

was to calm the public feeling, not to inflame it, especially when a moment's reflection would have assured him that in England the privileged class, with all its wealth, patronage, sinecures and titles, was fearfully liable to selfish panic. His raving denunciations of the whole French nation, saving the Emigrant Aristocracy, as a pack of cannibals and demons, show that he had utterly misread human nature, as well as that his mind had lost its balance. Arthur Young's *Travels in France* told plainly enough the tale of the oppression and misery which had goaded the French people to madness. But, as Mr. Morley admits, Burke seems profoundly unconscious of the facts. He fancies that the States General, in the changes which they made, were acting without instructions from their constituents. This Mr. Morley frankly admits to be an enormous blunder: it is a blunder which betrays the total absence of careful inquiry. The charge which Burke levels against the French, of presumptuously discarding all precedent, breaking with the historic past, and attempting to construct a polity with no guide but a chimerical fancy, is preposterously unfair. For a century and a half the political life of the nation had been completely interrupted by the despotism of encroaching kings; the path of constitutional progress had been lost; but in calling the States General the nearest historic precedent was followed, and the leaders had the model of Parliamentary Government in England always before their eyes. Burke had seen France, yet he seems wholly blind to the difference between its case and that of England. He arraigns the French Commons for sending notaries and physicians, whom he regards with supreme contempt, as their representatives to the Assembly. Whom could the French Commons send? Did Burke think that there was in France a class of country gentlemen like those who sat in the British House of Commons? Did he not know that the landowners there were nobles? What had he himself been, after all, but an adventurer and the retainer of a grandee, Lord Rockingham, from whom he had stooped to accept large sums of money under the name of loans? He is