

**BURKE'S SPEECH
ON CONCILIATION
WITH AMERICA**

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Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America by Daniel V. Thompson

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DANIEL V. THOMPSON

**BURKE'S SPEECH
ON CONCILIATION
WITH AMERICA**

English Readings for Schools

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Edmund Burke
From the portrait by George Romney

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SPEECH ON CONCILIATION
WITH AMERICA

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DANIEL V. THOMPSON, A. M.

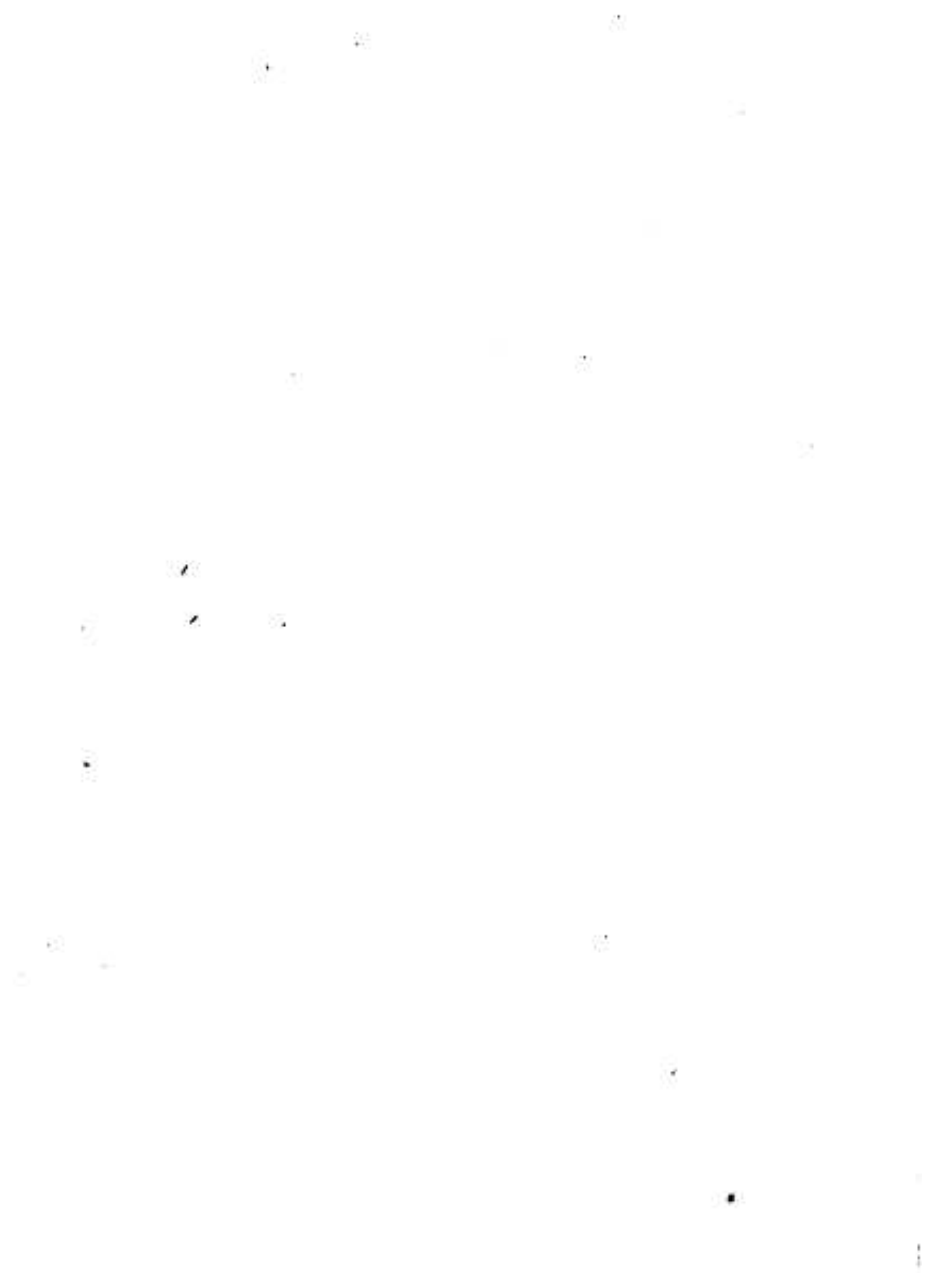
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CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|---------------------|
| INTRODUCTION | |
| I. Burke's Career | vii |
| II. Speech on Conciliation with America | xvi |
| 1. Historical Background | xvi |
| 2. A Brief of the Speech in Outline | xxi |
| 3. Form and Style | xxvi |
| DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY | xxxv |
| FORM OF TITLE-PAGE OF SECOND EDITION | xli |
| THE SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA | 1 |
| NOTES AND COMMENT | 87 |
| QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY | 115 |
| Portrait of Edmund Burke [Romney] | <i>Frontispiece</i> |



INTRODUCTION

I

BURKE'S CAREER

Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, in 1729. He was brought up in the Protestant faith of his father, who was an attorney of good repute albeit a man of irritable disposition. His mother, a Roman Catholic, was a large-minded woman of good family, with a strong hold upon the affection and reverence of her son. Next to hers, the profoundest influence in Burke's early years was exerted by the Quaker schoolmaster of Ballitore, a village some thirty miles from Dublin, who taught well both the mind and the heart of his pupil, and toward whom Burke cherished a lively gratitude as long as he lived. In 1743 Burke entered Dublin University, at nearly the same time with Oliver Goldsmith, whom, however, it does not appear that he knew in college days. Burke's course at the University was unconventional; not dissipated, but desultory. He enjoyed the studies of the curriculum keenly, but not in the allotted order. His course upon the whole formed a valuable brooding period for both mind and moral purpose. He himself describes it as a series of passionate sallies into various heights of learning, saying that he passed from the *furor mathematicus*,

through the *furor logicus* and the *furor historicus*, to the *furor poeticus*. Like young Francis Bacon, he took all knowledge to be his province; yet he left the University after five years of residence, with an undistinguished Bachelor's degree.

Burke was twenty when he arrived in London and went to the Middle Temple to study law, according to his father's wish. But his interest was not continuous, his eager pursuits were literary, not legal, his allowance from home was withdrawn, and a period of several years began which passed in an obscure conflict with fortune.

But the year 1756 brought forth not only the publication of two remarkable essays—*A Vindication of Natural Society* and *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*—but what was of even more lasting import, his marriage to his doctor's daughter, Miss Jane Nugent. By this marriage Burke ensured a long enjoyment of happy and peaceful home life; by the publication of his essays he attained instant recognition as a young man of unusual literary promise.

It was not long before Dodsley, the bookseller of Pall Mall, invited Burke to write for him an account of the most important events and a review of the most notable thought of the current year—1759. Burke's work was published as a periodical called the *Annual Register*, and the editor was engaged permanently at a salary of £100 a year. For thirty years he attended faithfully to the duty of making this annual chronicle, often glad of the secure though moderate income it afforded. For six years from this time Burke was employed as secretary by