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Charity a degrading influence
of the 18th Century.

I cannot quite picture to you the
condition in which England found
herself in the 18th Century. It is not
at all surprising to find an intense
reaction from the extremes of the Puritan
movement under such sway as
we enter the movements of life in
the opening of the eighteenth Century
to which we now turn our atten-
tion.

You will remember how we
trace the development of the
Puritan movement from its first
faint beginnings through the long
centuries to its final dramatic
struggle with the King and his
followers; ~~and~~ how under the
masterful power of Cromwell, and
his magnificent army, who rested
upon the teachings of the Bible for
their authority and guidance, the

issue between over what constituted^{the}
the right to govern was fought out
upon the battle fields of Naseby and
Marston Town. It was a period of
tremendous political and religious
excitement, in which we accumulated
all the deepest, and well as the worst
brutal feelings of man's nature.

But the reaction comes. The Puritan
fever, so tremendous and sweeping
in its rage, and not entirely with-
out its periods of delirium, had passed
the crisis, and the way to health was
now opened up.

In the early years of the 18th century
we find England in a peculiar
situation. It is easy enough in dealing
with this period to make a picture
as black as one ever painted. It is
a period extreme reaction against the
excitements of a struggle in which
we involved the deepest moral

and religious interests. Just as the ³
individual, who has been through
a long period of intense work and
activity, likes to take a vacation,
to forget what he has been working
over, and give himself up to less
exacting, and less strenuous period
in preparation of new duties, so
the nation as a whole does this same
thing. As we come upon England in
the opening years of the 19th Century
for the purpose of noting some of the
social, moral, and religious conditions
of the time, we find her in a kind
of vacation condition. While it may
be discouraging to investigate at this
point, it is necessary to do so, but
we must judge the conditions in
light of this fact, that it is a period
of relaxation, and indifference, an
attempt to throw off the duties and
cares of serious living, and give

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in a general pleasure seeking vacillation.

We are trying to look at things from the point of the professional classes, and especially in their relation to the people as a whole. To one who has read Thackeray's story towards the general atmosphere of the period is fairly familiar. Its general character is coarse and vulgar. One has only to read the literary products of the period to see this very clearly. Swollets, Fieldings, Swift's writings, if one has the patience to read them, mirror the conditions under which they were written.

As to the kind of pleasures that these people of the upper classes were interested in, such customs as bull-baiting and bear-baiting were common among the greatest lords and ladies. To witness such a spectacle

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was one of the common methods of
killing time among the better sort of
folks. In Queen Anne's time it was
performed twice a week at Hockley
Hole in London. "Among the entertain-
ments advertised in London in 1729 and
1730," says Lecky, "we find a woad bull
to be chased of ~~in~~ with fireworks and
turned loose in the game place, a
dog to be chased of with fireworks
over him, a bear to be let loose
at the same time, and a cat to be
tied to a bull's tail, a woad bull
chased of with fire works to be
baited (i.e. tortured)." (Lecky. England in
the 18th Cen. vol I. P. 598). Cocks: fighting
was also common, in schools, and
among all classes of people. In 1705 its
merits, and advantages were set forth
in "An Essay on the Advantage and
Royal Recreation and Art of Cocking."
The essayist hoped that this great

form of sport might become a popular
local, and to very common, it being
so innocent a past time. Some
times, it is said, the church bells were
rung in honor of a victory in the
inter county cock fights. Of course
hunting in various forms seemed as
the country gentlemen's great method
of satisfying his passion for excitement,
Gombling was very common, both
among men and women. It is
not quite clear whether the mania
for Gombling is the same, the result
or simply an attendant circumstance
to the wildest kind of speculation
into which men and women would
hedge long, in their mad desire
for money. The south sea Bubble
was only one of many that lead
the get rich quick people to the
great ruin when the Bubbles exploded.
Lotteries were regarded as a legitimate

method of performing charitable duties.^{7.}
The festival mitres of this is Hollis
Hall at Harvard which was built
from the proceeds of a lottery.

Not only was the coarseness and
vulgarity of the times exhibited here,
but also in the construction of the stage.
Not ⁱⁿ high art, not ⁱⁿ literary interest
but simply the form of the stage to
produce vulgar obscene entertain-
ments was its influenced fact.

But perhaps the greatest reproach
is that all this stage vulgarity was
permitted for obscurity's sake. It was
not lighted ~~and~~ even by the
slightest sense of delicacy and
refined feelings.

But this brings us to a point where
we can come in contact with
what was really the heart and core
of the trouble. There was no place

for art, except of that sort which
served to satisfy the desire for
ostentation and display. Pictorial painting
flourished, and lived upon the vanity
of strollers. Art in other forms went
begging. The struggle of Handel the
great composer of music is well known,
etc became one of the signs of good
taste among fashionable people to
ridicule his music" says Lecky.

While the list of writers which
appear during this period, is considerable
and their work is important, the interesting
thing is that their interests somewhat
reflect the commonplace-ness of the
life about them. There is little or no
place of what we call the finer
sentiments and deeper thoughts. To
deal with superficial things in
a superficial way, and if luck
by chance to touch upon some topic

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of a finer quality, it was with
the hand of Plag's indifference
and irony. The truth seems to be
that the finer sentiments of life
had been crushed.

Perhaps this is illustrated by the
attitude of the people towards religion.
To revert to the subject of morality
and religion, the subject which had
been the sole topic of vital interest
during the Puritan movement, seemed
utterly impossible, says to this
Englishman ~~on his~~ of the early 18th
century. "In higher circles, every-
one laughs, if one talks of religion,"
said Winterset on his visit to
England. The clergy had lost their
standing, and were about on a par
socially with the sewing maid.
They read prayers which no one
attended.

They hung around the heels of their lords, and as one has said there only duty seemed to be to be able to carry their lord to bed after he had become so drunk that he could no longer stand or walk. Recall the Parson of Henry Esmond. Even the worst glories of church writers have to pass over this period with their eyes closed or else declare that the curate was a disgrace to the church. While the Bishops and other higher dignitaries regarded their positions only as an easy means of getting money. One Bishop is said never to have visited his diocese. The fact is they were on about the same plane as their drunken lords, seeking lords, with this exception that in general they were not

quite so bold, and above board" in acknowledging their sins, in the midst of the coarseness and vulgarity, which they should have decried, they become helpless poffets who fawned and whined in the midst of it all. Among the more prominent people Christianity had become merely a theme for scorn, and was regarded as a mere fiction and ~~not~~ superstition.

Of course the clergy lost their political influence, and the restraint which at times had been given to political life by the influence of the church, was now with drawn.

^{the world of} politics shared the same fate as all the rest of society. It was corrupt, venal, Bickering and graft were ~~so~~ common. In fact the only method of accomplishing results either for

the benefit or the injury of the 12,
nation was by the force of in-
fluence. Wolfol's influence at this
point is illustrative.

That is a dark and gloomy picture
you say. Well, so be it, but we
must go far over the great middle
class, and take of one or two points
which show the relation of this brutal
period upon the poor. I called this
lecture "Charity, a degrading influence
in the 8th Century." You are wondering
how there could be any ~~the~~ such
thing as charity in such an age.
As a matter of fact there was not any
such thing, charity had become
Rhus giving. The lavish, and
ostentatious display, the recklessness
~~of~~ expenditure of money had pro-
duced its effect. An illustration
is seen in the manner of forging

servants. The custom which one ^{L¹³}
coll tying had become so common
that houses no longer paid their
servants wages, but simply gave
them board and a place to stop.

while the servant defended upon
top ~~and~~ from the guests, and when
a dinner party filed from the
dining room, it was compelled
to run the gauntlet of the out-
stretched hands of the butlers.
Livable and satisfaction with
four-fold servants was such in
those days, as to afford many a
woman with a topic of conversation
for all eternity.

In 1704 the evils which this pernicious
extravagance leads to come to the front
in an attempt to extend the system
of poor-law relief. Defoe, who
writes with keenness, and wisdom,
issued a tract. "Giving Alms

to charity." He maintains that the ⁽¹⁴⁾ pauperism of the country is not due to any want of employment, but to habits of vagrancy, drunkenness, and extravagance. "I affirm," he says, "of my own ~~experience~~ knowledge, that when I wanted a man for laboring work, and offered him 9S per week, to strolling fellows at my door, they have frequently told me to my face that they could get more ~~as~~ begging."

There is nothing more frequent than for an Englishman to work till he has got his pockets full of money, and then go and be idle, or perhaps drunk, till it is all gone, and perhaps himself in debt: and ask him in his cups, what he intends, he'll tell you honestly that he'll drink as long as it lasts, and then go to work for more.

I make no difficulty to promise, ⁽¹⁵⁾
on a short summons, to produce
above a thousand families in England,
within my particular knowledge,
who go in rags, and their children
wanting bread, whose fathers can
earn their 15s to 25s. per week, but
will not work.... The reason
why so many pretend to want
work is that, as they can live so
well on the pretence of wanting
work, they would be wad to
have it and work in earnest."

So you see the vulgarity, the
extravagance of the volubility is
perfectly mirrored in the lines
of the Puffers. Who ~~off~~ copies
who you cannot say. But the
cursed abuse giving, which
often passes for charity, had

sewed to transform whole
armies of people into professional
beggars. Charity had become a
profession, as devoid of sentiment
and healthiness, and human
interest, as were the lines from
which it emanated.

This is a gloomy and discouraging
situation that we find England in
after the fever of Puritanism had
run its course. But it is really not
so discouraging as it seems. As
we have seen before the Puritan
movement was not positive
in its work, but negative. It
had but one great object in view,
namely, of establishing the
truth that the so-called authority
which the Catholic Church

and English church exercised ¹⁷
basing its claims upon a former
which did not exist, was a fiction.
That was accomplished. The natural
reaction was such as we have seen.
The real positive, active, aggressive
work of building a new structure
but the site of the old had
as yet hardly begun. The moral
force and vigor of Calvinistic
Puritanism was still working its
way to the surface among
the middle classes. Its work was
yet of a hidden, and even crude
nature, but the former and nitidly
still existed in this vacation
period of English History.

Already in the thick under-
brush of the early years of

the 18th Century evidences of the ¹⁸
new power, were coming to the surface.
De Foë was writing. Addison was
dealing out morsels of literary merit
in the Spectator. These found their
way to many a breakfast table.
Steele was helping. There was a
revival of Cheapside's ~~place~~ fops,
which which was as a breath of
fresh air blowing across the foul foul
stagnation of the stage. Even the
appearance of Handel was of vast
moment. The coffee houses, where
men of taste and interest came for
conversation, were becoming popular,
a tremendous improvement ~~above~~ over
the ale houses, and gin shops.

Meantime, also, manufacturing
was increasing, and upon the basis
of Commercial and industrial

prosperity this great extravagance¹⁹
and luxuriousness rected. That
some Defoe who spoke with such
acumen on the problem of begging,
also describes in his *Tour through*
Great Britain, (wrote in 1724-6) the condition
of industry. Speaking of the small
manufacturers near Halifax in York-
shire he says. "The land was divided
into small enclosures, from two acres
to six or seven each, seldom more. Every
three or four ^{pieces} ~~acres~~ of land having a
house belonging to them; hardly
~~to~~ a house standing out of speaking
distance from another. We could see
at every house a tent, and on al-
most every tent a piece of cloth
or kersey, or shalloon. At every
considerable house there was a
a manufactory. Every clothier

keeps one horse at least to carry
 his manufactures to the market;
 and every one generally keeps a
 cow or two more for his family.
 By this means the small pieces of
 enclosed land about each house
 are occupied, for they scarce sow
 corn enough to feed their poultry.
 The houses are full of lusty fellows,
 some at the dye vat, some at the
 two loom, others dressing the
 clothes; the women and children
 carding and spinning; being
 all employed from the youngest
 to the oldest, ".... and not a beggar
 to be seen or an idle person."

Law III P. 1 1/2 b.

This gives us a much more
 cheerful conception of England,
 for it is true that among these

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obscure people, things of real value
were happening. Rev. Eliot's Address
Bede is interesting as showing the
emergence from the ~~first~~ people who
were doing the real work, a new
set of thoughts and ideas. Upon soil
such as this, soil which still
remained essentially ready for
cultivation, after the ~~first~~ purifica-
tion at the hands of the Puritan fever,
upon this soil grew the works of
Whitefield, and the Wesleys.
Already they were growing into
manhood, and were tracing in
their minds the workings of
thought and ideas which had
been almost obliterated from
England for three generations.
For the time being we leave

This as it is. Next Sunday evening 22
we shall consider the great Methodist
movement, and vote how the Wesleys
lay the foundation of modern religious
conceptions.