

**LONGMANS' HANDBOOK  
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.  
PART V, FROM BURKE TO  
THE PRESENT TIME**

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Longmans' Handbook of English Literature. Part v, from Burke to the Present Time by R. McWilliam

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**R. MCWILLIAM**

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**PART V.**

LONGMANS' HANDBOOK  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE

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PART V.

FROM BURKE TO THE PRESENT TIME



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## PREFACE

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In this final volume we pass in review our own century, which is interesting not only because it is ours, but because of the intrinsic excellence of so many of its writers. Few centuries can show such a roll of names as Wordsworth, Byron, Browning, Scott, Carlyle, Thackeray, and Ruskin, to mention only some typical writers, and though posterity sometimes reverses judgments very decisively, it is hard to believe that these names will soon be forgotten.

Our record is brought down to the present time, but the names of living English writers are excluded with the exception of two, whose noble life-work is finished, though they themselves are still with us.

The record of American literature is very inadequate, but it seemed better to give even an imperfect picture rather than to pass over in silence what is so well worthy of further acquaintance.

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HANDBOOK  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE

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BURKE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE French Revolution in its early stages of progress was hailed with delight by many pure and ardent young minds in England.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!

So sang the poet Wordsworth, and to him and Coleridge and others the fall of the Bastille and the uprising of the French people seemed signs of the dawning of a glorious day of liberty and brotherhood.

But to Edmund Burke this uprising appeared a horrible desecration of liberty and a reckless casting away of all the wisdom of bygone times. With the eye of a prophet he foresaw from the beginning the course of excess and cruelty which the Revolution was to take, and he whose earlier years had been spent in pleading for