

noble life now to be touched in its enthusiasms by the spirit of the Revolution, to be caught in the great storm, shattered, and lost among its wrecks.

To Burke's attack on the French Revolution Mary Wollstonecraft wrote an Answer—one of many answers provoked by it—that attracted much attention. This was followed by her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman," while the air was full of declamation on the "Rights of Man." The claims made in this little book were in advance of the opinion of that day, but they are claims that have in our day been conceded. They are certainly not revolutionary in the opinion of the world that has become a hundred years older since the book was written.

At this time Mary Wollstonecraft had moved to rooms in Store Street, Bedford Square. She was fascinated by Fuseli the painter, and he was a married man. She felt herself to be too strongly drawn towards him, and she went to Paris at the close of the year 1792, to break the spell. She felt lonely and sad, and was not the happier for being in a mansion lent to her, from which the owner was away, and in which she lived surrounded by his servants. Strong womanly instincts were astir within her, and they were not all wise folk who had been drawn around her by her generous enthusiasm for the new hopes of the world, that made it then, as Wordsworth felt, a very heaven to the young.

Four months after she had gone to Paris, Mary Wollstonecraft met at the house of a merchant, with whose wife she had become intimate, an American named Gilbert Imlay. He won her affections. That was in April, 1793. He had no means, and she had home embarrassments, for which she was unwilling that he should become in any way responsible. A part of the new dream in some minds then was of a love too pure to need or bear the bondage of authority. The mere forced union of marriage ties implied, it was said, a distrust of fidelity. When Gilbert Imlay would have married Mary Wollstonecraft, she herself refused to bind him; she would keep him legally exempt from her responsibilities towards the father, sisters, brothers, whom she was supporting. She took his name and called herself his wife, when the French Convention, indignant at the conduct of the British Government, issued a decree