

the Revolution acted most powerfully upon our literature was the liberation of the press. The lapse of the licensing laws in 1695 marks the real birth of English journalism and periodical literature. Within a few months after that event a whole host of newspapers had been started in London—the *English Courant*, the *London Newsletter*, the *Post*, the *Postboy*, the *Postman*—all those obscure and meagre sheets which are now remembered only through the mention of them in the pages of Addison and Steele. To the new freedom of the press these writers themselves owed their great opportunity, for doubtless it would have been impossible under the harassing and uncertain limitations of a censorship to produce a *Tatler* or a *Spectator* at least with the delightful ease and spontaneity which are the very life and charm of the English periodical essay.

That, however, was still a thing of the future, and for some time the effect of a free press was felt mainly in the growth of pamphleteering and the enlargement of its scope. The pamphlet still continued to be the chief instrument of popular appeal, and one of the greatest of English pamphleteers, Daniel Defoe, began his career in the decade after the Revolution. But neither his work, nor indeed the bulk of the so-called Augustan literature, can be understood without taking account of another factor introduced by the Revolution—the development of the system of government by party. Parties, indeed, had existed in England since 1641, and had obtained their names of Whig and Tory in 1679; but it was only with the formation of the Whig Junto about 1694 that the system was fairly organised. The effect on literature was momentous, for thenceforth during more than a century our prose, and even our poetry, continued to be written mainly on party lines. The writers of Queen Anne's time attached themselves to one party or the other, supporting it not only in their acknowledged writings, but also by anonymous pamphleteering. Swift became the best champion and almost the literary 'handy man' of the Tories; Addison and Steele fought the battle for the Whigs. At the production of *Cato* in 1713 both sides mustered as at a political demonstration, and the speeches of Syphax and Sempronius were cheered alternately like hits in an election speech. More than this, the party system had important effects on the patronage of literature and the social position of literary

men. Some pamphleteers, no doubt, like Defoe, were mere under-trappers and secret-service men; but the better and more respectable writers got honourable posts, and were even welcomed to friendship by the chiefs of the State. The intimacy of Bolingbroke and Oxford with Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot served to dignify and enrich our literature hardly less than the friendship of Mæcenas and Horace adorned and exalted the literature of Rome. As for the more material aspects of party patronage, it needs but to recall part of the catalogue in one of Macanlay's essays: 'Congreve, when he had scarcely attained his majority, was rewarded for his first comedy with places which made him independent for life. . . . Locke was Commissioner of Appeals and of the Board of Trade. Newton was Master of the Mint. Stepney and Prior were employed in embassies of high dignity and importance. . . . Steele was a Commissioner of Stamps and a Member of Parliament. Arthur Mainwaring was a Commissioner of the Customs and auditor of the impost. Tickell was secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland. Addison was Secretary of State.'

Much of this, no doubt, was a late fruit of the Revolution; yet it was none the less a genuine product of that event—of the development of party which it occasioned, and of the transfer of power from the sovereign to the ministry which it brought about. Patronage, of course, there had been for long before, and the Stuarts were perhaps more intelligent patrons of letters than any of their successors on the throne. But it was assuredly a good thing for literature that its votaries had to turn from the galleries of Whitehall to the offices of the Lord High Treasurer and the Secretary of State. It may be more flattering, but it is far less salutary, to be patronised by a king than by his prime-minister. To the former one can be but a servant; with the latter it is possible to be almost an equal and quite a friend. One needs but to contrast the position of Dryden, the laureate of Charles II. and the butt of Rochester and Buckingham, with that of Swift and Pope, the friends of Harley and St John.

Another effect of the Revolution upon our literature is found in the check which it gave to the influence of France. The royal master and patron of Boileau, formerly our ally and our paymaster, was now to be our enemy, with