

Cowper's letters, it was a coarse scepticism which desired to be buried with its hounds. Ignorance and brutality reigned in the cottage. Drunkenness reigned in palace and cottage alike. Gambling, cockfighting, and bullfighting were the amusements of the people. Political life, which, if it had been pure and vigorous, might have made up for the absence of spiritual influences, was corrupt from the top of the scale to the bottom : its effect on national character is pourtrayed in Hogarth's *Election*. That property had its duties as well as its rights, nobody had yet ventured to say or think. The duty of a gentleman towards his own class was to pay his debts of honour and to fight a duel whenever he was challenged by one of his own order ; towards the lower class his duty was none. Though the forms of government were elective, and Cowper gives us a description of the candidate at election time obsequiously soliciting votes, society was intensely aristocratic, and each rank was divided from that below it by a sharp line which precluded brotherhood or sympathy. Says the Duchess of Buckingham to Lady Huntingdon, who had asked her to come and hear Whitefield, " I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers ; their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinctured with disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting ; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding. I shall be most happy to come and hear your favourite preacher." Her