

chance was here played without restraint, and Nash had his full share of the spoil of the unwary. At Tunbridge he established a colony; and, like a great monarch, he often travelled there in state to receive the homage of his subjects, drawn in a post-chariot by six grays, with out-riders, footmen, and French horns. All went merrily till a cruel legislature passed an Act to declare Basset and Hazard and all other games of chance illegal. The statute was evaded; and an amended law was next year passed, to declare all games with one die or more, or with any instrument with numbers thereon, to be illicit. The law-makers did not foresee that an instrument with letters thereon might be as effectual; and the well-known game of E. O. was invented, and first set up at Tunbridge. Nash brought the game to Bath, not to offend the decorum of the Assembly-Room, but to be carried on snugly in private houses, to which Nash introduced those who had money to lose, confederating with the E. O. table-keepers for a share of their profits. This answered for some time, until another statute effectually put down all gaming-houses and gaming-tables, as far as law could accomplish their suppression. There was no resource for the persecuted people of quality but to establish private clubs.

CHAPTER XXII.

View of manners continued.—The Duke of Queensberry.—Club-life.—Excessive Gaming.—Excesses of Charles Fox.—Dress.—Conversation.—The Squires of England.—The Country Justice.—The Clergy of England.—The Universities.—Professional Classes.—The Mercantile Class.—The Lower orders.—The Rabble.—Mobs.—Police of London.—The Prisons.—Social Reformers.—Howard.—Coram.—Hanway.—Raikes.—Education.—Rise and Growth of Methodism.

A FEW years after the beginning of the present century, there was to be seen in Piccadilly, on every sunny day, an emaciated old man sitting in a balcony, holding a parasol. The coachman of the Bath road as he drove by would tell some wondering passenger that there was the wicked duke of Queensberry; that he kept a man in readiness to follow any female not insensible to the bewitching ogles of his glass eye; that his daily milk bath was transferred to the pails of the venders of milk around Park-lane; with many other tales, more befitting the days of the second Charles than of the third George. This very notorious nobleman died in 1810, at the age of eighty-six. As Dr. Johnson was the link between the varying literature of two periods, the duke of Queensberry was the link between the changed profligacy of two generations. He had flourished as the earl of March and a lord of the bed-chamber in the times when to violate every decency of life was to establish a claim to wit and spirit; when "at the rehearsal, on Wednesday night, of the Speech, at lord Halifax's, lord Lichfield came extremely drunk, and proposed amendments;"* when sir Francis Dashwood, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1762, held his frantic orgies with his brother "Franciscans" at Medmenham Abbey, drinking obscene toasts out of a sacred chalice; when George Selwyn said, with as much truth as wit, when one of the waiters at Arthur's Club was committed on a charge of felony, "What a horrid idea he will give of us to the people in Newgate." Queensberry lived on, into an age of comparative decorum, which to him was as insipid as he thought the Thames seen from his Richmond villa: "I am quite tired of it—there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same."† He had no resources for amusement

* "Selwyn and his Contemporaries," vol. i. p. 352.

† "Life of Wilberforce," vol. iii. p. 417.

out of the libertine society of the turf and the gaming-house. Even these resorts had become decent. He could no longer sup with the duke of York (the brother of George III.) as in 1776, "with some of the opera girls." * "Information, as acquired by books, he always treated with great contempt." † There was nothing left for him to do, as a vigorous octogenarian, but to sit in the balcony at the corner of Park-lane, gazing upon "the full tide of human existence;" or retire to his drawing-room to enjoy what Wraxall calls a "classic exhibition," which if the unrefined passers-by had chanced to see they would have broken every window of that mansion of ill-fame. He had utterly neglected the duties of his station; he had regarded his tenantry as the mere slaves of his will, and the poor upon his estates as vermin that might be buried in the ruins of dilapidated hovels. Sir Walter Scott described, in 1813, the rebuilding of the cottages at Drumlanrig, by the duke of Buccleugh (the inheritor of the estate), for pensioners who, in the days of "old Q." were "pining into rheumatisms and agues, in neglected poverty." ‡

Time has removed the veil that hid the Club-life of Queensberry and his set from the gaze of contemporaries. We are now permitted to see the fine gentlemen of the days of Chatham and lord North pursuing their vocation of gambling with the assiduous perseverance of the most money-getting tradesman. If they were ruined there were two resources against starvation—a place, or a wife. "You ask me how play uses me this year," writes the hon. Henry St. John to Selwyn in 1766; "I am sorry to say very ill, as it has already, since October, taken 800*l.* from me; nor am I in a likely way to re-imburse myself soon by the emoluments of any place or military preferment, having voted the other evening in a minority." § This distinguished honourable, for whose misfortunes it was the bounden duty of the government to have provided a refuge, became lord Bolingbroke. He still pursued his calling with indifferent success in 1777, when Charles Townshend writes to Selwyn, "Your friend lord Bolingbroke's affairs are in a much more prosperous state than those of the public. He is gone down to Bath in pursuit of a lady, who he proposes should recruit his finances. . . . It is said she has accepted his proposal." || The reputation of lord Sandwich has survived as one of the most profligate in his private life, and one of the meanest in his public

* "Selwyn," vol. ii. p. 47.

† Craxall, "Memoirs."

‡ Letter to Joanna Baillie, in Lockhart's "Life of Scott."

§ "Selwyn," vol. ii. p. 102.

|| "Selwyn and his Contemporaries," vol. iii. p. 247.

career. His club-gambling has given a name to "a bit of beef between two slices of bread," the only food he took for four-and-twenty hours without ever quitting his game.* Common men pass away from the gambling clubs, whether to insolvency, or suicide, or death in a duel, without much sympathy from their fellows, who, like lord Sandwich, are too much absorbed in their thirst for lucre to take warning from the fate of those they call their friends. The right hon. Tom Foley is sold up. The rev. Dr. Warner gives an amusing account of the proceedings to George Selwyn. The creditors could not take the heir-looms; but every personal article was sold, whether of the right honourable or his lady. "He and she are left there among their heir-looms, chairs and tables, without any thing to put upon them, or upon themselves, when the clothes on their backs become dirty." † The hon. John Damer shot himself at the Bedford Arms in 1776. Lord Carlisle, who at this time was himself plunged in difficulties, says of this event, "It is a bad example to others in misery. . . . There never appeared anything like madness in him, yet the company he kept seemed indeed but a bad preparation for eternity." ‡ At Bath, Nash dealt rather severely with the duellist gamblers, for a few mischances might have thinned the numbers of his votaries by a general panic. He forbade the wearing of swords, "as they often tore the ladies' dresses, and frightened them;" and when he heard that a challenge was given and accepted, he immediately procured an arrest for both parties.

On the 24th of June, 1776, Gibbon, writing to his friend Holroyd, and dating from Almack's, says: "Town grows empty; and this house, where I have passed very agreeable hours, is the only place which still unites the flower of the English youth. The style of living, though somewhat expensive, is exceedingly pleasant, and, notwithstanding the rage of play, I have found more entertaining and even rational society here than in any other club to which I belong." Amongst "the flower of the English youth" was the earl of Carlisle, who, when Gibbon thus wrote, was in his twenty-eighth year. He was a man of talent; ambitious to be a poet and a statesman; happy in his marriage; fond of his children; surrounded with every worldly advantage. In July, 1776, he writes to Selwyn: "I have undone myself, and it is to no purpose to conceal from you my abominable madness and folly. . . . I never lost so much in five times as I have done to-night, and am in debt to the house for the whole." A few days after this loss of

* Grosley—"Tour to London in 765," vol. i. p. 1149.

† "Selwyn," iv. 147.

‡ *Ibid.*, viii. 148.

ten thousand pounds, he again writes to his friend, "I do protest to you that I am so tired of my present manner of passing my time—however I may be kept in countenance by the number of those of my own rank and superior fortune—that I never reflect upon it without shame." Lord Carlisle abandoned his dangerous course when not too late. This was not the case with one of far higher intellect. There is no scenic representation of the horrors of gambling so truly pathetic as the history of Charles Fox, nor one which conveys more fearful warnings.

The precocious son of lord Holland was furnished, by the overweening fondness of his father, with guineas to stake at the gaming-table at Spa, when he was a boy of fifteen. "Let nothing be done," said the rival of Chatham, "to break Charles's spirit; the world will effect that business soon enough." He soon was in Parliament. The acquirements of the young politician were as extraordinary as his abilities. His profligacy was as remarkable as either. Lord Brougham says: "The dissipated habits of the times drew him, before the age of manhood, into the whirlpool of fashionable excess. . . . The noble heart and sweet disposition of this great man passed unscathed through an ordeal which, in almost every other instance, is found to deaden all the kindly emotions."* Yet these excesses, at that period of his life when his transcendent powers had placed him in the first rank as a party leader, materially diminished the confidence which the nation would otherwise have reposed in him, and not unjustly rendered him obnoxious to his sovereign. They had probably a more fatal consequence in the encouragement of the heir-apparent in a course of profligacy, which the lower nature of the prince of Wales cherished into that confirmed sensuality which rendered him unfit for the duties of his high station, and made him odious as a sovereign to a people who would otherwise have supported him with something better than "mouth-honour." In 1772, Fox was a lord of the Admiralty, opposing, as a member of the government, the petition of some of the clergy that subscription to the thirty-nine articles should not be enforced at the Universities. Gibbon writes, "Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy work by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard; his devotion only cost him about five hundred pounds an hour—in all, eleven thousand pounds." Lord Carlisle said of him at this period: "He is not following the natural bent of his genius; for that would lead him to all serious inquiry and laudable pursuits." † In 1778, Fox was in opposition—with a distant prospect of office. Lord Car-

* Lord Brougham—"Statesmen of the time of George III."

† "Selwyn," vol. iii. p. 23.

lisle then says, "I do think it does Charles, or ought to do, great credit, that under all his distresses he never thinks of accepting a place on terms that are in the least degree disreputable."* In 1779 the same friend writes, "Charles tells me that he has not now, nor has had for some time, one guinea, and is happier on that account." † Yet though he possessed this extraordinary elasticity of mind—could be found calmly reading Herodotus in the morning after having lost his last shilling the previous night—yet his sense of degradation, when he had to borrow money of club-waiters, and saw his goods seized in execution, must have been somewhat real, however carefully concealed. What might he not have been, great as he was, had he possessed the firmness of Wilberforce, founded upon a juster sense of honour than Fox possessed. Wilberforce has recorded his club-experience when he came up to London, young and rich, the member for Hull, in 1780: "The very first time I went to Boodle's, I won twenty-five guineas of the duke of Norfolk. I belonged at that time to five clubs—Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, and Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined from mere shyness in play at the Faro table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called out to me, 'What, Wilberforce, is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and, turning to him, said in his most expressive tone, 'O, Sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce; he could not be better employed.'" ‡ Some time after, he was persuaded to keep the bank at a Faro table of one of the clubs. "As the game grew deep," says his son, "he rose the winner of six hundred pounds. Much of this was lost by those who were only heirs to future fortunes, and could not therefore meet such a call without inconvenience. The pain he felt at their annoyance cured him of a taste which seemed but too likely to become predominant."§ Pitt once displayed intense earnestness in games of chance, but he suddenly abandoned gambling for ever. He shunned the rock upon which his rival had been wrecked.

In the letters of some of the fine gentlemen of the time of George Selwyn, we find them writing about dress much in the style of boarding-school misses—giving their friends in Paris commissions for velvet suits and embroidered ruffles. The Macaroni Club was in great repute at the beginning of the reign of George III. Wraxall, in 1815, laments over the change which forty years had produced: "That costume, which is now confined to the levee, or the drawing-

* "Selwyn," vol. iii. p. 292.

† "Life of Wilberforce," vol. i. p. 17.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 165.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

room, was then worn by persons of condition, with few exceptions, everywhere, and every day." Mr. Fox and his friends "first threw a discredit on dress. From the House of Commons, and the Clubs in St. James's Street, the contagion spread through the private assemblies of London." The glories of buckles and ruffles perished in the ascendancy of pantaloons and shoe-strings. "Dress never totally fell, till the era of Jacobinism and of Equality in 1793 and 1794." *

Cowper, in the days of his town life, wrote a paper on "Conversation." He holds that it is "in vain to look for conversation where we might expect to find it in the greatest perfection, among persons of fashion: there it is almost annihilated by universal card-playing; insomuch that I have heard it given as a reason why it is impossible for our present writers to succeed in the dialogue of genteel comedy, that our people of quality scarce ever meet but to game." † There is a prevailing opinion, resting chiefly upon the reputation of George Selwyn, that this was the age of conversational wit. The sayings of witty men are always reported very imperfectly. They appear to little advantage without the accessories that gave them point. The anecdotes of Selwyn's "social pleasantry and conversational wit," appear now sufficiently common-place. It does not require any great force of genius to utter such witticisms as these: A member of the Foley family having hurried to the continent to avoid his creditors, Selwyn remarked, "It is a pass-over that will not be much relished by the Jews;" or as this: Bruce having been asked if there were musical instruments in Abyssinia, and replying that he believed he saw only one lyre there, Selwyn whispered, "Yes, and there is one less since he left the country." ‡ More rapid still were the *mots* of James Hare, which had a prodigious reputation; for example: His report of Burgoyne having been defeated at Saratoga being discredited, Hare said, "take it from me, as a flying rumour." § Yet we cannot doubt that amidst the frivolity and pretence of high society, the sterling qualities of Englishmen prevailed over the fashionable attempts to imitate French vivacity. Cowper truly says, "As the English consist of very different humours, their manner of discourse admits of great variety; but the whole French nation converse alike." || Arthur Young, travelling in France in 1787, observes that at the tables d'hôte of officers you have a valuable garniture of indecency or

* Wraxall—"Historical Memoirs," vol. i. p. 138.

† "Connoisseur," Sept. 16, 1756.

‡ "Selwyn and his Contemporaries," vol. i. p. 21.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 285.

|| "Connoisseur."

nonsense, and at those of merchants, a mournful and stupid silence. "Take the mass of mankind, and you have more good sense in half an hour in England, than in half a year in France."* It is Government—all, all, is Government,—he says. The passing observations of the poet and the traveller are confirmed by the philosopher who looks back upon the manners of that period, for a solution, in part, of the causes of the French Revolution: "The men of that time, especially those belonging to the middle and upper ranks of society, who alone were at all conspicuous, were all exactly alike . . . Throughout nearly the whole kingdom the independent life of the provinces had long been extinct; this had powerfully contributed to render all Frenchmen very much alike . . . In England, the different classes, though firmly united by common interests, still differed in their habits and feelings; for political liberty, which possesses the admirable power of placing the citizens of a state in needful intercourse and mutual dependence, does not on that account always make them alike. It is the government of one man which, in the end, has the inevitable effect of rendering all men alike, and all mutually indifferent to their common fate." †

In England, "the independent life of the provinces" was as vigorous in the days of sir George Savile and the Associations, as in the days of John Hampden and Ship-money. The squires of England still exhibited the natural varieties of the rich soil upon which they flourished. From the monotonous gambling of the fashionables of St. James'-street, it is almost pleasant to turn to the rougher amusement of the Country House. There was a considerable change in provincial manners during the last half of the reign of George III. Fielding presented Allworthy, as a portrait of Allen, the friend of Warburton; benevolent, placable, not learned, but a competent judge of literature, improved by much conversation with men of eminence, Allworthy is one of the class who, with some narrowness, gave lustre to the great Country-party of the House of Commons. Squire Western, coarse, passionate, violent in his politics—a roaring, drinking fox-hunter—is not to be wholly despised, for out of his rough material was to be carved the decorous and considerate landlord of another century. There were few Allworthys and many Westerns in the last years of George II. Soame Jenyns has admirably described a visit to sir John Jolly, he proposing to exchange the bustle of London for the soothing indolence of a rural retirement. It was the race week, and a great

* "Travels in France," p. 135.

† De Tocqueville—"France before the Revolution," chap. viii.

cavalcade set out from the mansion to the country town. The Ordinary at the Red Lion before the race; the Assembly, over a stable, after the race; the dancing and cards; the cold chicken and negus; the ride home as the sun rose—this repetition of the same dreary round of pleasure, day by day, wearies the Londoner, who gets away to his quiet lodgings next door to a brazier's at Charing-cross, rather than stay upon the assurance of the lady, that though the races were over he should not want diversion, for they should not be alone one hour for several weeks.* There is a somewhat loose clerical correspondent of George Selwyn, who describes Leicester "at *reace* time"—the country squires, with their triple bands and triple buckles on their hats, "to keep in their no-brain;"—"the clod-pated yeoman's son in his Sunday clothes,—his drab coat and red waistcoat, tight leather breeches, and light gray worsted stockings, with one strap of his shoe coming out from under the buckle upon his foot,—his lank hair, and silk handkerchief, new for *reace* time, about his neck." With a touch of real wit this worldly parson finishes his picture of the yeoman's son:—"depriving of all grace and rendering odious a well-fancied oath from the mint of the metropolis, by his vile provincial pronunciation." †

The Squire sits for the portrait of the Country Justice; whose notions of law are not very different from those of the London Justice who said, "he would commit a servant to Bridewell at any time when a master or mistress desired it." ‡ The fox-hunting justice before whom Parson Adams is taken will not condemn him at once to the hangman: "No, no; you will be asked what you have to say for yourself when you come on your trial; we are not trying you now; I shall only commit you to gaol." In vain the poor curate asked, "Is it no punishment, sir, for an innocent man to be several months in gaol?" His mittimus would have been signed, had not a bystander affirmed that Mr. Adams was a clergyman, and a gentleman of very good character. Then said the justice, "I know how to behave myself to gentlemen as well as another. Nobody can say I have committed a gentleman since I have been in the commission." § But squires and justices were rapidly improving. In 1761, a writer in a periodical work called "The Genius," attributes to "the intercourse between the town and the country, of late so much more frequent," an extraordinary change which he describes with a good deal of vivacity: "It is scarce half a century ago, since the inhabitants of the distant counties were regarded as a species almost as different

* "World," No. 154.

‡ "Tom Jones," book vii. chap. x.

† "Selwyn," vol. iv. p. 311.

§ "Joseph Andrews."

from those of the metropolis as the natives of the Cape of Good Hope. Their manners, as well as dialect, were entirely provincial; and their dress no more resembling the habit of the town, than the Turkish or Chinese. But time, which has inclosed commons, and ploughed up heaths, has likewise cultivated the minds and improved the behaviour of the ladies and gentlemen of the country. We are no longer encountered with hearty slaps on the backs, or pressed to make a breakfast on cold meat and strong beer; and in the course of a tour through Great Britain you will not meet with a high-crowned hat, or a pair of red stockings. Politeness and taste seem to have driven away the horrid spectres of rudeness and barbarity that haunted the old mansion-house and its purlieus, and to have established their seats in the country.* In 1766, the rev. W. Digby writes to Selwyn, from Coleshill, "Thank you for your offer of Swift's works. They are arrived at this place; for you must know we are civilized enough in this country to have instituted a club called a book-club, where I never saw pipe nor tobacco, and take in all the new things we choose. This respectable corps consists of twenty neighbouring clergy and squires, chosen by ballot." †

In the immediate vicinity of the Country Squire is the Country Parson. The permanent resident in the parish is almost invariably the Curate. The incumbent is a pluralist, who passes much of his time in London, or Bath, or Tunbridge, or in the nobleman's establishment as chaplain; the arduous duties of his chaplaincy demanding a freedom from common parochial offices, and entitling him to hold several preferments and to do the duties of no cure of souls. From the Revolution to the Rebellion of 1745, the orthodox clergyman had a decided tendency to Jacobitism. After that period he gradually became less earnest in politics, and resolutely applied himself to uphold government and oppose innovation. He had his own peculiar business in life to perform, which was chiefly to make himself as comfortable as possible. The indecorum, if not the profligacy, of a large number of the English clergy, for a period of half a century, is exhibited by too many contemporary witnesses to be considered as the exaggeration of novelists, satirical poets, travellers, and dissenters. Passages of every variety of writer—private correspondence now laid open—strictures of those of their own profession—are overwhelming in their testimony to this deplorable laxity of morals. Ridicule, pity, indignation, produced little or no change for more than a generation. The

* Quoted in the "Annual Register," for 1761, p. 206.

† "Selwyn," vol. ii. p. 23.

curate of Fielding, engaged in a most excellent political discourse with the squire, during which they made a libation of four bottles of wine to the good of their country, is a sober picture.* The young fellow of Smollett, in the rusty gown and cassock, confederating with the exciseman to cheat two farmers at cards, swearing terrible oaths, and talking gross scandal of his rogue of a vicar, is probably a caricature.† The visitation dinner of Goldsmith, in which all are gormandizing, from the bishop to Dr. Marrowfat, may be received as the fancy-piece of a great humorist.‡ The Jack Quickset of Colman and Thornton is the representative of those "ordained sportsmen, whose thoughts are more taken up with the stable or the dog-kennel than the church; who are regarded by their parishioners not as parsons of the parish, but as squires in orders."§ The wits, it may be said, are thus attacking a sacred profession in the wantonness of their scurrility. What shall we say to the testimony of Dr. Knox, head-master of Tunbridge school? "The public have long remarked with indignation, that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamblers who figure at the watering-places, and all public places of resort, are young men of the sacerdotal order."|| What, to the "shepherd" of Crabbe?

"A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;"

who comes not to the sick pauper's bed; and who, when the bier is borne to the churchyard, is too busy to perform the last office "till the day of prayer."¶ Surely these writers are not conspiring against their own order. Hear a sober-minded traveller, if the novelists, essayists, and poets are not to be credited: "The French clergy preserved, what is not always preserved in England, an exterior decency of behaviour. One did not find among them poachers or fox-hunters, who, having spent the morning in scampering after hounds, dedicate the evening to the bottle, and reel from inebriety to the pulpit. Such advertisements were never seen in France as I have heard of in England: 'Wanted a curacy in a good sporting country, where the duty is light, and the neighbourhood convivial.'"** A conscientious writer has pointed to the reverend Dr. Warner as an object of contemplation for "those who would hastily accuse Fielding of exaggeration in his portraits

* "Tom Jones," book iv. c. 10.

† "Roderick Random," c. 9.

‡ "Connoisseur," No. 105.

¶ "The Village."

** Arthur Young—"Travels in France," 1789, p. 543.

‡ "Citizen of the World," No. lviii.

|| Knox's "Essays," 18.

taken from the church."* Let us regard a few traits of this popular preacher from his own letters. He desires Selwyn to send him "the magazine, with the delicate amours of the noble lord, which must be very diverting."† He describes a dinner with two friends—"We have just parted in a tolerable state of insensibility to the ills of life."‡ "I have been preaching this morning, and am going to dine—where?—in the afternoon. We shall bolt the door and—(but hush! softly! let me whisper it, for it is a violent secret, and I shall be blown to the devil if I blab, as in this house we are Noah and his precise family)—and play at cards."§ The Reverend Dr. Warner is an unimpeachable witness.

The apathy of the Clergy at this period was as injurious as their indecorum. Their eloquence was of the tamest character. An accomplished foreigner thus describes their sermons: "The pulpit declamation is a most tedious monotony. The ministers have chosen it through respect for religion, which, as they affirm, proves, defends, and supports itself without having any occasion for the assistance of oratory. With regard to the truth of this assertion, I appeal to themselves, and to the progress which religion thus inculcated makes in England."|| Dr. Campbell goes to the Temple Church, where the brother of Thurlow preached: "The discourse was the most meagre composition, and the delivery worse. He stood like Gulliver stuck in the marrow-bone, with the sermon, newspaper-like, in his hand, and without grace or emphasis he in slow cadence measured it forth."¶ Goldsmith has hit upon the true cause of the dry, methodical, and unaffecting discourses of the English preachers, delivered with the most insipid calmness: "Men of real sense and understanding prefer a prudent mediocrity to a precarious popularity; and fearing to out-do their duty, leave it half done."** He further says that the lower orders are neglected in exhortations from the pulpit—"they who want instruction most find least in our religious assemblies." The fear of being called Methodists was one of the causes that made too many of the clergy careless in their lives and indifferent in their vocation.

When Cowper denounced

"A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,"

he tracked the "deep mischief" to its source. "The sage, called Discipline," had ceased to be revered in "colleges and halls;" he had declined into the vale of years; had fallen sick and died. Then "study languished, emulation slept, and virtue fled." The

* Forster—"Life of Goldsmith."

† "Selwyn," iii. 374.

‡ "Grosley—"Tour to London," vol. ii. p. 105.

** "Essays," No. 17.

¶ *Ibid.*, iv. 132.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

|| "Diary," p. 28.

schools became a scene of solemn farce; scrutiny went stone blind; gowns were mere masquerade.* Is this only the declamation of a poetical enthusiast, moping on the banks of the Ouse? A distinguished fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, a master-of-arts, describes the externals of that consecrated place—superb dining halls; painted chapels; a peculiar race in the streets; doctors and proctors in solemn procession, with velvet sleeves, scarlet gowns, and hoods black, red, and purple. He then tells us what all this parade ends in—the most absurd forms of examination for degrees, “in which the greatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with as much ease and credit as the finest genius,” in one stage of the process; and in another, when “the examiners and the candidates often converse on the last drinking bout, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner, till the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend, and the *testimonium* is signed by the masters.” So much for the Bachelor's degree, which is attained after four years' term-keeping. For the degree of Master-of-arts three more years must be employed in trumpery formalities; and then, “after again taking oaths by wholesale, and paying the fees,” the academic issues into the world with an “undeniable passport to carry him through it with credit.”† “Accidental visitors to Oxford,” writes Knox, “are naturally led to conclude that here, at length, wisdom, science, learning, and whatever else is praiseworthy, for ever flourish and abound.” The Prussian clergyman, walking into Oxford at midnight, was introduced by a courteous pedestrian, who had overtaken him on the road, to an alehouse. “How great,” he says, “was my astonishment, when, on being shewn into a room, I saw several gentlemen in academic dress, sitting round a large table, each with his pot of beer before him.” He thought it extraordinary that at this unseasonable hour, he should suddenly find himself in a company of Oxonian clergy. The foreigner was kindly received. He told them stories of riots in German universities. “O, we are very unruly here, too,” said one of the gentlemen, as he took a huge draught of his beer, and smote the table with his fist. One “weakly and impiously attempted to be witty at the expense of scripture; and I had the good fortune to be able to convict him of his ignorance of its language and meaning.” As the morning drew near, after a carousal which stupefied the German, the gentleman who introduced him “suddenly exclaimed, ‘I must read prayers this morning at All Souls.’”‡ Cambridge was not behind Oxford in

* “The Task,” b. 2.

† Moritz—“Travels in England, in 1782.”

‡ Knox—Essay 77.

its capacity of qualifying its students as “gamesters, jockies, brothellers, impure.” Wilberforce entered St. John's in 1776, at the age of seventeen. He tells us his experience: “I was introduced, on the very first night of my arrival, to as licentious a set of men as can well be conceived. They drank hard, and their conversation was even worse than their lives. I lived amongst them for some time, though I never relished their society; often, indeed, I was horror-struck at their conduct; and after the first year, I shook off in great measure my connection with them.” He got into better society; he lived much among the Fellows of the College. “But those,” he complains, “with whom I was intimate, did not act towards me the part of Christians, or even of honest men. Their object seemed to be, to make and keep me idle. If ever I appeared studious they would say to me, ‘Why in the world should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?’” * Wilberforce was one of the few who could “escape contagion, and emerge pure from so foul a pool.”

It would be absurd to imagine that the professional class, and the trading class, were untainted amidst the corruptions of the time. “Profusion unrestrained” producing unmitigated selfishness, was not likely to decrease, during half a century of very rapidly increasing wealth, amongst those who had a more than common share of the national advantages. Public servants were as rapacious in 1783, as when, forty years before, Smollett carried his qualification for a surgeon's mate to the Navy Office, and found that he had not the slightest chance of an appointment, “without a present to the Secretary, with whom some of the Commissioners went snacks.” † It was the system of corruption which gave the charge of a man-of-war to the brutal captain Oakum, who declared with terrible oaths that there should be no sick in his ship, while he had the command; and which chose for his successor, captain Whiffle, who came on board in a coat of pink-coloured silk, lined with white; his hair flowing upon his shoulders in ringlets; his blue meroquin shoes studded with diamond buckles—Whiffle, who languished on a sofa, his head supported by his valet-de-chambre, who from time to time applied a smelling-bottle to his nose. ‡ Such were the vermin of the navy, till Rodney taught even fribbles to fight, and Collingwood showed bullies how gentle manners and tenderness of heart could be combined with the most heroic courage. The Weazels and other reptiles of the army were gradually exchanged for such as went from the ball-room at Brussels to

* “Life of Wilberforce,” vol. i. p. 10.

† “Roderick Random,” chap. xviii.

‡ *Ibid.*, chap. xxxiv.

fight in silk stockings. Young men of fashion drank deep and swore hard; but if they saw service, and they had ample opportunities in Chatham's day, they might have some sense of religion upon the principle laid down by corporal Trim, that when a soldier "is fighting for his king, and for his own life and his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world." *

The Medical Profession was so distracted by jealousies and rivalries between its different ranks and between individuals of the same rank, that, from Garth to Foote, the satirists have always a joke ready for the physician's pomp and the apothecary's rapacity. The Law was necessarily open to the ridicule which properly attached to the inflated harangues and absurd technicalities of the Courts—"injunctions, demurrers, sham-pleas, writs of error, rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, rebutters, sur-rebutters, replications, exceptions, essoigns, and imparlance." † Quackery was keeping pace with the progress of luxury. Litigation was encouraged by the multiplication of statutes, and by the general ignorance even of the educated, of the laws and constitution of their own country, "a species of knowledge in which the gentlemen of England have been more remarkably deficient than those of all Europe besides." ‡

The members of the Mercantile Class were, in London especially, accumulating wealth, and losing respectability. The citizen of the beginning of the century had become a hybrid of fashion before its close. After George III. had been ten years on the throne the traders began to desert the city. The capacious mansion in the narrow street was given up for the inconvenient house in the new-built square. It is curious to mark the changes in the fashionable estimate of locality. The citizen of ninety years ago is reproached for "the petty vanity of residing in the circle of fashion; to have descended from the first in the neighbourhood of the Exchange to be the last in Bloomsbury square." § The Essayist asks a question, which has not yet been more satisfactorily answered than he answers it:—"When the rich and respectable leave it, who are to fill its magistracies and its council? The lower orders of tradesmen, destitute of education and of liberal views, and thrust forward into office by nothing but their own pragmatism activity." The city had its evil reputation for gluttony and ignorance, which might be some excuse for the men of refinement and education deserting it. Dr. Campbell is taken to dine with a citizen. He says, "I'll do so no more, for there is no entertainment but meat and drink

* "Tristram Shandy."

‡ Blackstone, section i.

† Foot—"The Lame Lover."

§ Knox—Essay 8.

with that class of people."* When Johnson was told that the society of Twickenham chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business, he declared that he never much liked that class of people; "for, sir, they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen." † Johnson's contempt of trade was one of his prejudices. Boswell asked, "What is the reason we are angry at a trader's having opulence?" The answer was, "the reason is, we see no qualities in trade that should entitle a man to superiority." Reasonable men have ceased to be angry at a trader's having opulence, provided his wealth has proceeded from the true qualities of a tradesman, honesty, skill, perseverance, decision of character—qualities that in any position "should entitle a man to superiority." It is the pretence to be what they are not that has always made the traders ridiculous. Mr. Zachary Fungus learning to dance, and practising fencing, and keeping his riding-master waiting while he recites the speech which he has learnt from Mr. Gruel, "the great orationer who has published a book," by which Fungus hopes to rise in the state; ‡—this is the citizen to be despised, whether he be exhibited by Mr. Foote, or be labelled as "a snob" by a greater humorist.

Fielding, in "The Covent Garden Journal," has an amusing paper on the power of "the fourth estate," by which he means "the mob." Their insolence to passengers on the river, "whose dress entitles them to be of a different order from themselves;" their rudeness on the footpaths of the streets; the habits of carters and draymen "to exclude the other estates from the use of the common highways;" their abuse of women of fashion in the Parks of a Sunday evening—these are the crimes which an acute observer lays to their charge. To the justice of peace and the soldier, whom they hold in awe, he considers that it is "entirely owing that they have not long since rooted all the other orders out of the commonwealth." § Foreigners agree in this species of censure. M. Grosley says that the porters, sailors, chairmen, and day-labourers who work in the streets, "are as insolent a rabble as can be met with in countries without law or police." Their rudeness to foreigners he especially dwells upon; and he gives an example. His servant had followed the crowd to Tyburn, to see three men hanged. Returning home through Oxford-road, he was attacked by several blackguards; and Jack Ketch joined in the sport. But two or three grenadiers, belonging to the French guards, who had de-

* "Diary," p. 75.

† Maxwell's "Collectanea," in Boswell.

‡ Foote—"The Commissary," act ii.

§ No. 40, June 20, 1752.

sented, rescued their countryman. The man was frightened, and would not go out for a fortnight; but M. Grosley says that if he, being a stout fellow, had taken his coat off and boxed with the weakest among them, they would have carried him home in triumph. Grosley admits that the obliging readiness of the citizens and shopkeepers sufficiently consoles the foreigner for the insolence of the mob.* Nevertheless, he affirms that "even amongst those of the lowest rank, the people of London, though haughty and ungovernable, are in themselves good natured and humane." Opposed to the complaint of Fielding against the carters and draymen, the Frenchman maintains that their good nature appears in their great care to prevent the frays almost unavoidable, amidst the eternal passing of carriages in narrow streets; and in their tender treatment of children, and persons low of stature, in ceremonies which attract a crowd.† Moritz saw the proceedings at an election in Covent Garden: "What is called hanging-day arrived. There was also a parliamentary election. I could only see one of the two sights." There was no contest, and sir Cecil Wray was elected, to fill one vacant seat. "In the area before the hustings immense multitudes of people were assembled, of whom the greatest part seemed to be of the lowest order." The moment that the candidate began to speak, "even this rude rabble became all as quiet as the raging sea after a storm." Another gentleman spoke; and a gruff carter who stood near our foreigner exclaimed, "Upon my word that man speaks well." The enthusiasm of the Prussian is awakened; and it warms his heart to see "how in this happy country, the lowest and meanest member of society thus unequivocally testifies the interest which he takes in everything of a public nature,—how high and low, rich and poor, concur in declaring their feelings and their convictions that a carter, a common tar, or a scavenger, is still a man and an Englishman, and as such has his rights and privileges defined and known as exactly and as well as his king and his king's ministers."‡ Moritz, who was familiar with our literature, had probably the fine lines of Goldsmith in his mind:

"Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
True to imagined right above controul,
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man."

It must not be forgotten when we speak of the licentiousness of the lower orders in the period of which we are writing, that they were constantly stimulated by demagogues to abuse the liberty of

* "Observations on England," vol. i. p. 84.

† *Ibid.* p. 63.

‡ "Travels through England, in 1782."

which they were proud; that whatever was brutal in their nature was not softened by any care for their education; that the police of London was utterly inefficient; and that the frequency of executions would have rendered them blood-thirsty, it, with all their curiosity to see men hanged (which low taste they partook in common with George Selwyn and others of rank), they had not had essentially a greater respect for human life than any other people in the world. A writer, who presents us many vivid but rather vague generalizations on the manners of that time, says, "The rabble of London, though to this day the most brutal and odious rabble in Europe, were never sanguinary."* This is somewhat hard upon the rabble of London, if we consider that they have not the advantage of those lessons of politeness enjoyed by every other rabble in Europe—that they are not tamed by a soldiery always ready to shoot them down without magistrate or riot act. "The English rabble," continues this historian, "are chiefly remarkable for mischief and cowardice. They destroy property, but they rarely attempt life." One who had a very considerable experience in the political power of mobs, was anxious that what he considered their courage should be kept alive by the humanizing lessons of the gallows. Romilly describes a dinner in 1785, at which he was present with John Wilkes and Mirabeau: "The conversation turned upon the English criminal law, its severity, and the frequency of public executions. Wilkes defended the system with much wit and good humour, but with very bad arguments. He thought that the happiest results followed from the severities of our penal law. It accustomed men to a contempt of death, though it never held out to them any cruel spectacle; and he thought that much of the courage of Englishmen, and of their humanity too, might be traced to the nature of our capital punishments, and to their being so often exhibited to the people."† When the system came to an end, under which ninety-seven malefactors were executed in London in one year, and twenty were hanged on one morning, did the "cowardice" increase; so that "a file of soldiers will, at any time, disperse the most formidable crowd; and a few resolute individuals, armed with bludgeons, can generally beat them off."‡ The admirable metropolitan police of the present day has prevented any frequent opportunities of analyzing the composition of the qualities of the London rabble. Mischievous boys are generally more conspicuous than brutal men. The chairmen are gone, and so are the street porters. That large class who stand behind

* Massey—"History during reign of George III.," vol. ii. p. 85.

† "Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly," vol. i. p. 61, 3rd edit.

‡ Massey.