is one which is not intended for a specialist, for special information or a particular use, or indeed, one, which having had originally that intention, goes beyond or survives it and gets itself read by a multitude of persons who seek in it only entertainment or intellectual improvement.

But the work of literature is defined, above all, by its intrinsic character. There are poems which are restricted by their technique to a very limited public, and which will never be appreciated by the majority of readers: shall they be put outside the bounds of literature? The mark of the literary work is the design or effect of art, it is beauty or grace of form. Special writers become literary by virtue of a form which enlarges or extends their power of performance. Literature is made up of all the works of which the sense and effect can be fully revealed only by an esthetic analysis of their form.

It follows from this statement that in the vast mass of printed works, those particularly belong to our study which by the nature of their form have the peculiar quality of producing in the mind of the reader imaginative stirrings, emotional excitations, and esthetic sensations. It is by virtue of this fact that our study is not comprehended by other historical studies, and that literary history is something else than a small auxiliary science of history proper.<sup>14</sup>

We study the history of the human spirit and of the national civilization in their literary expressions, in their literary expressions essentially: and it is always through the medium of a style that we attempt to come at the advance of ideas and of life.

The masterpieces of literature are then indeed the axes of our study, or if one prefers, they denote for us so many centers of study. But let us not understand this word masterpiece in a present or subjective sense. It is not only that which is a masterpiece for us and for our contemporaries that we must study; it is everything that has been a masterpiece at any given moment, all the works in

which a French public has recognized its ideal of beauty, of goodness, or of strength. Why is it that some of these have lost their active properties? Are they extinguished stars? or have we today eyes which are no longer sensitive to certain rays? Our task is to understand even these dead works; and in order to do that, it is necessary to treat them otherwise than as documents from the archives: we must by a conscious effort of sympathy make ourselves capable of feeling the virtue of their form.

This sentient and esthetic quality of the works which are our "special business" is responsible for the fact that we cannot study them without a disturbance of heart, imagination, and taste. It is at once difficult for us to eliminate our personal reaction and dangerous to retain it. Difficulty number one of method.

The historian, faced with a document, endeavors to evaluate its personal elements in order to eliminate them. Yet it is to these very personal elements that the stimulative or esthetic power of the work is attached; and it is necessary for us to preserve them. The historian in making use of

a testimony of Saint-Simon<sup>15</sup> sets himself to rectifying it, that is, to taking Saint-Simon out of it; and we to taking from it precisely that which is not Saint-Simon. Whereas the historian seeks for general facts and does not occupy himself with individual persons except in so far as they represent groups or modify movements, we dwell upon individuals first of all, because sensation, passion, taste, beauty, are individual properties. Racine does not interest us chiefly because he absorbs Quinault, embodies Pradon, and begets Campistron, but first of all because he is Racine, a unique combination of sentiments translated into beauty.<sup>16</sup>

The historical sense, it is said, is the sense for distinctions. By this standard, we shall be the most historical of all the historians: for the distinctions which the historian seeks for between general facts we carry on to individuals. We attempt to define individual geniuses, that is to say, peculiar phenomena, without equivalents and incommensurable. Difficulty number two of method.

But great and fine as are the individuals, our study cannot confine itself to them. For, in the first place, we should not come to know them if we

sought to know only them. The most original writer is in large measure a depository of previous generations, a collector from contemporary movements: three quarters of what he is, is made up from that which is not himself. In order to find the man himself, in himself, it is necessary to separate from him all that mass of foreign elements. It is necessary to know the past which has continued in him, the present which has crept into him: then we shall be able to distinguish his real originality, to measure it, and define it. But it will still be known to us only approximately: in order to know its true quality, its true intensity, we must see it act and generate its effects, that is to say, we must follow the influence of the writer in literary and social life. And therein is the study of general facts, fashions, currents of thought, conditions of taste and feeling which is imposed upon us in connection with great writers and masterpieces of literature.

Moreover, that which the individual genius has of outstanding beauty and greatness is not the singularity which sets him apart; it is rather the property, in that very singularity, of assembling in

himself and of symbolizing the collective life of an epoch and of a group, that is, the property of being representative. It is necessary for us, then, to seek to know all that humanity which has found expression in the great writers, all those undulating lines of human or national thought and feeling of which they indicate the directions and the peaks.

Thus we should push forward at the same time in two opposite directions, to disengage the individuality, to express it in its unique aspect, irreducible, indecomposable, and also to replace the masterpieces in a series, to make the man of genius appear as the product of a society and the representative of a group. Difficulty number three of method.

The critical spirit is an informed scientific spirit, which does not rely upon the natural rectitude of our faculties for finding the truth, and which determines its courses with eyes open to errors which must be avoided. The preceding reflections will aid us in developing the methods of literary history by pointing out to us the principal points where, from the very nature of our object and the conditions of our study, we are most liable

to make mistakes.

The peculiar property of the work of literature is its faculty of stirring up within the reader reactions of taste, feeling, and imagination: but the more intense and more frequent these reactions, the less are we in a condition to distinguish ourselves from the work. In the literary impression which Iphigénie<sup>17</sup> makes upon us, what is of Racine? what is of ourselves? how shall we extract from our personal modification knowledge valuable for others? Does not the very definition of literature entangle us in impressionism?

If we are to undertake the description of individual geniuses, how can one be certain of coming at "that which one shall never see a second time"? Is the individual ever accessible? Can we know otherwise than by comparison, anything but that for which we find an analogue within ourselves or outside ourselves? As for the unique thing, we can perceive it, can mark its existence: but will it ever be for us anything but an unknown quantity? We may say that we know it, when we have described certain of its effects that we have ascertained from our own impressions and those of others. Who shall

assure us that this knowledge is exact and complete? who shall assure us that it is not Taine and ourselves that we describe, rather than Racine, when we relate the effects of Racine upon Taine and upon us?<sup>18</sup>

And finally, reducing the particular to the general, to proportion in a masterpiece the collective and the individual elements, to subject genius to dependences without diminishing it, to see in it a synthesis without making it seem to be merely a combination of elements, to show that it expresses the common herd without lowering it to that level--what difficulties! what uncertainties! what careful studies to be carried on, wherein all our fancies and our feelings are likely to insinuate themselves!

In every way, the danger for us is to imagine instead of to observe, and to believe that we know when we feel. The historians are not entirely free from this danger; but their documents do not expose them to it to the same extent. The natural and normal effect of literary works is to produce strong subjective modifications in the mind of the reader. Our whole method then should be laid out in

such a way as to rectify knowledge and purge it of subjective elements.

And yet we must not carry this purgation too far.

If the literary text differs from the historical document by its quality of stirring up within us esthetic and emotional reactions, it would be strange and contradictory to indicate this difference in definition without taking account of it in method. Never will one know a wine, neither by a chemical analysis nor the statement of an expert, without having tasted it himself. In literature, also, nothing can replace this "tasting". If it is useful for the historian of art to stand before the "Last Judgment"<sup>19</sup> or the "Night Watch,"<sup>20</sup> and if there is no catalogue description which can replace the sensation of the eye, then we also cannot pretend to define or measure the quality or power of a literary work without having been first ourselves exposed, directly, ingenuously, to its influence.

The complete elimination of the subjective element is, then, neither desirable nor possible, and impressionism is at the very basis of our work. If

we refuse to take account of our own reactions, it will only result in our registering those of other men: objective as regards us, but subjective in their relation to the work which we are seeking to understand.

Let us be very careful to picture to ourselves, as we commonly do, what we make of objective science when we take up, simply, in place of our own, the subjective impression of a great colleague. However little I may value myself, my impression exists; it is a fact; I should take account of it just as much as that of any other reader whatsoever, be it Brunetière<sup>21</sup> or Taine.<sup>22</sup> Indeed I shall not be able to understand the words which they make use of in expressing their impressions if I have not considered my own impression: it is my own sensation which gives their language a meaning for me.

I exist as much as any other reader. As much. and no more. My impression enters into the plan of literary history. But it should not have special privilege there: it is a fact; it is only a fact, of relative value, to be considered historically. It expresses the relation of the work to a man of a

certain sensibility, of a certain epoch, and of a certain culture: it can be of use in defining the work by its effects.

There may also be possible a utilization of all religious and political prejudices, of all temperamental antipathies and sympathies. The reaction of my hates, of my enthusiasm, and even of my bigotry to a masterpiece, if I do not make of them a criterion of its value and its beauty, may serve as an index to guide the analysis: from the nature of the explosion one guesses sometimes what the explosive was.

The chief thing is not to make myself the center, not to place an absolute value upon my sentiments, no more upon my taste than upon my belief. I will check, I will rectify my personal impressions by a study of the intentions of the author, by an intrinsic and objective analysis of the work, by an examination of the impressions of as large a number of readers in the past and present as I can obtain: these other individual reactions, as instructive and as valuable as my own reaction, will serve to put it in its place. My vibration will be blended with the thousands of vibrations which Pen-

sées<sup>23</sup> or Emile<sup>24</sup> has excited, since its publication, in the hearts of civilized mankind: their total harmony, full of discords, will constitute what one may call the effect of the book.

We must take care also to interrogate our feeling only upon those questions to which it can reply. The practice of this principle is difficult; its theoretical virtue is evident. We must strive to know everything which can be known, by objective and critical methods. We must assemble all that may be obtained of exact, impersonal, verifiable information. Let us ask of the intuition, the feelings, only that which, by its nature, falls under their dominion, and would be less satisfactorily apprehended in any other way. To repeat: let us try out upon ourselves the active properties of the literary work, its power of excitation, its beauty of form, and let us compare the result of that trial with the results which the experiences of other men and other methods of analysis give us.

If the first commandment of scientific method is the subjection of the spirit to the object for the sake of formulating the means of knowing in accordance with the nature of the thing to be known,

it will be more scientific to recognize and control the role of impressionism in our studies than to ignore it. As one does not abolish a reality by ignoring it, this personal element, which it is impossible to eliminate, would enter on the sly and act uncontrolledly in our work. Since impressionism is the only method which gives a sense of the power and the beauty of literary works, let us employ it frankly for that purpose; but let us resolutely limit it to that. Let us know, in retaining it, how to distinguish it, evaluate it, control it, and limit it; these are the four conditions of its use. All this brings us back to the necessity of avoiding a confusion of knowing and feeling and of taking proper precautions to the end that feeling may become a legitimate means of knowing.

The historical point of view puts the subjective element back in its place and makes criticism impartial. My reaction, which is everything to me so long as I keep it within myself, becomes, when projected outside of myself and reduced to the plane of history, merely one fact among facts, a fact not specially privileged; if it illuminates the other

facts, they in turn limit it.

But historical order is often only a sham: it covers up all the devices of impressionism and all the enterprises of dogmatism. It is an artifice or an illusion.

If the chronological point of view helps us to avoid relating everything to ourselves, to study each age and each writer for themselves, it also furnishes a new direction for the esthetic sensibility and opens to it unlimited possibilities for safe activity. Ordinarily, in our reading, our esthetic reactions are not very pure: what we call our taste is a melange of feelings, habits, and prejudices to which all the elements of our moral personality furnish something; something of our morals, our beliefs, and our passions enters into our literary impressions.

History can detach from us our esthetic sensibility, or at least make it pass under the control of our representations of the past. The work of the taste will consist, thereafter, of laying hold upon the ties which bind a literary work to a particular ideal, an especial technique, and each ideal and technique to the spirit of a writer

or the life of a society. We shall try to feel historically. We shall establish the scale of values not according to our personal preferences but according to the power and exactness of their realizations with reference to the doctrine which directed them. We shall try to feel in Bossuet what the men were able to feel who had built the colonnade of the Louvre, and in Voltaire, the men for whom Pater or Martin worked.<sup>25</sup> We shall not in any sense renounce ourselves: reading for ourselves, we shall bring forth and listen to our reactions, as a symbolist or a humanist, a freethinker or a Catholic of 1910; but we must know how, at other times, to cut off the connection between our esthetic sensibility and the rest of our living individuality. In literature, as in art, it is necessary to have two tastes, a personal taste which chooses our pleasures, the books and the paintings with which we shall surround ourselves, and an historic taste which is employed in our studies, and which may be defined as "an art of discerning styles," and of feeling each work in its style, in proportion to the perfection which it attains therein.

The marvelous development of the natural sciences has resulted in the fact that in the course of the nineteenth century students of literature have tried repeatedly to apply their methods to literary history: they would hope to give it the solidity of scientific knowledge, to exclude the despotism of impressionism based on taste and the apriorism of dogmatic judgments. Experience has condemned these attempts.

The ablest minds have let themselves be the most befuddled by the great discoveries in science. I think of Taine<sup>26</sup> and Brunetière.<sup>c,27</sup> I shall not undertake to make again a criticism of their systems: one sees clearly enough to-day that their fixed determination to imitate the operations or employ the formulas of the physical and natural sciences caused them to deform or mutilate literary history.<sup>d</sup> No science is constructed upon the pattern of another: their progress depends upon their reciprocal inde-

---

c. I name them because no one has had more talent. The errors of the mediocre do not instruct.

d. Permit me to refer here to the lecture which I delivered at Brussels, November 21, 1909; it has been printed in the Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles, December-January, 1910.<sup>28</sup>

pendence which permits each to comply with its own purpose. Literary history, if it is to be in any sense a science, must begin by forbidding itself all imitation of the other sciences, whatsoever they may be.

Far from increasing the scientific value of our work, the use of scientific formulas diminishes it, because they are only shams. They interpret with brutal precision knowledge which by its very nature is not precise: therefore they pervert it.

Let us put no trust in mathematical devices. They do not cause to disappear what there is of a wavering or intangible nature in an impression: they disguise it. Whoever knows how to write a little, will find in ordinary language the means of making evident the fine distinctions without which there is no exactitude in our work, and these distinctions do not yield themselves to mathematical devices.

Let us undeceive ourselves concerning curves, with which we make a graph of the development of literary ideas. These curves imply that there are in literary ideas, or introduce into them: 1. uni-

ty; 2. continuity. But there are movements which break out, like epidemics, in several places at once, and there are genres which are born two or three times before they really become alive. The curve gives often, therefore, an inexact representation of facts.

Let us resist the petty vanity of using generative formulas. We never know all the elements which enter into the composition of genius, nor the exact proportion of each in the melange, and we can never foresee what the combination will give. Those who construct La Fontaine<sup>29</sup> from Champagne, the Gallic spirit, and the poetic gift, those who construct Iphigénie<sup>30</sup> from the good breeding of court circles, classical education, and delicacy of feeling, are either charlatans or simpletons. The approximation at which we arrive in our determinations is au génie près. We have a knowledge of the composition of classic tragedy; we have a grasp of the formulas: there are the materials for constructing Corneille. But will it be Pierre, or Thomas?<sup>31</sup> Here are the elements from which to make court tragedy. But will it be Racine or Quinault?<sup>32</sup> Our conjectures do

not imply the individual. All our words which express presumably known quantities, poetic gift, sensibility, etc., comprehend in reality a prodigious unknown quantity. We must be content with modestly analyzing what we have before us, and recounting facts; let us cease playing the role of a scientist who is going to recompose by chemical synthesis Phèdre<sup>33</sup> or L'Esprit des Lois.<sup>34</sup>

The scientific mode of expression, when it is carried over into our work, gives only a false clearness. In fact, it may even serve to render a statement obscure. The eloquence of the pulpit was in the nineteenth century metamorphosed into lyric poetry: that expression has meaning only for those who know the facts. For those who do not know them, it either has no meaning or it denotes an error. For the metamorphosis of one genre into another is exactly what the facts do not show: it is a product of the so-called scientific system. So that, taking away the scientific manner of expression, it is better to say, in the language of everybody: The lyric poetry of the nineteenth century took for its subject matter sentiments which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were not expressed

in France except in pulpit oratory. That is less striking, but it is more clear; and it is more exact.

More truly scientific will be the attitude of the scholars who, without pretending to construct anything upon the model of another science, will take care only to see clearly the facts in their own field, and find the forms of expression which will subtract from or add to their meanings as little as possible. That is why our true masters are Sainte-Beuve and Gaston Paris.<sup>35</sup>

The only thing which we should take from science, as Frédéric Rauh writes, "is not this or that method of procedure . . . but its spirit. . . . It seems to us, in fact, that there is no universal science or method, but only a universal scientific attitude. . . . Men have for a long time confused with this scientific spirit, the methodology of some particular science, because of the precise results to which it has led. The sciences of the external world have thus come to be considered the only type of science. But the unity of physical and intellectual sciences is only a postulate. . . . There is (however) an attitude of spirit with re-

gard to truth which is common to all scholars. . . ."36

An attitude of spirit with regard to reality, that, indeed, is what we may borrow from students of science. Let us carry over into our work the unbiased curiosity, the rigid honesty, the assiduous patience, the submission to fact, the hesitation to believe, to believe ourselves as well as to believe others, the constant insistence upon the attitude of criticism, of restraint, and of verification. I do not know whether we shall then create a science, but I am sure at least that we shall create better literary history.

If we consider the methods of the natural sciences, let it be the most general ones, procedures common to all researches which bear upon facts, and let it be less for the purpose of arranging our knowledge, than for enlightening our perception. Let us consider the methods of agreement and difference, the methods of remainders and variations, but let it be rather for the moral reflections which they imply than for the framework or facades which they supply. From our meditation upon scientific methods let us draw, first of all, certain scruples, a conception of what a real proof is, an

idea of what it means actually to know, in order that we may become less complaisant in our conceits, less hasty in arriving at certainties.

Our principal operations consist of getting acquainted with the literary texts, of comparing them for the sake of distinguishing the individual from the collective, and the original from the traditional, of grouping them by genres, schools, and movements, in order to determine finally the relation of these groups to the intellectual, moral and social life of our country, as well as to the development of European literature and civilization.

For the accomplishment of our task, we have at our disposal a certain number of procedures and methods. Spontaneous impression and reflective analysis are legitimate processes, but insufficient. In order to regulate and control the play of the spirit in its reactions toward a text, in order to diminish the despotism of opinions, other aids are necessary. The chief assistance is to be found in the use of the auxiliary branches of knowledge, knowledge of manuscripts, bibliography, chronology, biography, criticism of texts, and in the use of

all the other sciences, as auxiliary sciences, each in its turn according to the occasions, chiefly history of language, grammar, history of philosophy, history of science, history of manners. The method consists, in each particular study, of combining, according to the needs of the subject, impression and analysis with the exact processes of research and criticism, of calling in appropriately various auxiliary branches of learning in order to make them contribute according to their capacity to the elaboration of exact knowledge.

To know a text is first of all to know its existence: tradition, rectified and amplified by bibliography, indicates to us the works which are the materials of our study.

To know a text is in the next place, to have subjected it to certain questions; to have made our impressions and our opinions pass through a series of varied operations which transform them and make them exact.

1. Is the text authentic? If it is not, is it falsely assigned or entirely apocryphal?

2. Is the text pure and complete, without alteration or mutilation?

These two questions ought to be considered very carefully in the case of letters, memoirs, speeches, and in general in the case of all editions of posthumous works. The second ought always to be raised when we are making use of a modern reprint, and not of an edition issued by the author himself.

3. What is the date of the text? The date of composition, as well as that of publication. The date of the parts,<sup>e</sup> not merely that of the whole.

4. How has the text been modified from the first edition to the last edition issued by the author? and what evolutions in ideas and taste are registered in the variations between editions?<sup>f</sup>

---

e. Consult the work of M. Villey upon Montaigne and note the ingenious devices which he has employed with equal prudence and precision.<sup>37</sup>

f. One cannot help wondering at the tendency of certain literary spirits who value themselves for their dislikes, to take fright at words, the meaning of which they do not understand. Journalists, professors even, who set themselves up as advocates of good literature, utter with horror the expression variant editions, abhor the dry and pedantic study of them, without ever realizing that variant editions of a French text are not, like those of Latin and Greek texts, the various shams of imitators, but the successive stages of a writer's self-expression, the witnesses, therefore, of the activity of his mind and the evo-

5. How was the text formulated from the first rough draught to the first edition? What states of taste, what principles of art, what spiritual travail are manifested in the outlines and rough draughts, if they have been preserved?

6. One will in the next place make out the literal sense of the text. The meaning of the words and turns of phrase with the help of linguistic history, grammar, and historic syntax.<sup>g</sup> The meaning of the sentences, by clearing up obscure references, historical and biographical allusions.

7. Then one will establish the literary meaning of the text. That is to say, one will define its intellectual, emotional, and artistic values. One will distinguish personal usages in language from common usages of contemporaries, individual states of mind from common fashions of feeling and thought. One will distinguish beneath the general expression and trend of ideas, the representations

---

lution of his taste. So that there is no study more purely "literary" than this.

g. Advice very banal, but a practice not sufficiently common.

and conceptions, moral, social, philosophical, and religious, which form the sub-soil of the author's intellectual life, and which he has not found it necessary to express, because he understood himself, and made himself understood in his period without actually expressing them. One will discern in a bit of emphasis, in some reflection, in a turn of phrase, the profound and hidden meanings which often rectify, enrich, or even contradict the apparent sense of the text.

It is here especially that it is necessary to employ subjective feeling and taste: but it is here likewise that it is necessary to suspect and control them, in order not to depict oneself under the pretext of portraying Montaigne<sup>38</sup> or Vigny.<sup>39</sup> A literary work ought to be known first of all in the time when it was created, in its relation to its author and its period. Literary history ought to be treated historically. That is a truism but it is not yet a commonplace.

8. How was the work composed? From what temperament reacting to what circumstances? Biography tells us that. From what materials? That we learn by an investigation of the sources: let us under-

stand this word in a broad sense, and not seek merely the obvious imitations and manifest borrowings, but all the marks, all the traces of oral or written tradition. It is necessary to push in this direction to the furthest limit of perceptible suggestions and colorations.

9. What has been the success and what the influence of the work? The influence does not always coincide with the success. The determination of the literary influence is merely a study of sources reversed: one gets at it by the same methods. The social influence is even more important, and more difficult to determine. The bibliography of editions and reprints indicates the circulation of the book: one gets hold of it, at the point of departure, from the publisher. The catalogues of private libraries, post-mortem inventories, the catalogues of reading rooms, show it to us at points of arrival: one sees what persons, or at least what classes and what regions the book has reached in its diffusion. Finally, the accounts given by the press, private correspondence, intimate journals, occasionally annotations of readers, at times legislative debates, newspaper controversies, or court proceedings give information

as to the manner in which the book has been read and the deposits it has left upon the minds of men.

These are the principal operations by which is collected knowledge exact and complete--never complete in reality, but as nearly so as possible--of a literary work. From this point one proceeds, by a repetition of the same processes, to the other works of the writer and to those of other writers. One groups the works finally according to their affinities in content and in form. One constructs, from the association of forms, the history of types; from the association of ideas and sentiments, the history of intellectual and moral currents; from the coexistence of certain colorations and certain elements of technique in works of different type and spirit, the history of the epochs of taste.

In this triple theory, one proceeds surely only by giving a very large share in it, as large a share as possible, to inferior and forgotten works.<sup>h</sup>

---

h. I cannot resist the pleasure of referring to some pages of Péguy (Cahiers de la Quinzaine, onzième série, 12<sup>e</sup> cahier, Notre Jeunesse, pages 8-10), where he calls attention admirably to the interest of documents which represent, not "the leading roles, the great acting, the great successes,"

They surround the masterpieces, they prepare the way for them, serve as an outline or rough draught of them, and help to explain them, make the transition from one masterpiece to another, make clear their origin and their import. The genius is always of his age, but always goes beyond it: the mediocre writers are entirely of their age, they are always at the temperature of the atmosphere which surrounds them, at the level of their public. The dead works of a period are then necessary to limit and define the irreducible and inexpressible originality of the great writer, to define the esthetic mean of a school, the ordinary technique of a type, the usual end and common usages of a given category of literature.

Finally, literary history is completed by an expression of the relation of literature to life--

---

but the ordinary, average, obscure men, who are the very fiber of a people. These pages eloquently uphold us against those who would be inclined, with Péguy himself (douzième série, 1<sup>er</sup> cahier Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo, page 225), to reproach us for not confining ourselves to the masterpieces and for amassing about them all sorts of texts of less beauty, wherein we seek the average thought of an epoch, the soil in which are implanted the roots of superior works.<sup>40</sup>

a point at which our study joins sociology. Literature is an expression of society: an incontestable truth which has begot many errors. Literature often is complementary to society: it expresses that which is realized nowhere else, the regrets, the uneasinesses, the aspirations of men. It is indeed in this respect still an expression of society, but here it is necessary to give to the word a meaning which comprehends more than institutions and manners, which extends to that which has not had actual existence, to the invisible phases of life which neither events nor the mere document of history reveal.

Moreover, it will not suffice to see a general connection between literature and society. Image or mirror, that is not enough for us: we wish to know the actions and reactions which pass from one to the other, which goes before and which follows, when it is the one, when the other which furnishes the model or does the imitating. Nothing is more delicate than the investigation of these interchanges.

One will have no difficulty in perceiving that the general problem must be divided up into smaller problems, and that it is only at the completion of an infinite number of small individual solutions

that one will be able to discover, I do not say the general solution, but a rough draught of a solution of approximate value for a period or a movement. It is chimerical to hope to settle at one stroke the question of the influence of a whole group of works upon a group of events. The influence of literature upon the Revolution will be fairly perceptible only when one shall have observed patiently from 1715, and even from 1680, to 1789, the innumerable interchanges which have taken place uninterruptedly between literature and life. If literature has exerted an influence, it has not been as a mass, nor upon the whole group of events; it is rather by an infinite number of appeals to an infinite number of individual hearts during more than a century, in such a manner that finally, in 1789, a century of literature had seeped down, leaving deposits at divers stages and in different quantities upon the collective conscience of the French nation, and came to the surface again in such a way as to react upon events.

In all the operations which I have described, we are constantly liable to make mistakes. To fear error constantly is our true method and our whole

method of doing scientific work, and it is in that respect that the method which I am explaining goes chiefly contrary to the literary practices of "criticism based on genius".<sup>1</sup> We are fearful always of falling into error, we suspect our ideas: criticism based on genius delights in its ideas; it wishes them to be fresh, amusing, showy: we wish our ideas to be true; it exaggerates or embellishes its ideas with virtuosity: we take care that nothing goes beyond the established facts. Montaigne and Rousseau are only the weights with which criticism based on genius juggles:<sup>43</sup> the subject serves only to win admiration to the force or the agility of the critic. We wish to be forgotten, and that the readers of our work may see only Montaigne and Rousseau, just as they were, just as each will see them if he applies

---

1. It is understood that in employing this expression, I do not mean to say that those who practice it have a monopoly on genius, nor that they all have genius, but that they cannot get along without genius. Better compile an annual literary index<sup>41</sup> than write in the manner of Lemaître and Faguet, when one is neither Lemaître nor Faguet.<sup>42</sup> And it is well to get it into one's head once and for all that one does not make up for his lack of genius, not even the spirit of genius, by the pretention of having it: a truth, hard, but wholesome when one has once well understood it.

his mind faithfully and patiently to the texts. Subjective criticism attracts so many amateurs only because it is the type in which it is easiest for the critic to push himself forward in connection with and in place of the work that he appears to be studying.

Our whole method, as I have already said, is calculated to separate subjective impression from objective knowledge, to limit impression, control it, and interpret it to the profit of objective knowledge.

But in the preparation of objective knowledge, error lies in wait for us at every moment and at every point in our studies. I shall point out some chief types of error.

1. We work with an incomplete or inaccurate knowledge of facts. We have not made a sufficiently careful list of the texts to be studied; we are not sufficiently acquainted with the work of our predecessors and the results which they have attained. Bibliography is once more the remedy: a type of scholarship dry, insipid, if one makes it an end in itself, but a necessary and powerful instrument for getting together the material which one will work up

into true ideas. j, 44

We transgress also because of mental indolence. We record too willingly as results acquired the conclusions of our predecessors, if they do not run counter to our own fixed conclusions or our sympathies. We often make only a logical examination of them and not a critical examination. We do not sound sufficiently the depths of the book, we do not scrutinize with sufficient caution the quality of its evidence. It is necessary first to take account of the

j. The word bibliography is again one of those which certain choice spirits cannot utter without horror. They do not appear to realize that the moment they speak of the life of Molière or Racine, they have need of bibliographical information: for they surely do not pretend to invent the biography of their authors. Without owing a debt to bibliography they can succeed in nothing beyond adorning with wit or rhetoric the knowledge they gained at college or plagiarizing a work of scholarship which chance has put into their hands. The moment one goes beyond impressionism, it is only by the help of bibliography that one can learn where the materials which he needs are located. And furthermore, the drawing up of a bibliography is not a piece of manual labor in which intelligence and taste have no part. It is very necessary to possess a subject, it is necessary to have reduced it to definite ideas in order to be in a condition to formulate a bibliographical list which will conduct the student to the useful works and give him his bearings in the great forest of books. There are, in bibliography, good and bad pieces of work: just as there are in the production of literary men, the least suspected of erudition, writings which are intelligent, and others which are not.

manner in which it is constructed, to see clearly what it makes use of, what it neglects, how it interprets what it makes use of, and whether the conclusion is exactly proportionate to the evidence which appeared to establish it; it is necessary, finally, to determine exactly the actual quantity of new and sound information which one owes to it.

2. We establish inexact relations: sometimes through ignorance, and that error goes back to the preceding one; sometimes by impatience, and the remedy is to discipline ourselves, to force ourselves to work slowly so that our ideas may have time to ripen; sometimes by a thoughtless confidence in reasoning. For, in the historic sciences, reasoning is a deceiver. Almost never do we possess data sufficiently simple and precise to determine strictly a process of reasoning. At least it is necessary to reduce our reasoning to short processes so as to draw an immediate inference which seems to be the only possible one. But we must give up making chaînes de raisonnements: they are stretched out only at the expense of becoming weak. The sure inference which at the first step proceeded from an immediate contact with facts, becomes weaker with each step which sep-

arates it further from the facts. Whatever care one may take to reason strictly, at each step away from the original deduction the number of possible constructions increases, and the choice between them becomes more arbitrary. Therefore, after each step in formal reasoning, it is necessary to return to facts, and secure sufficient data to determine the next step. Never, without extreme caution, draw one inference from another.

And, moreover, let us interpret the texts at first hand. Never substitute equivalents for them as we often do unconsciously. We translate into our own language the documents which we are discussing, and our translation, which impoverishes or alters the originals, drives them clear out of our minds. "X writes a; but a is the same thing as b. Therefore b is actually the thought of X." And we no longer concern ourselves with a which is the only real text: we work only upon b which is the apocryphal text that we have established by an excessive and convenient trust in our judgment of identities.

3. We extend in an illegitimate fashion the import of the facts which we have observed. We establish an analogy, we make of it a dependence.

"X resembles Y" becomes "X copies or imitates Y." We establish a dependence, we declare it to be direct or immediate: "X was inspired by Y"; but we forget that there was, or may have been, a Y' which was inspired by Y and which alone has inspired X. We note a connection, precise, limited, partial, we attach to it an extended or general conclusion. "The date of this sentence is established by certain allusions: then the chapter, then the whole work is of such a date." Theoretically, a dated passage dates only itself: it does not necessarily follow that it establishes the date of a larger section.

Each fact or each class of facts that we study eclipses momentarily the others. We study the English or German origins of romanticism; and the French tradition withdraws into the shadow. We study the influence of Lamennais<sup>45</sup> upon Hugo<sup>46</sup> or Lamartine;<sup>47</sup> and we suppress in our thought all the other channels by which the same ideas, the same states of mind might have been brought to them at the same time. It is not a small task to keep always before the eye of the mind a map of the

multiple courses of thought and of art, together with the exact positions of the principal writers and the lines of communication, often faint and indirect, which connect them. It is necessary, however, never to lose sight of this map whatever may be the particular district or by-way that one is studying. Our tracers of influences and seekers of sources are too easily persuaded that there is only one road which leads to Rome.

We stretch nearly always the meaning of facts and of texts. Let us carefully, on the contrary, confine it to its proper dimensions. Let us try not to augment the import too much at the expense of exactness. It is true that criticism shines by making evidence mean more than it appears to do: let us be content not to shine, and to gather from our evidence only truth, palpable, incontestable, and "plain," as Pascal said of geometrical truth.

Facts limit each other: let us always seek for those which detract from the significance of the ones which have appealed to us, and let us not fail to take account of "negative facts". Let us expect a great shrinkage: we never know all the circum-

stances which surround a fact, all the thoughts of an author, and, in our most evident interpretations, it is very rarely that a possibility of error does not exist. Let us multiply, then, our observations so that errors in detail may be compensated for and canceled. Let us mark our course with definite landmarks, so far as possible, and narrow the intervals between positive facts which must be filled in by our minds.

4. We make mistakes by the use of particular methods, and we demand from one method the results which only another can give. We affirm facts upon the basis of an a priori deduction or a subjective impression: these are plain cases. But we employ biography, for example, to establish the moral or intellectual value of a work. That is very well, if it is a question of judging the author: and yet his actual intentions in writing are not necessarily determined by the incidents of his earlier life. Neither the five children put in the foundling hospital, nor the incident of Marion and the ribbon gives us information upon the moral inspiration of Jean-Jacques in 1760, and still less upon the moral virtue and, if I may say it, the wholesomeness of

Emile.<sup>48</sup> The problem here is no longer solved by the biography of the author but by the reaction of the public: in these reactions, the life and character of Rousseau no longer count according to what they actually were, but according to the conceptions, true or false, which the readers form of them, and which may be confused more or less with the impressions of the book.

One errs commonly in the choice of representative facts. Without mentioning prejudices or partialities which lead us astray, an ordinary self-deception is that which leads us to take extreme facts for the most representative ones. But, being extreme, they are consequently exceptional: they are representative only of a limit, of a maximum of intensity. And, in our studies, they contain always a considerable share of individuality which makes their representative value obscure and uncertain. Masterpieces are extreme phenomena. Phèdre represents French tragedy, but in Phèdre there is perhaps still more of Racine than of French tragedy.<sup>49</sup>

The facts obviously representative are the average ones. Gathered together in a large number, their common tenor is readily discernible. It becomes easy

to select the most significant ones, that is to say, those which present the purest and most nearly normal forms of the common type. And at the same time the masterpiece, the extreme phenomenon, is illuminated; by this comparison its total significance is revealed; and one is able to perceive clearly wherein it is representative without ceasing to be unique.

But average facts, usually, cannot be gathered into a homogeneous group. They tend in different directions. M. Mornet in his fine work on the feeling for nature in the eighteenth century<sup>50</sup> has developed an original method for discerning, among contrary currents and eddies, the direction of the movements of ideas. M. Mornet arranges chronologically, in parallel series, the contradictory facts: the series which goes on increasing marks the new tendency, the decreasing series is that of the survivals in which the past prolongs itself. A single section, taken at a particular moment, would leave us undecided in the face of two fairly well balanced groups of contradictory facts.

In the work of M. Mornet also, and in that of M. Cazamian, in his book upon the social novel in England,<sup>51</sup> we can find methods for solving the del-

icate problems concerning the influence of a writer or a book. We solve them nearly always by a presumption in favor of genius: we readily grant genius the initiative or the efficacy. We do not examine one by one the four or five hypotheses which may be set up, aside from that which credits everything to genius.

a. The masterpiece may have sounded a victory won by others.

b. It may have carried a stronghold already weakened, delivered the final assault which overcame opposition.

c. It may have been only the drum which beat the charge for the attack.

d. It may have merely mobilized men dispersed in all walks of life, and inscribed an idea in public opinion's general orders.

All these hypotheses bring us back to the observation that a masterpiece follows after other literary works which must also be taken into account.

5. Finally, as we do not wish to have had our trouble for nothing, we exaggerate the truths attained. Very few documents, and very few methods,

in literary history, give real certainty. And the degree of certainty is, generally, in an inverse ratio to the generality of the knowledge. That much must be said. But probabilities and approximations are not to be disdained; and one is sufficiently rewarded when one has advanced some steps on the road toward knowledge which is perfectly clear. It is necessary to know, at once, how to appreciate results acquired in order to avoid discouraging skepticism, and how to depreciate them in order to avoid self-complacent languor. Relativity is here, as elsewhere, the governing principle of both a sure technique and moral health.

Our usual sin is to exaggerate several degrees and sometimes even as far as absolute certainty all the imperfect truths which we come at in our studies. Possibilities become probabilities, probabilities become evident facts, hypotheses demonstrated truths. Inductions and deductions are confused with the facts upon which they are based and take from them the force of directly demonstrated truths.

However, during the last twenty or thirty years the historians and critics who use historical and

critical methods in literature have become much more exact and careful. The state of mind of a Sainte-Beuve,<sup>52</sup> always cautious, always on guard, if it is not yet universal, is at least no longer exceptional. Progress is brought about by the fact that the masters, after a certain period of work, find pupils who go beyond them, and who have almost by instinct the scientific conscience which the masters have acquired so late and with so much difficulty.

The reader will, perhaps, be frightened by the list which I have just made. If the exactions of method are such, so many and so rigorous, what human life will be long enough for the study of French literature? No life will be long enough for the acquisition of complete knowledge. But that which one human life cannot do, many lives can do. The history of French literature is a collective enterprise: let each bring his stone well-hewn. That will keep no one from reading all that he wishes for his own pleasure. There is, indeed, scarcely a special subject, outside of small problems of scholarship, which one man can treat exhaustively, doing all the

work himself: it is, therefore, necessary to know what others have done before us in the field, and to go forward from results already attained. Wherefore the impossibility of accomplishing anything without good bibliographies.

Division of the work is the only rational and productive arrangement of literary studies. Each will give himself to the task best suited to his abilities and his taste. Some will be research scholars devoted to the preparation of materials, to the discovery and criticism of documents, to the fabrication of working tools. Others will make up monographs of authors and of genres. Others will attempt the broad syntheses. Others will devote themselves to the popularization of the results acquired by original work.

I do not believe, however, in spite of the opinion of M. Langlois,<sup>53</sup> that it is desirable to have a complete separation between the research scholars and the popularizers, between the verifiers of detail and the generalizers. One thoroughly understands the parts only by understanding the whole. One knows the whole only by knowing the parts. One popularizes poorly if he does not know how the knowledge is

worked out, and just what is the value of the acquired result. The division of labor has, then, its dangers.

On the other hand, life is short, and one does well only that which he does with pleasure and by natural inclination. The division of labor is a necessity, whether one considers the structure to be built, or the workmen to be employed.

But there is a time when it is neither necessary nor desirable. That is the time of apprenticeship. It is desirable that at the University the young men whom literary history interests, be given practice successively in all the processes by which it is produced, be familiarized with the handling of all methods, that they learn to draw up a bibliography, to seek out a date, to collate various editions, to turn to account rough draughts of a masterpiece, to find a source, to trace an influence, to clear up the origins of a movement, to separate the elements of a hybrid form; that they attempt partial syntheses, and expositions in which the popularization preserves the precision and soundness of the truth being presented. After that they will do in

life what they please, what they can best do. They will have passed through all the branches of work; they will know how literary knowledge is manufactured, and how it is used. If they do not learn these two things, the first especially, at the University, where and when will they learn them?

It would be well, later, if the popularizer and the generalizer should preserve the habit of settling from time to time problems of exact scholarship, if they should set themselves occasionally to the criticism of documents or the preparation of an edition. And, inversely, the research man would gain by attempting a synthesis and by trying to speak now and then to the public at large. These changes of occupation would preserve flexibility and vigor of mind, would keep the first group of workers from becoming shallow and the latter from becoming narrow, and would prevent that sort of drying up which even in intellectual work is the dark side of the division of labor, and from which the specialists in light, popular writing are no more exempt than others.

Certain literary critics are afraid that atten-

tion to methodology may stifle genius, and get warmed up over this matter as if they had a personal interest in it. They denounce the mechanical labor of taking notes, and dry research scholarship. They want ideas.

Let them set their minds at rest. Research is not an end: it is a means. Notes are instruments for the extension of knowledge, securities against the inaccuracy of memory: their end is beyond themselves. No method warrants mere mechanical work, and there is no method, the value of which does not depend upon the intelligence of the worker. We also want ideas. But we want them to be genuine.

And thus none of the original activity of the mind, in feeling, analyzing, and reflecting, is lost in the use of exact methods. The development of original ideas may be practiced freely, and we would not limit the power or fecundity of any intelligence. But as we wish our ideas to be genuine, let us demand proofs and verifications; we insist that the worker use materials of good quality, that he shall have taken the trouble to become thoroughly informed about the things which he pretends to explain. When these proofs and these verifications, when this crit-

icism of materials and exact knowledge are lacking we do not reject the illuminations of genius, but we accept them as hypotheses; we set ourselves to the task of verifying them, of separating the good metal from the alloy; and the lives of patient workers are employed in extracting the truth from the careless creations of negligent genius.<sup>k</sup>

Far from restricting the inventive activity of the mind, we increase it: we offer it a new and unlimited field. To create ideas is not everything: one must create methods. There are no methods which serve as masterkeys. Whatever general principles are given, each problem is satisfactorily solved only by a method constructed especially for it, adapted to the nature of its data and to its difficulties.. The problems themselves do not take form of their own accord: the determination of the question requires often as much genius as the determina-

---

k. Yet genius should not be too careless. It is pitiable to see, now and then, critics of the finest ability write books about our greatest writers in which they put only prettinesses of style, and wherein there is nothing to be learned by a bachelor of arts in literature of average culture. Those who can do the most should do the most. Talent and genius are resources, not exemptions.

tion of the answer. In suggesting to the creative imagination that it apply itself to the invention of problems and methods, as well as solutions, we extend its range of activity, and open to it unlimited possibilities. Our men of genius need not worry: we will never let them be without work.

But is what truth one can attain in literary studies worth the trouble that he takes in attaining it? That is a doubt which lingers in the minds of many. The answer of Montaigne satisfies me: if we are not obliged to find truth, at least it is our business to search for it. But the occupation of talking about the works of others would have in it little of nobility, if there were not at the end of our work, in addition to the pleasure that we ourselves take in it, some little truth to communicate. For the professor of literature, particularly, teaching would be only a hocus-pocus or hypocrisy if each of us taught only his own conceits or his dogmatic beliefs. There is a part of literature which can not be taught; we can only say to our students: "Read, feel. React to the author. We do not wish to substitute our reactions for yours. But we will teach you that which is a matter of knowledge, and

therefore of instruction; we will communicate to you all that body of truths relative and imperfect, but precise and verifiable--history, philology, esthetics, poetics, the principles of style--all those ideas dependent upon an exact knowledge which can be the same in all minds, and which will give you the means of refining, correcting, enriching your impressions, of seeing more things, more profoundly, in the masterpieces which you read all the while. We will show you how this exact knowledge is obtained. We will put you in a position to work at increasing it, if that is your desire, or at least to know what it is worth, in order that you may make use of it without undervaluing or overrating it".

Moreover, it is evident to-day that all those who have desired during the past century to give to literary knowledge a little of the solidity of scientific knowledge, whatever may be the illusions and the mistakes of many, at times the very greatest, have not worked in vain. Neither Sainte-Beuve, nor Taine, nor Brunetière,<sup>54</sup> nor the many authors of monographs, of doctoral dissertations,<sup>1</sup> of articles

---

1. Kindly regard the series of dissertations in French literature produced during the past thirty

in critical and learned journals have lost their time. The foundations of literary work have been laid. Many a biography has been cleared up. Many a chronology has been made exact. All sorts of problems of sources, influences, versification, etc., have been solved or at least clearly stated. The origin, the process of formation, the direction of great currents in literature and feeling, of styles, and of genres have been traced with greater exactitude. Nothing is finished, everything is in the

---

years. It will be seen that, like those in history and geography, in ancient and foreign literature, in grammar and philosophy, they do, as a group, great honor to the faculty of literature in the University of Paris; I believe that there does not exist in any country of the world a comparable collection of scholarly works, in which the learning is at once more substantial, and put more vigorously to the service of ideas, or the literary qualities of composition and expression are better employed for the communication of knowledge. It will be perceived without difficulty that scarcely a single one of these dissertations on French literature has held its ground for any length of time, if it has not represented an application of the method which I describe, that certain of those persons who strive against it today have owed to it all that there is of value in their essays, and that the most brilliant minds who have thought themselves able to do without it, have remained in achievement, notwithstanding the richness and novelty of their ideas, far below certain average spirits who knew how to work.

process of development. Each year verified materials and well organized groups of data are placed by research scholars at the disposal of the originators of ideas; there will soon be no excuse whatever for that lazy ignorance which is sometimes paraded before us as a presumption of talent.<sup>m</sup>

Without a doubt the surest results are attained in the most limited problems, and certainty, as I have said, becomes less and less in proportion as generality increases. That is the case in all the sciences. But it was necessary to begin the house by laying the foundation; little by little the body of exact knowledge increases and touches upon more extended problems.

---

m. I lay stress upon this point. We do not deter anyone from reading texts, from having ideas, taste, and intelligence. We urge these things. We want as much of them as possible. The more of these things the worker has at his disposal, the greater the results which our method will produce. All the opposition with which we meet is, at bottom, opposition based upon indolence. We insist upon work, the most work from him who has most talent. There is also opposition based on vanity. We wish that the worker work usefully, that is to say, exactly, for the sake of finding the truth, not of showing off. We insist that he employ himself altogether to make his subject known, and not employ his subject to make himself known. Inde irae.

Already definitions of the genius of the greatest writers, ideas concerning the formation and influence of great works are becoming definite and to some degree fixed. There will always be an unknown quantity in Montaigne and Pascal, in Bossuet and Rousseau, in Voltaire and Chateaubriand,<sup>55</sup> in many other writers, and a degree of contradiction proportionate to what is unknown. But one must have entirely failed to follow the course of literary studies during the last few years if he has not noticed that the field of dispute is becoming contracted, that the domain of established and uncontested knowledge is gradually widening, and leaves thus less liberty, unless they escape through ignorance, to the dabbling of dilettantes and the prejudices of fanatics. So that one may, without idle fancy, look forward to a day when, an agreement having been reached upon the definition, the content, the meaning of works, there will be nothing left to argue about except their wholesomeness or their malignancy, that is to say, their sentimental nature. But concerning that, I believe, there will always be disagreement.

A number of present day workers strive only to see the past as it actually was. But others, who, more ardent or working upon burning ground, cannot entirely neutralize their subjective preferences, are doing, nevertheless, excellent historical and critical work. Among freethinkers, Protestants, Catholics, in all the faiths, there are men--and their number increases little by little--who understand the necessity of discipline in literary work and force themselves to the use of exact methods. If there remain, in spite of everything, traces of personal convictions in their writings, one at least finds also portions of impersonal and verified information, and in the integrity of their exposition, it is not difficult, most of the time, to distinguish between what they merely believe and what they prove.

Finally, the historical spirit and critical method have a peace-making effect. That is a further point at which we claim for our studies one of the advantages of scientific work. It embodies, as we know, a principle of intellectual unity. There is no national science: science is universal. But as it tends to bring about intellectual unity among men,

science also contributes toward maintaining or restoring the intellectual unity of nations. For if there is not a French science, nor a German science, but one science, the same for and common to all nations, still less is there a science of party, a science monarchical or republican, catholic or socialistic. All the men of one country who share the scientific spirit, strengthen thereby the intellectual unity of their country. For the acceptance of a common discipline establishes fellowship between men of every party and every creed. The acceptance of results attained by loyal obedience to this discipline forms a solid basis of acquired facts upon which men, gathered from all points of the horizon, meet each other. The acceptance of the final arbitrament of rules of method takes away the bitterness from disputes and furnishes a means of settling them. Without renouncing any personal ideal, one understands and is understood, one cooperates: that leads to reciprocal esteem and sympathy. Dogmatic, fanciful, impassioned criticism divides: literary history unites, like science whose spirit inspires it. It becomes thus a means of reconciliation between fellow-countrymen whom everything else

separates and sets in opposition to each other, and that is why I would dare to say that we work not only for truth and for humanity, but also for the nation.

## NOTES

1. The monumental work of M. Alfred Croiset (1844-1923) and M. Maurice Croiset (1846- ) referred to is Histoire de la Littérature Grecque (5 vols., 2nd ed., Paris, 1896). Both men have done other important work in the field of Greek literature.

M. Gaston Boissier (1823-1908) was the author of several standard works on Latin life and literature, among which are Cicéron et Ses Amis (12th ed., Paris, 1902), L'Art Poétique d'Horace et la Tragédie Romaine (Paris, 1898), and Tacite (Paris, 1907).

M. Gaston Paris (1839-1903) was the leading scholar of his age in the domains of romance philology and medieval literature. Among his most important publications are Etude sur le Rôle de l'Accent Latin dans la Langue Française (Paris, 1862), La Poésie au Moyen Age (2 vols., Paris, 1887-95), Poèmes et Légendes au Moyen Age (Paris, 1900), Francois Villon (Paris, 1901), Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne

(2nd ed., Paris, 1905), La Littérature Française au Moyen Age (5th ed., Paris, 1915). See page 53 of text and note 35.

M. Joseph Bédier (1864- ) has published Les Fabliaux: Etudes de la Littérature Populaire et d'Histoire Littéraire du Moyen Age (2nd ed., Paris, 1895), Les Légendes Épiques: Recherches sur la Formation des Chansons de Geste (4 vols., Paris, 1908-13). M. Bédier was one of the contributors to the book Mélanges. See Introduction, page 5.

2. The critical career of Ferdinand Brunetière (1849-1906) was in a sense a series of campaigns in which he waged war under the banners of various religious and literary dogmas. He was one of the great modern exponents of scientific criticism, and is particularly noteworthy for his application of the theory of evolution to literature, as found in the several works constituting the Evolution des Genres (Paris, 1890-94). Of this phase of his work William A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan say in their History of French Literature (New York, 1922), page 714, "In applying the principles of Darwin to criticism, Brunetière forges the final link between nine-

teenth-century science and literature. . . . The value of his theory has been much debated and remains debatable". M. Lanson began his career as a pupil of Brunetière, a fact which adds interest to his comment here. For an exposition of Brunetière's theories the reader is directed to the Introduction of his L'Evolution des Genres dans l'Histoire de la Littérature (Paris, 1890; 3rd ed. 1898). See text, page 49, and note 28.

3. See Introduction, pages 2-10, for a discussion of M. Lanson's career as a historian and critic of literature.

4. Jacques-Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704), French Catholic divine, Bishop of Meaux, member of the Academy, preceptor of the Dauphin, a noted pulpit orator. He defined a heretic as celui qui a une opinion. All his life he vigorously combated Protestants and Jews. His works include sermons, especially funeral orations, works intended for the instruction of the Dauphin, and controversial writings. His style places him in the front rank of seventeenth century prose writers. M. Lanson is the author of a book Bossuet (Paris, 1891) and an

article "Bossuet Historien du Protestantisme" (Revue Universitaire, vol. II).

5. Voltaire (François Marie Arouet) (1694-1778), witty, brilliant, skeptical French dramatist, poet, and reformer. He was a militant skeptic who fought with great energy the intolerance, superstitions, and persecutions of the Catholic Church. His writings include poetry, drama, philosophic and satirical short tales, letters, criticism, history, polemic works, and philosophy. M. Lanson has published a book Voltaire (Paris, 1906) and a number of articles on Voltaire.

6. One who is opposed to the Roman Catholic Church and its influence.

7. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-1592), a celebrated French essayist. His ideas and influence are to be traced in many of the best French authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in England his essays were diligently read by Bacon and Shakespeare.

8. Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) famous French dramatist, considered by Saintsbury "the greatest

tragic dramatist of France on the classical model". M. Lanson has written a book Corneille (Paris, 1896) and several articles on Corneille.

9. Vincent Voiture (1598-1648), French poet and man of letters, patronized at court. He is noted for his letters and his short poems (sonnets, chansons, etc.).

10. The work of M. Charles V. Langlois (1857-1924) and M. Charles Seignobos (1854- ) is fortunately available for English readers in a translation by G. G. Berry, which bears the title Introduction to the Study of History (New York, 1904). The authors view the study of history as a scientific pursuit and write for those "who propose to deal with documents with a view to preparing or accomplishing historic work in a scientific way". They insist upon the necessity of a strict and orderly method in the prosecution of historical studies. The work does not pretend to be a complete treatise on historical methodology, but its three hundred or more pages give a very full sketch or outline of the subject. The first division of the work deals with the fundamental problem of seeking out and getting in touch with

documents and other source material. A second section discusses the important labor of analyzing and criticizing the source materials. The final portion of the book deals with synthetic operations such as the grouping of facts, constructive reasoning, the construction of general formulas, and the exposition of evidence and conclusions. An examination of the book shows many parts of it to have value for the student--in whatever field--who is concerned with the locating and criticizing of texts, the weighing and coordinating of evidence, and the formulation and exposition of results.

The essay on historical method by M. Gabriel Monod (1844-1912), the distinguished French historian, is found in De la Méthode dans les Sciences, first series (Paris, 1908), pages 367-410. In this article M. Monod limits himself to an indication of the essential processes of historical method and the chief problems which arise in connection with it. For a more detailed analysis of the problems and practices of historical investigation he refers his readers to the work by MM. Langlois and Seignobos which has just been commented upon. M. Monod states that the science of history, like all sciences of

induction, resolves itself into two essential operations: analysis and synthesis. Analysis involves the criticism of sources and the criticism of facts; and the writer lays down some basic principles which govern these operations. He then proceeds to an illuminating discussion of the difficulties which arise in connection with historical construction, generalization, and interpretation. It is interesting to note that whereas M. Monod lays great stress upon scientific care, accuracy, and thoroughness in historical research, he recognizes intangible and incommensurable psychological and philosophical implications in history which will not yield to strict scientific treatment.

11. Gabelle is a word originally used in France to designate every kind of indirect tax, but more especially the tax on salt. This impost, first established in 1286 during the reign of Philip IV, was only temporary, but was declared perpetual by Charles V. Salt was made a government monopoly, and every family in the kingdom was required to buy a certain amount weekly at a fixed price, the price varying in different provinces. This tax was unpopu-

lar from the beginning, and efforts to collect it frequently led to disturbances. It was finally suppressed in 1790. The name gabelous is still given to tax collectors by the common people in France.

12. Le Cid (1636), a tragedy by Pierre Corneille. See note 8.

13. Candide (1759), the most famous of Voltaire's contes philosophiques. See note 5.

14. It is pertinent to quote here the paragraph with which M. Gabriel Monod opens his essay on historical method already referred to. See page 32 of text and note 10.

We shall take the word history in its broadest sense. We shall understand by that word the ensemble of the manifestations of human thought and action, considered in their chronological order, their development, and their relations of direct connection or dependence. Sometimes the meaning of the word history is limited to political history, the history of the formation of states and of their mutual relations; and literary history, the history of art, the history of philosophy, religious history, legal history, economic history, even the history of customs and civilization are considered as distinct from it. But these various histories, like political history itself, are only parts of history proper, particular points of view from which are observed human activity and thought. The

ideal end of history would be to reconstruct, in chronological series, the integral life of humanity.

15. Duc de Saint-Simon (Louis de Rouvroy) (1675-1755), French soldier, statesman, and writer. He is celebrated for his Mémoires on French affairs and the court during the last part of the reign of Louis XIV and the beginning of the reign of Louis XV. Nitze and Dargan state in their History of French Literature, page 353, "The French have long been unequalled in the writing of memoirs, and those of Saint-Simon are the greatest in the language".

16. Philippe Quinault (1635-1688) was for ten years master of French tragedy, filling the interregnum between Pierre Corneille (see note 8) and Jean Racine (1639-1699). His tragedies deal with conspiracy, crime, and politics, and constantly exalt love as the only virtue, the justification for any act. His masterpiece is, perhaps, Stratonice (1660). All his work has a high lyrical quality, and in the latter part of his life he wrote several operas. Indeed he had a leading part in the establishment of opera as a permanent European genre. As suggested by M. Lanson's reference, Racine took

his cue from the work of this man, but going far beyond him, developed an original and much greater art.

Nicholas Pradon (1632-1698) was an imitator and rival of Racine. He is now remembered only for his Phèdre et Hippolyte (1677), a worse than mediocre play, which, under the command of certain enemies of Racine, he wrote as a rival performance to that writer's Phèdre. In all his work he borrowed heavily from Racine, and always introduced a love intrigue into his plays with the aim of attracting to his work the audience of the great tragedian.

Jean Galbert de Campistron (1656-1723) was an ardent disciple of Racine and, in his early work, received advice and applause from the master. He copied Racine's methods of construction with some success, but in the execution of his plays never advanced beyond mediocrity. His best-known play is Andronic (1685).

M. Lanson contributed the article on Racine to the Grande Encyclopédie.

17. Iphigénie, tragedy by Jean Racine, acted at court in 1674 and in public in 1675. See note 16.

18. Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828-1893), dis-

tinguished French historian, philosopher, and critic. Notable among his works is Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise (1864-65). Oxford University conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1871. In 1878 he was elected to the French Academy. Taine has treated Racine in his book Nouveaux Essais de Critique et d'Histoire (4th ed., Paris, 1886), pages 171-223. His essay is divided into four sections under the headings "Esprit de Son Théâtre," "Mœurs de Son Théâtre," "Les Bienséances dans Son Théâtre," "Son Caractère et Son Esprit". M. Lanson is author of the article on Taine in the Grande Encyclopédie. See page 49 of text and notes 16, 26, and 28.

19. The Last Judgment has served as the subject of many great paintings. The most famous of them, probably, is that by Michelangelo, which covers the entire end wall above the high altar of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican at Rome. This magnificent work, painted in the years 1534-41, is the largest fresco in the world; it contains more than one hundred figures over life size. Another notable representation of the Last Judgment is a very large painting by Rubens in the Old Pinakothek

at Munich. It was painted in 1617.

20. The "Night Watch or Sortie of the Banning Cock Company" (1642), masterpiece of Rembrandt in the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam. This painting represents an assembly of the civic guard (by daylight, despite the title), with their officers, banner, and drummer.

21. See notes 2 and 28.

22. See notes 18, 26, and 28.

23. Pensées, (1670) philosophical and theological work by Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), celebrated French geometrician, philosopher, and writer.

24. Emile ou de l'Education (1762), a treatise on education in the form of a romance by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), eminent Swiss-French philosopher and writer. The book grew out of the request of a mother for advice as to the training of a child, and it represents the expansion of Rousseau's opinions and counsels, the framework of the story sustaining an elaborate system of elementary education. The book irritated both the Philosophe party and the

Church. It was condemned by the Parliament of Paris, June 11, 1762, and Rousseau was compelled to leave the city to avoid arrest. At Geneva the Council likewise condemned the book, and it was burned by the public executioner. See pages 72-73 of text and note 48.

25. Bossuet (see note 4) lived from 1627-1704. The famous colonnade of the east façade of the Louvre in Paris, consisting of twenty-eight pairs of large Corinthian columns, was constructed in the years 1666-1670.

The life of Voltaire (see note 5) extended from 1694-1778. Jean-Baptiste Martin (1659-1735), called Martin des batailles, was an artist who devoted himself largely to pictures of battles. He painted for the palace of Versailles pictures representing the victories of Louis XIV. His Siège de Fribourg en 1677 hangs in the Louvre. Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Pat-er (1695-1736), a French painter, who produced, in the manner of Watteau, a number of charming tableaux de genre.

26. See notes 18 and 28. For an exposition of Taine's ideas on literary history and criticism the

student is referred to the Préfaces of 1858 and 1866 in his Essais de Critique et d'Histoire (Paris, 1858; 2nd ed. 1866; both Préfaces are printed in the 10th ed. 1904) and the Introduction to his History of English Literature (trans. by H. Van Laun, 2 vols., New York, 1874).

27. See notes 2 and 28.

28. The title of this lecture is "L'Esprit Scientifique et la Méthode de l'Histoire Littéraire". It has been reprinted in a pamphlet entitled Méthodes de L'Histoire Littéraire by Gustave Lanson (see Introduction, pages 12-15). The lecture discusses the problem of the proper relation between the methods of the natural sciences and the method of literary history. The central ideas of the lecture have been incorporated in the essay translated here. With regard to Taine and Brunetière, M. Lanson has the following to say, page 22:

This word [scientific] has been greatly abused by students of literature, and the ablest minds have let themselves be the most befuddled by the great discoveries of chemists, natural philosophers, and naturalists. You guess that I am thinking of Taine and Brunetière. All the truths that we owe to them, the great views, fertile and suggestive, that they have left us, are not,

perhaps, worth as much as the lesson which they have given us by the error and by the defeat of their scientific pretensions. The books of mediocre men do not contain instruction; but the falls of great men show us the precipices: who would dare to flatter himself of his ability to walk safely where Taine and Brunetière have slipped?

Warned by their experience, we know now that as the sciences took their flight only when detached from metaphysics, it is necessary for us, with a similar independence with regard to the sciences, to organize our research, build up our knowledge, taking account only of the nature of the special aim which is ours and of the actual means which are at our disposal for attaining it. As no science has been obliged to reproduce the external plan or to utilize the formulas of another science, let us not seek further to copy the structure or to appropriate to our use the language of chemistry or natural history.

29. Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), the most noted of French fabulists, was born at Château Thierry, Champagne.

30. See note 17.

31. Pierre Corneille, see note 8. Thomas Corneille (1625-1709), French dramatist and miscellaneous writer, younger brother of Pierre.

32. See note 16.

33. Phèdre (1677), tragedy by Jean Racine. See note 16.

34. L'Esprit des Lois, famous philosophical work, published at Geneva in 1748, by Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (Charles de Secondat) (1689-1755).

35. Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), the greatest and most universal of French critics. Gaston Paris, see note 1. In the Brussels lecture (see note 28) M. Lanson says, pages 23-25:

We should admire and imitate the discretion of Sainte-Beuve. He tasted science and knew what was true of it. He was formed in the great school of the eighteenth century, the century so falsely, so absurdly regarded as the dupe and the slave of apriorism. He set himself to compose the natural history of intellects, to class them by families. But he took from science nothing more than this general assimilation: that is to say he wished to arrive at truth by the observation of reality and to make only the generalizations which the facts warranted. Never did he ask himself whether what he was doing resembled what Lamarck, Blainville, or Magendie had done.

He is our master, gentlemen; in that at least which is essential, we have as yet no better course than to follow the route which he has pointed out.

The same lesson is given us by the great spirit who, from the fields of romance philology and medieval literature extended his strengthening influence as far as the study of classical and contem-

porary works. Gaston Paris, gentlemen, never played at being Claude Bernard or Darwin: he treated philological problems with the processes of philology, and never has work aped to a less extent the practices of science or been more impregnated with the spirit of science.

Gaston Paris knew what we should take from science, gentlemen, it is its conscience. Leave to it its framework and its formulas. Our way of participating in the scientific life, the only way which does not lead astray, is to develop in ourselves the scientific spirit. We have in common, the scientists and we, every human infirmity, short life, wavering attention, blind passions, inability to get outside of ourselves, the constant risk of deceiving ourselves and of being deceived. We have in common the natural instruments of work, which Montaigne has named, reason and experience. We also have in common, as our object, facts, reality, present or past, infinitely complex and confused, hiding under the shifting richness of appearances the simplicity and stability of their true nature. We cannot, then, adopt the tactics of the scientists in their campaigns, but we can fill ourselves with the spirit to which they owe their victories.

36. The quotation is from the opening page of De la Méthode dans la Psychologie des Sentiments (Paris, 1899) by Frédéric Rauh (1861-1909).

37. Pierre Villey (1879- ), Les Sources et l'Evolution des Essais de Montaigne (2 vols., Paris, 1908). The editor has not had access to this work.

M. Villey contributed an article to Mélanges. See Introduction, page 5.

38. See note 7.

39. Alfred Victor, Comte de Vigny (1797-1863), French poet, dramatist, and novelist.

40. Charles Péguy (1873-1914), French poet, mystic, editor, and sociological writer. He was killed in battle, September 5, 1914. In 1900 he began the publication of Cahiers de la Quinzaine, which was interrupted in August 1914 by the War. This collection contains most of Péguy's work. In it Romain Rolland's masterpiece Jean-Christophe was published periodically before its appearance in volumes. The two works alluded to here, Notre Jeunesse and Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo, are to be found in volume 4, 1916, of the Oeuvres Complètes de Charles Péguy (15 vols., Paris, 1916- ), where the editor has had access to them. The paragraph in Notre Jeunesse to which M. Lanson refers is on pages 40-42. It follows:

Concerning the great masters, the great leaders, history will always inform us tolerably well, that is its business; and in default of history the historians, and in default of the historians the professors (of history). What we want to know and what we

cannot find out, what we wish to learn, what we wish to be informed of is not the leading roles, the great masques, the great acting, the great successes, the theater, and the performance; what we wish to know is what went on behind the scenes, beneath the stage, how this French people was made, finally what we want to know is what was, in that heroic age, the actual fabric of the people and of the Republican party. What we wish to construct is, indeed, ethnic histology. What we want to know is of what sort of fiber was woven this people and this party, how a Republican family--ordinary, average, obscure, selected by chance, selected from the ordinary fiber, so to speak, pulled out of the full fabric--lived, what the members of such a family believed, thought,--what they did, for they were men of action--what they wrote; how they married, how they existed, upon what, how they brought up their children;--how they were born, first of all, for people were born in that time;--how they worked; how they spoke; how they wrote; and if they wrote verse what sort of verse they wrote; from what common, ordinary soil, from what mold, upon what ground, upon what terrain, under what skies, in what climate sprang up the great poets, the great writers. From what fertile soil sprang forth this great Republic. What we wish to know is what was the very fiber of the bourgeoisie, of the Republic, of the people, when the bourgeoisie was great, when the people was great, when the Republicans were heroic and the Republic had clean hands. In a word when the Republicans were republicans and the Republic a republic. What we wish to see and have is not a history decked out in Sunday clothes, but a history of all the days of the week, a people in the texture, the tissue, the fabric of its daily existence, in the struggle for daily bread, panem quotidianum, a race in its reality, in its vast unfolding.

In Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo, pages 469-484, Péguy delivers an attack against the Sorbonne, especially the faculty of letters, who, he declares, have fallen back into scholasticism and have betrayed culture, the maintenance and extension of which are entrusted to them by the state. He condemns with irony the efforts of literary scholars to ape the methods of natural sciences of which they have no real knowledge; and, in the passage referred to by M. Lanson, pages 483-84, ridicules the scientifically exhaustive, or exhausting, editions of literary works issued by these scholars, in which the text is buried under and obscured by a great mass of material, entirely external, if not actually irrelevant to it.

41. A standard French work of this sort is Les Livres de L'Année, published annually at Paris.

42. Jules Lemaître (1853-1914), eminent French critic of the subjective Impressionist school. M. Lanson in his Histoire de la Littérature Française (17th ed., Paris, 1922) writes as follows of Lemaître, pages 1119-20:

Poet, without being in the first rank,  
dramatist, without having decidedly im-

pressed the public, he made his criticism benefit by his gifts of poetic invention and of dramatic creation. What did not suffice to make a great artist gave to the critic an artistic grace by which one is irresistibly attracted. . . . With his fluent, nonchalant manner of writing, his supple transitions from one side of a question to another, his ironical balancings, M. Lemaître had for a long time the appearance of a dilettante who juggles with ideas, a whimsical writer who amuses himself. . . . He evidenced, in effect, the curiosities and gambols of a kitten: maturity coming, he became established in his true character, much more conservative and more attached to the strict French tradition than his juvenile activity led one to believe. Politics also occupied M. Lemaître, and there again he displayed his true character, his timorous bourgeois spirit. He led with an ardor exempt from dilettantism the fight against socialism; he believed himself for a time to be one of the great leaders of nationalism and a maker of kings, that is to say of presidents of the Republic. He forgot literature for some years.

He returned to it in later years. Without abandoning his political role, converted even to the monarchy and giving lavish evidences in the papers and at banquets of the ingenuous fervor of a neophyte, M. Lemaître produced various literary studies wherein the friends of his former manner found it again, or something quite like it. A study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose ideas Lemaître's new faith unfortunately did not permit him to scrutinize carefully, another of Racine, not exempt from idolatrous exaggeration, both charming in many portions, especially in the biographical portions, were followed by an essay upon Fénelon, a bit feeble in its

grace, and another upon Chateaubriand, wherein the political faith of the writer frequently held in check his literary admiration.

Emile Faguet (1847-1916), French critic and literary historian. In his Histoire de la Littérature Française (17th ed., Paris, 1922) M. Lanson writes, pages 1117-18:

M. Faguet, avoiding with care general theories and erudite learning, gave us careful analyses of personalities. He applied himself only to distinguish, to define the moral beings which are revealed by literary works; and all these mixtures of temperaments, intelligences, and affections were proportioned by him with a fine precision. He does not have an equal in building up a personality, in delineating its structure, and distinguishing its essential functions. There are practically no great writers or thinkers in the five centuries of modern literature of whom he did not take the measure and give a description. His influence has especially been felt in the putting forward anew of the seventeenth century at the expense of the eighteenth, which he treated too harshly, in regarding individuals rather than society and the general movement of ideas. For he wrote many monographs and almost never attempted a general, synthetic study: he was content to place substantial and copious prefaces, containing fixed determinations a bit peremptory, in the collections of monographs which he published. We have from him only one book of literary esthetics, upon the theater: obviously a work of youth despite its late publication, but full of original and interesting views. In later years M. Faguet devoted himself also to the discussion of current questions of political and social organiza-

tion: he brought to these subjects the same indifference to methodical erudition, the same power of analysis, and the same wealth of personal ideas. There is no one of his articles wherein he does not give proof of the penetration of his keen intelligence, which is limited only by some paradoxical set opinions. . . .

More and more beset as age came by a sense of the necessity of expressing all the ideas which his lucid mind formed without rest, he astonished the public in his last years by the abundance and variety of his publications. He became a moralist. He read and reread great writers, Plato, Nietzsche, Corneille; and apropos of each, with a prodigious ease, he tossed off a volume, always entertaining to the public at large, and wherein the best informed persons had something to learn. Upon all the great questions of the day he had a work ready in three months. When the centenary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau came, he reread him; and the result was, in eighteen months or two years, the appearance of five large volumes: and the most astonishing thing about it was that never had he been more completely, more exactly informed.

43. Montaigne, see note 7. The following persons to whom M. Lanson might grant genius have written about Montaigne: Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (see note 35), Emile Faguet (see note 42), and Guillaume Guizot. Concerning Rousseau (see text, pages 72-73, and notes 24 and 48) Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Jules Lemaitre (see note 42), Sainte-Beuve, Faguet, Ferdinand Brunetière (see notes 2 and 28),

and Mme. de Staël have written. M. Lanson is the author of the article in the Grande Encyclopédie and other articles on Rousseau.

44. M. Lanson speaks from experience and with authority concerning bibliographical work. See Introduction, page 7.

45. Hugues Félicité Robert de (Abbé de) Lamennais (1782-1854), French religious and political writer of great influence in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

46. Victor-Marie Hugo (1802-1885), great French poet, dramatist, novelist, essayist, and politician.

47. Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869), French lyric poet and statesman.

48. In 1728 Rousseau served for three months as a lackey in the household of a widow, Madam de Vercellis, at the end of which time she died. After her death a piece of old silver- and rose-colored ribbon was missing; Rousseau had stolen it, and it was found in his possession. Asked whence he had taken it, he said it had been given to him by Marlon,

a young and pretty maid in the house. In her presence and before the whole household he repeated his false story and clung to it. Rousseau relates this incident and describes the remorse which he suffered for it in Book II of his Confessions.

About 1743 Rousseau established a lasting liaison with Thérèse le Vasseur, an illiterate kitchen maid at the inn in Paris where he was living. She bore him five children, who, since Rousseau felt unable to support them, were consigned one after the other to the asylum for foundlings, with such entire absence of any precaution with a view to their identification in more prosperous times that not even a record of their birthdays was kept. In 1761 the Maréchale de Luxembourg made efforts to recover the children but without success. Rousseau tells of his life with Thérèse and of the abandoning of the children in Books VII and VIII of the Confessions. Rousseau's disregard for responsibility in this affair was in a measure punished by the use his critics made of it when, as the author of Emile (1762) and other writings, he became celebrated as a writer on education and a preacher of domestic affections.

See note 24.

49. See notes 16 and 33.

50. Le Sentiment de la Nature en France de J.-J. Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Essai sur les Rapports de la Littérature et des Moeurs (Paris, 1907) by Daniel Mornet (1878- ). This book is dedicated to M. Lanson. M. Mornet is also author of Le Romantisme en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle (Paris, 1912). M. Mornet is represented by an essay in Mélanges. See Introduction, page 5.

51. Louis François Cazamian (1877- ), Le Roman Social en Angleterre: 1830-1850. Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley (2nd ed., Paris, 1904). In outlining the method employed in the book M. Cazamian writes as follows, Introduction, pages 14-16:

Studying the reciprocal action and reaction between the novel and life, we had to ask ourselves two questions: what are the internal causes within the novel which have produced its influence; what are the external conditions which have allowed its influence to be exerted? It is necessary for us to know at once the books, which have acted upon society, and the society, which has submitted to their influence because it was ready for it, and was then in part a result of this influence. Also, we attribute to the novel a double historic interest. It has first an in-

herent value, so to speak. It contains a certain sum of didactic intentions and of evidence; it has exerted a predetermined influence. We set ourselves to extract from it the actual motive force, composed of the information which it gives upon social ills and its thesis, made up of the remedies which it suggests for curing them; we attempt to measure, as accurately as possible, its influence.

It has also a representative value. Through itself, through its author, and through the public which welcomes and enjoys it, it is representative. If, keeping it as a center, we replace it in the psychological milieu of which it is at once the effect and the cause, we can understand through it this milieu, and through this milieu the whole of the moral movement. For an induction of this sort an examination of the literary works is not sufficient; they must be supplemented by information which other sources give us. Making use of these latter, we employ especially four processes.

The psychology of the novelist which, as we have said is typical, gives us a hold upon the movement of public sentiment. That which Dickens and Kingsley felt in the presence of social evil, others felt, with less emotional and imaginative intensity, but without their feelings definitely taking another direction or assuming a different judicial tendency.--Study of the characters, in so far as they are based on reality and the public has accepted them as such, allows us certain conclusions upon the moral types of society. The touches, sympathetic or antipathetic, by which the author has altered the prototypes of his characters are interesting because they make up part of his social mentality, but form obviously a personal equation

against which it is necessary to be on guard.--The public which makes the success of the book, appreciates it, resembles it, and also imitates it, is a third subject of study, for knowledge of which, the novels themselves are not less valuable than other sources of information.--Finally, without losing sight of the novel, it is possible to leave it to examine rapidly other social literature of the same import, of which the effect, analagous to its own, develops along with that of the novel.

52. See note 35.

53. In book II, chapter 5 (written by M. Langlois), pages 115-18, of Introduction to the Study of History by MM. Langlois and Seignobos, translated by G. G. Berry (see note 10) M. Langlois expresses the opinion referred to here:

Theoretically, not only is it unnecessary for those who wish to make historical syntheses to do for themselves the preparatory work on the materials which they use, but we have a right to ask, as has often been asked, whether there is any advantage in their doing it. Would it not be preferable that workers in the field of history should specialize? On the one class--the specialists--would devolve the absorbing tasks of external or erudite criticism; the others, relieved of the weight of these tasks, would have greater liberty to devote themselves to the work of higher criticism, of combination, and construction. . . .

Formerly the professions of "critical scholar" and "historian" were, in fact, clearly distinguished. The "historians"

cultivated the empty and pompous species of literature which then was known as "history," without considering themselves bound to keep in touch with the work of the scholars. The latter, for their part, determined by their critical researches the conditions under which history must be written, but were at no pains to write it themselves. Content to collect, emend, and classify historical documents, they took no interest in history, and understood the past no better than did the mass of their contemporaries. The scholars acted as though erudition were an end in itself, and the historians as if they had been able to reconstruct vanished realities by the mere force of reflection and ingenuity applied to the inferior documents, which were common property. So complete a divorce between erudition and history seems to-day almost inexplicable, and it was in truth mischievous enough. We need not say that the present advocates of the division of labor in history have nothing of the kind in view. It is admittedly necessary that close relations should obtain between the world of historians and that of critical scholars, for the work of the latter has no reason for existence beyond its utility to the former. All that is meant is, that certain analytical and all synthetic operations are not necessarily better performed when they are performed by the same person; that though the characters of historian and scholar may be combined, there is nothing illegitimate in their separation; and that perhaps this separation is desirable in theory, as, in practice, it is often a necessity.

.....

Is it a good thing in itself that some workers should, voluntarily or not, confine themselves to the researches of critical scholarship? Yes, without a doubt. In the study of history, the re-

sults of the division of labour are the same as in the industrial arts, and highly satisfactory--more abundant, more successful, better regulated production.

54. See notes 35, 18, 26, 28, 2.

55. See notes 7, 23, 4, 24, 48, 5. François August René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), French author and statesman, one of the great fore-runners of Romanticism.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### General Works

- Augé, G. (editor). Larousse pour Tous. Nouveau Dictionnaire Encyclopédique. 2 vols. Paris: Larousse, 1909-10.
- Boielle, J. and Payen-Payne, De V. Heath's French and English Dictionary. Revised ed. New York: Heath, 1903.
- Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia. 12 vols. Revised ed. New York: Century, 1911.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica. 29 vols. 11th ed. Cambridge, Eng.: University Press, 1910-11.
- Grande Encyclopédie. 31 vols. Paris: Lamirault, 1886-1902.
- Hatzfeld, A., Darmesteter, A., and Thomas, A. Dictionnaire Général de la Langue Française. 2 vols. Paris: Delagrave, 1895-1900.
- Larive, -- and Fleury, --. Dictionnaire Français Illustré des Mots et des Choses. 3 vols. Paris: Chamerot, 1884-89.
- Littre, E. Dictionnaire de la Langue Française. 4 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1874.
- New International Encyclopaedia. 25 vols. 2nd ed. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1928.
- Who's Who. An Annual Biographical Dictionary. London: Black, 1927, 1928.

## Books

- Borel, E. (editor). De La Méthode dans les Sciences. Nouvelle Collection Scientifique. Paris: Alcan, 1st series, 1908; 2nd series, 1911.
- Brunetière, F. L'Evolution des Genres dans l'Histoire de la Littérature. Vol. I. Paris: Hachette, 1890.
- Cazamian, L. F. Le Roman Social en Angleterre: 1830-1850. Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley. 2nd ed. Paris: Société Nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1904.
- Cross, T. P. A List of Books and Articles, Chiefly Bibliographical, Designed to Serve as an Introduction to the Bibliography and Methods of English Literary History. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926.
- Gayley, C. M. and Kurtz, B. P. Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism. Lyric, Epic, and Allied Forms of Poetry. Boston: Ginn, 1920.
- Gayley, C. M. and Scott, F. N. An Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism. The Bases in Aesthetics and Poetics. Boston: Ginn, 1899.
- Langlois, C. V. and Seignobos, C. Introduction to the Study of History. Trans. by G. G. Berry. New York: Holt, 1904.
- Lanson, G. Histoire de la Littérature Française. 17th ed. Paris: Hachette, 1922.
- Lanson, G. Hommes et Livres. Etudes Morales et Littéraires. Paris: Lecène et Oudin, 1895.
- Lanson, G. Manuel Bibliographique de la Littérature Française Moderne 1500-1900. 5 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1909-14.
- Lanson, G. Méthodes de l'Histoire Littéraire. Etudes

- Françaises, premier cahier. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1925.
- Mélanges. Offerts par Ses Amis et Ses Elèves à M. Gustave Lanson. Paris: Hachette, 1922.
- Morize, A. Problems and Methods of Literary History with Special Reference to Modern French Literature. A Guide for Graduate Students. Boston: Ginn, 1922.
- Morley, J. Rousseau and His Era. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1923.
- Mornet, D. Le Sentiment de la Nature en France de J.-J. Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Essai sur les Rapports de la Littérature et des Mœurs. Paris: Hachette, 1907.
- Nitze, W. A. and Dargan, E. P. A History of French Literature from the Earliest Times to the Great War. New York: Holt, 1922.
- Péguy, C. Notre Jeunesse and Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo. Oeuvres Complètes de Charles Péguy. Vol. IV. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1916.
- Rauh, F. De la Méthode dans la Psychologie des Sentiments. Paris: Alcan, 1899.
- Renard, G. La Méthode Scientifique de l'Histoire Littéraire. Paris: Alcan, 1900.
- Rousseau, J.-J. Les Confessions. Oeuvres Complètes de J.-J. Rousseau. Vols. VIII and IX. Paris: Hachette, 1865.
- Strowski, F. Tableau de la Littérature Française au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Revised ed. Paris: Delaplane, 1924.
- Taine, H. A. Essais de Critique et d'Histoire. Paris: Hachette, 4th ed. 1886; 10th ed. 1904.
- Taine, H. A. History of English Literature. Trans. by H. Van Laun. 2 vols. New York: Holt, 1874.

Villey, P. Les Sources et l'Evolution des Essais de Montaigne. 2 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1908.

### Articles

Lanson, G. "Allocution Prononcée à l'Ouverture des Conférences de l'Année Scolaire 1901-1902 à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris." Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement. Vol. 42, 1901, pp. 385-397.

Lanson, G. "Histoire Littéraire: Résultats Récents et Problèmes Actuels." Revue de Synthèse Historique. Vol. I, 1900, pp. 52-83.

Lanson, G. "L'Histoire Littéraire et la Sociologie." Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale. July, 1904.

Lanson, G. "La Méthode en Histoire Littéraire." Revue du Mois. April 10, 1911.

Lanson, G. "Programme d'Etudes sur l'Histoire Provinciale et la Vie Littéraire en France." Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine. April 15, 1903.

Monod, G. "La Méthode de l'Histoire." De La Méthode dans les Sciences. 1st series. Paris: Alcan, 1908. pp. 367-410.