

THE WISDOM AND GENIUS

OF

EDMUND BURKE.

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EDMUND BURKE
BY THE SCULPTOR
1764

THE
WISDOM AND GENIUS

OF

THE RIGHT HON.

EDMUND BURKE,

ILLUSTRATED IN A SERIES OF EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS
AND SPEECHES ;

WITH

A SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE :

BY

PETER BURKE, Esq.,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

“ Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such.”
GOLDSMITH.

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PREFACE.

EDMUND BURKE is more frequently cited than any other political author, and at no time so often as at the present day. There scarcely passes a public meeting, or a debate in either house of parliament, where, to sustain the argument, or to round the period, recourse is not had to those thoughts of wisdom, and words of fire, which emanated in such rich profusion from this master-spirit of reason and eloquence. Yet, strange to say, the works of Edmund Burke are not generally read. The knowledge of them appears to be confined to the orator or politician: others, though ever ready to admire and applaud Burke's brilliant passages when quoted, seldom themselves visit the actual store of his rhetorical opulence. The evident cause of the neglect is this—the portions of the writings and speeches of Edmund Burke, which must delight every reader,

are often combined with a quantity of matter of temporary interest only—with a mass, in fact, of political, financial, and statistical detail which the public or parliamentary business of the moment required. Unless the reader has some particular object in view, his mind hesitates to encounter this formidable obstacle to its gratification. The precious gems lie in the heap it is true, but the labour and perseverance of the diamond seeker can alone arrive at their possession.

The present volume proposes to relieve this embarrassment by giving, under a systematic arrangement, the finer part of the works of Burke. The plan adopted is a classification into chapters of the different subjects which principally occupied the great statesman's attention; and a formation under each chapter, of a connected series of extracts the most remarkable for eloquence, argument, or style. The whole, with the biographical summary annexed, displays a concise, and, it is submitted, a clear view of what was the luminous course of Burke's action and thought—what were his parliamentary and literary powers.

To effect the intended object, nearly all Burke's

productions have been laid under contribution. The two principal instances of omission are his earliest essay, "A Vindication of Natural Society," a piece of continued irony which will not permit of separation or curtailment; and the "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity," a paper, the excellence of which mainly depends on the unity of the whole. One other exception also occurs. Nothing, beyond a few observations, is taken from the correspondence of Edmund Burke, lately brought out by Earl Fitzwilliam, and Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Bourke. Due consideration must be paid to the very recent publication of those letters; and, in truth, they form altogether so agreeable and attractive a collection, that they do not come within the reason which has led to this volume's appearance. The care and ability devoted to their production reflect high credit on the editors—the one, the representative of a magnificent line, and the son of that great and good man, Burke's truest and dearest friend,—the other, Burke's relative, a soldier of distinction, who, as Governor of New South Wales, has, in a distant quarter of the globe, established and enlarged the reputation of his race.

Ever a warm and reverential admirer of the character and principles of Edmund Burke, the editor of the present volume has already found his task rewarded by the pleasure experienced in its performance; he will feel that satisfaction considerably increased, should the book prove in any way the means of extending the knowledge and influence of the illustrious mind whose matter it contains.

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A SUMMARY

OF

THE LIFE OF EDMUND BURKE.

ALTHOUGH the Spensers boast of the trophies of a Marlborough, Gibbon esteems "the Fairie Queen" the brightest jewel of their coronet; so in the lineage of the historical house of Clanricarde, the fairest name is that of Edmund Burke. But an embarrassment occurs in the pedigrees of both poet and orator; neither can accurately determine the precise connection with his parent stem. In Ireland, the frequent confiscations, and the consequent alienation of lands and destruction of records, have thrown such difficulties in the pathway of the genealogist, that, but for the light which tradition affords him (and in the sister island the veracity of family tradition is most remarkable), his enquiries would be fruitless, and his utmost exertions unavailing. In the case of Edmund Burke, tradition affirms that he was a scion of a respectable branch of the house of Clanricarde, long settled in the counties of Galway and Limerick; and this statement is strongly confirmed by his continuous usage of the exact Clanricarde arms, and the recognition of the first Earl, who, on more than one occasion, addresses him as "cousin."

The greater portion of the Limerick estates of

Mr. Burke's family having been lost in the civil commotions of the 17th century, his great grandfather retired to a property he possessed in the county of Cork, and settled there in the neighbourhood of Castletown Roche, a village about five miles from Doneraile. The grandson, RICHARD BOURKE, or BURKE, the father of Edmund Burke, was brought up to the profession of the law, and resided for some time in Limerick, but eventually removed to Dublin, where he took a house on Arran Quay, and there practised as an attorney with eminent success. About the year 1725, he married Mary, daughter of Patrick Nagle, Esq., of Ballyduff (descended from an ancient family in the county of Cork, of which was Sir Richard Nagle, Attorney-general for Ireland *tempore* James II.),* and by her he had no less than fifteen children, all of whom died in youth, except GARRETT, EDMUND, RICHARD, and JULIANA. Garrett, the eldest son followed his father's profession, and resided in Dublin: he was never married, and at his decease, in 1765, the county of Cork property, which had been for several generations in his ancestors' possession, devolved on his brother Edmund, by whom it was sold for £4000, in 1793. Richard, the third son, acquired reputation in the political circles of London as a wit and a writer: he was by profession a barrister; after filling the situation of one of the secretaries of the treasury in 1782, and again in 1783, he was, in the December of the latter year, elected Recorder of Bristol, an office he held until his death, the 4th February, 1794. It is to this Richard Burke

* Admiral Sir Edmund Nagle, the friend of King George IV., was Mr. Burke's first cousin.

that the following well-known jocular epitaph of Goldsmith, in "Retaliation," refers:—

"Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at ;
 Alas ! that such frolic should now be so quiet !
 What spirits were his ! what wit and what whim !
 Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb !
 Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball !
 Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all ;
 In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
 That we wished him full ten times a day at old Nick ;
 But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
 As often we wished to have Dick back again."

Of the only daughter, Juliana, who married a Mr. French, further mention will be made hereafter.

The second son, EDMUND BURKE, was born in his father's house, on Arran Quay, the 1st January, 1730. Very little is known of his early years, except his being of a delicate constitution, tending as was believed to consumption. This weakly state of health rendering necessary a longer than usual stay under the paternal roof, he was first taught to read by his mother, a woman of cultivated understanding. Tradition also relates that another instructor of this great master of the powers of the English language was an elderly lady, resident in the neighbourhood, who feeling a strong partiality for the boy, took a pleasure in communicating the rudiments of learning to his infant mind. The air of the country, however, becoming essential to give vigour to his frame, he was removed from the metropolis to the house of his grandfather, at Castletown Roche, in the county of Cork. Here he first went to school, and passed several years—some say five—under the discipline of a village schoolmaster. The memory of this period remained ever vivid in the mind of Burke ; a pleasing

anecdote describes him revisiting the place in the days of his greatness, and gratifying the pride of his quondam pedagogue by a cordial and affectionate recognition. Near the spot stood the ruins of Spencer the poet's castle—a circumstance which in after life tended powerfully to confirm Mr. Burke's early attachment to the locality. From Castletown Roche he returned to Dublin, but did not long stay there, as his health further declined: his father therefore resolved that the whole of his boyhood should pass in the country, and sent him to the academy of Ballitore, a village in the county of Kildare, about thirty miles south of Dublin. This school, always one of considerable and deserved repute, was then conducted by an excellent and learned Quaker, Abraham Shackleton. Young Burke was at that time in his twelfth year. With the son of the master, Richard Shackleton, who afterwards became master himself, Edmund formed a friendship of the warmest kind; it lasted through the whole of life, neither chilled by time, nor weakened by distance, nor even by the immeasurable interval in point of station and pursuits, which Burke's genius and fame placed between them. Boyish intimacies, the result generally of accident rather than knowledge of character, are seldom durable; not so with this. Through all the statesman's illustrious career, his early and humble ally found him still the same, still preserving, amid the applauses of the senate and the admiration of the world, an undiminished relish for the society of the friend of his childhood. Affectionate correspondence and mutual visits passed between them till Mr. Shackleton's decease in 1792; and, after that event, Mr. Burke continued his inti-

macy with the Shackletons, until his own death. One of his very last letters was addressed to the daughter of his friend, Mrs. Mary Leadbeater; her affecting answer is to be found in the correspondence recently published by Lord Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, and the reader is referred to it as a production fully worthy of a lady who, inheriting the talent of her family, obtained public favour herself as an author, and won the approbation of another genius of Ireland, Maria Edgeworth, a name like that of Edmund Burke, of never fading reputation.

At Mr. Shackleton's school, Burke is said to have displayed little of that splendour and originality of mind which afterwards distinguished him so eminently; indeed, some of his peculiarities were such as are generally supposed dissociated from lofty intellect. A patient assiduity, a tenacious memory, and an unrivalled facility of acquisition, appear to have been his chief attributes in his early years. Towards the middle of April, 1744, having been just three years at the school, he quitted it, and the day after doing so, he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a pensioner. He passed through the usual routine of a University education with credit, and nothing more. He took the degree of B.A. in 1748, and M.A. in 1751: he was presented with the further degree of LL.D., in 1791. Having been always designed for the English bar, his name was entered at the Middle Temple so early as 1747. In 1750 he arrived in London to keep terms. Burke, while in London, studied with his accustomed ardour and diligence; but it has been rightly conjectured that his pursuits were somewhat too excursive to permit him to obtain a very profound knowledge of the law; not to men-

tion that his health, still delicate, demanded frequent relaxation. From one or other of these causes, or more probably from both, he soon abandoned altogether the profession to which he had been destined; a step not agreeable to, or sanctioned by, his father. The knowledge he had obtained, however, was respectable, and of considerable use to him in after life; while the discipline which his legal studies afforded, exerted a most beneficial influence on the general character of his mind.

The earliest attempts of Burke were poetic, and of more than ordinary promise; but he subsequently devoted himself to prose compositions alone. There is abundant reason to believe that at this period of his student life, he wrote much and frequently for the various periodicals of the day. His first avowed work, the "Vindication of Natural Society," came out in 1756. This pamphlet may be termed a piece of philosophical criticism, couched under the guise of serious irony. The design of its author was to produce a covert mimicry both of the style and principles of Lord Bolingbroke, and particularly by pushing those opinions to their ultimate results, to force conviction on the mind of the reader, of their unsoundness, by showing that the arguments employed by the noble writer against religion, applied as strongly against every other institution of civilized men. The attempt proved eminently successful, the imitation being deemed so perfect, as to constitute identity rather than resemblance. A few months afterwards, in the same year, appeared his celebrated essay, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." The severe application which this

publication demanded injured his health, and compelled him to seek repose. For that purpose he visited Bath and Bristol, where he soon recovered. At Bath he was attended by his countryman, Dr. Christopher Nugent, an eminent physician. This amiable man invited Mr. Burke to his house, where he remained till the re-establishment of his health; and the consequence of the visit was an attachment between Burke and the daughter of his kind host—Miss Jane Mary Nugent. The guest (his income depending on what his father supplied) offered her nearly all he had at that time to present—his hand and heart, which were accepted. This union proved a source of comfort ever after. The lady well deserved Burke's affections. To considerable endowments of intellect she added the utmost amiability of disposition: proud of her conquest over such a man, proud of his genius, and still prouder of his love, she made him the object of almost idolatrous attachment; and to the promotion of his happiness she dedicated her whole life. Invaluable to him was the acquisition of such a companion; never did man need more than he a sanctuary, and a refuge in the quiet of domestic bliss from the incessant agitation of his public life; a spot of inviolable security, round which the storm of politics might roar and bluster, but never enter. Such was his home, justifying his own strong and beautiful language, that "every care vanished the moment he entered beneath his own roof." He himself fully felt and acknowledged his wife's surpassing worth, as appears by the terms in which he ever spoke of her, and the agony of care with which he watched over her during frequent periods of ill health, the result of her delicate constitution.

In 1757 appeared, in two volumes octavo, "An Account of the European Settlements in America," a work of disputed authorship, but attributed generally, and on good grounds, to Mr. Burke. The publication of a new edition of the "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful," so overcame the parental displeasure at Burke's abandoning the legal profession, that, on presenting his father with a copy, he received a substantial proof of reconciliation in a remittance of one hundred pounds. From this Essay Burke became universally known and admired; his company was courted by men of letters and distinction—among them Goldsmith, Lord Littleton, Arthur Murphy, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Colossus of English literature himself also sought the acquaintance and friendship of the author of the "Sublime and Beautiful." Dr. Johnson declared that Burke was the greatest man living, and that if a stranger were driven to take shelter from a shower of rain under the same gateway with him, he must, in a few minutes' conversation, perceive his superiority over common men. Murphy says Johnson would from Burke bear contradiction, which he would tolerate from no other person. In 1764, Reynolds and Burke originated the LITERARY CLUB, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, Soho. They and Johnson were its most distinguished members; its history brings into association all the great names that adorned that Augustan period of learning and genius.

In 1757, Burke commenced his "Essay towards an Abridgement of English History;" eight sheets were printed by Dodaley, but the work was thrown aside from some cause or other, probably because Hume had entered into a similar undertaking.

In January, 1758, was born his son, Richard, that child of many hopes and many sorrows, to be through life beloved with excessive fondness, and to be mourned in death with even more than parental agony and affliction. This was Burke's only offspring, with the exception of another son, who, born about two years afterwards, died in infancy.

The prospects of a family rousing the energies of Burke's mind to still greater exertion, he, about this time, commenced the "Annual Register," and continued, for some years after its establishment, to be connected with that excellent and deservedly popular political and literary history of the times.

The day of Burke's political fame now approached. The amiable, accomplished, and patriotic Lord Charlemont, whose name carries Ireland's greatness in its echo, was the man who first introduced him to the attention of those in power. This nobleman recommended Burke to the Right Hon. William Gerard Hamilton, well known as "Single-Speech Hamilton," who, in 1761, had been appointed Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Hamilton engaged Burke to assist him in Ireland; and the latter actively, and, no doubt, usefully, employed himself in the service of the government, though without any ostensible office or any salary. In 1763, Burke received a pension, on the Irish establishment, of £300 per annum, for which he was indebted principally to Mr. Hamilton. He enjoyed it, however, only for two years; it appears its payment inferred implicit political obedience. Burke was not the man for this: his lofty spirit did no such fealty to Mammon. The instant he became fully aware of the intentions of his employers, he

spurned the ignominy and relinquished the pension. Mr. Hamilton, who managed the matter in the true spirit of a political huckster, had the meanness to take the pension back. The whole transaction, the entire particulars of which have only recently transpired, redounds to Mr. Burke's high and unbending honour.

In 1765 a section of the Whigs—the aristocratic portion of that party—entered office under the auspices of the Marquis of Rockingham. One week after that nobleman became First Lord of the Treasury, he appointed Burke his Private Secretary, and the latter, through the interest of Lord Verney, entered parliament as Member for Wendover. The Rockingham administration, it is well known, came into power under very critical circumstances. In America, discontent had spread to an alarming degree in consequence of the Stamp Act: at home, the manufacturers and merchants were incensed at restrictions which threatened to destroy their trade. At this momentous period, the parliamentary session opened, January the 14th, 1766, and on a very early day, Burke delivered his first speech, with America for the theme. Though little of this effort now remains, it is evident from the commendations of Mr. Pitt, who followed him in the debate, that it must have exhibited no ordinary excellence. After this Burke spoke frequently, and each time with increasing effect. His parliamentary reputation had indeed no slow dawning, no lengthened rise; it burst at once into full and lasting splendour. Johnson himself has left it on record, “that probably no man at his first appearance ever obtained so much reputation before.”

The most important measure on which the Rockingham party resolved was that which respected

America, one well known to every reader of English history. They repealed the Stamp Act on the ground of *expediency*, but asserted the *legislative* power of Great Britain to enforce it, if she thought proper. This was a middle course between the two extreme parties, one of which denied the right of England to tax the colonies at all, while the other not only maintained that right, but insisted on its being exercised. The government measure bears conclusive internal evidence of having chiefly been the work of Mr. Burke. It carries the very stamp of his policy. His principle was always to apply a practical remedy to a practical grievance, and never to discuss abstract principles, or, at all events, not before the most imperious necessity compelled such course. The measure answered its purpose; and had the plan it recognised been adhered to, North America might long have remained to Britain. Several other ministerial proposals passed this session, the most popular of which was *the resolution against general warrants*. Under the provisions of this act, Mr. Wilkes returned from banishment.

Parliament was prorogued in June, and in July the ministry were dismissed. Mr. Burke soon after drew up that masterly sketch, entitled, "A Short Account of a late Short Administration;" in which he simply stated, in a few paragraphs, what the government had done during its year of office. On the dissolution of the Rockingham Administration, Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, attempted to combine a new one out of the elements of all political parties, and he produced in consequence that memorable "piece of joinery,"* some years afterwards

* See p. 266.

so happily described by Mr. Burke. This ministry subsequently received an accession of strength from the Bedford party, terminating in what is usually called the Grafton Administration, whose proceedings respecting Wilkes gave rise to the Letters of Junius. Among the many persons to whom the public has attributed the authorship of that famous epistolary work, Burke has been frequently mentioned; but, laying aside the little proof brought forward to maintain the supposition, the question is, as regards him, completely set at rest by his own statement; for, be it remembered, Burke was a man of unalterable truth: one might safely hazard even life upon his faith. In a letter addressed to Charles Townshend, bearing date the 24th Nov., 1771, to be found in the recently published correspondence before alluded to, Burke writes thus: "I have, I dare say, to nine-tenths of my acquaintance, denied my being the author of 'Junius,' or having any knowledge of the author, as often as the thing was mentioned, whether in jest or earnest, in style of disapprobation or of compliment. Perhaps I may have omitted to do so to you, in any formal manner, as not supposing you to have any suspicion of me. *I now give you my word and honour that I am not the author of 'Junius,' and that I know not the author of that paper, and I do authorise you to say so.*"

In the year 1768 Mr. Burke purchased an estate in Buckinghamshire, called Gregories, or Butler's Court, situated about a mile from the market town of Beaconsfield, and latterly itself better known by the name of "Beaconsfield" only.

The funds necessary for this acquisition he derived partially from money left him by his father and elder

brother, then dead ; and partially through the aid of his patron, the Marquis of Rockingham, who considered it little more than a just return for the faithful and indefatigable services of his secretary. At Beaconsfield, Burke cultivated his lands with great care and attention : he took infinite pleasure in agriculture, and he proved himself to be one of the most successful farmers in the county. Here too used he to entertain with cordial and frequent hospitality his friends and admirers. Butler's Court was the continual resort of beauty, wit, or talent, led thither by the fascinating society of the owner and his family. In private company Burke was a delightful associate : he had extraordinary powers of conversation on all matters, grave or gay, important or trivial ; he abounded in humour and pleasantry ; he took an interest in every one, and every thing ; and there was scarce a subject of which he did not evince a perfect knowledge. He felt much enjoyment in female society, and with ladies his manners were graceful, amusing, and playful. At home, and among his associates, politics were readily laid aside ; and various anecdotes represent the statesman entering with zest into the sports and pranks of the witty crowd that surrounded him ; sharing earnestly in the games of schoolboys ; and even listening in the company of children, with serious attention, to fairy adventures and infantine histories. Add to this the pure mind, and unimpeachable moral character of the man, and no wonder that Beaconsfield formed a centre of attraction. But the place is rendered sacred by even nobler recollections : it was on all occasions, the refuge of misery and distress. To the assistance Edmund Burke afforded in hours of poverty and

embarrassment, England owes a painter and a poet, Barry and Crabbe. Burke sent Barry to Italy at his own expense, and maintained him through many difficulties. To Crabbe he was of still greater service: the poet while in London, in straightened circumstances and without friends, conceived the happy thought of writing and sending a specimen of his talents to Beaconsfield. The reply and the relief were instantaneous; and under his great patron's fostering care, the author of "The Borough," and the "Tales of the Hall," rose from obscurity, and made the opportunity the means of fame and independence. Nor can it be forgotten, that at Beaconsfield, the priests and laymen who had escaped from the terrors of the French revolution were received with open arms; that Burke, with all his energy and eloquence, raised subscriptions for those unhappy sufferers; that he induced the government to form a school in his neighbourhood for the education of the children of refugees; and that, even in the last sorrowful hours of his life, he never relinquished his attention to the comfort and prosperity of that establishment. These deeds, more than his greatness, speak to his eternal honour; and make one easily accord with Abraham Shackleton, the son of his early friend, who, when Burke was near his death, wrote to him thus: "the memory of Edmund Burke's philanthropic virtues will outlive the period when his shining political talents will cease to act. New fashions of political sentiment will exist; but philanthropy—*immortale manet.*"

Abraham Shackleton's sister, the talented Mrs. Leadbeater, before-mentioned, wrote, when a girl, a poem descriptive of the mansion at Beaconsfield and

its owner : the following lines are from the introduction :—

All hail, ye woods, in deepest gloom array'd !
 Admit a stranger through your reverend shade,
 With timid step to seek the fair retreat,
 Where Virtue and where Genius fix their seat :
 In vain retiring from the public gaze,
 Not deepest shades can veil so bright a blaze.
 Lo ! there the mansion stands in princely pride ;
 The beauteous wings extend on either side ;
 Unsocial pomp flies from the cheerful gate,
 Where hospitality delights to wait ;
 A brighter grace her candid smile bestows
 Than the majestic pillars' comely rows.
 Enter these ever-open doors, and find
 All that can strike the eye, or charm the mind :
 Painting and sculpture there their pride display,
 And splendid chambers deck'd in rich array.
 But these are not the honours of the dome
 Where Burke resides, and strangers find a home ;
 To whose glad hearth the social virtues move,
 Paternal fondness, and connubial love,
 Benevolence unwearied, friendship true,
 And wit unforced, and converse ever new,
 And manners, where the polished court we trace,
 Combined with artless nature's noble grace.

* * * *

When the sad voice of indigence he hears,
 And pain and sickness eloquent in tears—
 Forsakes the festive board, with pitying eyes,
 Mingles the healing draught,* and sickness flies ;
 Or, if the mind be torn with deep distress,
 Seeks, with kind care, the grievance to redress—
 This, this is Edmund Burke—and this his creed—
 This is sublime and beautiful indeed.

* This is an allusion to Burke's possession of a slight knowledge of practical medicine, which enabled him to administer relief not only to his servants and family, but to his poorer neighbours in the country, when they were unable to pay for more regular advice, or too distant to procure it immediately.

The parliamentary session of 1768 opened in perplexities. America, agitated from one extremity to the other, assumed a tone of remonstrance fast strengthening into defiance. This topic, more especially the flagrant injustice of summoning Americans to England for trial, furnished Mr. Burke with matter of frequent and powerful invective. Unable any longer to carry on the government, Lord Chatham resigned. At this critical moment Wilkes again appeared on the stage, and against the influence of both court and legislature gained the election for Middlesex. His consequent prosecution gave rise to disgraceful riots. Burke, while he disapproved of Wilkes' conduct, exerted himself to the utmost to defeat the unconstitutional methods adopted to crush him.

Mr. Grenville at this period either wrote, or caused to be written, a pamphlet, "The Present State of the Nation;" an elaborate defence of the Earl of Bute's measures and his own. Mr. Burke replied, in his "Observations on a late Pamphlet, entitled, 'The Present State of the Nation.'" In 1770 he published the "Thoughts on the Present Discontents."

Although on the eve of the American war, the ministry, still obstinately devoted to their policy, adopted the most rash measures against the state of Massachusetts. Mr. Burke, almost alone, steadily opposed them. He took a leading part in the Grenville Election Bill, the Quebec Bill, and several others that affected America. But his most splendid effort was his harangue in favour of Mr. Fuller's motion for repealing the tea-duty. It equals in beauty any piece of oratory Mr. Burke ever composed; and in nerve and force, in all the essentials of

powerful eloquence, surpasses most of them. This is the speech on "American Taxation," the first he could be prevailed on to publish.

In the summer of 1772, Burke visited the continent, and there saw the beautiful but ill-fated Maria Antoinette, whose charms and accomplishments made a lasting impression on his mind.

On the dissolution of parliament, in 1774, a difference with Lord Verney excluding Burke from Wendover, he was elected for Malton, in Yorkshire. Malton, however, had not then the honour of being so represented; for just as the election had terminated, a deputation from Bristol arrived with the flattering invitation to become a candidate for that city. Burke immediately decided; threw himself into a post-chaise, and by travelling night and day with incredible speed, in about four-and-forty hours reached Bristol. Without resting a moment, he repaired to the Guildhall, and addressed a powerful speech to the electors. He had been nominated at a late period, and the canvass of his opponents had already far advanced; yet, nothing daunted, he ventured on the contest, which continued to the very last moment. It terminated in his favour. In returning thanks for his election, he took an opportunity of entering largely into the mutual duties of representatives and their constituents.

The "Boston Port" measures produced, as predicted, the most disastrous results. They exasperated the spirit of all America; they necessitated defence; and they led to the establishment of Congress; thus giving unity and concentration to the hitherto vague and wavering spirit of hostility. The ministry in this embarrassing position, gave powerful

testimony to Burke's far-sighted wisdom, though too late. Lord Chatham now consented to adopt the DECLARATORY ACT. Abundant evidence, given at the bar of the house, also proved that America would have rested tranquil, had the policy of the Rockingham administration been adhered to. .

In the session of 1775, Mr. Burke introduced his famous propositions on the subject of "American Conciliation." This is the most elaborate of his speeches on the subject of America, and one of the most powerful he ever delivered. In it he went somewhat further than he had as yet done, though he still cautiously avoided the question of right, and contented himself with denying altogether the possible expediency of taxing America. The time had arrived, in his opinion, when something *more* was necessary for the tranquillisation of the colony, than the abandonment of a tax. The Americans would formerly have accepted that compromise; they would now be satisfied with it no longer. They demanded a pledge against the possible recurrence of the system. His defence of this advance on his old position was, that *a great change of circumstances demanded a change of policy*. The whole harangue teems with important principles, adorned and enforced with the prodigal illustrations of his fancy. Mr. Fox said of it, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day, and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it on their hearts—they would there learn that representation was the sovereign remedy for every evil."

Burke's eloquent warnings, however, poured forth in vain. The infatuated ministry had no ear for the

modern Cassandra. Hostilities, in fact, had already commenced at Lexington, at Concord, and at Bunker's Hill; and, General Washington had taken the command of the colonial forces.

In the following session, the haughty tone of the address again called Burke to offer a strong but ineffectual protest against an obstinate appeal to force in the disputes with America. Nor did he stop here; five weeks afterwards he brought forward a *second* scheme of conciliation with America, founded on the statute of Edward I., *de tallagio non concedendo*. This speech is said to have been a wonderful effort of oratory, but scarcely a vestige of it remains.

His efforts were of no avail; the ministry still persevered. Petitions and remonstrances from merchants, both at home and abroad, met with a sort of ostentation of neglect, which at length provoked Mr. Burke to move a resolution in the shape of a taunt, to the effect, that, "The house knowing all things relative to America, needed no further information."

Thus, finding their efforts to oppose the obstinacy of ministers ineffectual, Lord Rockingham's party determined to absent themselves from parliament, and no longer endure the humiliation of seeing measures passed which they believed fraught with calamities to the country, and to which they could offer no availing resistance. Two addresses, one to the king and the other to the colonies, were drawn up in explanation of their conduct by Mr. Burke. This unprecedented policy was not persisted in. It, however, called forth Burke's eloquent letter to the "Sheriffs of Bristol."

The attempt to remove certain heavy restrictions on the trade of Ireland, met with the approbation and support of Burke. But the narrow spirit of Bristol, jealous for its commercial interests, took alarm. Burke, however, resolved to preserve his independence, though at the expense of his popularity. He accordingly persisted in his course; and in consequence, his patriotism cost him much of the favour of his constituency. He defended his conduct in "Two letters to Gentlemen of Bristol, on the Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland."

Nor in this point only did he give umbrage to his constituents. As narrow-minded in their general policy as they were selfish in their commerce, the people of Bristol could not sympathise with his support of Sir George Saville's bill for the relief of the Catholics. The state of things, however, at Bristol, met a counterbalance in the conduct of Dublin, which, in the ardour of gratitude and admiration, proposed a statue to his honour.

At this period an occurrence took place which proved Burke's constancy in friendship. Admiral Keppel had fought an indecisive action with the French fleet. For this he had to appear before a court-martial. Mr. Burke who had long felt for him the warmest friendship, attended the gallant seaman throughout the anxious scene of his trial at Portsmouth; cheered and encouraged him; and report says, aided in preparing his defence.

In 1780, Mr. Burke displayed his eloquence and his extensive knowledge in another effort. Taxes had increased in proportion to the expenses of a costly and ruinous war, and the people at length became clamorous for redress. Mr. Burke under-

took the arduous task of constructing a measure on this subject: hence his speech on "Economical Reform."

The chief points this speech embraced were an abolition of all the inferior royal jurisdictions, of an immense number of useless offices in the royal household, of some of the civil departments of the mint and the ordnance, of the patent offices of the exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay-offices; and a new adjustment of the civil list.

Applause unbounded this oration obtained, but the project shared the usual fate of opposition measures, and at that time fell to the ground.

After the melancholy riots stirred up by Lord George Gordon, Mr. Burke, while urging condign punishment on the principal offenders, evinced great humanity in exerting himself to procure pardon for the subordinate agents. About the same time he drew up the heads of the plan for the abolition of the slave-trade. It became impracticable, however, then to bring it forward. The great achievement remained for Wilberforce.

On the dissolution of parliament in the autumn of 1780, when Mr. Burke repaired to Bristol, he found his constituents in no very propitious mood. Their prejudices, duly inflamed by the industry of his opponents, had poisoned their minds against him. Resolved, however, that he would neither abandon the contest, if a reasonable prospect of success remained, nor persist in it merely for the sake of opposition, he called a meeting at the Guildhall on the 6th of September, to enable him to form an opinion of the issue of an election. On this occasion, he defended himself at great length from the charges which had been

brought against him. The principal seemed to be that he had not visited the city so frequently as he ought; in other words, that he had not practised with sufficient assiduity the common artifices for gaining popular favour. He had preferred serving his constituents to flattering them. The other objections were to his support of the Insolvent Debtors' Bill, the Irish Trade Acts, and the relief granted to the Catholics. On all these questions, his speech breathes the spirit of manly independence and a sustaining consciousness of integrity.

Finding it, however, essentially necessary to retire from the contest, he sought Malton once more; and for this place he sat during the remainder of his parliamentary career.

In March, 1782, the ministry resigned, and the Rockingham party again entered office. The province which in this change fell to Burke was the paymastership of the forces, and a seat in the privy council. Burke proved as active in office as in opposition. His "Economical Reform Bill," though curtailed of some of its proportions (sacrifices which he was compelled to make to propitiate the lords), passed both houses, while his own office became subjected to thorough alteration, not more extensive than judicious. This demanded and obtained such sacrifice on his own part as rendered it difficult which most to admire, the genius which could devise, or the disinterestedness which could effect. Certain perquisites of his office, amounting nearly to 1000*l.* a year, he threw into the public treasury. The ministry had hardly time to arrange their plans when Lord Rockingham suddenly died. Lord Shelburne succeeding, several of the ministry,

and Burke amongst them, resigned. On the subsequent formation by Mr. Fox and Lord North, of the much blamed Coalition administration, Burke once more became paymaster.

This ministry, led by Mr. Fox, framed the famous "India Bill," to correct the gross misgovernment of the British Indian Empire, which had again and again roused the indignation of parliament. In support of this measure, Burke delivered that speech which, in his works, goes under the name of the "Speech on Mr. Fox's India Bill."

The bill passed the house of commons; but the king exerted all his secret influence to procure its defeat in the lords. It was accordingly rejected; ministers summarily dismissed from office; while the youthful but ambitious Pitt succeeded to the premiership. A strange and fearful struggle now ensued between the royal will, which had fixed on Mr. Pitt, and the house of commons who were as determined on thwarting it. This hard-fought political struggle was maintained by the minister with a cool courage and perseverance almost incredible. Constantly disgraced and out-voted, he still kept his ground; till after numberless defeats his pertinacity met with success. The opposition majority, which had once been fifty-four, at length broke down to one. At this critical moment Mr. Pitt advised the daring measure of dissolving parliament: his success was signal; no less than 160 members of the old parliament being thrown out.

In April, 1784, the University of Glasgow elected Burke Lord Rector; and repeated the honour in the following November. He was installed amidst a splendid assemblage of all the principal literati of

the North. About this period he paid his last visit to Dr. Johnson, then on his death-bed. On this occasion, the Doctor tendered a most touching tribute to the conversational powers of his friend.—“I fear,” said Burke, “the presence of strangers is oppressive to you.” “No, sir,” was the reply, “it is not so: and I must be in a wretched condition indeed, when *your* company would not be a delight to me.”

The session of 1785 found Mr. Burke still foremost in opposition. He resisted with spirit the ministerial proposals for a sinking fund, as well as those respecting Ireland. But India now became the scene which was to occupy, for many years, Burke's untiring eloquence. On the twenty-eighth of February, he delivered his celebrated speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts. This, however, was but prelude and preparation for those more gigantic efforts, which he afterwards made to expose to the people of England the whole system of our eastern tyranny, and to obtain, if possible, a severe but salutary exercise of retributive justice.

In 1786 he moved for the prosecution of Governor-General Warren Hastings. Despite of all obstacles Mr. Burke entered fearlessly upon the almost desperate enterprise of this accusation. By his persevering eloquence he gradually won over the nation to his views, and even forced the minister, who had previously betrayed partiality for the accused, to maintain a rigid neutrality. The conduct of the trial of Hastings was committed, by the house of commons, to a body of managers, the chief of whom were Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, and the first of these the animating soul of all. In the session of 1786, Burke declared his intention to proceed by impeach-

ment: and in the session of 1787-8, the trial commenced in Westminster Hall, in the presence of almost all that was august and imposing in the empire.

Never did eloquence so delight the ear as on this occasion. The greatest orators of an age of oratorical splendour exerted themselves to the utmost. Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Windham, followed each other in apparently endless succession, and, to use the striking language of Mr. Erskine, "shook the walls of Westminster Hall with anathemas of superhuman eloquence." Mr. Burke never spoke with such transcendent effect as on this memorable occasion.—The description of the enormities of DEBI SING,* one of the worst agents of Indian tyranny, excited a thrill of ungovernable horror and suppressed mutters of execration through the whole assembly, while many of the female part of the audience fainted. Even the sternness of Lord Thurlow was for a moment melted, and he observed, in reference to the effect of the speech, that "their lordships all knew the effect upon the auditors, many of whom had not to that moment, and, perhaps, never would, recover from the shock it had occasioned." Owing to a variety of causes, but to nothing more than the sheer weariness of the national mind from the length of the trial, Hastings was acquitted in 1795, and he stands *legally* absolved. It is for posterity to judge of the existence and extent of his offences. The firmest conviction of his guilt remained on Mr. Burke's mind to the end of his life.

In the autumn of 1788 the alarming state of the king's health forced the Regency question on the attention of Parliament. Burke opposed Mr. Pitt on this measure with continued wit, sarcasm, argu-

* See p. 117.

ment, and ridicule. The rapid improvement of the royal invalid at the end of February 1789, rendered it unnecessary to pursue the unhappy topic further.

The closing and most conspicuous scene of Mr. Burke's political career now approached—the year 1790, and the French revolution—the period when, to use his own metaphorical language, his splendid orb went down, and left the western horizon in a blaze with his descending glory. The great convulsion in France had amazed and stupified mankind. An ancient and powerful nation rose suddenly from a state of oppression to one of the wildest freedom. In the neighbouring countries the multitude, who looked no deeper than the surface, applauded: many even among the wisest, and the best yielded to the popular feeling. Charles James Fox, whose gallant, generous mind worshipped liberty in every shape and every clime, surrendered himself entirely to this apparent consecration of his idol. When the plot thickened, and horrors accumulated upon horrors, men still stood bewildered, and knew not what to do. But from the very first, the prophetic eye of Edmund Burke went beyond ordinary mortal vision, penetrated the outward covering, and perceived the danger that lurked beneath. Irreligion, anarchy, cruelty, and mob-dominion, and beyond that again the dread fury of conquest and aggrandisement that had seized the French and threatened the slavery of Europe—he saw it all, and he addressed the civilised world in a voice of thunder. The recollection of the loss of British America sanctified his warning: the people dared no longer hesitate to hear him, and the continental struggle commenced. Yet in the beginning there was no energy, and Pitt himself showed

vacillation in an undertaking so terrible. Burke alone grew more animated as the difficulty increased. Louder and louder did he proclaim, "Let there be no compact or alliance with revolutionary France!—war upon the regicide!" until his expiring voice had roused his country and the nations that depended upon her to continue a contest, which, as he foretold, happily ended in victory, security, and peace.

In the beginning of February 1790, Mr. Fox took occasion, in the debates on the army estimates, to give unequivocal utterance to his admiration of the French Revolution, and was lavish in praise of those very points which were considered in England of most dubious character. These sentiments met with strong censure from several persons, but from none more than from Mr. Burke, who no longer hesitated to reprobate the whole Revolution in the strongest language. At an earlier stage, Mr. Pitt had been surprised into feelings somewhat favourable to its progress; he now, however, renounced all sympathy with it, and expressed admiration of Mr. Burke's speech. Mr. Fox's reply to Mr. Burke was calm. It contained the memorable acknowledgment, that "he had gained more by the conversation of Mr. Burke, than by all other men and books put together;" and it even acknowledged that his speech on this very occasion, "with the exception of a few observations, was one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that house."

Mr. Burke now produced that book, which, as a literary effort at least, went far to eclipse the fame of his previous productions,—the work was the "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

Throughout the greater part of the year 1790 he was perpetually employed upon this celebrated performance, and he laboured at it with his accustomed ardour and diligence. It appeared in the month of November 1790. The circulation of the book corresponded with its fame. Not less than thirty thousand copies were disposed of within a year of its publication, a sale unprecedented; for at that time the demands on literature were considerably less than at the present day. Nor was its celebrity confined to England. M. Dupont, the friend of Burke, translated it into French, and extended its reputation to the greater part of civilized Europe. Even monarchs condescended to read and patronise a book, which promised to be an effectual safeguard to their thrones. The Emperor of Germany, the Princes of the House of Bourbon, Catherine of Russia, Stanislaus of Poland, George the Third, all expressed their approbation to the author, or gave him presents still more flattering. Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Oxford, and numberless distinguished individuals both at home and abroad, were equally loud in their praises. "I shall take care," said Erskine, "to put Mr. Burke's work on the French Revolution into the hands of those whose principles are left to my formation. I shall take care that they have the advantage of doing, in the regular progression of youthful studies, what I have done even in the short intervals of laborious life; that they shall transcribe, with their own hands, from all the works of this most extraordinary person, and from the last among the rest, the soundest truths of religion; the justest principles of morals, inculcated and rendered delightful by the most sublime eloquence;

the highest reach of philosophy, brought down to the level of common minds, by the most captivating taste; the most enlightened observations on history, and the most copious collection of useful maxims from the experience of common life."

The "Reflections" provoked innumerable replies. The most celebrated of these were the "Vindiciæ Gallicæ" of Sir James Macintosh, by far the ablest of them all. Tom Paine responded in "The Rights of Man."

The gentleman to whom the "Reflections" were addressed having written a short letter in answer, Mr. Burke was induced to publish his "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly," in which he enforces and illustrates the arguments contained in the "Reflections." Soon after followed a pamphlet, entitled "Hints for a Memorial to M. de Montmorin." It had for object the mediation of the British government between the French monarch and his people. The negotiation contemplated the concession of a free constitution to the French.

A complete alienation between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke was now at hand, in consequence of their difference of opinion on the French Revolution. This unhappy dispute gradually progressed in the warmth of public debate. Their final quarrel took place in the House of Commons, on the 28th December, 1791. On that memorable occasion, Mr. Burke's horror of the French Revolution led him into an act of egregious bad taste. After mentioning that he understood that 3000 daggers had been ordered from Birmingham, he drew one from under his coat, and exclaiming, "This is what you are to gain by an

alliance with France ; this is your fraternisation," he threw it on the floor. At the close of his speech, addressing himself to Mr. Fox, he exclaimed, " My right honourable friend no more." No sooner had he said this, than he darted across the House and seated himself by the side of Mr. Pitt, on the ministerial benches. Burke, however right in political principle, is certainly to be blamed for this violence and for his subsequent persevering, and, for him, unusual animosity against his former friend.

To justify his opinions, Mr. Burke, in 1791, published his " Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs ;" and soon after he put forth a paper, under the title of " Thoughts on French Affairs." The principles it designed to enforce, are these,—that no internal cause would produce a counter-revolution in France ; that the system would strengthen the longer it continued ; and that so long as it existed, it would be the interest of France to disturb and distract all foreign governments.

He once more also exerted himself on behalf of the Irish Catholics, against the severity of the penal laws. On this occasion he wrote the first letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe. The Bill soon after introduced into the Irish parliament, conferred upon the Catholics the privileges of practising law, intermarrying with protestants, together with several other important advantages, in connection with education and commerce ; and, at length, the elective franchise.

In the midst of parliamentary duties, Mr. Burke did not forget France for an instant. It absorbed his time and his thoughts. In November he drew up " Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs," purposing to excite war, and to show that

no country in Europe could successfully battle with France unaided by England. He exhibited great diligence in obtaining information of the state of France. He even sent his son to the French princes, staying at Coblentz. On his return, he brought over M. Cazales, a member of the National Assembly, distinguished as the opponent of Mirabeau. By his son's efforts he also opened a correspondence with some of the ministers of Austria and Prussia.

In November, 1793, Mr. Burke published another piece on his exhaustless theme, French affairs. It was entitled, "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies." It attributed the disasters of the war to want of combination and energy on the part of the allies, to mutual jealousies, to cowardice in some, and secret love of revolutionary principles in others. He also wrote a preface to a Mr. William Bourke's Translation of Brissot's Address to his Constituents, which contains a brilliant and masterly sketch of the Brissotin and Robespierre faction. In the house, Mr. Burke scarcely spoke at all till quite towards the close of the session.

The parliament, the last in which he sat, broke up in July, 1794. Soon after, the Duke of Portland's party joined the ministry, a step which was strongly urged by Mr. Burke, and mainly effected by his mediation.

The darkest hour of Mr. Burke's life drew nigh; a calamity awaited him which did more to paralyze his energies and to hasten his death than all the agitating conflicts and labours of his past life put together. This was the death of that only and beloved son, from whom he had hoped so much; to whom he looked as

the stay and solace of his declining age, and as the heir not only of his fame, but of a fame still brighter than his own. Young Burke possessed much to justify parental affection. He had talents excellent in themselves, and assiduously cultivated. His knowledge was extensive, for his studies were directed, and his mind formed, under his father; a man himself of boundless information—a man whose most casual conversation was rich with instruction—a man, too, who believed that almost everything might be accomplished by industry, and who was the mortal enemy to those great allies of ignorance,—sloth and dissipation! To this the son added amiability of disposition and devotedness to his parents. These *real* accomplishments, and *real* excellences, the father's ardent imagination had decked out in celestial colours and ideal graces, and on this picture of imaginary perfection his fancy had been accustomed to delight for years. No wonder that he watched with intense anxiety the opening of this fair flower, or that he felt with overwhelming anguish the rude stroke that laid its young beauty in the dust.

It appears that exactly when the fatal symptoms of his son's last illness disclosed themselves, Mr. Burke had relinquished to him his seat for Malton, and had even procured for him the appointment of secretary to Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Dazzled by the bright scenes which his hopes had conjured up, he could not see, what every one else perceived plainly enough, that the days of his son were numbered. Of this he was totally unconscious, and no one dared to tell him. Dr. Brocklesby, the physician of the family, declared from his long knowledge of the intensity of Burke's

affection, that any such disclosure would probably be fatal, and brief as was the term of the son's existence would render that of the father still shorter.

Young Burke was removed to Cromwell House, near Brompton, for the sake of the country air. The unhappy father, who still never thought of danger, selected for him this residence near town, that he might be ready to depart for Ireland at a moment's notice, as soon as his health permitted. Here, however, all the symptoms rapidly grew worse, and the physician, no longer able to disguise the truth, disclosed the horrors of the case just a week before its fatal termination. From this moment, Burke abandoned himself to the desperation of sorrow; "his was a grief which would not be comforted."

Young Burke passed the night before his dissolution in much pain and restlessness. Early in the morning, he heard the voice of sorrow in the adjoining apartment, where his parents had spent a night of yet deeper wretchedness. Anxious to alleviate their affliction, he resolved, if possible, to delude them, by an affectionate deceit, into the belief that he was stronger than he really was. Rising with some difficulty, he requested to be supported to the door of the apartment in which his father and mother were sitting. There he dismissed his attendants, and, making a last effort, walked twice or thrice across the room. But his parents were not to be deceived, and they looked on in silent agony. Finding his efforts to console them vain, "Speak to me, my dear father," said he, "speak to me of religion, speak to me of morality, speak to me of indifferent matters, for I derive much satisfaction

from all you say." Hearing the wind whistling through the trees, he was reminded of the words of Milton :

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud ; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave."

These lines he repeated twice : he had just strength to say them the second time, when, exhausted by the effort, he staggered across the room and fell in a state of insensibility into his father's arms ; shortly after which he expired. The event took place on the 2nd of May, 1794.

The grief of Burke was appalling ; he would sit in that unnatural calmness of despair more terrific than the most stormy display of passion ; then bursting into a frenzy, he would rush into the chamber where his son lay, and throwing himself on the body, call in accents of fearful anguish for "the hope of his age, the stay of his life, the only comfort of his declining and now joyless years." He was prevailed upon after the first day, though with some difficulty, to consent that he would see the corpse no more ; a promise which he kept. The mother was equally distracted ; to Mr. Burke's frequent efforts to get her away from the room, her only reply was, "No, Edmund, while *he* remains there, I will remain." At length, however, her husband prevailed.

Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted an admirable portrait of young Burke. This, Burke ordered to be engraved, with the following inscription from Dryden's poem of *Eleonora*—

"As precious gums are not for common fire,
They but perfume the temple and expire ;
So was he soon exhaled and vanish'd hence,
A short sweet odour at a vast expense."

Underneath these lines were the words,

“O dolor atque decus.”

One would think that such a stroke as this should have utterly unfitted Burke for politics. The only wonder is that he ever recovered his elasticity of mind sufficiently to enter into that scene again. He found it, however, the only means left of weaning him from the perilous indulgence of solitary grief.

In 1795 he wrote his letter-on the Catholic Question, addressed to W. Smith, Esq., in reply to one from that correspondent. It contains an admirable discussion of all the chief topics connected with the subject. A letter on the same subject to Sir Hercules Langrishe (the second to that gentleman) soon followed. His sarcastic letter to William Elliot, Esq., in defence of his conduct against the attacks of the minority, was his next publication. Another paper, written about the same time, displayed his extensive knowledge of the minutest facts connected with the state of the country, and presented the most enlightened principles of political economy. This was his “Thoughts and Details on Scarcity,” addressed to Mr. Pitt. In 1795, Burke received a pension from government. This grant, which he had neither directly nor indirectly solicited, originated, it is said, in the express wish of King George III. The manner in which the bounty came, formed, however, no object of consideration with his political opponents. They vehemently attacked his acceptance of a favour, which really had more of justice than benevolence in it. Worn out as he was in the service of the commonweal, no man in his days of sickness and

sorrow had stronger claims upon the public. He had deserved that reward by a long series of acts that tended to the general good; by his personal disinterestedness on many occasions; by surrendering a large income, as his perquisites from the pay-office; by his economical Reform Bill, which for the twelve preceeding years had saved the country nearly £80,000 annually in hard money, as well as extinguished a source which might have been converted to undue parliamentary influence; by the reformation of the pay-office, in guarding against the serious deficits so frequently experienced there, and rendering available to the government about a million sterling, the frequent amount of the balance in hand; by a whole life, in fact, devoted to bettering the condition of the state, and increasing the resources and prosperity of the empire. Against the effusions of irritation, rather than of good sense, good feeling, or sound argument, that emanated from his adversaries, Mr. Burke had to place his own political course of unsullied purity, and the example of numerous other eminent men of all parties, Lord Chatham among the rest, who had not disdained a similar honourable recognition of their abilities and conduct. In answer to the Duke of Bedford, one of those who cast reflections upon him, he wrote his celebrated "Letter to a Noble Lord in Defence of his Pension." His ultimate publications were his "Letters on a Regicide Peace;" called forth by the disasters of the war, and intended to animate to renewed exertions the drooping spirit of the nation; and last of all came another "Letter on the affairs of Ireland." He was the first who, when others hardly

gave the subject a thought, boldly and loudly addressed the parliament of England on the misrule and misery in Ireland, calling upon the commons to redress her grievances and to relieve her suffering people. His exertions in this cause he never relaxed. Ireland he brought forward at every opportunity; and in his expiring thoughts and language Ireland was present again.

Grief and toil at length broke down energies which at one time equalled almost any measure of human endurance or exertion. As often happens when strength had been long overtaken, Burke sank almost at once into the last stage of corporal debility and prostration: his mind, however, shone out in all its lustre even to the last, unsmothered amidst the falling ruins of the body.

Finding medical skill unavailing, he repaired in the spring of 1797 to Bath, for the benefit of the waters. He remained there four months, but without any material improvement of health. At length, despairing of a change for the better, he resolved on a removal to Beaconsfield. "It is so far at least" said he, "on my way to the tomb, and I may as well travel it alive as dead." He again thus expressed himself to Mrs. Leadbeater, "I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping, that my better part may find a better mansion."

To Beaconsfield, therefore, where he had enjoyed so many of the honours, the affections, and the comforts of life, he returned to die. Another month,

and the event occurred. A presentiment almost of the moment of his final summons seemed to have prevailed with him; for he employed several of the previous hours in sending messages of tender remembrance to absent friends; in expressing his forgiveness of all who had in any manner injured or offended him, and in requesting the same from all whom his general or particular infirmities had offended. He recapitulated his motives of action in great public emergencies, and told his thoughts on the then alarming state of the country—"the ruling passion strong in death:"—he gave a few private directions connected with his approaching decease, and afterwards listened attentively to the perusal, by his own desire, of some serious papers of Addison on religious subjects, and on the immortality of the soul. These duties finished, his attendants, with Mr. Nagle of the War Office, a relation, were conveying him to his bed, when, indistinctly articulating a blessing on those around him, he sunk down, and after a momentary struggle expired, on the 9th July, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He was interred on the 15th of the same month; a large concourse of men of high rank and official station attended the funeral; the pall had for supporters the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Earl Fitzwilliam, the Earl of Inchequin, Sir G. Elliot and Mr. Windham. Mr. Fox had proposed in parliament, that he should be interred with public honours in Westminster Abbey: the tenor of Burke's will, however, rendered this impracticable. In accordance with his own direction, he was buried in Beaconsfield Church,

in the same grave with his brother and his son: a tablet in the south aisle of the church bears the following inscription:

NEAR THIS PLACE LIES INTERRED ALL
THAT WAS MORTAL OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE,

WHO DIED ON THE 9TH OF JULY, 1797, AGED 68 YEARS:
IN THE SAME GRAVE ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF HIS ONLY SON,

RICHARD BURKE, Esq.,

REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT FOR THE BOROUGH OF MALTON,
WHO DIED THE 2ND AUGUST, 1794, AGED 35:

OF HIS BROTHER,

RICHARD BURKE, Esq.,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, AND RECORDER OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL,
WHO DIED ON THE 4TH FEBRUARY, 1794:

AND OF HIS WIDOW,

JANE MARY BURKE,

WHO DIED ON THE 2ND APRIL, 1812, AGED 78.

Such was the unsullied life, and such the dignified departure of Edmund Burke— orator, statesman, writer, patriot, philanthropist—admirable; husband, father, relative, friend—admirable also. His conduct without vice; his bearing, gallant, unaffected, and courteous; his mind potent in the acquisition of all knowledge, and continually ready to impart it; his spirit inflexible in integrity, and intolerant of oppression; his heart copious in affections public and private, and his soul devoted to religion—with such attributes this great man realised, more than any other personage in history, a combination of the heroic qualities of classic Greece and Rome, with whatever was beautiful in the chivalry of modern and Christian Europe. That Burke always cherished this country, and her happy constitution with the

ardour and freshness of a bridal love, his whole existence passed in her service, sufficiently attests: that his views and his policy were right, subsequent events now make indisputable: and there can be as little doubt, that the verdure of gratitude will decorate his memory, whilst this nation, its right feelings and its prosperity endure. "His immortality," said Grattan, "is that which is common to Cicero or to Bacon, —that which can never be interrupted while there exists the beauty of order, or the love of virtue, and which can fear no death except what barbarity may impose on the globe."

Of Mr. Burke's immediate family, none survived himself, but his widow, and his niece, Mrs. Haviland and her son. Mrs. Burke continued until her demise the 2d April, 1812, to reside at Butler's Court, visited and esteemed by all the friends of her late husband. Mrs. Haviland was the only daughter of Mr. Burke's only sister, Juliana, wife of William French Esq., of Loughrea, in the county of Galway. Mrs. Haviland espoused in 1792, Colonel Thomas Haviland, who was the only son of General William Haviland, of Penn in Buckinghamshire, near Beaconsfield, and who died shortly after the marriage. The sole issue of this union was a son, who on the decease of his mother, in March 1816, became the lineal representative of the family: he has assumed the name and arms of his grand-uncle, and is the present Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-law.

A word or two about Beaconsfield, and this narrative concludes. The residence of Butler's Court, after Mrs. Burke's death, was let to a clergyman named Jones, for the purposes of a school, and, while in his occupation, it was burnt down, on the morning

of the 23d April, 1813. In the century previous to the time of Burke, his lands at Beaconsfield had formed a portion of the estate of another Edmund—the poet Waller, who, although a slippery politician, was a bard of fair repute. Here, returning from exile, Waller terminated his days in retirement, amid the recollections of his blighted ambition, and his bygone love for Sacharissa, and the other aristocratic objects of his poetic affections. Lipscomb, in his History of the County of Buckingham, thus describes Beaconsfield whilst in Burke's possession:—"The diversified combination of woods, hills, valleys, and beautiful enclosures by which the residence of Burke assumed a resemblance of Chilton, Wotton, Cliefden; and the splendid colonnades which gave it, at a little distance, the dignity of a royal residence in miniature, by its similitude to Queen Charlotte's palace, called Buckingham House, in St. James' Park, together with the magic name of Burke, rendered it an object of very general curiosity." There is now scarcely a vestige of the place—nothing, indeed, remains but the lasting halo of its departed greatness.

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