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5/05/20

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Study material U6 Part-I, Paper-1

Joseph Addison as a periodical writer

Educated at the Charter House, Addison went to Oxford where he became a fellow of Magdalen College. He early made his mark as a serious and accomplished scholar and seems to have attracted the notice of the Whig leaders, who marked him out as future literary prop of their function. He obtained a travelling scholarship of 300 pounds a year, and saw much of Europe under favourable conditions. Then the misfortunes of the Whigs in 1703 reduced him to poverty. In 1704 it is said at the instigation of the leaders of the Whigs, he wrote the poem *The Campaign* praising the war policy of the Whigs in general and the worthiness of Marlborough in particular. This poem brought him fame and fortune.

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He obtained many official appointments and pensions married a dower countess and became a Secretary of State. Two years later he died at the early age of 44. In his Latin verses Addison attained early distinctions. These verses were highly praised at a time when prize for proficiency in such a medium was of some significance. Then in the Campaign in 1704 gave him a reputation as one of the major poets of the age. The poem is poor enough but is written in the heroic couplet and with some truth it has been called a rhymed gazette. The story is little more than a pompous catalogue of places and persons. The style is but mediocre and warms only when it is feebly stirred by the ignorant enthusiasm that a sedentary civilian feels the glory of war. The hero is Marlborough who is drawn on a scale of epic grandeur. The most famous passage of the work is that comparing the general to the angel that writes the storm. The poem literally made Addison's fortune for after reading it the Whig Lord Treasurer Godolphin gave him the valuable appointment of Commissioner of Appeals. His only other poetical work worthy of notice are

beginnings which are meditative, scholarly and full of cheerful piety. The one that brings the spacious firmament on high is among the best. His drama - Addison was lucky in his greatest dramatic effort just as he was lucky in his longest poem. In 1713 produced the tragedy of Cato, part of which had been in manuscript as early as 1703. It is of little merit and shows that Addison whatever he is other qualities may be, but is no dramatist. It is written in laborious blank verse, in which wooden characters deliver long dull speeches but it caused the rage of the political parties both of which is the course of the play saw pithy references to the inflated passions of the time. The play had the remarkable run of the 29 nights and was revived with much success. Addison also attempted an opera Rosalind which was a failure and the prose comedy of the Drummer 1715 is said with some reason to be his also if it is it adds nothing to his reputation. His prose - Several political pamphlets are ascribed to Addison but as a pamphlet, he is not impressive. He lacked the directness of Swift whose pen was a terror to his opponents. It is in fact almost entirely an Essayist.

That Addison is justly famed. These essays began almost casually. On April 12, 1709, Steele published the first number of the Tatler, a periodical was to appear three weekly. Addison who was a school and college friend of Steele saw and liked the new publication and offered his service as a contributor. His offer was accepted and his first contribution a pen and political one appeared in no. 18. Hence forward Addison wrote regularly for the paper contributing about 42 nos. which may be compared with Steele's share of about one hundred eighty eight.

The paper finished in January 1711 then in March of the same year Mill began the Spectator which was issued daily. The paper had some variations of fortunes price and time of issue but eventually it ran until December 1712 obtained an unprecedented popularity. It was said that in its palmy days, it sold 10000 copies of each issue and ~~had~~ exercised a great influence upon the reading public of the period.

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E-Material Paper - I

Historical Background of the Age of Pope

In the reign of Charles II, the terms whig and tory first became current by the year 1700. They were in everybody's mouth about that time domestic politicians became sharply clapped into two groups that were distant to become established as the basis of our political system. Domestic affairs, while they never approached the stage of bloodshed took on a new acrimony that was to affect literature deeply. Actual points of political faith upon which the parties were divided are not of great importance to us here but generally speaking we may say that the whig party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom as opposed to the tory view of royal divine right. Hence the whig supported hereditary succession whereas the tories were

Jacobites, the Tories which numbers were recruited chiefly from the landed classes objected to the foreign war upon the score that they had to pay taxes to prolong it and the Whigs representing the trading classes generally were alleged to be anxious to continue the war as it brought them increases prosperity in the matter of religion, the Whigs were low church men and the Tories high church men. The foreign war - this war of the Spanish Succession was brilliantly successful under the leadership of Marlborough who besides being a great general was a prominent Tory politician, the Tories as the war seemed to be identified is definitely prolonged subplant 1710, the Whigs with whom they had been co-operating in the yearly stage of the war and in 1713 they concluded the war by an unfortunate treaty of Utrecht. Contemporary literature is much concerned both with the war and the peace. The Succession - when Anne ascended the throne the Succession seemed to be safe enough for she had a numerous family. Nevertheless, her children all died before her and in 1701 it became necessary to pass the act of Settlement a Whig measure by which the Succession was settled upon the house of Hanover. On the

death of a man - in the year 1710. The succession took effect in spite of the efforts of the Tories who were anxious to restore the Stewards. The events of this year 1714 deeply influenced the lives of Addison, Steele, Swift and many other writers of lesser degree. 4) The spirit of the age - after the succession of the House of Hanover, the first half of the 18th Century was a period of establishing and steadily growing wealth and prosperity, the evils of the approaching industrial revolution had not yet been realized and the country still free from any recitation of acrimonious class consciousness underwent a period of comfortable aristocratic rule in which local government rested on the squares, typified by Sir Roger de Coverley it was an age of tolerance moderation and common sense which in cultured modes. At least sought to refine manners and introduced into life the rule of sweet reason. The balance of political power in spite of the fifty years superiority of the Whig oligarchy, was so even as to preclude fanatical party politics while the established Church pursued a plain middle way and all religion was free from strife over doctrine and the fanaticism which it called entia until Wesley and Whitefield began the

revival. This middle way of control and reason and the distrust of enthusiasm are faithfully reflected in the literature of the period.

The age of Pope intensified the movement that age we have seen begin after the restoration the drift away from the poetry of passion was more pronounced than ever the ideals of wit and common sense were more zealously pursued and the lyrical note was almost unheard in its place we find in fact the overmastering desire for neatness and perspicuity for edge and point in style and for correctness in technique these aims received expression in the devotion to the heroic couplet. The epitome of the medium for the purpose in this type of poetry the supreme master is Pope. Apart from him the age produce no great poet. On the other hand the other great names of the period Swift, Addison, Steele, Defoe, are those of prose writers primarily and prose writers of a very high quality. Some other outstanding condition of the age remains to be considered most of them it will be noticed helped to give prose its dominating position

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E-Study Material English Literature
UG Part-I, Paper-I

Dr. Samuel Johnson : Life & Times

Johnson has a faithful chronicler in Boswell, whose life of Samuel Johnson makes us intimate with its subject matter to a degree rare in literature. But even the prying zeal of Boswell could not report many facts regarding the great man's early life. Johnson was born at Lichfield, the son of a book-seller whose pronounced Tory views he inherited and steadfastly maintained. From his birth he was afflicted with a malignant skin disease which all through his life affected his sight and hearing and caused many of the peculiarities that astonished and amused the friends of his later years. After being privately

educated, he proceeded to Oxford where he experienced the miseries and indignities that are lot of a poor scholar cursed with a powerful and aspiring mind. Leaving the university, he tried school-teaching, with no success married a woman twenty years older than himself, and then in 1737 went to London and threw himself into the squalors and allurement of Grub-street. In his Essay on Boswell's life of Johnson Macaulay has given an arresting description of the miseries endured by the denizens of Grub-street and in this case the natural exaggeration of Macaulay is not quite misplaced. We know next to nothing regarding the life of Johnson during this early period. It is certain that it was wretched enough to cause the sturdy old fellow, in after years, to glance at this period of his life with a shudder of loathing, and to quench the curiosity of Boswell with ultra-Johnsonian vehemence. very slowly he won his way out of the gutter, fighting every step with bitter tenacity, for as he puts it in his poem of London

From the obscure position of a publisher's lack he became a poet of some note by the publication of London (1738), which was noticed by Pope; his Dictionary (1747-55) advanced his fame; then somewhat incomprehensibly he appears in the limelight as one of the literary dictators of London, surrounded by a circle of brilliant men. In 1762 he received a pension from the state, and the last twenty years of his life were passed in the manner most acceptable to him: dawdling, visiting, conversing, yet living with a gigantic vitality that made his fellows wonder. It is in these latter years that we find him imperishably figured in the pages of Boswell. All his tricks of humor - his bearishness, his gruff good-will, his silent and secret benevolences; his physical aberrations - his gurglings, his grunts, his grinnaces, his puffings and wallowing; his puerile superstitions, his deep and beautiful piety, his Tory prejudices, so often enormously vocal; his masterful and unsteering common sense, the devouring immensity of his conversational

powers, we find all these set out in the
 life of Samuel Johnson. He wrote little
 poetry and none of it, though it has
 much merit, can be called first-class. His
 first poem, London (1738), written in the
 heroic couplet is of great and sombre
 power. It depicts the vanities and
 the ding of the city life viewed
 from the depressing standpoint of
 an embittered and penurious poet. His
 only other longish poem is The Vanity
 of Human Wishes. The poem is
 imitation of the Tenth Muse of
 the Terrenal, transfer to the activities
 of the mankind in general the
 gloomy convictions raised ten years earlier
 by the spectacle of London. The
 meter is the same as in London
 and there is the same bleak
 of pessimism but the weight and
 power of emotion, the tremendous
 convictions and the stern immo-
 bility of the author, give the
 work a great value. There are
 many individual lines of solemn
 grandeur. It is very interesting
 and mind raising poem which
 enthralled and amuses everybody
 in the literary circle.