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England and the French Revolution, 1789-1797, pp. 429-652 by William Thomas Laprade

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**WILLIAM THOMAS LAPRADE**

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ENGLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SERIES XXVII

NOS. 8-12

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
IN  
HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Under the Direction of the

Departments of History, Political Economy, and  
Political Science

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ENGLAND  
AND THE  
FRENCH REVOLUTION  
1789—1797

BY

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## PREFACE.

This study was originally undertaken with the purpose of showing to what extent the English social and political life of the period contemporaneous with the French Revolution was influenced by that event, or, in other words, whether the popular agitations in England, which attracted the attention of the English government at this time, owed their origin to the revolution taking place in France. In the course of investigating the subject it became apparent that these agitations were due to conditions existing in England itself rather than to outside influences, and consequently the policies and methods of William Pitt became the primary themes of the study. However, in spite of this change of view, it has seemed best to adhere to the original plan of presentation, and to regard the English social organization as a whole, discussing its economic, political, and religious aspects, but stressing the administration of the government and the measures of those at its head.

It is easy to forget, more than a century after the event, that the French Revolution presented a constantly changing aspect to those watching it from England, and one must give due weight to the fact that until the Tories and Whigs definitely took opposite sides of the questions supposed to be at issue in France, the views which Englishmen held varied according to the characters of the individuals themselves. Moreover, it is so difficult to classify such individual views, expressions of opinion, or private actions, or to draw from them any generalizations of value, that no attempt has been made to do so here, but the discussion has been confined to those influences only which took the definite form of word, deed, or movement the evidence for which clearly appears in the documents of the period. It is mani-

festly impossible to ascertain the effect on people in general of isolated pamphlets or speeches unless the evidence proves that in consequence of them a considerable body of men meditated taking action or unless some collective expression of opinion or collective action resulted therefrom.

This investigation covers the period from 1789 to the spring of 1797 when a change appeared in the attitude of the English ministers toward the war with France. The author regrets that he has been unable to examine all of those records preserved in the Public Record Office bearing on the subjects which are discussed in this monograph and are to be treated more fully in a larger work now in course of preparation. Though in consequence of this fact some of the conclusions regarding the diplomacy of the period are in a measure tentative, yet they seem to represent the most reasonable interpretation of the evidence at hand and are not invalidated by anything found in the work of those who have hitherto examined the materials in the Public Record Office.

The author acknowledges with appreciation the assistance of Professor John M. Vincent, at whose suggestion this inquiry was undertaken, and of Professor Charles M. Andrews, who has also given helpful advice. Finally, he acknowledges the many courtesies shown him by the library staff of the British Museum, of the Library of Congress, and of the Peabody Institute of Baltimore.

## ENGLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PRELIMINARY SKIRMISHES.

When, in the summer of 1789, it became evident that a new régime was about to be inaugurated in France, the general attitude of the English public, if we may accept the expression of the writers for the press as typical, was one of approbation. The people were ready to welcome France as a free nation. Sometimes it was suggested that Louis XVI was merely receiving what his interference in the American war had merited.<sup>1</sup> It was said also that the prospective change of affairs in France would not result in an ultimate advantage to England, since France, possessing freedom, would become a more formidable rival than she had hitherto been.<sup>2</sup> Yet few doubts were expressed that the final disposition of the affair would be beneficial to France.

In all of these discussions, however, the writers maintained the attitude of disinterested spectators, and no one had yet imagined that England would be directly concerned. The events which were taking place in France were regarded as merely wonderful phenomena, and therefore proper subjects for speculation. Not until 1791 was the French Revolution to become a party question in England. Previous to that time, the newspapers which represented the views of the party in power were fully as extravagant in their praise of the progress of affairs in France as those

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<sup>1</sup> Morning Post, July 8, 17, 1789. The Oracle, July 2, 1789.

<sup>2</sup> The Oracle, July 4, 1789; August 25, 1789. Morning Post, July 24, 1789. Whitehall Evening Post, August 20-22, 1789. Public Advertiser, December 27, 1789.