

THE LITERATURE AND LIFE OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE
AS PRESENTED BY THE COMMENTS OF THE EDITORS
OF THE BIBLIOTHEQUE ANGLAISE (1717-28)

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Bibliothèque anglaise or Histoire littéraire de la Grande Bretagne was published in fifteen volumes at Amsterdam from 1717 to 1728 by Michel de la Roche and Armand de la Chapelle.

Michel de la Roche was a French refugee who published in London the Memoirs of Literature (1710-14), a work in four volumes. For it he collected the most interesting articles from the papers of such prominent European countries as France, Holland, and Germany. However, the journal did not obtain the success for which the editor had hoped, so he abandoned it for another periodical, the Bibliothèque anglaise. In it he aimed to instruct foreigners, especially those who did not understand English, by giving reviews of books printed in Great Britain. With this prospect in mind, the editor said:¹

C'est un pays . . . où les sciences et les arts fleurissent autant qu'en aucun lieu du monde; ils y sont cultivés dans le sein de la liberté. Il est donc important qu'il y ait quelqu'un qui soit capable d'informer de ce qui s'y passe.

The Bibliothèque anglaise received a warm welcome and other periodicals of the time published its praises.² Only five volumes were published when a quarrel arose between the author and the editor who refused to con-

¹ Eugène Hatin, Bibliographie historique et critique de la presse périodique française, p. 38.

² Ibid.

tinued printing the journal while M. de la Roche was the author. Armand de la Chapelle, a well-known minister of the reformed religion, was engaged to continue the Bibliothèque anglaise. Nevertheless, Michel de la Roche went to The Hague, where he published the Mémoires littéraires de la Grande Bretagne from 1720 to 1724.

The first five volumes of the Bibliothèque anglaise had on the frontispiece the initials, M. D. L. R., which indicated the name of the first editor. With the sixth volume, which was the first after the quarrel, the frontispiece had the initials A. B. D. M. T. The new author inserted an avertissement or notice in which he stated that he would follow the former plan of speaking of both old and new books. His efforts toward impartiality and justice were expressed in the following words:³

Je tâcherai de régler mon Goût sur celui du Public, et l'on peut s'assurer par avance que mon inclination pacifique ne sera d'un grand secours pour ne rien écrire qui soit contre les règles de la Justice, de l'Honnêteté, de la Bien-séance et de la Charité Chrétienne. (Avvertissement, Vol. VI, Part I.)

Thus the editor told how he wished to serve the public.

With the ninth volume appeared on the frontispiece the name of Armand de la Chapelle, who had hitherto kept himself anonymous by the use of initials. In this volume he explained that he had wished to remain anonymous until the Bibliothèque anglaise should be well enough established to resist attacks from its adversaries or from the political parties re-

³ Throughout this study the notation & is written at. The spelling and capitalisation used are those of the eighteenth century except in the title which has been modernized. Since most of the quotations of this study come from the Bibliothèque anglaise, the volume number and the page or part will be given in parentheses instead of being placed in the footnotes.

presenting them. He hoped to avoid mistakes and prejudice and to render justice as a reporter. Of the difficulty of this task he said, "Qu'il est difficile d'atteindre à ce point de perfection, et de l'attraper d'une manière qui plaise au Public qui achète des Livres!" (Avertissement, Vol. IX, Part I)

The avertissement mentioned above which explains the author's identity and aims, also gives directions that manuscripts for him should be addressed thus: "For the Reverend Mr. Armand de la Chapelle, in White Row, Spittlefields, London" (Avertissement, Vol. IX, Part I). The statement shows that the author must have been in London at this time. In the seventh volume, the announcement is made that he has received a suggestion to enclose all his comments in brackets:

L' Avis donc qu'on m'a donné consiste à renfermer entre deux Crochets de cette sorte [] ce qui est purement de ma façon. J'observerai cette méthode à l'avenir, et je commence dès ce Volume à la mettre en usage. (Avertissement, Vol. VII, Part I).

From this point on, it is easy to distinguish the comments of the author from the text. In the thirteenth volume it is stated that the author of the Bibliothèque anglaise was called to a church at The Hague and that any correspondence may be addressed to stated places in London, Amsterdam, or The Hague (Avertissement, Vol. XIII, Part II).

By means of avertissements found in the various volumes, the reader is informed of the changes introduced by the editor. The Errata found in the journals gives a notice of the misprints which are listed by the number of the page and the line on which the mistake occurs and which are followed by the correct form.

The Catalogue de Livres nouveaux is a list of the books for sale at the bookshops of London and Amsterdam. These lists usually precede the text of each of the two parts of the Bibliothèque anglaise, but in certain volumes the catalogue follows the text instead of preceding it.

The Table des Articles, a table of contents, always precedes each part of a volume. By glancing through these tables, one observes that the majority of the articles concern theology. They may be interpretations of Scriptural passages, discussions of doctrine or ceremony, or accounts of the lives of theologians. Other articles discuss science, history, literature, and government. Many articles are reviews of recent works discussing matters of current interest, while a few of them are reviews of translated works or discussions of old manuscripts. This table differs from the Table des Matières, which is an index to the material in the text, and which is always found at the back of each volume. The Nouvelles littéraires are also similar to the Table des Articles in the type of subjects listed, but they are those works which are in press or which are being prepared for it. Remarks which vary in length and in form follow each title in the Nouvelles littéraires. When this part is inserted, it follows the text of each part of the volume.

As stated in the discussion of the avertissement, the author enclosed his reflections or comments in brackets, with the exception of those in the first six volumes. These reflections in the earlier volumes are usually identified by the context. In this study the literature, government, and customs of the English people, as shown by the comments of the editor, will be discussed.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

In the seventeenth century France had been one of the literary nations whose critics had formulated the rules which influenced the literature of other nations, but in the following century England began to make its influence felt abroad, especially in France. The editor emphasized to his French readers the growing importance of English literature: ". . . on doit se persuader en France qu'il y a en Angleterre des gens d'un goût aussi fin et aussi délicat qu'il peut y en avoir par tout ailleurs" (XIII, 391). It is interesting to note that the Bibliothèque anglaise appeared from 1717 to 1728, preceding by several years the Lettres philosophiques (1734) of Voltaire. Thus this periodical may be considered one of the precursors of the English influence in France.

Stimulation of literary activity was sometimes brought about by competition with a foreign author who would visit England and would produce a work of merit. If his ability became known, the native authors exerted more energy in producing their works and tried to excel those of the stranger. Very fitting is the editor's comment which is "C'est une chose étrange que la vanité des Auteurs" (XV, 103). The following words, apparently those of the editor, described the desire of English authors to excel in their work:

Les Anglois, jaloux de la gloire que cet Etranger allait s'acquérir, se hâterent de le prévenir. On fit travailler sur le même plan. . . (XIII, 417).

The foreigner mentioned above was Casaubon, a classical French scholar who was born in Geneva and who was patronised by James I of England. Thus it

is seen that national vanity aroused by foreign inspiration may stimulate literary production.

Although the Bibliothèque anglaise showed an increasing interest in scientific, philosophic, and historic subjects, religion occupied the largest amount of space in the periodical. This religious material, as well as that on other subjects, reached countries on the continent and started in them new ideas and interests. The editor in the article, Voyage aux Isles de Madère, des Barbades, etc., commented as follows concerning the interest by an English writer in a variety of subjects.

Mr. SLOANE n'est pas un de ces Savans Anglois dont la reputation ne sort guère de leur Isle, qu'à la faveur des Journaux. Il est connu avec distinction dans tous les lieux où l'on cultive l'Histoire naturelle, la Medecine, et les belles Lettres. Les Etrangers curieux, qui ne manquent point, dans leur tour d' Angleterre, d'aller rendre visite à son Cabinet, sont encore plus charmez de sa personne, que de tous les Thrésors qu'on y voit. . . Le Catalogue qu'il en avoit dressé vers la fin de l'année précédente, contenoit déjà XXX gros Volumes in folio, quoi qu'il y manquât quantité de choses dont la notice n'étoit pas encore achevée (XIII, 401-02).

In addition to Mr. Sloane, there were other men, whose works are discussed in the Bibliothèque anglaise, who had varied interests. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was a great mathematician and natural philosopher, and was twice chosen to Parliament. William Whiston (1667-1752) was an Anglican clergyman and a mathematician. He was deputy professor to Newton and later became his successor. Robert Boyle (1627-1691) was a philosopher who was interested in experimental physics and chemistry, having been a member of the Philosophical College which became the Royal Society after the Restoration. He also left a bequest of two hundred fifty dollars annually for lectures to be given in a series of eight at the Church of Saint-Mary-le-Bow, London, on the defense of Christianity. Richard Bentley (1662-1742)

was an English divine, a classical scholar and a polemicist. In Boyle's foundation, he gave a lecture on the defense of Christianity against atheism. Sir Richard Blackmore (1650-1729) was a court physician and poet. He had taught in England and studied medicine at Padua. He wrote several lengthy epics and won recognition from the contemporary critics, Addison and Johnson. Thus it is seen that thought, during the eighteenth century in England, had directed its interests into various channels.

Translations were frequent and the works of foreign authors were almost as plentiful as those of English writers. The public gave a favorable reception to translations, and their acceptance was shown by a comment on Mr. Chamberlayne's translation of a history of the Reformation in the Netherlands:

Encouragé par l'accueil favorable du Public, et par les Souscriptions qu'on a faites, il a continué son travail, et déjà exécuté en partie son grand dessein: Ce dessein étoit de donner sa Traduction en trois Volumes in folio. . . (VII, 374-75).

An example of the prevalence of translations was stated by the editor in the Nouvelles littéraires thus: "M'étant imposé pour loi de ne point inserer ici des Extraits de tant de Traductions qui se font tous les jours en Angleterre". . . (XIV, 550).

An increasing interest in history was shown by the fact that the study of modern history was encouraged in the universities of England. In the Nouvelles littéraires the editor described a book which would be released and which revealed the interest in historical material. He said:

La fondation que le Roi a faite dans nos Universités, pour l'Etude de l'Histoire moderne, a causé une noble émulation parmi les Savans de la Grande Bretagne. Les Personnes qui n'y ont point de Vocation publique contribuent de tout leur pouvoir à seconder

les sages intentions de sa Majesté, et l'on peut dire même qu'il y en a qui les ont prévenues. Dans le nombre de ces dernières, on doit placer Mr. Guillaume Gibbon qui vient de nous donner un Ouvrage en ce genre (XIII, 282).

This fostering of the study of modern history has rendered a useful service in encouraging contributors of this type of literature.

In speaking of compilations such as historical and critical dictionaries, the editor said that much time and labor were necessary for research in collecting and organizing material, and that the requirements for such studies were as follows:

. . . une grande connaissance de l'Histoire moderne, tant Civile que Littéraire, l'esprit juste, le discernement bon, des liaisons considérables, l'entrée des Bibliothèques, et certain instinct qui fait déterrer quantité de Pièces que le temps a fait tomber dans l'oubli (XIII, 442).

Thus it is seen that the encouragement of historical study prepared the authors for producing dictionaries and critical works because the methods of procedure are similar. In the Nouvelles littéraires (V, 282), the editor speaks of an essay written in an historical and critical dictionary concerning celebrated persons of England and Ireland. Evidently there was considerable interest manifested in England at this time in historical and biographical research.

Philosophy was a subject of much study but the editor shows his surprise that such works as the Ebauche de la Religion naturelle by Woolston⁴ should be followed immediately by a second edition:

Ce ne seroit rien pour une Historiette ou pour une Comédie. Mais pour une Philosophie sacrée, c'est beaucoup à mon avis qu'elle excite tant de curiosité (XII, 442).

In literary circles epic poetry and the rules for composing it were

⁴ Thomas Woolston (1669-1731) was an English Deist.

being discussed in conversation and in writing. It was about half a century after Milton had written Paradise Lost when Swift and Pope produced their mock-epics, The Battle of the Books and the Dunciad, and Sir Richard Blackmore was composing epics at court. The editor comments thus on an article on epic poetry by Blackmore:

. . . (l'étude de Milton) engagea les Anglois à étudier les regles de la Poesie Epique. Depuis ce temps-là on a vu, en Angleterre divers Auteurs, qui ont travaillé sur cette matiere (I, 43).

By the foregoing passage one sees that an effort was being made to revive epic poetry, and the various discussions reveal a new interest in it.

Drama was popular at this time but it appears to have had a tendency toward corruption which defeated its useful purpose. The editor comments upon the situation thus:

Celui-ci attaque un desordre contre lequel on déclamera toujours, et que vraisemblablement on ne corrigera jamais, tous les Hommes aimant les Spectacles, et le Théâtre, étant de tous les Spectacles, celui qui joint à l'agréable une plus grande apparence d'utile (XIV, 253-54).

With the increasing corruption came opposition to this state of affairs and discussions arose concerning the improvement of comedy and tragedy. ✓ It was thought that the theatre should combat vice by inspiring virtue. To bring about a reform, it was suggested that ladies should be warned about plays which were not up to a proper moral standard, so that their absence on such occasions would be an effective weapon. Another suggestion was that preaching from the pulpit would be a means for denouncing the abuse of drama. The editor commented on the reforms suggested in an article written by Blackmore:

Il souhaiteroit qu'on ne vît paroître sur le Théâtre que des Comédies et des Tragedies, propres à inspirer l'amour de la Vertu

et à faire détester le Vice; et qu'elles fussent si innocents qu'un Evêque même y pût assister, sans en être choqué. . . Il dit, entre autres choses, que si l'on avoit soin d'avertir les Dames, que certaines Comédies sont remplies de Sentimens, d'Allusions, et d'Idées qui blessent la pudeur, elles ne se trouveroient plus au Théâtre, lorsque l'on continue d'y représenter des Pièces, où elles n'avoient pas remarqué ces défauts. L'absence des Dames seroit apparemment un moyen plus efficace pour réformer le Théâtre, que celui que l'Auteur propose à la fin de cet Essai. Il voudroit que le Clergé prêchât vigoureusement contre les abus, dont on vient de parler; et il croit que le Théâtre ne résisteroit pas long-temps aux Batteries de la Chaire (I, 318-19).

It is shown by the preceding paragraph that the low morality of the drama was causing comment and that ideas were being offered for its improvement.

Pamphlets appear to have been very popular at this time. Reference to them is made throughout the Bibliothèque anglaise, in the avertissemens, and in the editorial comments. These brochures discussed various topics of interest in the eighteenth century. In the avertissement the editor says of these pamphlets:

. . . je ne m'arrêterai pas à toutes les Brochures, qui fourmillent dans ce Pais; mais il y en a quelques-unes de la dernière importance, qui contiennent plus de Vérités essentielles au Christianisme, et au bien de la Société civile, que de gros Volumes; et l'on en trouvera de beaux Exemples dans cette Bibliothèque Angloise (Avertissement, Vol. I, Part I).

In the same volume the editor again tells of their use:

Il n'y a point de Pais, où l'on imprime un si grand nombre de Brochures qu'en Angleterre. Ces petits Ouvrages roulent ordinairement sur des matieres de Religion ou de Politique (I, 204).

As can be seen by the foregoing paragraph, these pamphlets treated various matters of current discussion and were probably read by a great number of people.

Literary criticism was common from the beginning until the middle of the century, or from the death of Dryden in 1700 to the death of Pope in 1744, on account of the great influence of these men. Critics at this

time were especially interested in the classic authors of Greece and Rome whose works they corrected and explained to make them more intelligible to the public. However, these critics did not have sufficient tact and their writings contained a number of insults unworthy of literary men, according to the words of the editor:

J'avoue que plusieurs Critiques, qui ont travaillé à expliquer les anciens Auteurs, n'ont pas eu assez de politesse; et que l'on trouve dans leurs Ecrits une infinité d'injures de personnes, qui font profession d'étudier les Belles Lettres. Mais, nonobstant tous ces défauts, on ne saurait nier qu'ils ne fassent souvent paroître beaucoup d'esprit, de savoir, et de pénétration (I, 289).

Although one may sometimes condemn the severity of their judgments, these critics did produce works which gave evidence of much scholarly thought.

The paragraph above indicates the type of criticism that was done.

The editor, in speaking of a history of the Reformation from the crowning of Elizabeth to 1580, reflected criticism:

L'Ouvrage même feroit plus de plaisir, s'il étoit mieux écrit. On n'y voit qu'avec quelque dégoût un grand nombre de Faits entassés crûement sans liaison, et sans autre ordre que celui du temps. Mais il faut tout dire. Ce que ce Livre perd du côté de l'agrément, il le regagne avec usure du côté de l'utile (XIII, 288-89).

The preceding paragraph shows that literary productions were often freely criticized.

Humor was found in English comedy and believed to be characteristic of the English people, but it was more in the satiric vein of which the extreme type is best exemplified by Swift and Pope. The editor commented as follows on the various definitions of the English word "humor" discussed by Sir William Temple:⁵

⁵ Sir William Temple (1628-99) was an English statesman who wrote essays and was an advocate of the Ancients in the quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns.

Ce Gentilhomme a soutenu que, ce tour d'esprit manquant aux autres Peuples, il leur est impossible d'attraper le Comique fin et divertissant du Théâtre Anglois. . . Humour signifie tant de choses, dans la Langue Angloise. . . Tout ce qu'il y a de fixe, c'est qu'il porte toujours l'idée d'une chose qui plaît ou qui divertit. Il me semble donc que Mrs. les Anglois estiment trop leur Humour, . . (XIII, 397-98).

Thus one observes that although humor was important in English comedy, it was not as essential as the English wished foreigners to believe.

The Nouvelles littéraires or Nouvelles de la littérature were, for the most part, announcements of works that were on the press or would go to press in the near future. This list consisted of foreign works printed in England, translations, new editions of works that had already been published, and criticisms of old manuscripts. If a new edition was being printed, an announcement might state that corrections had been made, or that an appendix had been added which contained notes, the author's life, or one of his works which had not been published before.

In the Nouvelles littéraires one usually found the title and author, the number of the edition or reprint, the statement of the subject, the number of pages or volumes, the date, and, in the longer announcements, a short review containing extracts and comments. These announcements varied in length from about an inch, as in Volume III, page 533, to several pages, as in Volume XIV, pages 263-73.

As mentioned in the introduction of this study, the Nouvelles littéraires listed books on a variety of subjects. Among the longer notices appears an interesting item (XIV, 263) announcing the sale in London of the French edition of the letters of Madame de Sévigné. A long discussion was

given of the second volume of the Annales des Provinces Unies by James Basnage, a French Protestant minister of the seventeenth century. An announcement (XII, 248) was made of the printing at London of a new edition of the Essais de Michel Montaigne with some letters by the author and an improved index, while in Volume VIII, page 256, was mentioned an article concerning the plague at Marseilles, to which was added some observations on the London plague. This work was written by Richard Bradley, a member of the Royal Society of England. These selected articles furnish examples of the variety of works appearing in the London book-shops.

In addition to literary articles such as those mentioned above, there were reviews of other works, especially concerning theology, history, and science although less space was devoted to these than to the reviews of works more distinctly literary. The following selected topics will show the variety of subjects reviewed in the Bibliothèque anglaise: a political pamphlet on the affairs of the time, a dissertation on modern theology, a sermon of Mr. Smallridge, a commentary on the First Epistle of St. John, a discussion of the diseases of the skin, an essay on the natural history of the earth and terrestrial bodies, a French translation of Terence, an essay on the nature and place of Hell, a history of the time of Charles II and James II, the history of Europe from 1668 to 1678, a treatment of logic or the right use of reason, a modern history of all the nations of the world, the life of the Anglican divine, Chillingworth, the life and writings of John Toland, a new edition of Boyer's Dictionary, and works on anatomy.

The Nouvelles littéraires gave other information in addition to the list of books on the press. In Volume III and IV respectively were reported

the deaths of Mr. Petiver and Mr. Cumberland. The announcement concerning the former was, "La mort vient de nous enlever Mr. Petiver, fameux Botaniste de Londres, et Membre de la Société Royale" (XII, 553). The notice about the latter read as follows:

La République des Lettres vient de perdre le savant Mr. Cumberland, Evêque de Peterborough, dont nous avons un excellent Ouvrage, intitulé De Legibus Naturae. Les Devoirs de la Morale y sont établis sur un fondement inébranlable (IV, 552).

It is seen how the Nouvelles littéraires kept the reading public informed of the large number of interesting works which were going to press. The books listed may have been foreign works that were printed in England, translations, or works by English authors. Thus, by reading these announcements, readers would be aided in their purchasing of books.

At this time in England some authors published their books by subscription. Nothing is said about this method before Volume VII, but in the remainder of the volumes of the Bibliothèque anglaise it is mentioned frequently. A quotation was given (IX, 527) announcing the printing of the poetry of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, followed by the editor's comment concerning the publication of the poems, while in another volume (X, 538) a comparison was made between the cost of publication of Rousseau's poetic works by subscription and the new edition of Essais de Montaigne. When publishing his works by subscription, the author would obtain from subscribers a specified amount of money, the remainder to be paid upon receipt of the copy. If the book failed to materialize, the money was returned to the subscribers.

This method of publication had its disadvantages. Although some publishers made an effort to satisfy the public by publishing books well printed on a good quality of paper, others had no scruples in letting the

system fall into abuse. The editor said in the Nouvelles littéraires: "Les Auteurs, ou plutôt les Libraires ont si bien abusé de la Méthode des Souscriptions, qu'ils l'ont désormais presque rendue impraticable" (XIV, 261). Of unscrupulous schemes he said:

Mais à voir du Papier sale et des Caracteres usés, on remarque un peu trop de lézine, et ce n'est pas un des moindres griefs que la Méthode des Souscriptions a nécessairement introduit dans la Librairie. J'ai dit quelque part que c'est désormais un vrai brigandage et je ne m'en dédis point (XIV, 207-08).

The practice of charging several cents per sheet, not including the cost of binding, made a book very expensive. Sometimes a book was sold in parts rather than as a whole. The following paragraph explained the situation:

Ils font traduire à loisir les plus grands Ouvrages François, ou compiler des Extraits de gros Volumes, et vous débitent cela par Brochures à tant de Feuilles par Mois; de sorte qu'à la fin la Piece complete coûtera peut-être le double de ce qu'elle auroit coûté, et de ce qu'on la vendroit, si le tout eût paru à la fois (XIV, 262).

The system of publication became so expensive that a person of ordinary means could often not afford to buy a book. The editor voiced the opinion of the people when he said:

Si cela continue, il n'y aura plus que les grands Seigneurs qui puissent avoir des Livres et le Savoir sera mis en parti comme le sont le Tabac et le Sel en quelques Etats de l'Europe (XIV, 208).

In that satirical remark the editor compared the high price of books in England with heavily taxed articles of other European countries in order to reveal the publication abuses of the former.

The method of selling by subscription lost its popularity by falling into the abuses mentioned. With the rise in prices, the sales

fell and the publishers had to refrain from their unscrupulous practices.

The English people had been struggling for centuries to secure personal liberties, especially those of freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and had succeeded in obtaining them to a large extent. The editor gives due credit for these privileges to the Anglican Church:

La liberté qu'on y a de dire, d'écrire, et même de prêcher tout ce que l'on veut, tant sur ces matières que sur plusieurs autres qui sont peut-être plus chatouilleuses, cette liberté, dis-je, doit être d'un grand secours pour parvenir à la connoissance exacte des choses. La Nation Angloise est en général fort éclairée, et l'Eglise Episcopale en particulier a tous les Avantages temporels qui peuvent animer les Savans, et faciliter le Savoir (VII, 3).

Although the people of England had greater liberty of expression than did those of most of the other European countries, there were some books not considered good for the welfare of the Church or of the State. Suppression of such works only served to arouse the people's curiosity. As soon as a work was suppressed, the people, having a greater desire to obtain it, exerted all their energies toward this end and a larger circulation than usual was the result. A nation, once having had partial freedom, would struggle to obtain full freedom, and the idea that it would be futile to hinder them was expressed in the editor's comment:

On croit que l'intérêt de la Religion demande qu'on les cache, ou qu'on ne les montre qu'avec de grandes précautions. Mais quel est l'effet que cela produit? C'est de donner un grand relief à ces Livres, de les faire rechercher avec plus d'ardeur, de les laisser tomber en partage aux personnes qui ont déjà de mauvaises inclinations, et de les rendre par-là véritablement dangereux (XI, 76).

The curiosity of the people served to stimulate the circulation of suppressed books.

In order to retain liberty, it was necessary to diffuse knowledge throughout the nation. The Royal Society aided in disseminating information in England and also in giving foreign nations an account of discoveries and progress in England. Study was to be encouraged so that

those seeking the truth in all matters would become enlightened citizens. The editor, in speaking of the article on the history of the Royal Society of London by Mr. Sprat,⁶ commented thus on the advantage of a government favorable to the promotion of knowledge where people were encouraged to seek the truth:

. . . et je ne comprends pas pourquoi M. Sprat ne parle pas en cet endroit de la douceur du Gouvernement Anglois si favorable à toute sorte d' Etudes. Il me semble qu'on auroit dû s'y attendre d'un Homme extrêmement zélé pour l'honneur de sa Patrie, et qui n'aimeoit pas à perdre les occasions de la faire valoir. . . J'y voudrois un grand nombre de Bibliothèques publiques, des Libraires honnêtes-gens, des Savans communicatifs, une Noblesse et des Princes éclairés, et amis du Savoir, et sur tout point d' Inquisition. Mais où aller pour rencontrer tout cela? Ne pouvant tout avoir, contentons-nous de ce que nous avons, et crions à haute voix, heureuse Angleterre pour les gens studieux qui cherchent la Verité! (XI, 50-53).

With the government's favorable attitude, people were encouraged and dared to give expression to their thoughts.

Freedom of speaking and writing was promoted by Robert Boyle in his foundation of a series of lectures in which ministers preached during the years 1692 to 1726. Their sermons were printed immediately after having been pronounced. The more freedom was to be exercised, the more it was certain to exist. Such was also the opinion of the editor in comparing Boyle's lecture ship with that of a preceding plan when he said:

Ici la Raison s'exerce à souhait dans le champ le plus vaste et le plus magnifique; au lieu que dans l'autre, humiliée et contrainte, elle ne connoit qu'un Sentier où le moindre écart est à craindre pour elle. Plus libre et plus hardie, dans la Carrière que Mr. Boyle lui a ouverte, elle n'y est gênée ni par l'unité de l'objet, ni par (sic) l'uniformité du tour" (XIV, 493).

These words show that Boyle was an advocate of freedom.

When Toland was in disfavor with the ministry, he, in numerous

⁶ Thomas Sprat (1635-1713) was the bishop of Rochester and was interested in literature.

pamphlets, clearly expressed his opinion against the government. He wrote freely on many subjects and, as the editor suggested, there was probably no subject that Toland would not attack if he were offered pay for his services:

Ce dernier, qui n'avoit d'autre gagne-pain que sa Plume, n'étoit pas autrement délicat sur le choix des sujets. Pourvû qu'on le payât, il s'embarrassoit peu du reste (XIV, 330).

The fact that the sermons preached at Boyle's foundation and the works of Toland and others were printed shows that there was freedom of the press along with the freedom of speech, and England, as well as Holland, were the two countries which enjoyed more freedom in this respect than did the other European countries. In speaking of Clark's⁷ treatise, L'Existence et des Attributs de Dieu, the editor adds the following footnote which states the place of its printing: "Elle a été imprimée à Amsterdam en 1717, et se trouve chez le Libraire qui fait imprimer ce Journal" (VII, 474). Again, in speaking of Rival's⁸ pamphlet, Le Missionnaire Démasqué, which was printed in English and in French in 1724, the editor made this note: "Elles sont aussi imprimées à Amsterdam, où on les trouve chez P. De Goun, qui fait imprimer ce Journal" (XII, 32). These notes show that English works from England were printed abroad as well as at home. Having crossed the Dutch border, they could rather easily get into other countries which had less freedom and where they could exert considerable influence.

The English people were encouraged to express themselves more freely, both in speech and in writing, because their government was more favorable than those of most of the other countries in promoting the spread of know-

⁷ This man was a brother of John Clark, D. D., who in 1719 preached a sermon on the cause and origin of evil which is reviewed in the Bibliothèque anglaise (VII, 472-501).

⁸ Rival was chaplain of the king in the French chapel of St. James at London.

ledge. The censorship on literature was not so rigid in England as in many European countries, so that foreign works, which were banned in their own land, were printed in England although Holland was also a fruitful field for the publication of prohibited works. The books and the pamphlets which were popular during the eighteenth century were smuggled into other countries, and leading men from these nations coming to England took home new ideas. Thus by freedom of speech and of the press, England had fostered a literary productivity that contained the thoughts and ideas which during the century were influential not only in England but also in other countries.

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

In the time of the reign of the Stuarts, the idea of the divine right of kings theoretically gave the monarchs absolute control over the people but in practice this theory was not always successful because the people rebelled against the authority of their kings. During the early eighteenth century, when the Hanover line came to the throne (1714), a belief began to be prevalent that there was no divine command which prescribed one form of government as preferable to another. Man is free and may choose any type of government which he judges will best suit his needs. This is the idea of natural law or la loi naturelle by which men live in harmony under the ruler they have chosen to guide and protect them. This plan of government provides for the obligation of obedience on the part of the people and protection and guidance on the part of the monarch. The king, as well as the people, should follow la loi naturelle, according to the comment of the editor:

Il me semble que de tous les malheurs qui peuvent arriver à une Nation, il n'y en a point de plus grands Criminels que les Ministres, qui conseillent aux Princes de violer les Préceptes de la Loi Naturelle, et les Loix Fondamentales de l'Etat (I, 332).

A form of government under natural law can not well exist if either the monarch or the people take advantage of it.

In England at this time, a foreign ruler, George I, gave the people an opportunity to exercise power without dictation from the monarch. There was little dispute between the king and the political party in power because the latter made and obeyed its own laws. During the period between the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), ending the War of the Spanish Succession,

and the ascension of George II to the throne (1727), the English government enjoyed comparative quiet. The Whigs and Tories who had been engaged in a bitter contest during the days of Queen Anne had now laid aside their disputes. The former had the majority and began encouraging and supporting commerce by passing laws which were to their interests and benefit while their foreign king paid little attention to them. In the following comment the editor suggested that the making of trade laws with selfish interests should be discouraged by the people and by the court in order to conserve the peace and liberty for the people who would otherwise probably suffer the evil results of a panic:

Que faut-il conclurre de tout ceci? Le Peuple, qui souhaite la conservation de son repos, et de sa liberté, doit souhaiter l'extinction de ce Négoce, qui à la longue ruinera les meilleures Maisons, et pourroit bien conduire à l'Esclavage. La Cour la doit aussi désirer, si elle ne veut pas se décréditer dans l'opinion du Peuple en se mêlant à un Commerce qui ne peut lui faire honneur; ou si elle ne veut pas être perpétuellement exposée à l'insulte de ses Ennemis, qui profitent avec adresse de la moindre occasion d'affaiblir le crédit public, et qui ne sont en cela que trop bien soutenus par les Whigs, ambitieux et avarés, dont le nombre augmente tous les jours (VI, 243-44).

With the new trade laws of the Whigs in force, commerce began to prosper at first. The South Sea Company reaped great profits and soon other companies were established, selling shares to everyone who wanted to buy in the hope of becoming wealthy. In speaking of the speculators, the editor says, "C'est un torrent qui a entraîné tout le monde, le Seigneur comme le Bourgeois, le Théologien comme le Marchand, le Philosophe comme le Garçon de boutique"(VII, 460).

People were so absorbed in buying shares and reading stock reports in the papers, that they failed to reflect upon the excessive prices that

the stock attained. The editor comments on their intense interest:

Les Disputes de Politique, et de Religion sont en quelque sorte entièrement abandonnées. La diversité des sentimens est assoupie, si elle n'est pas éteinte. . . Les puissantes Factions des Whigs et des Torys sont à présent réunies. Elles ont enfin les memes craintes, et les memes esperances (VII, 462).

While nearly everyone was centering his interests, time, and money on this great commercial adventure, a few people like Robert Walpole and his followers who distrusted the venture wondered how long the situation would last. The speculation which began with the granting of a charter in 1711 reached its peak in 1720 when an act of Parliament gave to the South Sea Company the management of the national debt in return for a considerable sum. Thus confidence in the company was renewed and shares reached the exorbitant price of one thousand one hundred pounds each. In August of that year the crash came and stock fell to thirty-three pounds a share and in April, 1721, Walpole, the famous financier, took charge of the treasury to stabilize the nation's financial chaos in which many people lost the saving of a lifetime and were sorely in need while a few made a fortune. The editor described the condition as follows:

Que les affaires ont changé de face dans ce Roiaume depuis le mois d'Août dernier! Tout y étoit alors dans la joie, ou dans l'esperance. Tout y est à présent dans la crainte, et dans l'affliction. . . L'immense hausse des Fonds publics a été suivie d'une cherté si prodigieuse, et si subite qu'il n'est presque point de Familles que ce Coup n'ait ébranlé, s'il ne les a pas accablées. On diroit que la Nation a été livrée au pillage d'une Trentaine de petites gens qui se sont enrichis de ses dépouilles, et qui ont exécuté ce dessein avec tant d'adresse et de promptitude, que cette Nation, qui au commencement de l'année 1720 étoit une des plus riches et des plus heureuses qu'il y eût sur la Terre, en a été une des plus malheureuses et des plus pauvres avant la fin de la meme année (IX, 116-17).

Thus troubles and affliction, brought about as a result of the panic, were general among the people of England, with the exception of a few who had

prospered by the misfortunes of others.

The king, George I, on account of his lack of fluency in speaking English, permitted the party in power to act very nearly as it pleased. If a man wished to succeed in a political scheme or to obtain an office, he could usually attain his wishes by the bribery of those in power. The following words, apparently those of the editor, seemed to express Walpole's statement that "every man has his price".⁸

On n'a pas encore oublié que, pendant la dispute des deux Compagnies d' Orient, les Voix de ceux qui devoient choisir les Membres du Parlement étoient achetées, ou du moins marchandées par l'une ou par l'autre (VI, 242).

Thus the early eighteenth century witnessed the rise of government control by the minister at the head of the leading political party of Parliament.

The Church and State were separate powers, but some of the laws still showed the influence of the church. The people wished to have Charles Edward Stuart, the grandson of James II, rule the nation at Queen Anne's death, provided that he renounce the Catholic religion. His refusal to do so brought George I to the throne. Friction such as this proved that the two groups would never work in harmony. The editor spoke of the separation of power as follows:

.... C'est qu'on voudroit concilier deux choses absolument incompatibles, et les Anglois qui ont senti l'embarras, n'en ont pas fait à deux fois. Ils ont conservé à la Couronne la Souveraineté temporelle dans sa plus grande indépendance, et n'ont laissé qu'à JESUS-CHRIST la puissance absolue et infinie sur la Conscience des Hommes (XIV, 27).

Thus an agreement gave the temporal power to the sovereign and the spiritual to the church.

⁸ Edward P. Cheney, A Short History of England (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1919), p. 548.

Difficulties were encountered by the English in ruling over the Irish people. Those of the higher classes emigrated and those who remained and continued to be rebellious were subjected by laws made by Parliament, which consisted mostly of Protestants. The Irish, who were Catholics, disliked the Englishmen who occupied their dispossessed lands because these lords had received them in return for aiding the Crown in the subjugation of the Irish. The new masters did not exert any effort toward gaining the respect of the conquered, but continued to annoy them. The following note inserted by the editor explains the identity of the conquerors:

On entend par là les Seigneurs et Gentilshommes Anglois, qui servirent le Roi de leurs personnes et de leurs Vassaux pour conquérir le Royaume d' Irlande (XV, 403).

The laws of Fanistrie and of Gavelkind concerned succession and inheritance and further antagonized a tormented people. These laws provided for an equal division of land among the sons of the English lords, including the illegitimate ones, so that the land of the dispossessed Irishman would remain in the hands of the conquerors. If there were no sons, the property would go to the nearest male relative of the new owner. If Irishmen willed their land to their sons, it was turned over to the English government unless these sons renounced the Catholic faith. The editor comments on the above-named laws:

Ceci regloit la Succession des Grands, chez qui le plus accredité des Parens heritoit, desorte que souvent c'étoit la Loi du plus fort (XV, 403). . . Par cette Loi l'Heredité se partageoit à portions égales entre tous les Enfans mâles, sans en excepter les Bâtards, et, au défaut d' Enfans mâles, entre les plus prochains du sang, à l'exclusion des Femmes (XV, 404).

These laws practically excluded the Irish from the right to hold property and served only to cause more friction.

The requirement that a person had to be a graduate of the Universities of Cambridge and of Oxford to hold an ecclesiastic benefice in England was a restriction connected with religion. In the following words the editor states the idea of this law, ". . . qu'il faut nécessairement être gradué dans l'une ou l'autre de nos Universités, pour posséder légitimement aucun Benefice Ecclesiastique en Angleterre" (X, 278).

In general, the period of the rule of George I and the first years of George II was comparatively quiet. There were no great international wars and the only great excitement, the period of speculation, was of rather short duration. Natural law was the basis upon which the people were ruling through the king who said little and did less. Walpole having eased the country somewhat from the miseries of the panic, the smouldering Irish difficulties being far from home, and the few ever-present religious disputes upsetting the government but little, the first period of the Hanover rule appeared rather peaceful as compared to the events of the troubled period of the Revolution and the Restoration.

CHAPTER IV

THE CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

Ignorance was the cause of much of the superstition among the English people, but many of the old customs and beliefs were being discarded because of education which enlightened the upper classes. However, the lower classes largely remained in darkness and continued to adhere to the old ideas as much as did their ancestors in centuries past. They still had definite customs concerning ceremony in the church as well as beliefs concerning the influence of stars and various other signs, and showed little faith in the medical profession. The editor spoke of the existence of old ideas and practices as follows:

En Angleterre, comme ailleurs, le Commun Peuple a retenu de l'ancien temps, je ne sai combien de petits Prejuges ou de menues Ceremonies, qui n'ont d'autre raison que la Tradition et que la Coutume (XV, 344).

In illustrating a Japanese practice, a story is told of a prince who, born under the sign of the dog, favored these animals and required their burial on a mountain top. The editor wished to show that similar ideas might be current in other countries by asking, "Ce raisonnement à la Japonoise ne se fait-il qu'au Japon?" (XV, 48).

With perhaps such a condition at home, the more educated people needed to turn serious thought to the state of ignorance among the masses, and the editor suggested that it might be well to give some consideration to the enlightenment of the common people:

. . . et sans nous amuser davantage à combattre des fantômes de pure imagination, nous ferons quelque chose de plus utile pour tous les Hommes si nous nous arrêtons un peu en cet endroit à considérer ce qui pourroit les rendre moins superstitieux et plus sages (IX, 318-19).

A few examples listed below will show the types of ideas and customs prevalent among the common people. The appearance of heavenly phenomena, especially with regard to the stars, caused much discussion among the people and had a great effect in directing their lives. In the following paragraph the editor commented on the belief in the influence of heavenly bodies on mankind:

La Pensée suppose que les Astres ont beaucoup d'influence sur les affaires humaines, et l'on voit par là que le plus grand savoir ne nous élève pas toujours au-dessus des Erreurs vulgaires. . . Ne nous moquons donc de personne. Chacun a ses infirmités, les uns d'une manière, et les autres d'une autre façon. Le Ciel les distribue assez également entre les Hommes pour leur ôter tout sujet de rire aux dépens du Prochain. Ce que je dis des Particuliers doit aussi s'entendre des Peuples. . . (IX, 219-20).

It was believed that fermenting particles from the atmosphere of a comet mixing with those of the earth's atmosphere corrupted the air Man breathed and thus shortened his span of life. The following words which seem to be those of the editor expressed this thought:

. . . comme ce mélange, dis-je, et cette fermentation se firent naturellement par degrés; on ne doit pas être surpris qu'elles aient peu à peu corrompu l'air, gâté le temperament des Hommes, et abrégé le cours de leur Vie (III, 429).

The editor of the Bibliothèque anglaise seems to believe in the theory that the fermenting of particles of a comet contaminated the atmosphere of the earth.

In one of the volumes the editor stated the belief that a meteor appearing in winter signified very cold weather and its appearance in autumn before harvest was a sign of an abundant crop:

. . . mais s'il paroît dans l'Hiver, c'est signe d'un grand froid, et s'il paroît dans l'Automne avant la Moisson, les Faisans en concluent que la recolte sera très-abondante (VII, 425).

In reading these examples one can easily understand how these beliefs in-

fluenced the lives of ignorant or uneducated people.

Religious beliefs and customs played an important part in the lives of the people at that time. Much discussion was held concerning those who did not follow the majority. A few examples will show some of the customs practiced.

Several of the Protestant sects used Psalms in rhymed verse, with music, but the Catholics and Anglicans sanctioned only the Psalter in prose which was the only one approved by Parliament. The former, introduced by the Anglican fugitives on their return after the persecutions of Mary Tudor had ceased, did not have this legal approval, but the kings permitted its printing for those who cared to use it. The editor's comments explained the situation in these words:

. . . il ne s'agit que du Pseautier en Prose qui est actuellement le seul que la Loi Parlementaire ait jamais ratifié depuis la Réformation. L'autre, qui est en Rime, n'ayant pas la même autorité, ne fait point partie légale du Rituel Anglican. . . Il n'y a donc proprement ni Loi civile, ni Canon Ecclesiastique qui ait fait entrer ce Chant dans le Culte public, et c'est sur ce fondement que quelques Curés n'ont point voulu le permettre dans leurs Paroisses (XI, 294-95).

Thus the paragraph quoted indicates that the prose Psalters were more commonly accepted than those in poetry.

A current custom of the church was the reading aloud of the names of those who did charity work or gave alms and stating the amount given. This method undoubtedly had the effect of encouraging larger gifts. The editor commented on this practice thus:

On s'en trouva sans doute si bien, qu'on ne laissa pas tomber une coutume si utile. C'est prendre les Hommes par leur foible que d'en préconiser les Aumônes, et l'on ne manque guère d'amorcer les Bienfaiteurs, lors qu'on a le secret d'en publier les Bienfaits sans en choquer la modestie (X, 7).

Most of the more conservative ministers, as well as many of the laity, believed that a child should have a Biblical name or one of Christian significance. A clergyman could refuse to baptize a child if he were given a name other than one of the types mentioned. In the following paragraph an unusual name was given:

J'ai lu dans une Histoire du dernier Siècle, qu'un grand Fanatique du temps de Cromwell avoit nom, Loue Dieu en Christ; car sans lui tu aurois été damné (I, 131).

Other names, that were not so long as the one mentioned above but which were unusual, are listed in what is apparently the editor's comment:

On nous dit que le même Ministre avoit accoutumé de donner aux Enfants, qu'il baptisoit, des Noms fort singuliers; savoir, Nouvelle Joye; D'en haut; Nouveaux Fruits; Poussiere (V, 335-36).

These names that were mentioned above were probably more the exception than the rule, and names of saints were commonly used for children.

In the field of medicine, very little was generally known, and because the people were ignorant, they had many superstitious ideas. If doctors did not know the causes of some diseases, the superstitions of the people often prevented or hindered post-mortem examinations. In fact, the people often had little use for physicians and continued to follow their old beliefs.

Scrofula or the "King's Evil" was a disease which it was thought could be cured by a king's touch. The Stuarts were believed to have had this power, but William III and the Hanover rulers were from foreign countries and the people did not have so much faith in them. The editor commented on this belief thus:

C'est une Opinion en Angleterre, que les Rois y jouissent du rare privilège de guérir les humeurs froides en touchant les Malades.

On se s'en tient pas à cela. Quantité de gens prétendent encore que le Ciel ne favorise de ce don miraculeux que les Monarques qui ont un droit légitime à la Couronne (X, 93).

The French kings, according to legend, were also endowed with the power to cure scrofula. The editor's comment gave the French name for the disease: "En Anglois, the King's Evil, c'est-à-dire, le Mal du Roi, pour insinuer sans doute que le Roi le guérit. On l'appelle en François les Ecouelles" (X, 96).

Scurvy was a common disease, and the people believed it was caused by the amount of meat and hard drinks that they consumed, the nitric humidity of the air, and the variability of the seasons. The editor commented as follows:

De toutes ces Maladies Chroniques, il n'en est point de plus commune en Angleterre que le Scorbut, qui se mêle toujours plus ou moins dans toutes les autres. . . On doit l'attribuer tant à la quantité des Viandes et des Liqueurs fermentées qu'on y prend, qu'à l'humidité nitreuse de l'Air, et à l'inconstance des Saisons (XII, 308-09).

The paragraph quoted above reveals the extent of the knowledge of the people concerning scurvy.

On account of the belief that a Frenchman was responsible for the transportation of venereal disease to Turkey, the English gave the disease a French name. The editor in his comment said: "Ainsi ce sera sans doute avec toute la raison du monde, que les Turcs appelleront désormais cette Maladie, le Mal François comme on le nomme en Angleterre" (XII, 121).

Smallpox was one of the most serious diseases and caused many disfigurements and a considerable loss of life. It appeared in its greatest frequency in the eighteenth century and was as prevalent as measles is now. Although people dreaded this disease, they were skeptical of the new practice of vaccination and often believed that it would cause bovine traits to develop in the child vaccinated, that hoofs and horns would develop, and that bellowing would replace speech. In speaking of a scientist's efforts and the reaction of the people, the editor suggests the opposition of the latter by saying,

" . . . il paroît un peu mortifié de ce qu'il y a dans le Monde des gens qui prétendent que cette méthode n'est pas exempte de crime" (X, 385). Some people were so opposed to vaccination that they believed that it should be prohibited as if it were a crime.

Bleeding was a remedy for many ills. At times the patients would feel relieved but sometimes they died from loss of blood. In the following words, which are apparently those of the editor, this comment was given concerning relief by bleeding:

On me dispensera bien de suivre mon Auteur dans ses Narrations; mais je ne ferois pas mon devoir, si je n'avertissois qu'il y a, dans la seconde Histoire, une petite digression sur la Saignée, qui merite l'attention des Savans. C'est à l'occasion d'une évacuation de dix Onces de sang qui fut faite à un Malade le quatrieme jour, et qui fit un bien notable pour faciliter la Respiration, et pour abbatre la Fièvre (VI, 348-9).

It is seen by the foregoing passage that bleeding was a common remedy to give a patient some relief.

Another old superstition was that a birth-mark was a result of fear, fright, or unnatural longing which manifested itself on an unborn child in the shape of the thing causing the mark. The editor, in speaking of a physician's treatise on the natural causes of birthmarks said:

On attribue cet Ouvrage à Mr. Blondel, Medecin François, d'un grand mérite à Londres. Si ce bruit public n'est pas faux, l'Auteur, qui a eû la modestie de vouloir être anonyme, ne doit point trouver mauvais qu'un autre que lui le fasse connoître. Son Ecrit lui fait trop d'honneur pour laisser son nom dans l'oubli (XV, 286).

The editor of the Bibliothèque anglaise praised the author for showing that the belief in the unnatural causes of birthmarks was a vulgar error.

There were certain days which superstition indicated as favorable or unfavorable to certain enterprises. The editor disagreed with this belief: "Quelle impertinence! On veut que le troisieme de Novembre soit

plus funeste que le quatrieme, et sur quel fondé je vous prie! (IX, 206).

In spite of the fact that the custom of tournaments had been generally abolished in England, the system of dueling was so deeply rooted that it still existed, as the following comment would indicate:

Mais il n'en est pas de même d'un autre Abus qui y est fort ancien et fort enraciné; je veux parler des Duels, où l'on cherche à laver, dans le sang d'un Ennemi, l'Affront qu'on en a reçu (VI, 206).

It was believed that if a small insect called the "Death Watch" was heard, that there would be an approaching death. The following paragraph of the editor's comment suggested how the insect acquired its name:

Le bruit qu'elle fait à coups redoublés passe communément pour l'avis d'une mort prochaine. A cause de cela les Anglois appellent cet Insecte Death Watch, ou l'Avertisseur de la Mort (XIV, 28-29).

It is interesting to note that women were believed to have been especially susceptible to the acquisition and spread of strange ideas or superstitions, and powers of witchcraft were often attributed to them. The editor in speaking of the second dissertation of Mr. Toland said, ". . . et dans la II. on remarque que les Femmes sont toujours les premières que l'on empaume, quand on veut établir la Superstition" (IX, 252).

A large part of these beliefs and customs were current because the masses lacked the education which would have enabled them to understand and to reason for themselves concerning causes and underlying principles. This was the reason they were willing to attribute certain unusual causes to things they did not understand, and these beliefs influenced their customs.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Upon considering the English people in regard to their literature, government, and customs and superstitions as presented in the Bibliothèque anglaise (1717-28) by the editor's comments, one obtains an idea of what these people thought and did during this period in their history. Besides much religious material, the Bibliothèque anglaise contains scientific and political articles. The popularity of the periodical was evident and its ideas reached and influenced other countries, especially France, where articles discussing similar subjects began to appear. The French refugees in London welcomed visitors from their native land, and these brought English thought home with them. The Bibliothèque anglaise is especially important as representing an early period of the French interest in England as it precedes by several years Voltaire's Lettres philosophiques (1734).

During the early eighteenth century, the English became more interested in a variety of things and many types of literature were being written and published. There was a revival of interest in the study and writing of epic poetry. Many translations of foreign works were made. In regard to the drama, there was a discussion about its moral qualities, and suggestions were made for its purification. The study of history was encouraged. Various historical works and dictionaries for the compilation of knowledge in various fields became more common. Literary criticism, both of English works and of the old Greek and Roman classics, was undertaken. Humor in literature was much talked of at that time, but it did not appear to have been so important

as the English would have led one to believe.

Freedom of speech and of the press made it easier for the people of England to gain access to the various types of literature. It was not possible to do this in most of the other European countries. The titles of the works mentioned in the Nouvelles littéraires indicate what a variety of literature was being published at this time and also pointed out how much freedom people had in discussing topics of the day.

Some of the authors of this period published their works by subscription. This system prospered until corruption entered. Conditions became so bad that it was almost impossible for the people to buy a book on account of its high price. Then the sales began to drop and the publishers had to change their unscrupulous practices.

During his rule, George I had little actual power because he allowed it to revert to Parliament in which the stronger party, the Whigs, did much as they pleased. This transition was accomplished gradually and quietly because the king's lack of fluency in speech caused him to absent himself from all parliamentary meetings possible. The prevalence of the idea of natural law was the basis upon which the people made laws. The party in power encouraged and stimulated trade, and prosperity with corruption finally led to a panic, in which practically the whole nation suffered. Some religious discussions arose, and the granting of benefices or livings was made only to Cambridge and Oxford graduates. A stubborn struggle existed in connection with succession and inheritance which further antagonized the dispossessed Irish. However, with the Tory-Whig dissension temporarily calmed, the Irish trouble far from home, and the economic situation improving under the guidance of Robert Walpole, the rule of George I was quite peaceful as com-

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