

Vanderbilt Law Review

Volume 13
Issue 4 *Issue 4 - October 1960*

Article 29

10-1960

Book Note

Law Review Staff

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Recommended Citation

Law Review Staff, Book Note, 13 *Vanderbilt Law Review* 1329 (1960)

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/vlr/vol13/iss4/29>

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BOOK NOTE

REFLECTIONS WITH EDMUND BURKE. By Timothy P. Sheehan. New York: Vantage Press, 1960. Pp. 288. \$5.00.

History has classified Edmund Burke as the foremost conservative of the late eighteenth century. This he certainly was, but unfortunately very few of us have ever bothered to plumb further the personality of the apparently moody author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. While he opposed the excesses of that fiery movement, Burke was always an advocate of change and improvement in law and government. He often championed the cause of the American colonies, vigorously denounced English oppression of Roman Catholics, and sought to uncover graft and corruption in the East India Company. Author, philosopher, politician, orator—his manner with the English language was truly remarkable. Nonetheless, with the exception of the commentary on the French Revolution, Burke is not often read today. There are two probable reasons for this: His writings are so voluminous that few people would care to undertake a really thorough study of what Burke had to say; much of what he wrote was also so enmeshed with local conditions and problems of his own age that it holds little meaning for the twentieth-century reader.

Mr. Sheehan, former Congressman and recent Republican candidate for mayor of Chicago, has attempted to overcome these two obstacles by preparing this volume of sharp and concise quotations from Burke's writings. These statements, culled from thousands of pages, are arranged alphabetically by topics and, together with a short introduction, compose the entire book. The reader will doubtless be surprised by the charm, wit, and variety of opinion which abound in these excerpts from the words of a man too often thought of as a somewhat colorless figure. Lawyers will be most interested in the pithy opinions expressed on punishment, legislation, and justice. The only regret to be felt about this entertaining volume which otherwise furnishes an excellent introduction to the less known works of a brilliant mind is that occasionally the editing has been too severe, and the excerpts too brief.

