

A Dolphin Book C246

\$1.95

**Reflections  
on the Revolution  
in France  
by Edmund Burke  
& The Rights of Man  
by Thomas Paine**



REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE  
AND  
THE RIGHTS OF MAN

REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE  
AND  
THE RIGHTS OF MAN

EDMUND BURKE (1729-97) was the second son of an Irish attorney. From 1743 to 1748 he attended Trinity College, Dublin, and in 1756 he first came to public notice with the publication of *A Vindication of Natural Society* and the *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful*. He entered Parliament in 1765 and represented the great seaport of Bristol from 1774 to 1780. While he never held any important ministerial post, Burke gained an extraordinary influence in England by means of his published writings, reaching the climax of his fame with the publication, in 1790, of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. This great British statesman and publicist, who commanded the admiration and friendship of Samuel Johnson, devoted his life to five "great, just, and honorable causes": the preservation of the English Constitution, the emancipation of Ireland, the emancipation of the American Colonies, the protection of the people of India from the misgovernment of the East India Company, and opposition to the ravages of the French Revolution.

THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809) was born in England, a Quaker and the son of a poor corsetmaker. At thirteen he was apprenticed to his father's trade. After a meeting with Benjamin Franklin in London, he sailed for Philadelphia in 1774. In the new land he became a journalist and an ardent patriot. His pamphlet, *Common Sense*, urging the immediate declaration of independence, appeared in January 1776 and did a great deal to inspire the American Revolution. He trav-

eled with the Revolutionary Army and wrote the *Crisis* pamphlets. In 1787 he returned to England, only to leave for France two years later, a self-appointed missionary of revolution. His famous answer to Edmund Burke's condemnation of the French Revolution, *The Rights of Man*, resulted in his trial for treason and banishment. When the sentence was delivered he was in France, where he was subsequently imprisoned under the Terror. In prison he began writing *The Age of Reason*. He returned to America in 1802, but found himself ostracized as a radical freethinker and lived in poverty until his death.

REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN  
FRANCE

EDMUND BURKE

THE RIGHTS OF MAN  
THOMAS PAINE

Dolphin Books  
Doubleday & Company, Inc.  
Garden City, New York

*Dolphin Edition published: 1961*

*Printed in the United States of America*

## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| REFLECTIONS ON THE<br>REVOLUTION IN FRANCE | 15  |
| THE RIGHTS OF MAN                          | 267 |

CONTENTS

15

REFLECTIONS ON THE  
REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

287

THE RIGHTS OF MAN

**REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE  
AND  
THE RIGHTS OF MAN**

REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE  
AND  
THE RIGHTS OF MAN

REFLECTIONS ON  
THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE,

*and on the proceedings in certain societies in London  
relative to that event:*

IN A LETTER

*intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Paris*



*It may not be unnecessary to inform the Reader, that the following Reflections had their origin in a correspondence between the Author and a very young gentleman at Paris, who did him the honour of desiring his opinion upon the important transactions, which then, and ever since, have so much occupied the attention of all men. An answer was written some time in the month of October 1789; but it was kept back upon prudential considerations. That letter is alluded to in the beginning of the following sheets. It has been since forwarded to the person to whom it was addressed. The reasons for the delay in sending it were assigned in a short letter to the same gentleman. This produced on his part a new and pressing application for the Author's sentiments.*

*The Author began a second and more full discussion on the subject. This he had some thoughts of publishing early in the last spring; but the matter gaining upon him, he found that what he had undertaken not only far exceeded the measure of a letter, but that its importance required rather a more detailed consideration than at that time he had any leisure to bestow upon it. However, having thrown down his first thoughts in the form of a letter, and indeed when he sat down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of address, when his sentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction. A different plan, he is sensible, might be more favourable to a commodious division and distribution of his matter.*

It may not be necessary to inform the Reader, that the following Reflections had their origin in a conversation between the Author and a very young Gentleman of Law, who did him the honour of desiring his opinion upon the important transactions which then, and ever since, have so much occupied the attention of all eyes. An answer was given to him some time in the month of October 1782, but it was not back upon punctuated considerations. That letter is alluded to in the beginning of the following sheets. It was a very short memorandum to the person to whom it was addressed. It was for the sake of sending it more designed as a short letter to the same gentleman. This produced an answer, and a more extensive application for the Author's assistance.

The Author began a second and more full statement on the subject. This he had some prospect of publishing early in the next spring, but the matter resting upon him, he found that what he had undertaken not only far exceeded his powers of a lawyer, but that the reporters reported rather a more detailed consideration than at that time he had any idea of bestowing upon it. However, having thrown down his first thoughts in the form of a letter, and finding when he came down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of address; when his sentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction. A different plan, he is sensible, might be more applicable to a common-law dispute and distribution of his matter.

REFLECTIONS  
ON THE  
REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

1790

DEAR SIR,

You are pleased to call again, and with some earnestness, for my thoughts on the late proceedings in France. I will not give you reason to imagine, that I think my sentiments of such value as to wish myself to be solicited about them. They are of too little consequence to be very anxiously either communicated or withheld. It was from attention to you, and to you only, that I hesitated at the time, when you first desired to receive them. In the first letter I had the honour to write to you, and which at length I send, I wrote neither for nor from any description of men; nor shall I in this. My errors, if any, are my own. My reputation alone is to answer for them.

You see, Sir, by the long letter I have transmitted to you, that, though I do most heartily wish that France may be animated by a spirit of rational liberty, and that I think you bound, in all honest policy, to provide a permanent body, in which that spirit may reside, and an effectual organ, by which it may act, it is my misfortune to entertain great doubts concerning several material points in your late transactions.

You imagined, when you wrote last, that I might possibly be reckoned among the approvers of certain proceedings in France, from the solemn public seal of sanction they have received from two clubs of gentlemen in London, called the Constitutional Society, and the Revolution Society.

I certainly have the honour to belong to more clubs than one, in which the constitution of this kingdom and the principles of the glorious Revolution, are held in high rev-

erence: and I reckon myself among the most forward in my zeal for maintaining that constitution and those principles in their utmost purity and vigour. It is because I do so, that I think it necessary for me, that there should be no mistake. Those who cultivate the memory of our revolution, and those who are attached to the constitution of this kingdom, will take good care how they are involved with persons who, under the pretext of zeal towards the Revolution and Constitution, too frequently wander from their true principles; and are ready on every occasion to depart from the firm but cautious and deliberate spirit which produced the one, and which presides in the other. Before I proceed to answer the more material particulars in your letter, I shall beg leave to give you such information as I have been able to obtain of the two clubs which have thought proper, as bodies, to interfere in the concerns of France; first assuring you, that I am not, and that I have never been, a member of either of those societies.

The first, calling itself the Constitutional Society, or Society for Constitutional Information, or by some such title, is, I believe, of seven or eight years standing. The institution of this society appears to be of a charitable, and so far of a laudable, nature: it was intended for the circulation, at the expence of the members, of many books, which few others would be at the expence of buying; and which might lie on the hands of the booksellers, to the great loss of an useful body of men. Whether the books so charitably circulated, were ever as charitably read, is more than I know. Possibly several of them have been exported to France; and, like goods not in request here, may with you have found a market. I have heard much talk of the lights to be drawn from books that are sent from hence. What improvements they have had in their passage (as it is said some liquors are meliorated by crossing the sea) I cannot tell: But I never heard a man of common judgment, or the least degree of information, speak a word in praise of the greater part of the publications circulated by that society; nor have their proceedings been accounted, except by some of themselves, as of any serious consequence.