Their tinsel show, and a' that;
15 The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie° ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that,
Though hundreds worship at his word,
20 He's but a coof° for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star and a' that,
The man of independant mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

25 A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon° his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that![3]

For a' that, and a' that,
30 Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' Sense, and pride o' Worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
35 That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree,° and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That Man to Man the warld o'er,
40 Shall brothers be for a' that.

1795

3. Must not claim that.

The Revolution Controversy and the "Spirit of the Age"

[illegible] to Byron in 1816 Percy Shelley called the French Revolution "the master [illegible] of the epoch in which we live." The closing sentences of his "Defence of [illegible]," similarly, that, because of the repercussions of the Revolution, literature "has arisen as it were from a new birth." The "electric life that [illegible] within the great poets of the time, Shelley continues, expresses "less their [illegible] than the spirit of the age." Such judgments were widely shared: the literature [illegible] them, early and late, cannot be understood historically without acknow- [illegible] of how these works' distinctive modes of imagining and feeling were [illegible] by the promise, then by the tragedy, of the great events in France. In the [illegible] preceding Shelley's several authors had expressed an enthusiasm for [illegible] transformations that in its intensity resembled a religious awakening. [illegible] to make sense of events in terms borrowed from the Bible, interpreting [illegible] as fulfilling the promise, guaranteed by an infallible text, that a short [illegible] would ultimately usher in an era of universal peace in which the [illegible] begin anew. (See "The French Revolution: Apocalyptic Expectations" in [illegible] ebook.) And even after what they considered the failure of the [illegible] promise—signaled by the executions of the king and queen, the mas- [illegible] the Reign of Terror under Robespierre, the wars of imperial conquest [illegible] many authors held fast, despite a pervasive disenchantment, to [illegible] of radical transformation. Twenty years on, when Shelley wrote, it must [illegible] following the defeat of Napoleon's armies and restoration of the Euro- [illegible], as though the clock had been turned back and the old political [illegible] been re-established on even firmer foundations than before. Shelley and [illegible] Romantic authors, however, continued in the belief that the hopes [illegible] the Revolution remained relevant, even essential, for their moment.

[illegible] began with the storming of the Bastille and freeing of a handful [illegible] prisoners by an angry mob of Parisians on July 14, 1789. A month later, [illegible] Assembly passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Six weeks [illegible] October, citizens marched to the royal palace of Versailles and [illegible] King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette, confining them to the [illegible] in Paris. These happenings were almost immediately reported in [illegible] newspapers, quick to recognize a commercial opportunity. British lib- [illegible] the revolutionists' proclamation of natural rights and equality. The [illegible] ecstatic, believing the moment was ripe for Britain to embrace politi- [illegible] as well. Conservatives, who referred to themselves "loyalists," thus cast- [illegible] reformist principles as treason, were first wary and then horrified. Most [illegible] them, perhaps, was the emergent view that politics was the legitimate [illegible] the common people and should not be monopolized by an aristocratic

[illegible] escape the notice of British onlookers that during the revolutionists' [illegible] printing presses were carried along in the parades—the French republic's [illegible] the technology that made it possible to spread new political ideas [illegible] the masses in their discussion. This section documents how, through [illegible], a frenzied pamphlet war over the meanings of the French Revolu- [illegible] the printing presses of England busy in their turn. Sales in London's print- [illegible] were likewise boosted by the excitement, which provided visual [illegible] especially, with unprecedented opportunities.