

after they have passed away, there intervene wide periods of repose, in which there are only minds of a lower order produced. "Some ages have been remarkable," he says, "for the production of men of extraordinary stature; others for producing particular animals in great abundance; some for excessive plenty; others, again, for seemingly causeless famine. Nature, which shows herself so very different in her visible productions, must surely differ also from herself in the production of minds; and, while she astonishes one age with the strength and stature of a Milo or a Maximian, may bless another with the wisdom of a Plato or the goodness of an Antonine." In glancing over the history of modern Europe, and more especially that of the British empire, civil and literary, one can scarce fail to mark a cycle of production of this character, which now seems far advanced in its second revolution. The seventeenth century was in this country peculiarly a period of great men. Cromwell and Shakespeare were so far contemporary, that when, little turned of fifty, the poet lay on his deathbed, the future Lord Protector, then a lad of seventeen, was riding beside his father, to enter as a student the University of Cambridge; and the precocious Milton, though still younger, was, we find, quite mature enough to estimate the real stature of the giant that had fallen, and to deplore his premature death in stanzas destined to live for ever. And when, in after life, the one great man sat writing, to the dictation of the other, the well-known noble letter to Louis in behalf of Continental Protestantism, the mathematician, Isaac Newton, sat ensconced among his old books in the garret at Grantham; the metaphysician, John Locke, was engaged at Oxford in his profound cogitation on the nature and faculties of mind; John Bunyan was a soldier of the Commonwealth; Cowley was studying botany in Kent; Butler was pouring forth his vast profusion of idea in the dwelling of Sir Samuel Luke; Dryden, at the