

Perhaps we may say, there was something in the spirit of the age which may account for the decay of architecture and the marvellous progress in painting which alike distinguish this period. Of the facts themselves there can be no question. Without doing more than merely indicating this very interesting problem, we may at least point out that the age of the greatest Italian painters was a period of unusual intellectual and religious excitement. It was the period alike of the Reformation and the Renaissance—two movements having this in common, that they were both revolts from the dominating authority of the time—the one claiming absolute liberty of thought and action and the right to return to nature, the other claiming liberty to go back to the Bible and the earlier sources of religious truth and doctrine; yet differing very widely in another respect, that the one clung to the supernatural, the divine, whilst the other was satisfied with the world and nature. However this may be, these were two potent influences over human thought and life at that period; and it is perhaps enough that we should recommend the following up of the suggestions here offered, to those who may be interested in these inquiries. Along with this should certainly come the study of the Græco-Roman architecture of the Renaissance, a subject on which it is hardly too much to say that the artistic world is widely and sometimes violently divided.

It is with some regret that I have been forced to almost ignore the subject of music—certainly the most divine of of all the arts. But something may be said on this subject in connexion with an age which is supposed to be the least artistic in modern history—I mean the 18th Century.

Mr. Frederic Harrison has taken up the defence of this, in his judgement; much maligned period, and I

will content myself with quoting some passages from his article (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1883). He remarks:

"A century which opens with the 'Rape of the Lock,' and closes with the first part of 'Faust' is hardly a century of mere prose, especially if we throw in Gray, Cowper, and Burns, the 'Ancient Mariner' and the 'Lyrical Ballads.' A century which includes twenty years of the life of Newton, twenty-three of Wren's, and sixteen of Leibnitz, and the whole lives of Hume, Kant, Adam Smith, Gibbon, and Priestley, is not the age of mere shallowness; nor is the century which founded the monarchy of Prussia and the Empire of Britain, which gave birth to the Republic in America, and then in France, and which finally recast modern society and formed our actual habits, the peculiar era of quackeries, bon-fires, and suicides (Reference to Carlyle).

"In the core the epoch was hearty, manly, humane; second to none in energy, mental, practical, and social; full of sense, work, and good fellowship. If its poetry was not of the highest of all orders, the century created a new order of poetry. If its art was on the whole below the average, in the noble art of music it was certainly supreme. In philosophy, science, moral and religious truth, it was second to none that went before.

"The weak side of the century was certainly in beauty, in poetry, and the arts of form. (But, he denies that it is without poetry.)

"We may (he goes on) give up architecture at once. People were so much absorbed in making their homes comfortable within, that they seemed blind to ugliness elsewhere; and if Mr. Ruskin is certain that Satan had to do with the churches of the Georgian era, there is no means of disproving it. But Reynolds remains the greatest English painter, Gainsborough and Romney have not been