محاضرات في ..

England
in
The Eighteenth Century

English department

الفرقة الثالثة

أستاذ المقرر

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ONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY

The Structure of the Society

The first forty years of the eighteenth century, the reign of Anne and the rule of Walpole, constitute an age of transition, during which the feuds and ideals of the Stuart era, lately a lava flood scouring the land with devastating heat, were being channeled and congealed into fixed, durable Hanoverian forms.

Economic circumstances made the first half of the eighteenth century an age of relative plenty for the working class. England in 1714 was still a rural community. The majority of the population was mainly in the south. England was a land of hamlets and villages. It was still a rural country, the majority of its population was still in the south.

As seen by some contemporaries, London and some other industrial towns emerge in the worst, and filthiest image.. Small as they were, although as towns they all ceased to be the sprawling villages they had been half a century earlier, they were small by modern standards, none of them reaching 50,000. Small as they were, they ate up men, women, and children and their population was only maintained, let alone increased, by a steady immigration from the country and in the north-west Ireland.

The first noticeable thing about these towns would have been the foulness and stench. The streets were unpaved, dirty and narrow. The water supply was an open cesspool in the court often served the richer inhabitants; the poor made a public convenience of every nook and cranny. The houses of the poor were one or two room hovels, placed back to back; or they were the houses of the rich deserted, deserted because their owners were seeking more salubrious suburbs. They were overcrowded

inhabited by both the occupants and their pigs, fowls, sometimes even by their horses and cattle. All tradesmen and craftsmen used the street as their dustbin, including butchers who threw out the refuse of their shambles to decay and moulder in the streets.

About London and one or two of the large towns, enterprising market gardeners bought the refuse and the night soil to manure their fields, and this helped the growth of cleanliness.

All houses and cellars were desperately overcrowded – ten to a room was common in Manchester. The rooms were without furniture and lacking even beds. Disease was rampant and unchecked. Due to the inadequacy of the sanitary system, death rate, especially among children, was rising. In the early part of the century, only about one child in four, born in London, survived; and probably the mortality was higher in the northern towns.

In the midst of death, the people sought palliatives in drink, gambling and violence. Bull baiting and cock fighting were not mere means for entertainment, but as a kind of social antidote favoured by all classes of society to alleviate the bitterness of their survival. Violence, born of despair and greed, belonged to the poor alone. There was no adequate way to keep order especially among the mob; the ultimate outcome was violence.

Most of the new towns were still, constitutionally speaking, villages. London, Bristol, Liverpool, and a few other large towns were better off because they had resident justices. Burning, looting, and destruction by the mob were common commonplaces of life. And yet, these towns drew an endless stream of emigrants from the countryside.

In London which drew the most, conditions varied considerably. The eastern suburbs were as bad as the provincial towns. The area controlled by the city of London was better administered, although the social

amenities were negligible. Johnson's London as well as the accounts of other travelers, English and foreign, show London to have been squalid and pestiferous, lacking the common amenities; a city of violent contrasts between luxury and elegance and poverty and ugliness. A city, above all, of crime and turbulence and hard living.

On the peak of the urban society were the merchant princes, with whom a few lawyers and high civil servants could associate. This class was composed of the great Whig families of landed gentry who had descended from the less, wealthy, but hardly less civilised squires of Tudor and Stuart times. In Tudor days the Russell's and the Cocils and the Cavendishes, the Dudleys and the Seymour, would have been socially of no account if the Crown had not chosen to use them as its servants, but by the eighteenth century the descendants of some of them were Dukes and Earls.

The tendency of the century, especially in its second half, was for the accumulation of land into large estates. Towards the end of their careers, these merchants bought up great estates to endow themselves with the social prestige which went with the land ownership and which would enable their sons and daughters to marry into the aristocracy or to acquire a title into their own right. These were the men who controlled the Bank of England and the great-chartered companies. They had close financial ties with the government. In order to protect their vested interests, they supported Walpole and called themselves 'Whigs'; but of course, to them Whiggery was not a radical creed.

Their whiggery was not rooted from an adherence to specific political creed, but out of sheer manifestation of the toleration to dissenters originated by the general temperament of the Hanoverian dynasty and the preservation of things as they were. In habits of life, the

merchant princes differed little from the noblemen; they lived in equal state, built as grandly, and spent as prodigiously on furniture, food, and servants.

But not all merchants were merchant princes. The great majority were middling people, mildly well-to-do. Among these, the ordinary merchants and prosperous shopkeepers, who were still attached to the puritan attitude of the seventeenth century, many were dissenters. They were also Whig, but it was an old-fashioned type of Whiggery. They believed in plain, fair, honest dealing, and the control of government by a Parliament - not the reverse, which was Walpole's way. They both envied and distrusted the great chartered companies and felt increasingly that they were a hindrance to trade. What loyalty they had to Walpole was strained by the opposition's frequent exposure of corruption in high places. Their natural suspicion was aroused by the talk of England's interests being sacrificed to Hanover. They seek

certain vent upon reading *The Craftsman*, the vigorous opposition newspaper which played on their prejudices; some were taken in and voted Tory, most of them kept to the politics of their fathers. Their isolationism and thirst for empire awaited the voice of Chatham, became keen supporters; for the gulf between their world and Bolingbrook's _ who attempted to turn them into Tories _ was too great to be bridged.

The craftsmen and artisans – the journeymen and apprentices of the great livery companies of London _ were the bridge between the rich and the poor. They worked long hours _ fourteen was common _ for a modest wage which, with the addition made by their wives and children, raised them well above the subsistence level, so long as trade was good. But trade was fickle and the chance of hunger and poverty threaded their lives with anxiety. Also the changes in industrial organization _ the decay of the guild, the spread of a free labour market, the introduction

of labour-saving machinery _ increased the feeling that they were being dispossessed. Until 1725 they still enjoyed a measure of political power in London, but this was diminished by Walpole, who disliked the spread of opposition views, both Tory and Radical, among them. He disliked even more their tendency to combine in order to insist on their rights under Tudor industrial legislation. It is true that Parliament believed that the artisan had a right to a fixed minimum of wage and this it tried to uphold, but it condemned outright combination. Their combination went on; industries were small, often very localized, especially in London, and the journeymen met together in their friendly societies and taverns. Among them were men who were literate, and the violent press attacks on the government first stimulated, and then focused , their sense of grievance with life. But again, the cheap food and good years of trade appeased their animosity and kept it in bounds. The periods of most widespread public hostility to Walpole's

government coincide with bad harvest or depressed trade. Nevertheless, their political opinions in a world without organized public order was a factor to be reckoned with, especially so as they still possessed importance in London politics. By their votes, they confronted Walpole at the most critical moment of his life _ the Excise crisis of 1733.

Below the artisans and Journeymen were the masses of London's population, the hopeless labourers who performed casual jobs and were liable to be dismissed at any time. They lead a life of abject poverty and desperate existence. They laboured to save their children from starvation, crime and whoredom. Since they were illiterate mobs deprived of any political rights, the only rescue for them was to riot. They attracted the concern of many benevolent men of the time such as Wesley whose mission tried to sooth their depravity. But they could not stimulate any organized political or constitutional aid. Their violence was confronted by further cross violence procedures made

by the government to secure private possessions threatened by the plundering of this mob.

The big provincial towns were like London but with less wealth and more poverty, more despair, less social order, less charity, more disease, but like London, full of opportunity for men of tough temperament, endless vigour, and resources to acquire the modest affluence necessary to enter a world of ease and comfort provided by hard cash. Property could save standing in society. In the early part of the century it was relatively easy to pass from one social class to another.

Chapter TWO

TRADE AND WEALTH

Manufacture And Navigation

1714 - 1742

Trade and Wealth, Manufacture and Navigation

Generally speaking, the economic system was expanding steadily.

G.M. Trevelyan states:

The England so ordered

was prosperous and in

the main contented even

in time of war, partly owing

to good harvests and cheap food in the first half of Anne's reign.

Nonetheless, In the reign of Anne and George I the old way of life for peasant and craftsman still prevailed, but under conditions highly agreeable. The enterprise of trade

and middleman was finding new markets for distributing the agricultural and china products. This investment made a sort of interplay of the activity of town and country and improved the financial conditions of the landlords and craftsmen.

Trade was a national preoccupation and the constant concern of Parliament and the government, for all his contemporaries were agreed with Defoe that trade was the cause of England's increasing wealth. The trade of England, both overseas and domestic, was extremely rich and varied, based partly on things made or grown as home and partly on an extensive re-export trade of raw materials from the colonies in America and luxury goods from the East. In order to encourage trade, Walpole removed all restrictive measures on the export of English manufactured goods. He also allowed into the country the raw materials needed for them duty free. But, of course, there was no general tendency towards free trade. Everyone, including

Walpole, believed that English manufacturers had to be protected at all costs. The Irish were forbidden to make cloth or export their wool to anywhere but England in case the greatest of all English industries _ cloth manufacture _ should be endangered in any way. This fear of foreign competition was at times carried to fantastic lengths: it was an offence to shear sheep within four miles of the coast in case the fleeces might be in many manifestations _ was fundamentally realistic.

Eighteenth century politicians realized great clarity that wealth meant power. Chatham, who was more preoccupied with England's grandeur than any other statesman, planned his campaigns with the merchants of London and planned them to capture French trade. For trade was wealth and wealth was power.

This was true, too, of the men engaged in commerce and industry; it was the middlemen, the clothier in the cloth trade, the hostmen in coal, the men who controlled the

buying and selling, who had become the dominating figures in English industry in the early part of the century. They gave active encouragement to new processes and often found the money for them. By their demand for more and more goods, craftsmen were forced to consider the efficiency of their industrial processes and look for methods by which output could be increased. One method was by the division of labour so that one workman specialized in one simple process and so produced more; another was the replacement of a workman by a machine which was usually quicker and more accurate; a third was to simplify the product and spend less time, and energy in embellishment and decoration. All of these developments can be traced in English clockmaking in the early decades of the eighteenth century; and from being a highly specialized craft in the hands of a few master craftsmen, clockmaking became a widespread national industry whose products by their efficiency and cheapness captured the European market. It

was because division of labour had already proved itself so efficacious, especially in the metal trades.

Division of labour could accomplish a great deal, but there was a limit to what it could do, and in some industries, especially textiles, little further help was to be expected; the only hope for a future increase in output lay in improved technology. In the textile trades there was always a shortage of yarn, for spinning had to be done by hand and output failed to keep pace with weaving or knitting. To overcome the shortage, Irish yarn was imported, but this could be only a stop-gap. The solution was a spinning machine, and several inventors tried to solve this problem. Hence, the cloth trade was the typical industry of the time. Two fifths of England's exports consisted of cloth woven in England. It was felt that here lay their real advantage over Dutch rivals in the carrying trade of the world. The desire to keep open the great markets of the world for English cloth was a chief incentive

to taking up arms in 1702 against the Franco-Spanish power. In the other two great industries _ coal and iron _ there was an equal need for technological improvements.

The demand for coal was so great in the early eighteenth century that it is almost possible to speak of a coal rush. Gentlemen prospected for it on their estates and when they found it under their flower beds, lawns, and parkland, the uprooted the lot without compunction. New finds were not sufficient to meet the demands or to replace the exhaustion of the rich surface, or near surface, seams. The answer was to go deeper, but depth meant flooding. However, the steam pump perfected in 1712, solved this problem and secured the most important of England's basic industries.

After cloth and coal, the most vital of English industries was the metal trade. Iron was smelted by charcoal, but English forests were being rapidly exhausted and in Queen Anne's time it seemed as if the iron industry,

and the metal trades which depended on it, were doomed. The experts knew that smelting by coal was the answer and for half a century they tried to discover how to do it. The solution was found by the Darbys of Coalbrookdale, who were using coke for smelting, their process was perfected by the thirties. Without this invention and its wide diffusion, England would not have led the world in the industrial revolution which was based on the marriage between coal and iron. These England had in royal abundance; but their rapid exploitation in the middle years of the century was due to these early discoveries.

Jealous of her own inventions and the supremacy of her industries, England viewed those of other nations with an envious ete. Naturally she welcomed Protestant refugees from France, especially when they brought the secret of new industrial processes.

English industrialists and merchants were aggressive, inventive, and fully alive to a sense of their own future and

greatness. They had the active and intelligent sympathy of the government and yet, compared with the development later in this century or in the early nineteenth progress was painfully slow. Why was this?

Firstly, the organization of many industries and much of the overseas trade cramped rather than aided their development. Foreign trade was dominated the great chartered companies _ east India, South Seas, Africa, and Levant _ whose directors were the merchant princes of England. The names of these companies indicate the foreign lands of whose trade they enjoyed the monopoly. To many smaller merchants such restrictive policy was irksome, and the territories of all these companies were invaded by energetic, free-trading interlopers, but the Companies repressed them at every opportunity. The directors of these great companies were also very frequently directors of the Bank of England and, in consequence, their financial relationship with the

government was very close, and this helped them to secure their monopolies. It also turned them into sound Walpolean Whigs in the interests of trade averse to war, which might endanger their magnificent and secure profits.

Industry, too, suffered from the nature of its organization. Conventionally, the organization of industry was still that laid down by Tudor legislation, with its guilds composed of master, journeymen, and apprentices, and its careful regulations and detail specifications in regard to the product. Many men, especially those not actively engaged in business, still felt that it was the right method of industrial organization; so did the skilled workmen whose livelihood was endangered by the decay of guild control. The Statute Book is full of Acts attempting to prevent this decay and in the textile industry combination of workmen were formed in an attempt to secure their rights. It was the constant industrial unrest, caused by the attitude of masters and middlemen, that led Walpole to make laws

against combination and to make it a capital offence to break machinery.

But probably a far greater hindrance to rapid commercial and industrial expansion was the lack of capital and the appalling state of the country's transport system. The financial panic of the South Sea Bubble led the government the government to pass the Bubble Acts forbidding the formation of joint-stock companies without a royal charter – an instrument which was costly and difficult to get; and, therefore, the easiest method of raising the capital necessary for large-scale industrial organization was not available. In consequence, many of the new industrial undertakings were painstakingly built up by their craftsmen founder, and such process was long, laborious, and fraught with danger. The position was made worse by a scarcity of banks in the provinces, and so the enterprising industrialists were denied the financial facilities so necessary for the growth of their business.

A more serious obstacle, and one fully appreciated by contemporaries, was the state of transport. The roads were repaired by the inhabitants of the parish through which they passed, which meant that they were never repaired until they were in a desperate condition, and the eighteenth century idea of a desperate condition was extremely generous. For most of the year the roads were a wilderness of bog and swamp and at all times they were infested with swarms of armed robber and highways. The highwaymen, like the gangsters of America, captured popular imagination, but were the despair of the traveling merchants. On roads such as these pack horses were the only method of moving goods for any distance and pack horses were a very expensive method. But on the great rivers of England and along the coast water-borne trade moved easily, freely, quickly, and cheaply. And so the early eighteenth century saw an intensive effort to bring more and more of the heart of England in the reach of its water-

borne trade. Rivers were deepened and canalized and the flow of water was controlled by locks. By these means, trade between towns became water-borne in the early years of the century. The goods which they produced were cheapened and they reached a national instead of a local market. There were regions which were inaccessible and enterprising men obtained private acts of Parliament by which they were empowered to take over the maintenance of a section of a road and in return allowed to charge a fee for its use. These bodies were called Turnpike Trusts, but in the early part of the century they did very little to help road transport. The trustees were interested in fees more than in repairs. It was only about London, where the trustees were personally interested in the ease of transport, that real improvements were made.

The appetite of England had whetted by the rapid commercial expansion. A world of never-ending luxury could be won by vigorous and aggressive action against her

competitors; so it seemed to many of London's merchants. That war would bring commercial wealth was a deep-seated belief which influenced English politics profoundly. But there were some who believed that England's greatness lay in invention, in discipline, in method, in cheap mass production. To these the relics of a past social order were burdensome and oppressive, but, as yet, only in economic life was it the dawn of their world. In the structure of society of their place was modest and obscure.

Chapter 3

Condition of Agriculture

in the early half of the 18th Century

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Condition of Agriculture in the 18th Century

Agriculture had prospered so far in the 18th that more wheat was grown than in medieval times. Wheat was reckoned at thirty eight per cent of the bread of the whole population. Rye came next, barley and oats a good third and forth. Prices were therefore quoted in terms of wheat and rye.

But wheat formed a much smaller proportion of the actual corn grown than of the bread baked, because enormous crops of barley were produced all over the island to make malt for ale and bear.

Not only did barley everywhere. The small farmers of the Welsh supplied themselves with excellent barley bread.

England and Wales already formed the most considerable area in Europe for internal free trade, to which Scotland was added half way through the reign of Anne. London and every provincial city was an open market for provisions, with no toll taken at the gate,

Favoured by this freedom, the corn-factors pervaded the whole island buying the farmers crops as they grew in the field, or as they lay thrashed in the barn.

Yet this bright picture of agriculture was not complete. The busy life of the rivers was a measure of the badness of the roads corn-lands potentially the best in England –in the midlands, and northern East Angela – were still for the most part unenclosed. In those regions the vast and hedgeless village field was still being cultivated by medieval methods.

The initiative of improving landlord or farmer was closely circumscribed on these village fields, wherein the scattered strips of individual owners had perforce to be cultivated on the plan laid down for the whole community.

The whole field, as soon as the corn was carried was opened as pasture to the cattle of the village, which would eat his clover and turnips and he would be without redress.

The open field was cultivated on a uniform plan, more initiative and therefore more progress was possible, though by no means inevitable , no newly enclosed farms which were constantly increasing in number and in the regions of old enclosure in southern. Western, and northern England, But the districts where enclosure was commonest were on the average the less productive parts of the island, with the worst climate.

With the idea of agricultural improvement thus in the air, the enclosure of commons and heaths not only frequently practised as it had been for centuries.

The age of Defoe, was still a period of prosperity for English free-hold yeomen, and it was no ill time for the still rising fortunes tenant farmers, the freehold yeomen and their families were reckoned at about one eighth of the population of the country, and the substantial tenant farmers at a little less,

The freeholder had a vote for parliament and was often in a position to use it as he liked the tenant farm had no vote, and if he had , he would have been obliged to cast it as his landlord wished.

Even the ideal landlord, sir Roger do Coverley was represented by Addison to approving world as exercising over his tenant as an absolute patriarchal sway .

But the independence of the freehold yeomen was deeply cherished and stoutly maintained. in the election correspondence of country gentlemen in the Reign of Anne we meet such expressions as the freeholders do not stick to say they will show their liberty in voting .

The squire who had everyone else under his thumb, was all the more anxious to buy out the freehold yeoman for political and gamekeeping reasons; and as the century went on, many freeholders, whether yeomen or small gentry were ready on fair terms to quit the countryside, in which their old importance was threatened by the increasing wealth of the large landlord and his tenant farmers.

The process of buying out the small freeholder to form large compact estates for the grandees began after the Restoration during the next hundred years and more.

The squalor of the medieval village had long been in retreat before the homely dignity and comfort of the rural middle class in Anne's reign men were everywhere building or enlarging farmhouses, in stone, brick, or half-timber according to the tradition or material of the district.

Besides the fine old farmhouses familiar to the traveller in the Lake District today, there were then many

cottages, since fallen to ruin, wherein the poorer dalesmen brought up large and sturdy families.

Spinning was done chiefly in country cottages by women and children, and weaving chiefly in towns and villages by men. Both processes, though conducted under domestic conditions, required capitalist organization and supervision, either by employers or middlemen who bought the goods manufactured by the cottagers.

The children were kept at their mother's knee, spinning for the clothiers, until they were old enough to go up on to the falls to drive the sheep and to pile those great stone walls up the sides of the precipices, which are the wonder of our less industrious age.

The pattern of life in rural England was more stable than in the great towns, controlled firmly by tradition and customs. Changes there were, such as in the thirties, completely unnoticed by the bulk of the farmers, whether gentlemen or peasant. They farmed as their forbears had

farmed for centuries. The wasteful open-field strip system, only slowly giving way before enclosure, still dominated English agriculture. Breeding was unselective and the majority of commons and pastures were overstocked with lean sheep and undernourished cattle. Inefficient as the farming was, the profits were very great. There was an incessant demand for wool and the government bounty on corn stimulated arable farming. The big farming profits encouraged the movement towards enclosure. It also made the possession of great estates a highly desirable form of investment and of course this again encouraged experiments in agrarian technique.

From the end of the seventeenth century, possibly since the Civil War, there had been a tendency for estates to grow larger, and this was beginning, by the early eighteenth century, to affect the nature of rural society. By prudent marriages and careful purchases, some of the aristocratic families of the seventeenth century amassed

estates which made them far richer than many of the sovereign powers of Germany. This made them a class apart from the small squire. The distinction was further underlined by the way of life which these agrarian millionaires designed for themselves. The point of pride was the rural palace. There was no modesty felt about the ostentation of wealth. They intoxicated contemporaries with their size and grandeur. The English countryside enriched eternally by men so confident of themselves that they designed for their children's children. Europe first, and Asia next, were ransacked for treasures, modern or antique, good, bad, or indifferent: so long as they emanated a sense of *luxe* they were welcome. Trees, plants, and fruits which have been thoroughly assimilated into the English garden or countryside were then new and strange.

The lesser gentry were in a dilemma. It was difficult for them to suppress either their envy or their desire to emulate their betters. Their envy was further quickened

because the possession of vast estates carried greater significance than the ownership of land. For with this ownership went a host of social and political privileges which drew to their possessors the anxious and devoted attention of all aspiring men. As the social and political power of the magnates grew, that of the lesser gentry diminished. Those who had once been courted were now ignored. Naturally, they began to look back to a world of the past in which they believed they had possessed undisputedly control of their countryside. So men whose fathers had voted for Shaftsbury or welcomed William III as a deliverer turned Tory. What strength and vigour the Tory party possessed in the early part of the century sprang from the social animosity of the country gentlemen of modest means, but the general prosperity which they shared with all classes took away some of the bitterness which a class, lowing power, must feel.

There were a few winners and a multitude of losers lower in the social scale of rural society, although both were fewer than later in the century. The land tax was too much for many of the lesser squires, They sold their land to their "betters" and became tenants.

The agricultural labourer had eked out a precarious living by using his small allotments and common rights, but with enclosure, which always required a considerable capital expenditure, these disappeared, and the consequence was a growth in rural poverty which became the local administration. The smaller proprietor _ the peasant or yeoman _ suffered in a similar way. Most often than not he lacked the capital for enclosure; if he was a small tenant, he became unprofitable to his landlord and out he went. The dispossessed swelled the ranks of the rural poor or were eaten up by the towns. Yet not all the yeomen suffered. The landlords wanted intelligent and industrious men to work the new large farms and these the yeomen

class provided, but for one who prospered there were a score who lost.

Hungry men will snare and poach. For decades country gentlemen, great or small, had been paying increasing attention to their property rights over the birds of the air or the fish in the streams. As they controlled Parliament, it was easy to give the force of law to their desires; and the poor went hungrier than before. Nevertheless, they were not allowed to die of starvation. The Elizabethan Poor Law, later modified by the Stuarts, was still operative. The parish was responsible for relief. In the twenties and thirties of this century the problem of the rural poor, especially in south England, became too heavy for the single parish to bear.

In 1723 Parliament enabled parishes to combine for the purpose of erecting a workhouse _ hence the word 'Union' which is still applied by the poor to workhouses. These 'unions' were then hired out to any manufacturer

who, in return for keeping the inmate alive, obtained cheap labour. To prevent the pauper children absconding they were at times ringed by the neck or manacled. In lean years the despair of the poor became unendurable; food riots, with burning, looting, and mob violence were a commonplace. The militia suppressed them and hangings and transportations followed. Rural poverty and the fear of workhouses does much to explain the lure of the disease-ridden and dangerous life of the towns.

CHAPTER 4

The Political situation during Queen Ann's England

Queen Anne, 1702-14-George 1, 1714-27-

In 1714 everyone, even the Tory government, knew that the future belonged to the Whigs. For a long time the Tory leaders had lost contact with the realities of political life and had refused to face the question of what was to happen on the death of Queen Anne.

By the act of 1705, the death of Queen Anne in 1714 followed by the accession of the House of Hanover, they knew that the government in power would be dissolved and the Lords Justices, appointed by the Elect would be Whig, for the Whigs had supported the Hanoverian succession, whereas some of the Tories had entertained the idea of bringing back the Stuarts. To bring back the Stuarts meant more than bringing back a Catholic King; it meant power

for the conservative forces of society, and an attempt to make the world safe for the squire, parson, and craftsman. That this was the intention of the Tories was clear enough from the Acts which they had recently passed, which had strengthened both the squirearchy and the Church at the expense of merchants and dissenters.

The Tories had further worries. During their period of power 1710 _ 1714, they had shown themselves vindictive to the Whigs _ Marlborough's officers had been cashiered from the Army, and Robert Walpole, the most promising of the junior Whig politicians, sent to the Tower on a charge of corruption. If the Whigs come to power, the Tories could be certain that they would be found guilty. Their situation was desperate, calling for bold leadership and quick, firm decisions. The country had fought a long war which had created a huge national debt which dismayed the vast majority of Englishmen. No one had any knowledge of the

real wealth of the kingdom and, in consequence, national bankruptcy was regarded as inevitable.

War, too, as always had played havoc with established custom and economic relationship, and readjustment to peace time economy was haphazard and unplanned. Soldiers had been discharged. Unemployment and poverty came to many craftsmen when demands for guns, ammunitions, and clothing ceased. This was the breeding ground for discontent.

It was about 1720 when the country seemed safely assured of a long peaceful period under the Whig regime. The fact that George I was ignorant of English language and customs evoked the Jacobites' rebellions. They never ceased to claim their eligible rights in the throne, but they failed to elicit any serious power in England. The total abandonment of George I and II to the Whig leaders certain privileges of the Crown. The formation of ministries, the dissolution of Parliament, the patronage of

the Crown. The formation of ministries, the dissolution of Parliament, the patronage of the Crown in Church and State all passed, in effect, from the monarch to the Whig chiefs. This forced the Tory to make a compromise and to accept what was then described as a 'Whig oligarchy'. It was the age of Marlborough, and Bolingbroke.

The English political society of that era was excessively personal. Membership of Parliament was limited to persons of political power, or were born to privilege. Democracy was out of place.

The middle years of the eighteenth century were the most peaceful era in the English history. The death of Queen Anne in 1714 was followed by the accession of the House of Hanover. It was the age of Marlborough, and Bolingbrook. The fact that George I was ignorant of English language and customs evoked the Jacobites' rebellions. They never ceased to claim their eligible rights in the throne, but they failed to elicit any serious power in

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CHAPTER 5

THE MACHINERY OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

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Under the first two Georges, the Whig peace Minister from 1721 to 1742, who did most to evolve the principle of the common responsibility of the Cabinet, and the supremacy of the Prime Minister as the leading man at once in the Cabinet and in the Commons. It was significant that, unlike his Whig and Tory predecessors in power, Sir Robert remained undazzled by the lure of peerage, and

refused to leave the Lower House so long as he aspired to govern the country. Unfortunately, in his period the power of the House of Commons increased, while its connection with the people diminished.

In effecting these changes in the custom of the constitution, Walpole acted not a little from love of personal power, but he did the country a great service. In driving out from his Cabinet all colleagues who did not agree with his policy or would not submit to his leadership as Premier, he set up the machinery by which system is the key by which the English wee able to get efficient government by a responsible and united executive, in spite of assembly of five or six hundred men. They solved this problem, which many nations have found insoluble, not, as was often contemplated in

William III's reign, by excluding the Ministers from the Commons, but on the contrary by insisting that they should sit in and lead the House of Commons, like Sir Robert Walpole. The Cabinet is the link between the executive and legislative, and it is a very close link indeed. It is the essential part of the modern British polity.

Sir Robert Walpole knew that England cared nothing for either of them. A zeal Whig supporter holding complete control over all-powerful parliament, Walpole's task was to prevent these differences of interest and union from disturbing the national peace. Nonetheless, he refused to stir the sleeping Tory dogs by a single act of whiggishness.

The English government presided by Walpole was a mild and free government. It learned, in consequence, how

to leave the country alone. It was a lesson that was not learned elsewhere. The prosperity at home was aided by Walpole's financial and economic policy. He had a number of advisers of real ability with a flair for administration. With their help, Walpole recognized the custom system. Duties were removed from most exports and from the imports of those raw material needed by England's manufacturers, whose interests were preserved by careful protective legislation. In order to check smuggling and to encourage the development of London as a free port, excise and a system of bonded warehouses were introduced in 1723 for tea, coffee, and chocolate. With regard to revenue, he made a number of small administrative changes.

Walpole's long- term policy gave rise to bitter controversy, which lasted throughout the century.

He was faced with a number of demands for increased expenditure, which could only be met by increasing taxation. Walpole hated increased taxation. He even avoided war for twenty years.

In order to fully estimate Walpole's pacifest policy, one might first give a glimpse over the scope of English foreign affairs. In the winter of 1688-9, events forced England into the leadership of the alliance against France. After the Revolution, the continual attempt of the new type of continental autocracy personified in the tyrannical Louis XIV, Grand Monarch of France to reimpose upon England the rule of James 11 and his son after him rendered the wars of William and Marlborough unavoidable. That struggle freed Europe from French domination. It also proved the supremacy of the great efficiency of the free community over

the despotic state. It also marked a change of no less significance to the world at large _ the maritime, commercial, and financial supremacy of Great Britain.

In 1729 Walpole made the treaty of Seville with Spain, rather than increase land tax. The years had proved that his most successful reform had been the introduction of excise for tea, coffee, coffee, and chocolate. It was true that they were still smuggled in enormous quantities, but the volume of legitimate trade had greatly increased and with it the revenue. Walpole's genius lay in the art of management, both in the good sense and the bad. No strain of idealism or romance tempted him to venturous or warlike policies. Good sense and kindliness were his dominant virtuues; cynicism his fault. He would never govern with bayonet, or any other form of

terror, but saw no harm in allowing power to rest on the obvious and traditional basis of Parliamentary corruption, instead of making appeal to the national pride and conscience.

His love of peace abroad was genuine. It is not by idealists alone that the cause of peace has been upheld through the ages. Coarse and cynical though he was, Walpole had the humanity to keep England out of the war of the Polish Succession, in spite of the desire of his colleagues to revive the old Whig feud against the Bourbons.

In 1732 he made it clear that he intended to extend this system of taxation. The public received the news with fury. Indifferent to clamour, Walpole went ahead and in 1733 introduced his scheme for excising tobacco; wine was to follow.

Though Walpole could win the trust of both the King and the queen, yet his foreign as well as his domestic policy produced distrust and content among many. The way Walpole had forced diplomatic isolation over the country, the consequent overgrowing of the French influence in the continent, all evoked the opposition's cry that Walpole's policy was against the wishes of the nation. In 1733 Walpole abandoned his excise scheme before stormy opposition.

The period from 1733 to 42 was a rough time for Walpole. In foreign policy, he failed to fulfill the

Treaty of Vienna, which frustrated the king himself. The Third Treaty of Vienna was signed and held between Spain and France verging England' role to be totally expendable. At length, in 1739, his peace policy foundered on a great

movement of opinion in favour of maritime war with Spain. It was no question of European boundaries that excited the mob, the English Popular passion felt that the French might usurp their commercial advantages that the Spanish Empire offered. This threatened the British overseas trade. The campaign was led by the zealous Bolingbroke aided by the press.

In the Parliament, Jacobites, Hanoverian Tories, as well as discontented Whigs all accused Walpole of corrupt use of allowance. "When trade is at stake it is your last Retrenchment; you must defend it, or perish". This was the fervorous claim made by Pitt. For Pitt, England's grandeur was at steak. Despite its military and navy non-readiness, reacting to the patriots' imperialistic desires, England went to war with Spain. Walpole finally yielded and unwillingly

drew the sword. 'It is your war, and I wish you joy of it". Such were Walpole's forewarning words, which proved true.

A badly conducted war drifted on incompetently and expensively off the South American coast soon involved Britain in the general European struggle known as the War of the Austrian Succession. Walpole had been right in his warning that renewed hostilities with the French and spanish Bourbons would mean the lauching of another Jacobite attack on England. The threat approached from Scotland. There was a great deal of discontent in Scotland caused by the Union. The Scottish aristocrats envied and distrusted the way of life of the English aristocracy who despised them, and never bothered to conceal it. As an affirmation of monarchial belief and devotion to the Stuarts cause, the Scottish Jacobites supported Charles Edward as the legitimate heir of the thrones of England and Scotland. But England did not want the Stuarts, for the Stuarts

meant subservience to France, followed by a decline of trade, and the threat of an alien religion. In 1745 the Jacobite rebellion arose. The weak side of Walpole's regime of negation and management was shown by the low level of British public spirit in 1745. The inevitable end was retreat, defeat and flight.

Walpole's end became inevitable. In 1742, he resigned all of his offices and was made the Earl of Oxford. It was the end of the long political career of a man who dominated the institutions of the government as well as the court. England has never known a Prime Minister more capable in handling men than Walpole.

Anyway, the fall of Walpole did not lead to the collapse of the political machine, which he had controlled for over twenty years. The time has come for Pitt and his associates to suspend their

previous furious claim for war, and to follow the same pacifist policy framed by Walpole.

In 1756 the Seven Years War between England and France began. England lost Minoroca. In the interval George 111 (1760-1820) governed without a party, making the Cabinet a mere instrument of the royal will and Parliament pensioner of the royal bounty. In 1761 Pitt resigned and the peace party gained control of the ministry. George III sought to 'be a King' and built up a party known as the "King's friends'. The 'King's friends' in the Commons were his hired mercenaries, at best his personal devotees. The ideal of the 'ideal king' independent of all political factions captured the imagination of the King and the imagination of Chatham as well. But as soon as the idea was put into practise, the land was filled, not with the benisons of a grateful people on a benevolent monarch, but with the noise of unseemly conflict between rulers and ruled.

During the first twenty years of his reign, George III attempted to take back the patronage of the Crown into the royal hands. But as soon as he had recovered the patronage of the Crown, he used it to corrupt the House of Commons even more than Walpole did and the Whig Oligarch had done. It was ironically possible in the Eighteenth Century to corrupt the members through the distribution of patronage, because the decayed boroughs were becoming less representatives of the country.

CHAPTER 6

THE POLITICAL CONDITOPNS: THE AGE OF CHATHAM.

One of the memorable figures of the age is Earl of Chatham. A politician who realized with great clarity that wealth meant power. Chatham was preoccupied with England's grandeur, he was supported by with the merchants of London, and planned his campaigns with them to capture French trade. British colonial and commercial interests were fostering steadily.

Though without a regular Parliamentary following of his own, Pitt held the balance between the King and Whigs, because he represented in some degree the spirit of the nation for which the

House of Commons so very inadequately spoke. But Chatham, though popular in his political sympathies, had a personal pride that was more than aristocratic. He could work neither with George nor with the Whigs, still less effect an arrangement between them. That affair went so ill at home and abroad during the first twenty years of the new reign, must not be ascribed wholly to the faults of the King and his enemies, the Whig aristocrats. Part of the blame must be shared by Pitt himself _or the Earl of Chatham as he became in this unhappy period.

The period between1766_69 the government was again put into Chatham's hands, and he was called upon to form a Cabinet 'above party', and to save the state once more, this time from internal maladies. But his mental as well as his physical

powers failed him carrying to limbo the last hopes of the country and the Empire.

By 1770 George III had triumphed over all his enemies _ over the 'Whig connextion', and over Chatham whom he detested as he did all save the second-rate statesmen who were willing to serve him without a policy of their own. To criticize the royal policy was 'sedition' in the eyes of the King who judged the merit of all statesmen by their attitude towards himself.

In theory _ or in the theory that was held in England _ the Empire was a single consolidate State. In practice it was a federation of self-governing communities.

Nevertheless, political and social power in that easy-going century was concentrated too much in one class, the landowners. The time was coming when the defect would greatly enhance the social evils of the Industrial Revolution.

But under the first two Georges, before the coming of great economic change, the wage-earner, both in town and country, scarcely seems to have resented his want of social and political power. The British working man, then called the 'honest yeoman' or the 'jolly prentice', was quite happy drinking himself drunk to the health of the 'quality' at election time. And even if he had no vote, he could stand cheering or hooting, while the candidate, possibly a Peer's son, bowed low with his hand on his heart and a rotten egg in his hair addressing the mob as 'gentlemen', and asking for their support as the chief object of his ambition. The spirit of aristocracy and the spirit of popular rights seemed to have arrived at a perfect harmony, peculiar to the England of that epoch. There was no class hatred, and though highest and lowest were far apart, there were infinite gradations and no rigid class barriers as on the

continent. But this careless, good-natured state of society could not outlast the coming of the Industrial Revolution. Under George 111 there was a great revival of public interest in politics, but no democratic control over Parliament. The Parliamentary aristocracy of the Eighteenth Century had forged and sharpened the future weapons of the democracy. It is doubtful whether nobles and squires would ever have consented to concentrate such powers in the Lower House, if they had thought of it as a strictly popular body. But they thought of it as a house of gentlemen.

Chapter 7

Social Life and Education

Gradual changes were made due to the growth of towns. Also and increase of population was maintained in industrial towns by a steady immigration from the country and in the northwest from Ireland. In the first decades of the century the death-rate had risen sharply and passed the birth-rate. But this dangerous tendency was reversed between 1730 and 1760, and after 1780 the death-rate went down. Both the rise of the death-rate and its subsequent fall have been attributed in part to the growth and decline of the habit of drinking cheap gin instead of beer. Besides the decline of the consumption of spirits, improved conditions of life and improved medical treatment also contributed to the decline of death-rate. The foundation of hospitals and the great improvement of the medical profession also checked the increase in infant mortality. In 1734 a new

system of street lighting was introduced which dispelled some of the nocturnal gloom.

IT is only in the years that followed (1740-80) that we find a generation of men wholly characteristic of the eighteenth century ethos, a society with a mental outlook of its own, self-poised, self-judged, and self-approved, freed from the disturbing passions of the past, and not yet troubled with anxieties about a very different future which was soon to be brought upon the scene by the Industrial and the French Revolution. The gods mercifully gave mankind this little moment of peace between the religious fanaticism of the past and the fanaticisms of class and race that were speedily to arise and dominate time to come. In England it was an age of aristocracy and liberty; of the rule of law and the absence of reform; of individual initiative and institutional decay; of creative vigour in all the trades and arts that serve and adorn the life of man.

Divorce was almost unknown. It was obtainable only through church courts, and then only if followed by a special Act of Parliament.

Drunkenness was the acknowledged national vice of Englishmen of all classes, though women were not accused of it. Among the common folk, ale still reigned supreme; but ale had a new rival worse than itself in the deadly attraction of bad spirits. The acme of cheap spirit drinking was not indeed reached till the reign of George 11. Meanwhile the upper class got drunk sometimes on ale and sometimes on wine.

The drinking and gambling habit of society, and the fierceness of political faction, led to frequent duels of which many-ended ill. The survivor, if he could show there had been fair plays, was usually convicted of manslaughtering and

imprisoned for a short term; or luckily 'pleaded his clergy', was 'touched with cold iron' and so set free. It was the privilege of all gentlemen, from a duke downwards, to wear swords and to murder one another by rule. As soon as men were well drunk of an evening they were apt to quarrel, and as soon as they quarreled they were apt to draw their swords in the room, and, if manslaughtering was not committed in the spot, to adjoin to the garden behind the house, and fight it out that night with hot blood and unsteady hands. London and the county capitals were the commonest scenes of such duels.

Tobacco was still taken in long churchwarden pipes. A 'smoking parlour' was set aside in some country houses. Among the common people of the

southwestern counties, men, women, and even children smoked pipes of an evening.

The taking of snuff became general in England during the first year of Anne's reign, as a result of immense quantities thrown on to the London market after the capture of Spanish ships loaded with snuff.

At cockfighting all classes shrieked their bets round the little amphitheatre. Hors-racing presented much the same spectacle in a more open arena.

Few villagers had seen anything of town life. The mental food of English children was just such cottage fireside tales. The children were kept at their mother's knee, spinning for the clothiers, until they were old enough to go up on to the falls to drive the sheep and to pile those great stone walls

up the sides of the precipices, which are the wonder of our less industrious age.

The coffeehouse filled the place now occupied by the club, but in a more cheap and informal manner, and with a greater admission of strangers. Topics of political, military and general interests were taking place in these coffeehouses. They attracted merchants for the latest information and for the personal intercourse and advice necessary for all transactions. Newspapers had, then, no commercial column and no detail of shipping. Before the end of Queen Anne's reign, Edward Lloyd had set up a pulpit for auction and for reading out shipping news.

<u>Education</u>

In the reign of Anne, charity schools were founded by hundreds all over England, to educate

the children of the poor in reading, writing, moral discipline, and the principles of the Church of England. They were much needed for the State did nothing for the education of the poor, and the ordinary parish had no sort of endowed schools.

The able men at the head of the charity school movement introduced the principle of democratic cooperation into the field of education endowment. They did not depend merely on the support of a few wealthy founders. The policy at headquarters was to excite the local interest of a parish in the setting up of a school. Small shopkeepers and artisans were induced to subscribe and to collect subscriptions, and were taught to take a personal interest in the success.

The charity schools were indeed the first systematic attempt to give any education to the bulk

of the working people, as distinct from selected clever boys to whom the old Grammar Schools had given opportunity to rise out of their class.

The new charity schools and Sunday schools had the merit of trying to do something for all, they also had demerits; trying to keep the young scholars in their appointed sphere of life, they trained up a submissive generation.

The expenditure required of a country gentleman, rich or poor, was in one respect very small. It was not then considered obligatory that his sons should be sent to exclusively aristocratic school. At the nearest local grammar school, the squire's children sat beside those sons of yeomen and shopkeepers who been selected for a clerical career; otherwise the young gentlemen were taught at home by a neighboring parson, or in wealthier

families by the private chaplain. Smaller squires paid equally little for their sons schooling, and then prenticed them to cheaper trades than the army or diplomatic service. In the plays of Congreve and Farquhar the younger son of the manor may still expect to be bound 'bound prentice'. On these terms, the gentry could afford to have large families, and although a great proportion of their children died young, they kept England supplied with a constant stream of high-spirited young men. The fact that the younger son went out to make his fortune in the army or at the Bar, in industry or in commerce, was one of the general causes favouring the Whigs and their alliance with those interests, as against the desire of the High Tories to keep the landed gentry an exclusive as well as a dominant class.

The common schooling of the upper and middle classes was already being criticized for its rigidly classical curriculum. Upper-class education was admitted on all hands to need reform, yet nothing was done to reform it.

While the Eighteenth century made a beginning of mass instruction by starting the charity and Sunday schools, it lost ground in secondary Education by permitting many of the old Grammar and endowed schools to decay.

It was indeed a general feature of the age that chartered institutions grew lazy and corrupt. The headmasters of endowed schools often neglected and in some cases closed their schools and lived on the endowment as if it was their private property.

But the loss thus incurred by secondary Education was given money or property to provide

income made good by unendowed private schools, financed by fees only, which made much progress in the Eighteenth century.

Such schools, including the dissenters, Academies, supplied at moderate cost a good education, in which living languages and science held a place besides classes, the old endowed schools had no more use than the universities for such new angled subjects.

The only two universities in England excluded all who were not churchmen, and gave so bad, and so expensive an education to those whom they designed think fit admit, that their numbers shrank to miserable proportions, not half what they had been in the days of Laud and Milton. The Oxford , by 1770, no serious examination at all was held for a degree.

The college don could hold his Fellowship for life, unless he took a church benefice; he was not compelled to do any academic to do any work, he was not permitted to marry, and in most colleges he was forced to take Holy orders. In their lazy, self-indulgent, celibate clericalism the dons of the Eighteenth century resembled the monks of the fifteenth and were about as much use.

At both universities the undergraduates were entirely neglected by the great majority of the fellows. Noblemen's sons and rich follow commoners, who were much in evidence, and for whom large allowance was made in matters of discipline, were often accompanied by private tutors of their.

Another characteristic organization of this period was 'The Society for the Reformation of

Manners'. In its open ranks churchmen and Dissenters cooperated against the license of the age. Scores of thousands of tracts were issued against drunkenness, swearing, public indecency, and Sunday trading.

Women's education was sadly to seek. Among the lower classes it was perhaps not much worse than men's. It was before the days of 'Ladies academies', and though there were 'boarding schools' for girls, they were few and indifferent.

Yet the eighteenth century, in spite of its educational defects produced a large proportion of remarkable and original Englishmen from among those who passed through its schools than highly educated and over- regulated age is able to do.

Chapter 8

Arts, Literature in

the second half of the century

If the England of the eighteenth century, under aristocratic leadership, was a land of art and elegance, its social and economic structure was immediately helpful. As yet there was no great development of factories, producing goods wholesale, ruining craftsmanship and taste, and rigidly dividing employers from employed. A large proportion of wage-earners were fine handicraftsmen, often as well educated, as well-to-do, and socially as well considered as the small employers and shopkeepers.

Eighteenth-century craftsmanship also displayed qualities of taste, which have not since been bettered. Common objects of daily life were possessed, if not among the poor, among the moderately well off end their betters. They were characterized by grace and elegance. The china

produced at that time was almost always beautiful, and the pottery produced by the Stafford shire manufacturer, Josiah Wedgwood (1730-95) which is now much prized by collectors, was in its own day sold far and wide in the ordinary course of business. Wedgwood consciously tried to make his products beautiful, confident that there would be a market for them.

Under these happy conditions, the skilled hands produced, for the ordinary market, goods of such beautiful design and execution that they are valued by connoisseurs and collectors today: china, glass, and other ware, silver plate, books beautifully printed and bound. Chippendale chairs and cabinets, all sorts of articles for ornament and use. Even the commonest type of grandfather clock that told the time in farmhouse kitchens were simple and effective in design, the outcome of a tradition followed with individual variations by innumerable small firms.

Architecture was safe in the plain English style now known as 'Georgian'. In those days all buildings erected in town or country, from town halls and rural mansions to farms, cottages, and garden tool-houses, were a pleasure to the eye, because the rules of proportion, in setting doors and windows in relation to the whole were understood by common builders, Those simple folk, by observing the rules of proportion laid down for their guidance in Gibb's handbooks kept hold of a secret afterwards lost by the pretentious architects of the Victorian era, who deserted the plain English Georgian style to follow a hundred exotic fancies, Greek, medieval, or what not, and were book-wise in everything concerning their work, except the essential.

Indeed, aristocracy functioned better as a pattern of art and letters than even the old-fashioned form of kingship. The English aristocracy had hundreds of

centres of light and learning, scattered all over the country in 'gentlemen seats' and provincial towns, each of them a focus of learning and taste that more than made up for the decay of learning at the official universities and of taste at the Hanoverian court. George 11 patronized Handel's music but nothing else. It did not matter, because patronage had passed into thousands of other hands. Oxford did nothing for Gibbon, and royalty had nothing to say to him except,' Hey, what Mr. Gibbon, scribble, scribble, scribble !'But the reading public of the day was just of the size and quality to give proper recognition to his greatness the moment his first volume appeared (1776).

Eighteenth century taste was not perfect. The limits of its sympathy in literature are notorious. Even in art, too much was thought of Reynolds and not enough of Hogarth and Gainsborough. By the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 Sir Joshua made the purchase of

pictures fashionable among the rising middle class seeking a hallmark of gentility.

But in spite of the vagaries of fashion in art and much variety in the powers of its leading practitioners, the tone of the eighteenth century was favorable to high quality in the arts and crafts. English was filled full of beautiful things of all kind old and new, native and foreign. Houses in town and country were as rich as museums and galleries, but the books, the engravings, the china, the furniture, the pictures were not flaunted or crowded for exhibition, but were set in their natural places for domestic use in hospitable homes. Hence, the greatness of England during the epoch that followed the revolution is to be judged by her individual men, by the unofficial achievement of her free and vigorous population, by the open competition of her merchants and industrialists in the markets of the world, rather than by her corporate institutions. The glory of the eighteenth century in England lay in the genius and

energy of individuals acting freely in a free community- Marlborough, Swift, Dr Johnson, Cavendish and Priestley.

The 18th century is known as the Age of Reason, a time when construction of the modern world atop the foundations laid in the previous two centuries began to assume its present shape. By this time, Europe had attained cultural and political supremacy; other countries and regions remained shadows in the background. Literature was becoming the forum of choice in which great issues were debated, won, or lost. The spread of literacy assured authors wide readership, and critical

literary journals and associations began to make their appearance. Publishers began to establish themselves as commercial enterprises and to compete for books and authors. New genres were introduced, such as the psychological novel and sublime poetry, which goes beyond technical rules of prosody to produce works of great moral, emotional, and imaginative depth. In England, the novel

emerged as a major art form in the works of such popular writers as Henry Fielding, Daniel Defoe, Tobias Smollett, and Samuel Richardson.

Multiplication of Newspapers

Defoe's case reveals the great dangers that lay in London's developing world of political journalism. Just as writing for the theater could be dangerous in Elizabethan or early Stuart times, the annals of eighteenth-century journalism are filled with cases of those who, like Defoe fell afoul of the law. But while these decisive punishments sometimes made journalists personally more cautious in the years after they had occurred, they did little to discourage others from following in their footsteps. England's developing political journalism could be a lucrative career. The early eighteenth century was a time of relative political instability in the country, with frequent changes in government during the reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714), and the political disputes of these years

consequently created a market for news about politics. Other celebrated cases similar to Defoe's also nourished a market for newspapers, political tracts

and commentary on contemporary developments. Where London had a handful of newspapers in 1700, this number continued to grow in the first half of the century and many new journals came to be centered in the city's Fleet Street, long the heart of English newspaper publication. With the establishment of regular coach services up and down the length of Britain in the early eighteenth century, London newspapers came also to be

transported to far-flung points of the island, inspiring thefoundation of journals and papers in other provincial cities that reprinted the "news" recently arrived from the capital together with information about local events. In London, the vigorous climate of political journalism nourished some of the greatest writers of the age.

Among the many distinguished authors who wrote for London's newspapers and journals were the poet Alexander Pope (1688–1744); the churchman and satirist Jonathan Swift (1667–1745); and the playwright and poet John Gay (1685–1732.(

English Poetry in the Eighteenth Century

The Dominance of Alexander Pope

The eighteenth century in Britain saw the blossoming of seventeenth century poetic modes and the sprouting of modes that would blossom into Romanticism. It was an age of reason and sentiment, of political turbulence, of growing colonialism and wealth, of beautiful landscapes and parks, of gin addiction and Evangelicalism, of a burgeoning middle class and growing respect for middleclass values, of increasing literacy and decreasing dependence on patronage, and of cantankerous Tories and complacent Whigs. As England became the center of world

commerce and power, so, too, it became the center of literary achievement.

John Dryden died in 1700, but his death signaled no dramatic change in poetic style. Poets walked in his footsteps, moving away from Metaphysical conceits, from the style of those poets who glittered "Like twinkling Stars the Miscellanies o'er" — to search for smoothness and a new style of thinking. Symptomatic of the eighteenth century's passion for order and regularization was Alexander Pope's tinkering with the poetry of John Donne: He made Donne's numbers flow melodiously and corrected his versification. Heroic couplets and lampoons and political satires such as Dryden's were written throughout the century. Common Restoration subjects such as the imperious mistress and the cacophony of critics continued to be used.

Dryden named William Congreve his poetical successor but Pope was his true heir. Pope used the

epistle form to speak personally. Eighteenth century poets valued elegant ease and noble urbanity. “Decorum” was a key word: The eighteenth

century classicists sought to control the abundant energy which characterized earlier English classicists. Augustan poets tried to achieve the effect of apparent casualness of structure with definite coherence under the surface. Their use of noble Roman tone and classical patterns familiar throughout Europe gave them a Continental

audience, something the Elizabethans never had.

Epics and Mock-epics. The most popular genres were epic, ode, satire, elegy, epistle, and song. To show their fealty to Homer and Vergil, nearly every eighteenth century poet at least thought of writing an epic. Eighteenth century poets had more success writing odes than they did writing epics..

Satire

The eighteenth century was, of course, the golden age of satire. Satirists such as Jonathan Swift and Pope attacked

the frivolity of polite society, the corruption of politics, and false values in all the arts. The aim of satire as Pope explained it, was not wanton destruction: Satire "heals with Morals what it hurts with Wit." Satirists, he claimed, nourished the state, promoting its virtue and providing it everlasting fame. Eighteenth century poetry has been accused of monotony and weak feeling. The zeal of the satirists for truth and virtue, however, blazes through many lines and the warmth of their compassion for the poor, the sick, the mistreated, and the aged glows through many

others. The age, particularly the state under the

administration of Sir Robert Walpole, may not have been as black as the satirists painted it — it was an age of increasing wealth and progress — but the satirists were obsessed by the precariousness of intellect and of civilization, by the threat of fools and bores and pedants by the fear of universal darkness burying all. In a world where

man's intellect alone keeps society from the disintegration caused by unthinking enthusiasts and passionate pig heads, dullness is morally objectionable an aspect of vice. Satirists thus became moral crusaders for truth, virtue, and intelligence. They believed in an ancient state of purity which man could not re-create

man could, however, "relume the ancient light" (in

Pope's words) for the future.

Elegies

Elegies in Latin and Greek were composed in elegiac

couplets rather than the hexameter lines of the epic and the pastoral. Donne wrote amatory elegies in the

seventeenth century, but by the eighteenth century

elegies were meditative pieces, often about death.

Epistles

The epistle, or verse letter, an important form in the

seventeenth century, reached its height in the epistles of Pope in the 1740's, and continued to be popular until the

end of the nineteenth century. Horace provided the classical model for the verse epistle. The familiar form of the epistle allowed poets to seem to speak sincerely and intimately to a close friend while addressing the public about general issues. Almost all epistles were written in heroic couplets, began in a rather rambling way, and finally came to a point about halfway through the poem.

Fables

The fables of the eighteenth century demonstrate the ability of Augustan writers to enrich and vary a genre..

The Nature of Humankind

After the 1640's, England's civil war left deep scars that lasted well into the eighteenth century. Religious and political factions still strained the country, and the atmosphere was at once one of compromise and tolerance and one of skepticism. It was a time when writers questioned and strove to understand the nature of man,

human limitations, and the limitations that must be set on human passions. Answers to these questions differed significantly: Some optimistic moralists believed in the essential goodness of humankind, some satirists and cynics bemoaned humanity's incorrigible pride which would forever keep people from the truth, and some realists insisted that humanity and the world must be accepted as they are, in all their ugliness..

Landscape and Philosophical Discourse

While Pope inherited satire and heroic couplets from Dryden, there was another poetic movement in the eighteenth century whose ancestors were Milton‹ reflective poetry, and blank verse. Poets increasingly used landscape as material for their poetry and wedded it to philosophical discourse.

Sensibility and Melancholy

Another important movement in the literature of England and the Continent in the first half of the eighteenth century

has been named “sensibility.” By this is meant an exquisite sensitiveness to the beautiful and the good a sensitiveness which induces melancholy or sorrow. All

that is noble and generous in human conduct was

thought to have its source in this exquisite sensitivity and nature assisted as a moral tonic to the human heart. The pensive mood, even though it induced melancholy also induced pleasure because it freed the emotions and the imagination from the conventions of civilization and from the vanity and corruption of humankind. Sensibility was a movement toward moral feeling and conduct‹

toward middle-class values, and, politically, toward the Whigs..

From Society to the Individual

The latter half of the century produced no English poet

equal to Pope, but it did produce a large number of

important writers and did serve as a transition period

from concentration on society as the preserver of the

best in man to concentration on the nobility and potential of the individual. The beautiful city of Bath was built in the classical style, and the Adam brothers designed and built new streets and squares in Edinburgh. Advances were made in the art of writing history because men had come to believe with Pope that the "proper study of mankind is man." Shaftesbury's doctrine of man's natural goodness coupled with materialistic rationalism had led to optimistic political programs based on the perfectibility of man.

Writers did not rebel overtly against the classical tradition but increasingly began to write about realistic matters of everyday life. Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard is one of the best examples of this new poetic material. Humble life is treated humorously as well as realistically and much less idyllically. Writers began to claim that absolute standards are impossible and to believe

in progress and novelty. With increasing doubts about Pope's assertion that truth is "one clear

unchanged, and universal light," the pendulum swung from fear of individualism and enthusiasm (which had led to civil war) to love of diversity (which, in turn, led to revolutions.(Poets became expressers of mood rather than eloquent preachers of general truths. The poet was exalted as a mysterious and sacred natural force which mere intelligence could not comprehend and training could not bestow. "Genius" supplanted wit as the creative force in the poet's mind..

Moving away from the Renaissance and neoclassic idea that poetic genius should be learned, mid-eighteenth century audiences believed in "natural" or unlearned genius. Johnson, however, while affirming that "no man ever became great by imitation," insisted that genius must be trained by study. Belief in "natural" genius went hand in hand with a return to folk and national literature..

A cultural movement of the eighteenth century that was reflected in and shaped by the drama was sentimentalism which became, from the second decade of the century, an increasingly pervasive influence on both tragedy and comedy. Sentimentalism brought to the theater a new emphasis on benevolence and pity and a new goal for the playwright, the eliciting of pathos. One's heart rather than one's reason became the guide as well as the measure of one's worth. The popularity of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's social criticism fostered the development of a humanitarian concern bred by sentimentalism, which emphasized the dignity and worth of the lives of ordinary men and women. The problems of women, especially of married women, also became serious topics for tragedy (most obviously in Nicholas Rowe's she-tragedies) and comedy alike. Although the fully emancipated woman remained an object of satiric attack, the drama afforded greater recognition of the problems of being a woman.

As the shift in the makeup of the audience was reflected

in the more sympathetic presentation of women, so, too,

was this change reflected in the presentation of

members of the mercantile class.

Traditional butts of ridicule in the Elizabethan and Restoration comedy, merchants were presented during the eighteenth century with dignity and respect. Merchants are, for example, openly praised in two of the most successful and influential comedies of the century. So, too, are they

presented sympathetically in tragedy, most obviously in

Lillo's The London Merchant. in which Thorowgood eulogizes the dignity and worthiness of the merchant's trade in order to emphasize the tragic dimension of the protagonist's fall.

In the eighteenth century, as in every period since the beginnings of public drama, the success or failure of the

plays did not depend wholly on their aesthetic or ethical merits. The fate of a play might depend, for example, on the political sentiments it expressed or was perceived as expressing. A playwright's political allegiances could boost the success or ensure the failure of a play irrespective of its intrinsic merits. Yet politics could damn a play as well as promote it. Although politics remained a vital force in English drama throughout the century, the nature of the political allusions shifted noticeably. Whereas political allusions in drama during the first half of the century were generally faction- or party-oriented, those that followed the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 were generally nationalistic. During the final years of the century, largely in response to the French Revolution, occasional pieces were composed to express English nationalistic sentiment. Despite their exuberant patriotism, plays such as these are of little literary value.

Licensing Act of 1737

Another political factor contributing to the decline in quality of eighteenth century theater was the Licensing Act of 1737. Sir Robert Walpole advanced the act ostensibly to help maintain order in London but actually to deter satiric attacks against him and his party, especially those leveled by Fielding. The Licensing Act decreed that all play scripts were subject to the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain and that only the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theaters would be permitted to perform plays. This act was a particularly repressive measure, since, for the first time in one hundred years, there were five playhouses simultaneously offering plays in London. In addition to decreasing the accessibility of the theater to the audience, the Licensing Act effectively crushed the artistically stimulating competition between playhouses and vastly decreased the likelihood of playwrights and

managers offering new, untried, and hence riskier plays. At first, the managers of the unlicensed theaters circumvented the law by advertising musical performances and staging plays during what purported to be the intermissions. Eager to boost their profits by eliminating their competition, however, the managers of the Covent Garden and Drury Lane theaters assisted the authorities in exposing and suppressing such practices, so that by mid-century virtually no such renegade productions were offered.

The Licensing Act also strongly influenced the tone and the content of plays performed after 1737. At first, only selected passages were altered, but gradually the form and content of entire plays were affected. Because selfconsciously moral plays were more likely to obtain the censor's approval, these were more frequently submitted for approval, were approved, and were performed more than were plays laden with controversial matter such as

sex, religion, and politics. Thus, the Licensing Act reinforced in the drama the expression of middle-class tastes and the movement toward the avoidance of controversial (and thus significant and intellectually oriented) subject matter. The effects of the act were not entirely negative, however, for in the search for plays that would be inoffensive to the censor and successful with the public, the theater managers, particularly David Garrick, began performing Shakespearean drama much more frequently than they had before.

The Audiences

Whether in original or adapted form, the plays of Shakespeare attracted large audiences. Though by no means as docile as the audience of today, the audiences of even the early years of the century were considerably better behaved than were their Elizabethan and Restoration counterparts. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the century, players still faced an audience whose

members were often drunk and rowdy and who shouted catcalls during the performances, and playwrights still felt the need to "pack" the audience with friends and hirelings to combat "first nighters" determined to ensure the play's failure. As the drama grew more decorous over the course of the century, however, the audience, too, became increasingly self-restrained — and increasingly prudish. Perhaps because they were not as well educated and as intellectually oriented as were members of the Restoration audience, the members of the eighteenth century audience wanted their drama to be emotional, sentimental, and didactic rather than intellectually stimulating. They longed to hear effusive declarations of sentiment rather than clever repartee. Loud or open laughter they believed, reflected a distinctly unattractive lack of breeding as well as insensitivity, at a time when a tender heart and a refined mien were the most desirable traits.

As the drama became increasingly dominated by the bourgeoisie, its two traditional sustainers, the aristocrats and the artists, gradually dissociated themselves from the theater. Among the aristocrats, the French fashion of holding private theatricals became popular during the last two decades of the century. However, the fashion of the private theatrical only augmented the domination of the middle class and the mediocre over both the French and British drama. In England, the decline in the quality of the drama was also encouraged by the popularity of the "little theaters."

The Theaters

Substantial architectural as well as aesthetic changes also occurred in the theater during the eighteenth century. In the beginning of the century, new playhouses were built to accommodate the expansion of the audience. In addition to the expansion of seating capacity, there were other physical changes within the

theater. As in the previous century, would-be wits and critics continued to habituate the pit, but the more fashionable members of the audience left the first gallery to the middle class. For a substantial fee, wealthy members of the audience could still obtain seats onstage during performances until 1763, when Garrick, the manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, refused to allow this disruptive practice to continue. This restriction was not innovative on Garrick's part, for onstage seating had been banned in Paris four years earlier.

During the eighteenth century, the shape of the stage also changed: The apron grew smaller, with the performing area shrinking gradually into the familiar picture-frame stage. Thus, physically as well as spiritually, the theater was receding from the flesh-and-blood world of its audience. Although remodeling made it possible for increasing numbers of people to attend the theater, the ultimate effect of the enlargement was to accelerate the decline in the

quality of the productions and to discourage the writing of plays of depth and subtlety. Given the relatively primitive state of stage lighting in the eighteenth century, the increased distance of the audience from the stage made it more difficult to see the facial expressions and gestures of the actors.

Moreover, the enlarged theaters were, as a rule, acoustically poor: The Haymarket, for example, had acoustics so dreadful that it was impossible to perform plays there, and its stage had to be given over entirely to the production of opera. Actors who wished to avoid having their words garbled into incomprehensibility or swallowed up in space were compelled to speak lines in inappropriate (albeit audible) pitches and monotonous tones.

Thus, it became impossible for an actor to give a erformance that had much subtlety or naturalness.
Such physical problems in the theater encouraged
theater managers and audiences to become visually

rather than aurally oriented and thus to prefer tragedies that relied not on great verse but on spectacle and comedies that relied on farce rather than on incisive dialogue.

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