

intelligible to the reader. So the War of the Succession, Marlborough and his victories, the union with Scotland, the great struggle between the Whigs and Tories, with its strongly marked characters and striking vicissitudes; the impeachment of Sacheverell, and the singular revolution to which it led; the intrigues and the fall of Bolingbroke; the glories of the Augustan literature and art—still solicit the pen of a historian who wishes for a theme full of dramatic life, and as complete in itself as the best constructed play.

Of the intellectual products of the reign of Anne, it is needless to speak. Mr. Ashton truly says that it was the merit of Addison, Steele, and their compeers, not only to refine literature, but to render reading popular. Science had made, in the reign of Charles II., a progress which throws Mr. Buckle off his balance, and leads him to glorify a by no means glorious period. Under Anne, the Royal Society is the butt of all the wits, not excepting the liberal-minded Addison; and perhaps the ridicule was partly deserved, if scientific collectors exhibited "the bones of mermaids" and "the horns of unicorns;" but even the author of "*Laputa*" would scarcely have sneered at Newton. An additional interest attaches to the giants of those days on account of their lack of the subsidiary appliances which now enable men who are not great to do great things. We admire Newton more when we think of the ponderous geometry which he wielded, and Bentley when we think of the editions which he must have used. The drama was at a low ebb—the genius of the nation had spent itself in the glorious profusion of the Elizabethan era; but the theatre was pretty flourishing, though not patronized by the Queen. There were good actors, and still better actresses, such as Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Bracegirdle, though as Mr. Ashton says, it was then not

more than forty years since the first appearance of women on the stage. Pamphleteering, both political and religious—or rather ecclesiastical—was lively, and had plenty of matter; political journalism was in its cradle. The chief organs of daily discussion seem to have been the coffee-houses, the closing of which under Charles II., was therefore equivalent to imposing silence on the press. The political oratory of the period was not reported. Probably from the very fact of its being addressed, not through reporters to constituents, but to the House and with the object of gaining votes, it was superior to the prolix editorials which fill the weary hours of Parliament at the present day. But as the avowed aim of Bolingbroke was "to show game to the Tory squires," it is not likely that in his speeches those of a second Demosthenes are lost.

To painting, sculpture, and music neither English genius inclined nor had Puritanism been propitious, though Cromwell himself loved music, and the miniature portraits of him by Cooper are superb. Engraving in Anne's reign was good; and carving, excellent after its fashion, both in wood and stone, was done by Grinling Gibbons. If the reign could claim St. Paul's, it might boast of having produced as noble an exterior as any in the world; but Wren and his work belong rather to the generation before. The great building of Anne's period is Vanbrugh's *Blenheim*, a work original, picturesque, and imposing; a real palace and a worthy embodiment of historical grandeur, let criticism say what it will. Mr. Ashton gives us a shock by treating the house architecture of the reign as almost a fiction, and telling us that what is taken for the Queen Anne style is really Dutch. As the best of the genuine specimens remaining, he names two town houses, Nos. 10 and 11 Austinfriars. But