

the will of the majority, while it was less tempted to meddle out of its sphere. The questions of the right of taxation and of control over religion, both burning questions, were now set at rest.

The activity of the political body at the end of the 17th century had been enormous—a lasting lethargy now fell upon the nation. During this period the Tory party was effaced, its work being over. It had been the guardian of the two principles of hereditary right, and of the supremacy of the established church, but the time had come when the Tories found it absolutely impossible to maintain these together. They had also opposed standing armies, but all danger from this source was now over. Another characteristic of this period was the influence of the aristocracy which resulted in the

“Anomaly of the theoretic supremacy which the House of Commons exercised by means of its control over the purse, combined with the practical supremacy of the members of the House of Lords by means of the influence which they exercised over the election of members of the House of Commons.”

The *Rule of the Whigs* was accompanied by toleration to Dissenters, and aversion to zeal and enthusiasm as a disturbing factor in human affairs. Christianity was nothing if not rational. Reason predominated without active energy for the common good. “The old tyrannies were gone, and the new effort after a better order had not yet come.” The life of the time is reflected accurately in *Hogarth* and *Fielding*. Something of Puritan morality remained without Puritan enthusiasm; there was no sense of natural and artistic beauty. “Individual energies were strong, and the thought of devotion to public ends was weak. The Puritan ideal and the Royalist ideal had been alike trodden in the dust.” Englishmen were proud of their constitution because it shielded them from personal oppression, and they were content for the present to leave the helm in the hands of a place-loving aristocracy.

THE RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY.

It was certain that sooner or later the rule of the aristocracy would have to succumb to the central authority as it had done to the Tudors. The first motion towards a better order made itself felt in the domain of religion. The growth of *Wesleyanism* was due to the apathy of the church and its abhorrence of zeal. There was nothing new in the teaching of John Wesley, but old things became new in his hands. What Wesley was in religion, *William Pitt* was in politics. Like Wesley he brought nothing new in the