

he revered, he worshipped it. "Study it," said he, "until you have learned how to admire it, and if you cannot know and admire, rather believe that you are dull than that the rest of the world has been imposed upon." "Never will I cut it in pieces, and put it into the kettle of any magician in order to boil it with the puddle of their compounds into youth and vigour; on the contrary, I will drive away such pretenders, I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath." When he came to apply his principles to the case of France, Burke merely considered the Revolution as a political movement, a subversion of the best interests of the country to the private and selfish ends of such men as Rousseau and Mirabeau. Though he was partly alive to the distress of the lower classes, and to the intolerant tyranny of the clergy, he did not for a moment surmise that it was a social and religious movement, of which the political disturbance was the mere index, that was convulsing that unfortunate country. In fine, Burke committed the unpardonable error of not fully informing himself upon the facts of his subject. He refused to believe that the people were groaning under burdens no longer to be borne; he saw only the madness of the popular leaders, the upheaval of the whole system of government, and the destruction of the King and his beautiful Consort.

And yet if Burke had gone no further than his "Reflections," the danger might have been averted. The position he assumed was purely critical. He saw the chaos that was approaching, he warned his countrymen to withhold their sympathy from what was sure to lead to the destruction of

the monarchy; but it was not until after the final rupture with his friends that he gave vent to the sentiments contained in his "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly," where he advanced to the position of open and active hostility to France. He left the party he had, during a long life, managed and kept together; he, who during all that time had been regarded either as an ingenious madman or a cunning knave, became at last the idol of the people; he was favoured by the King and carressed by the King's ministers; he received a pension and the offer of other political honours; and he plunged his country into a dishonourable and disastrous war, from the effects of which, it has not, after the lapse of nearly a century, recovered.

It is fortunate for Burke's memory that his actions must not be judged by their issues. We are bound to keep in view the fact that he believed he was working for the salvation of his country. Conscientious throughout the whole of his career and concentrating all his energies upon what he believed to be necessary for the peace and happiness of his country, we cannot but accept the sad truth that he made a fatal mistake. In the pursuance of his object he sacrificed his party, his dearest friends, and himself; yet when history considers his great labours in the cause of national peace and political freedom; his untiring industry in everything pertaining to the good government of his country and its dependencies; his never failing generosity to struggling genius, and his unswerving attachment to public and private morality; he will then be assigned his proper place among the greatest sons of England.