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Nineteenth-century Britain saw the rise of secularism, the development of a modern capitalist economy, multi-party democracy, and an explosive growth in technological, scientific and medical knowledge. It also witnessed the emergence of a mass literary culture which changed permanently the relationships between writers, readers and publishers.

Focusing on the work of British and Irish authors, The Routledge Concise History of Nineteenth-Century Literature:

considers changes in literary forms, styles and genres, as well as in critical discourses

examines literary movements such as Romanticism, Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism and Decadence

considers the work of a wide range of canonical and non-canonical writers

discusses the impact of gender studies, queer theory, postcolonialism and book history

contains useful, student-friendly features such as explanatory text boxes, chapter summaries, a detailed glossary and suggestions for further reading.

In their lucid and accessible manner, Josephine M. Guy and Ian Small provide readers with an understanding of the complexity and variety of nineteenth-century literary culture, as well as the historical conditions which produced it.