The age of Pope
(1700-1744)

Dennis John
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THE

AGE OF POPE

(1700-1744)

BY

JOHN DENNIS

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE" ETC.

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PREFACE.

The Age of Pope is designed to form one of a series of Handbooks, edited by Professor Hales, which it is hoped will be of service to students who love literature for its own sake, instead of regarding it merely as a branch of knowledge required by examiners. The period covered by this volume, which has had the great advantage of Professor Hales's personal care and revision, may be described roughly as lying between 1700, the year in which Dryden died, and 1744, the date of Pope's death.

I believe that no work of the class will be of real value which gives what may be called literary statistics, and has nothing more to offer. Historical facts and figures have their uses, and are, indeed, indispensable; but it is possible to gain the most accurate knowledge of a literary period and to be totally unimpressed by the influences which a love of literature inspires. The first object of a guide is to give accurate information; his second and larger objects to direct the reader's steps through a country exhaustless in variety and interest. If once a passion be awakened for the study of our noble literature the student will learn to reject what is meretricious, and will turn instinctively to
what is worthiest. In the pursuit he may leave his guide far behind him; but none the less will he be grateful to the pioneer who started him on his travels.

If the Age of Pope proves of help in this way the wishes of the writer will be satisfied. It has been my endeavor to acknowledge the debt I owe to the authors who have made this period their study; but it is possible that a familiar acquaintance with their writings may have led me occasionally to mistake the matter thus assimilated for original criticism. If, therefore—to quote the phrase of Pope’s enemy and my namesake—I have sometimes borrowed another man’s ‘thunder,’ the fault of having ‘made a sinner of my memory’ may prove the reader’s gain, and will, I hope, be forgiven.

HAMPSTEAD,
August, 1894.

J. D.