

style is more unexceptionable; he had resided much in France, and consorted with French *literati*, and thus learned the charm of a perfectly clear and simple way of writing. Among the divines of this age there was much eloquence, much richness and force, but little good style. Nothing can be more copious than Taylor, but it is a *claying* manner; his facility of speech and coining imagination are masters of him, not he of them. Isaac Barrow, who died in his forty-seventh year in 1677, seems to be the best of them; he has more self-command than Taylor, more earnestness than South, and more dignity than Baxter. Against Tillotson's style no particular objection can be urged, except that it does not prevent his *Sermons* from being dull and dry.

In the *Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan (1684) the style, without being elevated or distinguished, is plain and manly. It is of course free from pedantry, which cannot be where there is no learning; but it is also free from affectations, and—almost always—from vulgarity. It is interesting to observe in this,—the most popular English work of the century,—the revival of the old allegorical way of writing which was so much relished in the age of Chaucer. Mr Hallam remarks that there is some inconsistency or defectiveness of plan; the persecution of the pilgrims in the city of Vanity, and the adventure of the cave and the two giants, might with equal propriety, so far as the allegorical meaning is concerned, have been placed at any other stage of the pilgrimage. This is true; but it is only saying that in these passages the tale overpowers the allegory; considered as incidents in the tale, they could not have been better placed than where they are.

In the heyday of reaction against the hypocrisy and violence of the Puritans, it may be imagined that neither they nor their principles found any quarter. A long satire in doggerel verse, the *Hudibras* of Samuel Butler, one of the best second-rate poets of the day, was especially devoted to their discomfiture. The general texture of this poem is loose and careless; the versification, as a rule, too unpolished to invite to a second reading; still there are epigrammatic couplets and sarcastic descriptions in it which will be remembered while English literature endures. Denham, best known as the author of the pretty descriptive poem of *Cooper's Hill*, wrote many pieces in the spirit of the reaction, which in him, as in Davenant and others, went to the length of identifying Puritanism with Christianity, and rejecting both together. Such at least seems the natural conclusion to be drawn from a perusal of Denham's strange poem entitled *The Progress of Learning*. In Dryden's poetry the temper and policy of reaction are exhibited with great distinctness. At first, and for many years after the Restoration, his attacks are chiefly upon the political side of Puritanism; he rings the changes on "rebellion," "faction," "disobedience," and "anarchy." In *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) he argues, with that skill of ratiocination in metre which never forsakes him, against the tenets of democracy and the absolute right of a majority:—

"Nor is the people's judgment always true;
The most may err as grossly as the few."

In *Threnodia Augustalis* he talks of "senates insolently loud;" and in the *Hind and Panther* (1687) cleverly presses home against the clergy, who were grumbling at the arbitrary acts of James II., their own declared principles of "passive obedience" and "submission for conscience' sake." In middle life Dryden began to take a lively interest in the controversy on the grounds of religious belief; we see him in the *Religio Laici* (1681) perplexing himself with the endeavour to ascertain the limits of the province of authority and that of private judgment. Waiving the question as to the entire sincerity, or rather disinterested-

ness, of his conversion, we find him, after that event, exemplifying the reaction against Puritanism in an extreme degree; as he had magnified the authority of the prince in the political sphere, so now he magnifies the authority of the church in the religious sphere. The *Hind and Panther*, as all the world knows, is a theologic-political dialogue, disguised under a thin, a very thin veil of allegory, on some of the questions debated between the churches of Rome and England, and also on some of the political theories then in vogue.

As for the drama, the mere fact of its revival was a part of the reaction against Puritanism. In the coarse play of *The Roundheads, or the Good Old Cause*, by Mrs Aphra Behn, which came out shortly after the Restoration, some of the great Commonwealthsmen are exhibited on the stage, of course in an odious light. Dryden kept clear, in his dramas, of scurrilities of this kind, probably because he himself had been brought up among Puritans. In the famous play of *Sir Courtly Nice* (1685) by Crowne, the character of the Whig-Puritan, Mr Testimony, is a compound of hypocrisy, knavery, and cowardice. Yet at the time when this play was represented, the party of the counter-action, represented now by the names of Whig and dissenter, was already so strong that Crowne could say of them in his dedication to the duke of Ormond,—“There were no living, if some great men, elevated not only in quality but understanding above the rest of the world, did not protect us [the dramatists] from those barbarians, because they know us.” After the Revolution there was a truce; the comedies of Congreve and Wycherley have COV no political bearing. The comic stage was hardly, if at GREY all, employed for party purposes till the reign of Queen Anne, when the strong high-church temper which prevailed in the country caused the revival of *Sir Courtly Nice* (1711). A few years later Cibber, in his play of the *Nonjuror*, imitated from Molière's *Tartufe*, attacked the nonjurors and the Catholics in the interest of the Hanoverian succession. As altered by Bickersteth, the same play appeared soon afterwards with the title of *The Hypocrite*; here dissent is attacked in the persons of Dr Cantwell and Mawworm.

In political philosophy the reactionary spirit was represented by Sir Robert Filmer, who, in his *Patriarcha* (1680), argued that legitimate kings inherited the absolute power over their subjects, which he assumed Adam and the patriarchs to have possessed and exercised over their families. This doctrine was opposed by the republican Algernon Sidney, and also by Locke, whose admirable *Treatises on Government* appeared in 1688. Though not indisposed to admit that the monarchical constitution of existing kingdoms was originally imitated from the patriarchal rule, which in the infancy of society is known to have existed, nay, which still exists in families and clans, Locke denied that this imitation implied any devolution of right or power; the origin of civil right he sought, like Hooker, in a contract, expressed or implied, between the governors and the governed, which bound the one to govern on certain prescribed terms, that is, according to law, and the other to obey the lawful commands of the government. It is well known that this doctrine of an original contract found its way into that celebrated state-paper, the Declaration of Rights, in which it is asserted that James II. had "endeavoured to subvert the constitution of this kingdom, by breaking the original contract between king and people."

In other departments of literature, as well as political philosophy, the counter-action strongly asserted itself. Milton, "on evil tongues though fallen, and evil times," knew that he should "fit audience find, though few," when at the close of life he gave his long-promised service to the epic muse, and sang "an elaborate song to generations."

The *Paradise Lost* is indisputably the work of a great and lofty mind,—of a mind armed by nature with an astonishing moral energy, and equipped with powers of imagination and conception suitable to the charge of a vast enterprise. This is the more apparent, because the diction of the poem certainly falls below the standard of purity and evenness which the best writers of the day had reached, while the peculiar nature of his subject involved Milton in the greatest difficulties. A number of awkward and ill-sounding words, the use of which would fix the note of pedantry on any one else than Milton, were formed by him from the Latin, and freely employed in the *Paradise Lost*; how injudiciously, the mere fact that not one of them has held its ground and come into common use is sufficient to prove. The subject,—belonging neither to history nor legend, so that details could not be supplied by tradition, and could only be invented at the imminent risk of profaneness,—was baffling by its very grandeur and simplicity. It did not in itself present a sufficiency of changes and incidents to furnish out the material of a long epic composition; hence Milton was obliged to have recourse to episodes, with which nearly half the poem is taken up. It is noteworthy how weighty and dignified a rhythm blank verse becomes in his hands. Never, as used by him, does it even tend to be the dull, insignificant, tiresome metre which it was in the hands of later writers, e.g., Thomson, Young, and even Wordsworth, in their negligent hours. Milton, in whose eyes the Cavaliers of the Restoration were—

"The sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine,"

neither wished nor expected to be read at court. Forty years later, when counter-action had accomplished the Revolution, and Whiggism had secured much of the ground from which its parent Puritanism had been contemptuously thrust back, Whig critics like Addison found no difficulty in gaining a hearing, when they pressed upon general society the consideration of the surpassing claims of the *Paradise Lost* to the admiration of Englishmen.

In the department of history, the reaction produced, in Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, a masterly and enduring work. The writers of the counter-action were also busy in this field; and Burnet's *History of the Reformation* (1679) was thought to lend so much support to Protestant and liberal principles that he received the thanks of the House of Commons for writing it.

The materialistic empiricism of Hobbes gave place in this period to what has been called the sensistic empiricism, or sensationalism, of Locke. Inasmuch as this philosopher struck two important blows at principles which the Whig-Puritans detested,—at the principle of authority, by deriving all human knowledge from experience, and at the doctrine which ascribes reality both to the accidents, or sensible qualities, of objects, and to the substances in which they are supposed to inhere, by (with Descartes) awarding mere subjectivity to accidents, and relegating substance to the region of the unknowable,—he may properly be regarded as the philosopher of the counter-action.

The first book of the *Essay on the Human Understanding* (1689) is devoted to the endeavour to disprove the doctrine of innate ideas. Yet, when we proceed to examine Locke's own view of the origin of our knowledge, it would appear at first sight that he admits one source which is independent of the reports of sense. Our knowledge, he says, is made up partly of ideas of sensation, partly of ideas of reflection. These last are supplied to the mind by its own operations; we know that we think, believe, doubt, will, love, &c. Now, if these operations were assumed to have any other basis than sensible experience, ideas of reflection might be a source of knowledge independent of the senses. But as his argument proceeds, it is evident that Locke had no such

meaning. All such mental operations, in his view, are dependent on the mind's having previously been supplied with ideas by the senses. "In time the mind comes to reflect on its own operations about the ideas got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas, which I call ideas of reflection." This and many similar passages are decisive as to Locke's belief, that there is but one original gate of ideas, viz., the senses. The mind at birth is a *tabula rasa*, or, to use his own illustration, a "sheet of white paper;" whatever knowledge it afterwards acquires is written on it by the finger of experience. This denial of *a priori* knowledge was not effectually confuted till the rise of Kant, near the close of the 18th century. It followed from Locke's principles that belief in revealed religion (which in his case was perfectly sincere) was simply and entirely a question of external evidence. If the evidence for the truth of the alleged fact or doctrine appeared sufficient, the mind would accept it; if not, reject it; but no principle inherent in its own constitution could be appealed to in either case to aid its judgment; for on Locke's system no such principles existed.

VIII. *The Age of Queen Anne, 1700-1729.*—Weary of life, Dryden had descended into the tomb; and his mantle had fallen on no poet. Grateful for support manfully rendered when all the world was against him, he had, in some moving and musical lines, designated in Congreve the successor to his fame—

"Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you:"

but that cold man of fashion never rose above the point which he had reached in the *Mourning Bride*. A poet, however, appeared before long, but he was a Whig poet; that is, he represented respectability, common-sense, and the *juste milieu*;—the cause which fires the blood, the ideal which kindles the imagination, were strange to him. This was Addison, whose *Campaign* (1704), an heroic poem on Addison, the battle of Blenheim, is much in the style of that portion of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* which describes the duke of York's victory over the Dutch fleet, but is written with more care and more concentration. To the production of *Cato*, a tragedy which observes the rules, and aims at exhibiting the lofty grandeur and the devotion to principle of the Roman character, Addison seems to have been induced partly by his protracted stay in Italy (where his attention was engrossed by classical monuments, and turned with indifference from mediæval), partly by the desire to win laurels in the field where Corneille and Racine had shone with such distinction, and to show that an English dramatist could be as *correct* as they. No other poem of note, with the single exception to which we shall presently refer, was written in the reign of Anne. The innumerable verses composed by Swift were written rather to give vent to his spleen, and exercise his misanthropic humour, than under the presence of any motive which ordinarily influences poets. Parnell wrote one or two didactic pieces, and Rowe some pastoral ballads, which are not without merit. Defoe's satirical poems, *The True-Born Englishman* and the *Ode to the Pillory*, possess the interest which the indomitable character and caustic humour of the man impart to them. As a dissenter, he felt properly grateful to the Dutch prince, one of the first acts of whose reign was to establish a legal toleration, and was equally indignant with the clergymen and gentlemen of England, who, though glad to be rid of James II., felt sore at the thought that the Revolution was effected by foreign regiments. This feeling led to a temporary insistance in society on the fact that a man was an *Englishman born*; and it is this insistance which Defoe assails with homely but effective ridicule in the *True-Born Englishman*. The *Ode to the Pillory* was

written while its author lay in prison, awaiting his public exposure in that "state machine" for having written *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. This was an ironical pamphlet, occasioned by the disgust with which Defoe was inspired by the conduct of the wealthy dissenters in London, who occasionally conformed to the worship of the establishment in order to qualify themselves under the Test Act for holding office. Defoe recommends the passing of an Act by which a dissenter attending a conventicle shall be made punishable by death or imprisonment for life. Many of the clergy took the pamphlet seriously, and approved of it; when it was discovered that the advice was ironical, the exasperation against Defoe was so great that it resulted in his being condemned to pay a heavy fine and to stand in the pillory. The *Ode* has a nervous strength, almost dignity, of style, which can seldom be asserted of the writings of Defoe. Referring to this incident, Pope, whose Catholic rearing made him detest the abettor of the Revolution and the champion of William of Orange, wrote in the *Dunciad*—

"Earless on high stands unabash'd Defoe"—

though he knew that the sentence to the pillory had long ceased to entail the loss of ears.

The exceptionally remarkable poem to which reference was made in the last paragraph was Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, which appeared in 1711. Of all such poems the *Ars Poetica* of Horace is the original model—a model, it may be added, which has never been surpassed. The classical taste, and the desire to conform to the ancient rules, which had obtained a complete ascendancy in the literary circles of France during the reign of Louis XIV., were now almost equally prevalent in England. Boileau's *Épître sur l'Art Poétique*, and the critical writings of Bossu, Bouhours, Dacier, and Sarasin, led to the appearance in England of such works as Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*, Sheffield's two *Essays*, on satire and on poetry, and the critical attempts, in prose, of Rymer and Dennis. The receptivity and power of Pope's intellect were naturally employed at an early period of his career on a line of thought, in literature and art, which interested so many able minds, and was, so to speak, in the air. He lays down in the *Essay* rules for the guidance of critics in judging, which, he contends, they are as much bound to observe as poets are to follow the rules of art in writing. The acuteness of observation, the terseness of definition, the brilliance of wit, and the keenness of polished invective which distinguish the *Essay*, render it, though containing little that is absolutely new, a composition of which English literature may well be proud.

But the chief literary achievements of this period were expressed in prose. Prose is the medium which befits the *seculum rationalisticum* which is now opening, an age in which men do not trouble themselves about new ideas, but reason and debate upon those which have been already manifested. Ideas possess themselves of the whole man, and impel him to remodel his life in accordance with them. The idea of the theocratic republic, growing into distinct shape in the minds of Milton, Cromwell, and other Puritans, drove them to march through war, regicide, and revolution towards its accomplishment. The idea of hereditary monarchy, ruling by virtue of a right of which the origin is lost in the mists of a venerable antiquity, and is therefore assumed to be divine, animated the Jacobites of 1700, as it animates the French legitimists of our own day. But neither of these two ideas had, after turning England upside down, succeeded in establishing itself; the country had acquiesced perforce in a compromise. The partisans of the theocratic republic were forced to put up with king, constitution, law, and an Erastian church; never-

theless they were tolerated, and even allowed to write and preach what they pleased, so long as they did not openly advocate sedition. The partisans of hereditary monarchy were forced to accept a king, and then a queen, and then a whole dynasty, whose rights had no older or more sacred origin than the Acts of Settlement of 1689 and 1701; still some deference was paid to their cherished sentiments, inasmuch as the new stock of royalty was not sought from an alien tree, but was a scion, though not the legitimate scion, growing from the old Stuart trunk. With this makeshift English loyalty was fain to be content. Thus on both sides the consistent theorists, the men of an idea, were discountenanced; and the *via media* in politics and religion, since it seemed to be the only practicable path, was more and more frequented by men of sense. Then a host of reasoners and debaters arose, bent upon showing, not that the compromises were logically sound, which they could not do, but that the extremists were dangerous fools. Moreover, since the compromise might be held and viewed from opposite sides, endless debate was possible, and actually arose, as to the right way of viewing it, whether mainly as a concession to liberty and democracy, or mainly as the guarantee of order and conservatism. In contests of this kind the pens of many able writers were engaged in the reign of Anne; we may mention in particular Swift, Steele, Addison, and Arbuthnot. We will briefly examine their chief performances, first in general literature and then in theology and philosophy.

Swift, appointed to the deanery of St Patrick's in 1713, Swift was generally believed to have no faith in revealed religion, but to adhere to what we have called "the compromise" for the sake of what he could get by it. On the night before his installation, a copy of verses was affixed to the door of St Patrick's cathedral, containing these amongst other lines:—

"This place he got by wit and rhyme,
And other ways most odd;
And might a bishop be,—in time,
Did he believe in God."

"Look down, St Patrick, look, we pray,
On this thy church and steeple;
Convert thy dean on this great day,
Or else, God help the people."

This reputation for unbelief was acquired through the publication of *The Tale of a Tub* (1704), in which Swift employed the unequalled resources of his scornful wit in satirizing the extreme parties, the consistent doctrines, which the Revolution had discomfited. In the celebrated apologue of Peter, Martin, and Jack (by whom we may either understand Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, or the Church of Rome, that of England, and the Puritans), it is hard to say whether the assault on Peter's knavery and mendacity, or on Jack's fanatical folly, be the more unsparring. Of Martin, who represents rational religion, moderation, common-sense,—in a word, the compromise,—Swift has only expressions of approval. But we know that what men *feel* to be a compromise, they cannot heartily love; and it is therefore only in conformity with what we should expect, to find that for every page given to the commendation of Martin, at least twenty are employed in reviling Peter or ridiculing Jack. Hence the general effect of the work as a whole is that of an attack on Christianity; and on this account its perusal was much recommended by Voltaire.

But there were other upholders of "the compromise" who had nothing of Swift's cynical temper, nay, who were conspicuously warm-hearted, eager, and generous. Such a man was the Irishman Richard Steele. He seems to have been descended from one of those Cromwellian adventurers who were rewarded for their services to the Puritan

commonwealth by grants of land at the expense of the Irish. It was natural, therefore, that his political sympathies should be of an Orange hue, and that he should regard William III. as the greatest of deliverers, the most beneficent of conquerors. For, but for the battle of the Boyne, it cannot be doubted that the confiscations of previous reigns would have been in great measure reversed, and the native Irish resettled on their own soil; in which case families of English origin and of recent importation, like that of Steele, would have fared but badly. Hence in his *Christian Hero* (1701), written while he was in the army, and again in the *Tatler*, Steele launches forth into glowing panegyrics on his Dutch hero, which would have satisfied Lord Macaulay himself. The foundations being secure, Steele, whose education was English (he was at the Charterhouse and at Oxford along with Addison), employed his voluble argumentative tongue and his racy Hibernian humour to improve the superstructure. Mild reasoning, gentle ridicule, harmless banter, might, he thought, be used with effect to assuage the rancour of old animosities, soften the asperity of party spirit, expose the weak side of vanity, and introduce a temper of "sweet reasonableness" into all social relations. Availing himself of the advantages which his position as conductor of the *Government Gazette* gave him for obtaining early news, Steele started the *Tatler* in 1709, with the view of entertaining with instructive and amusing gossip the readers whom the promise of news from the seat of war had already attracted. The imaginary editor, Isaac Bickerstaff (the name was borrowed from Swift, who had employed it in his ironical controversy with Partridge the almanac-maker), dates his communications from various coffee-houses according to their subject matter. Addison, who was at the time in Ireland, soon discovered the authorship of the *Tatler*, and was enlisted with joy by Steele as a contributor. It was succeeded by the *Spectator* (1711-1713), planned by the two friends in concert, with the same general objects as the *Tatler*, but with better machinery. Almost at the opening, in No. 3, Addison wrote a clever vindication of the revolution-compromise, which the Jacobite leanings of some among the ministry appeared at the time to place in jeopardy. With this exception, political questions are scarcely mentioned by the *Spectator*, who in his character of a mild censor of manners, "pietate gravis ac meritis," affects to stand aloof from the strife of party, and by expostulation and advice, undertakes to reform society. "The *Tatler* and *Spectator* were published," says Dr Johnson, "at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political contest they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflexions: and it is said by Addison . . . that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolic and the gay to unite merriment with decency."

By turning to fresh intellectual fields the minds of the upper classes—the people in good society—to whom the theatre was now a forbidden or despised excitement, Addison and Steele did without doubt allay much restlessness, still or amuse many feverish longings. Its ideals discredited or found impracticable, the English mind, disenchanted and in heavy cheer, took up with languid interest these pleasant chatty discourses about things in general, and allowed itself to be amused, and half forgot its spiritual perplexities. Nothing was settled by these papers, nothing really probed to the bottom; but they taught, with much light grace and humour, lessons of good sense and mutual tolerance; and their popularity proved that the lesson was relished. The characterization which we meet with in the *Spectator* has been justly admired. Sir Roger

de Coverley is an excellent type of the English country gentleman of that day—unintelligent and full of prejudices, but manly, open-hearted, and conscientious. The mercantile classes are represented, less adequately, yet in a dignified and attractive manner, by Sir Andrew Freeport. Captain Sentry, as the representative of the army, is not so satisfactory; compare him with Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and the contrast between a dull, wooden figure, and personages who bring the life of the British army in Flanders exactly and vividly before our eyes, is immediately apparent.

The theological controversies of the period were carried on chiefly between deists and churchmen on the one hand, and non-jurors and oath-takers on the other. There will always be able men to whom revealed religion will not commend itself, because demonstration of its truth is in the nature of things impossible, and the portal through which conviction must be reached is too lowly for many to enter. In this age of reasoning, the English writers who followed Hobbes in eliminating the supernatural from Christianity considered it to be their duty to exhibit their proofs in the clearest and most systematic manner. Thus arose the school of English deists. Toland, the author of a good life of Milton, led the way with *Christianity not Mysterious* (1702). Tindal followed with *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, in which an attempt is made to identify Christ with Krishna, and to evaporate the Christian religion into a solar myth. Collins, in his *Discourse on Free-Thinking*, took the line of impugning the trustworthiness of the text of Scripture. He was answered by Dr Richard Bentley in a tract called *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, in which it is maintained that the text of the Greek Testament is on the whole in a sounder state than that of any of the Greek classical authors. Berkeley combated free-thinking in the philosophical dialogue of *Alciphron*. Bishop Butler, and afterwards Warburton, contributed important works to the same controversy.

In philosophy the trains of thought which Hobbes and Leibnitz had pursued were either further developed, or led to opposing reactions. Hobbes's selfish theory of morals; and his disposition to leave out the idea of God from his system of the universe, found resolute opponents, not only in Clarke and Berkeley, but also in Shaftesbury, the noble author of the *Characteristics*. The treatises composing this work were published at various times between 1708 and 1713. Shaftesbury maintains the disinterested theory of morals, but rather in a rhetorical way than with much solidity of argument; he derives virtue, beneficence, and compassion, not, as Hobbes had in each case done, from a source tainted by self-interest, but from the delight which the mind naturally takes in actions and feelings conformable to its own unperverted nature. In his general reasonings on the constitution of nature and of man, Shaftesbury is an optimist; but his optimism acquires its serenity at the cost of surrendering the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice. Like Pope (who, indeed, in the *Essay on Man*, versified and condensed freely the glowing rhetoric of the *Characteristics*), Shaftesbury

"Accounts for moral as for natural things:"

the Deity whom he celebrates in eloquent periods is not a being who hates moral evil while permitting it, but one from whose elevated point of view that which seems to us worthy of reprobation must appear as necessary to the working out of a vast scheme of paternal government. These views bear a considerable resemblance to the hypothesis more cautiously put forward by the late Professor Mansel, and at once combated by Mr Mill and Professor Goldwin Smith, which suggested that man's ideas of justice and injustice, right and wrong, were per-