

monarch held his crown neither of God nor of the nation, but of a parliament controlled by a ruling class. The Whig aristocracy had done a priceless service to English liberty. It was full of political capacity, and by no means void of patriotism; but it was only a part of the national life. Nor was it at present moved by political emotions in any high sense. It had done its great work when it expelled the Stuarts and placed William of Orange on the throne; its ascendancy was now complete. The Stuarts had received their death-blow at Culloden; and nothing was left to the dominant party but to dispute on subordinate questions, and contend for office among themselves. The Tory squires sulked in their country-houses, hunted foxes, and grumbled against the reigning dynasty; yet hardly wished to see the nation convulsed by a counter-revolution and another return of the Stuarts.

If politics had run to commonplace, so had morals; and so too had religion. Despondent writers of the day even complained that British courage had died out. There was little sign to the common eye that under a dull and languid surface, forces were at work preparing a new life, material, moral, and intellectual. As yet, Whitefield and Wesley had not wakened the drowsy conscience of the nation, nor the voice of William Pitt roused it like a trumpet-peal.

It was the unwashed and unsavory England of Hogarth, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne; of Tom Jones, Squire Western, Lady Bellaston, and Parson Adams; of the "Rake's Progress" and "Marriage