If there are still people who suppose that the disasters anxieties, and disillusionments from which we are suffering, and the greater trials with which we are plainly threatened, are the result of unco-ordinated forces, such persons must find the world a very depressing spectacle. A situation in which the threat of war grows daily, in which the stock markets of the world stagger from one crisis to another, while prelates and politicians vie with each other in demanding still more sacrifices from a world which is but one continual sacrifice, would, if its condition were fortuitous, be the best possible excuse for universal suicide. There would from this point of view be so many and such widely varying defects in modern society that no reasonable space of time could be expected to produce a better state of affairs, even if there were any signs of progress in that direction. It would be a hopeless situation.

Fortunately, evidence accumulates daily that this is not the case. There is in existence at least one definite policy which is being pursued with great ability, and over a world wide area. I suppose this policy is responsible primarily for most of the troubles with which the world is suffering, although secondary troubles have grown out of it, and its defeat will have results as widespread and far-reaching as the troubles which proceed from it.

The main outlines of this policy are familiar, and its objective, the establishment of a world hegemony, has been recognised in many quarters. In passing it may be observed that, in addition to any fundamental question as to its desirability there is probably an immense illusion at the base of the idea of world power—that by the centralisation of administration you obtain more control over an organisation. I suppose it is beginning to dawn upon a good many people in widely differing spheres of influence that exactly the opposite is the truth, that the centralisation of administration results in the organisation obtaining more control over the administration. In other words, the larger and more centralised an organisation is the more impossible it becomes for its so-called "head" to deflect the organisation from a policy which arises out of its own inherent constitution.

However this may be, the strategy which is being pursued for the attainment of this world hegemony is becoming plain, and the first constituent of it is disarmament, not merely of a military character, but in every plane of human activity.

Arms are merely a special form of tools—they increase the power of the individual over circumstances. If this be recognised, it will easily be grasped that there is no essential difference between the disarmament of an individual and the taking away from him of any other tools, and that fundamentally the desirability of such a line of action depends very much on whether you believe that the individual or the nation can desirably relinquish all specialised action in favour of some exterior organisation. Disarmament is simply dis-empowerment. If there is anyone who finds such prospect attractive, then Soviet Russia, or Fascist Italy, are the spiritual homes for him.

This idea that everybody knows better what is good for a man than the man himself, and that any external organisation is a better repository for a nation's power than the nation in question, would seem on the face of it to bear such strong resemblance to the fable of the fox, which having lost its tail in a trap, proclaimed the transcendent advantages of a tail-less existence, that one would not expect it to attract much support. But, in fact, it seems to lend itself to presentation in a form very attractive to the idealistic mentality. The Archbishop of Canterbury, refreshed by his three-months cruise with Mr. Pierpoint Morgan, is asking for our prayers in favour if it. By a curious coincidence, American banking circles are firm in their contention that no reduction of the debts of Europe to America can be contemplated without corresponding reduction in European armaments.

Contemporaneously we have a blast of propaganda for what can only be described as "programitis." The very financiers who condemn Russia in public while endeavouring to organise loans to her in private, are enthusiastic about the desirability of the centralised planning of production. The centralised planning of production, if it means anything at all, means that some central authority shall decide both what the individual wants, whether he is to have it, who is to make it for him, and on what terms he is to get it. It is the only way by which the individual can rapidly acquire material prosperity. Yet curiously enough, the complaint by the same people made against what remains of the centralised control of production, is that it has produced too much. In other words, whatever happens in the world at the present time, which is a world increasingly in the control of finance is an argument for taking still further control out of the hands of the individual and transferring it to the power which is demonstrably responsible for the trouble.

(continued on page 4).
Edmund Burke's Reflections

The extracts which follow are from Edmund Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution, taken from The Works of Edmund Burke, Vol. II (George Bell & Sons—1910) and emphasise his appreciation of Constitutionalism (Political Relativity) and his condemnation of Continental Absolutism. Each extract has been given a distinguishing label:

ABSOLUTISM

LIBERTY AND ALL THAT

(1) THE ABSTRACTIONISTS:—(page 282). “But I can not stand forward and give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense ten years ago, have felicitated France on her environment of a government (for she then had a government) without inquiry what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered? Can I now congratulate the same nation upon its freedom? Is it because liberty in the abstract may be classed amongst the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a mad-man, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison, upon the recovery of his natural right? . . .”

(2) CHANGE OF PERSONNEL (page 322):—“Every person in your country, in a situation to be actuated by a principle of honour, is disgraced and degraded, and can entertain no sensation of life, except in a mortified and humiliated indignation. But this generation will quickly pass away. The next generation of the nobility will resemble the artificers and clowns, and money-jobbers, usurers, and Jews, who will be always their fellows, sometimes their masters. Believe me, Sir, those who attempt to level, never equalise. In all societies, consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some description must be uppermost. The levelers therefore only change and pervert the natural order of things; they load the edifice of society, by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground. . . .”

(3) THE RULE OF THE PROLETARIAT (page 322):—“The Chancellor of France at the opening of the states, said, in a tone of oratorical flourish, that all occupations were honourable. If he meant only, that no honest employment was disgraceful, he would not have gone beyond the truth. But in asserting that anything is honourable we imply some distinction in its favour. The occupation of a hair-dresser, or of a working tallow-chandler, cannot be a matter of honour to any person—to say nothing of a number of other more servile employments. Such descriptions of men ought not to suffer oppression from the state; but the state suffers oppression, if such as they, either individually or collectively, are permitted to rule. In this you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature.”

(4) GANGSTERDOM (page 350):—“But power of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of fealty, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventative murder and preventative confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims which form the political code of all power not standing on its own honour and the honour of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy, when subjects are rebels from principle.”

THE “RIGHTS” OF MAN

(5) THE DOCTRINAIRE (page 337):—“This sort of people are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man that they have totally forgotten his nature. Without opening one new avenue to the understanding, they have succeeded in stopping up those that lead to the heart . . .”

(6) THE COMPUTING PRINCIPLE (page 335):—“The pretended rights of these theorists are all extremes; and in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false. The rights of men are in a sort of middle, incapable of definition, but not impossible to be discerned. The rights of men in governments are their advantages; and these are often in balance between differences of good, in compromises sometimes between good and evil, and sometimes between evil and evil. Political reason is a computing principle: adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, morally and not metaphysically or mathematically, true moral denominations.”
(7) THE RIGHT OF MINORITIES (page 335):—“By these theorists the right of the people is almost always sophistically confounded with their power. The body of the community, whenever it can come to act, can meet with no effectual resistance; but till power and right are the same, the whole body of them has no right inconsistent with virtue, and the first of all virtues prudence. Men have no right to what is not reasonable . . . .

(8) PURITANISM (page 441):—“... in general, those who are habitually employed in finding and displaying faults, are unqualified for the work of reformation, because their minds are not only unfurnished with patterns of the fair and good, but by habit they come to take no delight in the contemplation of those things. By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little . . . .”

POLITICAL RELATIVITY

STATESMANNISH

(9) THE STATESMAN (page 428):—“... A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman. Everything else is vulgar in the conception, perilous in the execution.”

(10) A RULING PRINCIPLE (page 440):—“... Where the great interests of mankind are concerned through a long succession of generations, that succession ought to be admitted into some share in the councils which are so deeply to affect them. If justice requires this, the work itself requires the aids of more minds than one age can furnish. It is from this view of things that the best legislators have been often satisfied with the establishment of some solid, and ruling principle in government; a power like that which some of the philosophers have called a plastic nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation.

“To proceed in this manner, that is, to proceed with a presiding principle, and a prolific energy, is with me the criterion of profound wisdom. What your politicians think the marks of a bold, hardy genius, are only proofs of a deplorable want of ability. By their violent haste and their sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not, (as I conceive) lost the generosiy and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvétius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that we have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity . . . .”

CONSTITUTIONALISM

(11) THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT (page 333):—“The science of constructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught a priori. Nor is it a short experience that can instruct us in that practical science; because the real effects of moral causes are not always immediate, but that which in the first instance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remotest operation, and its excellence may arise even from the ill effect it produces in the beginning. The reverse also happens; and very plausible schemes, with very pleasing commencements, have often shameless and lamentable conclusions. In states there are often some obscure and almost latent causes, things which appear at first view of little moment, on which a great part of its prosperity or adversity may most essentially depend. The science of government being, therefore, so practical in itself, and intended for such practical purposes, a matter which requires experience and even more experience than any person can gain in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be, it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes.”

(12) POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLANNING (page 368):—“To avoid therefore the evils of inconsistency and versatility, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of our country, who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father’s life.”

(13) THE TRUE CYNIC (page 338):—“Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not, (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvétius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that we have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity . . . .”

(14) THE UNWRITTEN CONSTITUTION (page 362):—“... The whole has emanated from the simplicity of our national character, and from a sort of native plainness and directness of understanding, which for a long time characterised those men who have successively obtained authority amongst us. This disposition still remains at least in the great body of the people.”

(15) THE FAMILY SETTLEMENT (page 307):—“This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper, and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement: It leaves acquisition free; but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims, are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement; grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions
of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are
downed to us, and from us, in the same course and
order. Our political system is placed in a just correspond-
ence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with
the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body com-
pose of transitory parts; whereby in the disposition of a
stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious
incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time,
ever old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of
unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor
of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus
by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the
state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what
we retain, we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this
manner and on those principles to our forefathers, we are
guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the
spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance
we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation
in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with
our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws
into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable,
and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and
mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepul-
chres, and our altars."

(16) CONFORMITY TO NATURE (page 307): —"Through
the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial
institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and
powerful instincts, to fortify the fallible and feeble contriv-
cances of our reason, we have derived several other, and
those no small benefits, from considering our liberties in the
light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of
canonised forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself
to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity.
This idea of a liberal descent inspires us with a sense of
habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart in-
justice and despotism implanted in our nature."

(17) THE CULTURAL INHERITANCE (page 305): —"In
the famous law of the 3rd of Charles I. called the 'Petition
of Right,' the Parliament says to the King, 'Your subjects
have inherited this freedom,' claiming their franchise not on
abstract principles 'as the rights of men,' but as the rights
of Englishmen, and as a patrimony derived from their fore-

(18) CONSERVATION AND CORRECTION (page 295): —
"A state without the means of some change is without the
means of its conservation. Without such means it might
even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which it
wished the most religiously to preserve. The two principles
of conservation and correction operated strongly at the two
critical periods of the Restoration and Revolution, when
England found itself without a king . . ."

(19) THE LITTLE PLATOON (page 320): —"Turbulent
discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed
up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their
own order. One of the first symptoms they discover of a
selfish and mischievous ambition, is a profligate disregard of
a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to
the sub-division, to love the little platoon we belong to in
society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public
affections. It is the first link in the series by which we pro-
cede towards a love to our country, and to mankind. The
interest of that portion of social arrangement is a trust in the
hands of all those who compose it, and as none but bad men
would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it
away for their own personal advantage."

(20) MAGNIFICENT SPECULATION (page 336): —"Al-
most all the high-bred republicans of my time have, after a
short space, become the most decided, thorough-paced cour-
tiers; they soon left the business of a tedious, moderate, but
practical resistance, to those of us whom, in the pride and
intoxication of their theories, they have slighted as not
much better than Tories. Hypocrisy, of course, delights in
speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent."

(21) SOCIAL SECURITY (page 489): —"All this violent
cry against the nobility I take to be a mere work of art. To
be honoured and even privileged by the laws, opinions, and
invertebrate usages of our country, growing out of the preju-
dice of ages, has nothing to provoke horror and indignation
in any man. Even to be too tenacious of those privileges is
not absolutely a crime. The strong struggle in every indi-
vidual to preserve possession of what he has found to belong
to him, and to distinguish him, is one of the securities against
injustice and despotism implanted in our nature."