NOTES TO ‘THE FRENCH REVOLUTION’

by

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Page 1, line 3. A very young gentleman. This was Mons. Dupont, who had visited England and become acquainted with Burke. He afterwards translated the Reflections into French.

P. 1, ll. 6–7. An answer...in October, 1789. See Burke’s Correspondence, III. 102. The letter was written with punctilious care, yet was withheld for fear it might be intercepted and bring Dupont into peril. The reasons assigned in the short letter will be found in the answer referred to.

P. 1, l. 17. Early in the last spring; i.e. in February 1790, when Burke had voiced his sentiments in a parliamentary speech on the Army Estimates and the London Chronicle had advertised the speedy publication of the Reflections, which was largely in proof, for Sir Philip Francis was reading the sheets (Burke’s Correspondence, III. 128).


P. 2, ll. 20–21. Neither for nor from any description of men: like the Constitutional Society and the Royal Society mentioned below. Burke claims to write from a detached and impartial standpoint, though he believes he has on his side the best English opinion. The Constitutional Society was founded in 1780 by John Cartwright (1740–1824), a naval officer, who afterwards became a major of militia. It included many Whig noblemen and circulated not only the works of earlier writers on liberty like Sidney and Locke, but more extensively those of contemporary pamphleteers. The abolition of slavery, the emancipation of Greece, and the liberation of Spain from its absolute government, were among the objects for which Cartwright worked.

P. 2, ll. 37–38. The Revolution Society: had been founded principally by Nonconformists in honour of the Revolution of 1688, and its chairman at this time was Charles Stanhope (third Earl Stanhope), brother-in-law of William Pitt. Lord Stanhope was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and his education in Switzerland had given him an intense love of liberty. His high qualities were marred by an impracticable disposition and his able speeches carried no weight with his fellow peers. He wrote a reply to Burke’s Reflections. Burke says here (p. 3) that the members of the Society were not as well acquainted with the event that led to its foundation as they might have been. New recruits (p. 4) had joined it, and it had been re-modelled so as to co-operate with the French revolutionaries.
P. 3, l. 27. As charitably read: implying, of course, that they were really not worth reading.

P. 3, l. 33. Meliorated: improved. A more correct form than our "ameliorated."

P. 3, l. 40. National Assembly: sometimes called the Constituent Assembly, the first of the revolutionary parliaments in France. It sat 1789–1791, and was superseded by the Legislative Assembly.

P. 5, ll. 35–36. Their signatures ought to have been annexed. It was one of Burke's cardinal tenets that in political affairs men and measures should always be considered together.

P. 6, ll. 36–37. The metaphysic knight, etc.: Don Quixote, who freed the criminals (Part I. ch. 22), simply on the abstract or metaphysical (Burke often omits the "-al" in words of this type) ground that every man had a right to liberty.

P. 6, l. 40. Wild gas: Crabbé (Tales of the Hall), whom Burke had helped in his struggling days, takes up this illustration. He says of "the lighter gas"—

"Such is the freedom which when men approve,
They know not what a dangerous thing they love."

P. 6, l. 40. The fixed air: carbonic acid gas had been so called by Dr. Joseph Black (1728–1799), the great Scottish chemist, because of the readiness with which it fixed itself in many bodies. It is this gas which gives liquors their effervescence.

P. 7, ll. 7–9. New liberty . . . combined with government: Burke applies this test in detail in the second part of the book.


P. 7, l. 13. Civil: civic.

P. 7, l. 34. Dr. Price: Richard Price (1723–1791), a Nonconformist minister, who wrote largely on ethical and economical questions. His chief work was a Review of the Principal Questions in Morals, in which he criticized the position of Francis Hutcheson. He vigorously opposed the war with America in 1776, and was a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. He was now near the end of his life; Burke had a grudge against him for his attachment to Lord Shelburne, Rockingham's rival. His sermon, which Burke goes on to criticize, was "On the Love of our Country," and when published had as an appendix the Report of the Revolution Society's committee, an account of the people of France, and the National Assembly's Declaration of Right. The letter of the Duke de Rohanfoucault was a private one to Dr. Price, that of the Archbishop of Aix (President of the National Assembly) an official communication to Earl Stanhope.

P. 8, l. 7. Beginnings of confusion in England. Burke was needlessly afraid that theoretical Jacobinism—and there was a good deal of it in England—would produce a revolution like that in France, where, however, very strong material causes had been the main factor in the upheaval.

P. 8, ll. 27–28. The affairs . . . perhaps of more than Europe: a
prescient utterance. Through the Revolution the United States of America gained Louisiana, and both Africa and Asia came into the scope of Napoleon's plans and campaigns.

P. 8, ll. 30–31. The most wonderful things, etc.: cp. Johnson in The Rambler, 141: "The greatest events may be often traced back to slender causes. Petty competition, or casual friendship, the prudence of a slave, or the garrulity of a woman, have hastened or retarded the revolutions of empire."

P. 8, l. 34. Out of nature: unnatural.

P. 9, ll. 6–7. The secular applause of dashing Machiavelian politicians: see p. 78. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1530) was secretary of the Republic of Florence, 1498–1512. In his great work, The Prince, he asserts that to preserve the integrity of the state, a ruler should not feel himself bound by any scruples of justice or humanity.

P. 9, l. 29. Caballers: plotters. The word is really from Cabbala or Cabala, a secret science of the Jewish rabbis for interpreting the hidden sense of the Hebrew scriptures. In English history the name Cabal is especially applied to five unpopular ministers of Charles II. (1672), whose initials happened to make up the word.

P. 9, l. 33. Philippi: is on Philip's side or party—a reference to the great crisis in Greek history, when Philip of Macedon was seeking the friendship of Athens and was opposed by Demosthenes. Oracles were bribed to give utterances favourable to Philip.

P. 9, l. 30. Rev. Hugh Peters (1508–1660): an Independent divine. He took his M.A. degree at Cambridge and lived for some years in New England as minister at Salem, Massachusetts. On his return to England in 1641 he allied himself with the Parliamentary forces and won many recruits to Cromwell's army by his preaching. He was made a chaplain to the Council of State in 1650, and preached regularly at Whitehall during the Protectorate. He was executed at Charing Cross in 1660 for having abetted the death of Charles I.

P. 10, ll. 4–5. Your league in France: the Holy Catholic League, organized in 1576 by the Duke of Guise to suppress Protestantism in France and prevent the accession of Henry IV.

P. 10, ll. 5, 6. Our Solemn League and Covenant: the agreement of the English Parliament with Scottish representatives, signed in St. Margaret's, Westminster, September 25, 1643, by which in return for assistance against Charles I. the Scots were guaranteed the security of their own National Covenant to maintain Presbyterianism.

P. 10, l. 9. Politics and the pulpit. Dr Price was not the only offender. Hardly three months after his famous sermon, i.e. on January 30, 1790, the Bishop of Chester preached to the House of Lords a violent attack on the French nation in general and the National Assembly in particular, for which thanks were voted him.

P. 10, ll. 27–28. The hint given to a . . . lay-divine. The (third) Duke of Grafton, who was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, had about 1770 written a pamphlet (which Price said was "ascribed to a great name and would dignify any name") on the subject of the
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Liturgy and the terms of subscription to the Anglican Articles. He did much to popularize Griesbach’s famous edition of the Greek New Testament in England. In his retirement he wrote a defence of Unitarianism and an autobiography, first published in complete form in 1899. Among the other lay-divines of rank was Lord Shelburne, Burke’s bugbear, who also favoured Unitarianism.

P. 10, l. 31. Seekers: inquirers for truth. Technically the “Seekers” were a sect of mystics (seventeenth century) which, according to Richard Baxter, included Roman Catholics and infidels as well as Puritans.

P. 10, l. 32. Old staple. The use of staple here seems to combine the nominal meaning “raw material,” and the adjectival “established,” “regularly produced for market.”

P. 11, ll. 11-12. The calculating divine. Price wrote a good deal on public finance.


P. 11, ll. 19-20. Round of . . dissipated. In Burke’s day the London season filled the winter months, lasting from November till May.

P. 11, ll. 20-21. Mess-Johns: an old Scottish term for clergymen. Mess is from magister. The former blessed times (l. 27) were those of Hugh Peters.

P. 11, ll. 35-36. Utenam nugis, etc. “Would that he had spent all that time of violence on trifles.”—Juvenal, Satires, IV. 150.

P. 12, ll. 3-4. Owes his crown to the choice of his people. Price is here echoing Rousseau’s theory of a primitive social contract, which was so repugnant to Burke.

P. 12, l. 7. Meridian: noonday, zenith. Innocent III. (1198-1216) in the same year excommunicated two of the most powerful sovereigns in Europe, John of England and the Emperor Otto


P. 12, l. 42. Condo et composto, etc. “I amass and arrange my stores, so that afterwards I may be able to bring them forth.”—Horace, Epistles, I. 1. 12.

P. 13, ll. 39-40. An electoral college: college is here used like the Latin collegium, an official board.

P. 14, l. 10. Bottom in: rest on.

P. 14, ll. 26-28. Lives and fortunes . . laws of their country Section 8 of the Declaration of Right (usually called the Bill of Rights) promises “that they will stand to, maintain and defend their said Majesties . . . with their lives and estates.”


P. 15, l. 43. A small and a temporary deviation, etc. We must remember that all through this argument Burke is engaged in a piece of special pleading. He does not appear in the rôle of an impartial judge but as a warm and skilful advocate. As a matter of fact though there was very little deviation from formal law in the Revolu-
tion of 1688, there was a profound change in the spirit and disposition and sentiment of the nation towards the monarchy, and Burke fights shy of this very significant fact.

P. 16, ll. 4-5. Privilegium non transit in exemplum: a special case must not be made a general rule.

P. 16, ll. 16-17. Eldest born of the issue... acknowledged as his: i.e. of Mary and Anne. A prince, James Francis Edward (the Chevalier de St. George), was born in 1688, and rumour (quite groundless) threw doubt upon his legitimacy.

P. 16, l. 30. Lord Somers (1651-1716): was the son of a Worcestershire attorney who rose to high station. In 1688 he was counsel for the seven bishops, and in 1689 asserted the virtual abdication of James II. and drafted the Bill of Rights. In 1697 he became Lord High Chancellor of England. He possessed great influence with William III., and later did much to bring about the union with Scotland in 1707. He was a greater lawyer than statesman, though his political tracts are models of lucidity.

P. 16, l. 32. Address: skill, adroitness.

P. 16, l. 33. Solution: dissolution, breach.

P. 17, l. 21. Relax the nerves: slacken the sinews.

P. 17, ll. 32-33. As from a rubric: This again illustrates Burke's emphasis on inheritance, custom and precedent, his regard for law. Rubric—directions for worship, so called because formerly printed in red; hence, anything definitely settled.

P. 18, l. 12. The limitation of the crown: i.e. to those holding the Protestant faith.

P. 18, ll. 18-19. For themselves and for all their posterity for ever: Burke out-Herod Herod here. The Parliament of Elizabeth had a well-established right to regulate the succession to the Crown. It was pointed out by Joseph Priestley, one of Burke's most eminent contemporaries, that by denying this power to Parliament, Burke laid himself open to a charge of treason under an act framed by his own hero, Lord Somers. For the extreme Tory position here assumed by Burke, see Swift in the Examiner, No. 16; on the other side, Locke, On Government, Bk. II. ch. 8.

P. 18, ll. 21-22. A better Whig than Lord Somers: yet Somers wrote a work on the "Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations," whose very title-page asserts "the rights of the people and parliament of Britain to resist and deprive their kings for evil government."

P. 18, l. 28. Aided with: assisted by.

P. 18, ll. 37-38. Limits of abstract... (and)... moral competence: a distinction which Burke was always ready to draw, and had used in his reasoning on the American revolution. Abstract is always a term of depreciation with him; statesmen have to deal with what is practically attainable, not with what is ideally perfect.

P. 19, ll. 2-4. The House of Lords is not morally competent... to
dissolve itself: this dictum was quoted by Henry Grattan in his speech against the union of the Irish and English parliaments in 1800.


P. 19, ll. 30-31. Muses of metaphysic sophistry: another hit at the abstract. Sophistry (plausible but fallacious reasoning) takes its name from a Greek school of philosophy characterized by such methods. Burke here comes perilously near to advocating the slavery of absolute submission.

P. 20, ll. 13-14. Ancient organised states: (i.e. estates), the House of Parliament.

P. 20, 1. 15. Organic molecule: the constituent parts of the nation, including the crown, nobility, gentry, clergy, local officials, traders, etc.

P. 20, ll. 27-31. The law of inheritance... questions upon the legal principles of hereditary descent. The germ of the hereditary principle can be traced in the time of the Witenagemote, who, while they had the sole power of electing the king, nearly always confined their choice to the royal family, and to the oldest male representative if of full age and capacity. The Norman Conquest strengthened the hereditary principle, for men argued to the crown from the analogy of a feudal fief. But the immediate descendants of William I. could not plead an hereditary title, and so the old elective theory was maintained. William himself went through a form of election, and Henry I. declared himself crowned by the general council of the barons of the whole realm of England. So with Stephen. In 1199 the election of John over Arthur shows that the hereditary principle was not yet established. Edward I. was the first English king whose reign dates from the death of his predecessor and commenced before coronation. The theory that the king never dies, thus adumbrated, was the accepted doctrine by the time of Edward IV.

The Lancastrian title, however, was purely Parliamentary, though Henry IV. showed his regard for hereditary right by claiming to be the lineal descendant of Henry III. Henry VII. claimed the crown by inherent right and by victory over his enemies, and though his title was debatable it is quite possible to maintain that he was king by hereditary right. As regards Parliament's power of deposition, it may be noted that in the case of James II., where the House of Commons declared that James had abdicated the government, the Scottish Parliament substituted the term forfeited.

P. 20, ll. 31-32. Heir per capita... heir per stirpes: terms borrowed from Roman law, though Burke has somewhat changed the original significance of the former. He uses it to denote the eldest and most worthy of the same blood, a reference to the Celtic system of "tanistry," a system which prevailed in Ireland to the time of James I., and in which the right of succession lay not with the individual but with the family in which it was hereditary, and by the family the holder of office or lands was elected. This system was partly in force in England in early days; gradually it gave place in
the case of private possessions to that of inheritance *per stirpes* or *per stirpem*, i.e. by direct descent, and the principle was extended to the Crown by the lawyers about the middle of the thirteenth century. While Edward I. in his proclamation refers to "hereditary succession and the will of the nobles," the last words were omitted in the proclamation of Edward II. Burke elsewhere says the heir *per capita* bases his right on consanguinity, the heir *per stirpes* on representation, from his standing in the place of his predecessor.

P. 20, ll. 37–38. Multosque perannos, etc. "For many a year the fortune of the house stands firm, and grandsires' grandsires swell the pedigree."—Virgil (speaking of bees), Georgics, IV. 208.

P. 21, ll. 11–12. Dragged the bodies of our sovereigns. At the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII., the body of Stephen was disinterred at Faversham for the sake of the lead coffin. The Roundhead troops committed similar sacrilege in Winchester Cathedral. Burke naturally does not refer to the Restoration outrages on Cromwell's body.

P. 21, ll. 24–25. Statute de tallagio non concedendo: tallage was a tax on the towns and demesne lands of the crown, usually levied by a poll-tax, e.g. a tallage of 2000 marks levied from London in 1214. By this statute—really an unauthoritative extract from the Confirmation of the Charters, but held to be a statute by the Petition of Right (1628)—no tallage or aid is to be taken without the consent of all.

P. 21, l. 25. Petition of Right: eleven articles assented to by Charles I. in 1628.


P. 22, ll. 26–28. Sophia ... daughter of the Princess Elisabeth: others, nearer in blood, were passed over because of their Roman Catholicism.

P. 23, l. 42. Illicit bottoms: bottom is an old term for ship. "Illicit bottoms" refers to a contravention of the Act of Navigation (1651, repealed in 1849), by which it was sought to confine the carrying trade of England to English vessels.

P. 24, l. 25. Exploded fanatics of slavery: like Peter Heylyn (1600–1663), a great clerical supporter of the Stuart cause, and Sir Robert Filmer (d. 1653), who wrote Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings asserted.

P. 24, l. 30. New fanatics: like Rousseau and Dr. Price.

P. 26, l. 5. Aggravated: piled up.

P. 26, l. 13. Popular representative: the representatives of the people.

P. 26, ll. 14–15. The next great constitutional act: the Act of Settlement (1701), which rectified some of the hastily drafted provisions of the Bill of Rights and dealt with abuses that had sprung up in the twelve years since that measure was passed.
P. 26, ll. 18–19. No pardon...pleadable, etc. The question arose out of the impeachment of the Earl of Danby for high treason in 1698. The Lords refused to commit him because the charge was general not specific. When the impeachment was revived in a new parliament Danby pleaded the king's pardon, but was, nevertheless, sent to the Tower (April 1679). There he remained until the Lords discharged him in 1685. His impeachment is of high constitutional importance on several grounds (see Feilden's Constitutional History of England, pp. 154, 155), among them that which is here mentioned. The Act of Settlement in making this ordinance provides that the Crown can pardon offenders after conviction: to allow it to do so before judgment was given would be to subvert the doctrine of ministerial responsibility.

P. 26, ll. 32–33. Servant...sovereign: one of the leading points in Rousseau's "Contrat Social." With his idea of an inalienable national sovereignty compare Burke's idea of king and people as equal contracting parties, whose compact creates government and is not to be broken by either as long as the original terms of the covenant are kept.

P. 26, l. 37. The slave in the old play: Sosia (Terence, Andria, I. i. 17) the steward who resents being reminded of his former slavery. "This reminder smack of a reproach".


P. 27, l. 36. The Justicia of Aragon: described in Hallam's Middle Ages, ch. iv. The state was founded early in the twelfth century, and about 1350 was endowed by the Cortes (the parliament of Aragon, then an independent Spanish kingdom and always noted for its stout defence of popular rights) with an authority which "proved eventually a more adequate barrier against oppression than any other country could boast." The Justicia's functions were in theory similar to those of the Lord Chief Justice of England, but in practice more important and extensive.

P. 27, l. 39. In this he is not distinguished, etc. No process can be granted against the king at Common Law.

P. 28, l. 22. Justa bella quibus necessaria: "Wars are righteous in so far as they are inevitable" (Livy, IX. 1). Livy goes on to say that they are inevitable in so far as there is no hope for safety except in arms.

P. 29, l. 35. Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634): solicitor-general, speaker of the House of Commons and attorney-general (1592), the great rival of Francis Bacon. In 1606 he was made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. He quarrelled with James I. on questions of royal prerogative, was removed to the less lucrative office of Chief Justice of the King's Bench, 1613, and from the bench altogether in 1616. As one of the leaders of the parliamentary opposition he helped to draw up the Petition of Right in 1628. His writings (Institutes of the Laws of England) are distinguished for erudition and thoroughness rather than by method or order.

P. 29, l. 42. Blackstone, Sir William (1723–1780): a barrister
whose fame was made by his Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765–1770), notable for the “way in which the author handles an immense mass of material and unloads it gently upon the reader in such quantities as the average man can bear.” Like Coke, he sat on the Bench of Common Pleas and the King’s Bench, but he was not a great judge.

P. 30, l. 15. Rights of Englishmen: similarly, it was the Americans’ appeal to law and precedent that had influenced Burke in siding with them during their revolution.

P. 30, l. 16. Selden, John (1584–1654): the famous jurist who wrote History of Tythes, De Divis Synis, Table Talk, and other works, and up to 1649 took a leading part in public affairs on the side of the Parliament. The “general theories concerning the rights of men” which Selden would know were those of Hooker and Grotius. Selden himself wrote On the Law of Nature and of Nations according to the Teaching of the Hebrews.

P. 30, l. 38 Auspiciate: initiate or inaugurate with hope of good luck.

P. 31, l. 15. A House of Commons and a people: these were not so closely identified in Burke’s day as in ours, when members are little more than delegates of the majority in their respective constituencies.

P. 31, ll. 19–20. Following nature, which is wisdom: cp. Burke’s Third Letter on a Regicide Peace: “Never, no, never, did nature say one thing and wisdom say another,” a favourite stoic maxim embodied in Juvenal’s “Nunquam aliud Natura, aliud Sapientia dixit” (Satires, XIV. 321).

P. 31, ll. 20–21. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper. It was so with the Stuarts and with George III. at the beginning of his reign. Burke was never weary of insisting that innovation is not necessarily reform.

P. 31, l. 31. Mortmain: the transfer of property to a corporation, which is said to be a dead hand, or one that can never part with it again.


P. 32, l. 25. Freedom leading in itself to . . . excess. The classical description of the vices of unlettered and intoxicated freedom is in Plato’s Republic, VIII. 563


P. 33, l. 13. Your old states: the States-General, the name given to the representative body of the three orders (nobility, clergy, burghers) of the French kingdom.

P. 34, ll. 2–4. Ancestors . . . a standard of virtue and wisdom: especially in the reign of Louis IX. (St. Louis), 1226–1270, the Golden Age of France.

P. 34, l. 13. Maroon slaves: fugitive slaves living on the mountains
in the West Indies (French, marron; Spanish, cimarron, wild; cima, a mountain summit).

P. 35, ll. 4-5. To lead your virtue not to overlay it: i.e. smother, stifle.

P. 35, ll. 5-6 A liberal order of Commons: a middle class refined, educated, and broad-minded.

P. 35, ll. 36-37. Foundations of civil freedom in severer manners: cp. the Puritan régime of the Cromwellian commonwealth. We may remember here that if France "when she let loose the reins of legal authority, doubled the licence of a ferocious dissoluteness in manners and of an insolent irreligion in opinions and practices," England did exactly the same when, at the Restoration in 1660, she submitted to similar reins.

P. 36, ll. 4-5. Disgraced: displaced.

P. 36, l. 6. Most potent topics: strongest arguments.


P. 37, l. 8. Two great recognized species: gold and silver. In the first days of the Revolution these were largely hoarded, but during 1791 much of both was invested in England, and three per cent. Consols rose from 75 to 88.

P. 37, l. 26. The last state reserved, etc.: rebellion and bloodshed are the last desperate remedy, only to be used when all else has failed—not, as here, before trying legal measures.

P. 37, l. 30. Their pioneers: the revolutionary writers like Rousseau.

P. 37, l. 34. Shoe-buckles: were among the "patriotic donations" further referred to on p. 227. Cp. p. 52, l. 17.

P. 38, l. 23. Engagement: pledge, promise. Burke has in mind the theory of episcopal ordination and apostolic succession.

P. 38, l. 27. Tiers État: Third Estate—the Burghers or Commons section in the States-General. Here according to Burke there was a complete dearth of the statesman type.

P. 39, l. 24. Six hundred persons. This doubling of the Tiers État was advocated by the Abbé Sieyès and adopted by Necker, the financial adviser, in order to out-weigh the privileged orders who were selfishly resisting necessary taxation.

P. 39, ll. 33-34. Was soon resolved into that body. The states met on May 5, and on June 17 the Tiers État resolved itself into the National Assembly.

P. 39, ll. 36-39. A great proportion . . . of practitioners of the law. These were very numerous in France (Montaigne said they almost constituted a Fourth Estate—as we to-day say about journalists), owing to the varied systems of common law that prevailed in different districts. But they were not in a majority in the État; out of 652 members the lawyers numbered 272. There were 162 magistrates of lower grades; the "distinguished magistrates" were represented in
the Estate of the Nobility: and it was the lawyers who best knew the condition and need of the people. A Breton advocate, Le Chapeller, was President of the Tiers État.

P. 41, ll. 17-18. Handful of country clowns... not a greater number of traders: there were some seventy or eighty farmers and perhaps the same number of merchants. Of physicians instead of a "pretty considerable" number (I. 27) there were sixteen. Burke’s slights on this profession remind us that his favourite French author was Molière. And why should we look for "the natural landed interest of the country" in the Tiers État when it was so abundantly represented in the nobility.

P. 42, l. 4. The British House of Commons was not, indeed could not be, regarded by Burke (or by any one in his day) as an example of "popular representation." Things have changed since the Reform Bill of 1832 and the extension of the franchise.

P. 42, l. 9. Politic: political.

P. 42, l. 42. Breakers of law in India, etc. A reference to Paul Benfield, an Indian trader and servant of the East India Company, who acquired a large fortune by trading and money lending. He was implicated in a very shady transaction with the Nawab of Arcot and was ordered home. His conduct occasioned one of Burke’s strongest and most ironic speeches. Benfield became member for Cricklade in 1780, and had a number of other boroughs in his pocket. He afterwards lost his fortune in speculations, and died in needy circumstances in Paris in 1810.

P. 43, ll. 28-29. Mere country curates: curates is used here not in our sense of "assistants," but meaning curés, beneficed clergy. In the clergy État were 48 bishops, 35 abbots and canons, 208 parish priests. The lower clergy certainly, as Arthur Young points out, benefited by the Revolution.

P. 44, ll. 20-21. Discontented men of quality: Burke here intends not only such Frenchmen as the Duke of Orleans, Mirabeau, de Noailles and Talleyrand, but Englishmen of his day, like Lord Stanhope, Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Bedford.

P. 44, ll. 25-26. To be attached to the subdivision, etc. But surely caste feeling does not always lead to universalism.

P. 44, ll. 37-38. The then Earl of Holland: Henry Rich (1590-1649), M.P. for Leicester 1610, who rose rapidly in court favour, negotiated the marriage of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, and as Chief Justice in Eyre furthered the illegal claims of Charles. In 1642 he joined the Parliamentary party, went back to Charles in 1643, and then back again to the Parliamentary side. In 1648 he again took up arms for the king, was captured at St. Neots, July 1648, and beheaded.

P. 45, l. 34. His kinsman, a favourite poet: Edmund Waller, who was related to Cromwell through his mother, a sister of John Hampden. He wrote a "Panegyric to my Lord Protector."

P. 46, l. 10. Guises: a celebrated French ducal family deriving its
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title from the town of Guise in Aisne. The first duke (Claude, 1406–1550) distinguished himself in the service of Francis I.—his daughter married James V. of Scotland and was mother of Mary Queen of Scots. The second (Francis, 1519–1563) rose to high eminence as a soldier, and was virtual ruler of France under the feeble rule of Francis II., setting himself to crush Protestantism; in this he was helped by his brother Charles (1527–1574), Cardinal of Lorraine, perhaps the ablest of the family. Francis's son Henry (1550–1588) rigorously persecuted the Huguenots and was a party to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; his designs on the French crown led to his assassination. His grandson (Henry II., 1514–1554) was the opponent of Richelieu, and finally became Grand Chamberlain to Louis XIV.

P. 46, l. 10. Condés: a collateral branch of the House of Bourbon Louis I., Prince of Condé (1530–1580), a spirited soldier, who became a Protestant and opposed the Guises. The second Louis (1621–1686), "the great Condé," was equally distinguished in arms and in letters. Louis Joseph Condé (1730–1818) did all he could to save the monarchy at the Revolution.

P. 46, l. 10. Colignis: Gaspard de Coligny (1517–1572), a distinguished French admiral, who worked hard for toleration for the Huguenots and was the first victim of the St. Bartholomew Massacre.

P. 46, l. 11. Richelieu, Cardinal (1585–1642): minister of Louis XIII. and a great statesman, who strove (1) to ruin the Protestants as a political power; (2) to curtail the power of the nobles; (3) to humiliate Austria in the councils of Europe. He had a great genius for detailed administration and effected many reforms in finance, legislation, and the army. He founded the French Academy.


P. 46, l. 13. Sully, Duke of (1460–1611) the fellow campaigner and trusty minister of Henry IV. He did much to encourage agriculture as the true wealth of France.

P. 46, ll. 16–17. How very soon France... recovered: this has been illustrated since Burke's day, especially by the way France emerged from the burden of the great war with Prussia in 1871.

P. 46, l. 38. Load: overload; make top-heavy.

P. 47, l. 5. Oratorical: Burke wrote, quite correctly, oratorical

P. 48, l. 1. Woe to the country that rejects, etc.: this is bombast. Burke himself supported the Test Act, which shut out many capable men from the service of their country, and he identifies religion with the Established Church.

P. 48, l. 10. No rotation, etc.: referring to the ideas of James Harrington (1611–1677) and the plan of Soame Jenyns (1704–1757) to have an annual ministry chosen by lot from among thirty picked peers and one hundred commoners.

P. 49, ll. 32–33. Twenty-four million ought to prevail over two hundred thousand: similarly to-day it is said that the seven million voters who elect the Commons ought to prevail over the six hundred peers who represent but themselves.
P 49. 1. 35. The lamp-plot: referring to the street lynchings in Paris, when the mob hanged its victims with the ropes which were used to suspend the lanterns.


P 52, I. 11. The House of Lords to be voted useless: as it was by the Commons on February 6, 1649.

P 52, II. 17-18. Land tax and malt tax: these taxes brought in about two and a half millions, which was all that the navy then cost

P 53, I. 3. Admire . . . the British Constitution: not so much, however, for its theoretical and formal (which Bentham attacked in his Fragment on Government in 1775) as its moral basis—the good feeling and unity that prevailed among its component parts and which was impossible in the condition of things prevailing in France.

P 53, I. 10. Dr. Price . . . inadequacy of representation. The events of the next generation and the Reform Act of 1832 prove Price to be justified in spite of Burke's sneer.

P 53, I. 33. Consistency of democrats: this has always been the case. When the people favour a politician's views they are the enlightened source of all power, when they oppose him they are an uneducated mob. Even Milton often talks in the style of a Coriolanus

P 55, II. 14-15. A man . . . of great authority: Dr. Priestley in his History of the Corruptions of Christianity (1782) strenuously attacked the state establishment of religion and its then chief supporter, Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester. His references to calamities appear to be based on the imagery of the Book of Revelation.

P 55, II. 37-38. They have "the rights of men": the school which took this phrase for its watchword was founded by John Locke and Algernon Sidney, who argued that by nature certain rights belong to all men, and these rights have always been enjoyed by Englishmen.

P 56, II. 10-11. Illa se jactat in aula, etc. "In that hall let Aeolus blister, there let him reign when he has closed the dungeon of the winds."—Virgil, Aeneid, I. 140.

P 56, I. 12. Levanter: a strong easterly wind in the Levant (Levant is really the point where the sun rises—hence the coasts of the Mediterranean east of Italy.)

P 57, I. 41. A power out of themselves: i.e. outside themselves, an eternal power.


P 59, II. 5-6. Approved utility: usefulness that has been "proved" or tested and found good.

P 60, II. 1-2. Denominations: denominators, numbers.

P 60, I. 8. Prudence: the Aristotelian φρόνησις, practical wisdom, good sense, thoughtfulness.
P. 60, l. 11. Liceat perire poetis: let poets have the right to perish if they please.

P. 60, l. 13. Ardentem frigidus Ætnam insiluit. "He (Empedocles) leapt in cold blood into burning Ætna."—Horace, Ars Poetica, 465 f.

P. 60, l. 15. Franchises of Parnassus: liberties or privileges accorded to poets, Parnassus being a mountain in Greece sacred to Apollo and the muses.

P. 60, l. 16. Divine: a reference to Dr. Price, who, Burke suggests, is like Empedocles (in the legend), discredit a philosophical career by a piece of theatrical fooling.

P. 60, l. 37. Cum perimit, etc. "When many a class annihilates the cruel despots."—Juvenal, VII. 151.

P. 60, l. 41. High-bred republicans: like the Bedford, Grenville and Chatham houses—all these had gradually yielded to the seductions of the court.

P. 61, l. 2. Those of us, etc.: the Rockingham party.

P. 62, l. 29. Still: in the old adverbial sense of "always," "ever."

P. 62, l. 35. Pisgah: the hill from which Moses looked across Jordan to the land of Canaan (Deut. xxxiv. 1).

P. 63, l. 17. Hugh Peters: see note to p. 9, l. 39.

P. 64, l. 33. Well born: noble, high, liberal.

P. 64, l. 37. Onondaga: an Indian village in New York state near the site of the present town of Syracuse. The Onondagas were one of the Iroquois confederacy. Champlain attacked their fortress unsuccessfully in 1615. Burke had written an early book on European Settlements in America, drawing his information largely from the accounts of French Jesuits who had a mission in Onondaga.

P. 65, l. 16. A foreign republic, etc.: i.e. Paris, governed at this time by sixty departments, each of which like a Greek city state had full power within its own limits, and carried out the measures proposed in the clubs of the city.

P. 65, l. 19. An army, etc.: the National Guards, hastily raised at the beginning of July.

P. 65, l. 38. Catiline: an able but ambitious Roman, who formed an unscrupulous conspiracy against the state, the discovery of which by Cicero forced him to leave the city and attempt a rebellion. This was put down, and Catiline died in the engagement, 63 B.C.

P. 65, l. 38. Cethegus (C. Cornelius): one of Catiline's fellow conspirators, whose strangling in the Capitol dungeons, urged by Cato and Cicero, was opposed as illegal by Julius Cæsar.

P. 66, l. 10. Embracing in their arms, etc. In January 1790 two brothers named Agasse were condemned for forging bank-notes. While they lay under sentence their brother and cousin were made lieutenants of the National Guard and were publicly feasted and honoured.

P. 66, l. 20. Explodes: cry down—the antithesis of applaud.
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P. 66, l. 27. Nœc color imperii: the quotation, paraphrased in the preceding context is from Lucan, Pharsalia, IX. 207.


P. 66, l. 35. Institute: institution.

P. 67, l. 5. The vessel of the state, etc.: Mirabeau's words quoted in the footnote on p. 71.

P. 67, l. 11. The blood spilled, etc. Barnave's remark on hearing of the hanging of Foulon and Berthier, two of the innocent gentlemen. Barnave was one of the best orators of the Revolution.

P. 67, l. 21. Felicitation on . . . new year: a deputation from the Assembly presented an address to the king and queen on January 3, 1790, in which they looked forward to presenting him as the friend of the people with a collection of laws calculated for his happiness and for that of all the French, etc.

P. 67, l. 34. Frippery: (1) second-hand clothes; (2) a second-hand clothes shop.

P. 68, l. 3. Ordinary: a bishop or his deputy, here the prison chaplain.

P. 68, l. 10. Lèse nation: a phrase, modelled on the familiar lèse majesté (treason against the crown), applied by the Assembly to treason against the nation.

P. 68, l. 34. Sentinel: his name, de Miomandre, deserves to be recorded. Happily he recovered from his wounds.

P. 69, l. 13. These two gentlemen, of the king's bodyguard, were de Huttes and Varicourt.

P. 69, l. 27. One of the two palaces: the Tuileries.

P. 69, l. 32. Theban and Thracian orgies: Thebes was the chief city of Boeotia in ancient Greece and is associated in legend with the tragic story of Oedipus. The long Latin poem Thebaic is one steady record of horrors. Thrace was accounted the most barbarous state of Greece.

P. 69, ll. 35–36. Apostle . . revelations of his own: as Paul in 2 Cor. xii. 1-4.

P. 70, l. 17. Fifth monarchy: certain fanatics at the close of the Commonwealth period looked for a coming universal kingdom of which Christ was to be the head. They were put down by Cromwell, and again soon after the Restoration.

P. 72, ll. 36–37. A sovereign distinguished, etc.: Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria.

P. 73, l. 3. It is now sixteen or seventeen years: Burke had seen the queen in 1774.

P. 73, l. 21. Sophisters: sophists; captious, fallacious reasoners. Burke's lament over the departed age of chivalry is of a piece with the universal longing for "the good old times," a longing which is as old as it is untrue.

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P. 73, II. 32–33. Vice lost half its evil . . . grossness. Burke frequently expressed this view, but it is an opinion that challenges opposition.


P. 74, I. 19. The decent drapery of life: Samuel Johnson was fond of saying that life was barren enough with all her trappings, and men should be cautious about stripping her of them.

P. 75, II. 2–3. Groves of their academy: the philosophers of ancient Greece used to discourse with their pupils and followers in shady groves. Plato’s school was in a grove on the Cephissus near Athens.


P. 75, I. 15. Non satis est, etc. “For poems to have beauty of style is not enough, they must have feeling too.”—Horace, Ars Poetica, 99.

P. 76, II. 9–10. Two principles. It did not suit Burke here to add to the spirit of gentleman (i.e. honour) and religion, a third great impulse that has guided human affairs, viz. Liberty.


P. 77, I. 17. Gentis (in)cunabula nostræ: the cradle of our race (Virgil, Æneid, iii. 105)

P. 78, II. 5–6. As it has long been observed: i.e. by Aristotle in his definition of tragedy in the Poetics, ch. vi.

P. 78, I. 14. David Garrick (1717–1779) one of the most famous of English actors, born at Hereford, buried in Westminster Abbey. His impersonation of Richard III. was particularly good. He was one of Burke’s intimate friends.

P. 78, I. 14. Sarah Siddons (1755–1831): England’s greatest tragic actress, born at Brecon. She was sister of John and Charles Kemble, and played many parts, excelling in that of Lady Macbeth.

P. 79, I. 29. To call his people to a share in government: Burke is probably referring not so much to the parliament of Paris as to the institution of the provincial assemblies.

P. 79, I. 33. Thought it necessary to provide force: when he arrested certain magistrates.

P. 80, I. 7. Listed with fortune: enlisted in the army of fortune.

P. 80, I. 23. Nero: Emperor of Rome, 54–68. His reign was one incessant course of profligacy and crime.

P. 80, I. 23. Agrippina, mother of Nero, and murdered by him after she had incited him to all manner of evil.

P. 80, I. 23. Louis XI. (1423–1483): was a thorough despot, cruel and treacherous, and inaugurated the absolute tyranny that culminated in the Revolution.

P. 80, II. 23–24. Charles IX. (1550–1574): was responsible for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew and the persecution of the Huguenots.

P. 80, I. 25. Patkul: the Russian ambassador at Dresden; had been surrendered to Charles XII. under a treaty by Augustus II., the
deposed King of Poland, and was broken on the wheel in 1707 after
a form of trial.

P. 80, l. 26. Christina (1628-1689): Queen of Sweden, was the only
child of Gustavus Adolphus. She abdicated after a capable rule, and
spent her last years in artistic and scientific studies in Rome.
Monaldeschi was an Italian whom she had favoured and then neg-
lected. He published the story of her intrigues, and was assassinated
in her presence, October 1657.

P. 81, ll. 10-11. Attestation of the flower-de-luce: some French
courtiers (wearing the Royal fleur-de-lis) had sought refuge in Eng-
land and were talking scandal about their queen.

P. 81, l. 12. Lord George Gordon: had been convicted in June 1787
of libelling the French queen. He evaded immediate arrest by going
to the Continent, and on his return professed himself a convert to
Judaism. He was arrested in Birmingham in December for contempt
of court, and sent to Newgate. The mob that he raised was in 1780
in connexion with the "No-papery" riots.

P. 81, l. 23. Talmud: the Rabbinical exposition of and commen-
tary on the Jewish scriptures.

P. 81, ll. 30-31. Dr Price has shown us, etc.: a reference to
Price’s mathematicall and economical treatises. The thirty pieces of
silver are those given to Judas Iscariot by the Jewish officials. The
Gallican Church is the Roman Catholic Church in France.

P. 82, ll. 14-15. Slender dyke of twenty-four miles: the Straits of
Dover, dyke=ditch.

P. 83, l. 1. We formerly have had a king of France: John, taken
by the Black Prince at Poitiers, September 1356.

P. 83, l. 10. Subtisised: transformed, lit. spun or woven.

P. 83, l. 12. Helvetius (1715-1771): a Parisian of Swiss origin,
his book, De l’Esprit, taught that man was a mere animal, guided
altogether by self-love, the sole principle of morals being sensuous
gratification.

P. 83, l. 28. Blurred shreds: i.e. scribbles.

P. 84, l. 29. Prejudice, etc.: these ideas were embodied in a collec-
tion of Essays by Lord Chesterfield and others, published about 1756,
and no doubt familiar to Burke.

P. 86, ll. 41-42. This people refused to change their law: Parlia-
ment repudiated John’s surrender of the realm to the pope, and in later
days, by the Statute of Provisions, declared that the Court of Rome
had no power to appoint English bishops or incumbents.

P. 86, l. 16. Cabal calling itself philosophic: “philosophic” seems
here to imply free-thinking, the rejection of Christianity. Many of
the leading thinkers in England (named below by Burke) during the
eighteenth century had belonged to the “deistic” school, who had
advocated a rationalist handling of the records and beliefs of Chris-
tianity. They never formulated any system, and indeed can hardly
be called a "school" of thought, though much of their work was based on the teaching and spirit of John Locke.

P. 87, ll. 6–8. Plainness and directness of ... those men who, etc.: men like Walpole, Chatham and Rockingham; in our own day Salisbury and Campbell-Bannerman.

P. 87, l. 31. The Armenian Church: is not now given a place alongside the three great divisions of Christianity: Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Eastern (commonly called Greek, the religion of Russia, Greece, etc.). Like the Coptic and Abyssinian Churches it is treated as a branch of Eastern Christianity.

P. 88, l. 5. Alembic: a vessel used by the old chemists in distillation

P. 88, l. 35. In ancient Rome: when the Decemvirate was founded, commissioners visited Athens, then at the height of its fame under Pericles.

P. 90, ll. 1–2. To act in trust: so it was said by The Spectator of Lord Cromer on his retirement from Egypt, that he had controlled all his conduct by the sense that he was a trustee.

P. 90, l. 42. Quicquid multis peccatur multum: whatever wrong is wrought by the many, goes unpunished. The quotation is from Lucan (Phars. V. 260), and had been used before by Burke in pleading for the rioters of 1780.

P. 91, l. 40. That eternal, immutable law, etc. It was the "scholastic" theologians of the Middle Ages who laid down the doctrine that in the Divine mind reason and will are identical.

P. 91, l. 41. Life-renters: life-tenants

P. 92, l. 3. Entail: the settlement of an estate on a series of heirs so that the immediate possessor may not dispose of it. "To cut off the entail" is to formally deprive such beneficiaries.

P. 92, l. 3. Commit waste: to depreciate the value of an estate by felling timber, allowing houses to fall into disrepair, etc.

P. 92, ll. 12–13. No one generation could link with the other: cp. what Burke says on p. 31.

P. 93, l. 18. Hack that aged parent in pieces, etc. On the advice of Medea, the daughters of Peleus, King of Thessaly, meted out to their father the treatment here described. Hobbes and Cowley had used the illustration in a similar way.

P. 94, l. 37. Great name: Scipio; the greater, Cicero. The quotation is from Scipio's dream in Cicero's De Republica, Bk. VI.

P. 95, l. 4. High origin and cast: i.e. caste, descent, birth.

P. 95, l. 17. Signiory: seigniory—the power or authority of an overlord.

P. 97, l. 12. As ample and as early a share, etc. It may have been as ample, but it was certainly not as early. The revival of learning and all the new life associated with the Renaissance was very late indeed in reaching England.
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P. 98. l. 1. Identified the estate of the Church with private property. A change from the position taken up by Burke in 1772 when, arguing for the repeal of the Act of Uniformity, he maintained that the Anglican Church was a voluntary society favoured by the State, and that the tithes were a species of public tax.

P. 98, l. 6. Euryalus: the strait between the island of Euboea and the mainland where, contrary to most of the Mediterranean Sea, there is a considerable rise and fall of tides.

P. 98, l. 34. The gospel's being preached to the poor: see Matt. xi. 5.


P. 100, l. 22-23 They can see a bishop of Durham... Much of what Burke says is sound enough (e.g. on the value of a clergy not dependent on the offerings of those whom they may have to rebuke), but he does not touch the burning question of the inequality of clerical stipends, the vast discrepancy between the income of a bishop and that of a curate.

P. 103, l. 13. Academies of the Palais Royal: the courtyard of the Palais Royal was the favourite spot for gossip and tub-thumping oratory.

P. 103, l. 14. The Jacobins got their name from their meeting-place—the hall of the old monastery of St. James of Compostella, in the Rue St. Honoré.

P. 104, l. 2. Dungeons and iron cages: were much used by Louis XI. The iron cage was invented by the bishop of Verdun, and he was its first victim.

P. 106, l. 10. The jus retractus: the right of recovery, by which the lord could compulsorily repurchase alienated lands which had at any previous time formed part of his fief. The French law recognized a score of species of this droit de retract.

P. 106, l. 10-11. Landed property held by the crown. After the ordinance of Moulins in 1560, all private estates that became royal property were united to the crown lands and so became alienable. In practice they were often alienated, but the jus retractus remained and largely nullified the alienation.

P. 107, l. 2. Commendatory abbeys: abbeys to which (as to sees) patrons had the right of presenting their nominees.

P 107, l. 26. The two academies of France: (1) the Academy of Sciences (the French Academy) of forty members, founded by Richelieu in 1635; (2) the Academy of Inscriptions, whose function was to compose inscriptions in honour of the achievements of Louis XIV.

P. 107, l. 28. The Encyclopædia: was begun by Diderot and d'Alembert in 1751 with the avowed purpose of propagating rationalist and sceptical views of philosophy and religion. It was finished in thirty-three vols. by 1780, and contributed largely to fan the fires of the Revolution.
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P. 108, l. 26. Desultory and saint persecution. This was on the
part of the nobility and clergy. But the Jansenists and Jesuits could
not unite against the common foe, and the committee of supervision
appointed by the Parliament of Paris was equally helpless.

P. 109, ll. 2–3. Late king of Prussia: Frederick II. ("the Great"),
who died in 1786 and was largely imbued with the French spirit,
being a great friend of Voltaire.

P. 110, l. 41. M. Laborde: a Spaniard by birth and afterwards a
prosperous Bayonne merchant, who became a financial contractor for
the government of Louis XV. and received a marquisate. Under the
Reign of Terror in 1794 he was condemned for exporting bullion and
was guillotined.

P. 111, l. 6. Duke de Choiseul (1719–1795): Louis XV’s “last sub-
stantial man” had done much to strengthen the Bourbon family com-
 pact and had greatly influenced European politics. He was dismissed
from power through the jealousy of Madame du Barry, Louis XV.’s
mistress.

P. 111, l. 13. The Duke d’Aiguillon: succeeded Choiseul as Minister
for Foreign Affairs. He is remembered for his supineness in the
partition of Poland. He was the wealthiest of all the French nobles,
but took the side of the Revolution in the Assembly. The protect-
ing despotism that saved him was Madame du Barry.

P. 111, l. 18. Noailles: several members of this old ducal family
had distinguished themselves in Church and State, e.g. (1) Anne Jules
(1650–1728), marshal of France, who persecuted the Huguenots; (2)
Louis Antoine, his brother (1651–1739), Archbishop of Paris and
Cardinal; (3) Adrien Maurice (1678–1760), also marshal, who was
in the War of the Austrian Succession; (4) his son Louis was a
private agent of Louis XVI.; (5) the Vicomte, Louis Marie (1756–
1804), brother of (4), with the Duke d’Aiguillon took a leading part
in the Assembly.

P. 111, l. 23. The Duke de Rohesfoucault: was a famous political
economist. The Cardinal (see footnote) belonged to another branch
of the family and was President of the Order of the Clergy in the
States-General of 1789.

P. 111, l. 39. Crudelem illam hastem: it was the custom of the
Romans to stick a spear in the ground at public auctions, originally
as a sign of booty gained in battle.

P. 112, l. 26. Mariuses and Syllas: Marius and Sulla were two
prominent Roman generals of the first century B.C., whose strife
one with the other involved the city in fearful slaughter for many
years.

P. 112, l. 43. Operose: laborious, tedious.

P. 116, l. 40. Offer of a contribution: the clergy proposed to sur-
render the tithes, while retaining the Church lands.

P. 118, l. 14. The Bank of Discount: had been established by Turgot
when he was comptroller-general.
P. 119, l. 22. Arcanum: mystery, secret.

P. 119, l. 31. A sort of fine: the sum paid by a tenant in return for the favour of a lease or renewal.

P. 119, l. 32. Gift: the technical term for a grant under the feudal system.

P. 120, l. 32. Judicious check, etc.: yet in Burke’s day the House of Commons was largely nominated by the House of Lords.

P. 121, l. 8. A direct train: a straight course. The establishment of the Directory confirmed Burke’s opinion.

P. 121, l. 13. Purely democratic form, etc.: When Burke wrote the Republics of Genoa and Venice were in existence as well as the Swiss Confederation.

P. 122, l. 21. I do not often quote Bolingbroke. Yet to him Burke (like Pitt) owed more than he would confess, almost as much indeed as, in another way, to Addison. Viscount Bolingbroke (Henry St. John) (1678–1751) was Tory prime minister of Queen Anne and the friend of Swift and Pope (to whom he suggested the Essay on Man). He wrote “Letters” bearing on politics and literature, and his chief fame is that of a rhetorician. His Ideal of a Patriot King shows him at his best.

P. 123, l. 2. These abuses accumulated, etc.: The existence of these abuses was fully known, and Jacques Robert Turgot (1727–1781), who was called by Louis XVI. to manage the national finances, had thoroughly probed them and planned a scheme providing for their gradual but complete removal. Unfortunately the vested interests were too strong for him, and he had to retire after less than two years of office. What he would have done peacefully only the shock of the Revolution could afterwards effect. And in what follows Burke is somewhat astray. The idea of a republic must have had its seeds long before 1789, it did not spring up and mature so swiftly as he makes out.

P. 123, l. 36. Tahmas Kouli Khán: Burke seems to have in his mind Mahmud, the inhuman Afghan conqueror of Persia who, between 1722 and 1725, almost depopulated Isphahan.

P. 124, l. 1. Where the human race melts away, etc.: as in the Congo State at the end of the nineteenth century.

P. 124, ll. 16–17. Intendants of the generalities: public officials at the head of the different districts, something like the English lords-lieutenant.

P. 125, l. 12. Considerable tracts are barren: e.g. the sandy tracts on the coasts of Gascony and Languedoc. About seventeen million acres out of a total area of 123 million are unproductive.

P. 125, l. 17. Lisle: the dense population of this district is due to its having been part of Flanders. Cp. the density of modern Belgium.

P. 126, l. 7. Whole British dominions: i.e. the United Kingdom or Great Britain and Ireland.
P. 127, l. 12-13. Her spacious high roads: these, made chiefly under Louis XIV. and XV., are still the admiration of Britshers.

P. 127, l. 13. Opportunity: fitness, suitability. The first canal in France was that which connects the Seine and the Loire, and was constructed early in the seventeenth century. The great canal of Languedoc connects Narbonne and Toulouse, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and was the work of Paul de Riquet under Louis XIV.

P. 127, l. 18. Naval apparatus, etc. As de Riquet made the canals so Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683), one of the greatest ministers France ever had, made the navy, and the Marquis de Louvois the army, while Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban laid the foundations of modern fortifications and military engineering not only for France but for Europe.

P. 127, ll. 27-28. Manufactures...not second (to ours): this was especially the case with regard to silk fabrics.

P. 127, ll. 30-31. The arts that beautify life: music, architecture, painting—in all these France was leading the world.

P. 128, ll. 18-19. Censurable degree of facility: there is no doubt that the king made a good many rash promises (with levity and want of judgment) to the working classes, which excited opposition between them and the aristocracy.

P. 129, l. 15. Circean: Circe was the enchantress who, when Ulysses and his comrades landed on her island, first infatuated them and then changed them (except Ulysses) into swine.

P. 131, l. 10. At the period when the Hanse-towns, etc.: the Hanseatic League was a combination of towns in North-west Germany for the mutual protection (1) of their commerce against the Baltic pirates, (2) of their liberties against the encroachments of neighbouring princes. It was founded in 1341, and numbered at the time sixty-four cities, now dwindled to three—Hamburg, Lubeck and Bremen.

P. 131, l. 12. Orsini: better known in Italian history as the head of the Guelf party in the thirteenth century, and the opponents of Pope Alexander VI. at the end of the fifteenth

P. 131, l. 12. Vitelli: this family governed the town of Citta di Castello (twenty-five miles from Perugia) in the fifteenth century. It is worth remembering that they were among the first to patronize the painter Raphael.

P. 131, ll. 14-15. Mamelukes: originally slaves from the Caucasus, who became the bodyguard of the Sultan in Egypt, and in time gained the supreme power there. They were defeated by Napoleon in 1798, and finally annihilated by Mehemet Ali, who became Viceroy of Egypt under the Sultan of Turkey.

P. 131, l. 15. Nayres...of Malabar: the Nairs are a military caste (claiming to rank next to Brahmins) who long held power on the Malabar or west coast of India. They were subjected by Hyder Ali (father of Tipu Sultan) in 1763.
P. 131, l. 18. Statues of Equity and Mercy: both these virtues were ranked among the goddesses of ancient Rome.

P. 132, ll. 8–10. Triumph...over...a British constitution: Maury and others really counselled a constitution on the British model. Burke is here really hitting at the English Jacobins, who, like the victorious revolutionary party, opposed the constitution.

P. 132, ll. 35–36. Shed the blood...upon the scaffold: Henry IV. did this with Marshal de Biron.


P. 133, l. 22. Officious: not in our sense of meddlesome, but full of good offices, kindly disposed.

P. 134, l. 4. Partnership with the farmer. Under this system, known as métayage, and still largely practised in India, the landlord advanced stock, seed, etc., and received in return half the produce.

P. 134, ll. 13–15. Civil government...not in the hands of the nobility: It had passed to the central power, with the further result that the people grudged paying the old dues to those who had no responsibility of administration.

P. 135, l. 28. Omnes boni, etc. “True nobility is esteemed by every one of us.”—Cicero, Pro Sextio, IX. 21.

P. 136, l. 7. My inquiry concerning your clergy. In these paragraphs Burke argues from the good character of the individual clergy to their corporate fitness in the administration of government, and so confounds two questions that should be considered independently. He resembles those apologists for Charles I. who say that because he was a kind husband and father we should overlook his faithlessness, perjury and tyranny in public affairs.

P. 139, l. 4. The Cardinal of Lorraine: Charles, Duke of Guise (see note on p. 46), took a leading part in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

P. 139, l. 37. Teachers of the Palace Royal: see note to p. 103, l. 13.

P. 141, l. 26. The two great parties: the old faith and the new, Catholic and Protestant.

P. 142, l. 4. Regulars of both sexes: monks, friars, nuns—all who live under a monastic rule. The seculars are the clergy who are not so bound.

P. 142, l. 21. Fénélon (1651–1715): a famous French prelate and writer on historical, philosophical, theological and literary subjects. He was a remarkable preacher and a man of most benevolent disposition. He became Archbishop of Cambrai in 1695.

P. 142, l. 27. A provincial town: Auxerre, capital of the department of Yonne, ninety miles south-east from Paris.

P. 143, ll. 15–16. A hundred and twenty bishops: bishops and archbishops numbered one hundred and thirty-one and were reduced to
eighty-three, one for each department of the country. Of the one hundred and thirty-one, forty-eight had seats in the Assembly.

P. 143, l. 19. Instances of eminent depravity: e. g. Talleyrand, who was Bishop of Autun, and the Abbé of St. Germain des Prés, who under Louis XV. held 2000 benefices, which he sold to the highest bidders, spending his revenues in some very unecclesiastical directions.


P. 145, ll. 6-7. Enlightened self-interest: a reference to Helvetius (see note to p. 83, l. 12), who has some remarks on Civic Education at the end of his book De l'Esprit.

P. 146, l. 1. Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715): a native of Aberdeen, and professor of divinity in Glasgow. He supported William of Orange and was made Bishop of Salisbury. He wrote a History of the Reformation, and a History of his Own Times.

P. 146, l. 15. Humour: disposition, spirit.

P. 146, l. 36. Justice and mercy, etc.: see Micah vi. 8.

P. 147, l. 15. A common enemy: unbelief, atheism.

P. 148, ll. 3-4. I see in a country very near us: cp. what Burke said on p. 8 about a neighbour's house being on fire.

P. 148, l. 8. Doctrine of prescription: custom continued until it becomes a right or has the force of law.

P. 148, l. 9. Domat, Jean (1625-1696): a great French jurist and friend of Pascal; he regarded laws and customs as the reflex of political history.

P. 149, l. 19. Anabaptists: a fanatical sect which, originating in the Netherlands in the time of the Reformation, afterwards had their head-quarters at Munster in Saxon. Their excesses included community of goods and of wives.

P. 150, l. 16. Tokens of confraternity and standards, etc. The Revolution Society of London was presented by the Patriotic Society of Nantes with a banner that the latter had used in one of their festivals. It bore a representation of the flags of the two countries and the motto "Pacte Universel."

P. 152, l. 7. Confederacies and correspondences. The footnote shows that Burke is thinking of the secret society of the Illuminati, the discovery of which produced a panic out of all proportion to its importance. The society arose at Ingolstadt in Bavaria as a kind of political variety of freemasonry that aimed at combatting the obscurantism of the Jesuits. Certain malcontents betrayed the leaders, who were punished for infringing an electoral edict against secret societies.

P. 153, ll. 16-17. As sophists represent it: i.e. as the next sentences show, as a dilemma between unreformed existence or absolute destruction. Burke's middle course would be "to mend," rather than to end or to continue the trouble. Cp. p. 155: "It was your business to correct and mitigate everything noxious in this passion (superstition) as in all the passions."
P. 153, ll. 20-21. *Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna:* "your lot is cast in Sparta, be a credit to it"; "having made your bed, now lie on it as comfortably as you can." The proverb is frequent in Latin literature, being taken from the *Telephus* of Euripides, where it is addressed by Agamemnon to Menelaus.

P. 153, l. 40. *Purchase:* advantage in raising bodies, leverage.

P. 154, l. 11. *The winds blow as they list:* St. John iii. 8. A politician cannot always get his leverage when he wants it; he is as dependent on the gifts of nature or of chance as the sailing-ship was on the wind.

P. 154, ll. 33-40. *Steam, electricity, magnetism ... most powerful and most tractable:* it would almost seem here that Burke foresaw the scientific triumphs of the nineteenth century.

P. 155, l. 34. * Munera Terra:* the gifts of earth (Horace, *Odes*, II xiv.); the things that pass away as opposed to the eternal.

P. 157, l. 4. *Commendatory abbots:* those who, like Abbé Clermont of St. Germain des Prés (note to p. 143, l. 19), held plural livings.

P. 158, ll. 35-36. *Petit maisons:* should be *petits maisons,* probably in the sense of chalets, small houses. Distinguish from *petites maisons* (mentioned, though wrongly spelt, in the footnote on p. 164), which means lunatic asylum.

P. 158, l. 36. *Petit(s) soupers:* little suppers (on which much money is often spent).

P. 159, l. 16. *Philosophic spoiler:* another hit at the Encyclopédistes.

P. 160, l. 10. *This letter is grave,* etc. At this point Burke, after an interval of some months of absorption in parliament, in which he opposed several measures of political and religious reform, enters upon a distinctly new section of the work and sets himself to criticize (1) the capacity and policy of the National Assembly; (2) their achievements in the legislature, administration, the judicature, the army and finance.

P. 160, ll. 17-18. *My original purpose,* etc.: as outlined on p. 88 and never properly carried through.

P. 161, ll. 9-10. *They have assumed another (sanction and authority):* as they were obliged to by the political need of the situation. The Long Parliament did the same in the time of Cromwell.

P. 161, ll. 18-19. *Great majorities ... near divisions:* Burke has some further remarks on the competence of majorities in his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.* He says that to give authority to majorities it must be perfectly unanimously and generally understood by society that the act of a majority, however small, must be taken as the act of the whole.

P. 161, ll. 38-39. *Hardly a year ... they have made a Revolution:* but the revolution was not the work of the Assembly; it had been growing more and more inevitable for nearly two generations.

P. 161, l. 40. *Prima fronte:* on the face of it.
P. 162, l. 15. Pleader: not in the sense of a barrister who argues in open court, but rather=draftsman, one who prepares the "pleas" in correct and formal terms. Burke refers to the set proxy speeches which were even more in evidence in the Assembly than the eloquence which he mentions at the beginning of the next paragraph.

P. 163, ll. 24–25. Pater ipse colendi, etc. "The great Father himself would not have the path of tillage an easy one."—Virgil, Georgics, l. 121.

P. 163, ll. 25–26. He that wrestles with us, etc.: an allusion to Jacob and the angel, Genesis xxxii. 24 f.

P. 164, l. 25. Expatiate: in the original sense of "range at large" (now limited to speaking or writing).


P. 166, l. 9. Excellence in simplicity: i.e. in things regarded individually.

P. 166, l. 10. Composition: collectivity.

P. 166, l. 19. Some of the philosophers: the schoolmen of the Middle Ages.

P. 166, l. 29. Empiric: an experimenter whose experiments are not controlled by education and systematic knowledge, a quack.

P. 166, l. 36. Declamations and buffooneries: like those of Molière in Le Médecin Malgré Lui, and Le Tartuffe, satires on the doctors and the clergy respectively.


P. 167, l. 11. Quadriramanous: or quadrumanous, "having four hands," monkeyish.

P. 167, l. 12. Paradoxes of eloquent writers: like Rousseau, as the succeeding sentences show.

P. 167, l. 24. Pede nudo Catonem: Burke quotes from Horace (Epistles, I. xix. 12), a gibe against those who think that wine drinking makes a poet. "Suppose a man with rough and stern countenance, barefoot and with the texture of a scanty toga, were to ape Cato, would he, therefore, reproduce the virtues and morals of Cato?" It takes something more than the philosopher's garb to make a philosopher.

P. 169, ll. 16–18. The French... propose to divide, etc. But the division when accomplished followed natural boundaries not geometrical lines.

P. 170, l. 3. System of Empedocles and Buffon: Empedocles (cp. p. 60) of Sicily (c. 490–430 B.C.) conceived the story of the universe as an everlasting evolution, a series of endless cycles in which the two motive principles, love and hate, alternately prevail over the four elements—fire, air, earth and water.
NOTES

P. 170, l. 3. Buffon (1707-1780): the great French naturalist who arranged the animal world in orders, genera and species.

P. 170, l. 27. A third for her dower: the fraction of a husband’s real estate to which a widow is entitled.


P. 174, l. 3. Servius Tullius: was the sixth king of Rome (578-534 B.C.), and divided the Roman territory into thirty “tribes,” and the people into five “classes,” from the richest to the poorest, and as any man became rich, so he had power in the state, though he were lowly born.

P. 174, ll. 30-31. Eighteen livres a day: the old French livre was about the value of a franc (34d.), by which it was superseded in 1795.

P. 178, l. 29. Hominem non sapunt: they do not take cognizance of man.

P. 179, ll. 4-5. Such governments do exist in the world: e.g. in the United States of America, in Switzerland and (in Burke’s day) in Holland. In each case it was the revolt from an external despotism that was the necessitating cause.

P. 179, ll. 29-30. The Romans freed Greece, Macedon, etc. In 196 B.C. Rome having subjugated the Greek states proclaimed them free, giving them the opportunity to justify their old reputation for self-government. The difficulties became apparent when the liberated districts were distributed among existing political organizations. The degenerate Greeks failed to work out their own salvation, and in 148 B.C. their country was incorporated in the Roman province of Macedon.

P. 179, l. 39. Civil habitudes: civic manners.

P. 180, ll. 15-16. Facies Hippocratica: the consumptive face, so called because of the description of its symptoms (sunken eyes, sharp nose and ears, etc.) by Hippocrates, “the father of medicine,” who lived in the fifth century B.C.

P. 180, l. 21. The metaphysics of an undergraduate were very different a century ago from what they are to-day.

P. 181, l. 17. Montesquieu, Baron de (1689-1755): an illustrious French thinker, remembered chiefly by his Esprit des Lois, wrote also an able work on The Causes of the Grandeur of the Romans and their Declension.

P. 181, l. 34. The troll of their categorical table: i.e. the recitation of the table or list of categories—the classes under which objects of philosophy are systematically arranged.

P. 182, ll. 16-17. If monarchy should ever again obtain ascendency: the unfettered despotism of Napoleon proves the marvellous prescience of Burke’s opinion.

P. 184, l. 6. A trustee for the whole. This is truer of the British House of Commons to-day than in Burke’s time, when the interests
of the industrial section of the community were subordinated to those of the agriculturists and especially the great landlords.

P. 184, ll. 10–12. When did you hear . . . inequality of representation: the cry was already beginning to be heard before Burke’s death, it was answered by the Reform Bill of 1832.

P. 184, l. 21. Out of some giddy clubs: outside such fraternities as the Revolution Society.

P. 184, ll. 22–23. Desire it on different ideas. In Burke’s day dissatisfaction was expressed not so much with the basis as with the method of representation—the buying and selling of seats in the House of Commons.

P. 185, l. 34. Limbus Patrum (the “limbo” of the fathers): an indefinite region in the intermediate state where the souls of those who had no opportunity to accept Christ (e.g. the good who died before He came, and unbaptized infants) are supposed to abide.

P. 185, l. 38. Like chimney-sweepers. Burke refers to the boys who went up chimneys before the introduction of the present long brushes. They were disqualified, of course, by growing too big.

P. 188, ll. 1–2. They have reversed the Latonian kindness to . . . Delos: Delos (in the Cyclades) in Greek legend was a floating island, and was first fixed in its place by Zeus that Latona (Leda) might have somewhere to give birth to her twin children Apollo and Artemis. Orae et littorae circum, (floating) round coasts and shores, is from Virgil, Æneid, III. 75. Burke says that the Assembly instead of giving stability and permanence to landed property, have set it in fluctuation.

P. 188, ll. 8–9. A holy bishop: Talleyrand (1754–1838), Bishop of Autun, who espoused the revolutionary cause, and, being excommunicated by the pope, embarked on a statesman’s career.


P. 188, l. 25. Carthusian monk: one of an order founded by St. Bruno at Catorissium (Chatroussse) in Dauphiné in 1086, noted for their strictness.

P. 188, l. 37. Beatus ille: “Happy is the man”—the opening words of Horace’s second Epode, in which a usurer praises the charms of country life, its freedom from worry and its simplicity, but soon finds his love of money overpowering his sentiment. Hac ubi, etc., “So spake the money-lender Alphius; he was all but adopting a country life; he got in all his money at the middle of the month, but when the first comes round he wants to put it out again.”


P. 189, ll. 2–3. Mississippi: cp. p. 237. The Mississippi scheme was started in France in 1717 by John Law and the Government, nominally to develop the basin of that river, but really to ease the
pressure on the exchequer. Over 600,000 shares were issued, and the demand was enormous; the crash came in 1720.

P. 189, l. 23. South Sea: the well-known English “bubble” of the same period.

P. 191, l. 5. Ephemeral:

P. 191, ll. 17–18. He falls the value, etc.: i.e. causes it to fall, depreciates.

P. 192, l. 1. Serbonian bog: a quagmire in Egypt in which armies were fabled to be swallowed up. See Paradise Lost, ll. 592–594.

P. 193, l. 3. Hackled: hacked, rudely chopped up.

P. 195, l. 1. Solon (640–559 B.C.): the great Athenian lawgiver and one of the seven sages of Greece, famed for his maxim “Know thy self.”

P. 195, l. 1. Numa: the second king of ancient Rome, revered as the organizer of the state and its civil and religious institutions.

P. 195, l. 33. Bumbailiffs: under-bailiffs. Catch-pole or catch-poll, a constable or petty officer of justice (old Latin, chasspullos, one who fowls).

P. 198, l. 8. The business of the fifth and sixth of October (1789): when the Parisian women marched to Versailles and brought the Royal family to Paris.


P. 201, ll. 34–35. Sed multa urbes, etc. “But a host of cities, with their public prayers, prevailed”—Juvenal, X. 284.

P. 203, l. 18. Areopagus: a tribunal of thirty-one members who judged criminal offences, and whose sentences were characterized by the strictest justice.

P. 208, l. 1. Rism teneatis: can you keep yourself from laughing?


P. 210, l. 24. Comitia: the Assemblies of the Romans for electing magistrates, passing laws, etc. Burke introduces the Latin term to show what the use of the word comites implies.

P. 212, ll. 18–19. Grand compounders, etc. The allusion is to an old and now (except in some bogus American institutions) extinct university arrangement, by which in certain cases the degree could be obtained without going through the normal course.

P. 212, l. 33. In my grand climacteric: my sixty-third year. This age, being $7 \times 9$, has often been regarded as a critical one.

P. 212, ll. 36–37. Si isti mihi largiantur, etc. “But if any god would permit me to become young again and cry in my cradle, I would stoutly refuse.”—Cicero, De Senectute, XXIII. 83.

P. 216, l. 6. Some popular general: a prediction fulfilled in Napoleon.
NOTES

P. 216, l. 17. Debouching: in the (now rare) transitive sense, "to lead away from duty or allegiance."

P. 217, l. 11. Marquis de la Fayette (1757-1834): after aiding the Americans in their War of Independence, returned to France and was made commander-in-chief of the National Guard in Paris. He tried to model the new constitution on American lines. Burke refers to the revolution custom of dubbing every one "Citizen ---."

P. 220, l. 28. Such unfeathered two-legged things: Plato's humorous definition of man (ἔναν ἄνθρωπον ἄνθρωπον), a two-footed animal without wings. Dryden used the phrase in Absalom and Achitophel (l. 170) in describing the son of the Earl of Shaftesbury.


P. 223, l. 7. The systasis of Crete: the union or confederation made by the cities of Crete (otherwise engaged in fighting each other) in face of a common foe.

P. 225, ll. 24-25. Cedo qui vestram, etc. "In what way, pray, did you lose your commonwealth which was so great?"—Cicero, De Senectute, VI. 20.


P. 227, l. 26. St. Simon, Louis de Rouvroy, Duke of (1676-1755), a French courtier and diplomatist in the reign of Louis XIV.; his Memoirs depict with remarkable sagacity the court life of his age. He was the grand-uncle of the Count St. Simon who is known as the founder of French Socialism.

P. 227, ll. 32-33. A season for disposition and providence: an opportunity for planning and providing.


P. 230, l. 23. Mummy: here-used in the obsolete sense of a medicinal gum.

P. 231, ll. 5-7. Mais si maladia, etc. An adaptation of the closing scene of Molière's Malade Imaginaire, where a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Medicine is examined in dog-latin. He is asked as to the remedy for various diseases, and gives the same answer: "Clysterium donare, postea segnare, ensuita purgare." So, says Burke, for all the evils in the state the one remedy of these quack legislators is assignats or paper currency.

P. 231, l. 19. Pious and venerable prelate: a sharp gibe at Talleyrand.

P. 237, l. 33. Credat who will: let him believe it who will. Horace in Satires, I. v. 100, refers to a Jew Apella who might be credulous enough to believe that at the entrance of the temple in Egnatia frankincense melts without fire. But, says Burke, no Jew would believe assignats to be as good as cash.

P. 237, ll. 36-37. Fraudulent exhibitions of Mr. Law: see note to p. 189, ll. 2-3.
NOTES

P. 238, l. 16. Nussling: blindly following his nose.

P. 239, l. 37. Cold, dry, petrific mace: from Paradise Lost, X. 293—the weapon with which Death strikes the soil. "Petrific"—changing animal and vegetable substances into stone.

P. 241, l. 14. Tontines: a kind of life annuity, increasing as the subscribers die, loans raised with the benefit of survivorship. (From Lorenzo Tonti, a Neapolitan, who invented the system.)

P. 241, l. 30. "All-atoning name." The quotation is from Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel (l. 179). He says Shaftesbury "usurped a patriot's all-atoning name."

P. 241, l. 42. Fine raptures of Lucan. Lucan (39–65 A.D.), a Latin poet, born at Cordova, was a nephew of Seneca. His poems contain so many "grand swelling sentiments of liberty" that they were withheld from the Dauphin.

P. 241, l. 42. Corneille, Pierre (1606–1684): "the father of French tragedy." Goethe said that he "delineated great men; Racine, men of eminent rank." Burke is perhaps thinking especially of his play Cinna.

P. 244, l. 17. One of our poets: Addison in his tragedy, Cato, V. I. The French constitution did indeed pass through "fire and blood."
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