

intellectual greatness seems to surpass that of other periods. These are : —

1. The Chaucerian Period, extending over the latter part of Edward III reign and the whole of that of Richard II.

2. The Shakespearean Period, which sheds such a radiance over the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. In the genius of their writers, though not in their numbers, these are superior to those which follow.

3. The third period is the era of Swift, Addison, Prior, and Pope, or during the reign of Anne.

4. The last may be placed in the early part of the 19th Century, and is rendered illustrious by such names as those of Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Moore, and a host of others in poetry, not to mention those taking a foremost place in other branches of Literature. Indeed Scott's enduring fame is as a prose writer rather than as a poet.

In selecting these as *the* great periods in the history of English Letters, the many writers, whose literary genius has shed its light over the intervening times, must not be ingored. To do so would be to evince unpardonable ignorance of the subject of which this series of articles can be but a skeleton sketch. To the enquirer the times which preceded or followed each and all of these periods must be fruitful of interest and of information.

Next to Shakespeare, probably the greatest name in our literary annals is that of John Milton. His genius alone would make his age a great one, and it is difficult to pass by the epoch of the author of *Paradise Lost* to select another period as greater, though not one of its writers can compare in genius with the sublime poet of the Commonwealth.

In choosing the Chaucerian period as the first of our great literary eras, the fact must not be over-looked that before that time there were writers—and great writers—of whom our Mother Country could boast. Alfred had given the encouragement of royal example and patronage, to men of