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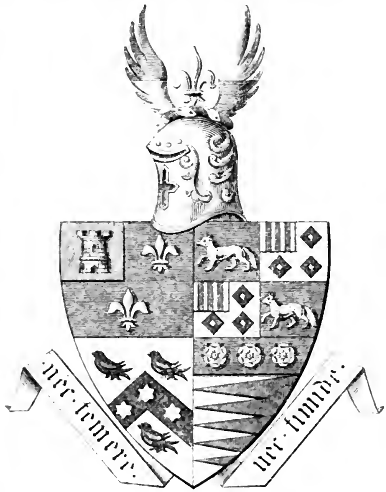

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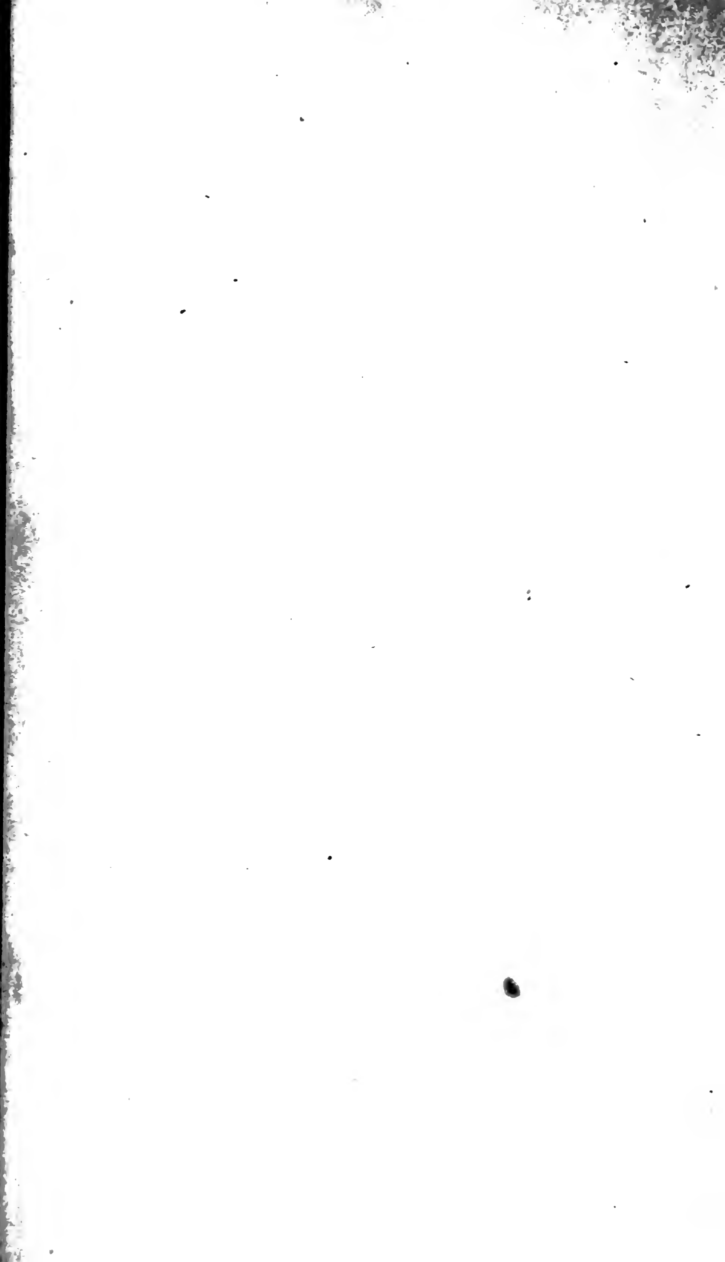

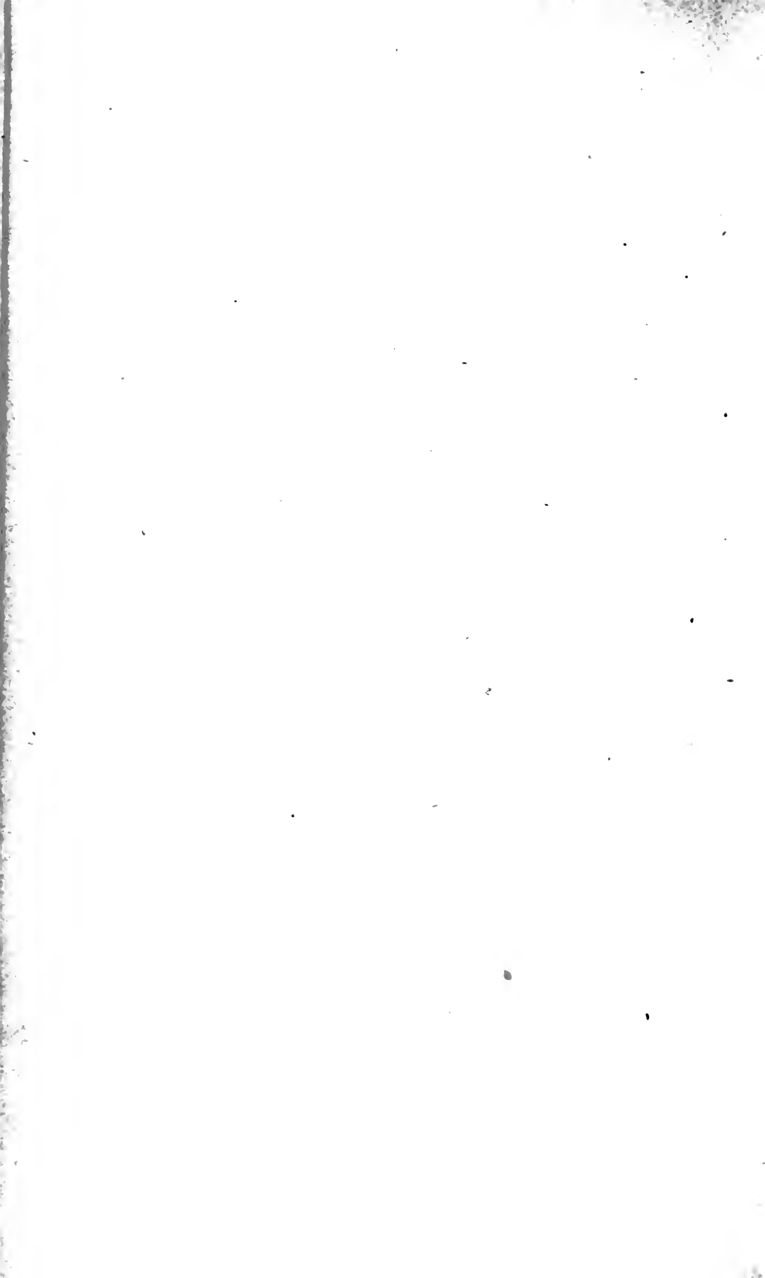

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HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE MEETING OF THE STATES-GENERAL TO THE REVOLUTION OF JULY 14. MAY 5—JULY 15, 1789.

1. Elevated state of science at the date of the Revolution.

It is a common, but a very fatal mistake, to suppose that ignorance is the greatest evil which can afflict a nation. The want of knowledge is not so much to be feared as its perversion; for the one leaves men powerless animals, the other makes them powerful demons. "The higher branches of science," says Plato, "are not useful to all, but only to a few; general ignorance is neither the greatest evil, nor the most to be feared; a mass of ill-digested information is much more dangerous."[1] "A little knowledge," says Bacon, "makes men irreligious; but profound thought brings them back to devotion." In the truths unfolded by these great men, are to be found the remote sources of the miseries of the French Revolution. Science had never attained a more commanding station than in France at the close of the eighteenth century; astronomy, by the aid of mathematical calculations, had, first of all the exact sciences, been brought almost to perfection; the profound researches of her geometricians had rivalled all but Newton's glory; while the talents of her chemists, and the genius of her naturalists, had explored the hidden processes of Nature, and erelong made the remains of animated life unfold the pristine order of creation. What then was wanting to fit her people for

[1] Plato de Legibus, lib. vii.

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rational liberty, and qualify them for the exercise of the rights of freemen? A sense of religion, the habits of sober thought, and moderation of general opinion: and the want of these rendered all the other advantages of no avail.

2. Rashness of the Constituent Assembly, and peril of hasty innovation.

History affords no example of an era in which innovation was so hastily hurried on, and ambition so blindly worshipped; when the experience of ages was so haughtily rejected, and the fancies of the moment so rashly adopted; in which the rights of property were so scandalously violated, and the blood of the innocent so profusely shed. If we trace these frightful disorders to their source, we shall find them all springing from the pride of a little knowledge; from historical analogies being imperfectly understood, examples of antiquity rashly misapplied, dreams of perfection crudely conceived, speculations of the moment instantly acted upon. The danger of proceeding on such false conclusions had been repeatedly exposed; the annals of Tacitus, the discourses of Machiavel, the essays of Bacon, had long before illustrated it; but these and all the other lessons of experience, were passed over with disdain, and every village politician who had dreamed of politics for a few months, deemed himself superior to the greatest men whom the world had ever produced. The great risk of setting the ideas of men afloat upon political subjects consists in the multitude who can think, compared to the few who can think correctly; in the rapidity with which the most stable institutions can be overturned, compared with the slow rate at which they can be restored. Every man can speak of politics; there is not one in ten who can understand them: every man flatters himself he knows something of history; to be qualified to reason justly upon it requires the incessant study of half a lifetime. But, unfortunately, the knowledge of the difficulty of the subject, and of the extensive information which it requires, is one of the last acquisitions of the human mind: none are so rash as those who are worst qualified to govern; none are so really worthy of the lead as those who are least desirous of assuming it.

3. Opening of the States-General.

The 5th of May 1789, was the day fixed for the opening of the States-General: with that day the French Revolution actually began.

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On the evening before, a religious ceremony preceded the installation of the Estates. The King, his family, his ministers, and the deputies of the three orders, walked in procession from the church of Notre Dame to that of St Louis, to hear mass. The appearance of the assembled bodies, and the reflection that a national solemnity, so long fallen into disuse, was about to be revived, excited the most lively enthusiasm in the multitude. The weather was fine; the benevolent and dignified air of the Monarch, the graceful manners of the Queen, the pomp and splendour of the ceremony, and the undefined hopes which it excited, exalted the spirits of all who witnessed it. But the reflecting observed with pain, that the sullen lines of feudal etiquette were preserved with rigid formality, and they augured ill of the national representation which commenced its labours amid such distinctions. First marched the clergy in grand costume, with violet robes; next the noblesse, in black dresses, with gold vests, lace cravats, and hats adorned with white plumes; last, the *Tiers Etat*, dressed in black, with short cloaks, muslin cravats, and hats without feathers. But the friends of the people consoled themselves with the observation, that, however humble their attire, the numbers of this class greatly preponderated over those of the other orders. It was observed that the Duke of Orleans, who walked last, as of highest rank among the nobles, lingered behind, and was surrounded by the dense masses of the *Tiers Etat*, who immediately followed. Hardly any of the deputies had hitherto acquired great popular reputation. One alone attracted general attention. Born of noble parents, he had warmly espoused the popular side, without losing the pride of aristocratic connexion. His talents universally known, his licentiousness too notorious, his integrity generally suspected, rendered him the object of painful anxiety. Harsh and disagreeable features, a profusion of black hair, an expressive and daring countenance, a commanding air, attracted the curiosity even of those who were unacquainted with his reputation. Many admired, some feared, none despised him. His name was MIRABEAU, future leader of the Assembly.[1]

[1] Mad. de Staël, i. 186. Mig. i. 30. Th. i. 43. Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, No. 67, p. 79, 80.

Two ladies of rank, from a gallery, with very different feelings, beheld the spectacle. The one was Madame de

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4. Madame de Staël's, and Madame de Montmorin's observations on the ceremony.

Montmorin, wife of the minister of foreign affairs; the other the illustrious daughter of M. Necker, Madame de Staël. The latter exulted in the boundless felicity which seemed to be opening under the auspices of her father. "You are wrong to rejoice," said Madame de Montmorin; "this event forebodes much misery to France and to ourselves." Her presentiment turned out too well founded: she herself perished on the scaffold with one of her sons; another was drowned; her husband was massacred in the prisons on September 2d; her eldest daughter was cut off in jail; her youngest died of a broken heart before she had attained the age of thirty years. It soon appeared what was the temper of the Assembly, and how much reason there was for Madame de Montmorin's gloomy forebodings. The Bishop of Nancy preached on the occasion, in the Church of St Louis, and he began with the words, as in ancient days, "Receive, O God! the homage of the clergy, the respects of the noblesse, and the humble supplications of the *Tiers Etat*." Upon this, loud murmurs were heard on all sides. But when, in the course of his sermon, he made an ill-timed allusion to the goodness of the monarch, and the rapacity of the tax-gatherers, tumultuous applause burst forth from all quarters, and the sounds of worldly exultation, for the first time, resounded through these sacred aisles.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 187. Droz, ii. 174. Prudhom., Rév. de Paris, v. No. 67, p. 80.

5. Meeting of the States-General. May 5, 1789.

On the following day the Assembly was opened with extraordinary pomp. Galleries, disposed in the form of an amphitheatre, were filled with a brilliant assembly of spectators, among whom all the rank, talent, and beauty of Paris was to be found. The deputies were introduced and arranged according to the order established in the last convocation in 1614. The clergy sat on the right, the nobles on the left, the commons in front of the throne. Loud applause followed the entry of the popular leaders, especially those who were known to have contributed by their efforts to the convocation of the states. The Duke of Orleans was twice loudly cheered; first on his first appearance, next when he made a curé of the deputation of Corpi in Valois, to which he belonged, pass before him. The deputies of Dauphiné were received with tumultuous applause. Similar approbation was beginning for those of Provence, but it was checked to mark the personal application of the applause

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to Mirabeau, who was one of them. M. Necker, in particular, was distinguished by the reception which he experienced. After the ministers and deputies had taken their places, the king appeared, followed by the queen, in simple attire, but radiant with beauty, the princes, and a brilliant suite. The monarch placed himself upon his throne, amidst the loudest applause. He looked happy, and he was so; for he was received by his subjects with sincere affection. The three orders at the same instant rose and covered themselves. The days were past when the third estate remained uncovered, and spoke only on their knees; that first spontaneous movement was ominous as to the subsequent conduct of that aspiring body. The king, on taking his seat, perceived that the Duke of Orleans was sitting amongst the *Tiers Etat*, and immediately made a sign to him to take his place among the princes of the blood. The Duke replied, "My birth gives me always a right to be near the throne; but on this occasion I prefer taking my place among the *Tiers Etat* of my bailliage." It was not difficult to see who aspired to be their head.[1]

[1] Th. i. 43. Montjoye, Cons. D'Orleans, i. 304, 305. Lab. iii. 10. Mig. i. 31. Th. i. 43.

6. Description of the hall of the Assembly.

The meeting of the States-General had been appointed to take place in Versailles, and the king had been at great pains to provide a place of meeting suitable to the august assembly. The hall selected was a very large one in that town, capable of holding two thousand persons, besides the galleries. It was a spacious, handsome room, a hundred and twenty feet long, by fifty-seven feet broad within the columns, which were fluted, of the Ionic order; the entablature being rich, and the roof pierced in the centre by a large oval skylight; and this, with two other windows in the sides, through which the light was admitted through azure gauze, threw a pleasing tint over every part of the interior. At one extremity of the room was an elevated dais, magnificently ornamented, and covered with violet-coloured velvet, embroidered with lilies. At the upper end of it, under a superb canopy, adorned by deep gold fringe, was placed the throne. On the left of the throne a large arm-chair was set apart for the queen, and lesser chairs for the princesses: on the right, richly ornamented seats for the princes; the ministers were seated in front of the

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throne, round a large table covered with blue lilied velvet. Behind the table on the right were seats for the fifteen councillors of state, and twenty *maîtres des requêtes:* on the left the like number for the governors and lieutenants-general of provinces. On either side of the hall were arranged the benches for the deputies, all adorned with rich covers: on the right those for the clergy, on the left for the noblesse; in front of the throne, at the opposite end, those for the *Tiers Etat.* Spacious galleries, as if inviting the attendance of the public, were arranged behind the seats of the deputies, capable of holding above two thousand persons. It would seem as if, in the very disposition of the seats, it had been intended to point to the intended union of the orders, and the fatal influence of the galleries on their deliberations. Louis had anxiously superintended the arrangements, and frequently visited the hall to observe the progress of the operations. By such hands and with such magnificence was the theatre prepared on which was to be enacted the overthrow of the French monarchy.[1]

[1] Corresp. de Baron de Grimm, v. 124. Weber, i. 326, 329.

7. Speech of the King. May 5.

"Gentlemen," said the monarch, with emotion, "the day which my heart so long desired is at length arrived; I find myself surrounded by the representatives of the nation, which it is my first glory to command. A long period has elapsed since the last convocation of the States-General; and although the meeting of these assemblies was thought to have fallen into desuetude, I have not hesitated to re-establish a usage from which the kingdom may derive new force, and which may open to its inhabitants hitherto unknown sources of prosperity. The debt of the state, already large at my accession to the throne, has increased during my reign; an expensive, though glorious war, has been the cause of this; and the augmentation of taxes which it compelled, has rendered more perceptible their unequal imposition. A general disquietude, an exaggerated desire of innovation, have taken possession of all minds, and might have led to a total unhinging of opinions, if haste were not made to fix them by an union of those capable of giving the most enlightened and moderate advice. It is in this confidence, gentlemen, that I have called you together; and I understand with pleasure that it has already been justified by the

disposition which the two first orders have evinced to renounce their privileges.* The hope which I had formed to see all the orders, united in opinion, concur with me in measures for the general good, will not be disappointed.

8. The generous sentiments it expressed.

"I have ordered considerable retrenchments in the expenses; I shall receive with eagerness the suggestions which you make to me in that particular; but in spite of all the resources which the most rigid economy may afford, I fear it will be impossible to relieve my subjects as rapidly as I could desire. I shall direct the exact situation of the finances to be laid before you; and, when you have examined them, I feel assured that you will propose to me the most efficacious means to restore their order, and support the public credit. The minds of men are in a state of agitation; but an assembly of the representatives of the nation will listen, without doubt, to nothing but the counsels of wisdom and prudence. You must doubtless have observed, gentlemen, that these counsels have not been always followed on recent occasions: but the ruling spirit of your deliberations will respond to the real wishes of a generous nation, which has always been distinguished by its love for the sovereign. I know the authority and power of a just king, surrounded by a faithful people, attached from the earliest times to the principles of the monarchy: they have given rise to the power and glory of France: I am bound to support them, and I will do so constantly. All that can be expected from the most tender interest in the public good, all that can be asked from a sovereign, the first friend of his people, you may rely on finding in me. May unanimity, gentlemen, prevail among you, and this epoch be for ever memorable in the annals of French prosperity! That is the first prayer of my heart, the most ardent of my wishes, the reward which I expect from the rectitude of my intentions, and my love for my people!"

9. Incipient division on the king's sitting down.

These generous sentiments excited, as well they might, universal applause; and the king and queen, for a few seconds, surrendered themselves to the delicious belief of a blessed regeneration of society springing from the virtue and gratitude of its members. The queen had stood, like

* This statement was founded on their Cahiers, which were known, and almost unanimously recommended such a step.

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the rest of the assembly, during the royal speech. The grace and modesty of her demeanour, joined to the beauty of a countenance on which a passing smile shone through the settled expression of melancholy which it had already assumed, added to the general enchantment. But hardly had they sat down, when they received a proof that, even in that moment of general enthusiasm, the ambition and passions of the world possessed the hearts of the assembly. The sovereign, on resuming his seat, put on his hat; the nobles, jealous of the privilege they had been wont to assert in former States-General, had the imprudence to do the same. Some members of the *Tiers Etat*, resolved to assert an equal pretension for their order, immediately covered themselves: the cries, "On with your hats," "Uncover," "Off hats," were heard on all sides; and the meeting was about to be seriously disturbed by an incident which, how trifling soever itself, was important, as revealing the secret divisions of the members, when the king, with admirable presence of mind, feigning to be incommoded by the heat, took off his hat, and the whole assembly, having no longer a pretence for discord, followed his example, and tranquillity was restored.[1]

[1] Lab. iii. 13. Hist. Parl. i. 336. Bertrand de Molleville. Hist. de la Rév. i. 166.

10. Speech of M. Necker, and general disappointment it occasioned.

The keeper of the seals followed with a studied harangue, which told little. It contained only one sentence of importance, which related to the double representation and voting by head; * but that rather favoured the union of the orders. M. Necker was now anxiously looked for —and a breathless suspense pervaded the assembly when he began his speech. But never was disappointment more universal than was felt as it proceeded. It contained nothing which threw a light on the views of the court in regard to the all-important question of the mode of voting, and instead, abounded with tedious details on taxes and retrenchments which had ceased to excite any interest in the public mind.† In truth, notwithstanding his abilities, the Swiss minister entirely mistook the signs of the times.

* "En deferant à cette demande (la double representation) sa Majesté n'a point changé la forme des anciennes deliberations; et quoique celle par tête en ne produisant qu'un seul resultat, paraisse avoir l'avantage de faire mieux connaitre le désir général, le roi a voulu que cette nouvelle forme ne se puisse s'opérer que du consentement libre des états-généraux, et avec l'approbation de sa Majesté."—*Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 338.

† Such is the following:—"Le tabac se vend aujourd'hui râpé dans presque toute la France: cette méthode a beaucoup augmenté la ferme du tabac." —*Moniteur, 5th to 10th May* 1789.

Pressed by the needy state of the public treasury, his attention was exclusively fixed on the means of replenishing it. He persisted in considering the crisis as financial, when in reality it had become social; as arising from embarrassments of government, when these, all-important in a former stage, had yielded to a more absorbing passion; and when the crisis was now forced on by the growing importance and ambition of the people. He spoke to them of accounts when they wanted to hear of principles, and dwelt on the means of extinguishing the deficit when they were occupied only with filling up the blanks in the constitution. Thus his speech pleased few, and disappointed many. He hoped to accommodate his measures to the public exigencies, without compromising or breaking with any party. He was aware that the ancient system of government could not be maintained, but he trusted that the divisions in the political parties would enable him to repair the machine without destroying it. By this he lost the confidence of all. Conciliatory measures are admirable, when they are founded on reforms which remove a practical evil; they are ruinous when they proceed on a balance of mutual jealousies, or a blind concession to popular menaces, and disappoint all, without attaching any.[1]*

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 363, 373. Mig. i. 35.

11. Commencement of the contest between the orders.

No debate followed these official speeches, but the assembly broke up in an orderly manner at half-past four o'clock. Next day, however, the great contest upon which the eyes of all France were fixed began in the assembly. The three orders met, as on the preceding day, in one room, but afterwards repaired to the halls appointed for their *separate* meet-

* In Necker's financial statement, which was laid before the States-General, he represented the

	Francs.	
Fixed expenses, . .	531,000,000, or	L.21,240,000
Fixed revenue, . .	473,294,000, or	18,931,000
Deficit, .	57,706,000, or	L.2,309,000

This, however, was the fixed expenses, as Necker called them; and when the floating debt was added, the deficit was 113,000,000, or L.4,520,000 more This was clearly demonstrated by Calonne in his work on the state of France, and indeed it is inconceivable that a deficit which Brienne only the year before had admitted was 165,000,000 francs, should, without the imposition of a single new tax, have fallen to 57,000,000. In the "Etat de la Dette Publique," published by the Constituent Assembly in 1790, the real deficit was stated to be at that time 189,000,000 francs, or L.7,560,000.—See *Histoire Parlementaire de France*, i. 375, 378. Calonne, in 1790, stated the real deficit, on grounds apparently very satisfactory, at 255,724,000 francs, or L.10,228,000 yearly.—*See* Calonne, *L'Etat de la France present et avenir*, 36, 37; and *Etat de la Dette Publique*, 47.

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ings. That of Menus, in which they had met on the preceding day, being by much the largest, was set apart for the *Tiers Etat*, whose numbers equalled that of the two others taken together. This circumstance, in appearance trivial, was attended with important effects: for being styled the "*Salle des Etats Généraux*," and the theatre of their first and common assemblage, it gave that aspiring body a colourable pretext to consider and represent themselves as in effect the national representatives. Having taken their places there, the skilful leaders of the commons affected to feel surprise that they were not joined by the other two orders, with a view to proceed jointly to the verification of their powers, and meanwhile did nothing. While this was going on in the *Salle de Menus*, the other two orders were proceeding rapidly with the separate verification of their powers: the clergy having resolved on that step by a majority of 133 to 114; and the nobles by one of 188 to 47. No sooner were these votes announced to the *Tiers Etat* than they broke up their meeting, without having taken any step to constitute themselves a separate body.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 384, 385. Droz, ii. 179, 180. Puisaye, i. 197. Lab. ii. 15, 16.

12. First interference of the Electors and Municipality of Paris with the government.

On the following day, so quickly did the germs of the Revolution develope themselves at this crisis, an event occurred hardly less important than the contest of the orders now openly engaged on its ultimate fortune. Mirabeau had begun a journal on the debates of the Assembly, entitled—"*Journal des Etats Généraux;*" and government, conceiving such a publication from such a hand dangerous at this moment, had ordered its suppression. Upon this the electors of Paris, who were still engaged, as they were in many other parts of France, with the drawing up of their cahiers, met at the Hotel de Ville, passed unanimously and published an *arrêté*, or resolution, protesting against this act of authority, which they directed to be sent to the chambers of the clergy and the nobles, accompanied by an earnest invitation to them to unite themselves to the *Tiers Etat*, procure the revocation of the *arrêté* of the royal council complained of, and obtain for the National Assembly the immediate liberty of the press.*

May 6.

* "L'Assemblée du Tiers Etat de la Ville de Paris reclame *unanimement* contre l'Acte du Conseil qui supprime le *Journal des Etats Généraux*, et en defend les suites, et qui prononce des peines contre l'imprimeurs, sans néanmoins l'entendre par là approuver ni blâmer le journal: elle reclame en ce que cet Acte du Conseil porte atteinte à la liberté publique au moment

Such was the commencement of the direct interference of the electors of Paris in the affairs of government, which subsequently, when applied through the organ of the municipality which they had elected, became of such paramount importance, and produced at once the most daring acts and detestable crimes of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 383.

13. Tiers Etat insist for one Assembly, which completely stops the public business. May 7, 1789.

On the 7th May the three orders again met in their respective chambers: the *Tiers Etat* still occupying the central Hall of Menus, and waiting, or pretending to wait, for the expected junction of the other orders. The contest was now openly commenced; the deputies of the commons alleged that they could not verify their powers till they were joined by the whole Estates, while the clergy and nobles had already verified theirs in their separate chambers, and were ready to begin business. For several weeks they daily met in the great hall, and vainly waited for the accession of the other orders. They attempted nothing, but simply trusted to the force of inactivity to compel the submission of their opponents. It was soon evident that this state of things could not long continue. The refusal of the commons to constitute themselves, occasioned a complete stoppage to every sort of business, while the urgent state of the finances, and the rapidly increasing anarchy of the kingdom, loudly called for immediate measures. Meanwhile the firmness of the Third Estate occasioned the utmost agitation in Paris, and crowds of all classes daily came to Versailles, to encourage the members in their courageous resistance to the measures of the court.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 29. Mig. i. 37. Th. i. 45, 46, 49, 50, 53.

In this contest the advantage evidently lay on the side of the commons. The state of the finances rendered it absolutely necessary that the States-General should commence their labours: their dissolution, therefore, was not to be apprehended. On the other hand, by simply remain-

où elle est la plus precieuse à la nation; en ce qu'il viole la liberté de la Presse reclamée par la France entière; en ce qu'enfin cet Acte rapelle au premier moment de la liberté nationale une police et des règlemens qui avaient été suspendus par la sagesse et la bonté du roi; et en conséquence, l'Assemblée du Tiers a unanimement résolu que le présent arrêté sera présenté aux Chambres du Clergé et de la Noblesse, et qu'ils seront invités *à se réunir au Tiers*, pour faire revoquer le dit Acte du Conseil, et pour procurer *à l'Assemblée Nationale*, la liberté provisoire de la Presse "—*Histoire Parlementaire de la France*, i. 383. With such fair requests and so reasonable a representation did the infernal atrocities of the electors and municipality of Paris commence. Mirabeau's journal was continued under the name of " *Courier de Provence*."

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14. Violent contest betwixt the parties. Advantages of the Commons.

ing in a state of inactivity, they did nothing which could apparently justify harsh measures, and there was every reason to believe that they would ultimately weary out their antagonists. They had gained the immense advantage in social contests, that of being in a position where, by simply resting and remaining passive, they achieved their object, and forced the initiative upon their opponents. Any decided measure on the part of government to stop this fatal inaction, was sure to meet with the most violent opposition. The force of public opinion, always at first, in civil commotions, on the side of resistance, was daily strengthening their cause. The agitation of the capital was intimidating their adversaries, and the divisions which prevailed among them rendered it every hour more improbable that they would be able to maintain their ground. The *Tiers Etat* was unanimous, while a considerable part of the nobility, and the great majority of the clergy, were secretly inclined to their side. The able leaders of the commons thoroughly appreciated the advantages of their present position, and waited calmly for above a month for the arrival of the time when either the necessities of the crown might force government into measures of hostility, or the submission of the other orders should give them the entire command of the state, or the decided tone of the public voice, daily gathering strength in their favour, might enable them to take the initiative themselves with the prospect of success.[1] *

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 438-443. Mig. 37. Lac. vii. 30. Th. i. 52, 53.

This temporary lull in the parliamentary contest of parties affords a favourable opportunity, ere the decisive struggle commences, for surveying the feelings and interests by which they were severally actuated, and the leading characters who obtained their direction.

The greater part of the nobles were naturally desirous of maintaining the privileges they had inherited from their forefathers, and which, in one form or another, they regarded

* "Vous avez persévéré, avec une fermeté rare. dans une système d'inaction politique infiniment decrié par ceux qui avaient une grand intérêt à vous faire adopter des fausses mésures; c'était pour donner le temps aux esprits de se calmer, aux amis du bien public celui de seconder le vœu de la justice et de la raison; c'était pour vous assurer mieux que même dans la poursuite du bien vous n'excéderiez aucunes bornes; c'était, en un mot, manifester une moderation qui convient surtout au courage, ou plutôt, sans laquelle il n'est pas du courage vraiment durable et invincible."—*Discours de* MIRABEAU, *13th June* 1789; *Histoire Parlementaire*, i. 443.

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15. Sentiments and cahiers of the nobles.

with reason as essential to the existence of government in modern times. Their interests in this, as is generally the case with men, determined their opinions; and they were firmly resolved to resist to the uttermost those pretensions of the commons, which they clearly foresaw would end in prostrating the monarchy at their feet. They perceived that if the whole States-General were united in one chamber, they would, since the duplication of the *Tiers Etat*, the nearly equal division of the clergy, and the strong body of the noblesse themselves who adhered to the same views, be left in a minority of at least one to two. Rather than incur certain destruction in this way, they were prepared to incur all the hazards of a civil war. But though resolute on this vital question, they had abated much of their original pretensions, and were disposed to concede many points upon which formerly they had been most tenacious. They were no longer the proud and haughty Notables of 1787, determined to abate none of their exclusive privileges: the imminence of the danger had made them willing to avert it by large concessions. Their cahiers, though not unanimous, tended in general to the same point. The instructions to the noblesse of Paris, the most important of any in the kingdom, from their rank, influence, and intelligence, recommended the surrender of all exclusive privileges in the matter of taxation: the regular convocation of the States-General, the imposition of all taxes by their consent, and their illegality without it; their legal extension only from one meeting of the States-General to another; the passing of all laws by their consent; the suppression of *lettres-de-cachet;* the liberty of the press; the closing of the Bastile; the abolition of all feudal rights, on a reasonable indemnity payable in ten years. The great majority of the instructions of the noblesse were in the same terms. The whole elements of real freedom were to be found in these concessions, on which the nobles were almost unanimous. But, in addition to this, a minority of forty-seven, with the Duke of Orleans and the Duke of Rochefoucault at their head, which carried much weight from the high rank and acknowledged talents of some of its members, was disposed to join at once with the commons, and go the whole length with them of revolutionary innovation.[1]

[1] Cahiers de la Noblesse de Paris, Hist. Parl. i. 328, 330.

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16. Views and instructions of the clergy.

The higher classes of the clergy shared the sentiments of the noble families from which they sprang, and were equally anxious to maintain the privileges from which they derived advantage; but the great body of the undignified ecclesiastics, who were indignant at their exclusion from all situations of consideration or emolument in the church, participated in the feelings of the third estate, with whom they were more immediately in contact, and might be expected, on any serious struggle, to join their ranks. Taken as a body, the clergy had supported all the efforts of the people for the establishment of their liberties. The vast proportion of their numbers who were humble curés, destitute of any property, afforded a sufficient security that this would be the case. They had urged the convocation of the States-General; the clergy of Rheims, with their archbishop at their head, demanded, in their instructions to their representatives, the establishment of a national code, embodying the fundamental laws of the monarchy; the regular assembly of the States-General, the right of taxing themselves, the establishment of personal freedom, security to property, the responsibility of ministers, open eligibility to all the citizens to every employment, a new civil and military code, uniformity of weights and measures, and the abolition of the slave-trade. All the other instructions of the clergy to their representatives contained more or less the same sentiments. It was at a later period in the Revolution, and in consequence of the treachery and injustice with which they were assailed, that this great body became the lasting and inveterate enemy of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Riv. 8. Lac. vii. 9, 11. Chateaubriand, xix. 344. Burke, v. 99. Hist. Parl. i. 323, 327.

17. Of the Tiers Etat.

Liberty and equality were the ideas predominant in the mind of the whole third estate, and of that large party of the clergy which, having risen from its ranks, was identified with its interests. EQUALITY was the great object of their ambition, because the distinctions of rank were the evil which occasioned their discontents. It was not so much absolute freedom which they coveted, as equality of restraint, and the repeal of all those laws which threw their fetters with undue severity upon the lower classes. They would rather have had servitude in common with the privileged ranks, than freedom accompanied with those privileges which drew an impassable line between them. The passion for distinction, as Napoleon afterwards observed, is

the ruling principle in France. Equality was demanded because it promised to remove the load which depressed the buoyant ambition of the middle and lower orders of society. Proceeding on these principles, the cahiers of the *Tiers Etat* were unanimous in demanding the union of the orders and the voting by head; and the instructions in these respects were so precise, that in truth the deputies of that order had no discretionary power on the subject. In addition to this, and all the points conceded by the noblesse, the commons were led, both from the tenor of their instructions and their own wishes, to demand the abolition of incorporations and statutes of apprenticeship of every kind; universal freedom of commerce and labour; uniformity of weights and measures; a relaxation of the penal code; reformation in the administration of justice; the establishment of a general code of laws, and the restriction of the powers enjoyed by the police. Generally speaking, the instruction of the *Tiers Etat* pointed to the abolition of practical abuses, to an extent and with a minuteness never carried into effect by the National Assembly; and excepting in the one particular, the union of the orders, gave no countenance whatever to the overthrow of the monarchical authority, or the nourishing of that aspiring ambition which so speedily caused the States-General to overturn the throne.[1]

[1] Parl. Hist. i. 330, 345. Riv. 37, 48. D'Abr. vii. 269, 270 Lac. i. 32.

18. Views of the King.

The King, who had never tasted one moment of repose since his accession to the throne, had been induced, by financial embarrassments, to convoke the States-General, and looked forward to their assembling as the termination of his difficulties. He in truth loved his people, and expected to meet their representatives with the tenderness of a parent who rejoins his long-lost children. He believed himself beloved, because he deserved to be so. Unhappily, it was the fashion to laugh at the idea of a revolution. Reposing under the shadow of the monarchy, men shut their eyes to the possibility of its overthrow, and deemed present institutions stable, because they had never seen them shaken. He had yet to learn that no reliance is to be placed on the affections of mankind when their interests are at stake; that democratic ambition may carry away in a few weeks the most rational; that the force of ancient recollections, strong in periods of tranquillity, is frequently

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lost in moments of danger: and that attachment to old institutions is powerful only in those who have shared in their protection. He had adopted from M. Necker two principles very generally received at that period, but of which subsequent experience has amply demonstrated the fallacy; viz. that public opinion is always on the side of wisdom and virtue, and that he could at pleasure sway its impulses. The principle, *vox populi vox Dei*, doubtful at all times, is totally false in periods of agitation, when the passions are let loose, and the ambition of the reckless is awakened by the possibility of elevation. It would often be nearer the truth to say then—*vox populi vox diaboli*. Public opinion, in the end, will always incline to the right side; but amid the violence of its previous oscillations, the whole fabric of society may be overthrown. The mariner who descries a coming storm, may with certainty predict that its fury will ultimately be stilled; but he cannot be sure that his own vessel will not previously be sunk in the waves.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 8, 9. De Staël, i. 280.

19. And of the people of Paris.

The people of Paris, whose opinions came to have so vast an influence on the march of the Revolution, looked forward to the States-General as a means of diminishing the imposts; the nobility hoped it would prove the means of re-establishing the finances, and putting an end to the vexatious parsimony of later years; the citizens trusted it would remove the galling fetters to which they were still subjected; the fundholders, who had so often suffered from breaches of the public faith, regarded it as a secure rampart against a national bankruptcy—an event which the magnitude of the deficit had led them seriously to apprehend. Every class was unanimous in favour of a change, from which all were equally destined to suffer. All who were conscious of talents which were unworthily depressed, who sought after distinction which the existing order of society prevented them from obtaining, or who had acquired wealth without obtaining consideration, joined themselves to the disaffected. To those were added the unsettled spirits which the prospect of approaching disturbances always brings forth—the insolvent, the reckless, the ardent, the desperate; men who were suffering under the existing state of society, and hoped that any change would ameliorate their condition. A proportion of the nobles, as is ever

the case in civil convulsions, also adhered to these principles; at the head of whom was the Duke of Orleans, who brought a princely fortune, a selfish heart, and depraved habits, to forward the work of corruption, but wanted steadiness to rule the faction which his prodigality had organised; and the Marquis La Fayette, who had nursed a republican spirit amidst American dangers, and revived for the strife of freedom in the Old World the ardent desires which had been awakened by its triumph in the New. The Counts Clermont Tonnerre and Lally Tollendal were also attached to the same principles; the Duke de la Rochefoucault, and the Duke de Liancourt, the Marquis de Crillon, and the Viscount Montmorency; names long celebrated in the annals of French glory, and some of which were destined to acquire a fatal celebrity from the misfortunes of those who bore them. A portentous union of rank, talent, and energy! of much which the aristocracy could produce that was generous, with all that the commons could furnish that was eminent; of philosophic enthusiasm with plebeian audacity; of the vigour of rising ability with the weight of antiquated splendour.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 13, 15. Dumont, i. 38. Th. i. 41.

Two circumstances, however, were remarkable in the composition of the Constituent Assembly, and contributed in a great degree to influence its future proceedings.

20. Absence of philosophers and literary men.

The first was the almost total exclusion of literary and philosophical talent, and the extraordinary preponderance of the legal profession. With the exception of Bailly, and one or two other illustrious individuals, no name of literary celebrity was to be found among its members. On the other hand, no less than 279 of the Tiers Etat were advocates, chiefly from the provincial courts of France. This class did not correspond to the barristers of England, who, although not in general men of property, are at least usually possessed of talent and information, but were provincial advocates, stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attorneys, notaries, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters of petty war and village vexation. "From the moment," says Mr Burke, "that I read a list of their names, and saw this, I foresaw distinctly, and very nearly as it happened, all that was to follow!" This fact is not surprising, when it is considered, on the one hand, how few of the electors were capable of appreciating

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the merits of scientific characters, in a country where not one in fifty could read; and, on the other, how closely the necessities of men brought them every where in contact with that enterprising and restless body which lived upon their divisions. The absence of the philosophers is not much to be regretted, as, with a few splendid exceptions, they seldom make good practical statesmen; but the multitude of lawyers turned out an evil of the first magnitude, possessing, as they did, talent without property, and the desire of distinction without the principles which should regulate it. The worst characters in the Revolution—Robespierre, Danton, and almost all their associates—belonged to this class.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 15, v. 93. Burke, Works, vi. 117. Young's Travels, i. 384.

21. Few great proprietors.

The second circumstance was the great proportion of the *Tiers Etat* who were men of no property or consideration in the country, mere needy adventurers, who pushed themselves into the Estates in order to make their fortune amidst the public convulsions which were anticipated. The leading persons of the banking and commercial interest were indeed members of this body, and took a pride in being considered its heads; but their numbers were inconsiderable compared with those of their destitute brethren, and their talents not sufficient to enable them to maintain an ascendancy. When the contest began, they were speedily supplanted by the clamorous and reckless adventurers, who aimed at nothing but public confusion. France, on this occasion, paid the penalty of her unjust and invidious feudal distinctions; the class was wanting, so well known in England, which, nominally belonging to the Commons, is bound to the Peers by similarity of situation and community of interest; which forms the link between the aristocracy and the people, and at once moderates the pride of the former by their firmness, and the turbulence of the latter by their authority.[2] *

[2] Lac. vii. 20.

* The Constituent Assembly was composed of 1128 persons, of whom about two-thirds were non-proprietors. They were arranged in the following manner:—

Clergy.		Nobles.	
Archbishops and Bishops,	48	Prince of the Blood,	1
Abbots and Canons,	35	Magistrates,	28
Curates,	210	Gentilhommes,	241
	293		270

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22. Birth and early life of Mirabeau.

No member of the States-General had yet attained a commanding reputation except Mirabeau. Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Count de MIRABEAU, was born at Bignon, near Nemours, on the 9th March 1749; so that, when the Revolution broke out, he was in the flower of his intellectual strength—aged forty years. He was son of the Marquis de Mirabeau, a distinguished member of the sect of the Economists, and the author of one of the most popular of their works—*L'Ami des Hommes.** Endowed by nature with a herculean constitution, an ardent temperament, and burning passions, he possessed at once the intellectual vigour, energy of will, and physical strength, which, for good or for evil, were fitted to raise him to the highest distinction among men. Like Voltaire and Rousseau, his character is better portrayed in his life than it could be in the most laboured diatribe or panegyric. His education was discursive rather

Tiers Etat.

Ecclesiastics,	2
Gentilhommes,	12
Mayors,	18
Magistrates,	62
Lawyers,	279
Physicians,	16
Merchants, Farmers, &c.,	176
Nobles and Clergy, 563.—Tiers Etat,	565

After the Assembly was united, and the parties were divided, they stood thus:—

Cote Droit, Royalists.		Cote Gauche, Democrats.	
Archbishops and Bishops,	39	Prince of the Blood,	1
Abbots and Canons,	25	Lawyers,	160
Curates,	10	Curates,	80
Nobles,	180	Gentilhommes,	55
Magistrates,	10	Merchants, Farmers, &c.,	30
Lawyers,	18		326
Farmers,	40		
	322		

Centre, or undecided.

Clergy,	140
Nobles,	20
Magistrates,	9
Lawyers,	101
Tiers Etat,	210
	480

Thus the Côté Gauche, which ultimately obtained the complete command of the Assembly and France, was at first less than a *third* of its number.

* Nevertheless, the capacity of this distinguished Economist may be measured by the following anecdote:—When the King of Sweden, in 1772, visited Paris, he called on the Marquis de Mirabeau, and having spoken of Montesquieu as a great man, the Marquis replied, " Montesquieu! les reveries surannées de cet homme ne sont plus estimées que dans quelque cours du nord."—*Biog. Univ.* xxix. 89.

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than complete; varied than profound. He acquired a slight knowledge of the classics, studied mathematics under the great La Grange, and at the age of seventeen entered the army. His spirit, however, was too ardent to be satisfied with the amusements of the theatre or the billiard-room, which generally at that period filled up the long leisure of a young officer's life, and too aspiring to bend to the general prejudice against a nobleman's reading. He accordingly studied his profession in all its great authors, and published an éloge on the great Condé. Shortly after, he got involved in a love intrigue, and was, at the request of his father, immured in the state prison of the Isle de Rhé, as the best method of cooling his ardent temperament. In 1769, after a short confinement, he served with some distinction in the reduction of Corsica, and soon after gave proof of the natural bent of his mind, by the publication of an essay on the political oppression which the Genoese had exercised in that island.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. xxix. 91. (Mirabeau.)

23. His first adventures in life.

Wearied with the monotony of a pacific military life, he retired in 1770, at his father's request, to the Limousin, where he engaged in country pursuits; but after a short trial, finding these still more foreign to his disposition, in 1771, he returned to Paris, where he soon evinced such a repugnance to the despotic system of the Abbé Terray, that he became estranged from his father, and, retiring to Provence, married Mademoiselle de Marignane, a beautiful and richly endowed heiress; but whose fortune, chiefly consisting in inheritances which had not yet devolved to her, was soon grievously embarrassed by her husband's extravagance. And, as his father refused to make any arrangement with his creditors, he was constrained to remain in a sort of forced exile on his estates, where, smarting under the consequences of his imprudence, and real or supposed injuries, he wrote, after studying Tacitus and Rousseau, his "Essay on Despotism," in which rays of genius are to be discerned in the midst of the ravings of a disordered fancy. Having soon after broken his ban, or the space allotted to him during his exile, in the prosecution of a private quarrel, he was imprisoned in the chateau of If, from whence he was transferred to that of Joux in the Jura, in 1776. The magic of his conversation having there induced the governor to grant him permission to live on his parole

in the neighbouring town of Pontarlier, he met and fell in love with a young lady of the name of Sophie de Ruffey, wife of the Marquis de Mounier, president of the Chamber des Comptes, at Dol, whom he soon seduced. This led him into new difficulties. The relations of his wife and of the Marquis de Mounier combined with his father to have him again imprisoned; and it required the intervention of Malesherbes, who was at that period on the eve of quitting the ministry, to obtain for him the mitigated penalty of leave to withdraw to a foreign country. He withdrew accordingly to Holland, was outlawed as for rape by the parliament of Besançon, and beheaded in effigy by their sentence, which involved a confiscation of the life interest in his estates.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. xxix. 91, 92. Mem. de Mirabeau, 3d and 4th vols. 8vo. edit.

24. His varied and licentious writings.

Reduced now to subsist in exile, and maintain Sophie, who had fled to his protection, by the productions of his pen, the prodigious activity and mingled greatness and turpitude of his mind at once displayed itself. He translated several respectable works, of which Watson's Philip II. was the most remarkable; and at the same time published the most violent libels against his father, who had accused him of having corrupted his wife, Mirabeau's own mother. There being no end to his violence, and the scrapes into which it betrayed him, he was a third time seized by warrant of a *lettre-de-cachet*, backed by the Dutch authorities in Holland, and taken to Vincennes, where he was confined three years and a half. Again the charms of his conversation prevailed over the rules of his prison; and he obtained from the secretary of police leave secretly to correspond with Sophie, which he did during his confinement, and copies of his letters having been preserved by the police were afterwards published. For the edification of that fond mistress, he translated in prison, and sent to her, Boccaccio's "Tales," and the "Baisers de Jean Second," works which sufficiently prove the character of that liaison. He there also wrote some original compositions, licentious in the extreme, and abounding in the satire on the sacred writings then so prevalent; particularly "L'Erotica Biblion," and "Ma Conversion," the latter of which equals the grossest productions of Aretin, and was a perfect disgrace to a man of Mirabeau's genius.[2] He could not rest, however, with such scandalous pursuits; and, in a treatise on prisons of state

[2] Biog. Univ. xxix. 92, 93.

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and *lettres-de-cachet*, gave vent to his indignation at the coercion to which he was subjected.

25. His career before the Revolution.

At length he extricated himself from prison, and made his peace with his father by attacking the reputation of his mother, whose tenderness to him had been uninterrupted during all the family dissensions which had so long embittered his existence. Immediately after he returned to Provence, where he published his memoirs, which produced an extraordinary sensation. Subsequently he compromised the lawsuit with M. de Mounier; and, in order to regain Madame de Mirabeau's fortune, exerted all his eloquence and art, both with her and the legal tribunal before which the process depended, to effect a reconciliation with that much-injured lady, whom he represented with truth as an "angel of sweetness and goodness." Having failed in that object, however, he thought no more of either his angel or Sophie, but came to London in company with a young Dutchwoman, who had succeeded both in his inconstant affections. But the strict morals of England soon disconcerted a person of his licentious habits, and he afterwards passed into Prussia, the institutions and rapid rise of which, under the auspices of the Great Frederick, strongly arrested his attention. His residence there led to the composition of the most bulky work which ever appeared with his name, and which related to the Prussian monarchy. During his stay in that country he corresponded regularly with Calonne, the minister of France, for whom he acted as a sort of spy, and to whom he furnished valuable statistical information regarding all the German states. During the whole time he was so employed, he incessantly importuned the French minister for money. After various other literary sallies, in one of which M. Necker, then at the height of his reputation, became the object of his attacks, he was at length thrown into his proper sphere by the convocation of the States-General, when he was elected representative of Aix in Provence. Even before the meeting of the assembly, he had given proof of the line he was to adopt in politics, by steering a middle part between the two extreme parties, whose collision was then shaking society to its centre in that remote province.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. xxxi. 96, 97. Dumont, Souv. de Mirabeau, 24, 85.

The preceding detail is necessary to a due appreciation

26. Character of Mirabeau.

of the character of Mirabeau, by far the most powerful man who appeared in the commencement of the Revolution. Impetuous in passion, unbridled in desire, vehement in anger, irascible in temper, vain and yet proud, alike without shame and without remorse, the tyrant of men, the corrupter of women, he had been at once an ungrateful son,* a faithless husband, a brutal lover, an imperious master, and a needy suppliant. Overwhelmed with debt, without a profession, insatiable in desires, panting for fortune, "alieni appetens, sui profusus;" he realized the picture of those reckless yet formidable characters who formed Catiline's conspirators, and of whom the pencil of Sallust has left so graphic a picture. He looked to the Revolution as the means of reinstating his affairs, and reopening to him that round of licentious pleasures, for which, even in middle life, he panted with unextinguishable ardour. Necker said of him, with equal felicity and justice, that he was "an aristocrat by nature, and a tribune by calculation," and such in truth was his character. Notwithstanding all his declamations in favour of popular rights, he never at heart had in view to surrender the vital privileges of his order, and entertained throughout a secret pride in those advantages of birth, with regard to which in public he professed himself to be so indifferent, and a thorough perception of the peril of those democratic principles of which he appeared so ardent a supporter.† He espoused with vehemence the popular side, because he thought it likely to prevail, because he had suffered under authority, was bankrupt in fortune, and his ardent spirit, thirsting for enjoyment, chafed against all laws, human and divine. But

* It is in reference to his mother, who always treated him with the greatest kindness, that this trait in his character is given. His father's conduct to him had been so cruel and unnatural, that it is not surprising it had extinguished every sentiment of filial affection; "L'Ami des Hommes" never ceased to persecute his son with the most impassioned rancour, and this circumstance affords some extenuation of his licentious life.—See La Harpe, *Cours de Littérature*, xii. 273; *and* Weber, i. 336.

† He said at the tribune—"As to my title of Count, any one is welcome to it who chooses to take it;" but that was only because he believed that by the force of such professions he could obtain a higher rank, and, above all, a larger fortune than had devolved to him by birth, or he had acquired by marriage. He frequently said in private society, "the Admiral Coligny, who, by the bye, was my cousin;" and when the decree abolishing titles of honour was passed, he said, "Savez-vous que vous avez disorienté l'Europe pendant trois jours?" At home he was always styled, even after that decree, M. le Comte, and his servants wore livery after it had been disused by every one else.—See *Biog. Univer.*, xxix. 108, 109.

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he was equally ready to support the opposite side if it held out still greater advantages; and when at last he accepted the secret bribes of the court, and sought to allay the tempest which he had been so largely instrumental in creating, he acted not less in conformity with his real inclinations than with the ruling principle of his conduct, which was ever to throw for the highest stake. The air of sincerity, to which so large a share of his success was owing, was all assumed; his professions of public zeal were a mere cloak for private ambition. He said of Robespierre, whose abilities early attracted his notice, "That young man will go great lengths: *he believes all he says.*"[1]

[1] Marm. ii. 342, 343. La Harpe, Cour de Lit. xii. 173, 174. Weber, i. 337. Lab. ii. 363. Dumont, 99, 132. Duval, Terreur, i. 69.

27. His character as an orator.

As an orator, Mirabeau was one of the most powerful that ever appeared on a great stage in public affairs. An ardent soul, a ready elocution, vast force of expression, a brilliant imagination, a voice of thunder, an unconquerable will, rendered him the natural leader of an assembly, in which the selfish and generous passions were tossed together in wild confusion, and both sought their gratification in the most extravagant schemes for the reconstruction of society. Like Mr Fox, he had no great store of acquired information, he trusted to others for the materials of his orations; and the greater part both of the most celebrated and laborious compositions which bear his name, were the work of an able circle of friends, who, fascinated by his talents, had become the coadjutors of his labours.* But though he got the materials, and often the exordium, from others, the great merit and unbounded success of his speeches were his own. Self-confident in the highest degree, no opposition could daunt, no clamours disconcert him; his ready capacity seldom failed to retort an interruption with effect on his adversaries; vehement

* Dumont, Duroverai, and Clavières were the most remarkable of these assistants, and composed almost all the writings which at first, before his great oratorical talents had become known, gave Mirabeau his colossal reputation. The former, well known to the world by his invaluable "Souvenirs de Mirabeau," published in 1834, to which this history is so largely indebted, wrote his *Courier de Provence*, which, after Mirabeau's *Journal des Etats Généraux* had been stopped by a decree of the royal council, continued to give a summary of the debates of the Assembly, and obtained a prodigious reputation. He also, with Duroverai, wrote the celebrated address to the King, for the removal of the armies on July 8: the still more famous "Rights of Man," and many of the speeches which he delivered with most emphasis and effect.—See DUMONT's *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, 79, 105, 125, 139. Major Mauvillon, a Prussian officer, whom he had in like manner pressed into his service, wrote nearly the whole of his elaborate work on Prussia in eight volumes.—*Ibid.* 136.

and impassioned, he always contrived, even when insincere, to throw into his speeches that vigour of expression, and earnestness of manner, which contribute so largely to oratorical fascination. No one saw so clearly where the vital points in every question discussed lay; none knew so well how to address himself, whether in support or opposition, to the prevailing feelings of the majority. Though steeped in gross ideas, and burning for sensual enjoyment, none could utter more elevated sentiments, or avail himself with more skill of the generous affections. Ambitious in the extreme, conscious of powers which qualified him for the lead, he was impatient of attaining it, and fretted against every opposition he encountered. According as his speeches were applauded or interrupted, he gave way to sanguine anticipations, or stigmatised the Assembly as the most deplorable set of imbeciles who were ever brought together. Yet did his self-confidence never desert him. There was something which savoured of the grand even in the resolution which sprang from his vices. Having lost all private character, even in the corrupted circles of Paris, he resolved to rear up a new influence founded upon public achievements; gradually rose superior to all his rivals in the Assembly, and by his courage in difficulty, and energy amid the hesitation of others, ultimately acquired its entire direction. Perhaps he was the only man in France who had a chance of moderating or arresting the fervour of the Revolution. He frequently said of La Fayette, when at the head of the national guard of Paris, "La Fayette has an army; but, believe me, my head, too, is a power."[1]

[1] Dumont, 137, 139. Biog. Univ. xxix. 109.

The only orator on the aristocratic side in the National Assembly, who was at all to be compared to Mirabeau, was the ABBE MAURY.* This celebrated man, at once an

* The Abbé Maury was born on the 26th June 1746, at Vaurens in the Venaissin, of obscure parents. His education, commenced in his native parish, was completed at Avignon. An ardent thirst for knowledge, a retentive memory, and ready talent, rendered him remarkable from his earliest years. At the age of eighteen, he came without either money or friends to Paris, where he at first earned a precarious subsistence by teaching. Before he was twenty, he composed a funeral éloge on the Dauphin; and in 1767, one on Charles V., and an essay on the advantages of Peace, for a prize proposed by the French Academy. These juvenile performances having procured for him some notice, he resolved to take orders, and devote himself to the attainment of public eloquence. His talent in this respect soon made itself known; and having been chosen, in 1772, to preach a panegyric on Saint Louis, his pulpit oratory met with such success, that the Academy petitioned the King to bestow some preferment on the young ecclesiastic, which was immediately done by his being promoted to

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28. Character of the Abbé Maury.

academician and a preacher before the king, had already acquired a brilliant reputation before the meeting of the States-General. A vivid imagination, a memory richly stored with the imagery of the East, a happy power of applying the sublime language of Scripture, great facility of elocution, and that decided style of expression which springs from strong internal conviction, made his oratory always impressive, and riveted the attention even of the hostile and unbelieving crowd which composed the great majority of the Assembly. They listened to him as they would have gazed on the opera stage at a representation of the antique and exploded, but yet powerful imagery of Gothic superstition. But, in addition to this, he possessed remarkable abilities as a debater; and his antagonists soon found, that it was with no theatrical remnant of the olden time that they had to deal in the contests of the States-General. A sound judgment, a clear and penetrating intellect, great rapidity of thought, and a mind fraught with the incidents and lessons of history, made him peculiarly powerful in reply. His speeches on these occasions, always extempore, a thing then rare in the Assembly, and poured forth with the vehemence and energy of impassioned conviction,[1] recalled those sublime instances of

[1] Marm. ii. 404, 405. Mém. de Comte Montlosier, ii. 255. Lab. iii. 398, 399.

the abbacy of Frenade. In 1775, he published a panegyric on Saint Augustin, which had been preached before the assembly of the clergy; and this was soon followed by other panegyrics on Fénélon and Bossuet. Subsequently he was promoted to the rich benefice of the priory of Lioris, worth 20,000 francs a-year; and he was admitted into the most brilliant literary and philosophical society in Paris. In 1787 and 1788, Lamoignon, then keeper of the seals. availed himself of his talents in the preparation of the edicts which excited such vehement opposition in the parliaments of France. In 1789 he was named deputy of the clergy for the bailiwick of Peronne, and he first appeared in debate during the discussions on the Veto in September of that year; after which he took a leading part in the discussions on every subject. The Revolution, which ruined the fortunes of so many others of his party, was, on the contrary, the making of his; he lost, indeed, all his benefices in France; but being called to Rome by the Pope. he was received with the utmost distinction by the head of the church, the two aunts of Louis XVI., and the whole conclave of cardinals; and erelong he was rewarded for his strenuous efforts in the cause of the altar and the throne, by his elevation to the highest situations in the church. In 1792, he was named Archbishop of Nice *in partibus*, and in 1794 elevated to the dignity of cardinal and Bishop of Monte Fiascone. On the conquest of Italy by the French in 1798, they did all they could to seize him, but he escaped disguised as a *voiturier* to Venice, from whence he withdrew to St Petersburg. In 1799 he returned to Rome upon the conquest of Italy by Suwarrow, and in 1806 was recalled to Paris after the coronation of Napoleon, by whom he was much esteemed; but his conduct there was far from proving agreeable to the Pope, it being deemed, and apparently with justice, not in unison with the former tenor of his character, and he died in 1817, after having fallen under the displeasure of the court of Rome.—*See Biographie Universelle*, xxvii. 568, 575, (MAURY.)

ancient heroism, when the inspired prophets poured forth in burning strains, against a blind generation thirsting for their blood, the awful denunciation of judgment to come.

29. His invincible moral courage.

It was this unconquerable moral courage, and the steady adherence which he manifested in those perilous times to the great principles of justice and humanity, which secured for the Abbé Maury the respect even of his most envenomed enemies. Opposed in debate by Mirabeau, Barnave, and Clermont Tonnerre: interrupted at every step by the hisses or cries of two or three thousand spectators in the galleries: certain of being defeated in all his efforts by an overwhelming majority: in danger of being stoned, strung up to the lamp-post, or torn to pieces at the close of every interesting debate, by the furious mob which often surrounded the Assembly—he never deviated from his duty, but was ever to be found at his post, combating the projects of spoliation and robbery which were brought forward, and proclaiming aloud, in the midst of a guilty generation, the eternal principles of justice and religion. Such was the fervour and rapidity of his thoughts, that the reporters in the galleries were unable to write down his finest speeches; and next day, in the retirement of his dwelling, he was unable to recall what the animation of the tribune had drawn forth. A true soldier of the church, he threw himself with undaunted valour into the breach; and it was hard to say whether, in oratorical contests, the vehement fervour of his declamation, the cutting force of his sarcasm, or the inexhaustible resources of his knowledge, were most conspicuous. His character may be judged of by two anecdotes. In the commencement of the Assembly, seeing the universal delusion which had seized the nation, he said to his friend Marmontel—"I have studied the two parties; I know the views of each. My mind is made up: I will perish in the breach; but I have not the less the mournful conviction, that the enemy will carry the place by assault, and give it up to pillage." And when he took leave of him for the last time, on his setting out for Rome, he said—"In defending the good cause, I have done all I could;[1] I have exhausted my strength, not to prevail in an Assembly where all my

[1] Marm. ii. 294, 407. Mign. i. 155. Lab. iii. 399, 400.

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efforts were in vain, but to spread profound ideas of justice and truth in the nation, and over Europe. I hope even to be listened to by posterity. It is not without profound grief that I remove from my country, but I carry with me the firm conviction *that the revolutionary power will one day be destroyed*."

30. Character of M. Cazales.

The chief other supporter of the *Côté Droit*, or Conservative side in the Assembly, was M. CAZALES.* An old military officer, he had, shortly before the Revolution, been received into the ranks of the nobility, and he proved one of its most able and intrepid defenders. His character was essentially different from that of the Abbé Maury; it was more contemplative and philosophic. Less fervent and animated than the intrepid champion of the church, he was more profound, and had taken a wider and more comprehensive view of human affairs. The ardent admirer of Montesquieu, he meditated deeply on that great man's writings, and now exerted himself in the Assembly to resist the movement, from a firm conviction, drawn from his principles, that it would infallibly terminate in the destruction of that freedom to the establishment of which its efforts were at present directed. Being unaccustomed to public speaking, he at first expressed himself with difficulty, and made no impression; but the copiousness of his ideas and the intensity of his thoughts, soon, as is generally the case, removed that impediment; and he at length spoke with such force, that, after one of his extempore orations, Mirabeau

* Cazales was born in 1752, at Grenade, on the Garonne. He was the son of a counsellor of the parliament at Toulouse, and had the misfortune to lose his father, a man of rank, in early youth; and as this circumstance seemed to preclude him from the studies requisite for the learned profession, he entered the army, and joined at first with ardour in the amusements and pleasures of that career. But his character was too vigorous, and his mind too powerful. to rest long satisfied with such pursuits, and before he had been many years in the service, he took with avidity to literary studies; while he spent the day in military exercises or amusements, he sat up half the night labouring at every branch of knowledge, and seeking to make up for the deficiencies of his education by redoubled application in maturer life. He had profoundly studied Montesquieu, and constantly combated the innovations of the Constituent Assembly, upon the ground so ably taken by that great man, that no nation in the end can prosper but by institutions in conformity with its spirit. He was obliged to emigrate, and lost nearly all his fortune, in 1792, but returned to France in 1800, after the elevation of Napoleon, and with the wreck of his fortune purchased a small estate in his native province, where he lived contented and happy till his death in 1805. His simplicity of character, rare modesty, and entire disinterestedness, procured for him universal and lasting esteem.—See *Biographie Universelle*, vii. 473, 475, (CAZALES.)

addressed him with the words—"Sir, you are an orator." Simple and precise in his ideas, frank and conscientious in his character, he owed his success in the Assembly to the lucid order in which he unfolded his arguments, and the admirable language in which they were conveyed to his hearers. Had his knowledge been equal to his intellectual powers, or his erudition to his eloquence, he would have made a formidable opponent to Mirabeau himself; but his military education had left great defects in these particulars, which all his subsequent efforts were unable to overcome. Mirabeau frequently said—"If the knowledge of Cazales was equal to the charms of his elocution, all our efforts would be ineffectual against him."[1]

[1] Lab. iii. 401, 402. Th. i. 131.

31. Of M. Bailly.

Of a disposition somewhat similar, but on the opposite side in politics, and incomparably superior in learning and information, was M. Bailly.* This eminent and good man was one of the numerous party in France, who, carried away by the enthusiasm of the age, and the entire ignorance which prevailed as to the working of human nature in a free constitution, had with sincerity and good faith embraced the cause of the Revolution, and believed that it would lead to the regeneration of society, the happiness of France, and the indefinite progress of the human race. That party was formidable, not only from its erudition

* Bailly was born at Paris on the 15th September 1736, so that in 1789 he was fifty-three years of age. His father, who was keeper of the king's pictures, destined him for the same office; but his disposition led him so strongly to literary studies that it determined his future career. In the first instance, he composed some tragedies, which have not been published and had no particular merit; but erelong science attracted him from the paths of literature, and under the celebrated mathematician, La Caille, he soon attained great proficiency in it. In 1762, he presented to the Academy observations on the course of the moon, which attracted considerable attention: subsequently he calculated the course of the comet which appeared in 1759 and 1764, and published an essay on the theory of the satellites of Jupiter. In the midst of these scientific labours he did not neglect his literary tastes, but competed for the prizes proposed by the Academy, in successive éloges on Charles V., Pierre Corneille, Molière, and other eminent literary characters. In 1775 he published his celebrated history of astronomy, which, written in an elegant style, and coinciding with the irreligious principles then so generally prevalent in Paris, was received with extreme favour in the scientific circles of that capital. It has since been demonstrated, that the series of astronomical phenomena which Bailly regarded as affording decisive evidence of the extreme antiquity of the Hindoo nation, in reality established the reverse; for they have been shown not to have been taken from actual observation, but framed by calculating *backwards* on tables constructed during a period consistent with authentic history, and to contain, in consequence, several errors which the more accurate researches of later times have proved are inconsistent with what must have occurred. The great celebrity, however, which in

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and talents, but from the philanthropic principles by which its members were animated, the generous sentiments they uttered, the unceasing desires for social felicity which they expressed, the intermixture of truth and error which their principles contained, and the real worth of some of its members. Bailly himself was one of the most eminent and respectable of this body. He was a philosopher known over all Europe; a person of unblemished character and the best intentions; and he possessed in the highest degree that great quality, rare in men of science, but the first requisite both in a patriot and a magistrate—moral courage and mental resolution. He was not gifted with the powers of extempore oratory, and his influence in the Assembly was rather owing to the elevated character and philosophic reputation he had long enjoyed, and the dignified position he acquired as mayor of Paris, than to any remarkable power in debate which he possessed; but he acted a decided and courageous part in its most momentous and dangerous crisis, and subsequently evinced, in striving to arrest the Revolution which he had contributed so much to produce, an intrepidity which, with his tragic fate, must ever render his memory dear to the friends of mankind.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. (Bailly,) iii. 317. Lab. iii. 229, 230. Smyth's French Rev. i. 253.

General La Fayette* belonged to the same philo-

the first instance this work acquired, procured for him in 1784 a place in the Academy: and soon after he was chosen by the royal commission appointed by the king to investigate the pretended marvels of animal magnetism, to draw up their report on the subject, which at once dissipated the illusion so generally prevalent in regard to it. In 1785 he was admitted a member of the society of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, which has left such valuable transactions; and in 1787 drew up, by desire of the Academy of Sciences, a report on the construction of hospitals, in which the discoveries of profound science were guided by the spirit of enlarged philosophy. Such was the reputation which these successive works procured for him among all circles in the capital, that, when the electors assembled in 1789 to choose their representatives for the States-General, he was the very first person they selected, and subsequently he was made president of the Assembly, and mayor of Paris. But these political elevations, which appeared to put the finishing stroke to his fame, ruined his fortunes, and precipitated him from one calamity to another, till he was guillotined by that very democratic party of whom at first he was the admired leader. His memoirs are one of the most valuable records of the first stages of the Revolution, though unhappily they terminate in October 1789.—See *Biographie Universelle*, iii. 238, 241, (Bailly.)

* Joseph Gilbert, Marquis of La Fayette, was born at Chavaignée, near Brioude, in Auvergne, on the 6th September 1757. His father, at the age of twenty-five, had been killed a few months before on the field of Minden, where he acted as *maréchal-de-camp*. Young La Fayette was early brought to Paris for his education: and there, from his earliest years, the future dispositions of the man evinced themselves. He has recounted in his memoirs, that when prescribed at school a theme on the horse, he took peculiar pleasure in describing the "impatience of the noble animal under the

32. Character and biography of M. La Fayette.

sophical school as Bailly, and he was not less characterised by purity of intention and elevation of principle; but he had not the firmness of character of the philosophic mayor, and possessed a mingled vein of simplicity and vanity, which rendered him on more than one momentous

rod of the rider." At the early age of sixteen he married the second daughter of the Duke de Noailles—an alliance which secured for him a brilliant position at the court of France, but at the same time confirmed, from the liberal politics of his father-in-law, the strong tendency to republican ideas which he had already evinced Polished and decorous in his manners, he exhibited the rare example of fidelity to his young wife in the midst of a corrupted court, and abstained from the usual vices and follies of persons of his rank in the capital. The love of popularity, joined to an attachment to freedom, were his ruling passions; and, as both these appeared to be likely to obtain gratification in the American war, he engaged as a volunteer in their service on the 7th December 1776, before the French government had ostensibly engaged in the contest. He received the rank of major-general in the American service, but expressly stipulated he was to receive no pay or other emoluments. Previous to setting out, he travelled over and minutely examined Great Britain; and as the two countries were still at peace, it was with considerable difficulty, and only by withdrawing by stealth, that he avoided a *lettre-de-cachet* which Maurepas, at the instigation of the English ambassador, issued against him to prevent his serving in the insurgent ranks. On the 26th April 1777, he embarked with his friend and comrade, Baron de Ralf, for the New World, and landed at Georgetown, from whence he joined the army of Washington, then encamped, eleven thousand strong, near Philadelphia. He had some difficulty at first in getting an appointment, but at length he succeeded in attracting notice by the following laconic note:—"Considering my sacrifices, I think I am entitled to ask two favours: the first, to serve at my own expense; the second, to begin as a simple volunteer." Washington then gave him an interview, and as he evinced some reluctance to show the new American levies manœuvring before a French officer, La Fayette replied, "I am come here to learn, not to teach."

Soon after, he was appointed major-general, and was wounded at the battle of Brandywine, when endeavouring to rally the American fugitives during a rout which the inconceivable apathy of the English general alone prevented from becoming a decisive overthrow. Subsequently he took part, always with courage and ability, in the principal events of the American war; and, as he corresponded regularly with the French ministers, there can be no doubt that his information contributed not a little to the open accession of France to the coalition against Great Britain, which was the real cause of the contest with the insurgents terminating in their independence. Having been engaged in the battle of Barrenhill in 1778, where the Americans were again saved by the supineness of the English from total destruction, he received the thanks of Congress for his gallant conduct, and soon after returned to France to aid the cause of American independence, by stimulating the government to serious efforts in favour of the insurgents. By his indefatigable exertions the repugnance of Louis and Turgot to any intervention was at length overcome: and soon after, the treaty of February 6, 1778, was signed between France and America, which proved, in the first instance, the cause of the dismemberment of the British, in the last, of the overthrow of the French monarchy. Having succeeded in this great object he returned to America, now openly assisted by the land and sea forces of France; and so great was the attachment he had inspired, and the general sense of the services he had rendered to their cause, that Washington shed tears of joy when he presented him to his troops. Subsequently La Fayette was engaged in several successful expeditions, entrusted to his command; and he led the troops to storm one of the most important redoubts which protected the British lines in New York, and contributed essentially to the surrender of Lord Cornwallis

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crisis one of the most fatal promoters of the Revolution. Descended of an old and noble family, he had preserved the purity of his heart in the midst of a corrupted court, and continued, when married to an amiable wife, that simplicity of manners which belongs to a more primitive

in that town in October 1781. After this he was sent to the court of Madrid, to arrange some disputes which had broken out between the Spaniards and America. Charles III. received him very politely, but with some distrust, on account of the liberal opinions which he constantly expressed. When it was proposed to confide to La Fayette the command of an expedition against Jamaica, and give him the command of the island, the old king exclaimed, "No, no, that would never do; he would make it a republic!"

On his return to Europe he received the most flattering reception; and, to gratify his secret thirst for popularity, he made the tour of the principal states of Europe, in all of which, even the most despotic, he was received with the most unbounded enthusiasm. Such was the interest he excited, that his progress resembled rather that of a popular king than even of the greatest and most successful general. At Berlin he was received with the utmost distinction by the great Frederick, who, however, was far from being carried away by the democratic illusions then so generally prevalent. "I once knew," said the aged hero to him, "a young man who, after having visited the countries where liberty prevailed, wished to establish it in his own country. Do you know what happened to him?"—"No, sire!"—"*Sir, he was hanged.*" So far, however, was La Fayette from perceiving the sarcastic depth of this remark, that he recounts it with infantine simplicity in his Memoirs. At the Court of France, however, when he returned to Paris, the same penetration did not prevail as to the ultimate tendency of his conduct; his reception there was so flattering that it might have turned the strongest head. Marie Antoinette, by a condescension without precedent, drove Madame de La Fayette to the hotel of the Duc de Noailles when her husband arrived: he never appeared in public without being overwhelmed by acclamations. Ever dreaming, however, of resistance and revolution, he soon repaired to the south of France, and entered into correspondence with the Protestants there, still labouring under the unjust restrictions following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and with his usual haste and *imprévoyance,* he was clear, if immediate redress was not given, to commence an insurrection.

Having consulted Washington, however, on the subject, that great man replied, "It is a fundamental rule in military operations to study the ground well before hazarding an engagement; often more is done by approaches in force than by a sudden assault." This sage advice turned him aside from his design; but still his head teemed incessantly with similar projects. The "Hero of the Two Worlds," as his admirers called him, could not rest in peace. Plans for the conquest of Egypt; for seizing Algiers and the States of Barbary; for the general emancipation of the Negroes; and other projects equally chimerical, successively engaged his attention, and were embraced with such seriousness, that it was only by the advice of Washington, with whom he regularly corresponded, that he was dissuaded from actually engaging in them. Such a disposition found a lasting object of interest and action in the Revolution. Elected deputy by the noblesse of Auvergne, he perceived so little the tendency of the general movement, that he wrote to Washington, in May 1789, that "France would arrive by *little and little, and without any great convulsion,* at a representative constitution, and consequent diminution of the royal authority." Yet in three months after this was written the monarchy was overthrown, and in three years more La Fayette himself was obliged to fly from France with a price set on his head, and only escaped the guillotine by imprisonment in an Austrian dungeon.—See *Mémoires, Correspondence, et Manuscrits de La Fayette,* 6 vols. Paris, 1838, vols. 1 and 2; and *Biographie des Contemporains, Supplement,* vol. lxix. 343-356, (LA FAYETTE.)

state of society. But his capacity and judgment in public were far from being equal to his virtues in private. Endowed with a lively imagination, a sanguine temperament, an ardent philanthropy, and an insatiable vanity, he had little penetration, and still less strength of intellect. Firmly convinced of the truth of his principles, persevering in maintaining them, he gathered nothing from the course of events, and worshipped the chimera of a "throne surrounded by republican institutions," as fervently, after the termination of the French Revolution had demonstrated its futility, as when the American insurrection first wakened men to the entrancing hope of its realisation. This rendered him incapable of perceiving the pernicious tendency of his doctrines, when so many others of his party were striving to arrest their effects; and, in truth, unfit to acquire the direction of the frightful insurrection to which he first gave the discipline and force of military organization. He was consistent throughout, but rather in error than in truth; individually brave, chivalrous to excess, often generous, enthusiastic in what he sincerely believed the good cause, he looked for no personal advantage from the Revolution, and repeatedly said, "it would leave him where it found him." He was satisfied if he thought American institutions, the object of his unceasing admiration, could be established in France; seeing no difference between the circumstances of a young republic with English blood and a boundless unoccupied territory, and an aged monarchy with French passions and a limited, fully appropriated, soil. Occasionally he made a gallant though ineffectual stand against popular violence; but, in general, a thirst for popularity, and a blind belief, which even the horrors of the Revolution could not shake, in the virtues of mankind, were his besetting weaknesses. And one unpardonable piece of neglect, when the lives of his sovereigns were at stake, and committed to his defence, has left a blot on his memory which can never be effaced.[1]

[1] Bouillé, i. 106. Lab. iii. 248, 249. Biog. Univ. vol. lxix. p. 343, 356. (La Fayette.)

CLERMONT TONNERRE * had a generous disposition,

* Stanislaus, Count de Clermont Tonnerre, was born in 1747. His father, the Marquis de Clermont Tonnerre, had served with distinction in the armies of Louis XV., and the son also was bred to the profession of arms. But although he rose in the service to the rank of colonel, his disposition always strongly attracted him to political speculations, and, before the Revolution broke out, his liberal tendency had become well known. When

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33. Character of Clermont Tonnerre.

and an uncorrupted heart; he wished for others the happiness, and believed to exist in them the virtue, which he felt in himself. He had a contemplative disposition, an enthusiastic mind, great facility in speaking, and unbounded application; but, like all the others of that philosophic party, he was entirely ignorant of mankind by actual experience, and though well acquainted with history, he had not sufficient force of mind to distinguish its imaginary from its real lessons. Perhaps no intellect under that of Machiavel or Montesquieu is able to do so, till instructed in the facts of value, and the real inferences to be drawn from them, by personal observation and experienced suffering. He sincerely believed it possible to construct a constitutional monarchy out of a corrupted noblesse, an irreligious middle class, and an ignorant people. His powers of application were immense: the "Résumé des Cahiers," which he prepared by order of the Assembly, in order to extract from that immense mass of instructions something like a uniform and consistent system, affords a decisive proof both of his perseverance and capacity for generalisation. In the earlier stages of the Revolution, he supported all the usurpations of the popular party, and was thus implicated in many measures of manifest illegality, which ultimately proved fatal to freedom in France; but he did so, like so many others at that period, in good faith, and without the alloy of selfish interest; and on many occasions, when the atrocities of the people had commenced, and the opposite leaders became the victims of their violence, he exerted his great powers of eloquence, too often without effect, in the cause of humanity.[1]

[1] Lab. iii. 162. Ferrieres, Mém. i. 162, 164. Bailly, i. 171, 186.

Lally Tollendal* belonged to the same school; but he

the States-General were elected, he was the first deputy named for his order, and it was as one of the representatives of the noblesse of Paris. From the very first he formed one of the minority headed by the Duke of Orleans, who contended that they should unite at once with the *Tiers Etat;* and he acquired, in consequence, great popularity, which was augmented by a pamphlet which he early published during the continuance of the contest, recommending the same step. He was massacred by the people during the revolt of the 10th August, with so many other of their earliest and firmest supporters among the nobility.—See *Biographie Universelle*, ix. 90, 92, (Clermont Tonnerre.)

* Trophine Gerard, Count of Lally Tollendal, was born at Paris on 5th March 1751. He was son of the brave and unfortunate General Lally, who defended Pondicherry with so much gallantry against the English, and subsequently was condemned with such atrocious injustice and cruelty by the parliament of Paris. He had been educated during youth at the

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34 Of Lally Tollendal, and the two Lameths.

was more inclined to favour the monarchy than Clermont Tonnerre. He belonged to the order of nobles, both by birth and inclination; but the atrocious injustice of which his father, Count Lally, so distinguished in eastern history, had been the victim under Louis XV.,* necessarily, and as a matter of filial duty, threw him into the arms of the popular party. He sincerely desired the continuance of the royal authority; but he desired it shorn of its despotic

college of Harcourt, in entire ignorance of his birth, in consequence of the long-protracted proceedings against his father: and it was when the approach of his execution excited general interest and commiseration, that he learned for the first time that he was his son. He instantly flew to the place of execution, "to bid him," as he has himself told us, "an eternal adieu; to let him hear the voice of a son amidst the cries of his executioners, and embrace him on the scaffold when he was about to perish:" but his filial piety was in vain; the hour of the horrid act had been accelerated, and young Lally arrived in time only to see his father's blood streaming over the scaffold. Overwhelmed with horror, he sunk in a swoon on the ground, and was carried back insensible to the college. So terrible a stroke, of necessity and as a matter of duty, inspired him with a profound hatred at the institutions of which his father had been the innocent victim. He adopted with devout resolution his father's testament, which bequeathed to him the duty of righting his memory; and exerted himself with such vigour and perseverance to procure a revision of his sentence, that under the equitable government of the just Louis XVI. it was at length accomplished, though not without the most strenuous and disgraceful resistance on the part of the parliament of Paris, headed by D'Espremenil. Voltaire took throughout a warm interest in this great act of justice, and he wrote from his deathbed in 1778, at Paris, to young Lally, on learning of his first success, in these terms:—"On the bed of death I revive on hearing this event. I embrace M. de Lally with all my heart. I see the king is the defender of justice. I die content." It is hard to say whether these lines redound more to the honour of Voltaire, of Lally, or of Louis. Though an innovator in opinion and on principle, he was a royalist in habit and by inclination, and entertained deep gratitude to Louis for his efficacious interposition, which alone extricated his father's memory from the obloquy which had been cast upon it by the parliament of Paris. Young Lally was bred to the army; but the sole idea which preoccupied him of vindicating his father's character, both developed his talents, added to his information, and gave firmness to his character. Like Clermont Tonnerre, he was one of the minority who voted for the union of orders, and subsequently took a lead on the liberal side in the first proceedings of the Assembly: but he easily saw whither general fervour and popular fury were impelling his party; his love of justice was soon shocked by the excesses committed; and, so early as the 20th and 23d July, he was found at the tribune vainly endeavouring to arrest the atrocities, in preparing which he had been no inconsiderable actor. On the last occasion he ventured to attack Mirabeau himself, saying, looking sternly at that redoubted leader—"One may have talent, great ideas, and be a tyrant." Along with Mounier, he laboured for the formation of a constitution similar to that of England for his country; but, like all the early and rational friends of freedom in France, he was swept away by the torrent of democratic ambition: and, after the 5th of October 1789, finding all his efforts in vain, he resigned his situation as deputy, and retired to Switzerland. Subsequently he was thrown into prison on the 10th August 1792, escaped by almost a miracle the massacres of September, and at length found a refuge and asylum in England. The rest of his life was devoted to combating the principles of the Revolution.—See *Biographie Universelle*, lxix. 513-517. *Supplement*, (LALLY TOLLENDAL.)

* *Ante*, c. ii. § 84. Note.

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character, and, above all, with the ministers of the crown deprived of those despotic powers which they had hitherto possessed, and sometimes exercised with such iniquity. A constitution on the model of England was the object of his desires; and he saw no difficulty in accomplishing it, by the simple division of the States-General into two chambers: the nobility and clergy forming the upper house. Ardent, active, and enthusiastic, he had inherited all his father's warmth of character; but to that he added a patient industry, a habit of application, which rendered him the able coadjutor of Clermont Tonnerre in the herculean labour of forming the "Résumé of the Cahiers."[1] Alexander and Charles LAMETH* embraced the same principles, and were actuated by the same motives; but in their case, ingratitude for signal benefits from the king and queen gave an ungenerous character to their measures, and exposed them to vehement and general obloquy from the nobles, to which class they belonged by birth. All their efforts, after the power of the crown had been overthrown by a usurpation in which they bore a part, were ineffectual

[1] Lab. iii. 162. Biog. Univ. vol. lxi. 95, 108, (Lameth.)

* Charles, Count of Lameth, was born on 5th October 1757, and, like his brother Alexander, who was three years younger, owed his education and first advancement in life to the kindness of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. He was a captain in the army when he was sent to America with Rochambeau, and imbibed his first liberal ideas from his service in that country. On his return to Paris, he was cordially received by the Court, and became in an especial manner the object of favour and protection to the Queen, who procured for him in marriage Mademoiselle Peroti, daughter of a rich Bourdeaux merchant, with whom he acquired a considerable fortune. He was thus bound, as well as his brother Alexander, who was in like manner promoted beyond all precedent by the court, by all the ties of gratitude to the royal cause: nevertheless they became from the very first among its most determined and envenomed opponents. Charles was appointed deputy of Artois to the States-General in 1789; Alexander obtained a seat in the same assembly as deputy for the noblesse of Peronne. Both brothers evinced from the first a determined hostility to the royal cause, which, to say the least of it, was, considering their numerous obligations both to the king and queen, ungrateful in the extreme. It appeared when the celebrated *Livre Rouge*, or record of the secret expenses of the court, was published, that he and his brother had cost the king for their education alone 60,000 francs (L.2800.) Charles was arrested after the 10th August, like all the other early friends of liberty in the aristocracy, and owed his life to Danton's intercession, but on condition of instantly leaving France. Alexander Lameth, equally with his brother, was violent and ungrateful to his royal benefactors; he was one of the forty-seven nobles who, with the Duke of Orleans, joined the *Tiers Etat*. He was in the army, and has admitted, in his history of the Constituent Assembly, that he was privy to the insurrection of the troops on the 14th July, which overturned the throne. Subsequently he took an active part in the most hasty and destructive acts of the Constituent Assembly, and was rewarded for all his sacrifices of honour and duty on the altar of the Revolution, by being obliged to fly from his country, and, like La Fayette, found refuge from his former associates in an Austrian dungeon.—See *Biographie Universelle*, vol lxi. 95, 108, (CHARLES AND ALEXANDER LAMETH.)

to stem the flood of democracy, which soon streamed over and swept away the whole bulwarks alike of order and freedom in the state.

35. Character of Barnave.

Born with fiercer passions, endowed with brighter talents, impelled to good or evil by more impetuous dispositions, BARNAVE* was a more prominent character in the early history of the Revolution. He was a young advocate in Dauphiné, who already had made himself conspicuous in the troubles of Grenoble; and on that account he was elected member for the *Tiers Etat* of Vizille. His figure was thin and little, his voice weak, and his physical qualities such as little qualified him to bear a leading part in the stormy scenes of the National Assembly. But within that frail and unprepossessing frame he concealed a powerful mind, an ardent spirit, a candid and generous heart. His rapid thought, quick discernment, and ready elocution, rendered him peculiarly powerful in debate; and being enthusiastic on the popular side, he would, but for the towering strength of Mirabeau, have acquired the lead on that side in the Assembly; and on many occasions he stood forth second only to him, in these stormy discussions. Profoundly embued with hatred of the aristocracy, he brought to the popular cause the ardent passions of the south of France; and the vehemence of his temper made him utter some expressions in palliation of the early excesses of the popular party,† which have affixed a lasting stigma on his name. But in cooler moments the candour of his disposition prevailed over these unworthy passions;[1] the clearness of his intellect at length opened his eyes to the fatal effects,

[1] Biog. Univ. vol. iii. 390, 391, (Barnave.) Lab. iii. 20.

*Antoine Barnave was born at Grenoble in 1761. He was the son of a Protestant, and himself belonged to that persuasion; so that he imbibed from infancy those democratic opinions by which that sect in France were at that period generally distinguished. His father was an attorney, and he himself was bred to the bar; where, having attained some distinction before the courts of Grenoble, he was chosen representative for that town to the States-General. At first he showed himself a warm partisan of the Revolution; and his eloquence, impetuosity, and imagination, speedily acquired for him a brilliant reputation. Subsequently, however, he perceived the fatal tendency of the innovations which were going forward, and strove to moderate them. From that moment his reputation was at an end. It will appear in the sequel what an important part he played in the interesting episode of the journey from Varennes, and how the line of conduct which he subsequently adopted, brought him before the revolutionary tribunal, by whom he was condemned and executed on the 29th October 1793.—See *Biographie Universelle*, iii. 390, 391, (BARNAVE.)

† "Was, then, the blood which has been shed so very pure?"

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upon the cause alike of order and of freedom, of the course which he was pursuing; his heart was touched by the dignity with which the queen, on the journey from Varennes, bore the reverses of fortune; and his last efforts in public life were devoted to the vain endeavour to erect a barrier against that very democratic power which at first he made such strenuous efforts to establish.

36. Biography of Talleyrand.

These were the leading characters in the Constituent Assembly: for TALLEYRAND,* who took an important, though not a conspicuous part in their proceedings, was a man who subsequently rose to greatness, and whose portrait will more fitly be drawn in a future volume, when the extraordinary mutations of his fortune, and unparalleled adroitness with which he regulated his career, have been unfolded.† It would have been well for France, however, if the Assembly had contained only such men as these, who were endowed with enlarged minds, and held, in general, philanthropic views; and all of whom, even including Mirabeau, became, erelong, alive to the peril of the career on which they had adventured, and made strenuous, though unsuccessful efforts to arrest the march of the Revolution. But in addition to these, there were two clubs already established in Paris, which, although they had not attained the celebrity of those of the Jacobins and Cordeliers, which exercised so terrible a sway on its future fortunes,[1] were yet not

[1] Lab. iii. 147, 148.

* Charles Maurice de Perigord, afterwards Prince of Talleyrand, was born at Paris in 1754. He was nephew of the Archbishop of Rheims, and was early destined for the church, in which his inimitable penetration and skill in the management of affairs soon gave him a degree of importance, especially in matters of business. In 1780, his talents in these respects were so well known that he was named agent-general of the clergy; and, in 1789, when the Revolution broke out, he was already Bishop of Autun. So well were his abilities known at this early period, that Mirabeau, in his secret correspondence with the court of Berlin, remarked him as one of the most acute and powerful men of his age. He was appointed deputy for the clergy of his diocese to the States-General in 1789; and though not possessed of any oratorical talents, and seldom appearing at the tribune, he erelong acquired a great degree of celebrity; was a member of all the important committees, of which he soon acquired the direction, and thus came to exercise a powerful influence on the progress of the Revolution. His character will come to be more appropriately drawn in the close of this work, when the latter stages of his eventful career are detailed, with the immense sway which he exercised at the fall of Napoleon. He was the only distinguished member of the Constituent Assembly on the popular side, who escaped exile or death at the hands of the democratic faction; and he did so only in consequence of the good sense which led him to withdraw to America during the worst days of the Revolution, when he was denounced by the Convention.—See *infra*, C. lxxxiv. § 34; and *Biographie des Contemporains*, xx. 440, 443.

† *Infra*, C. lxxxiv. § 31.

without their influence at the time, and are highly important as illustrating the secret views of the parties which were already formed in the States-General.

37. The Club Montrouge is the centre of the Orleans conspiracy.

The first of these was a club which held its meetings at Montrouge, near Paris, and embraced all the confirmed conspirators. Its leading characters were Mirabeau, Siêyes, the Count Latouche, the Count de Sillery, and the Chevalier Laclos. The three last were avowed and well-known parasites of the Orleans family, and had taken an active part in those infamous orgies which had given the Palais Royal and Folie de Chartres so deplorable a reputation. Laclos said with truth, in allusion to his celebrated licentious novel, that he had been for his friends "*la liaison la plus dangereuse.*"* The plan of these conspirators, who had formed the settled design of overturning the throne, was to supplant the reigning dynasty by the Orleans branch of the Bourbon family: to get the Duke created, first lieutenant-general, and then sovereign of the kingdom. But as they were possessed of little influence except in the most depraved circles of the capital, and had no weight whatever with any of the respectable members of society, they felt the necessity of allying themselves to the popular leaders, and using every effort, by the liberal application of money, and still more liberal assertion of democratic opinions, to win over to their side those masses of abandoned men and women with whom every great capital abounds, and who literally overflowed in Paris at the commencement of the Revolution. Mirabeau, to a certain extent, was admitted to their councils; he was flattered by their caresses and seduced by their luxuries, and would have gone all lengths with them if he had seen more vigour, and consequent chances of success, in their chief. The Duke of Orleans, ambitious, but yet weak and irresolute, allowed the conspiracy to proceed without any settled plan to what purpose to apply it, and still less capacity to obtain the mastery of its dark and selfish passions.[1]

[1] Beaulieu, Rév. Franc., i. 344. Mounier, Influence des Philosophes, 92. Montjoye, Consp. d'Orleans, i. 94, 268. Lab. iii. 148, 149.

38. The Club Breton; the cradle of the Jacobins.

The other club, which embraced a much greater number, not of more abandoned, but of more sincere and determined characters, was the Club Breton. It had its meetings in Paris, and embraced all the decided democrats both in and out of the Assembly. The name of the club was

* Alluding to his well-known production, "Les Liaisons Dangereuses."

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taken from a number of ardent deputies of the *Tiers Etat* from Brittany, who first formed it, and at once brought into its bosom those fierce passions which had been drawn forth, and extreme designs which had been matured, during the civil conflict which had so lately distracted that province.[1] Barnave, Rabaud St Etienne, the Abbé Gregoire, and many others, who made a figure in the first stages of the Constituent Assembly, were members of it; but it embraced others who rose to celebrity only in its later stages, particularly ROBESPIERRE, PETION, Buzot, Lanjuinais, and a large part of the Jacobins who ultimately acquired such irresistible power in the Revolution. Their intentions were to establish an entire democracy, and in the prosecution of that object, overturn the throne, the altar, and the whole institutions of the country. The Constituent Assembly was not ripe for their designs; the remains of monarchical attachment yet lingered in the bosoms of the majority of its members; they were prepared to overthrow almost every thing else, but sincerely believed this might be effected without shaking the throne. Hence these extreme characters acquired no great influence in the first Assembly, but they were all-powerful in the last. This club, however, was regarded as a valuable focus of union by all the determined republicans; the early excesses of the revolution were, for the most part, matured in its committees; and little is known of its designs, because all its members were bound by a solemn oath to divulge none of its proceedings. Sièyes, who was at first a member, early divined their dangerous intentions. "I will return there no more," said he to Mirabeau: "their politics are those of the cavern; their expedients consist in crimes."[2]

[1] Ante, i. ch. iii. 449.

[2] Dumont, Souv. de Mirabeau, 100. Bailly, i. 331. Moniteur, Dec. 11, 1794, p. 340. Deposit. au Chatelet sur 5 et 6 Oct. 1789. Lab. iii. 146.

39. Prodigious excitement in Paris during the contest of the orders.

Immense was the addition made to the excitement in the capital, by the protracted contest between the nobles and commons, as to the verification of their orders separately or in common. Suspense in this, as in most other cases, added to passion. It was felt by all that this was the vital question of the Revolution; that if this cardinal point were once gained, there would no longer remain any obstacle whatever to the establishment of a new constitution on a thoroughly democratic basis. The journals incessantly dwelt on the incalculable blessings which would flow from such a consummation; they extolled Necker to the skies; he was

the first of men, the saviour of France, the destroyer of feudal tyranny, the Avatar of the human race. The arts lent their aid to the general illusion: and, in a multitude of engravings rapidly published and eagerly bought up, he was represented like Samson, throwing down, by his single arm, the vast fabric of Gothic oppression.* It may be conceived how the mind of this well-meaning and conscientious, but vain, and in this respect weak man, living as he did on the breath of popularity, and worshipping with fervent adoration public opinion as the unerring guide of the statesman, reeled under the intoxication of this universal adoration. It rendered him wholly unequal to the crisis, and aggravated the dreadful fault he had originally committed, in leaving the question of voting by order or by head undecided by the king; for he was too much influenced by the thirst for popularity to attempt any thing likely to check it, and yet too sensible of the impending danger to venture upon that bold course which, by putting him at once at the head of the movement, might possibly have given him its direction.[1]

[1] Bertrand de Moll. i. 199, 212. De Staël, i. 94, 161. Necker, Rév. Fran., i. 119, 121.

40. Vacillation and terror of the Ministry.

The aristocratic class, however, as the contest between the orders rolled on, and week after week elapsed without any adjustment having been effected, became daily more sensible of the danger in which they were involved. The king's ministers were in consternation, but wholly at a loss what expedient to adopt to extricate the nation from its embarrassments. Necker, whom the menacing tone and hourly increasing strength of the *Tiers Etat* had at length weaned, at the eleventh hour, from his unbounded confidence in their wisdom, moderation, and virtue, fairly confessed in private to Marmontel that he had no project to suggest. The more influential members of the commons, who dined frequently at his hotel, evinced clearly by their manner that they would no longer submit to him

* The author is in possession of a collection of these engravings, which is one of the most curious records of the Revolution. They indicate a degree of fervour in the public mind, which would be deemed incredible, if not established by such authoritative contemporary evidence. So rapid, however, were the mutations of popularity in the progress of the convulsion, that all the industry of the artists could not produce original designs to keep pace with them; and the device they fell upon was to reproduce the old plates with a *new face* inserted in the principal figure. In this way they soon decapitated Necker, and substituted the hideous visage of Marat on his shoulders; and on the old body of La Fayette there appeared first the head of Dumourier, and afterwards that of Napoleon.

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as their leader, and that gratitude for past services was entirely obliterated in their breasts by the ambition for future elevation. It was proposed to the ministers that the king should retire into one of the strong places, and put himself at the head of his troops; but the total want of money, and the certainty that such a step would at once induce national bankruptcy and civil war, was considered as an insurmountable objection. "Do you really," said M. de Montmorin, "conceive the danger to be so imminent as to call for these extreme measures?"—"I believe it is so pressing," replied Marmontel, "that in a month hence I would not answer for the liberty of the king, nor for his head, nor for yours."[1]

[1] Marm. Mém. ii. 296, 313, 317.

41. Remarkable prophecy of Father Beau-Regard. May 20.

The prelates sounded the alarm in the strongest terms on this portentous state of things. The torrent of irreligious opinion with which France had lately been deluged, had awakened a general belief amongst the reflecting part of the community that some terrible national catastrophe was at hand. The ex-Jesuit Beau-Regard, when preaching before the court in Lent, on May 20th, appeared to be suddenly seized with a fit of frenzy, like the Pythian goddess when under divine inspiration, and pronounced, with an emphatic voice, these remarkable words, which subsequent events rendered prophetic:—"Yes! thy temples, O Lord, shall be destroyed; thy worship abolished; thy name blasphemed. But what do I hear, great God!—to the holy strains which beneath sacred roofs arose in thy praise, shall succeed profane and licentious songs; the infamous rites of Venus shall usurp the place of the worship of the Most High! and she herself sit on the throne of the Holy of Holies, to receive the incense of her new adorers."[2] Who could have imagined that this was literally to be accomplished in four years within the cathedral walls of Notre Dame! *

[2] Lac. vii. 11. Prudhomme, Rév. de Paris, vi. 349.

42. Views of the conspirators on the popular side.

It was not surprising that these desponding views were entertained by all persons of a reflecting turn in Paris; for the designs of the conspirators against the throne were fully formed, firmly acted upon, and rapidly approached their accomplishment. They were thus unfolded by

* This remarkable prophecy appears in all the contemporary journals, and may be fully relied on.—See PRUDHOMME, *Révolution de Paris, May* 23, 1789.

Champfort, Mirabeau's friend and confidant, to Marmontel. "It is useless to talk of repairing and not destroying; extensive ameliorations soon reduce an old edifice to a heap of ruins. It is necessary to destroy the old edifice from top to bottom. Is it any great grievance to think that you are likely to hear no more of titles, or noblesse, or roturiers, or eminences, or greatness, or high or low clergy? Be assured the leaders know what they are about." "But will the nation," said Marmontel, "agree to all that?" "The nation!" returned Champfort: "bah! the nation is a huge flock of sheep, which is intent only on getting good pasture, and which can easily be guided at pleasure by good shepherds and fierce dogs. The old worship, the ancient régime, the manners and prejudices of the last age, only excite pity in the present. The throne and the altar will fall together; we must have a clean sweep for our new institutions. Every thing is foreseen and calculated upon. Our main reliance is on the humanity of the king, which is so excessive as to amount to pusillanimity: rely upon it, he will never even in the last extremity authorize the shedding of blood. The clergy will oppose no resistance; those of them interested in the old abuses are corrupted by their long continuance; those who are not, pant for their destruction. The high noblesse contains some energetic characters; but their number is too small, the majority of their body too corrupted to act, too detested to make others do so. The *Tiers Etat*, on the other hand, numerous, enthusiastic, united, possessing nearly all the available riches of the kingdom, is combined in a vast league, having its ramifications over the whole kingdom, and, directed by leaders of equal courage and ability at Paris, will soon become omnipotent. Many of the commons, we are well aware, will disapprove such vigorous measures, and tremble at any thing which threatens to disturb their repose or their enjoyment; but the murmurs of that timid class will come to nothing, and be speedily overwhelmed by the shouts of the multitude, tenfold as numerous, who have every thing to gain and nothing to lose by public convulsions. Should they prove sluggish, we have powerful means to rouse them: want, famine, money, rumours of alarm, and the general delusions. Our

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orators, at five francs a-head, spread through the primary assemblies, will beat Demosthenes himself in producing an effect. We have lately tried our strength in the Faubourg St Antoine: you would hardly believe how little it cost the Duke of Orleans to excite that tumult at Reveillon's: Mirabeau always maintains, that with a thousand louis he can any day get up a very pretty sedition."[1]

[1] Marmontel, Mém. ii. 289, 293.

43. First appearance of Robespierre in the Assembly.

While the political atmosphere was thus daily becoming darker in Paris, and that uncertainty and suspense prevailed which is so powerful an agent in augmenting public effervescence, the States-General remained inactive and paralysed by the continued and obstinate resistance of the *Tiers Etat* to constituting themselves, unless in concert with the other orders. During the discussion on this important subject, the clergy, who wished to bring about a union of the orders without openly yielding to the commons, sent a deputation, headed by the Archbishop of Aix, to make a pathetic appeal to them on the miseries of the country people; and he concluded by making a proposal that some deputies of the commons should join a conference with a few of the clergy and nobles, on the best means of assuaging these sufferings. The former, who did not wish to yield any thing, and yet knew not how to decline such a proposal without compromising themselves with the people, were at a loss what answer to return, when a young man, unknown to the Assembly, rose and said, "Go and tell your colleagues, that if they are so impatient to assuage the sufferings of the poor, let them come to this hall to unite themselves with their friends; tell them no longer to retard our operations by affected delays—tell them it is vain to employ stratagems like this to induce us to change our firm resolutions. Rather let them, as worthy imitators of their Master, renounce a luxury which consumes the funds of indigence; dismiss those insolent lackeys who attend them; sell their superb equipages, and convert those vile superfluities into aliment for the poor." At this speech, which so clearly expressed the passions of the moment, a confused murmur of applause ran through the assembly—every one asked who was the young deputy who had so happily given vent to the public feeling. His name afterwards made every man in France tremble—it was MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE.[2]

May 16.

[2] Hist. Parl. i. 411, 415. Dumont, 61. Th. i. 48, 49.

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44. Proposals of the Tiers Etat. May 18.

At length the commons deemed the public mind sufficiently declared to authorize a departure from the system of passive resistance they had hitherto pursued, and to adopt measures of aggression against the king and the constitution. It was gradually, and with caution, however, that the commons entered on their adventurous career. The first step was to name commissioners; and they appointed, by a large majority, sixteen commissioners to meet with sixteen of the nobles and clergy taken together, to endeavour to effect a reconciliation with the other orders, and an adjustment of the differences between them. These conferences accordingly took place, and the commissioners on both sides were men of the most distinguished ability; but, as might have been foreseen, they led to no other result but widening the breach between the various orders, and rendering the leaders of each aware that the differences between them were so serious as to render all hope of an accommodation chimerical. The commissioners of the commons were resolute to admit no proposition which would, by implication even, throw the slightest doubt on the vote by head; those of the nobles and clergy, composed entirely of the dignified portion of the latter, were equally firm to adhere to the invariable practice in former States-General, to verify their powers, and vote in separate chambers; and the nobles, upon a report of their commissioners, passed a resolution, on the motion of M. de Villiquier, that their powers should be verified separately. In this debate D'Espremenil strongly opposed the encroachments of the commons. "After having given," said he, "a shining example of disinterestedness, it is now our duty to rally round our ancient constitution, and to give one of firmness. I demand that it be resolved, that the deliberations by order, and the power inherent in each order of putting a veto on the resolutions of the others, are fundamental in the monarchy. The nobility will ever profess principles conservative alike of the throne and of liberty." This resolution was carried by a majority of 202 to 46—the Duke of Orleans voting and protesting with the minority.[1] It was adopted, although in the course of it a letter was brought to the noblesse from Louis, expressing an earnest wish that the conference should be resumed on the following day at six,

May 28.

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 412, 417. Moniteur, 23 to 30 May, 1789, vol. ii.

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in presence of the keeper of the seals and commissioners appointed by the king.

45. Rejection of the arbitration of the king by the orders

When the king's letter was received by the commons, they perceived at once the immense advantage which it gave them, and immediately resolved, while still maintaining their principles, to fall, or feign to fall, into the views of the sovereign. "We are in danger," said Mirabeau, "if we adopt the recommendation of the king; we are in danger if we refuse it. Let us steer between these two shoals: let us accede to the king's invitation, but preface the renewed conferences with a dazzling declaration, which may at once defeat intrigue, and unmask calumny. The sovereign has sent us a message full of goodness: let us vote him an address overflowing with affection, where we may consecrate at once our sentiments and our opinions." In pursuance of this advice, they resolved to accede to the king's proposal, and reappointed their commissioners to confer with those of the nobles and clergy with the addition of those appointed by the crown. Their address concluded with these words—"Sire! your faithful commons will never forget what they owe to their king: they will never forget the natural alliance of the throne and the people against both branches of the aristocracy, whose powers cannot be established but on the ruins of the royal authority, and of the public felicity." But the deputation of the *Tiers* insisted that they should have no intermediate communication, but be received by the king in person; and this personal interview was prevented, partly by a difficulty as to whether they should be presented according to ancient etiquette on their knees, and partly by the alarming illness of the dauphin, whose health, long declining, at length gave way, and he expired, fortunately for himself, in the arms of his inconsolable parents a few days afterwards. Bailly, with the deputation, was at length admitted on June 6th with the address of the commons: but it elicited nothing of importance from the king, beyond ordinary expressions of satisfaction at their sympathy. An attempt was afterwards made by the king's ministers to reconcile the differences by the sovereign's pronouncing a decision as umpire, if the commissioners of the orders could not come to a decision;[1] but this proposal came to nothing, both the nobles and com-

May 29.

June 4.

June 6.

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 414, 421. Lab. iii. 34, 41, 44. Droz, ii. 189, 199.

mons agreeing that such a method of settling their differences was derogatory to the dignity of their order.

46. The Tiers Etat resolve to constitute the States-General alone. June 10.

At length the commons, deeming the public sufficiently enthusiastic in their support to warrant the adoption of offensive measures, resolved upon a step calculated to bring matters to a crisis. Siêyes was the orator put forward to submit the proposal. "Since the opening of the States-General," said he, "the commons have pursued a frank and moderate policy: they have evinced all the regard for the noblesse and clergy which their own duties and position permitted, while the two privileged orders have made them no requital but by hypocrisy and subterfuge. The Assembly cannot remain in a state of inactivity, without betraying its duties and the interests of its constituents. It has become indispensable, therefore, to put a period to our long inaction. It is impossible to form ourselves into a deliberative assembly, until it is settled, in the first instance, who are to compose it. The Assembly cannot be subjected to any other judgment but the collective opinions of its representatives. The noblesse resist all approaches towards an accommodation: by that very act, they confer on the commons the right to examine their powers; for it is enough for one party to reject a conciliatory step to warrant the other to proceed without its concurrence. The Assembly, therefore, has no other course to adopt, but to summon the members of the two privileged orders to meet in the hall of the States-General, to assist and concur in the verification in common of their powers." He then submitted a motion, to the effect that the two other orders were *invited* to concur in the verification of the powers. This motion was carried by a majority of *one*, the numbers being 247 to 246: 51 declined voting. It is remarkable that the first resolution of importance, both in the French Revolution of 1789 and the English one of 1832, was carried by the same slender majority.[1] *

[1] Parl. Deb. i. 430, 434.

On this resolution being reported to the clergy, they replied—"We have mourned the delay which has taken place in consequence of our anxious desire to conciliate the orders; and we wait with impatience the termination

* Leave to bring in the Reform Bill on March 1, 1831, was carried by a majority of one; the numbers being 301 to 300.—*Ann. Reg.* 1831.

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47. Answer of the noblesse and the clergy. June 12.

of the conferences to put ourselves in activity. We will devote ourselves with the most serious attention to the objects which you have submitted to our consideration." The noblesse answered, "The order of the noblesse have received, gentlemen, the proposition of the orders of the *Tiers Etat;* it will deliberate on it *in its chamber*, and will have the honour of giving you its answer." Upon this, Malouet proposed in the *Tiers Etat* an address to the king, which was agreed to, and bore—"The noblesse have now taken their resolution: they have passed an *arrêté*, by which they have reserved to *their order* to give a simple and decisive answer; and refuse to agree to the plan proposed by your commissioners. The *arrêté* renders all attempts at conciliation impossible. The noblesse not only does not adopt it, when it has embraced a resolution of an entirely opposite character; but it repels alike its letter and its spirit, since it pretends to abide by the judgment of its own order when the method proposed embraces all points in dispute, and proceeds on the principle universally recognised, that deputies who are called to a common duty should proceed in common to the examination and sanctioning of their composition." The *Tiers Etat* waited till five in the afternoon, when a deputation of the noblesse were introduced, who stated—"Gentlemen, the order of the noblesse have begun their deliberations on the proposition of the *Tiers Etat:* they will continue their deliberations at their next sitting, and will communicate to you the resolution which they may adopt." Bailly, the chairman of the *Tiers*, answered—"Gentlemen, the commons have waited long for the arrival of the gentlemen of the noblesse; they have still the hope to see them arrive in the hall of the Estates." With this answer the deputation from the noblesse retired, and the commons, having waited till seven o'clock for the arrival of the other orders, began calling the roll of the *whole States-General, including the nobles and clergy.* None of the latter made their appearance to answer to their names. The calling ceased at ten o'clock, and the *Tiers Etat*, after choosing Bailly for their chairman, adjourned for the night.[1]

[1] Parl. Hist. i. 435, 440. Moniteur, July 10 to 12, 1789.

The die was now cast; the first step in the usurpation of the commons had been taken. It was not without being prepared for civil war, and having made up their

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48. Serious disturbances and alarm over all France.

minds to go all lengths in support of their pretensions, that so decided a measure was adopted. The state of the provinces was to the last degree alarming; and the multitude of famished desperate characters whom the general distress, and almost universal disturbances, had impelled into the capital, had added fearfully to the strength of the agitators. Such had been the severity of the storms in the preceding summer, which had laid waste the crops, that in several provinces the scarcity amounted to actual famine; and real suffering added to the fervour so generally excited by the prospect of the immediate regeneration of society which it was believed was approaching. Now was seen what a fatal error Necker had committed in leaving the question of voting by orders or head undecided, at the very time that his duplication of the *Tiers Etat* rendered it utterly impossible for the noblesse, with the slightest regard for the preservation of the monarchy, to agree to a union of the orders. Even an express order to the nobles and clergy to unite with the commons would have been less dangerous; for that would only have determined the mode of deliberating and voting; while the course adopted, in addition to that, exhibited an entire paralysis of the royal authority for six weeks, and spread abroad the belief that government was too much alarmed to take any decided step; the most perilous impression which, in a period of agitation, it is possible to diffuse among an excited people.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 426, 427. Lab. iii. 33, 35.

49. Tumults in the provinces.

During this suspension of government, the disorders in the provinces, originating for the most part in the severe scarcity which every where prevailed, had risen to the highest pitch. The people in almost all the small towns and rural districts rose, took up arms, assembled themselves in tumultuous mobs, and violently seized, first provisions, and at length every thing of value, which they could carry off from the houses of the more opulent classes of society. In Normandy, Brie, Lorraine, Brittany, Languedoc, and Provence, the brigands appeared at the same time, and, not content with levying contributions of money and provisions, soon proceeded to acts of conflagration and murder. Universal terror attended these excesses; the military, divided in opinion, and irresolute, could not be every where, and often refused to act; and if a body of soldiers

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appeared in any quarter, the bands, perfectly acquainted with the country, disappeared, and resumed their excesses in other districts. At Marseilles, the citizens, driven to desperation, formed a corps of volunteers for the protection of life and property; at Toulon, the troops refused to fire upon the insurgents, and it became necessary to form a burgher guard for the preservation of the public peace. So universal was the alarm in Brittany, that forty thousand men enrolled themselves in that province, professedly for the protection of property, and to support the States-General, but the greater part really with ulterior revolutionary views. Terror and disquietude generally prevailed, and for the purposes either of attack or defence, bodies of armed men, self-constituted and self-directed, were already on foot, in almost every part of the country, before the taking of the Bastile gave the signal for universal insurrection. Soon the pioneers of revolution, half-famished, ferocious bands, began to appear in formidable groups in the capital, as sea-birds hover round a ship when the clouds gather and the waves rise; their number erelong became so large as to excite equal terror in the holders of property, and hopes in the leaders of the democracy; and the king, justly alarmed for the safety even of his palace, began to draw troops into the vicinity of Paris.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 426, 429.

50. Three Curés join the Tiers Etat.

June 13.

Meanwhile, the able leaders of the popular party in the Assembly, carefully watching the signs of the times, and keeping in advance of the movement, so as to preserve their popularity, and in a certain degree obtain its direction, advanced steadily in their career of usurpation. On the 13th June, when the roll of the nobles and clergy was called as usual, three curés from Poitou, M. M. Leceve, Ballard, and Tallet, appeared, and requested admission. "We come," said the last, "at the call of our country, which urges us to establish that concord and harmony between the orders, on which the success of the States-General and the safety of the kingdom depend: may this step be received by all the orders with the same feelings which prompt it; may it be generally imitated; may it secure for us the esteem of all good Frenchmen!" Indescribable were the transports with which these words were received; the applause shook the hall, and was prolonged several minutes without intermission; and at

length the members spontaneously rose from their seats, crowded round the adventurous curés, congratulated them on their courage, and promised them their powerful protection. "It is our duty," said they, "to take these intrepid citizens under our safeguard; let us put them beyond the reach of their enemies; let their names be for ever inscribed on our annals, as the first conquerors of prejudice." The effects of this first secession were soon apparent: on the following day six other curés made their appearance, and were received with the like enthusiasm; but by the sage advice of the Abbé Gregoire, one of their number, after answering to their names when the roll was called, they returned to the chamber of the clergy, both to give an account of the reception they had met with, and to strengthen the hands of their party in their own order. The great division of opinion in it was well known: a hundred curés had had separate meetings, and were resolved to join the *Tiers Etat*; and it was only by the efforts of the Abbé Coster, acting for the Archbishop of Paris, that this great schism was adjourned from day to day.[1]

June 13.
[1] Hist. Parl. i. 441, 442. Lab. iii. 53, 54. Droz, ii. 202.

51.
Debates on the title the Tiers Etat were to assume.
June 14.

Encouraged by the prospect of this powerful support, and by the hourly increasing agitation of the capital, as well as the intelligence of disturbances in the provinces, the *Tiers Etat* made a further and still more decisive step in the career of usurpation. It was no longer a question whether they should, of their own authority, constitute themselves the representatives of the nation: the only doubt was what title they should assume. Siêyes, who again took the lead, proposed that they should style themselves "The Assembly of the known and verified Representatives of the French Nation."—"This," said he, "is the only name which can be assumed in strict accordance with the fact, for we have not lost the hope of seeing united to us the still absent members of the other orders; the moment they appear, whether individually or collectively, our doors will be open to receive them, and we will hasten to concur with them in the great work of the regeneration of France."[2] Loud applause followed these words, and numerous orators were hastening to the tribune to inscribe their names for the support of the motion,

[2] Parl. Hist. i. 443, 444.

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52. Speech in opposition by Mirabeau.

when Mirabeau excited universal surprise by demanding to be heard against it.

"We are about," said he, "to depart from that circle within which your wisdom has long kept you circumscribed. Time, meanwhile, has rolled on; the pretensions, the usurpations of the two other orders have increased; your wise caution has been taken for weakness—hopes have been entertained that weariness, uneasiness, the public misfortunes, unavoidable in such unheard-of circumstances, would precipitate you into some step either pusillanimous or inconsiderate. Now is the time to reassure every mind; to inspire your adversaries with the restraint, the fear, I had almost said the terror, of respect, by showing, in the very outset of your measures, the foresight of skill, joined to the firmness of reason. Every one of you feels, gentlemen, how easy it would now be, by vehement speeches, to impel you to extreme measures; your rights are so evident, your demands so simple, the proceedings of the two other orders so clearly irregular, their principles so contestable, that any parallel between them and you is out of the question. It is said we must constitute ourselves, and assume a denomination. Unquestionably we must; but let us take care that, in the assumption of a name, we do not give a handle to our enemies, and undo in one day the work of six weeks. 'The States-General;'—all admit such a title would be improper: it supposes three orders, and we are but one. But it is said we may find another name, nearly synonymous, without implying the whole three orders. But the question always recurs, have you the sanction of the king for such an assumption, and can you dispense with it? Can the authority of the monarch slumber an instant? Is it not indispensable that he should concur in your decree? Is it not by that concurrence alone that he is bound by it? And even if we should deny, contrary alike to principle and precedent, that his concurrence is necessary to render obligatory every act of this assembly, will he adhibit to subsequent decrees a sanction, which it is admitted we cannot do without, when they are consequent upon a mode of constitution which he cannot admit?

"Are you sure of the support of your constituents in

the step you now meditate? Do not believe the people are interested in the metaphysical discussions which have hitherto occupied us. They are worthy, doubtless, of more consideration than has hitherto been attached to them; for they lie at the bottom of the whole system of national representation: but are the people prepared to see their importance? The people wish relief, for they have no longer the strength to suffer; they would throw off oppression, because they can no longer breathe under the horrible load which crushes them; but they ask only not to be taxed beyond what they can endure, and to be allowed to bear their misery in peace. Doubtless, we have more elevated views, and have formed wishes more suitable to the dignity of freemen; but we must accommodate ourselves to circumstances, and make use of the instruments which are in our hands. It is by so doing alone that you will obtain the support, by attending to the interest, of your constituents. It is thus alone that you will secure on your side the inestimable support of public opinion. Till that is obtained, it will be easy to divide the people by ephemeral gifts, passing succours, feigned conspiracies, or real dangers. It is no difficult matter to make the multitude sell a constitution for bread.

"Is principle clearly with you? We are all here by the king's convocation, and by it alone. Doubtless you may, and should, seek to obtain a more secure and independent mode of assembling, when you are constituted, and your powers have commenced; but can you make any such change just now? Can you do so before being constituted? Can you do so, even when constituted, of your single authority, without the concurrence of the other orders? What right have you to advance beyond the limits of your title? Does not the legislature imply three orders, though convoked in a single assembly? Do your mandates, your cahiers, authorise you to declare yourselves the assembly of the only representatives recognised and verified? The consequences of such a step are evident; an unchaining of every passion; a coalition of every aristocracy; and *that hideous anarchy which never fails to end in despotism.* You will have pillage and butchery: you will have the fearful horrors of civil war; for the French have never fought for things, but for

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one individual or another. What do you make of the *veto* of the king, if he should refuse it to your constitution? Will you in your turn refuse it to the king? For myself, gentlemen, I believe the sanction of the king is so indispensable to your constitution, that I would rather live at Constantinople than in France, if it did not exist. Yes, I declare I know nothing more terrible than an aristocracy of six hundred men, self-constituted, who will soon become hereditary, and end, like all aristocracies of the world, by swallowing up every thing."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 445, 460.

53. The Tiers Etat assume the title of National Assembly, June 17.

The debate was prolonged during three days, and continued on the third till past midnight. It was conducted with the utmost violence. "Who are the nobility," cried Sièyes, "that we should have so much consideration for them? They represent a hundred and fifty thousand individuals: we twenty-five millions. If we yield, it is an ignominious betrayal of our trust: it is surrendering twenty-five millions of men to the yoke of a few thousands of the privileged orders." Carried away by the apparent force of this argument, the Assembly, by a majority of 491 to 90, resolved "that they are the representatives of ninety-six hundredths, at the very least, of the nation. Such a mass cannot be rendered inactive by the absence of the representatives of a few bailiwicks, or a particular class of citizens; for the absent who have been summoned, cannot prevent the present from exercising the plenitude of their rights, especially when the exercise of those rights has become an imperious and pressing public duty. Moreover, since it belongs only to the verified representation to concur in the formation of the national will, and since all the representatives ought to be in that Assembly, they declare further, that *they and they alone are entitled to interpret and represent the general will of the nation;* and that there exists not between the throne and this Assembly, *any veto, any negative power.* The Assembly declare that the great work of national regeneration should be begun by the deputies present, and that they will pursue it without either obstacle or interruption." Struck by the flagrant nature of this usurpation, which assumed the whole powers of the States-General into one of the orders, and which even denied the king's veto on their resolutions, the minority, though without hope, continued a strenuous

opposition. The cries of the opposite parties drowned the voices of the speakers; the wind blew with terrific violence, and rattled the windows, as if the edifice in which they were sitting was about to fall. But Bailly, the president, remained immovable, and the minority, wearied with a fruitless opposition, retired at one in the morning, leaving the Assembly in the hands of the popular party. It was then resolved, by a majority of 491 to 90, to assume the title of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, and intimation was sent to the other orders that they would proceed to constitute themselves, with or without their adherence, which they immediately afterwards did by that dignified appellation. By the assumption of this title, and passing of the resolution, the *Tiers Etat* openly evinced their determination to erect themselves into a sovereign power, and, like the Long Parliament of Charles I., disregard alike the throne and the nobility.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 39. Lac. vii. 32, 35. Th. i. 56, 57. Parl. Hist. 466, 470.

54. Resolutions of the National Assembly, declaring all taxes illegal if they were dissolved. June 17.

On the day following, the Assembly met in presence of above four thousand spectators, who crowded every gallery, passage, and crevice in the hall, and there with great solemnity took an oath—"We swear and promise to fulfil with zeal and fidelity the duties with which we are charged." Next they passed resolutions to the following effect—"The National Assembly declares and decrees, that all taxes or imposts levied without its express, formal, and free concurrence, shall instantly cease over the whole kingdom, *on the day on which this Assembly is dissolved;* in the mean time, all imposts and contributions, how illegal soever in their origin, shall continue to be levied until the day of their separation. As soon as it shall, with the concurrence of his Majesty, fix the principles of the national regeneration, it will devote itself to the consolidation of the public debt, putting from this moment the whole creditors of the state under the safeguard of the honour and loyalty of the French nation. In fine, the Assembly, now become active, declares that it will instantly proceed to the consideration of the causes which have produced the present scarcity which afflicts the nation, and the investigation of the most efficacious means which may contribute to its removal; for which purpose a committee shall be instantly appointed."[2] These resolutions, so well calculated to meet the wishes of the

[2] Parl. Hist. i. 471, 472.

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great body of the public, were ordered to be printed, and sent into all the provinces.

55. Immense enthusiasm over France on these events.

The able leaders of the Revolution knew human nature well when they passed these resolutions. On the one hand, by declaring all imposts of every description illegal from the moment of their own dissolution, they took the most effectual means that could be devised to prevent such an event; for it was evident, that in the present vehemently excited state of the public mind, the breaking up of the Assembly, with such a resolution standing on their journals, would be immediately followed by a general refusal to pay taxes, and consequent cutting off of the royal revenue, over the whole kingdom. On the other hand, the resolutions in favour of public creditors, and for the immediate investigation of the causes of the scarcity, held out the prospect of security to the former of these important bodies, and that of relief to the immense multitudes who were suffering from the latter. No language, accordingly, can describe the enthusiasm which these decisive measures awakened over all France. Tears of joy were shed when the intelligence was received in the provinces. "A single day," it was said, "has destroyed eight hundred years of prejudice and slavery. The nation has recovered its rights, and reason resumed its sway." But the more thoughtful trembled at the consequences of such gigantic steps: "Not only," said they, "are the noblesse and the clergy set aside, usage disregarded, rights abolished, but the authority of the throne itself is undermined. In England, a balance is preserved between the three estates; but here the National Assembly has swallowed up every thing."[1]*

[1] Riv. 18. Lab. iii. 64, 65. Droz, ii. 215.

56. Commencement of the persecution of the unpopular deputies.

And now began a system hardly less ruinous in the end than the flagrant usurpation of the whole powers of the state, which the *Tiers Etat* had just committed. This was the practice of publishing lists of the deputies who had voted against the popular side, and exposing them to the

* Mirabeau, at this crisis, wrote to his friend Major Mauvillon in Prussia —"If, as I cannot anticipate, the king gives his sanction to the new title which we have assumed, it will be evident that the deputies of the *Tiers Etat* have played away the monarchy at a game of hazard. Nothing can be clearer than that we are not ripe. The excessive folly, the fearful disorder of government, have made the Revolution red-hot: it has outstripped both our knowledge and our habits."—MIRABEAU *to* MAJOR MAUVILLON, *June* 19, 1787; *Lettres de Mirabeau à ses amis en Allemagne*, 469.

indignation or vengeance of the people. On the very next day after the decisive vote on the title of the Assembly, the names of the ninety constituting the minority were placarded at the Palais Royal and in the clubs; and the most extravagant falsehoods were put forward to increase the excitement which prevailed. The multitude were every where told that the minority had voted against any constitution; and to such lengths did the calumnies go, and so completely were the people worked up, that little was wanting to make them burn the houses of the unpopular deputies. Mirabeau, aware of what was going on, took care not to be present at the final division, so that his name did not appear in the obnoxious list; and his friends appeased the people by telling them that he had voted on the right side. The multitude, ever carried away by the exhibition of a courage which they feel themselves incapable of imitating, were intoxicated with admiration of the majority of the Assembly, and vowed vengeance on all sides against the minority of traitors and aristocrats who had dared to oppose them.[1]

[1] Droz, ii. 215. Lab. iii. 66.

57. Measures of the noblesse. June 18.

The aristocratic party were thunderstruck by this measure; but they possessed neither power nor capacity sufficient to counteract its influence. The Marquis de Montesquieu proposed what appeared the only rational course, which was, that to counterbalance this stretch of power by the commons, the nobles and clergy should address the king to constitute them into an Upper Chamber; but they wanted resolution, or were too blinded by passion to adopt it. It was with difficulty he could bring his speech to a conclusion, so frequent and vehement were the clamours with which he was assailed. In truth, the proposal itself was, in the circumstances of the two Upper Chambers, fraught with difficulty, if not danger. Vengeance on the rebellious commons was what the more vigorous breathed: the prudent with reason dreaded the infusion into their order of the numerous democratic curés in the order of the clergy. The Duke of Luxembourg, the Cardinal Rochefoucault, and the Archbishop of Paris, besought the king to adopt energetic measures, and support their orders against the usurpation of the commons,[2] and the nobility by a large majority passed a solemn and most vigorous resolution to that effect in the form of a

[2] Parl. Hist. i. 464. Mig. i. 39. Th. i. 60. Lac. vii. 39.

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protest, which was laid before the king, but it was all in vain. The majority of the nobles indeed were resolute, but the court was vacillating. Decision in action belonged alone to the commons, who only had the advantage of depending on their own will alone, and they, in consequence, speedily obtained the whole power of the state.*

58. Debates on the subject in the chamber of the clergy. June 19.

But though the nobles were thus resolute to resist the usurpation of the commons, a very different spectacle was exhibited in the chamber of the clergy. The numerous body of the curés in that Assembly, who sympathised, both from interest and inclination, with the commons, made the most strenuous efforts to induce their order to take part with the *Tiers Etat.* The debate lasted eight days. The Abbé Maury poured forth, in prophetic and eloquent strains, the loudest denunciations of danger and ruin alike to the throne and the altar, if the usurpations of the commons were not arrested. But all his efforts, and all the influence of the prelates and higher orders of the clergy, were unable to preserve the curés and lower ecclesiastics from being carried away by the torrent of democracy. On the roll being called, one hundred and thirty-seven voted for the motion of the Archbishop of Paris, which was that they should verify their powers in their own Chamber; and one hundred and twenty-nine for the verification in common, and nine for the same measure, but with the restriction, that they should dispose of the matter of the powers themselves in the common hall.

* The address of the nobles on this occasion stated—" The spirit of innovation threatens the fundamental laws of the constitution. The order of the noblesse have observed the law and former usage; they respectfully solicit the same observance from others. Your Majesty has suggested, by your ministers, a plan of conciliation; the order of noblesse have adopted it, with the reservation of the principles with which it is imbued; it has presented its resolution to your Majesty, and deposited it in your hands. The deputies of the order of the *Tiers Etat* conceive that they can concentrate in their own hands the whole powers of the States-General, without awaiting either the concurrence of the other orders or the sanction of your Majesty; they have arrogated to themselves the power of converting their decrees into laws; they have ordered them to be printed and sent to all the provinces; they have, by a single decree, destroyed the whole taxes, and revived them for a period fixed by themselves, of their single authority, without the concurrence of the king or the other orders. It is in the hands of your Majesty that we deposit our protests; and we have no warmer desire than to concur with you in measures for the general good. If the rights which we maintain were personal to ourselves, we should have less confidence in maintaining them: but the interests we defend are common to your Majesty with ourselves; they are the bulwarks of the *Tiers Etat* themselves; in a word, of the whole French people.—*Protestation de la Noblesse*, 19th Jan. 1789; *Hist. Parl.* ii. 476, 478.

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The dignified clergy, upon this result being announced, clapped their hands, and exclaimed that they had the majority. But their triumph was of short duration. The minority of one hundred and twenty-nine now proposed to the nine dissentients, that they should acquiesce in their proposal of a simple and unqualified verification in common; and upon their refusing, they all declared in one voice that they would accept the reservations, and that they now had the majority, which was certainly true, of ONE. On this, the Archbishop of Paris, and the whole prelates who had voted with them, declared that the matter had been settled by the previous decision in their favour; and rising from their seats withdrew, without having closed the meeting or adopted any resolution. The majority of one hundred and thirty-eight, however, remained; and others having come in before the roll was again called, their number was ultimately swelled to a hundred and forty-nine, which was published the same night to the capital, and received with unbounded transports. Thus was the decisive vote in the clergy as well as the *Tiers Etat*, carried in favour of the Revolution by a majority of one; an extraordinary coincidence, when it is recollected that the same majority brought in the Reform Bill in Great Britain.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i 203, 209. Hist. Parl. i. 475, 476.

59. Necker's measures in this crisis.

Great was the consternation of M. Necker at these decisive events, which so clearly demonstrated that he had lost the control of the movement, and that his power of directing the tempest he had had so large a share in conjuring up, was at an end. Such was his vanity, and ignorance of the nature of a popular insurrection, that he flattered himself to the very last with the idea that the commons, out of gratitude to him for the duplication of their numbers, would prove entirely submissive to his will, and that they would willingly acquiesce in any arrangement which he might propose to the king. Unhappily Louis himself, trusting to the popularity of his minister, and desirous of avoiding extremities, entertained the same opinion. In pursuance of this belief, Necker had prepared a plan for adjusting the differences between the orders, the foundation of which was to be, that the orders were to deliberate and vote in common during the present States-General on subjects of taxation and national or public concern,

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and in their separate orders on those in which their respective interests or privileges were concerned; but the king was positively to announce that he would consent in future to no arrangement in which the legislature was not divided at least into two chambers; pointing thus not obscurely to the English constitution as a model. This plan was earnestly pressed by the minister upon the monarch, accompanied with the alarming intimation, which subsequent events proved to be well founded, that in truth no other resource remained, for that the army could not be relied upon if required to act against the States-General.* It argued little for the sagacity or knowledge of mankind which the Swiss minister possessed, that he could have for a moment supposed such a system feasible; or have deluded himself into a belief that an ambitious, reckless majority, formed of the doubled *Tiers Etat* and the minority of the nobles and clergy, would not, on these national questions of general concern, have speedily succeeded in tearing the monarchy to pieces. But events succeeded each other with such rapidity that his projects could not be matured before decisive steps became necessary; and the resolution of the majority of the clergy, on the evening of the 19th, to join the *Tiers Etat*, rendered immediate steps indispensable. It was accordingly resolved in a royal council held on that very evening, to proclaim a royal sitting on the 23d, to announce the king's project for settling the mode of voting; and in the mean time to close the hall of the States-General.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 37, 38. Necker, Rév. Franc., i. 244, 247. De Staël, i. 213, 214, 215.

In pursuance of this resolution, the heralds-at-arms in Versailles, early on the following morning, proclaimed

* "Sire, I am afraid they deceive you on the spirit of your army: the correspondence of the provinces makes me believe that it will not act against the States-General. Do not, then, bring it near Versailles, as if it was your intention to employ it in a hostile manner against the deputies. The popular party do not, as yet, know against whom the forces which are approaching are directed. Take advantage of the same uncertainty to maintain your authority in public opinion; for if the fatal secret of the insubordination of the troops once becomes known, how will it be possible to restrain the factious spirit? What is now indispensable, is to accede to the reasonable wishes of France; deign to resign yourself to the English constitution. Personally you will experience no annoyance from the restraint of the laws, for never will they fetter you so much as your own scruples; and in anticipating the desires of the people, you will have the merit of giving to-day what may, perhaps, be taken from you to-morrow."—NECKER, *Mémoire au Roi*, 8 *June* 1789; DE STAEL, *Révolution Française*, i. 213, 214. This was really sage advice: would that Necker had never given the king any other!

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that the king would meet the Estates on the 23d, and on the same day the doors of the hall of the States-General were closed by grenadiers of the guard against the deputies of the commons. This step was certainly unfortunate; it announced hostile intentions without any explanation of what was really intended, and irritated the deputies without subduing them. Bailly, the president of the Assembly, went in form to the doors, and finding them closed by orders of the king, he protested against the despotic violence of the crown. Opinions were at first much divided what course to adopt; some proposing that they should instantly adjourn to the palace, and lay their grievances before the sovereign in person; others, that they should move into the capital, and throw themselves on the support of its immense population. At length it was proposed, on the suggestion of Guillotin,* to adjourn to the Tennis Court-hall, in the neighbourhood, which was at once agreed to. The following oath, drawn up by Mounier, was immediately tendered to the deputies, and first taken by Bailly himself.—"The National Assembly, considering that they have been convoked to fix the constitution of the kingdom, to regenerate the public order, and fix the true principles of the monarchy; that nothing can prevent them from continuing their deliberations, and completing the important work committed to their charge; and that, wherever their members are assembled, there is the National Assembly of France, decree, that all the members now assembled shall instantly take an oath never to separate; and, if dispersed, to re-assemble wherever they can, until the constitution of the kingdom, and the regeneration of the public order, are established on a solid basis; and that this oath, taken by all and each singly, shall be confirmed by the signature of every member, in token of their immovable resolution."[1]

60. Tennis Court oath. June 20.

[1] Moniteur, June 21, 1789. Lac. vii. 39, 41. Th. 63, 64. Riv. 19.

The court on this occasion committed a capital error, in not making the royalist or constitutional party in the Assembly acquainted with their intentions, and preventing that unanimity which necessarily arose from the appearance of measures of coercion without any know-

61. Error of the king on this occasion.

* A medical man of some celebrity, who suggested the terrible instrument for execution which has rendered his name imperishable.

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ledge of their object. The consequence was, that the most moderate members, apprehensive of the crown, and alarmed at the apparatus of military force directed against the Assembly, joined the violent democrats, and the oath was taken, with the exception of one courageous deputy, unanimously. This decisive step committed the *whole* Assembly in a contest with the government; the minds of the deputies were exasperated by the apprehended violence, and the oath formed a secret bond of association among numbers, who, but for it, would have been violently opposed to each other. Mirabeau, in particular, whose leaning from the beginning was as much towards the aristocracy as was consistent with a popular leader, openly expressed, at a subsequent period, his dissatisfaction at not having been acquainted with the real designs of the king. "Was there no one," said he, in the Assembly, "whom they could make acquainted with their designs? It is thus that kings are led to the scaffold!"[1]

[1] Riv. 19. Mig. i. 41. Lac. vii. 29. Dumont, 89, 97.

62. 148 of the clergy join the Tiers Etat. June 22.

This step was followed on the 22d by an important accession of strength. On that day the Assembly met in the church of St Louis, as the Tennis Court had been closed by order of the princes to whom it belonged; and they were here joined by a hundred and forty-eight of the clergy, who participated in their feelings, and were resolved to share their dangers. This great reinforcement was headed by the Archbishop of Vienne, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and the Bishop of Chartres. By this junction, their majority over the other orders became so great, that the victory of the commons, if they continued in one assembly, was rendered certain. The spectacle of the union of the clergy with their brethren of the commons, excited the most lively transports, and they embraced each other amidst tears of joy. Who could then have foreseen, that in a few weeks the whole ecclesiastical body were to be reduced to beggary by those who now received them as deliverers, and that a clergyman could not appear in the streets without being exposed to the grossest insults! Such is the fate of those who think, by concessions dictated by fear, to arrest the march of a revolution.[2]

[2] Dumont, 90, 91. Mig. i. 42. Bailly, i. 203. Riv. 20. Deux Amis, 215, 216.

It is impossible to refuse a tribute of admiration to those

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intrepid men, who, transported by a zeal for liberty and the love of their country, ventured to take a step fraught with so many dangers, and which, to all appearance, might have brought many to prison or the scaffold. Few situations can be imagined more dignified than that of Bailly, crowning a life of scientific labour with patriotic exertion, surrounded by an admiring Assembly, the idol of the people, the admiration of Europe. But he did wrong on this occasion, for he denied to the king the right of dissolving the States-General, and so put the commons in direct rebellion against the crown. Mounier, who drew up the oath, lived to express his regret for having done so, in exile in a foreign land.* How vain are the hopes of permanent elevation founded on the applause of the multitude! Could the eye of prophecy then have unveiled the future, it would have discovered Bailly, now idol of the people, shivering on his face in the Champ de Mars, with his arms tied behind his back, and the guillotine suspended over his head, condemned by the Assembly, execrated by the multitude, subjected to a cruel and prolonged punishment, to gratify the peculiar hatred and savage revenge of the populace, whom he now incurred these dangers to support!

63. Reflections on this step of the Commons.

Mirabeau, who was in the secrets both of the Orleanists and republicans, seeing matters coming to such a crisis, made private advances through Malouet, a common friend of both, to Necker, for the purpose of allying himself to the throne. "I am not," said he, "a man to sell myself basely to despotism, and far from wishing to shake the throne. But if steps are not immediately taken to stop the effervescence, there are in our Assembly such a multitude of selfish turbulent spirits, and so many carried away by inconsiderate asperity among the first orders, that I fear the most horrible commotions. Without doubt, M. Necker and Montmorin have a fixed plan; if that plan is reasonable, and they communicate it to me, I will defend it to the utmost of my power." Mirabeau was already a person of too much weight to be disregarded, and Necker, in pursuance of this overture, though with great reluctance, agreed to receive him in his cabinet. But their

64. Repulse by Necker of Mirabeau's advances.

* *Mounier des Causes qui ont Empêché les Français de Devenir Libres*, 96, 97.

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interview came to nothing. "You wish," said Necker, "to govern by policy, and I by morality; we cannot act together." After a brief and dry conversation, they separated in mutual irritation. Shortly after, meeting Malouet, he said, "I will not return there; but they shall hear of me." Immediately he threw himself with eagerness into the arms of the Orleans' faction, and became one of the most ardent and dangerous supporters of the Revolution. He frequented all the nocturnal meetings, both at the Palais Royal and the Republican clubs, and proved an inveterate enemy of the court, where he was regarded with equal aversion. The queen alone, strongly impressed with a sense of his talents, still continued to maintain that the only hope for the monarchy was to attach him to their interest. Meanwhile, Mirabeau's establishment underwent a total change: he took a handsome hotel, lived sumptuously, and his brilliant equipages, which drove about the streets, sufficiently proved that, with the direction of the intrigues, he had received the wages of the Orleans family.[1]

[1] Moun. 93. Papon, Hist. de la Rév. i. 21, 22. Hist. des Causes Secrétes de la Rév. i. 70-312. Lab. iii. 71, 72.

65. Grand council at Marly, where the declaration of 23d June is resolved on.

Meanwhile Louis, now that matters had reached a crisis, was sorely beset by the different parties which agitated the kingdom; and such was the weight of the arguments which they severally adduced in their support, that the strongest intellect might have felt difficulty in coming to a decision among them. Necker besought him to ally himself, frankly and in good faith, to the constitutional party in the Assembly, as the only means of avoiding the most terrible calamities, when the fidelity of the army was more than doubtful. The Cardinal La Rochefoucault and the Archbishop of Paris, struck with consternation at the scene they had witnessed in the chamber of the clergy, threw themselves at his feet, and touched the inmost chords of his heart, by beseeching him to protect religion and its ministers, now threatened with destruction, who would involve in their ruin the throne itself. The Parliament, on the motion of D'Espremenil, now thoroughly alarmed, and fully sensible of the extreme peril of the passions they had awakened, sent a secret deputation to the king, entreating him instantly to dissolve the States-General, and solemnly promising to register whatever edicts he might deem necessary, either for the relief of the finances, or the removal of the grievances of the people.

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The queen, the Count d'Artois, and the Count of Provence, united their efforts to those of these powerful bodies, and implored Louis, by the obligations he owed to his people, his children, his successors, to interpose his authority and dissolve an assembly which had already usurped so much, and was evidently advancing by rapid strides to supreme dominion. The whole subject was solemnly and ably debated before the king in a grand council held at Marly on the 21st and 22d, and it was at length resolved to make great concessions on all the material points demanded in the cahiers of the deputies, so as to lay the foundations of a constitutional monarchy, but, at the same time, to annul the usurpations of the *Tiers Etat*, and maintain the vital point of the separation of the chambers. Necker wisely and generously concurred in this arrangement, though, as will soon appear, some alterations made in the royal speech which he had drawn up, in matters which he deemed material, led to his remaining absent from the decisive meeting of the Assembly, and this was attended with the most calamitous consequences.[1]

[1] Mém. de Necker, i. 222, 253. Hist. des Causes Secrétes de la Rév. i. 34. Th. i. 134. Boissy d'Anglas vie de Malesherbes, ii. 279.

66. Royal sitting of the 23d June. Great concessions of the king.

At length the famous sitting of the 23d June took place. The king took his seat on the throne, surrounded by his guards, and attended by all the pomp of the monarchy: he was received in sullen silence by the commons, but with loud applause by the majority of the nobles, and the minority of the clergy. His discourse commenced by condemning the conduct of the commons, and lamenting the spirit of faction which had already made such progress among the representatives of the people, and was alike opposed to the interests of the nation and the warmest wishes of his heart. The declarations of the monarch were then read. The first prescribed the form of the meetings of the Estates, and enacted their assemblage by three orders, as essentially linked with the constitution of the state: it regulated the form of their deliberations; annulled the declarations of the 17th June by the *Tiers Etat*, as contrary to law; reserved to the crown the right of regulating the future meetings of the States-General, and closed their deliberations against the public. The second embraced an exposition of the rights which the monarch conceded to his people, and they contained the whole elements of rational freedom; in particular, he declared the illegality

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of all taxes not expressly consented to by the States-General, and that they should be imposed only from one session of that body to the other; abolished the pecuniary privileges, and exemption from taxation, of the nobles and clergy; put an end to the *taille* and the impost of *franc-fief:* regulated the expenses of the royal household; provided for the consolidation and security of the public debt; secured the liberty of the press; established the security of property and of titles of honour; reformed the criminal code; took care of the personal freedom of the subject, and provided for the maintenance of the public roads, the equality of contributions, and the establishment of provincial assemblies. On the important question of the union of the orders, he gave no express injunctions, but simply "*exhorted* the three Estates, for the public good, for *this session only,* to deliberate in common on matters of public interest, with the exception of those which regard the ancient and constitutional rights of the three orders, the forms of convoking the next States-General, the feudal and seignorial rights, and the patrimonial rights and honorary titles of the two first orders." With truth could the monarch exclaim, "I may say, without fear of self-deception, that never king did so much for his people as I have done for mine; but what other could so well deserve it as the people of France?"[1]

[1] Parl. Hist. ii. 13, 15. Riv. 23, 24. Th. i. 67, 68. Lac. vii. 43.

67. Give no satisfaction

These important concessions, which, if supported by proper vigour in the government, might have stopped the Revolution, had no effect in allaying the public discontents. The period was past when the language of moderation could be heard; the passions were roused, the populace excited; and when does passion yield to reason, or the multitude pause in the prospect of the acquisition of power? The concluding words of the king had the air without the reality of vigour; they took from the grace of the gift without adding to the authority of the giver. "You have heard, gentlemen, the result of my dispositions and views: they are in conformity with my ardent desire for the public good; and if by a fatality, which I am far from anticipating, you shall abandon me in so noble an enterprise—alone, I shall work out the good of my people; alone, I shall consider myself as their true representative; and knowing your cahiers, knowing the perfect coincidence of the general wish of the nation, and my benefi-

cent intentions, I shall feel all the resolution which so rare a confidence ought to inspire; and I shall advance towards my object with all the courage and firmness which such an object deserves. Reflect on this, gentlemen! none of your projects, none of your dispositions, can have the force of law without my especial approbation. Thus I am the natural guarantee of your respective rights; and all the orders of the state may repose with confidence on my entire impartiality. The slightest distrust on your part would be a great injustice. It is I, gentlemen, who have hitherto striven alone for the good of my people: it is rare, perhaps, that the only ambition of a sovereign is, to prevail on his subjects to come to an understanding to accept his beneficent acts. *I order you*, gentlemen, to separate immediately, and to meet here tomorrow, *each order in its own chamber*, to resume your sittings; and I have given orders to the grand-master of the ceremonies to prepare the halls accordingly."[1]

[1] Parl. Hist. ii. 21. Deux Amis, i. 219, 222.

68. The commons refuse to leave the hall.

At the conclusion of this address, the king rose, and withdrew from the hall. The great majority of the noblesse, the whole bishops, and a considerable part of the inferior clergy, followed in his train; but the whole commons, and the majority of the clergy who had joined them, continued in the great hall. Hesitation and uncertainty prevailed in the body which remained; they were confounded by the magnitude of the concessions made by the sovereign, and knew not what part to adopt. At this crisis Mirabeau rose—"What you have heard, gentlemen, might be sufficient for the safety of the country, if the presents of despotism were not always dangerous. What is the insolent dictatorship to which you are subjected? Is this display of arms, this violation of the national sanctuary, the fitting accompaniment of a boon to the people? Who prescribes these rules? Your mandatory!—he who should receive your commands instead of giving them to you. The liberty of deliberation is destroyed; a military force surrounds the Assembly. Where are the enemies of the nation? Catiline is at your gates. I propose that, proceeding with becoming dignity, you act up to the spirit of your oath, and refuse to separate till you have completed the constitution." Then turning to the master of the ceremonies, who had just entered and reminded them

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of the king's orders, he exclaimed, "Yes, sir, we know the intentions which have been suggested to the king, and you, who are not his organ towards the States-General, have no right to take back our answer. Nevertheless, to avoid all misunderstanding, I declare, that if you are ordered to make us depart hence, you must employ force. Tell your master that we are here by the order of the people, and that we will not be expelled but at the point of the bayonet."—"You are to-day," said Siêyes calmly, "what you were yesterday; let us proceed with our deliberations." On the motion of Camus, they ratified all their proceedings, and declared the persons of the members inviolable.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 45. Mig. i. 4. Th. i. 68, 69. Hist. Parl. ii. 21, 22. Moniteur, 24th June 1789.

69. Vast amount of these concessions of the King.

Considered in themselves, these concessions were the greatest ever made by a king to his subjects, and at any other time they would have excited transports of gratitude; but democratic ambition was thoroughly awakened, and this conciliatory conduct was only adding fuel to the flame. If a government is powerful, whatever it gives is hailed with gratitude as a gift; if it is weak, its concessions are considered as the discharge of a debt, and tend only to rouse the popular party to fresh demands. "What was wanting," said M. Montmorin, one of the ministers, to Mirabeau, "in the concessions of the king?"—"Nothing," replied he, "but that *we should have taken—not he given them*." Such, in truth, was the feeling which produced the most fatal act of the Assembly—their refusal to close with the proposals of the king. They were resolved to have the credit of every thing—to make, not receive a constitution; and, by so doing, they destroyed the freedom of France.[2]

[2] Dum. 87.

70. Royal authority overthrown.

On that day the royal authority was annihilated in France. The Assembly had openly bid defiance to the mandates of the throne; and public opinion supported them in the attempt. The initiative of laws, the moral influence arising from the idea of supremacy, had passed from the crown to the people. M. Necker was not present at this memorable meeting; the evening before he had tendered his resignation, as the measures adopted by the court were not such as he thoroughly approved, but the king prevailed on him to continue a little longer in office. He was discovered in Versailles by the crowd, and con-

ducted home amidst the loudest acclamations, across the court-yard of the palace, which he might have avoided by withdrawing a back way. By his conduct he had evinced the sincerity of his intentions, and his disapproval of the measures of the crown; and he was, for a brief space, thenceforward considered as the leader of the popular party.[1]*

[1] Lac. vii. 47. Mig. i. 44. Th. i. 70, 74.

71.
Duke of Orleans and forty-six of the nobility join the commons.
June 24.

The effects of this decisive victory were soon apparent. On the following day the Duke of Orleans and forty-six of the nobility joined the *Tiers Etat* in great state, in the common hall. They were received with transport; but the duke was so strongly moved on leaving the order of his fathers, that he fainted on rising from his seat. He was impelled into conspiracy and revolution by his needy and guilty followers, rather than attracted by his inclination or ambition. In this number were to be found the heads of the greatest families, as well as the ablest men of the French nobility; the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Rochefoucault, the Duke of Liancourt, Count Lally Tollendal, Count Clermont Tonnerre, the two brothers Lameth, and the Marquis La Fayette. They were almost all guillotined, exiled, or ruined, during the progress of the Revolution; a memorable example of the inability of the higher ranks ultimately to coerce a movement which they themselves put in motion, and of the futility of the idea, so commonly entertained by the inexperienced in public affairs, that no innovations are dangerous if they are headed by the great proprietors in the state.[2]

[2] Deux Amis, i. 229. Hist. Parl. i. 26, 29. Th. i. 65.

Overwhelmed with the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and desirous above all things of avoiding an immediate collision with the commons, whom it was

* The alterations in the royal speech of 23d June, of which M. Necker complained, were for the most part verbal and unimportant; but in one particular they were material, and he regarded the change as vital. "In the all-important article," says he, "of the union of the orders, the king, in the project which he at first had adopted, had *enjoined* the three orders to deliberate in common on all general affairs: it was the principal object of the *séance royale* to establish that; while in the speech, as finally amended and delivered, he only *exhorted* them to do this; and concluded by *commanding* them in the mean time to separate, and meet in their respective chambers. This left the question where it found it, and perpetuated that contest which it was the object of the royal speech to terminate."—NECKER, *Révolution Française*, i. 246, 248. Thus it was the want of an express command on the three orders to unite on all subjects of general import, that is, on the reconstruction of the monarchy, which made Necker resign.

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72. Great difficulties of the King's situation.

extremely doubtful, from the growing disaffection of the troops, whether he had any means of coercing, the king saw no resource but in concession. He thus hoped that he would obtain what he above all things desired—the love of his people—and regain from their gratitude what he could no longer compel from their obedience. In truth, such was the fermentation in the capital, and the manner in which the troops were reeling under the varied temptations of money, wine, and women, with which they were plied, that stronger heads than any which now directed the royal councils in France might have yielded to the tumult. The capital, already labouring under severe scarcity, and teaming with the famished and ferocious bands which had poured in from all quarters in quest of subsistence or plunder, was in the most violent state of agitation. Nor was this agitation confined to any one class; all, from various motives, were equally excited, and no one thought either of rallying round the throne, or attempting the slightest restraint either upon its own delusions or those by which it was surrounded.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. i. 218, 219. Lab. iii. 126.

73. Immense effervescence in Paris.

The young, the ardent, the visionary, believed a second golden age was arriving; that the regeneration of the social body would purify all its sins, extirpate all its sufferings. The selfish and corrupt, a numerous and formidable party, paid little attention to such empty speculations, but fixed their desires on the more substantial objects of plunder, intoxication, and licentiousness. The Palais Royal, recently constructed at an immense expense by the Duke of Orleans, was the focus of their agitation; in its splendid gardens the groups of the disaffected were assembled; under its gorgeous galleries the democratic coffee-houses were to be found. It was amidst the din of gambling, and the glitter of prostitution, that liberty was nurtured in France; it must be owned it could not have had a cradle more impure. The enlightened, from a principle of patriotism; the capitalists, from anxiety about their fortunes; the people, from the pressure of their necessities, which they expected immediately to find relieved; the shopkeepers, from ambition; the young, from enthusiasm; the old, from apprehension—all were actuated by the most violent emotions. Business was at a stand.[2] Instead of pursuing their usual avocations, multitudes be-

[2] Riv. 43. Mig. i. 47. Lac. vii. 58, 61. Th. i. 81. Lab. iii. 126, 127. Bert. de Moll. i. 219, 256.

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longing to all ranks filled the streets, anxiously discussing the public events, and crowding round every one who had recently arrived from Versailles. In one depraved class the fever of revolution was peculiarly powerful. The numerous body of courtesans unanimously supported the popular cause, and by the seduction of their charms contributed not a little to the defection of the military, which shortly afterwards took place.*

74. Interview of the King with M. De Luxembourg. June 27.

Meanwhile the noblesse, seeing the royal power in a manner annulled, and the excitement in the capital increasing to the very verge of open revolt, made a last effort to raise the throne from the dust. The majority, who had remained in the chamber of the nobles after the secession of the Duke of Orleans and his adherents, sent a deputation, headed by the Duke of Luxembourg, their president, to remonstrate with the king against the union of the orders, which it was known was in contemplation. Their interview, which was committed to paper the same day by the duke, was in the highest degree interesting. "M. de Luxembourg," said the king when he entered, "I expect from your fidelity, and the affection for my person of the order over which you preside, that you will unite with the other orders." "Sire!" replied the duke, "the order of the noblesse will be always ready to give to your majesty every proof of its devotion to your person; and it has never given a more striking one than on this occasion; for it is not its own cause, but that of your majesty which it defends." "The cause of the crown!" said Louis with surprise. "Yes, sire! the cause of the crown; the noblesse has nothing to lose from the union which your majesty desires: a consideration established by ages of glory, and transmitted from generation to generation; immense riches, and the talents and virtues of many of its members, secure for it, in the National Assembly, all the influence which it desires. But is your majesty aware of the consequences which this union may have on the powers of the crown?

* "On ne peut peindre le frissonnement qu'éprouva la capitale à ce seul mot—'le Roi a tout cassé.' Je sentais du feu qui courait sous mes pieds: il ne fallait qu'un signe, et la guerre civile éclatait. Toutes les provinces sont sans commerce, et presque sans pain: et qu'a-t-on de mieux à faire, que de se battre, quand on meure de faim?"—*Lettre au* Comte d'Artois, 27th June 1789, p. 41.

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The noblesse, sire! will obey, if your majesty desires it; but as their president, as the faithful servant of your majesty, I venture to portray to you the consequences of such a step to the royal authority.

"Your majesty cannot be ignorant, what a degree of power public opinion and the rights of the nation have awarded to its representatives; it is such, that even the sovereign authority with which you are clothed is mute in its presence. That unlimited power exists in all its plenitude in the States-General, however it may be composed; but the division into three chambers fetters their actions, and preserves your authority. United, they will no longer acknowledge a master; divided, they are your subjects. The deficit in your finances, and the spirit of insubordination which has infected your army, have paralysed, I am aware, the deliberations of your councils; but there still remains your faithful noblesse. It has now the option to go, in obedience to your mandates, to share with the other deputies the legislative power, or to die in defence of the prerogatives of the throne. Its choice is not doubtful; and it demands no recompense—it is its duty. But in dying it will save the independence of the crown, and nullify the operations of the National Assembly, which can never have the stamp of legality when a third of its members shall have been delivered over to the fury of the populace or the dagger of assassins. I implore your majesty to deign to reflect on the considerations I have the honour of submitting to you."—"M. de Luxembourg," replied the king firmly, "my mind is made up; I am prepared for all sacrifices; I will not have a single person perish on my account. Tell the order of the nobles, then, that I entreat them to unite themselves to the other orders; if that is not sufficient, as their sovereign I command them. If there is one of its members who conceives himself bound by his mandate, his oath, or his honour, to remain in the chamber, let them tell me; I will go and sit by his side, and die with him if necessary." The Cardinal Rochefoucault was soon after admitted with a deputation from the clergy who had remained in the hall of their order, and received a similar answer.[1] Both returned with a letter from the sovereign, absolutely enjoining the union

75.
The King's answer to the representations of the Duke.

[1] Deux Amis, i. 236, 239. Bert. de Moll. i. 244, 245. De Staël, i. 264.

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of the orders.* This order was the work of Necker; it was the condition of his remaining in office that the king should issue it.

76. Interview of the King with the Cardinal de la Rochefoucault.

The real motives which induced the king to take this decisive step, were more fully and openly stated in his interview with the Cardinal de la Rochefoucault, and the Archbishops of Rheims and Aix, who presented the address from the clergy. "My troops," said the king, when the address was read, "are in a state of defection. I am obliged to yield to the National Assembly."—"Your troops are in defection!" replied the Archbishop of Aix, in surprise; "since when, and in what place? Is it the Gardes Françaises? Is it the Swiss? Your majesty was not aware of it yesterday. It could not be the work of a day. Were the officers ignorant of the plot? Be assured, Sire! your ministers have made you believe this in order to work out the views which made them double the *Tiers Etat*, and will infallibly lead to the overthrow of the throne." The king, instead of making any answer, requested the archbishops to pass into the adjoining apartment, where they received the same answer from the queen, the Count d'Artois, and the other princes, whose desire for vigorous measures was well known, and the event soon proved that their information as to the disposition of the troops was too well founded.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. Hist. de la Rév. i. 245.

77. The nobles with great reluctance obey the mandate, and unite with the Tiers Etat.

The minority of the clergy who had remained in the chamber, yielded an immediate and implicit obedience to the mandates of the sovereign. But, notwithstanding the earnest entreaty and express command of Louis, the noblesse were so alive to the imminent hazard of their being lost in the democratic majority of the commons, that a great proportion of them were still resolute to hold out, and maintain, with mournful constancy, that

* The king's letter was in these terms:—"My Cousin, Solely intent upon the general good of my kingdom, and, above all, with the desire that the States-General should occupy themselves with the objects which interest the nation, according to the voluntary acceptation of my declaration of the 23d of this month, I entreat my faithful clergy (or noblesse) to reunite themselves without delay to the two other orders, to hasten the accomplishment of my paternal views. Those who are prevented by their instructions from doing so, may abstain from voting until they receive new powers from their constituents. This will be a new mark of attachment on the part of my faithful clergy (or noblesse.) I pray God, my Cousin, to keep you in his holy keeping."—LOUIS *to the* CARDINAL DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT, 27th June 1789; BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, i. 246, 247.

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barrier against revolution which the veto that the law still gave to their order seemed to afford. Cazales, in eloquent terms, and with magnanimous constancy, insisted that the only security for a monarchical government was to be found in the separation of the orders, which must be maintained at all hazards. In the midst of the general agitation, the Marquis de la Queuille read a letter from the Count d'Artois, who entreated the nobles, in the most earnest manner, no longer to defer the union, intimating that, if they did so, they put the life of the king in danger. "The king is in danger!" exclaimed the Count de St Simon; "let us hasten to the palace, there is our place"——"If the king is in danger," interrupted M. de Cazales, "our first duty is to save the monarchy; our next, to form a rampart with our bodies for his person." The discussion upon this was beginning anew amidst the most violent agitation; but M. de Luxembourg, rising in the president's chair, exclaimed, "There is no time to deliberate, gentlemen! The king is in danger: who can hesitate a moment where he ought to be?" The generous flame caught every breast. The nobles, believing the life of their sovereign really in peril, rose tumultuously; some laid their hands on their swords, and all hastened in a body, headed by the Duke of Luxembourg, into the hall of the commons.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. i. 247, 248. Deux Amis, i. 240.

78. Junction of the orders. June 27.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon of the 27th June, when the two orders of the noblesse and clergy, led by their respective presidents, with slow step and downcast looks, advanced up the great hall of Menus, where the commons were assembled, the clergy on the right, the nobles on the left. A profound silence pervaded the assembly: every one felt the decisive moment of the Revolution had arrived. "Gentlemen," said the Cardinal de la Rochefoucault, "we have been led here by our love and respect for the king, our wishes for the country, and our zeal for the public good." "Gentlemen," said M. de Luxembourg, "the order of the noblesse has determined this morning to join you in this national hall, to give to the king marks of its respect, to the nation of its devotion." "Gentlemen," answered M. Bailly, the president of the *Tiers Etat*, "the felicity of this day, which unites the three orders, is such, that the agitation consequent on it almost deprives me

of the power of utterance—but that very agitation is my best answer. Already we possess the order of the clergy; now the order of the noblesse unites itself to us. This day will be celebrated in our annals: it renders the family complete: it for ever closes the divisions which have so profoundly afflicted us: it fulfils the desires of the king; and now the National Assembly, or rather States-General, will occupy themselves without distraction or intermission in the great work of national regeneration and the public weal." Universal joy was diffused over Versailles by the announcement of the long wished-for union of the orders; the Assembly was adjourned to the 3d July, to afford leisure for the general congratulation; immense crowds hastened to the palace, and, loudly calling for the king, the queen, and the dauphin, made the air resound with acclamations, when they appeared at the balcony. Without any order, Versailles was illuminated that night; for three days the rejoicings were continued at Paris, and the people universally indulged in the most sanguine anticipations. "*The Revolution is finished!*" said they: "*it is the work of the philosophers, aud will not have cost a drop of blood.*"[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 241 243. Droz, ii. 263, 264. Bert. de Moll. i. 249, 250. Hist. Parl. ii. 33, 35.

79. Revolt and treason of the French guards. July 1.

Rapid as was the march of events in the Assembly, it was outstripped at the same period by that of extraneous agitation. Already, indeed, it had become apparent that the direction of the Revolution had escaped from the hands, not only of the king, but even of the Assembly, which had usurped the supreme power. The MILITARY, thus early in its progress, took upon themselves to act for themselves; and, forgetting their duty and their oaths, to fraternise with the insurgent people. The regiment of the Gardes Françaises, three thousand six hundred strong, in the highest state of discipline and equipment, had for some time given alarming symptoms of disaffection. Their colonel had ordered them, in consequence, to be confined to their barracks, when three hundred of them broke out of their bounds, and repaired instantly to the Palais Royal. They were received with enthusiasm, and liberally plied with money by the Orleans party; and to such a height did the transports rise, that, how incredible soever it may appear, it is proved by the testimony of numerous witnesses above all suspicion, that women of family and distinc-

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tion openly embraced the soldiers as they walked in the gardens with their mistresses. After these disorders had continued for some time, eleven of the ringleaders in the mutiny were seized, and thrown into the prison of the Abbey; a mob of six thousand men immediately assembled, forced the gates of the prison, and brought them back in triumph to the Palais Royal. The king, upon the petition of the Assembly, pardoned the prisoners, and on the following day they were walking in triumph through the streets of Paris.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 60, 63. Mig. i. 47. Th. i. 82, 83.

80. Vigorous measures are resolved on by the court.

These alarming events rendered it evident that some decisive step had become indispensable to prop up the declining authority of the throne. The noblesse recovered from their stupor; even the king became convinced that vigorous measures were called for, to arrest the progress of the Revolution. For some time after their union with the commons, the nobles still met at a different house, and were preparing a protest against the ambition of the National Assembly, which subsequent events rendered nugatory; but the daily diminution of their numbers proved how hopeless in public estimation their cause had become. In this extremity, the king, as a last resource, threw himself upon the army. The old Marshal de Broglie was appointed general of the royal army, and all the troops on whom most reliance could be placed, were collected in the neighbourhood of Versailles; as many foreign regiments as possible were brought up; and by the first week of July thirty thousand men and a hundred pieces of cannon were assembled between Versailles and Paris. "Marshal," said the king, when he first received him, "you are come to assist a king without money, without forces; for I cannot disguise from you that the spirit of revolt has made great progress in my armies. My last hope is in your honour and fidelity. You will fulfil the dearest wishes of my heart, if you can succeed, without violence or effusion of blood, in frustrating the designs of those who menace the throne, designs which would erelong bring misery on my people." The marshal, ignorant of the changes of the times, became answerable for the safety of the capital, and immediately established a numerous staff, whose insolence and consequential airs only contributed to increase the public discontents.[2]

[2] Lac. vii. 64. Mig. i. 47. Th. i. 85. Hist. Parl. ii. 31, 32.

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81. Great agitation in the capital. July 1.

The successive arrival of these troops, especially of the German and Swiss regiments, in the neighbourhood of Paris, excited the utmost indignation in the capital, and entirely dispelled the fond illusions which had prevailed as to the bloodless character of the Revolution which had now decidedly begun. The troops which had mutinied came by hundreds into the Palais Royal, instigated by the Marquis of Valadi, one of their old officers, where they were liberally supplied with wine, ices, money, tickets for the theatres, and women, by the agents of the Duke of Orleans. Won by such unwonted liberalities, the troops shouted "*Vive le Tiers Etat!*" The crowds rent the air with their acclamations at the decisive evidences thus afforded, that the forces brought up to support the monarchy had added to the number of its enemies. The Gardes Françaises for a week past had been in a state of open revolt; all the efforts of the officers to make the men return to their duty were unavailing. Almost universally the non-commissioned officers took part with the privates, being entirely alienated from the existing government by the powerful stimulants applied to them by the agents of the Revolution, and the impolitic confining of commissions to persons of aristocratic birth. But the foreign regiments in the king's service, consisting wholly of Germans and Swiss, were known to be perfectly steady; and the citizens, surrounded by armed men, some disposed to aid, others to resist them, beheld with mingled feelings of exultation and dismay, the long trains of artillery and cavalry which traversed the streets, or took their stations in such a manner as to command all the approaches to Versailles. Marat incessantly stimulated the people in his seditious journal; the whole disturbances were got up by the ministers and aristocrats, to furnish a pretext for introducing and employing the military; their object was to dissolve the National Assembly; to excite revolt, and extinguish it in blood. Calm tranquil resolution, restrained within the bounds of order, could alone defeat their nefarious projects.[1]*

[1] Marat, Avis au Peuple, Juillet 1, 1789. Hist. Parl. ii. 37. Deux Amis, i. 249, 256. Lab. 138, 139, 141. Moniteur, July 4, 1789.

* "O mes concitoyens! observez toujours la conduite des Ministres pour regler la vôtre. Leur objet est la dissolution de notre Assemblée Nationale, leur unique moyen est la guerre civile. Les Ministres, les aristocrats soufflent la sédition! Eh bien! Gardez-vous de vous livrer à la sédition, et vous deconcerterez leurs perfides manœuvres. Ils vous environnent

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82. Power daily passing from the Government to the multitude.

Meanwhile the reins of power were daily more perceptibly slipping from the hands of those who yet held them. Terror of an approaching convulsion, added to the severity already extreme over the whole kingdom, rendered the supplies of grain deficient to an alarming degree in Paris. The bakers' shops were surrounded from morning till night by clamorous crowds demanding bread, and who no sooner were relieved than others equally importunate succeeded. Such was the scarcity, now amounting almost to famine, that part of the bread thus served out was unwholesome, and produced violent internal pains in some persons who took it. This gave rise to new clamours: it was the aristocrats who were adulterating the bread—not content with the pangs of hunger, they were actually poisoning the people. Barnave, Petion, Buzot, and Robespierre, at the club Breton, exerted themselves to the utmost to fan these discontents, and stimulate to the highest pitch the already excited passions of the multitude. The assembly of electors had met daily at the Hotel de Ville, since the 4th July, to deliberate concerning the measures to be adopted, and already began to organise that power, which, under the name of the Municipality of Paris, soon became so formidable. Numberless pamphlets issued daily from the press, teeming with violent suggestions; and the crowds at the Palais Royal, feigning already to exercise sovereign authority, passed decrees, banishing the leading aristocrats to the distance of one hundred leagues from Paris. The Comte d'Artois, the Princes of Condé and Conti, the Duc de Bourbon, the Abbé Maury, Madame Polignac, M. D'Espremenil, and all the leading characters in opposition to the Revolution, were denounced in this manner, and their names placarded in all the streets of the capital.[1]

July 4.

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 38, 39. Bert. de Moll. i. 269, 273. Bailly, i. 331.

In this extremity, the chief minister of the king exhibited only that quality, of all others the most fatal in presence of danger—indecision. Necker was still in office, and took his place regularly at the council-table; but his

de l'appareil formidable des soldats, des baionettes! Penetrez leurs projets inflammatoires. Ce n'est pas pour vous contenir, c'est pour vous exciter à la revolte, en aigrissant vos esprits, qu'ils agitent ces instruments meurtreuses. Soyez paisibles, tranquilles, soumis au bon ordre: laissez-les combler la mésure: le jour de la justice et de la vengeance arrivera."—MARAT, *Avis au Peuple*, 1 Juillet 1789.

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power was nearly extinct, from the revolt of the commons, and the calamitous consequences of the measures he had so strenuously advocated. Every one saw that he had lost the command of the movement; that his influence with the popular leaders was at an end; and that even the Assembly, which his counsels had elevated to such fearful preponderance, was likely itself to become the sport of fiercer and more impetuous passions among the people. Firmer hands, a more intrepid heart, were looked for to hold the rudder, when the vessel was drifting on the breakers. The war party in the council, without actually displacing Necker, virtually supplanted him in the direction of affairs. The troops arrived without his orders, and were destined, he knew not to what purpose. In truth, he was at a loss what to propose, and his only resource was to do nothing: the usual expedient in difficulty of temporising characters, and the inevitable result in the end of following popular opinion. If he adopted or agreed to vigorous measures, his popularity was gone, and would, in a few weeks, be shivered to atoms. The king could as little see his way through the overwhelming difficulties with which he was surrounded, and which the defection of the troops had so fearfully aggravated. He could only cling to the hope that the presence and strength of the military would overawe the turbulent in the city, and a returning sense of their duty restrain the demagogues in the Assembly. If not, he proposed, as a last resource, to concede the whole fundamental laws of a free constitution, agreeably to the cahiers of the deputies, and, having made the best provision he could for the finances, dissolve the Assembly. But he was determined, in no circumstances whatever, to make the military act against the people; and in truth, their temper, as the event proved, was such, that it would have been impossible, for they would not have done so.[1]

83. Indecision of Necker and the Ministers.

[1] Necker, Rév. Franc., i. 273, 291. De Staël, i. 231, 233. Bert. de Moll. i. 274. Toul. i. 76, 77. Lac. vii. 94, 98.

But though the intentions of the king were thus moderate and pacific, he was in a manner ridden over in his own council, by the more decided leaders, whom the imminence of the danger had raised up to a preponderating influence. The Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, M. de Breteuil, and nearly all the courtiers, were of this party; and their language was as menacing as their real measures were

84. More violent views of the war party in the council.

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inefficient, and their means of action feeble. The young officers openly spoke of throwing the deputies out of the windows, and dissolving the Assembly by force. "They have made fools of us hitherto," said they; "but this time we have sharpened our swords." Patrols and sentinels were stationed in every direction round Versailles: the communications were often intercepted by hussars: a camp for twenty thousand men was traced out between that palace and Paris: the foreign regiments were daily arriving, to the manifest augmentation of the mutinous spirit of the guards. The powers of the old Marshal de Broglie were very extensive, embracing even the direction of the household troops; and he had offered "to disperse, with fifty thousand men, all that rabble of famished wolves who hoped to devour the high noblesse. A single discharge of musketry will be enough to revive the monarchical power, instead of the republican influence which has overshadowed it." But in the midst of this military confidence, the essential measures necessary to justify it were neglected: no reviews took place by the king or the royal family, to confirm the spirit of such of the troops as still preserved their allegiance: no commanding stations were seized or strengthened, and the military positions of the capital were totally neglected. Nor were any precautions taken to preserve the soldiers from the contagion of the city, from whence wine and money were sent in profusion to the camp, and crowds of courtesans, who embraced the soldiers, saying, "Comrades, belong to us, and you shall want nothing."

[1] Mém. de Maréchal Rochambeau, i 350. Mém. du Comte de Montlosier, i. 195. Necker, ii. 14, 15. Deux Amis, i. 243, 244, 253, 256. Lab. iii. 164, 167.

85. Speech of Mirabeau in the Assembly against the troops.

Meanwhile the Assembly, for the first week after the union of the orders, were occupied with the details of protests lodged by individual members of the clergy and nobles, regarding their remaining, or not remaining, in the united States-General. But the growing accumulation of the troops, and rumours which began to spread of Necker's influence in the council being on the decline, roused them again to decided measures. The great reliance of the leaders of the movement was on the well-known humanity of the king, and the influence of the Swiss minister, who, they were aware, would never endanger his popularity by decided measures. But the prospect of his fall,

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and the presence of the military, warned them of the necessity of resuming the offensive. Mirabeau again stood forth on this occasion, and never did he sway with more power the energies of that fierce democracy. On the 8th July he introduced a motion, which was received with enthusiastic applause, to the effect that a petition should be presented to the king, praying him to remove the troops, and raise an urban guard in Paris and Versailles, for the preservation of public order. The petition, read and adopted next day, is a model of condensed eloquence, and invaluable as a record of public feeling, and of the address of the leaders of the Revolution at this time.[1] *

July 8.

July 9.

1 Hist. Parl. ii. 42, 53. Dum. 104, 106.

86. Address of the Assembly to the king.

"The movements of your own heart, sire! are the only safety of Frenchmen. When troops arrive on all sides, and camps are formed around us; when the capital is invested—we ask with astonishment—'Has the king come to distrust his people? What do these military preparations mean? Where are the enemies of the king and of the state who are to be subjugated? Where are the rebels, the conspirators, whom it is necessary to reduce?' An unanimous voice answers in the capital and in the provinces—'We cherish our king; we bless heaven for the gift it has bestowed upon us in his love.' Sire! the conscientious feelings of your majesty can have been misled only by deceitful representations of the public good. If those who have given these counsels to our king would now stand forth and avow their motives, this moment would behold the most complete triumph of truth. The throne has nothing to fear but from the bad counsels of those who surround it, and who are incapable of appreciating the motives of the most virtuous of kings. How can they have succeeded in making you doubt the love of your subjects? What have you done to alienate them? Have you shed their blood? Have you shown yourself cruel, implacable towards them? Have you abused justice? Do the people impute to you any of their misfortunes? Are they weary of your yoke, or tired of the sceptre of the Bourbons? No, sire! calumny itself has never ventured to advance any thing so mon-

* It was not written by Mirabeau, but by Dumont; to whose auxiliary labours he was throughout so much indebted.—See Dumont, *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, 106, 107.

strous: it seeks a more plausible ground to conceal its machinations.*

"We should deceive you, sire! if we did not add, forced by circumstances, that this empire of love is the only one which it is now possible to exercise in France. France will never permit the best of kings to be misled, and withdrawn from the course which he himself has traced out. You have been called on with us to fix the constitution, to effect the regeneration of the kingdom. The National Assembly has solemnly declared to you that your wishes shall be accomplished: that your promises shall not be vain: that difficulties, snares, terrors, shall neither intimidate its march, nor shake its resolution. 'Where, then, is the danger of bringing up the troops?' our enemies will perhaps say; 'What mean these complaints, when the Assembly is incapable of discouragement?' Sire! the danger is pressing, it is universal: it is beyond all the calculations of human prudence.

"The danger is for the people in the provinces: once alarmed for their liberties, where is the rein that will restrain them? Distance will magnify every thing, exaggerate every disquiet, envenom every feeling. The danger is for the capital. With what eye will the people, in the midst of want, tormented with anxiety, behold a numerous body of soldiers absorb the scanty remains of subsistence? The presence of the troops will produce an universal excitement; and the first act of violence committed under the pretext of keeping the peace, will lead to a horrible succession of misfortunes. The danger is for the troops themselves; French soldiers, close to the centre of discussion, sharing in the passions, as in the interests of the people, may forget that an engagement has made them soldiers, to recollect that nature has made them men. The danger, sire! menaces the labours which are our first duty, and which cannot obtain a full success, a real permanence, save so long as the people shall regard them as entirely free. There is, moreover, a contagion in passionate emotions: we are but men; distrust of ourselves, fear of appearing weak, may transport us beyond our end: we shall be besieged with violent, unmeasured

* It was a monarch thus painted by their ablest leaders, that the Revolutionists afterwards dethroned and executed!

counsels; and calm reason, tranquil wisdom, do not deliver their oracles in the midst of tumult, of disorder, and of faction. The danger, sire! is more terrible still, and judge of its extent by the alarms which bring us before you. Great revolutions have sprung from causes less considerable; more than one enterprise, fatal alike to nations and kings, has been announced in a manner less sinister and less formidable. Believe not those who speak lightly of the nation, and who represent it only in their own colours: sometimes insolent, rebellious, seditious; at others, submissive, docile, crouching. Always ready to obey you, sire! because you command in the name of the laws, our fidelity itself sometimes orders resistance, and we shall always glory in the reproaches which our firmness attracts. We beseech you, sire! send back the troops; dismiss to the frontiers that artillery intended to protect them; dismiss, above all, those strangers, whom we pay, not to disturb, but to defend our hearths. Your majesty has no need of them: a monarch adored by twenty-five millions of Frenchmen can derive no additional support from a few thousand foreigners!"[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 54, 57.

87. Answer of the king. July 10.

The deputation, consisting of four-and-twenty members of the Assembly, was introduced to the king on the succeeding evening, and he made the following answer:—"No one can be ignorant of the scandalous scenes which have taken place, and been renewed at Paris, under my eyes and those of the States-General. It is necessary that I should make use of the means which are in my power to maintain public order in the capital and its environs; it is one of my first duties to watch over the public tranquillity. These are the motives which have induced me to assemble the troops around Paris; you may assure the assembly of the States-General that they have no other object but to maintain the public peace, and preserve that freedom which should ever characterise your deliberations. None but the evil-disposed could seek to mislead my people as to the intentions I had in view in bringing them together. I have constantly aimed at the happiness of my people, and always had reason to be satisfied with their fidelity. If, however, the unavoidable presence of the troops in the environs of Paris gives you any umbrage, I will, at the desire of the States-General,[2] transfer the

[2] Bert. de Moll. i. 288. Hist. Parl. ii. 74, 75.

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Assembly to Noyon or Soissons, and repair in person to Compeigne, to maintain the communication between the Assembly and myself."

88. Dissatisfaction of the Assembly. July 11.

This well-advised answer satisfied all the reasonable men, but it excited loud murmurs among the majority of the assembly. "The king," said the Count de Crillon, "has given us his royal word that the advance of the troops has been dictated solely by the necessity of providing for his own safety and that of the capital, and that he has no intention of overawing the deliberations of the Assembly. We are bound to believe the word of his majesty. The word of an honourable man is a sufficient guarantee; it should dispel all our alarms. Let us then remain with the king, and declare that in doing so we yield alike to our love and his virtues."—"The word of the king," replied Mirabeau, "is a sufficient security for his own intentions, but none at all for those of a minister who has more than once violated his oath. Is any of us ignorant that it is want of foresight, blind confidence in others, which has brought us to our present predicament, and which should open our eyes if we would not continue for ever slaves? The answer of the king is in effect a refusal. We asked the removal of the troops from ourselves, we did not ask the removal of ourselves from the troops. The presence of the troops near the capital threatens public tranquillity, and may produce the greatest dangers. Those dangers would not be diminished, but, on the contrary, greatly augmented, by the removal of the Assembly. Let us then continue to insist upon the removal of the troops as the only means of safety." The discussion dropped after these observations; the subject was too delicate to be further probed; but they sufficiently revealed the spirit of the Assembly. They had no real fears of the soldiers, with whose mutinous spirit they were well acquainted, still less of any intention of being removed from Paris even to a place of the most perfect safety; they had need of its enthusiasm, its riots, its wine, and its women. What they wanted was to deliver over the king defenceless to its violence and intimidation. And on the same day, to augment the already formidable popularity of the Duke of Orleans,[1] a pretended offer of that prince to the Committee of Subsistence in the As-

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 76, 77. Bert. de Moll. i. 289, 290. Deux Amis, i. 265, 266.

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sembly of 300,000 francs (L,12,000) was hawked about the streets; a total fabrication, but which answered the purpose of increasing the general excitement, and procuring shouts from his hired retainers on his generosity and virtues.

89. Commencement of the insurrection, and dismissal of M. Necker. July 11.

The first signal for the revolt which overturned the throne, was given at eleven on the evening of the 11th July, by the issuing of a mob from the quarters of New France and Little Poland, who attacked and burned the barrier of the chaussée d'Antin. The object of this was to let in the smugglers and desperate characters from the environs; and it was to have been immediately followed by the burning, on the same day, of the Palais Bourbon, which was the signal agreed on for a general insurrection, during the confusion of which the Duke of Orleans was to have been proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom.* But before these designs could be carried into complete effect, intelligence arrived in Paris of an event which, as it indicated the adoption of vigorous measures by the court, added immensely to the general effervescence. The king, seeing that matters had now come to such a pass that resistance was necessary to prevent an immediate revolt, at length resolved on the dismissal of M. Necker, and embraced the views of the Count d'Artois, M. Breteuil, the queen, and others, who urged vigorous measures. The chief ministers were changed: M. de Breteuil as prime minister, and the Marshal de Broglie, as minister at war, were placed at the head of affairs; the saloons at Versailles were filled with generals and aides-de-camp, and every thing indicated the adoption of hostile resolutions.† Louis, preserving his calmness and moderation in the midst of the general tumult, refused to order Necker's

* See the depositions of M. Guilheim, Dufraisse, Duchey, and Tailhardat de la Maison Neuve. *Procedure du Chatelet sur les attentats des* 5 *et* 6 Octobre, (120 and 126 witnesses;) and BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, i. 293; and LABAUME, iii. 174.

† J'allai trouver le Maréchal de Broglie à Versailles. Le Maréchal, prenant le ton d'un général d'armée, disposait de tout comme si il avait été en face de l'ennemi. Je lui representai que la position était bien différente; qu'il n'était question d'atteindre le but qu'on se proposait à coup de fusil: qu'il fallait prendre garde de pousser les choses aux dernières extrémités avec des esprits tellement échauffés qu'ils ne connaissaient plus de frein. Le Maréchal reçut mal mes répresentations; J'insistai; il se fâcha. Le Maréchal avait fait du chateau de Versailles un camp. Il avait mis un regiment dans l'orangerie; il affectait des appréhensions pour la personne du roi, pour la famille royale, aussi

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arrest, as some proposed,* but sent him a letter, in which he expressed his regret at his dismissal, his regard for his character, and declared that he was overruled by necessity. Necker's conduct on this occasion was worthy of the elevated principles by which, notwithstanding his fatal errors of judgment, his conduct had been regulated. He received the king's letter at dinner, and, without testifying any emotion on reading it, said, as if nothing had occurred, to M. de Luzerne, the minister of marine, who brought it, that he would meet him in the evening at the council, and continued to converse, with perfect self-possession, with the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and other gentlemen present. After sitting the usual time at table, he rose, and without communicating with any person in his family—not even with his daughter, Madame de Staël—retired for the night to his country-house at Saint Ouen, from whence he set out next morning for Brussels, accompanied by Madame Necker, to whom he revealed for the first time, when in the carriage, that he had ceased to be a minister of the crown. It may safely be affirmed that Necker was greater in his fall than he had ever been in his elevation.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 233. Bert. de Moll. i. 292. Moniteur, July 17, 20, 1789. Jour. Mém. de la Rev. ii. 35. Lab. iii. 176.

90. Progress of the revolt in Paris, and first appearance of Camille Desmoulins. July 12.

The news of Necker's dismissal was not known at Paris on the 11th, when the revolt broke out; on the contrary, Dr Guillotin arrived there from Versailles at nine at night, with the intelligence that the Swiss minister was more than ever confirmed in the confidence of the king, and that La Fayette had just presented a declaration on the rights of man. But on the following morning, at nine o'clock, accounts were received of the change of ministry and of Necker's departure; and soon afterwards placards were put up about the streets bearing the old title, "De par le Roi," in which the Parisians were invited to remain at home, and not to be alarmed at the presence of the troops, who had become necessary to defeat the designs of the brigands. At the same time a considerable movement of military was observed; infantry and cavalry, with a

deplacees que dangereuses. Son antichambre était remplie d'ordonnances de tous les régimens, et aides-de-camp tout prêts à monter à chevaux. On y voyait des bureaux et des commis occupés à ecrire; on donnait un liste d'officiers généraux employés: on faisait un ordre de bataille. De pareilles démonstrations ne pouvaient qu'accroître l'inquiétude de l'Assemblée Nationale.—Besenval, *Mém.* ii. 371.

* "'Non,' disait le roi; 'il m'a promis de se retirer sans bruit, si ses services deplaisent: je réponds de sa soumission, et il obéira à l'ordre que je lui enverrai."—Labaume, iii. 175.

few pieces of artillery, entered the town; and aides-de-camp and officers were seen riding about in all directions. Indescribable was the sensation which these events occasioned. Paris was thrown into the utmost consternation. Fury immediately succeeded to alarm ; the theatres were closed; the Palais Royal resounded with the cry "To arms!" and a leader destined to future distinction, Camille Desmoulins, armed with pistols, gave the signal for insurrection by breaking a branch off a tree in the gardens, which he placed in his hat. The whole foliage was instantly stripped off the trees, and the crowds decorated themselves with the symbols of revolt. "Citizens," said Camille Desmoulins, "the moment for action is arrived; the dismissal of M. Necker is the signal for a St Bartholomew of the patriots: a hundred barrels of powder are placed under the Assembly to blow the deputies into the air: a hundred guns on Montmartre and Belleville are already pointed on Paris: furnaces for red-hot shot are preparing in the Bastile: men, women, and children will be massacred, none spared: this very evening the Swiss and German battalions will issue from the Champ de Mars to slaughter us; one resource alone is left, which is to fly to arms."—The crowd unanimously adopted this proposal, and, decorated with green boughs, marched through the streets, bearing in triumph the busts of M. Necker and the Duke of Orleans. They were charged by the regiment of Royal Allemand, which was put to flight by showers of stones; but the dragoons of Prince Lambesc having come up, the mob retreated, and dispersed through the gardens of the Tuileries. In the tumult, the busts were destroyed, a French soldier killed, and an old man wounded by Prince Lambesc—this was the first blood shed in the Revolution. From the lead which he took on this occasion, Camille Desmoulins acquired the name of the "First Apostle of Liberty." Associated with Danton, he long enjoyed the gales of popular favour. He died on the scaffold, the victim of the very faction he had so great a share in creating.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 81, 82. Bert. de Moll. i. 293, 294. Lac. vii. 70. Th. i. 89. Deux Amis, i. 276.

This tumult was shortly followed by another of a still more important character, from the decisive evidence which it afforded of the defection of the army. The Prince Lambesc had placed a squadron of dragoons in

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91. Combat in front of the barracks, and treachery of the troops.

front of the barracks of the French guards, to overawe that disaffected regiment. When intelligence of the rout in the gardens in the Tuileries arrived, the troops broke down the iron rails in front of their barracks, and opened a volley upon the horse, which obliged them to retire; they pursued them to the gardens of the Tuileries, and posted themselves in order of battle in front of the populace, and between them and the royal troops. The soldiers in the Champ de Mars received orders to advance and dislodge them; they were received by a discharge of musketry, and were so much restrained by the orders not to shed blood, that they did not venture to return the fire. The monarchy was lost: the household troops had revolted; and the remainder of the army was not permitted to act against the people. Encouraged by this impunity, the Gardes Françaises now openly joined the insurgents: twelve hundred of them repaired to the Palais Royal, with their arms, but without their officers, and there, fraternising with the people, and plied with wine, gave way to the universal transport. Soon they returned with a numerous band of the mob to the Place Louis XV., in order to clear it entirely of the foreign troops; but Baron Besenval, who commanded them, seeing the contagion of defection rapidly gaining their ranks, had previously withdrawn them to the Champ de Mars. The field was now clear; all resistance had ceased for the night on the part of the royal forces; and bands of the insurgents traversed the town in all directions, exclaiming, "To arms! to arms!" Meanwhile a storm arose in the heavens; the thunder rolled above even the cries of the multitude; and frequent discharges of fire-arms from the brigands added to the general consternation.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 275, 279. Bert. de Moll. i. 296, 299. Lab. iii. 183, 185. Toul. i. 73. Lac. vii. 74. Mig. i 50.

92. Efforts of the Orleans party to increase the excitement.

Indefatigable were the efforts made by the satellites of the Duke of Orleans, and leaders of the Revolution, to inflame the public mind, and turn to the best account this prodigious ebullition of popular fury. There was no end to the fabrications which they made, the avidity with which they were listened to, or the credulity with which they were believed. At one time the cry was—"They will burn Paris—they will decimate its inhabitants." At another—"Lorraine is sold to the Emperor Joseph for money to crush the Revolution: the troops on the Champ

de Mars are about to massacre the people." No words can adequately paint the mingled fury and enthusiasm which these reports and announcements, rapidly succeeding each other, produced in the public mind. In vain the urban guard and police of the capital ran into every street, and joined every group, to assure them that there was no cause for apprehension, that no hostile designs were contemplated. None listened to what they said. Numbers lay down and put their ears on the ground, to catch the first sound of the approaching cannon. All business was at a stand. The courts of law were shut. Almost all the shops were closed. Crowds thronged every street. Unbearable anxiety filled every bosom. Real alarms, as night approached, were joined to these imaginary terrors. The hired brigands, encouraged by the impunity with which their excesses on the preceding evening had been committed, issued from the Faubourgs, and burned the barriers of Saint Antoine, Saint Marceau, and Saint Jacques. The flames spread a prodigious light over all that quarter of the heavens, and produced a general belief that the conflagration of the city by the foreign troops had already commenced. Meanwhile, the destruction of the barriers being completed, ferocious bands of smugglers from the adjacent country broke in, joined the tumultuous crowds of the suburbs, and, with loud shouts, and waving torches, proceeded to the attack of the remaining barriers of the city.[1]

[1] Bailly, ii. 81, 83. Lab. iii. 184, 185. Deux Amis, i. 278, 279. Hist. Parl. ii. 82, 83.

93. Continuance of the riots on the 13th, and want of preparation on the part of the court.

These alarming appearances had no effect whatever in inducing the military authorities to take any effectual steps for warding off the danger. Accustomed to see Paris ruled without difficulty by a small body of police, and an inconsiderable civic guard, they persisted in regarding the disturbances as mere local outrages which were attended with no public danger. No military posts around Paris were occupied; not a gun was mounted on Montmartre or Belleville; the garrison of eighty men in the Bastile was not even reinforced; and this slender detachment, though abundantly supplied with ammunition, was almost destitute of provisions. M. Besenval, who commanded the military around Paris, had no force within its walls under his orders.[2] Twenty-five thousand men occupied St Denis, Courbevoie, Charenton, Sèvres, and all the villages round

[2] Deux Amis, i. 281. Bert. de Moll. i. 301. Lab. iii. 197.

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to the Champ de Mars; but none were drawn nearer to the capital, which was left at the mercy of ferocious brigands and a maddened people.

94. Vigorous preparations of the Revolutionists. July 13.

The Revolutionists acted very differently in their preparations. At three on the morning of the 13th, a hideous mob, armed with clubs, sticks, and pikes, surrounded the convent Saint Lazar, demanding bread. The trembling inmates speedily emptied their stores, and the mob, become furious when the distribution ceased, broke into the building, pillaged it from top to bottom, and were only prevented from burning it by the arrival of a company of the guards. Rapidly they proceeded to the Garde Meublè, containing a considerable store of arms, and many relics of inestimable value belonging to the crown: the gates were forced open, and the whole weapons seized and distributed among the people. The lance of Dunois, the sword of Henry IV., became the prey of the lowest of the populace, and were carried off in triumph. At the same time, the great prison of La Force was besieged, the gates forced, and the whole prisoners set at liberty, who instantly proceeded to the Conciergerie, where five hundred of the most abandoned felons, all in a state of mutiny, were making strenuous efforts for their liberation. A few only of them, however, were selected by the popular liberators. These bands, thus reinforced, forthwith began to traverse the streets, vociferating loudly, and calling on all true Frenchmen to join the arms of freedom. Such was the tumult, so loud did the clamour soon become, that hardly was the dismal clang of the tocsin audible from sixty churches, which, on the signal of a standard hoisted from the Hotel de Ville, all began to ring at once. No sooner, however, were these sounds of alarm heard above the din, than the whole citizens flew into the streets; in the twinkling of an eye posts were established, gunsmiths' shops pillaged, chaussées unpaved, waggons overturned, barricades erected, and every preparation made for a vigorous defence. "Arms! arms!" was the universal cry.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i 281, 285. Hist. Parl. ii. 96, 97. Lab. iii. 197, 198. Quesnard, Tableau Hist. de la Rev. i. 44. Bert. de Moll. i. 301, 304.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the Revolution were taking measures, with unexampled energy, to organise and turn to the best account this extraordinary effervescence. The Hotel de Ville, where a permanent committee of the electors had been established since the 4th July, presented a

central point of direction—the sixty electoral halls for the like number of districts, so many rallying-points where their orders might be received, and communicated to the obedient citizens. Night and day these points of rendezvous were thronged by crowds loudly demanding arms; and the electors soon assumed and received the supreme direction of affairs. A permanent committee, which sat without intermission at the Hotel de Ville, rapidly acquired the entire goverment of the insurrection; and decreed the immediate raising of a voluntary force in Paris of forty-eight thousand men. Each of the electoral districts was to furnish a battalion eight hundred strong: four battalions formed a legion, which took its name from the districts from which they were drawn. The committee named the officers of the Etat-major; but the nomination of the officers of battalions was left to the privates. Government was neither consulted, nor had it the slightest share, in the appointment or organisation of this formidable force. It of course fell into the hands of the most ardent and least scrupulous of the popular party.* It was at first named the Parisian Militia, and M. de La Salle D'Offremont, director of the arsenal, a well-known liberal, was invited to take the command. The device chosen was the red and blue riband, the colours of the city, and white, to mark the intimate union which should subsist between it and the army. These colours were immediately adopted by the National Assembly, and became the well-known standard of the Revolution. Such was the origin of the MUNICIPALITY OF PARIS, THE NATIONAL GUARD, AND THE TRICOLOR FLAG, the three most powerful springs of the Revolution, and of the last of which La Fayette nearly predicted the actual destiny, when he said it would make the tour of the globe.[1]

95. First organisation of the National Guard, Tricolor Flag, and Municipality of Paris.

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 97, 98. Bert. de Moll. i. 308. Lab. iii. 200, 201. Deux Amis, i. 300, 301.

Unbounded was the enthusiasm which the formation of this voluntary force occasioned in men of all ranks and ages. From the aged veteran who could hardly march, to the youthful stripling who with difficulty bore the weight of arms, all pressed to the various rallying-points to offer their services. It was not merely the democratic and the

96. Rapid formation of the revolutionary force.

* "Centurionum ordines legionibus offerebat: eo suffragio turbidissimus quisque delecti; nec miles in arbitrio ducem, sed duces militari violentiâ trahabantur."—TACITUS, Hist. iii. 49.

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revolutionary who came forward: the most respectable citizens were the first to tender their services: a sense of common danger, the dread of impending calamities, united every one. Government appeared to have abdicated its functions; the law was in abeyance; the constituted authorities had disappeared; society seemed resolved into its pristine elements; and self-preservation, not less than patriotic duty, called on all to take common measures alike for their own and for the general protection. Money and arms, however, were wanting; but such was the general enthusiasm that this deficiency was not long experienced. The treasure of the Hotel de Ville, amounting to three millions of francs, (£120,000,) presented an immediate resource, which was instantly rendered available. Orders for the manufacture of muskets were given to all the gunsmiths; their whole disposable arms instantly purchased. Every anvil rang with the making of pikes, of which it was calculated fifty thousand would be ready in thirty-six hours. Scythes were affixed to the end of poles, rails beat out into swords, lead melted down into balls, and daggers or hatchets affixed to sticks. Never, in modern Europe, had such sudden and energetic efforts been made to arm the multitude.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 284, 286. Lab. iii. 202, 203. Toul. i. 75. Lac. vii. 79, 82. Th. i. 90, 91. Marm. ii. 357, 359. Hist. Parl. ii. 83.

97. Capture of the Hotel des Invalides.

But these methods were not suited to the exigences of the moment, and could not at once produce a sufficient supply of arms for the vast population, numbering at least a hundred thousand men, who besieged the different electoral halls to receive them. The great arsenal of the Invalides presented an immediate resource, and the known disposition of the troops stationed in the Champ de Mars in its neighbourhood, rendered it all but certain that they would make no resistance to the arms it contained being seized. Instantly the cry arose, "*Allons aux Invalides;*" a prodigious crowd rolled in that direction, headed by the Procureur du Roi, Ethys de Corny, who, by order of the central committee at the Hotel de Ville, issued from its halls to put himself at its head, and speedily the insurgents surrounded the Hotel des Invalides. M. de Sombreuil, its governor, an old man of eighty years of age, seeing the multitude headed by so a high a functionary and several persons of respectability, and being well aware that the invalids and gunners in his establishment would

4th July.

oppose no sort of resistance to the people, advanced at the head of his staff, caused the gates to be opened, and permitted the leaders of the insurgents to enter. They asked for arms to put into the hands of the people, and insisted for leave to search the building for that purpose. Sombreuil, destitute of the means of resistance, replied that he was not at liberty to comply with such a demand, but that he had sent a courier to Versailles for instructions, and the answer would determine his conduct. But the impatience of the people could brook no delay. While the conference was yet going on, a furious multitude of above forty thousand insisted on being instantly led to the assault, and, in almost frantic impatience, had already begun, with hideous yells, to descend into the ditches, and escalade the parapets. Ten thousand men were encamped in the Champ de Mars, in the close vicinity, under Baron Besenval; but that officer, intimidated by the cold reception he had received after his spirited suppression of the revolt at Reveillon's, and his orders not to fire on the people in this instance, did not venture to act; and the invalids in the garrison of the Invalides refused to point their guns on the people, and even threatened to hang the governor if he persisted in his resistance.* In this extremity, Sombreuil conceived he had no alternative but to submit; the gates were opened, and instantly a prodigious crowd rushed in, and got possession of the whole arsenal in the building. Twenty pieces of cannon, and eight-and-twenty thousand muskets and bayonets, disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, and a large part of the Parisian populace speedily found themselves armed in the best manner.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 100, 102. Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, 17th July 1789, p. 10. Humbert, Journal, 7, 8. Deux Amis, i. 302, 307. Besenval, ii. 364, 366. Moniteur, July 20, 21, 1789, p. 90.

98.
It is determined to attack the Bastile.

This great success was immediately improved by the insurgents. Pickets were placed at all the important posts around Paris, which intercepted the communication with Versailles, and got possession of the whole avenues to the capital. A large body, armed with fifteen guns, took post opposite the camp in the Champ de Mars; but it soon appeared, from the conduct of the troops, that the insurgents had more to hope than to fear from their

* "Loin de s'opposer à l'invasion, les soldats de l'Hotel des Invalides les favorisèrent, et peu s'en fallut que le gouverneur, à qui ces gens-là n'avaient pas une reproche a faire, ne fut pendu par eux à la grille."—Besenval, ii. 366.

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operations. On one of the intercepted couriers from Versailles was found an order addressed to Delaunay, the governor of the BASTILE, enjoining him to hold out to the last extremity. This order was immediately carried to the Hotel de Ville ; and it was determined to proceed to the attack of that fortress before a duplicate of the instructions could be received by its governor. The strength of this celebrated fortress—which had been built, in the fourteenth century, between Paris and the faubourg St Antoine, for the purpose of coercing both—its deep ditches, massy walls, huge drawbridges, and lofty towers, armed with fifteen pieces of heavy artillery, seemed to defy an assault from an undisciplined multitude, however generally armed and strongly excited. But the accession of the Gardes Françaises, three thousand five hundred strong, to the insurgent ranks, and the guns taken at the Invalides, promised them the inestimable advantages of experienced discipline and a siege equipage. It was known that though the fortress was amply supplied with ammunition, it was almost destitute of provisions : the garrison consisted only of eighty-two Invalids and thirty-two Swiss :* and the facility with which the great arsenal of the Invalides had been captured and sacked, encouraged the belief that the humanity of the king would never permit its guns to be turned upon the people.[1]

[1] Moniteur, July 20, 1789, p. 90. Toul. i. 76. Lac. vii. 83, 85. Lab. iii. 207, 208. Deux Amis, i. 305, 307. Dusault sur la Bastile, 400, 408.

99. Preparations for storming the Bastile. July 14.

A few musket-shots were discharged during the night of the 13th at the sentinels who mounted guard on the Bastile, but without doing any injury, or provoking any act of hostility on the part of the garrison. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 14th, a crowd collected round its gates, and attempted to force their way in, while several shots were fired at the sentinels. Delaunay upon this directed a discharge of musketry, which, without injuring any one, dispersed the crowd, and at the same time ordered some of the great guns to be pointed down the Rue St Antoine,

* "Quatre-vingt-deux soldats invalides, dont deux cannoniers de la compagnie de Monsigni, et trente-deux Suisses du régiment de Salis-Sarnade, commandés par M. Louis de Flue, lieutenant de grenadiers, composaient la garnison. Tel était l'état de ses forces le 14 Juillet ; mais les munitions de guerre lui avaient fait oublier les provisions de bouche, Elles consistaient *en deux sacs de farine, et un peu de riz.* Il n'avait pas d'autre eau que celle que fournissaient des canaux par le moyen d'un bassin exterieur —faible resource, dont on pouvait aisément les priver."—*Moniteur, 20th July* 1789, p. 90.

the principal theatre of the assemblage. The sound of this fusillade, and the intelligence that the cannon of the Bastile were directed on Paris, speedily spread like lightning, and drew larger crowds to the spot, who alleged that they had been sent, some by the sections, some by the districts, to avert the threatened calamity. Delaunay, anxious to avoid extremities, admitted M. Belon, the deputy from the Hotel de Villé, and Thuriot de la Roziere, the deputy from the Quarter of St Catherine; and at their entreaty agreed to draw the guns pointed towards Paris within their embrasures, and informed them that they were not loaded. At the same time some slight measures were taken: several waggon loads of balls and iron missiles were brought up and placed on the ramparts, to defend the approaches to the bridge. While these preparations were going on within the fortress, the crowd outside rapidly increased; the faubourg St Antoine emptied its immense population; every avenue leading to the Bastile was soon filled with a prodigious multitude; and to those who, from the summit of its towers, beheld the sea of heads, the spectacle was so appalling, that Delaunay, taking Thuriot by the arm, said, turning pale, "Ah, sir! you abuse a sacred name to betray me."[1]

[1] Dusault, 408. Biog. Univ. Art. Delaunay. Deux Amis, ii. 312, 315. Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, 12 au 17 July 1789, p. 22.

100.
Description of the Bastile.

The old castle of the Bastile was surrounded by eight lofty round towers, the walls of which were six feet in thickness, and they were joined to each other by a wall still more massy, being no less than nine feet across. Its entry was at the extremity of the Rue St Antoine; above the principal gate was a considerable magazine of arms, but they had all been removed to the Invalides shortly before, with the exception of six hundred muskets, which had been withdrawn into the interior of the building. Within the exterior walls was, as in all other castles of considerable extent, an interior court, in which were the barracks of the troops and stables of the governor; access could be obtained to this court both by the principal gate, fronting the Rue St Antoine, and by another entrance on the side of the arsenal, which was, in the same manner as the first, defended by a drawbridge over the ditch, which entirely surrounded the edifice. Within this outer, was another inner court, separated from the first by a dry ditch, traversed by a drawbridge, defended by a strong

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guardhouse, intended as the last refuge of the besieged if the outer house was carried, and in it was the governor's house. After passing through this interior court, access was obtained by an iron gate to the great court, within the donjon, which was a hundred feet long by seventy broad, surrounded by the state prison, flanked by lofty towers, and in which the captives were allowed to take the air. The exterior ditch was usually dry except in wet weather, or when the Seine was high, with which it communicated; but as the outer wall of the donjon was thirty-six feet in height, and exposed to a flanking fire from the towers, which were forty-six feet in elevation, the place was considered impregnable, except by regular approaches; and so it was, if it had been regularly garrisoned and provisioned.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 309, 312. Moniteur, 20th July 1789, p. 90.

101. The insurgents break into the fortress.

Belon and Thuriot, being satisfied that no offensive measures were intended by the governor, withdrew, and endeavoured to persuade the crowd that their alarm was groundless. But the capture of the fortress had been resolved on, and the multitude, every instant increasing, surged round the whole walls. While the whole attention of the garrison was fixed on the principal gate, two old soldiers, named Louis Tournay and Aubin Bonnemère, mounting on the roof of a house which rested on the ramparts, contrived to reach the top of the parapet, and descended into the court where the governor's house stood, which they found deserted—as the garrison, with the exception of the guard at the outer gate, had all been withdrawn into the keep. Seizing a hatchet, which they found lying in the court, these brave men succeeded in cutting the chains of a little drawbridge which admitted foot-passengers from the outside, and thus gave an entry to several of the insurgents, who speedily cut the chains of the principal bridge, which fell with a terrible crash. Instantly the crowd rushed in; the governor's house was immediately inundated; and pillage had already commenced, when Delaunay ordered a fire of musketry from the top of the walls of the donjon into the court, which was filled with people, and the ditches. Several of the assailants fell; the court was cleared in an instant; but the combat continued round the drawbridge, and a sharp fire of musketry was kept up on both sides.[2] Still the governor declined to fire the great guns on the top of the castle, which, loaded with grape,

[2] Deux Amis, i. 317, 318. Lab. iii. 211, 212. Bert. de Moll. i. 326. Toul. i. 76.

and discharged down on the dense crowd in front of the fortress, would have occasioned a frightful loss of human life, but must speedily have driven back the assailants.

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102. Arrival of the Gardes Françaises.

Matters were in this state when a battalion of the Gardes Françaises arrived, with part of the guns taken that morning from the Invalides. This powerful reinforcement, and, still more, the skill which they communicated to the assault, had a decisive effect. Their first care was to station a large part of their number on the roofs and at the windows of the adjoining houses, who kept up a heavy and well-sustained fire on the ramparts; while, at the same time, the guns began to batter the exterior walls. Meanwhile the crowd, who had broken into the outer court, returned, under cover of the fire of the cannon, and set fire to the governor's house, which was speedily in flames. Furious at the resistance they experienced, the mob seized hold of a young and beautiful girl, daughter of an officer in the garrison named Monsigni, whom they had found in the governor's house, and mistook for his child. Exclaiming that she should be burned alive if the place was not instantly surrendered, they stretched her on a bundle of straw, to which they were just applying the torches, when the dreadful spectacle caught the eye of her father, who was on the top of one of the towers. Uttering the most piercing cries, he descended and rushed into the court, when he fell, pierced by two balls; and the flames were just reaching Mademoiselle Monsigni, when the brave Aubin Bonnemère, coming forward, succeeded in undeceiving the mob as to who she was, and conducting her to a place of safety.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 319, 320, 330. Lab. iii. 212. Bert. de Moll. i. 328, 329. Hist. Parl. ii. 103. Lac. vii. 86, 88.

103. Proposals made by the civic authorities.

After the conflict had continued in this manner for above three hours, without the guns of the fortress being once fired, the besieged repelling the attack with musketry only, a deputation from the Hotel de Ville, preceded by a flag of truce, and headed by Ethys de Corny, who had succeeded in getting possession of the Invalides, arrived at the principal gate of the Bastile. They were admitted into the first court; but Delaunay, perceiving that the pillage of his house and the conflagration of the buildings around it continued, and that the attack on the inner drawbridge went on with undiminished vigour, ordered the fire of musketry to be renewed, which, without injuring

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any person, drove the deputation back out of the court.* At the same time, one of the great guns, the only one which was fired during the assault, was discharged from the top of the towers down the Rue Saint Antoine, but did very little damage. Two other deputations afterwards arrived, but they returned to the Hotel de Ville without even entering the fortress, alleging they could not do so for the fire of the garrison. Meanwhile Delaunay was sorely beset—the French Invalids, swayed by seeing the uniforms of the Gardes Françaises among the assailants, vehemently urging him to surrender; the Swiss, who, though only thirty in number, had alone been hearty in the cause, with the heroic constancy of their nation insisting that he should hold out. Finding the outer gate carried, he withdrew the garrison into the inner court or keep of the castle, hoping he would be able to hold out till the Baron de Besenval, who commanded the troops in the Champ de Mars, should send forces to his succour, as he had promised. But Besenval had himself received no orders from the Duke de Broglie that day, though three successive couriers had been sent soliciting them: his previous orders were, not to fire on the people. The disposition of his troops was more than doubtful; and he had found that acting with energy at Reveillon's riot only brought him into obloquy with the court. In these circumstances, after remaining for some hours a prey to the most cruel irresolution, he took the determination of retiring with his whole troops, which he did first to Sèvres, and before night to Versailles.[1]

[1] Besenval, ii. 366, 367. Lab. iii. 214, 215. Moniteur, 21st July 1789, p. 90. Deux Amis, i. 333, 334.

Deserted thus in his last extremity by the external aid on which he had calculated, with a garrison of eighty wavering French, and only thirty Swiss on whom he could rely, in the midst of fifty thousand insurgents and two

* "You see," said Delaunay to his soldiers, "this deputation is not from the town: it is a white flag of which the people have got possession, and with which they seek to surprise us. If they had been really deputies, they would never have hesitated, after the promises you made them, to have come forward to make us acquainted with the intentions of the Hotel de Ville."—*Deux Amis*, ii. 322, 323. The letter which they bore was in these terms, to which Delaunay could never have acceded:—"The permanent committee of the Parisian militia, considering that there should not be in Paris any military force which is not under the control of the town, charges the deputies, whom it sends to M. le Marquis Delaunay, commandant of the Bastile, to enquire of him whether he is willing to admit into the place the troops of the Parisian militia, to keep guard jointly with his troops, who are to be at the disposal of the civic authorities."—14*th July* 1789; De Flesselles, *Prévot des Marchands*; *Ibid.* ii. 326.

104. Delaunay is forced to capitulate.

thousand French Guards, the brave Delaunay took the only resolution which a high sense of military honour permitted—he resolved to perish, rather than submit. Seizing a lighted match from one of the gunners on the ramparts, he rushed towards the magazine, which contained two hundred and fifty barrels of powder, with the design of blowing the whole fortress into the air; but he was seized, and forcibly withheld by the soldiers. With piteous entreaties he besought these men to give him one barrel of powder; but they sternly repelled him with the bayonet at his breast. "Let us then," said he, "at least, reascend the towers; and since we must die, let us die with arms in our hands, bury ourselves under the ruins of the Bastile, and render our death fatal to our implacable enemies." But the French soldiers, crowding round him, all declared that they would no longer fight against their fellow-citizens, and that they insisted on a capitulation. "Well, then," said Delaunay at last, "beat a parley, hoist a white flag, and see if you can obtain a promise that you shall not be massacred." Upon this M. de Flue, a Swiss ensign, wrote on a piece of paper these words: "We have twenty thousand barrels of powder; we will blow up the Bastile and all the adjacent quarter of Paris, if you do not agree to a capitulation, and guarantee our lives." With some difficulty one of the insurgents, named Maillard, who will again appear in the bloodiest days of the Revolution, got possession of this writing, which was pushed on the end of a pike over the drawbridge, and being brought to Elie and Hullin, officers of the Gardes Françaises, who commanded the assailants, they exclaimed—"On the honour of French soldiers, no injury shall be done to you." Upon this assurance, Delaunay lowered the drawbridge leading to the inner tower, and the infuriated multitude instantly rushed in.[1]

[1] Moniteur, 23d July 1789, p. 94. Lab. iii. 215, 216. Details sur la Bastile, par le Comte, Agay, 74. Deux Amis, i. 333, 337.

105. Violation of the capitulation, and massacre of some prisoners.

A bloody and treacherous revenge dishonoured the first triumph of the Revolution. The garrison had capitulated on a solemn guarantee of their lives: a decisive success, which gave them the entire command of Paris, had been gained, with the loss of only fifty killed and seventy-three wounded: every thing called for and enjoined humanity in the moment of victory. The feeble garrison, on the faith of the capitulation, laid down their arms in

the inner court in two ranks; the officers of the Gardes Françaises, who had really gained the success, in token of the treaty, shook the officers of the garrison by the hand. But nothing could restrain the bloodthirsty passions of the people. Infuriated by the sight of their comrades slain or wounded by the fire of musketry which had issued from the walls, they surrounded the prisoners, overwhelmed them with maledictions and indignities, and demanded, with loud yells, that they should be instantly put to death. The Gardes Françaises, who exerted themselves to the utmost to restrain their fury, were unable to save the officers from destruction. Bequart himself, who had held the arm of Delaunay when he attempted to blow up the fortress, and thus saved all their lives, was seized with frantic cries, his right hand cut off, and he himself, with another grenadier named Anslem, hanged on a lamp-post near the gate. Many of the Invalids and Swiss were dispatched on the spot. In a few minutes the whole rooms of the Bastile were ransacked and pillaged, the furniture thrown out of the windows and burnt.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 337, 339. Lab. iii. 218, 219. Moniteur, 23d July 1789, p. 96. Prudhomme, Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 118, 119. Bert. de Moll. i. 337.

106. Massacre of Delaunay and De Losme, and the Provost Flesselles.

Delaunay and Major de Losme, the second in command, were conducted by Hullin and Elie to the Place de Grève. "Is this the capitulation you promised us?" said the former, as the mob seized him, in spite of the herculean strength of Hullin, who strove to protect them, and observe the capitulation, which he bore aloft on the point of his sword. Despite all his efforts, these two unfortunate men were captured by the populace on the steps of the Hotel de Ville. Delaunay was instantly hanged upon the lamp-post; his head cut off, and borne about with Bequart's hand aloft on pikes, amidst shouts of triumph. De Losme was the next victim. In vain the Marquis de Pilleport, who, during five years, had experienced his kindness when a prisoner in the Bastile, ran after the crowd, exclaiming, "Hold, for God's sake! you are going to massacre the best of men—during five years he was my father in the Bastile." "Young man," said the generous De Losme, "retire—you will destroy yourself without saving me." But the Marquis de Pilleport was not to be outdone in this noble strife; and still following the crowd, exclaiming, "I will defend him to the last drop of my blood," he wrested a musket from one of the mob, with which, with almost

frantic courage, he strove to deliver his benefactor. It was all in vain. Surrounded by multitudes, shot through the neck, and pierced with bayonets, he fell senseless on the steps of the Hotel de Ville; while De Losme was massacred near the Arcade Saint Jean, and his head put on a pike, which was paraded amidst fearful yells through the streets. Mirey and Persins, officers of the Invalids who had defended the Bastile, were in like manner murdered, the one in the Rue de Tournelles, and the other at the Port-au-blé, and their mangled remains, yet streaming with blood, borne in triumph through every quarter of the city. M. de Flesselles, the provost of the merchants, soon after perished. He had for some days been obnoxious to the mob, who suspected him of not being cordial in the cause of the insurrection, though he had joined in it, and was chairman of the committee in the Hotel de Ville. Finding himself surrounded by distrust and apprehension after the Bastile was taken, he rose calmly and said, "I see I am suspected by my fellow-citizens; let us go to the Palais Royal, and there I will justify myself." He rose accordingly, and was proceeding thither, surrounded by a furious multitude, when a young goldsmith shot him from behind through the head, exclaiming, "Traitor, you shall go no further!" Flesselles fell dead, and the murder excited neither pity nor indignation among the crowd.[1] *

[1] Deux Amis, i. 337, 349. Lab. iii. 223, 224. Moniteur, 23d July 1789, p. 96. Montjoie, Consp. d'Orleans, ii. 88. Bert. de Moll. i. 340, 342.

107.
The rest of the Invalids and Swiss are saved by the French Guards.

In the midst of such hideous cruelty, it is consolatory to have one redeeming trait to recount, which proves that, in some breasts at least, the generous feelings were not wholly extinct, and which effaces part of the disgrace which must for ever attach to the French Guards, for the treacherous part they took in the revolt which overturned the throne. When the privates of the Invalids and Swiss, who had capitulated in the Bastile, were brought to the Hotel de Ville, the populace loudly demanded their blood, and insisted they should instantly be strung up in

* To extenuate this atrocity, it was maintained by the Republicans, that there had been found in the pocket of Delaunay a note from M. de Flesselles, in which he said, "I amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises: hold out till the evening, and you will be reinforced." This is now proved to be a falsehood. The pretended letter was never produced, though the above alleged extract was inserted in the *Moniteur;* and Bailly himself "admitted to me," says Bertrand de Molleville, "when he quitted the mayoralty, that he had never seen that letter, and that it would be impossible to produce any one who had."—See *Moniteur, 27th July* 1789*; and* BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, i. 342.

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the streets to the lamps.* Such was the fury of the mob, that there seemed not a chance of their escape; and preparations were already making for carrying the popular mandate into execution, when the French Guards, roused to better feelings by the prospect of destruction to their ancient comrades in arms, clustered around them, and asked, as the only recompense to themselves for the share they had taken in the capture of the Bastile, that pardon should be extended to the prisoners. Passing from one extreme to another, the multitude were strongly moved by the appeal. "Grace! grace!" resounded on all sides, and M. Marqué, sergeant of grenadiers in the Gardes Françaises, taking advantage of the enthusiasm, marched off twenty-two Invalids and eleven Swiss, surrounded by a detachment of the guards, who succeeded in conveying them in safety to the barracks, and rescuing them from the dreadful fate which awaited them. At the same time M. de Montbarey, formerly minister of the marine, who had been torn from his fainting wife, was brought in, and almost suffocated by the throng pressing round him and clamouring for his head; while twenty bayonets were held to the breast of M. de la Salle, a popular leader, who was striving to protect him. At length, by a prodigious exertion of strength, M. de la Salle extricated himself, and tore M. de Montbarey from the gripe of his bloodthirsty assassins; the multitude, admiring his prowess, applauded loudly, and both escaped.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, i. 345, 348. Bert. de Moll. i. 335, 336. Moniteur, 23d July 1789.

108. Interior of the Bastile.

Seven prisoners only were found in the Bastile when it fell into the hands of the insurgents—to such a degree had the mild government of Louis XVI. thinned that gloomy abode of the victims of former tyranny. They were all imprisoned on charges of forgery, chiefly for falsifying letters of exchange; none were implicated in

* Those who have visited Paris will require no explanation of this cry, (*à la lanterne!*) so common in the Revolution, or the ready means which it afforded of dispatching at once any number of persons who happened to be obnoxious to the populace. To those who have not, it is right to observe, that the lamps of Paris then, as in general now, were not, as in most other towns, affixed to the top of iron pillars placed on the sides of the pavement, but suspended directly over the middle of the street by cords, which were let down, for the purpose of the lamps being lighted, from pulleys affixed to the houses on either side; so that nothing was easier than to lower the lamp till some unhappy wretch had it directly above his head, and then attaching a cord to it, and fastening it round his neck, hoist him up and hang him in a few seconds over the heads of the multitude, who commanded and applauded the execution.—*Personal Observation.*

political offences. When they heard the frightful din within the fortress, they never doubted that their last hour was come ; an impression which was not diminished, when, after repeated strokes of the sledge-hammer, the ponderous gates rolled back on their hinges, and a vehemently excited armed multitude broke in. It may be conceived, then, what was their astonishment when, on being brought out, they beheld Delaunay's head on the top of a pike, with the inscription "Traitor to the people !" Every thing in the prison was ransacked ; and among the remnants of the olden time which were brought to light, were many relics of feudal barbarity, sufficient to rouse to the highest pitch a less excitable people than the French. Arms of an old and now disused kind, frightful instruments of torture, the names and purposes of which had passed into oblivion, were dragged into light from its gloomy vaults, and exhibited to the multitude. Among the rest was an iron corslet, which extended over every part of the body, and precluded the possibility of moving a single limb. Stone seats and couches were found, worn with the number who had lain upon them. But no skeletons were discovered—no persons chained to walls ; and the appearance of the instruments of torture sufficiently proved, that for a very long period they had ceased to be applied to their horrid destination. The fortress was, by order of the National Assembly, soon after razed to the ground.[1]

[1] Dusault sur la Bastile, 346, 348. Deux Amis, i. 354, 362. Moniteur, 23d July 1789. Bastile Devoilée, Nos. 109, 111, p. 19.

109. Great agitation in Paris during the night.

The night which followed this decisive success was one of extraordinary excitement in Paris. Though their victory was complete, and the troops had all been withdrawn from the neighbourhood of the capital, and grouped round Versailles and the adjoining villages, yet the agitation was still extreme. Many houses were illuminated, but less from triumph than a dread of being left in the dark. Few eyes were closed, even after the wearisome labours of the three preceding days : the women watched in their houses : the men were congregated in the streets, on the quays, and in the squares. A nocturnal attack was generally expected : men could not conceive that the military monarchy would so soon abandon the contest. The frequent march of the armed city guard, and Gardes Françaises, with their cannons and caissons, to the dif-

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ferent points thought to be menaced, increased the general alarm.* All night the mournful clang of the tocsin was heard, interrupted by the cry, incessantly repeated in the streets, "Don't go to bed: keep your lamps burning." The most fearful reports were circulated; that the foreign troops were to issue out of the cellars and sewers, and massacre the inhabitants; that a second St Bartholomew was in preparation. The people barricaded the streets, tore up the pavement, carried stones to the tops of the houses, and established guards in the principal quarters. But nothing occurred to justify the alarm, and the anxiety of a sleepless night only added to the intense feelings which agitated the populace. Meanwhile, the energy displayed at the Hotel de Ville continued unabated; and such was the astonishing activity of Moreau de Saint Mery, who had been chosen to supply the place of Flesselles, the former president, who had been murdered, that without rising from his chair, he dispatched before morning above three thousand orders.[1]

[1] Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, No. I. p 21, 22. Dussault, 343. Lab. iii. 224, 225. Moniteur, 23d July 1789. Deux Amis, ii. 2, 5. Lac. vii. 92, 93. Clermont, Mém. sur la Rév. i. 125.

110. State of Versailles, and change of measures by the court.

While these terrible scenes were passing at Paris, the government at Versailles was very imperfectly informed of what was going forward; and its policy underwent, in the course of the insurrection, a complete alteration. Misled by the confidence of the old officers by whom it was surrounded, and urged on by the vehemence of a gallant but inconsiderate noblesse, the court at first entertained the idea of restoring tranquillity to the capital by military force; and as the people were in a state of open insurrection, that was doubtless the course which duty, equally with policy, enjoined, if the troops could have been depended on. This measure, if successful, was to have been followed by the dissolution of the Assembly in a *lit de justice*, and the publication of forty thousand copies of the royal declaration of 23d July; and as that body had openly usurped the whole powers of government, and supplanted the king in his royal prerogative,[2] there can be no doubt

[2] Lac. vii. 94. Toul. i. 76, 77. Bert. de Moll. ii. 1, 9.

* "Ωρσὲ δε τὺς μὲν Αρὴς, τὺς δε γλαυκῶπις Αθήνη
Δειμος τ' ἠδε Φοβος καὶ Ερις αμοτον μεμαυια
Αρεος ανδροφονοιο κασιγνὴτὴ, ἑταρὴ τε,
Ἡ τ' ολίγη μεν πρῶτα κορυσσεται αυταρ ἔπειτα
Οὐρανῷ εζηριξε κάρη, και επὶ χθονι βαίνει."

Iliad, Δ, 440.

such a step would have been perfectly justifiable. Still the insurmountable and well-known aversion of the king to the shedding of blood controlled all the measures of the army, and would probably have paralysed any vigorous movement; for there seems no doubt that he never would have permitted them to fire, except in resisting the aggression of the insurgents.

111. The King resolves on concession. July 13.

But the alarming accounts received on the 12th, of the defection of the troops, and especially of the open adherence of the Gardes Françaises to the side of the insurgents, induced the king, on the morning of the 13th, to abandon the idea of using force, to which he had always felt the strongest aversion; and he accordingly wrote to the Count d'Artois, at eleven o'clock on the forenoon of that day, to the effect that he had given up all idea of coercion, and ordered the troops to withdraw from Paris.* It was in consequence of this total change of measures in the most critical period of the revolt, that the troops occupied on the 14th no posts in Paris; that they remained passive spectators of the pillage of the Invalides, and retired from the Champ de Mars, during the attack on the Bastile, to Sèvres and Versailles. Situated as the king was, there can be no doubt that this was the only prudent course that remained to him; for the defection of part of the troops, and the hesitation of all, had in truth deprived him of the only means of enforcing his orders. But such a change of policy, in the middle of an insurrection, even when constrained by external and irresistible events, was one of the most fatal circumstances that could have occurred; for it at once revealed, and perhaps magnified, the weakness of the throne, and by depriving it of the prestige of military power, converted an urban tumult into a national revolution.[1] "Ipse inutili cunctatione agendi tempora consultando consumpsit: mox

[1] Corresp. Pol. et Conf. de Louis XVI., i. 88; and 99. Lab. iii. 230, 231.

* "Versailles, 13 Juillet, 11 du matin.—J'avais cédé, mon cher frère, à vos solicitations, aux representations de quelques sujets fidèles; mais j'ai fait d'utiles reflexions. Resister en ce moment, ce serait s'exposer à perdre la monarchie; c'est nous perdre tous. *J'ai retracté les ordres que j'avais donnés:* mes troupes quitteront Paris; j'employerai des moyens plus doux. Ne me parlez plus d'un coup d'autorité, d'un grand acte du pouvoir; je crois plus prudent de temporiser—de céder à l'orage, et de tout attendre du temps du reveil des gens du bien, et de l'amour des Français pour leur Roi.—(*Signé,*) Louis." This letter, written at the most critical point of his agitated life, expresses the whole policy of Louis. —See *Correspondence Inédite de Louis XVI.* i. 131; and *Histoire Parlémentaire de la France*, ii. 101.

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utrumque consilium aspernatus, quod inter ancipitia deterrimum est dum media sequitur, nec ausus est satis nec providit."*

112. Violent agitation in the Assembly.

During these events the Assembly was in the most violent state of agitation. The most alarming reports arrived every half-hour from Paris; the members remained in the hall of meeting in the utmost anxiety; the sound of the cannon was distinctly heard, and they applied their ears to the ground to catch the smallest reverberation. No less than five deputations, during forty-eight hours, waited on the king, who was in as great a perplexity and terror at the effusion of blood as themselves. The addresses they brought were all in the same strain, and clearly revealed the revolutionary spirit of the Assembly. Nothing was said of re-establishing order in Paris: no address was issued against the insurgents in that city: the constant demand was for the king to remove the troops—in other words, surrender himself and the government to the rebels. Great part of the members were in a state of undisguised apprehension. But nothing could daunt the audacious spirit of Mirabeau. "Tell the King," said he to the last deputation which set out, "that the foreign bands by which we are surrounded, have yesterday been visited and flattered by the princess and prince, and received from them both presents and caresses. Tell him, that all night, in his palace even, these foreign satellites, amidst the fumes of wine, have never ceased to predict the subjugation of France, and to breathe wishes for the destruction of the Assembly. Tell him, that in his very palace the courtiers have mingled dancing with their impious songs; and that such was the prelude to the massacre of St Bartholomew."[1]†

[1] Th. i. 104. Hist. Parl. ii. 113, 116.

The sound of the cannon employed at the storming of the Bastile was distinctly heard at Versailles during the afternoon of the 14th; but the couriers dispatched by the military commanders in its vicinity were so effectually

* "He himself wasted the time for action in useless deliberation; and then, rejecting the counsels of both sides, sought a middle course, the worst possible policy in perilous circumstances, as he neither foresaw nor dared enough."—Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 40.

† The following was one of these addresses: they were all in the same strain:—"12th July 1789—L'Assemblée Nationale, profondement affectée des malheurs qu'elle n'avait que trop prevues. N'a cessé de demander à sa Majesté la *retraite entière et absolue des troupes* extraordinairement rassemblées dans la capitale et aux environs. Elle a encore envoyé dans ce jour

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113. State of the court on the night of the 14th.

interrupted by the insurgents, that it was only known, and that in a very indistinct way, that the arsenal of the Invalides had been taken and pillaged. The old officers, however, laughed at the idea of the Bastile sharing the same fate, and persisted in representing the tumults as mere local disorders which would soon be appeased. Every effort was made to secure the fidelity of the regiments in the vicinity of the palace: the princesses and ladies of the court walked in the orangery where one of them was stationed, and music and dancing for the last time enlivened that scene of former festivity. But in the night intelligence of the real state of things was received; that the Bastile was taken; Paris in insurrection; the guards in open revolt; the regiments of the line in sullen inactivity. The soldiers knew that an increase of their pay had been recommended in most of the cahiers of the deputies; and thus, by interest as well as inclination, they were disposed to take part with the citizens in the contest which was approaching. The Assembly, which had been constantly sitting for the two preceding days, was violently agitated by the intelligence. It was proposed to send a new deputation to the King, to urge the removal of the troops. "No," said Clermont Tonnerre, "let us leave them this night to take counsel: it is well that kings, like private men, should learn by experience." The Duke de Liancourt took upon himself the painful duty of acquainting the King with the events which had occurred, and proceeded to his chamber in the middle of the night for that purpose. "This is a revolt," said the King after a long silence. "Sire," replied he, "it is a revolution."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 116, 117. Toul. i. 78. Mig. i. 66. Th. i. 103. Calonne, 390.

Finding resistance hopeless, from the universal defection of the troops, the king immediately resolved upon submission—a measure which relieved him from the dreadful apprehension of causing an effusion of blood. On the following morning he repaired, without his guards or any

deux deputations au Roi, sur cet objet dont elle n'a cessé de s'occuper nuit et jour. Elle fait part aux electeurs des deux réponses qu'elle a reçues. Elle renouvellera demain les mêmes démarches; elle les fera plus pressantes encore, s'il est possible. Elle ne cessera de les répéter, et de tenter des nouveaux efforts, jusqu'à ce qu'elles aient eu le succès qu'elle a droit d'attendre, et de la justice de sa reclamation, et du cœur du Roi, lorsque des impressions etrangères n'en arrêteront plus les mouvemens."—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 12.

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114. The King goes to the Assembly and declares he will dismiss the troops.

suite, accompanied only by his two brothers, to the Assembly. He was received in profound silence. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am come to consult you on the most important affairs: the frightful disorders of the capital call for immediate attention. It is in these moments of alarm that the Chief of the nation comes, without guards, to deliberate with his faithful deputies upon the means of restoring tranquillity. I know that the most unjust reports have been for some time in circulation as to my intentions; that even your personal freedom has been represented as being in danger. I should think my character might be a sufficient guarantee against such calumnies. As my only answer, I now come alone into the midst of you; I declare myself for ever united with the nation; and, relying on the fidelity of the National Assembly, I have given orders to remove the troops from Versailles and Paris; and I invite you to make my dispositions known to the capital." Immense applause followed this popular declaration; the Assembly, by a spontaneous movement, rose from their seats, and reconducted the monarch to the palace. A deputation, with the joyful intelligence, was immediately dispatched to Paris, and produced a temporary calm among its excited population. Bailly was named mayor of the city, and La Fayette commander of the armed force. The King had the prudence to sanction these appointments, which in truth he could not prevent, but they originated with the insurrectionary authorities in Paris.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 79. Hist. Parl. ii. 116, 117. Th. i. 106. Mig. i. 67. Bert. de Moll. ii. 24, 26.

115. The King visits Paris. July 17.

On the 17th the King set out from Versailles, with few guards and a slender suite, to visit the capital, upon whose affections his sole reliance was now placed. A large part of the National Assembly accompanied him on foot; the *cortège* was swelled on the road by an immense concourse of peasants, many of whom were armed with scythes and bludgeons, which gave it a grotesque and revolutionary aspect. The Queen parted with him in the most profound grief, under the impression that she would never see him more. He had received in the morning intelligence of a design to assassinate him on the road, but that made no change on his resolution. The march, obstructed by such strange attendants, lasted seven hours; during which the King underwent every humiliation that a monarch could

endure. He was received at the gates by Bailly, at the head of the municipality, who presented to him the keys of the city. "I bring your Majesty," said he, "the same keys which were presented to Henry IV. He entered the city as a conqueror; now it is the people who have reconquered their sovereign." Louis advanced to the Hotel de Ville, through the midst of above one hundred thousand armed men, under an arch formed of crossed sabres. His air was composed, but melancholy: his countenance pale, and with an expression of sadness. The whole of the immense crowd bore tricolor cockades, now assumed as the national colours. At the Pont Neuf, he passed a formidable park of artillery; but at the touch-hole and mouth of each had been placed a garland of flowers. Few cries of *Vive le Roi* met the ears of the unfortunate monarch: those of *Vive la Nation* were much more numerous; but when he appeared at the window of the Hotel de Ville, with the tricolored cockade on his breast, thunders of applause rent the air, and he was re-conducted to Versailles amidst the most tumultuous expressions of public attachment.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 47, 55. Deux Amis, ii. 47, 52. Lac. vii. 105, 109. Th. i. 105, 109. Toul. i. 82, 83. Burke, v. 139.

116. Share of the Orleans faction in the insurrection.

The Orleans conspirators were thus disappointed in the result of the insurrection of 14th July, which they had so large a share in promoting. They had expected that, during the confusion consequent on the revolt of the people and defection of the troops, the King and royal family would have taken to flight, and then the Duke of Orleans was to have been proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Mirabeau, Laclos, and Latouche, were the chiefs of this conspiracy; and from their dark councils had issued the orders, as from the coffers of the Duke the treasures, which had originally put the revolt in motion. In pursuance of this plan, their adherents in the Assembly had vehemently declaimed against the employment of troops in the suppression of the insurrection, and pressed the King with those repeated addresses, which at length, from his inability to remedy the evils complained of, led to his answering them in a voice so penetrated with grief as to move their hearts.* Mirabeau, in particular, thundered

* "'Vous déchirez de plus en plus mon cœur, par le récit que vous me faites des malheurs de Paris. Il n'est possible de croire que les ordres qui ont été donnés aux troupes en soient la cause.' L'émotion avec laquelle le Roi prononça ces paroles montrait assez la douleur dont il était

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with all the force of his eloquence against the military, and concluded with the words, ominous of the reign of blood—"I demand the head of the Marshal de Broglie." So confident were the conspirators that this situation would be given to the Duke without hesitation, that the great object to which their efforts were directed was to determine him to ask it, and to prepare for him the speech which he was to employ on the occasion.* Indeed Mirabeau openly avowed in the National Assembly, on a subsequent occasion, the design of supplanting Louis XVI. by Louis Philippe.† But the Duke of Orleans failed at the decisive moment. He went so far, at the instigation of his accomplices, as to go to the King, with the intention of demanding from the prostrate monarch the office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom; but want of courage, or a lingering feeling of loyalty, prevented him from preferring the request; and he contented himself with asking leave, if affairs turned out ill, to retire into England. Mirabeau's indignation at this failure knew no bounds, and exhaled in vehement expressions of contempt; and from that day he sought an opportunity to disconnect himself from so irresolute and unprofitable a conspirator. "His cowardice," said he, "has made him lose the greatest advantages: they would have made him lieutenant-general of the kingdom: it rested with himself alone: his throne was made: they had prepared what he was to have said."[1]

[1] Ferrieres, i. 133. Bert. de Moll. ii. 15. Depositions au Chatelet, i. 213. Dep. de M. de Virieu. Lab. iii. 238. Hist. des Causes Secrètes de la Rév. i. 37.

117. Who did wrong in this stage of the Revolution?

The throne was irrecoverably overturned by the insurrection of the 14th July. The monarch had attempted, at the eleventh hour, to restrain the encroachments of the *Tiers Etat* by military force, and he had failed in the attempt. All classes had seen the weakness of the government: the power of opinion, the *prestige* of force, had

pénétré. La députation fut affèctée, et l'archévêque de Paris en rendit compte à l'Assemblée, de la manière la plus propre à la disposer à entendre la réponse de sa Majesté; mais la majorité, composée des députés les plus timides que la terreur enlisait avec les plus audacieux, persista à trouver cette réponse insuffisante, et personne n'osa ouvrir, ou soutenir, une autre opinion."—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 14.

* "De lui faire son thème," Mirabeau's words on the occasion.—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, iii. 14.

† "Qui vous conteste que la France n'ait besoin d'un roi, et ne veuille un roi?—Mais Louis XVII. sera roi comme Louis XVI.; et si l'on parvient à persuader la nation que Louis XVI. est fauteur et complice des excès que ont lassée sa patience, elle invoquera un Louis XVII."—*Discours de* MIRABEAU *à l'Assemblée Nationale*, 4 Oct. 1790.—*Moniteur.*

passed over to the other side; for it was obvious that it was in it the supreme authority was vested. This is the true date of the destruction of the old French monarchy; the subsequent years of Louis were nothing but a melancholy,. painful, and abortive attempt to rule, by following the changes of public opinion when the power of controlling it was gone. It will appear in the sequel, what unbounded calamities followed this great change, from which at the time nothing but felicity was anticipated. In the mean time, before advancing further, the all-important question arises, *Who did wrong in this stage of the Revolution?*

118. Usurpation and treason of the Tiers Etat.

I. The *Tiers Etat* did wrong, and committed at once a flagrant moral crime, and an irremediable political fault, by compelling the union of the orders, and usurping the supreme authority in the state. The constitution of France, as of all European monarchies, was founded on the separation of the representatives of numbers from those of property—a separation, not fanciful or accidental, but resting on the nature of things, coeval with civilisation, and one which, in one form or other, has existed in all forms of government which have had any durability, since the beginning of the world. The duplication of the numbers of the *Tiers Etat* by Necker, rendered it still more imperative to uphold this separation; because, as their numbers now equalled those of the two other orders put together, and a large portion of the clergy were known to belong to the levelling party, it was evident that the union of the whole would give numbers an immediate and decisive preponderance over property. This, accordingly, was what instantly happened. Strong in a decided predominance of votes, the majority at once usurped the whole authority in the state, and by assuming the exclusive right of taxation, in effect centred all authority in themselves. This was not less an action of rebellion against the king, than of disobedience to the mandates of their constituents—and it inflicted in the end as fatal a wound on the cause of freedom they were sent to support, as on that of the throne against which it was directed.

II. The military did wrong, in violating alike their duty and their oaths, by revolting against the crown, and uniting with the populace in an open insurrection ot subvert the

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119. The military did wrong in revolting against the throne.

royal authority. Generally as this act of treachery was praised at the time—as wicked deeds usually are by those whose interests they advance—it is now apparent that it was it which inflicted the death-blow alike on the happiness of France and the cause of its freedom; because it rendered the march of the Revolution inevitable, and destroyed all chance of arresting the evils which blasted its hopes. It will immediately appear, that within a fortnight of the revolt of the French guards, a series of causes and effects were in motion which necessarily, in their final result, induced the Reign of Terror and the carnage under Napoleon. On the heads of the faithless soldiers who deserted their king on the approach of danger, or under the influence of delusion, rest all the miseries which afterwards afflicted their country. This shameful defection had not even the excuse for it, lame as it would have been, that they meant well in deserting their duty; that their error proceeded from a generous motive. They were actuated by no real patriotic spirit; they forgot not that they were soldiers to remember they were men. Their loyalty perished in the fumes of intoxication—their oaths were forgotten amidst the embraces of courtesans. Let history hold them up to the eternal execration of mankind.

120. Error of the King in the period chosen for making a stand.

III. The error of the King, in this stage of the Revolution —and it was an error of judgment, and having reference only to time—was, that he selected the wrong moment for making his stand. That it had become indispensable to take strong steps to arrest the encroachments of the *Tiers Etat;* and that an Assembly which had, in defiance alike of its mandates from the people, and its duty to the throne, usurped supreme and exclusive authority, required to be dissolved, is perfectly apparent. But Louis took the wrong time for effecting that object: he was too late in attempting it. He first acquiesced in the forced union of the orders, and even, by the power of his prerogative, compelled the unwilling nobles into the union; and then he summoned up the military to dissolve the *united* Assembly. By so doing, he committed the Crown, in appearance at least, in a contest with the whole States-General; and lost the inestimable advantage he would have enjoyed, when resistance became unavoidable, of representing his hostility as directed against one only of its orders which was striving to

overwhelm the others. It is easy to see to what this calamitous delay was owing. It arose from the unbounded confidence of the monarch in the love of his subjects, which made him deem warlike preparations unnecessary till they were too late; and his unconquerable aversion to the shedding of blood, which induced him to postpone to the last moment any measures which might even have a chance of causing blood to be shed. But still the delay deprived him of his last chance of enlisting any considerable portion of the moral influence of the nation on his side: and the error in regard to time was the more inexcusable, that the nobility had clearly pointed out the period when resistance should have been made—viz. opposing the union of the orders—and bravely offered to throw themselves into the breach to prevent that union. In marking this error of judgment, however, on the part of the King, history must, at the same time, do justice to the motives from which it sprang, and distinguish it from the insatiable ambition which actuated the *Tiers Etat*, and the infamous treachery which disgraced the army.

121. Fatal results of this treason and treachery to the cause of freedom in France.

And what has been the final result of this general dereliction of duty by all classes, which at the time was the subject of such unbounded praise, such enthusiastic exultation? Have the people secured liberty to themselves and their children by revolting against the throne? Have the soldiers chained victory to their standards, and preserved their capital inviolate, by deserting their sovereign? Has the fair fabric of general freedom been here, for the first time in the history of mankind, erected on the foundation of treachery and treason? Passing by the immediate consequences of these acts;—drawing a veil over the Reign of Terror and the guillotine of Robespierre, as the first outbreak merely of popular license—what have been the results which have appeared at such a distance of time as to evince the lasting consequences of these deeds? Have they not been the subjugation of France by foreign armies; the double occupation of its capital by the forces of the stranger; the failure of all attempts to establish freedom in the land? Has not a constitutional monarchy been found, after repeated attempts, and half a century of striving, bloodshed, and turmoil, impracticable in France? and is not the capital now surrounded with a circle of for-

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tifications, ready to be mounted with two thousand pieces of cannon, to let fall the tempest of death upon its rebellious inhabitants? Have not twenty bastiles arisen instead, and one upon the very site, of the fortress which has been destroyed;* and is not a girdle of steel now put round the neck of the maniac city? Such have been the consequences of the attempt to establish freedom on the basis of treachery and treason.

122. All classes might have done their duty.

"What," it is often asked, "could the patriots of 1789, the real lovers of freedom in France, have done at the crisis which has now been described? Were the *Tiers Etat* to have submitted to the blasting of all their aspirations by the continued separation of the orders? Were the people to have done nothing to assert their liberties? Were the soldiers to have shed the blood of their fellow-citizens, striving for the first of human blessings?" It may be admitted that human wisdom, shaping its course by the probabilities of experience, would have found it difficult to have determined what course to pursue; and perhaps no possible foresight could have avoided the dangers with which the course was beset. But every man possessed within his own breast an inward monitor, the dictates of which, if duly attended to, would have saved the nation from all the calamities which ensued. ALL CLASSES MIGHT HAVE DONE THEIR DUTY; and if so, the good Providence of God would have rewarded them, even in this world, with peace and freedom and happiness.

123. Which would have avoided all the calamities of the Revolution.

The King might have done his duty. He might have recollected that in this world the coercion of the bad is not less necessary than the protection of the good; and that the monarch who fails in the first, is often the cause of calamities as great as he who neglects the last. The *Tiers*

* "To-morrow, the 14th July, fifty-four years will have elapsed since the Parisians subverted the Bastile. On the site it occupied there has been erected since that time, in honour of another revolution, a column surmounted by the genius of liberty; but, melancholy to say, if some citizens should wish to celebrate the glorious anniversary by going and saluting the names inscribed on the column of July, they will see there a third monument of a very different nature, which is rising upon the very spot whence the Bastile threatened Paris. Under the humble name of a guardhouse, a real citadel is at this moment being constructed, on the axis of the canal, which commands the main street of the Faubourg, the Rue Saint-Antoine, and the line of the Boulevards. That little fort, built of freestone, with battlements, and surrounded with iron palisades, will hold a numerous garrison, isolate the Faubourg, and prove in the hands of an oppressive government a very advantageous substitute for the old Bastile. It will be against Paris an advanced work of the intrenched camp of Vincennes. The men of 1789 must be astonished at the way their sons are treated, and the docility with which they suffer it."—*National de Paris, July* 13, 1843.

Etat might have done their duty. They might have sacrificed their private ambition to their public obligations, and closed with the offer of a beneficent sovereign, who tendered to them, without a struggle, the whole guarantees of real freedom, and a constitution conferring even greater liberty than experience has proved the nation was capable of bearing.* The soldiers might have done their duty. They might have recollected that fidelity to their colours is the first of military duties; that the armed force, in Carnot's words, "is essentially obedient—it acts, but should never deliberate;" and that a revolution brought about by the revolt of troops, though generally successful in the outset, never fails to be disastrous in the end; because it rests the public weal on the quicksands of Prætorian caprice. The people might have done their duty. They might have recollected that treason is the greatest of crimes, because it leads to the commission of all the others; they might have seen that the strength of public opinion had become such, that its force without violence was irresistible, that the acquisition of freedom was secured without shedding a drop of blood, and that the only danger it ran was from the crimes of its supporters. The simple path of duty would have saved France and Europe from all the crimes and misfortunes which ensued: what led to them all was, the selfishness of ambition and the delusions of expedience.

* Mr Jefferson, whose extreme democratic opinions are so well known, was at Paris in June 1789, as ambassador of the United States, and he has left the following valuable account of his view of what the patriots should have done to secure the liberties of their country.—"I consider a successful reformation of government in France as ensuring a general reformation throughout Europe, and the resurrection to a new life of their people, now ground to dust by the abuses of the governing powers. I was much acquainted with the leading patriots of the Assembly. Being from a country which had successfully passed through a similar reformation, they were disposed to my acquaintance, and had some confidence in me. I urged most strenuously an immediate compromise, to secure what the government was now ready to yield, and trust to future occasions for what might still be wanting. It was well understood that the king would grant at this time, first, freedom of the person by *habeas corpus;* secondly, freedom of conscience; thirdly, freedom of the press: fourthly, trial by jury; fifthly, a representative legislature; sixthly, annual meetings; seventhly, the origination of laws; eighthly, the exclusive right of taxation and appropriation; and, ninthly, the responsibility of ministers; and with the exercise of these powers, they could obtain in future whatever might be further necessary to improve and preserve their constitution. They thought otherwise, however, and events have proved their lamentable error: for after thirty years of war, foreign and domestic; the loss of millions of lives; the prostration of private happiness and the foreign subjugation of their own country for a time—they have obtained no more, not even that securely."—JEFFERSON'S *Memoirs, June* 1789; and SMYTH'S *Lectures on the French Revolution*, i. 303.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE TAKING OF THE BASTILE TO THE REVOLT AT VERSAILLES. JULY 14—OCTOBER 6, 1789.

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1. Extraordinary and almost bloodless triumph of the Revolutionists.

NEVER had the government of a great country been overturned with so much facility, as that of France was by the insurrection of the 14th July; never had the liberties of a great people been purchased at the expense of so little bloodshed. Hardly any resistance had been made, either by the military or civil authorities; not so many lives had been lost as usually perish in a trifling skirmish in the field; fifty men only had fallen in overturning the monarchy of Clovis. The rapid concessions and beneficent intentions of the King had long postponed a collision; his well-known aversion to the shedding of blood paralysed one of the parties engaged in it when it commenced—his humanity stopped it before the conflict had advanced any length. In truth he had then no alternative. The defection of the troops, the universal delusion and transports of the people, had destroyed all the means of resistance: and the monarch, not less impelled by necessity than urged by inclination, had capitulated on the very first attack. The prediction of the philosophers seemed about to be realised; the Revolution was finished, and it had scarcely cost a drop of blood. All France was in transports at the auspicious events, which, breaking in one day the chains of a thousand years, had set a whole nation free, without causing the widow or the orphan to weep. Europe sympathised with these sentiments: philosophy every where anticipated a bloodless triumph over oppression. Genius was eager to celebrate the advent of the emanci-

pation of the human race.* Yet from this very triumph is to be dated the commencement of the reign of violence: with the fall of the Bastile was closed the last hope of a pacific regeneration of society; with the transference of the sword from the crown to the people, began the series of causes and effects which, in their final results, induced the whole subsequent calamities which befell the kingdom.

2. Necessity for an executive occasioned the disasters which followed.

It was the dissolution of the governing power which brought about these disastrous consequences. Mankind can never exist, even for a day, without a ruling authority; moral influence is guided entirely by the intellectual strength of a few—physical force by the daring and combinations of one. The most imperious of all necessities to mankind, is a government. Individuals can subsist days, and sometimes weeks, without food, but no body of men ever could exist an hour without a ruler. Within a short period after existing government has been overturned, another authority never fails to be installed in its stead: so much the more powerful that it has been cradled in violence—so much the more despotic that it has to rule excitement. If the people ever really enjoy the illusion of self-government, it is but for an hour: with the choice of the demagogue who is to rule, or the cabal which is to direct them, their brief authority is at an end; and the new sovereign, under the name of a tribune, a consul, or a committee, enters upon the exercise of irresistible power, at once established on too broad a basis to be shaken down for years.

* The effect of this event on the ardent spirits in England may be judged of by the following magnificent lines of Darwin :—

> " Long had the giant form on Gallia's plains
> Inglorious slept, unconscious of his chains.
> Round his large limbs were wound a thousand rings,
> By the weak hands of Confessors and Kings.
> O'er his closed eyes a triple veil was bound,
> And steely rivets lock'd him to the ground;
> While stern Bastile with iron cage enthrals
> His folded limbs and bones in marble walls.
> Touch'd by the patriot flame, he rent amazed
> The flimsy bonds, and round and round him gazed;
> Starts up from earth, above the admiring throng,
> Lifts his colossal form and towers along:
> High o'er his foes his hundred arms he rears,
> Ploughshares his swords, and pruning-hooks his spears;
> Calls to the good and brave in voice that rolls
> Like heaven's own thunder round the echoing poles;
> Gives to the winds his banners broad unfurl'd,
> And gathers in the shade the living world."

DARWIN'S *Botanic Garden.*

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3. Gentle character of the king.

The mildness of the former government, the beneficent intentions and liberal principles of the King, are thus described by M. Bailly, the originator of the "Tennis Court Oath," and the first democratic mayor of Paris:—"Despotism was what never entered into the character of the King; he never had any wish but the happiness of his people: this was the only consideration which could be employed to influence him; and he never could be induced to sanction any act of authority, until he was convinced that some good was to be thus obtained or some evil avoided—some relief to the nation afforded, or some additions to the happiness of all secured. His power was never considered by him, nor did he wish to maintain it, except for the tranquillity and peace of the community. The first cause which produced the regeneration of the country was the character of Louis XVI.: had the King been less good, the ministers more able, we should never have had a Revolution."[1] Such was the sovereign, on the testimony of his opponents, whose reforms were rejected, whose concessions despised by the *Tiers Etat*—whose power was overthrown by the Revolt of July. Contrast this with the universal excitement which prevailed after the fall of the Bastile, as drawn by a master hand, who had himself a principal share in bringing about that event.

1 Bailly, Mém. i. 97.

4. Mirabeau's picture of these events.

"So many extraordinary changes," said Mirabeau, "have occurred within these few days, that one can hardly believe them real. The capital passing from despotism to liberty—from the extreme of terror to perfect security—a militia of citizens established—the Bastile taken by assault—a conspiracy averted—perverse counsellors dispersed—a powerful faction put to flight—ministers, clandestinely exiled, recalled in triumph—their successors recoiling before the storm—the King, whom they had deceived, restored to confidence, and voluntarily showing himself to his people—all these events, astonishing in themselves, and from their rapidity almost incredible, will produce incalculable effects, which are beyond the reach of human foresight to divine." The consequences of these events did indeed outstrip all human calculation, and proved diametrically opposite to what their authors anticipated.[2] "Scelera impetu, bona consilia morâ valescere." * But four were

2 Mirabeau à ses Commetans, 19th July 1789; and Smyth's French Rev. i. 246.

* "Crimes succeed by haste: good designs by delay."—TACITUS, *Hist.* i. 32.

of such importance that they eclipsed all the others, and are to be regarded as the great corner-stones on which the revolutionary fabric was erected. These were the formation of the municipality of Paris—of the National Guards over all France—the insurrection of the peasants—and the emigration of the noblesse.

5. Unceasing agitation of the people in Paris; their misery and famine. 19th July 1789.

The overthrow of the royal authority had left Paris without a government, and that too in the most critical period of its history, when the public passions most stood in need of control, and public misery had nearly reached the most alarming height. Such had been the excitement of the three days which had preceded the capture of the Bastile, that it was found impossible to induce the people either to return to their work, or engage in any regular or continuous employment. Though all danger was over, from the defection of the army and submission of the crown, yet, such was the enthusiasm which prevailed, that they did nothing but wander about the streets, wondering at the magnitude and ease of their triumph, and devouring the multitude of journals, pamphlets, and addresses, which, in every direction, were extolling it to the skies. The funeral obsequies of those who had fallen in the attack of the Bastile were celebrated with extraordinary pomp, in presence of an immense crowd of spectators. "It is the aristocracy," said Abbé Fauchet, "which has crucified the Son of God!" This impious speech was received with unbounded applause. Vast crowds continually thronged the ruins of the Bastile, which already, by orders from the Hôtel de Ville, was in process of being demolished. The people were never weary of examining the dark vaults and gloomy corridors of that long-dreaded prison—the stone couches, worn by continued lying; the huge rings, to which chains had once been attached; the frightful implements of ancient torture, were surveyed with insatiable avidity. But meanwhile all work was at a stand, and the usual symptoms of division after success were apparent. Already murmurs were heard against the Electoral Assembly at the Hôtel de Ville—from some for having done too much, from others for having done too little: provisions were beginning to be scarce; the people without work had no money to buy food;[1] and so pressing did the danger become, that within four days after the

[1] De Conny, Hist. de la Rév. ii 6. Lac. iii. 246. Hist. Parl. ii. 144.

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Bastile had been taken, a provisional committee of sixty persons was appointed by the municipality to superintend the distribution of provisions, organise an urban guard, and establish a police; and to pay considerable sums of money to every workman who could produce a certificate of his having given up his arms and resumed his labour.[1]*

6. Efforts to feed Paris prove insufficient.

But all the efforts of the provisional government at the Hôtel de Ville were unavailing: the money indeed was got by the applicants, but it was on false certificates of the arms having been given up: the people did not resume their labours; and ere a few days had elapsed, the most pressing dangers, as well from anarchy as famine, were experienced. All the efforts of Moreau de St Mery, the new provost of the merchants, and of Bailly, who had been appointed mayor of Paris, proved inadequate to arrest the growing evils. The capital was in such a state of confusion, the disorder arising from so many co-existing authorities was so excessive—the supply of provisions so precarious—the suspension of credit so universal—that the utmost exertions of Bailly and the magistrates were required to prevent the people from dying of famine in the streets. Tailors, shoemakers, bakers, blacksmiths, met at the Louvre, the Place Louis XV., and other quarters; deliberated on the public concerns, and set at defiance the Hôtel de Ville and the municipality. Night and day Bailly and the Committee of Public Subsistence were engaged in the herculean labour of providing for the wants of the citizens; the usual sources of supply had totally ceased with the public confusion; the farmers no longer brought their grain to market, fearing that it would be seized without payment by the sovereign multitude; and the people, as the first

* L'Assemblée des electeurs arrête—Qu'il sera formé un comité provisoire pour remplacer le comité permanent; qu'il sera composé de soixante membres élus dans son sein; et qu'il sera divisé en quatre bureaux; le premier de distribution, le second de police, le troisième des subsistances, le quatrième sera le comité militaire, dans lequel entreront les officiers d'état-major de la garde nationale. Les Gardes Françaises demandent que l'on choisisse les futurs officiers parmi les sous-officiers et soldats du régiment. L'Assemblée arrête—"Que les ouvriers sont invités à reprendre leurs travaux, et qu'en rapportant un certificat de leur maître ou chef-d'ateliers, portant qu'ils ont repris leurs travaux, et un certificat de district, portant qu'ils ont deposé leurs armes dans le depôt indiqué pour le district, il sera leurs payé une somme de 9 livres."—*Extrait de Procès Verbal de la Commune, Paris,* 18*mé Juillet* 1789*; Histoire Parlémentaire,* ii. 142.

consequences of their triumph, were on the point of perishing of famine. Every thing required to be provided for and done by the public authorities; large quantities of grain were bought up by their agents in the country, and conducted into Paris, as if into a besieged city, in great convoys, guarded by regiments of horse. This grain was ground at the public expense, and sold at a reduced rate to the citizens; but such was the misery of the people, that all these pains would not suffice, and loud complaints that the citizens were starving, incessantly assailed the Assembly. The loss sustained by the municipality within a week after the taking of the Bastile, in thus feeding the people at a reduced rate, amounted to 18,000 francs (L.720) a-day:* and yet such was their fury in consequence of the general want, that great numbers of carts and stores were seized and pillaged by clamorous and starving multitudes. All the efforts of the government could not supply the absence of that perennial fountain of plenty and prosperity, which arises from general security and public confidence.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, ii. 93, 100. Bert. de Moll. ii. 65, 67. Bailly, ii. 96. Th. i. 111.

7. Which nothing can alleviate.

Notwithstanding all the vigour of the public authorities, the distress of Paris, both as regarded the municipality and the citizens, soon became overwhelming. Almost every species of manufacture was at a stand: purchases by the wealthy classes had totally ceased—and all the numerous artisans who depended on these, in that great mart of luxury and indulgence, were in the utmost straits. The popular magistrates were obliged to dissipate all the corporate funds at their disposal, and contract large debts, in order to provide for the necessities of the people, who had already fallen as a burden on the public funds. Above 2,500,000 francs (L.100,000) were expended in this way by the municipality of Paris within a few months; but even this ample supply afforded only a temporary relief; and after exhausting their credit, and overwhelming with debt the public revenue, they were obliged to come to the National Assembly with the piteous tale that their resources were exhausted, and that Paris, as the first-fruits of its political regeneration,

* "D'abord la farine revenait le plus souvent au gouvernement à 90 livres le sec—ce qui donne le pain à 16 sous, 4 deniers, les 4 livres; en le donnant à 14 sous et demi, le gouvernement perdait donc deux sous pour 4 livres; à qui fait relativement à la consommation de Paris, environ 18,000 livres de perte par jour."—*Mém. de* BAILLY, ii. 96.

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was on the verge of ruin.* Meanwhile the people, feeling their wants continually increasing, loudly demanded the heads of the monopolisers who kept back the grain: one named Thomassin was seized by them near St Germains, and with difficulty saved from instant death when the rope was round his neck. The Assembly, glad to veil its weakness under the guise of moderation, was constrained, instead of vindicating the law, to limit itself to passing a vote of thanks to the Bishop of Chartres, who, by force of tears and entreaties, rescued the unhappy victim from his murderers when already at the foot of the scaffold.[1]

[1] Moniteur, 20th and 21st July 1789, p. 92. Lab. iii. 280, 281. Hist. Parl. ii. 146, 147. Bailly, ii. 86, 96.

8. Necessary institution of the Municipality on a democratic basis.

It was sufficiently evident that this state of distress and anarchy could not be permitted to continue; and as the former authorities were wholly annihilated by the prostration of the crown and the defection of the troops, there was no alternative but to organise an effective government at the Hôtel de Ville. But the municipality had no regular or paid force at its command: its strength was based entirely on the support of the multitude, and the co-operation of the great civic militia, which had sprung up as if by enchantment during the late insurrection. Thus the formation of a municipality on a purely democratic basis became a matter of necessity; and it arose so naturally from the circumstances in which men were placed after the overthrow of the royal authority, that it excited very little attention. The electors, about three hundred in number, chosen to appoint the deputies to the States-General, who had at first organised the urban force at the Hôtel de Ville, were speedily alarmed at the magnitude of the responsibility which was thrown upon them, when they beheld the disorders with which they were surrounded; and gladly acceded to the proposition of their constituents, that each of the sixty electoral districts of Paris should elect two deputies, who should form a temporary administration,[2] and who, being the acknowledged representatives of the people, might assume, in conformity with the

July 24.

[2] Moniteur, July 28, 1789. Smyth's French Rev. i. 316, 317. Procès Verb. de la Commune de Paris, i. 65.

* "In July 1789," said M. Bailly, mayor of Paris, "the finances of the city of Paris were yet in good order; the expenditure was balanced by the receipts, and she had 1,000,000 francs (L.40,000) in the bank. But the expenses she has been constrained to incur, subsequent to the Revolution, amount to 2,500,000 francs (L.100,000) in a single year. From these expenses, and the great falling off in the produce of the free gifts, not only a temporary, but a total want of money has taken place."—See BURKE's *Consid.*, *Works*, v. 431.

new principles of government, a legitimate authority. Their number was afterwards raised to a hundred and eighty, and by a final decree on 28th July, was fixed at three hundred.

9. Formation of the primary Assemblies to control the Municipality.

These three hundred deputies formed the new municipality of Paris; but such was the jealousy which universally prevailed of all power, even when directly delegated by the people, that, in order to control and compel them to bend to the popular will, each electoral district retained its hall of assembly, the same where the first election of the deputies for the States-General had taken place, in which meetings of the whole primary electors were held almost every night to discuss public affairs, and constrain the representatives at the Hôtel de Ville to obey the popular voice. These primary meetings speedily became little national assemblies for their own districts; they issued proclamations, passed decrees, raised armed bands, and granted passports; and these acts of power were implicitly obeyed, as the direct and immediate voice of the sovereign people. Thus Paris became tormented with sixty republics, each with a general assembly, where every Frenchman was permitted to speak and to vote; and the general municipality, and armed force at its disposal, the only remaining relic of sovereign power, was nothing but the *executive committee* of the highly excited majority. To those who duly reflect on these things, the subsequent history of the Revolution, and the atrocious part which the municipality of Paris took in all its excesses, will appear noways a matter for surprise.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 151, 152. Smyth's French Rev. i. 317.

10. Dumont's account of these primary Assemblies.

M. Dumont, the friend of Mirabeau, and framer of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, an eyewitness of these scenes, has left the following graphic picture of these primary assemblies:—"The noise which prevails in these meetings is enough to distract any one who is not accustomed to it. Every speech is followed or interrupted by the loudest and most clamorous applause, or the most tumultuous expressions of disapprobation. The president of one, finding it impossible to command silence by any other means, has stationed a drummer behind him; and when all is noise, tumult, and confusion, he gives the signal to beat the drum till tranquillity is restored. As nearly a hundred thousand of the upper ranks have emigrated, the

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number of valets, servants, and labourers out of employment is immense, and they throng all the public assemblies, and are always loudest in approval of extreme measures. Falsehood is the constant and favourite resource of the cabals which prevail here. It is impossible to conceive the impudence with which the most palpable lies are published and propagated among the people. The most positive assertions, the most minute detail of facts, the strongest appearance of probability, are made to accompany the grossest falsehoods. Foulon and Besenval were the victims of pretended letters, of which a thousand copies, but not one original, was ever seen. The convent of Montmartre has been twice beset by twenty or thirty thousand men, who threatened it with destruction for having engrossed the provender of Paris; it was searched, and there was scarcely found provision enough for the inmates of the house. At one moment, it is affirmed that the aristocratical conspirators have thrown a great quantity of bread into the Seine; at another, that they have mowed the green corn. The public is overwhelmed with lies and calumnies." Such, on the testimony of an eyewitness, and that eyewitness the author of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," were the assemblies, and such the arts, by which, from the outset of the Revolution, Paris and France were directed.[1]

[1] Groenvelt, (Dumont,) 46, 49; and Smyth's French Rev. i. 317, 319.

11. Establishment of similar municipalities over all France.

This terrible organisation of the multitude into primary assemblies, and of municipalities from the deputies whom they elected, was speedily imitated over all France. It was too much in the spirit of the age—it fell in too completely with the passions of the moment, not to be the object of universal adoption. The old magistracies, based in a great degree on the incorporations, and therefore identified with property, were in a few days every where superseded, and never more heard of. The new municipalities, formed of the deputies of the primary assemblies—that is, resting on universal suffrage—became universal, and soon engrossed the whole civil authority, as well as the direction of the armed force of the kingdom. Incalculable and irreparable were the effects of this change. Coupled with the simultaneous institution of the National Guard and the defection of the army, it rendered the march of the Revolution inevitable, because it deprived the crown

of all power, either by civil or military authority, to restrain or even modify it. The Jacobin clubs which, in imitation of the great parent one in the capital, were speedily established in every town in the kingdom, erelong, by the vehemence of their language and the energy of their proceedings, acquired the direction of these primary assemblies, and through them of the municipalities, and communicated the impulse of popular fervour to the whole constituted authorities. This was the true secret of the future progress of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Smyth's French Rev. i. 318. Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, No 67, i.

12.
Feeble conduct of the National Assembly on this point.

This great innovation did not escape the notice of the National Assembly, and some feeble attempt was made to prevent the civil power in the state from thus slipping from the hands of the legislature; but it came to nothing, and they were glad to veil their weakness under the guise of moderation. "Do you propose," said Mounier, who already began to perceive whither the current was flowing, "that all the towns of France should create municipalities like Paris? That power should be confined to the National Assembly; there is no saying whither such multiplying of states within states, sovereignties within sovereignties, may lead us." "The disorders of Paris," answered Mirabeau, "have all arisen from one cause, that no popular authority exists, and that the primary assemblies were not in harmony with the municipality. The latter had seized the reins of power in the public confusion, without the previous consent of the people. They retained it after they had lost their popularity, even after the electoral districts had manifested a wish to have a municipality established on the basis of the formal consent of the people. What circumstance can be so fortunate, as that municipalities are now erected on the basis of direct popular election, conducted with all the orders united into one, under the condition of a frequent removal and rotation of functionaries, and that Paris has offered to the other cities of France so admirable a model to imitate? The National Assembly should make no attempt to organise municipalities; they should arise in every instance from the direct will of the people. Look at the Americans; they have done this, and hence the stability of their institutions." "The terrible strokes aimed by the minister," replied Lally Tollendal, "have produced frightful reprisals. We

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must not deceive ourselves: the people demand vengeance, but we require subordination; else we shall fall from the yoke of ministerial power under that of arbitrary democracy. One may have much talent, great ideas, and be a tyrant. Tiberius thought, and thought profoundly: Louis XI. felt, and felt warmly." But these recriminations determined nothing; and the Assembly contented itself with issuing a proclamation, in which they declared that they alone were invested with the right of directing prosecutions for high treason, but left to the towns the power of choosing municipalities, and arresting suspected persons. Soon after, the new constitution of the municipality of Paris was solemnly sanctioned by a decree of the Assembly, and of course was immediately imitated over all France.[1]

23d July.
[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 151, 159, 180. Moniteur, 31st July 1789.

13.
General institution of the National Guard.

What rendered this newly-born power of the municipalities peculiarly formidable, in fact irresistible, was the simultaneous creation of an armed force, under the name of the National Guard, which, in imitation of that instituted in Paris, speedily sprang up in every part of the kingdom. As fast as the news of the taking of the Bastile spread through the provinces, the lower orders, in imitation of the capital, organised themselves into independent bodies, subject to their respective municipalities, and established national guards for their protection. The immediate cause of the formation of this prodigious armament was the propagation through all France of the most alarming reports as to the approaching destruction of the harvest by brigands, who were traversing the country in all directions —a stratagem played with the most complete success by the leaders of the Revolution, in order to place the armed force of the kingdom at their disposal. Three hundred thousand men were by these means speedily enrolled for the support of the popular side; the influence of government, as well as the power of the sword, passed into the hands of the people. The officers in the new regiments were all elected by the privates; the new magistrates were appointed by the mob, and of course taken from the most zealous supporters of the popular demands; their authority alone was respected. The old functionaries, finding their power gone, every where became extinct. In less than a fortnight there was no authority in France but what emanated from the people. Arms were in some places wanting for a time;

but the zeal of the new municipalities soon supplied this deficiency. The royal arsenals were generally opened by the officers in charge of them, who feared to disobey the orders of the sovereign people; and although a few, like M. de Bouillé at Metz, held out for some time, yet they were erelong constrained, by direct mandates from Louis, to comply.* This force speedily acquired a surprising degree of discipline and efficiency, chiefly from the number of old soldiers, or non-commissioned officers of the line, who obtained commissions in it; and who, in secret ashamed of the desertion of their sovereign, were glad to veil their disgrace under a new uniform and the assumption of the popular colours.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. i. 142, 143. Bert. de Moll. ii. 65, 73. Toul. i. 97. Th. i. 126. Mig. i. 69, 70. Bouillé, 79.

14. The ministry fly. Necker is recalled, July 21.

Frightful disorders, originating in Paris, and soon spreading over the whole kingdom, signalised the first transference of the supreme power from the crown to the people. Louis, immediately after his submission, sanctioned the appointment of General La Fayette as commander of the national guard at Paris, and recalled M. Necker to the office of prime minister. The messenger overtook the Swiss minister at Bâle, at which place he had arrived on his journey to his native country. His return to Paris was a continued triumph. Every where he received the most intoxicating proofs of public gratitude; the newly constituted authorities waited on him to testify their admiration; but his entry to Paris was not only the zenith of his popularity, but also its end. He proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville amidst the shouts of two hundred thousand admiring citizens, and from its balcony addressed the people in generous terms, imploring them to crown their glorious victory by a general amnesty. For a moment the generous sentiment prevailed: loud applause followed his words.[2] But he seemed to have a presentiment of his

[2] Toul. i. 85. Mig. i. 68. De Staël, i. 255.

* M. de Bouillé, whose firmness nothing could shake, and who had, by the ascendancy of his character, preserved subordination among his troops, continued for a month after the 14th July to refuse to issue arms to the national guard of Metz, where he commanded, till he received the orders of the King. But on 26th August 1789, the new minister at war, La Tour Dupin, indirectly enjoined it in the following words, "Un point essentiel et dont vous sentez l'importance, c'est de ne delivrer des armes qu'avec beaucoup de ménagement." Bouillé now felt himself bound to issue out arms, which he did, however, as prudently as possible. He was one of the last governors of provinces who withstood the universal demand for arms.—*M. La Tour Dupin to M. De Bouillé, 26th August* 1789; BOUILLE, *Memoirs*, 79.

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approaching fall; for, on entering his apartment at Versailles, he exclaimed to one of his friends—"Now is the moment that I should die!"

15. Murder of Foulon.

A melancholy proof awaited him of the inability even of the most popular minister to coerce the fury of the populace. Long lists of proscription had for a considerable time been fixed at the entrances of the Palais Royal, at the head of which was the name of M. Foulon, an old man above seventy years of age, who had been appointed to the ministry which succeeded Necker, but never entered upon his office. He was seized in the country, and brought into Paris with his hands tied behind his back. What had worked the mob up to a pitch of frenzy against him, was a falsehood propagated and at once believed, that he had said, "the people were fit for nothing but to eat grass." Anxious to save him from their fury, La Fayette, when he was brought to the Hôtel de Ville, proposed to send him to the prison of the Abbaye, in order to gain time to discover his accomplices. He was on the point of succeeding in the humane attempt when a voice in the crowd exclaimed—"They understand each other: this is all a *ruse*—what need have we of a trial for a wretch condemned thirty years since?" Upon this the vengeance of the people could not wait for the forms of trial and condemnation; they broke into the committee-room where he was undergoing an examination before La Fayette and Bailly, overthrew twelve hundred electors there assembled, and in spite of the most strenuous efforts on the part of the magistrates, tore him from their arms, and hanged him. Twice the fatal cord broke, and the agonised wretch fell to the ground in the midst of the multitude; and twice they suspended him again, amidst peals of laughter and shouts of joy. Some of the assassins, more humane than the rest, proposed to dispatch him with their swords; but the majority declined that mode of death as too speedy, and kept the unhappy wretch in mortal agony for a quarter of an hour till a third cord was got. It was with such terrific examples of wickedness that the regeneration of the social body commenced in France.[1]

July 22.

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 148. Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, i. 85. Toul. i. 85. Bailly, 280. Moniteur, 29th July 1789, p. 117. Lab. iii. 289. Lac. vii. 117.

M. Berthier, son-in-law to M. Foulon, soon after shared the same fate. He was arrested at Compeigne, and, after undergoing the utmost outrages on the road, was brought

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to the Hôtel de Ville, where the mob presented to him the head of his parent, still streaming with blood. He averted his eyes, and, as they continued to press it towards his face, bowed to the ghastly remains. Falsehood had here, as in the case of Foulon, rendered justice impossible. He was preceded by a crowd of people, who shouted, "He has robbed the king and France; he has devoured the substance of the people; he has drunk the blood of the widow and the orphan." The efforts of Bailly and La Fayette were again unsuccessful; he was seized by the mob, and dragged towards the lamp-post; but at the sight of the cord, which they prepared to put about his neck, he was seized with a transport of indignation, and, wresting a musket from one of the National Guard, rushed among his assassins, and fell pierced with innumerable wounds. One of the cannibals fell on his body, plunged his hand into his mangled bosom, and tore out his heart, which he bore about in triumph, almost before it had ceased to beat. The heads of Berthier and Foulon were put on the end of pikes, and paraded, in the midst of an immense crowd, through the streets of Paris.[1]

16. And of Berthier.

[1] Lac. vii. 117, 118. Toul. i. 86. Th. i. 117. Duval, i. 85. Hist. Parl. ii. 149. Prudhom., Rév. de Paris, ii. 27

It was from horror at these sanguinary excesses, that M. Necker demanded of the Assembly of electors at Paris, and obtained, a general amnesty for political offences. His chief object in doing so was to save the life of the Baron de Besenval, second in command under the Marshal Broglie, formerly his political opponent, whom, at the hazard of his own life, he had generously saved from the fury of the people on his road from Bâle, at the distance of a few leagues from Paris. But in taking this humane step, Necker experienced, for the first time, his inability to rule the Revolution, and felt the weakness of the thread on which the applause of the people is founded. His efforts were nugatory. Mirabeau, in the Assembly, stood forth as the opponent of humanity. The success he met with proved but too clearly that the reign of blood was approaching. On the following day that fearful orator brought the matter under the consideration of the Legislature—"Whence comes it," said he, "that the municipality takes upon itself, under the very eyes of the Assembly, to publish an amnesty for offences? Has the cause of freedom, then, no more perils to encounter? We may

17. Necker's amnesty is reversed by Mirabeau and the Assembly.

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pardon M. Necker his generous but indiscreet proceeding, which in any other but him would have been criminal; but let us, with more calmness and equal humanity, establish the public order, not by general amnesties, but by a due separation of the judicial functions from those of the multitude."—"The multitude," said Barnave, "may have been right: the main thing we have to think of is the formation of a constitution: we must not be too much alarmed at the storms of freedom. *Was, then, the blood which has been shed so very pure?*" Moved partly by terror, partly by fanaticism, the Assembly reversed the decree of the electors of Paris, and political revenge received ample scope for its development.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 122, 127. Mig. i. 68, 69. Th. i. 119. Hist. Parl. ii. 157. Moniteur, 23d July 1789, p. 99.

18. Cruel excesses on the farmers near Paris. 16th July.

Nor was it only on persons in an elevated sphere of life that the fury of the unchained multitude was exercised. Every person in any rank who was denounced by their leaders, or was suspected of thwarting their wishes, became the victims of their barbarity. Engravings were distributed, representing crowds composed of citizens, peasants, and women, carrying pikes, on the top of which the heads of the obnoxious persons were placed, with the inscription below each—"It is thus that we avenge traitors."* Worked up by these arts, the people were not slow in taking vengeance on their supposed oppressors. A convoy of grain having come from Paissy, near St Germain, on the 16th July, the farmer who led them, named Sauvage, was seized by the multitude and brought into Paris, guarded by three hundred armed men, accused of being a monopoliser. Quickly the drum went through the town with this announcement—"Citizens! by order of the King and the *Tiers Etat!* Notice is hereby given, that Sauvage will be hanged at three o'clock." At that hour an immense multitude assembled at the Hôtel de Ville; the unhappy wretch, who was entirely innocent, was brought out and instantly hung up to the lamp-post. The rope broke, and he fell to the earth; again, he was hoisted up with a fresh cord, and at the same time pierced through with swords and bayonets amidst savage shouts. His head was then cut off, put on the top of a pike, and paraded through the streets, followed by a butcher who had severed an arm, brandishing his bloody knife, while

* Copies of these engravings still exist.—*Histoire Parlémentaire*, i. 150

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another occasionally opened the lips to make them receive the stream of blood which flowed down the ghastly cheeks.* Not content with these atrocities, the heart and pieces of the body of Berthier were thrown into a goblet of wine, in which they were boiled, and the savages, standing round the caldron, drank the fuming liquor when red with blood, with naked arms uplifting their glasses, and chanting a song, the burden of which was death to all aristocrats who should oppose the will of the people.[1]†

[1] Prudhomme, i. 135, 137. Ibid. Rév. de Paris, No. ii. 30. Deux Amis, ii. 73.

17. Bailly and La Fayette wish to resign, but are not allowed.

Confounded by these and similar atrocities, of which they were doomed to be the impotent spectators, Bailly and La Fayette sent in their resignations of their respective offices of mayor of Paris and commander of the National Guard. "What a magistracy is this," cried the former, "which has not power to prevent a crime perpetrated under its very eyes!" "The people," said La Fayette, "have not listened to my advice; and the day on which they broke the promise which they made to me is that on which I feel I ought to resign my office, in which I can no longer be of any use." But it is easier to put a revolutionary torrent in motion than to withdraw from it when in the middle of its course. Earnest entreaties were made to them to resume their appointments: fair promises were lavished, that the disorders inseparable from the rise of freedom should not be repeated; and these well-meaning but deluded men, seeing that their withdrawing would probably make matters worse, by removing the only restraints on the popular fury, were obliged, much against their will, to resume their functions.[2]

[2] Bailly, Mém ii. 83. Deux Amis, ii. 74. Lab. iii. 299.

20. Atrocities in the provinces.

It can hardly be conceived that human cruelty could go beyond these dreadful massacres, but the scenes which followed the fall of the Bastile in the provincial towns and many of the provinces of France, threw

* "On se met en marche pour la pompe sanguinaire. Le cliqueteur est toujours en tête; le garçon boucher, armé de son coutelas, et le bras tout sanglant, vient ensuite; un troisième porte la tête, et ouvre la bouche pour y recevoir les gouttes de sang qui decoulent de cette tête."—Prudhomme, (Republican writer,) *Crîmes de la Révolution*, i. 137.

† "Le cœur du traitre (Berthier) proscrit était porté dans les rues au bout d'un coutelas; eh bien! dans un lieu public, qui le croirait! des Français, des êtres sensibles, Dieux! ils ont osé tremper des lambeaux de chair, impregnés de sang, dans leur breuvage, et leur haine a pu s'en repaître avec acharnement; ce fait a eu lieu dans une café Rue Saint Honoré près de celle de Richelieu."—Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*, (a Revolutionary journal,) No. ii. p. 25, 18 *à* 25 *Juillet* 1789. The murder of Berthier was immediately owing to the fabricated story circulated of his having said

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the atrocities of the capital into the shade. The regular soldiers almost every where declared for the people; and as this gave the latter the command of the whole arsenals in France, the populace were, in every quarter, speedily armed, and no power existed in the state which could coerce or restrain them. In many provinces the peasants rose in arms, ransacked and burned the chateaus of the landlords, and massacred or expelled the possessors. The horrors of the insurrection of the Jacquerie, in the time of Edward III., were revived on a greater scale, and with circumstances of deeper atrocity. In their blind fury the insurgents did not even spare those seigneurs who were known to be inclined to the popular side, or had done the most to mitigate their sufferings or support their rights. The most cruel tortures were inflicted on the victims who fell into their hands; many had the soles of their feet roasted over a slow fire before being put to death; others had their hair and eyebrows burnt off, while their dwellings were destroyed, after which they were drowned in the nearest fishpond. The Marquis of Barras was cut into little bits before his wife, far advanced in pregnancy, who shortly after died of horror; the roads were covered with young women of rank and beauty flying from death, and leading their aged parents by the hand. It was amidst the cries of agony, and by the light of conflagration, that liberty arose in France.[1]

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 3, 4, 1789, p. 138. Lac. vii. 130, 132. Th. i. 127. Chateaub. Mém. 83, 84.

21. Hideous massacre of M. de Belzunce. Aug 11.

At Caen and several other towns of Normandy, the massacres of the metropolis were too faithfully imitated. M. de Belzunce, an amiable young man of a noble family, major in the regiment of Bourbon, stationed at that town, had endeavoured to preserve his men from the contagion of revolt, and he had so far succeeded as to have attracted the notice of Marat, who in several numbers of his incen-

that the people were fit only to eat grass; but it is now known that it was owing to a deeper cause, and implicated more exalted personages. He had transmitted to Louis two secret memoirs, in which he had advised him either to yield and concede at once the whole demands of the Assembly, or to put himself at the head of his army, and arrest several members of the Assembly, who were implicated in the Orleans conspiracy. Hese memoirs were read in presence of Louis de Narbonne, who informed Madame de Staël of their import, and she had the imprudence to make Mirabeau acquainted with them. Hence the virulence of the chiefs of the revolt against this estimable man, the father of eight children, alike distinguished by their virtues and their manners.—*See* MADAME CAMPAN, ii. 62; *and* CONDORCET'S *Memoirs*, i. 259.

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diary journal had stigmatised him as an aristocrat who should forthwith be delivered over to popular vengeance. Soon a furious multitude arose and demanded his head; the magistrates, to avoid a civil war, requested him to go to the Hôtel de Ville with them, which he at once did, and from thence, for additional security, he was sent under an escort of the National Guard, who pledged themselves for his safety, to the citadel, while, to remove all cause of irritation, his regiment was ordered by the commandant of the province to leave the town. No sooner were they gone than the crowd, worked up by a fresh journal of Marat's, in which he was again denounced, broke into the citadel; the National Guard, as usual, did nothing to coerce the people, and M. de Belzunce was dragged out and shot in the chief square of the town, in presence of the powerless magistrates. No sooner was he dead than his body was torn in pieces; his head paraded through the streets on a pike, and his entrails hanging on other spears like ribbons. Bits of his flesh were divided among the people; some were eaten by the cannibals, others put into bottles of spirits to be preserved.* These hideous atrocities sunk deep into the heart of a young and beautiful woman of rank, by whom M. de Belzunce had been tenderly beloved, and who, though belonging to the liberal party, was tinged by none of its vices, and lived to take a signal revenge on the author of his murder; her name was Charlotte Corday.[1]

[1] Marat, Avis au Peuple, Aug. 8, 1789. Du val, Souv. de la Ter. i. 175, 176 Prudhomme, Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 149. Lac. vii. 129

22. Atrocities at St Denis, Troyes, Strasbourg, Orleans, and Marseilles. Aug. 1.

Similar atrocities disgraced many other of the large towns in France, especially Strasbourg, Troyes, Nismes, and Orleans. At St Denis the crowd fell upon M. Chatel, the mayor of the town, cut off his head, and paraded it into Paris: his wife, who witnessed the deed, threw herself into a well and was drowned. On the same day M. Montesson was seized in the Chateau de Juigne, near Mans, with M. Cureau, his father-in-law, by a furious

* "Beaucoup des citoyens de Caen voulurent avoir un lambeau de sa chair, beaucoup en emportèrent dans leurs poche, d'autres firent précéder la spectacle de sa tête par la vue de ses entrailles attachés au haut d'une pique en guise de rubans. Un homme envoya un morceau de sa chair à un four de boulanger *pour être cuite et pour en faire un repas de famille.* Une sage femme alla plus loin: elle n'eut pas de relache qu'elle n'eut obtenue un fragment des partes sexuelles de la victime qu'elle conserva dans un bocal rempli d'esprit de vin."—Prudhomme, *Crîmes de la Révolution*, iii. 149. (A Republican writer.)

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mob, which broke open the house. First the noses and ears of these unhappy men, and at length their heads were cut off, and paraded on pikes in presence of the magistrates, who were compelled to be present at this great act of popular justice. In Strasbourg, a frightful tumult took place; six hundred rioters besieged the Hôtel de Ville, pillaged it, and threatened the whole town with conflagration. At Troyes, a mob assembled round the Hôtel de Ville, exclaiming that the bread was made of unwholesome flour; and though the Mayor Huez pronounced a sentence condemning it to be burnt, yet such was the fury of the people, that they fell upon him in the Hippodrome; he was knocked down, and instantly a frantic mob of men, women, and children fell upon him and massacred him on the spot—one woman, seeing that his body yet quivered, plunged her scissors in his eyes, and scooped them out. At Marseilles the fury of the populace was only suppressed after a vehement contest between the National Guard and the insurgents. At Orleans a still greater calamity ensued. There vigorous efforts were made by the troops of the line and police to protect the convoys of provisions coming into the town from pillage, and in the conflict eight men were killed and twelve wounded. Instantly a furious mob of some thousand persons got up and assailed the troops, but they were boldly met: eighty men were killed, and a still greater number wounded; but the insurrection was at once suppressed. If the same fidelity and vigour had been generally exerted in France, the reign of blood would have been stifled in its cradle.[1]

[1] Prudhom. Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 157, 160. Lab. iii 322. Duval, i 17.

23. Conflagration of the Chateaus.

But nothing in these frightful days equalled the atrocities which were committed by the insurgent peasants upon the inmates of the chateaus, which they sacked and burnt in the first transports produced by the taking of the Bastile. In the space of a few days sixty-seven chateaus in the districts Maconnais and Beaujolais alone were delivered over to the flames, and all the churches containing the tombs of the ancestors of the nobility destroyed. In Dauphiny, thirty-six shared the same fate, and their whole inhabitants were burnt or massacred. In Burgundy several of the nobles strove to resist, and by arming their servants and a few faithful retainers, succeeded in inflicting

some severe losses on the insurgents; but the latter soon became so numerous, that all attempts to withstand them only aggravated the sufferings of the landowners without averting their fate. A forged proclamation of the king was spread, in which he was made to call on the people to rise and avenge themselves on the oppressors alike of the sovereign and themselves. This at once stimulated revolt and disarmed resistance. A body of six thousand armed brigands traversed the country on both sides of the Soane, burning and destroying chateaus and churches indiscriminately; while French Flanders, Dauphiny, Alsace, and the Lyonnais, were the prey of similar disorders.[1]*

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 6, 7, 1789, col. 2. Prudhom. Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 179, 181. Duval, iii. 179.

24. Cruelties exercised on the Seigneurs

Nothing in this hideous catalogue could exceed the cruelty exercised by the peasants in endeavouring to extort from the seigneurs their title-deeds. As possession of the land for nothing was the real object of the movement, they were impressed with the idea, which often proved well-founded, that if they could only discover and destroy the title-deeds, no one could claim the lands and property, and they would enjoy their farms without disturbance. Incredible were the efforts they made, if they could not find the title-deeds in the chateaus, to torture the landowners and their families into a discovery of where they were. In Normandy, one of the seigneurs was placed on a frying-pan, to make him give up his title-deeds; he was taken from it, with his two hands burnt to the bone, without disclosing the secret. In Franche-Comté, the axe was raised over the head of Madame de Batteville, to extort from her the same discovery; and a pistol put the breast of the Princess de Listenay. Cruelties of the same sort were exercised on Madame de Tonnerre and many others: often without extracting, even by the dread of instant death, the desired disclosure.[2]†

[2] Prudhom. Crîmes de la Rév. i. 181. Moniteur, Aug. 3, 4, 1789, p. 138.

* "Ce fut dans le Maconnais et le Beaujolais que la desolation des campagnes offrit le tableau le plus affreux. Soixante-douze chateaux furent la proie des flammes, ou de la rapacité de 6000 brigands. Seigneurs, proprietaires, fermiers, curés, jusqu'aux églises—tout portait les marques de leur furieux sacrilège. Les cultivateurs, menacés de l'incendie, tremblants de voir leurs maisons reduites en cendres, n'osèrent pas y renfermer leurs moisons. Cette troupe des forcenés enhardis par l'impunité grossissait avec une rapidité effrayante. Ils se portaient dans tous les villages, sonnaient tous les cloches, et forçaient tous les hommes, le pistolet à la gorge de marcher avec eux."—*Moniteur*, 6 *à* 7 *Août* 1789, col. 2.

† "Dans les premiers momens de l'effervescence ce fut un crîme d'être gentilhomme, et le sexe même ne put se garantir de la fureur de la multitude. M. de Montesson fut fusillé à Mans après avoir vu egorger son beau-père; en Languedoc M. de Barras fut coupé en morceaux, devant sa femme

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25. Disgraceful supineness of the Assembly amidst these excesses.

The National Assembly was well aware of the general prevalence of these horrors; its own proceedings and proclamations contain official notice of their extent.* But they did nothing whatever of an efficient character to repress them. They issued, indeed, several proclamations against the disorders, and calling on the people to respect property, but they made no enquiries as to their authors—they instituted no prosecutions, punished no offenders. They even declined to interfere, though violently affected, when M. Berthier flew to Versailles to implore their protection for M. Foulon, his father-in-law, and adjured Lally Tollendal, by the love he had borne to the memory of his parent, to save his father, now tottering on the edge of the tomb. Though they had now, by their direction of the National Guard, the control of the whole armed force of France, they gave no orders tending to discharge the first duty of government, that of protecting life and property. Thus their proclamations remained a dead letter; and the people easily saw that they were not sincere in their professed desire to terminate the devastations, by the constant apologies which Mirabeau, Robespierre, Siêyes, and the other popular orators, made for these excesses, as the natural and inevitable result of centuries of previous oppression.[1] The real motives of their conduct are thus revealed by Dumont:—"Indeed they were so far committed in a

[1] Bert. de Moll iii. 83, 84.

prete d'accoucher; en Normandie un seigneur paralytique fut abandonné sur un bucher, dont on se retira les mains brulées; en Franche-Comté Mad. de Batteville fut forcée, la hache sur la tête, de faire l'abandon de ses titres; la Princesse de Listenay y fut egalement constrainte ayant, la fourche au col et ses deux filles evanouies à ses pieds. Madame de Tonnerre, M. L'Allemand subvient le même sort; Le Chevelier d'Ambly, trainé nu sur un fumier, vit danser autour de lui les furieux qui venaient de lui arracher les cheveaux et les soureils. M d'Ormenan et Madame de Monteran eurent pendant trois heures le pistolet à la gorge, demandant la mort comme une grace, et ne voulant pas consentir à la cession de leurs droits, ils furent tirés de leurs voitures pour être jétés dans un etang."—*Moniteur*, 3 *à* 4 *Août* 1789, p. 138, col. i.

* In their report on the disorders on 3d August 1789, the Assembly stated;—"Letters and memorials received from *all the provinces* have proved, that property of every kind is every where the prey of the most atrocious plunders; that through the country the houses are burned, the convents destroyed, and farms given up to pillage; imposts, seignorial rights, all are annihilated; the laws are without force, the magistrates without authority, and justice is now but a phantom which it is vain to seek in the courts of law."—*Memorial of 3d August* 1789.

"On s'est armé de toutes pièces; on s'est jétés sur les chateaux voisins; le peuple qui ne connait plus de frein, lorsqu'on croit qu'on a merité sa fureur, s'est porté et se porté encore aux derniers excès, a brulé, saccagé les chartiers de seigneurs, les a contrainte à renoncer à leurs droits; a demoli et inondé plusieurs chateaux et incendié des abbayes."—*Histoire Parlémentaire de la France*, ii. 162.

contest with the crown and the aristocracy, that, instead of repining, they rejoiced in secret at atrocities which seemed necessary to complete the intimidation of their adversaries. They felt that they had put themselves in a situation where they must either fear the noblesse, or be feared by them. Thus, for decency's sake, they blamed openly and applauded privately; they conferred praises on the constituted authorities, and in secret gave encouragement to license. The usual consequence of violent usurpation is, to compel men to plunge deeper into the stream of revolution, and commit the greater crimes, to save themselves from the consequences of the lesser which they have already perpetrated."[1]

[1] Dumont, Vie de Mirabeau, 133, 134.

26. Commencement of the emigration of the noblesse.

It soon appeared what objects the Revolutionists had in view in perpetrating or screening and palliating these excesses. They led at once to the general EMIGRATION OF THE NOBLESSE; the cause of evils unnumbered to their country and to themselves, and which powerfully contributed to stamp its peculiar and fatal character on the French Revolution. The first emigration of the Royalist leaders began on the day when the King, having resolved on submission, repaired to Paris. The Count d'Artois, the Prince of Condé, the Prince of Conti, the Marshal de Broglie, M. de Breteuil, and the whole obnoxious members of the ministry, seeing their plans of resistance overturned, and the army generally in revolt, set off secretly from Versailles, and arrived safe at Brussels. With profound affliction the Queen bade adieu to her faithful friend Madame de Polignac, with the sad presentiment, which was too fatally realised, that she should never see her more. The Prince of Bourbon and the Duke d'Enghien soon followed. Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII., who inclined to liberal opinions, and was not exposed to the same danger, remained for some time longer with the King, but was at length likewise constrained to leave the country. The Duke de Luxembourg, though a moderate adherent of the new opinions, and the Marshal de Carrier, the friend of Necker, retired, the one into England, the other to Germany. M. d'Espremenil, the former idol of the people, M. de Cazales, and the Abbé Maury, also withdrew;[2] but they were arrested in Picardy, and brought

July 17.

[2] Lab. iii. 268, 269. Toul. i. 83. Bert. de Moll. ii. 51, 62.

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back to the Assembly, who placed them under the shield of its inviolability.

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27. The insurrection of the peasants renders the emigration general.

Although, however, the emigration of these leaders of the Royalist party was a very disastrous thing for France, by abandoning the sovereign without either counsels or support in the midst of a rebellious people, yet the great mass of the noblesse had not as yet left the country. It was the insurrection of the peasants, the burning of the chateaus, and the frightful cruelties exercised on the nobles in so many of the provinces of France, which rendered emigration general. It is not surprising that, when the landed proprietors saw such numbers of country-houses sacked and burnt, and their unhappy inmates murdered or roasted alive, without any attempt being made by the National Assembly, the army, the National Guard, or the constituted authorities, either to defend them or to punish their assassins, they should have given up the cause for lost, and deemed that, as in a shipwreck at sea, the only hope that remained was to quit the vessel, and make, destitute of every thing, for the nearest shore. But, however natural or unavoidable it might be, in the first moments of alarm at these infamous cruelties, yet was the emigration of the noblesse, and still more, their continued residence abroad when the disorders had in a great degree subsided, a great fault, a most calamitous circumstance. It left the King destitute alike of moral and physical support, and deprived the nation of all leaders who could have taken advantage of the reaction in favour of order which ensued erelong, when the woful consequences of democratic government had been practically experienced.[1]

[1] Lab. iii. 270, 271. Toul. i. 95.

28. Abandonment of the feudal rights by the nobles. Aug. 4.

The fatal effect of this universal discouragement and general emigration of the noblesse was speedily felt in the measures of the Assembly; and it soon appeared that if the people require an executive to retain them in their duty, the legislature stands not less in need of its protection to prevent it from being impelled to the destruction of the national institutions. The dissolution of the royal authority was erelong followed by an unexampled proceeding on the part of the National Assembly. On the night of the 4th August, amidst general consternation at the accounts received from the provinces on the preceding

day, the Viscount de Noailles gave the signal for innovation, by proposing that the burden of taxes should fall equally on all classes; that the feudal rights should be declared liable to rèdemption, and personal servitude be simply abolished. The Duke d'Aiguillon, in an eloquent speech, seconded the proposal. This, though a great concession, founded alike in justice and expedience, was far from satisfying the popular party. A painful picture of the oppression of feudal rights was drawn, and the generosity of the nobles piqued to consent to their voluntary surrender. All parties began, contrary to all expectation, to vie with each other in proposing the abolition of abuses; the contagion became universal; in a few hours the whole feudal rights were abandoned. The Duke de Chatelet proposed that the right of buying up tithes should be allowed, and that they should be commuted into a payment in money; the Bishop of Nancy, the general redemption of ecclesiastical property; the Bishop of Chartres, the suppression of the exclusive right of the chase. The more important rights of feudal jurisdiction in matters of crime, of the disposal of offices for gain, of pecuniary immunities, of inequality of taxes, of plurality of benefices, of casual emolument to the clergy, of annats to the court of Rome, were successively abandoned: finally, the incorporations and separate states sacrificed their privileges; the Bretons, the Burgundians, the Languedocians, renounced the rights which had withstood the assaults of Richelieu and Louvois. All the monuments of freedom, which the patriotism of former times had erected, were swept away, and the liberty established in its stead was founded on an imaginary and untried basis.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 225, 242. Moniteur, Aug. 4, 5, 1789, p. 142. Mig. i. 71. Lac. vii. 140. Th. i. 129, 131.

29. Speech of the Duke d'Aiguillon.

On this occasion the most remarkable speech was that made by the Duke d'Aiguillon, which gives a picture of the views that dictated these immense and sudden concessions, and shows how large a share the horrors of which the country was at that moment the theatre, had in producing them. "There is no one," said he, "who must not groan over the scenes of horror which France at this moment exhibits. The effervescence of the people, who have conquered freedom when guilty ministers sought to ravish it from them, has now become an obstacle to freedom, at a time when the views of government are again

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in harmony with the wishes of the nation. It is not merely the brigands who, with arms in their hands, wish to enrich themselves in the midst of the public calamities; in many provinces, the entire mass of the peasantry have formed themselves into a league to destroy the chateaus, ravage the lands, and, above all, get possession of the charter-chests where the feudal titles are deposited. They seek to shake off a yoke which for centuries has weighed upon them; and we must admit that, though that insurrection is culpable, (what violent aggression is not so?) yet it finds much excuse in the vexations which have produced it. The proprietors of fiefs, or of seignorial rights, it is true, have seldom themselves perpetrated the injustice of which their vassals complain, but their stewards and agents have done so; and the unhappy labourer, subjected to the barbarous yoke of the feudal laws which still subsist in France, groans under the constraint of which he is the victim. These rights, it must be admitted, are property, and all property is sacred; but they are burdensome to the people, and all are agreed as to the continual vexations which they produce. In this enlightened age, when a sound philosophy has resumed its empire; at this fortunate moment, when, united for the public good, and free from all personal interest, we are called upon to labour for the regeneration of the state; it appears to me, that before proceeding to the construction of a constitution, so ardently desired by the nation, we should prove to all the citizens that our wish is even to anticipate their desires, and to establish, as quickly as possible, that equality of rights which should ever prevail among men, and can alone secure their liberty. I doubt not that the proprietors of fiefs, the lords of estates, will be the first to agree to the renunciation of their rights on reasonable indemnity. They have already renounced their pecuniary exemptions; we cannot expect them to renounce gratuitously their feudal rights—but we may expect them to consent to the purchase of their seignorial rights by their vassals, at a price to be fixed on a moderate scale by the Assembly."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 225, 227.

Such was the enthusiasm produced by these words, and by the graphic descriptions of feudal oppression which followed from succeeding orators, that the Assem-

bly, who were in the excited state of an evening meeting, went on abandoning and voting away one right after another, till there seemed no end to their extravagance. "Every one," says an eyewitness, Dumont, "hastened forward to lay a sacrifice on the altar of the country, by denuding himself or some one else. There was not a moment left for reflection; a sort of sentimental contagion carried away every heart. That renunciation of all privileges, that sacrifice of all rights burdensome to the people, those multiplied abandonments, had an air of magnanimity which made their consequences be entirely overlooked." To such a height did the enthusiasm arise, that the Archbishop of Paris deserved no small credit for having dexterously contrived to terminate the sitting by the proposal that a *Te Deum* should be sung in the chapel of the King, in presence of his Majesty and the Assembly, which was received with universal acclamation. The Archbishop concluded with a proposal that the King should receive the title of "Father of his People, Restorer of the Liberty of France;" and the sitting terminated at four in the morning amid unanimous acclamations, which lasted a quarter of an hour.[1]

30. Universal transports of this meeting.

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 4, 5, 1789, p. 144. Bert. de Moll. ii. 127. Smyth's Fr. Rev. i. 330. Dumont, 144.

31. Prodigious effects of these changes.

Indescribable were the transports which this memorable sitting awakened in Paris, and throughout all France. "In a single night," said the *Moniteur*, "the whole fabric of feudal power has fallen to the ground, and the glorious edifice of general liberty emerged in its stead." It has been truly said, that this night changed the political condition of France. It delivered the land from feudal domination the person from feudal dependence; secured the property of the poor from the rapacity of the rich, the fruits of industry from the extortion of idleness. By suppressing private jurisdictions, it paved the way for public justice; by terminating the purchase of offices, it led to purity in the discharge of their duties. The career of industry, the stimulus of ambition, was thenceforward open to all the people; and the odious distinctions of noble and roturier, patrician and base-born, the relics of Gothic conquest, were for ever destroyed. Had these changes been introduced with caution, or had they gradually grown out of the altered condition of society, there can be no doubt that they would

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have been highly beneficial; but coming as they did, suddenly and unexpectedy upon the kingdom, they produced the most disastrous consequences, and contributed, more than any other circumstance, to spread abroad that settled contempt for antiquity, and total disregard of private right, which distinguished the subsequent periods of the French Revolution.

32. Dangers with which they were attended.

The whole ideas of men were subverted, when rights established for centuries, privileges maintained by successive generations, and institutions held the most sacred, were at once abandoned. Nothing could be regarded as stable in society after such a shock; the chimeras of every enthusiast, the dream of every visionary, seemed equally deserving of attention with the sober conclusions of reason and observation, when all that former ages had done was swept away in the very commencement of improvement. All that the eye had rested on as most stable, all that the mind had been accustomed to regard as most lasting, disappeared before the first breath of innovation. "Nullo tribunorum centurionumve adhortante, sibi quisque dux et instigator; et præcipuum pessimorum incitamentum, quod boni mœrebant."* The consequences of such a step could not be other than fatal. It opened the door to every species of extravagance, furnished a precedent for every subsequent spoliation, and led immediately to that intense excitement, amid which the most audacious and the least reasonable are sure of obtaining an ascendancy. The event, accordingly, proved the justice of these principles. "The decrees of the 4th August," says Dumont, "so far from putting, as was expected, a stop to the robbery and violence that was going on, served only to make the people acquainted with their own strength, and to inspire them with a conviction, that all their outrages against the nobility would pass with impunity. *Nothing done through fear succeeds in its object.* Those whom you hope to disarm by concessions, are only led by them to still bolder attempts, and more extravagant demands."[1]

[1] Dumont, 149.

The consequences of this invasion of private right were

* "Without any incitement from the tribunes or leaders, every one indulged in his own vagaries; and that greatest of excitements to the bad, the grief of the good, took place."—TACITUS, *Hist.* i. 38.

33.
Argument against spoliation of the church by Siêyes.
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soon apparent. Three days after, the popular leaders maintained that it was not the power of redeeming, but the *abolition* of tithes, which had been voted; and that all that the clergy had a right to was a decent provision for their members. The church found an able but unexpected advocate in the Abbé Siêyes. "If it is yet possible," said he, "to awaken in your minds the love of justice, I would ask, not if it is expedient, but if it is just, to despoil the church? The tithe, whatever it may be in future, does not at present belong to you. If it is suppressed in the hand of the creditor, does it follow from this that it is extinguished also in that of the debtor, and become your property? You yourselves have declared the tithe redeemable; by so doing you have recognised its legal existence, and cannot now suppress it. The tithe does not belong to the owner of the soil. He has neither purchased it, nor acquired it by inheritance. If you extinguish the tithes, you confer a gratuitous and uncalled-for present on the landed proprietor, who does nothing, while you ruin the true proprietor, who instructs the people in return for that share of its fruits. You would be free, and you know not how to be just."[1]

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 7, 8, 1789, pp. 158, 159. Th. i. 134. Dumont, 147. Hist. Parl. ii. 255, 257.

31.
Argument for church spoliation by Mirabeau.

Mirabeau supported the abolition of the tithes. He argued, "The burden of supporting the public worship should be borne equally by all: the state alone was the judge whether it should fall exclusively on the landed proprietors, or be made good by a general contribution of the citizens; it robs no one if it makes such a distribution of the burden as it deems most expedient; and the oppressive weight of this impost on the small proprietors loudly called for its imposition on the state in general. For this purpose the clergy should be paid by salaries. It is time, in the midst of a revolution which has brought forth such generous sentiments, that we should abjure the haughty pride which makes us disdain the word salary. I know but three ways of living in society: you must be either a beggar, a robber, or a stipendiary. The proprietor is nothing but the first of stipendiaries. What we call property is nothing but a right to rent, that is, a certain payment out of the land. The landowners are the stewards, the agents of the social body." The clergy had the generosity to intrust their interests to the equity of

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the Assembly; the only return they met with was the suppression of tithes, under the condition that the state should fitly provide for religion and its ministers—an obligation which was solemnly committed to the French nation, but which was afterwards shamefully violated, and in fact became perfectly illusory. Thus the first fruit which the clergy derived from their junction with the *Tiers Etat*, was the annihilation of their property, and the reduction of themselves to beggary. In this there was nothing surprising; gratitude is unknown in public assemblies. When men vote away the property of others, they can expect no mercy for their own; when the foundations of society are torn up, the first to be sacrificed are the leaders of the movement or the most defenceless of its supporters.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 257, 259. Lac. vii. 145, 147. Toul. i. 103. Dumont, 147. Th. i. 135.

35. Dignified conduct of the clergy. Aug. 11.

The clergy acted on this occasion with a noble disinterestedness worthy of their mission. The first in rank, the chief in station, the richest in possessions, were the foremost to make the sacrifice of worldly goods on the altar of their country. The Archbishop of Aix first signed an unqualified renunciation of his benefices; many of the richest bishops in France immediately followed his example. During more than an hour the signature of these renunciations continued, amidst a transport of applause from the Assembly and the galleries. When the sacrifice had terminated, M. de Juigne, archbishop of Paris, rose and said, in a voice penetrated with emotion—"We surrender the ecclesiastical tithes into the hands of a just and generous nation: let the gospel be preached; let the Divine worship be celebrated with decency and dignity; let the churches be provided with virtuous and zealous pastors; let the poor be succoured: these are the objects to which we devote our tithes; these are the ends of our ministry and our cares." "Such," said the Cardinal de Rochefoucault, "is the wish of all the clergy; and they put their trust in the magnanimity of the nation." With such dignified and elevated sentiments did the church fall in France.[2]

[2] Moniteur, Aug. 10 and 14. 1789, p. 165.

Louis perceived in the clearest manner, amidst this chaos of selfishness in some, enthusiasm in others, and delusion in all, whither the current was tending; and, in a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Arles, he has left

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36. Foresight of Louis, and decree of the Assembly. Aug. 11.

the clearest evidence, both of the sagacity of his perception and the strength of his understanding.* But, meanwhile, the revolutionary party, seeing their advantage, pursued their aggressions with unabated vigour; and the noblesse and clergy, panic-struck and disunited, and overwhelmed by a decided majority in the Assembly, were unable to oppose any resistance. In the evening sitting of the 11th August, the subject of the feudal rights, the game-laws, and the tithes, was resumed; and, after a warm debate, a decree was passed in such terms as abolished the first, partly on condition of an indemnity, partly without it; the second without any indemnity; and the third absolutely without compensation in the case of secular or ecclesiastical bodies, and on the promise of an indemnity in that of the parochial clergy. This indemnity was never given. At the same time, all privileges of incorporations, burghs, and provinces, were abolished, and all Frenchmen declared eligible alike to all offices, civil and military, in the kingdom.† This decree was sanctioned with great solemnity by the King on the 13th August.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, ii. 286, 288. Decrét de Aug. 11. 1789. Hist. Parl. ii. 259, 261.

Those innovators in the Assembly who had joined with the popular party from a belief that in doing so lay their only chance of preserving the wreck of their property, now perceived, with bitter regret, the infatuated course they had pursued, and the hopelessness of any expectation

* "Je suis content de cette démarche noble et généreuse des deux premiers ordres de l'état. Ils ont fait des grands sacrifices pour la reconciliation générale, pour leur patrie, pour leur Roi. Le sacrifice est beau; mais je ne puis que l'admirer. Je *ne consentirai jamais à depouiller mon clergé*, ma noblesse. Je ne donnerai pas ma sanction à des décrets qui les dépouilleraient; c'est alors que le peuple Français un jour peut m'accuser d'injustice ou de faiblesse. M. l'Archévêque, vous vous soumettez aux décrets de la Providence; je crois me soumettre *en ne me livrant à cet enthusiasme* qui s'est emparé de tous les ordres, mais qui ne fait que glisser sur mon âme. Je ferai tout ce que dépendra de moi pour conserver mon clergé, ma noblesse. Si la force m'obligeait à sanctionner, alors je céderai; mais alors il n'y aurait plus en France, ni monarchie, ni monarque. Les momens sont difficiles. Je le sais, M. l'Archévêque, et c'est ici que nous avons besoin des lumières du ciel: daignez les soliciter. Nous serons exaucés."—(Signé) Louis, *Août* 12, 1789.—What a picture does this letter exhibit of the wisdom and foresight of the monarch at this crisis when all heads were reeling; and how bitterly does it augment our regret at the unpatriotic and pusillanimous emigration of the noblesse, which left such a sovereign unarmed and helpless in the midst of his enemies!—See *Correspondence Inédité de* Louis XVI. i. 140; and *Histoire Parlémentaire*, ii. 248.

† I. L'Assemblée Nationale détruit entièrement le régime feodal. Elle décrete que, dans les droits et devoirs, tant feodaux que personels, ceux qui tiennent à la main-morte réelle ou personelle, et à la servitude personelle,

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37. Unavailing regrets of the nobles and clergy who joined the popular party.

that, by yielding to revolutionary demands, they would satisfy the people. The Bishop of Chartres, one of the popular bishops who had supported the union of orders, the vote by head, and the new constitution, was at this time visited by Dumont, when he was dismissing his domestics, selling his effects, and leaving his house to discharge his debts; with tears in his eyes the benevolent prelate deplored the infatuation which had led him to embrace the cause of the *Tiers Etat*, which violated in its prosperity all the engagements contracted in its adversity. The Abbé Siêyes, who had taken so decided a part in the early usurpations of the Assembly, was hissed and coughed down when he strove to resist this iniquitous confiscation. Next day he gave vent to his spleen to Mirabeau, who answered, "My dear abbé, you have loosed the bull; do you expect he is not to make use of his horns?"[1]

[1] Dumont, 66, 67, 147.

38. Secret causes of this spoliation of the church, at which all classes connived.

This first and great precedent of iniquity, the confiscation of the property of the church, was brought about by the selfish apathy, or secret wishes, of the great majority of the laity. All classes felt that the financial difficulties of the state were nearly insurmountable, and all anticipated a sensible relief from any measure, how violent soever, which might lead to their extrication. It was the universal belief that this embarrassment was the main cause of the public difficulties, and the secret hope that the property of the church would at once put an end to it, which was the real cause of this general and iniquitous coalition. All imagined that some interest must be sacrificed, and the church was pitched upon as at once the most wealthy and

et ceux qui les représentent, sont abolis sans indemnité; tous les autres sont declarés rachetables, et le prix et le mode du rachat seront fixés par l'Assemblée Nationale.

II. Le droit exclusif de la chasse et des garennes ouvertes est pareillement aboli, et tout propriétaire a le droit de détruire, et faire détruire, seulement sur ses possessions, tout espèce de gibier.

III. Les dîmes de toute nature, et les redevances qui en tiennent lieu, sous quelque denomination qu'elles aient connues et perçues, possédées par *les corps séculiers et reguliers, par les bénéficiers*, les fabriques, et tous genres de main-morte tenue par l'ordre de Matte, et autres ordres religieuses et militaires, moins celles qui auraient été abandonnées à des laics en remplacement et pour option de portions congrues, *sont abolies.* Sauf à aviser aux moyens à subvenir *d'un autre manière* à la dépense du culte divin, à l'entretien des ministres des autels, au soulagement des pauvres, aux reparations et réconstructions des églises et presbytères, et à tous les établissemens à l'entretien de quels elles sont actuellement affectées.—*Histoire Parlémentaire de la Révolution*, ii. 259, 263; *Decrét*, 11*me Août* 1789.

defenceless body in the state. But, like all other measures of spoliation, this great invasion of private right rapidly and fatally recoiled on the heads of those who engaged in it. The ecclesiastical estates, it was soon found, in the hands of the revolutionary agents, encumbered as they were with the debts of the clergy, yielded no profit, but were rather a burden to the state: to render them available, the contraction of debt on their security became necessary; the temptation of relieving the public necessities by such a step was irresistible to a public and irresponsible body, holding estates to the value of nearly two hundred millions sterling in their hands. Extraordinary as it may appear, it is a well-authenticated fact, that the expenses of managing the church property cost the nation at first £2,000,000 a-year more than it yielded, besides in a few years augmenting the public debt by £7,000,000. The reason was this: in the confusion consequent on so great an act of spoliation, no account of ecclesiastical domains could be obtained; and the leaders who had sanctioned so prodigious a robbery found it impossible, after its commission, to restrain the peculation of their inferior agents. Hence erelong, as will appear in the sequel, arose the system of ASSIGNATS, which speedily quadrupled the strength of the republican government, rendered irretrievable the march of the Revolution, and involved all classes in such inextricable difficulties, as rapidly brought home to every interest in the state the spoliation which they had begun by inflicting on the weakest.[1]

[1] Calonne, 81, 82. Burke, v. 421.

39. Abolition of the right of shooting and hunting. Its effects.

The abolition of the exclusive right of shooting and hunting was made the pretext for the most destructive disorders throughout all France. An immense crowd of artisans and mechanics issued from the towns, and, joining the rural population, spread themselves over the fields in search of game. The greatest violence was speedily committed by the armed and uncontrollable multitude. No sort of regard was paid to the clause in the decree of the Assembly, that the right of the chase was given to each man on his own ground only. It was universally considered as conferring a general right to shoot over any ground whatever. Enclosures were struck down, woods

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destroyed, houses broken open, robbery perpetrated, under pretence of exercising the newly regained rights of man. Meanwhile, the burning of the chateaus, and the plunder of the landed proprietors, continued without intermission, while the Assembly, instead of attempting to check these disorders, issued a proclamation, in which they affected to consider them as the work of aristocrats, who were desirous of bringing odium upon the Revolution. One of the most singular effects of the spirit of faction, is the absurdities which it causes to be embraced by its votaries, and their extraordinary credulity in regard to every thing which seems calculated to advance the interests of their party. The people of Versailles already insulted and pelted the nobles and clergy at the gate of the Assembly, whom they stigmatised as *Aristocrats*—an epithet which afterwards became the prelude to certain destruction. It may readily be imagined what an effect this name had in influencing the minds of men, already sufficiently inflamed from other causes. "Epithets and nicknames," said Napoleon, "should never be despised: it is by such means that mankind are governed."[1]

[1] Deux Amis, ii. 279, 281. Bert. de Moll. ii. 127, 130. Lac. vii. 149. Dumont, i. 72.

40. Dreadful distress at Paris.

But in the midst of these mingled transports and disorders, Paris was in the most deplorable state of distress, and the finances of the kingdom, from the general cessation in the payment of taxes, were rapidly approaching a state of complete insolvency. Even the columns of the *Moniteur** openly announced that the municipality was bankrupt, and the people starving. Nor was the public exchequer in a more flourishing condition. M. Necker, on 7th August, drew the following dreadful picture of the state of the kingdom and of the finances:—"You are all aware that property has been violated in the provinces; that bands of incendiaries have ravaged the houses; that the forms of justice are disregarded, and replaced by violence and lists of proscription. Terror and alarm have spread universally even where the bands of depredators

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* "J'ai parlé de la capitale, du désespoir de ses habitans. Le développement de cette verité peut être dangereux, et n'est pas nécessaire. La prudence ordonne de taire; et vôtre pénétration saura bien saisir l'excès du mal qui entraine à Paris dans cet instant une suspension de payement. Qu'oppose-t'on, que peut-on opposer à cette première necéssité, à ce premier devoir de venir au secours de la chose publique qui périt?"—*Discours de* M. De Lally Tollendal, 7*me Août* 1789, *Moniteur*, p. 155.

have not penetrated; licentiousness is unrestrained, law powerless; the tribunals idle; desolation covers a part of France, terror the whole; commerce and industry are suspended, and even the asylums of religion afford no longer a refuge to the innocent. Indigence or misfortune has not produced these evils. The season has been propitious, and at this time of the year should furnish employment to all. The beneficence of the king has been shown in every possible way; the rich have never shared so large a portion of their wealth with the poor. No, gentlemen! It is the total subversion of the police, and of all regular authority, which has occasioned these evils. The royal revenues have been in great part absorbed in the purchase of grain to feed the people. The payment of imposts and taxes of every sort has almost entirely ceased. The deficiency in the exchequer is enormous. So vast has this evil become that every one can judge of it; it is notorious to all the world. Let us then all unite to save the state; for matters have come to such a pass that nothing but the immediate and firm union of all men of property, can preserve us from the most dreadful convulsions."[1]

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 6, 7, 1789, pp. 152, 154.

41. Anarchy in Paris.

It was not surprising that even the popular leader of the *Tiers Etat* made such a mournful exposition of the state of the nation, for matters had in reality reached such a height in Paris, and over all France, that they amounted to almost total anarchy. Every body of men in the capital instantly entered on the exercise of their new and intoxicating rights; and the electors invariably assumed the government of their representatives. One hundred and eighty delegafes, nominated by the districts, usurped a legislative power in the metropolis; but they were in their turn controlled by their constituents, who, without hesitation, annulled their decrees when not suited to their inclinations; and nothing was agreeable but what flattered their ambition. The idea of ruling by commanding their delegates, speedily spread among the multitude, and was too delicious a one not to be every where well received. All those who were not legally vested with authority began to meet, and to give themselves importance by discussing public affairs;[2] the soldiers had debates at the Oratoire, the tailors at the Colonnade, the hairdressers at the Champs

Aug. 15 to 20.

[2] Mig. i. 85. Th. 111. Bert de Moll. ii. 147, 149.

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Elysées, the valets at the Louvre. Subsequent ages might smile at such proceedings, if woful experience had not demonstrated how fatal they are in their consequences, and how rapidly the minds of the lower orders become intoxicated by the enjoyment of powers which they are equally incapable of exercising with discretion, or abandoning without national convulsion.

42. State of the finances.

Meanwhile the finances of the kingdom, the embarrassments of which had first occasioned the convocation of the States-General, were daily falling into a worse condition. The lower orders universally imagined that the Revolution was to liberate them from every species of impost; and, amidst the wreck of established authority, and the collision of self-constituted powers, they succeeded for some time in realising their expectations. The collection of the revenue became every where difficult, in many places impossible; and the universal distrust which followed a period of general agitation, occasioned a lamentable deficiency in the excise and customs. The public revenue of 1790 was above one-third less than that of 1789; in many places the taxes had almost wholly disappeared; payment of the salt-tax, the most considerable of the indirect imposts, was every where refused; and the boasted credit of a revolutionary government was soon found to amount to nothing. Alarmed at a deficiency which he had no means of supplying, M. Necker made a full and candid statement of the finances to the Assembly, and concluded by demanding a loan of 30,000,000 of francs. The falling off in the revenue was above 200,000,000 francs, or £8,000,000 yearly. The Assembly in vain endeavoured to negotiate such an advance. Terror at the unsettled state of the kingdom, uncertainty with regard to the future, prevented any of the capitalists from coming forward.[1]

[1] Moniteur, Aug. 7, 1789, p. 152. Hist. Parl. ii. 350, 352. Th. i. 159, 160. Dum. 18. Lac. vii. 170. Burke's Cons., Works, v. 406, 408.

43. Declaration of the Rights of Man. Aug. 18.

In the midst of these alarms and anxieties, the Assembly were occupied with their great task, the composition of a succinct statement of rights, which was soon drawn up under the name of the Rights of Man. This famous composition, which was solemnly adopted by them on the 18th August, amidst much obvious and important truth, contains a most dangerous mixture of error, which, if not duly chastened by the lessons of experience and the

observation of history, is calculated to convulse society. It declares the original equality of mankind; that the ends of the social union are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression; that sovereignty resides in the nation, and all power emanates from them; that freedom consists in doing every thing which does not injure another; that law is the expression of the general will; that public burdens should be borne by all the members of the state in proportion to their fortunes; that the elective franchise should be extended to all; and that the exercise of natural rights has no other limit but their interference with the rights of others. In these positions, considered abstractly, there is much in which every reasonable mind must acquiesce; but the promulgation of the agreeable but perilous principles of sovereignty residing in the people, of the natural equality of mankind, and of the extension of the elective franchise to every citizen, only proves how ignorant the legislators of that period were of the real character of the human mind, and how little aware of that inherent depravity in human nature to which so many of themselves erelong became victims.[1]

[1] See Droits de l'Homme. Hist. Parl. ii 271, 274. Moniteur, Aug. 19, 21, 1789. No. 44. Lac. vii. 153.

44. Opinion entertained of it by its authors.

It is a curious and instructive circumstance, illustrative of the tendency of revolutionary excitement to deprive the representatives of the people of any thing approaching to freedom of deliberation, that the authors of this celebrated declaration were, at the time they wrote it, fully aware of the absurdity and peril of many of its parts. Dumont, its principal composer, has justly asked,—"Are men all equal? Where is the equality? Is it in virtue, talents, fortune, industry, situation? Are they free by nature? So far from it, they are born in a state of complete dependence on others, from which they are long of being emancipated." Mirabeau himself was so sensible of the absurdity of laying down any code of rights anterior to the formation of the constitution, that he laboured to induce the Assembly to postpone it till that was accomplished; observing, that "any enunciation of right at that time would be but an almanac for a year." But it was too late; the people would admit of no delay; and the deputies, afraid of losing their popularity, published the famous declaration, inwardly execrating the work of their own hands—a step so perilous, that, as its author himself admits,[2] it was like

[2] Dumont, 140, 142. Th. i. 142.

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45. Formation of a constitution.

placing a powder-magazine under an edifice, which the first spark of fire would blow into the air.

The great question which next occupied the Assembly was the formation of a constitution; and the discussions regarding it kept the public mind in a state of incessant agitation during the whole of August and September. The committee to which it was referred to report on the subject, recommended that it should include the inviolability of the king's person, the permanence of the legislative body, and a single chamber for the legislature. This important question, upon which the future progress of the Revolution hinged, was warmly discussed in the clubs of the capital, and the most vehement threats were held out to those of the Assembly who were suspected of leaning to the aristocratic side. On the one hand, it was argued that the very idea of an assembly composed of hereditary legislators was absurd in a free country; that if it united itself to the throne, it became dangerous to freedom—if to the people, subversive of tranquillity; that it would operate as a perpetual bar to improvement, and, by constantly opposing reasonable changes, maintain a continual discord between the higher and lower orders; and that the only way to prevent these evils was to blend the whole legislature into one body, and temper the energy of popular ambition by the firmness of aristocratic resistance. On the other hand, it was maintained that the constitution of society in all the European states necessarily implied a separate body of nobles and commons; that the turbulent spirit of the one was fully counteracted by the conservative tendency of the other; that a monarchy could not subsist without an upper house to support the throne; that the English constitution afforded decisive evidence of the happy effects of such a separation; that the best consequences had been found to follow the discussion of public matters in separate assemblies, and many fatal resolutions prevented, by allowing time for consideration between their deliberations; and that it was a mere mockery to pretend that these restraints could take place, if the legislature was all contained in one chamber, when the nobles would be immediately outnumbered, and the whole rights of the monarchy might be voted away in a single sitting.[1] Unfortunately for France, these arguments did

Aug. 28.

Aug. 31.

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 329, 374. Lac. vii. 159. Riv. 191. Th. i. 152, 154. Mig. i. 84. Dum. 158.

not prevail, and a single chamber was voted in the Assembly.*

46. First appearance of entire laxity on the subject of religion, Aug. 23.

The discussions on the constitution first brought prominently forward the laxity of opinion on all subjects connected with religion, by which the great majority of the Assembly were actuated, and their evident anxiety to abolish a national faith altogether, and leave every man to believe or not to believe, to worship or not to worship, as it suited his fancy, his passions, or his convenience. When the article of the constitution relative to public worship came on for discussion, it was proposed to insert this amendment—"As laws cannot reach secret delinquencies, it is religion alone which can coerce them. It is therefore essential and indispensable for the good order of society, that religion should be maintained and respected." Mirabeau immediately rose—"Are you disposed, in permitting worship, to make religion a matter of accident? Every one will choose a religion according to his passions. The Turkish religion will be that of young people; the Jewish that of usurers; all women incline in secret to that of Brama. We are told man does not bring religion into society. Such a system is very strange. What feelings arise in every bosom on contemplating nature, or raising one's eyes to heaven? What is the first sentiment of any one who in solitude meets his fellow-creature? Is it not to fall on their knees together, and to offer to the Creator their homage? You may forbid a worship which interferes with public decency or morals, but you cannot go further." "Religion?" said Talleyrand; "yes, but what religion? Do you mean all religions, or any religion? It is very well to say religion and morality are to be respected; but come a little nearer: what religion do you mean? The only way is to let every man choose his own." "A worship," said Rabaud de St Etienne, "is a dogma; a dogma depends on an opinion; an opinion on free-will. You attack freedom if you constrain a man to adopt a worship other than what he inclines to. Error is not a crime; and the state has no concern but with crimes."[1] It was at length unanimously agreed, "that no

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 327, 338.

* It was carried by a majority of 499 to 89. No less than 122 members remained away, intimidated by the threats of the populace.

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one should be disquieted for his opinions, provided their manifestation does not disturb the order established by the law."

47. Division of the Assembly into the Côté droit and Côté gauche. Aug. 28.

A few days after, the parties in the Assembly definitively took their places, and obtained, from that circumstance, denominations which have survived all the changes of the Revolution. The supporters of the church and the throne ranged themselves on the right hand of the president's chair; the liberals and revolutionists took their place on the left. These places have been kept by the opposite parties ever since that time; insomuch that the "*Côté gauche*" is still a watchword universally known to denominate the innovating party, and the "*Côté droit*" signifies that body which adheres to conservative and monarchical opinions. The *Côté droit* at first applied to their adversaries the epithet "*Coin du Palais Royal*," from the influence which the clubs of that focus of sedition had over its movements; but this and all other sobriquets were soon merged in the general names of Girondists and Jacobins, who, under the Convention, acquired an immortal celebrity.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ii. 349, 350.

48. Extraordinary haste in the formation of the constitution.

The proceedings of the Assembly in the formation of this constitution were so precipitate, that, in the eyes of the few reasonable men left in the commonwealth, they prognosticated nothing but ruin to the country. Meditation and thought there passed for nothing; every one seemed only desirous to gratify his own vanity by anticipating the notions of his rivals; every thing was done at the sword's point, as in a place taken by assault; every change pressed on at full gallop. No interval was allowed for reflection, no breathing-time given to the passions. After having demolished every thing, they resolved to reconstruct the whole social edifice with the same breathless rapidity; and so extravagant was the opinion of the Assembly as to its own powers, that it would willingly have charged itself with the formation of constitutions for all nations. In these monstrous pretensions and ruinous innovations, is to be found the remote but certain cause of all the blood and horrors of the Revolution.* [2]

[2] Dumont, 159, 160.

* The particulars of this constitution, which was soon swept away amidst the violence and insanity of subsequent times, are too complicated and prolix to be susceptible of enumeration in general history; but one vital part of the fabric is deserving of especial attention. By a fundamental article,

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49. Question of the absolute veto, which is denied to the King.

The question of the veto, or of the royal sanction being required to validate the acts of the legislature, was next brought under discussion, and excited still more violent passions. One would have thought, from the anxiety manifested on the subject, that the whole liberty of France depended on its decision, and that the concession of this right to the throne would be sufficient to restore the ancient *régime*. The multitude, ever governed by words, imagined that the Assembly, which had done so much, would be left entirely at the mercy of the King if this power were conceded, and that any privilege left to the court would soon become an anti-revolutionary engine. This was the first question since the Revolution in which the people took a vivid interest, and it may easily be conceived how extravagant were their ideas on the subject. They imagined that the veto was a monster which would devour all the powers they had acquired, and deliver them over, bound hand and foot, to the despotism of the throne. Those who supported the veto were instantly stigmatised as inclining to every species of tyranny. Many, without understanding even so much as that, imagined that it was a tax which it was necessary to abolish, or an enemy who should be hanged; and they loudly demanded that he should be suspended on the lamp-post. Others, better informed, asked, "Should the veto be vested in a single individual, or twenty-five

France was divided into 83 departments: the primary assemblies, 8000 in number, which were to be convoked every two years to elect the legislature, consisted of 5,000,000 citizens: in addition to this, there were established 48 000 municipal assemblies, composed of 900,000 citizens: 547 district assemblies, and 83 departmental assemblies, for the management of the local concerns of the provinces. But the most dangerous part of this highly democratic constitution remained behind. Each of the primary assemblies named an elector for every hundred citizens, who constituted 83 assemblies of 600 persons each, making in all 50,000 for the whole kingdom, who remained *permanently* in possession of their functions for the two years that the legislature sat. These 83 assemblies were invested with powers so considerable, that they almost amounted to the establishment of so many separate republics in one great federal union. They nominated, to the exclusion of the King, the whole local authorities, including the bishops and clergy, the judges, both supreme and inferior, the magistrates and functionaries of every description. They constituted, in short, a permanent *political union*, legally established in every department, elected by universal suffrage, and wielding within that department nearly the whole influence and authority of government. The Legislative Assembly, which succeeded the Constituent, was chosen under this constitution, and when the nation had become habituated to the exercise of these powers.—*See* CALONNE, 360, 361, *and Const.* 1789, § 17; *Histoire Parlémentaire*, iii. 41, 56.

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millions of men?" The clubs of the Palais Royal took the most violent measures, and incessantly besieged the Assembly with menacing deputations; efforts were made to array the municipality in insurrection; and the multitude, armed since the 14th of July, began to give symptoms of revolt. Alarmed by such dangerous signs, the ministry recommended concession to the King; and he himself preferred a conditional to an absolute veto. The Assembly, by a majority of two to one,* decreed that the King should have a veto, but that his power to decline sanctioning any legislative measure should not extend beyond two successive legislatures.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. vi. 379, 381. Th. i. 148, 153. Mig. i. 86, 87, 156 Aug. 10.

50.
Mirabeau supports the crown in the debate.

On this occasion Mirabeau supported the crown, and argued strenuously in favour of the absolute veto. "Let us not," said he, "arm the sovereign against the legislature, by allowing a moment to exist in which he may become its involuntary instrument. The nation will find more real security in laws consented to by its chief, than in the revolution which would follow the loss of his power. When we have placed the crown in the hands of a particular family, it is in the last degree imprudent to awaken their alarms, by subjecting them to a control which they cannot resist; and the apprehensions of the depositary of the whole forces of the monarchy cannot be contemplated without the most serious alarm. I would rather *live in Constantinople than in France, if laws could be made without the royal sanction.*" Words of striking and prophetic import, which were then ill understood or angrily interpreted, but which were recollected with bitter and unavailing regret when the course of events had proved their truth, and the most vehement of their revilers had perished from their neglect. Mounier, and Lally Tollendal on this occasion, though members of the committee appointed to frame the constitution, were the leaders of the party who contended for the division of the chambers, the absolute veto, and the formation of the constitution on the model of that of England. They even contended for it after the King had, by Necker's advice, agreed to yield the point.[2] After the vote was passed, they were so much disconcerted, that they

[2] Parl. Hist. ii. 247. Deux Amis, ii 343, 346. Th. i. 154. Lac. vii. 165.

* By a majority of 613 to 325.

withdrew from the committee on the constitution, and shortly after left the Assembly.

51. Contrary to the general directions of the Cahiers.

It is a remarkable fact, singularly illustrative of the rapid progress of revolutionary ideas, when the fever of innovation has once seized upon men's minds, that, in all the instructions of the electors to the deputies, without exception, the absolute veto, as well as personal inviolability, had been conceded to the sovereign. A few weeks of agitation—the revolt of the 14th July—the Tennis Court oath—had overturned all these sober resolutions, and the crown was compelled to recede from a privilege which had been unanimously agreed to by the whole kingdom. The instructions in the cahiers, indeed, were most express against almost all the illegal acts and usurpations of the Assembly. They almost invariably secured to the sovereign all the essential prerogatives of the monarchy. They unanimously prescribed a monarchical government for France; that all laws should require the King's sanction to their validity; that he should have the unrestrained right of making peace or war, and appointing the judges; that private property should be inviolate;* and, by a great majority, that the rights, estates, and privileges of the clergy should be maintained. The new constitution, the abolition of the absolute veto, the spoliation of the church, were already violations of these instructions in their most essential particulars: yet not a voice was raised in France, to protest against these monstrous and unauthorised stretches of power on the part of the popular representatives: so intoxicating is the possession of power to mankind, and so little are they qualified to bear its seduction, even when the measures to which it leads are most opposed to preconceived ideas, or most at variance with settled resolutions.[1]

[1] Calonne, 124, 125, 127, 214, 215, 304, 305, 319, 320. Lac. vii. 162.

52. Increased misery and agitation in Paris.

But in the midst of these projects of political reconstruction, the distress of Paris and of the kingdom was daily increasing, and matters, by the middle of September, had come to such a pass, from the effects of the insurrection of 14th July, that it was already apparent that a second

* So strongly was this principle expressed in all the cahiers, that the Assembly, by act 17 of the constitution of 5th October 1789, sanctioned it by a special clause in these terms:—"Property of every sort being a sacred and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it but on the ground of public necessity, legally established and evidently requiring it, and on the condition of a full and ample indemnity."—*See Const.* 1789, *act* 17; CALONNE, 215.

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popular outbreak was approaching. The usual effects of a revolution were experienced, an unavoidable and most alarming increase in the public expenditure, accompanied by a corresponding diminution in the public income. The exchequer, the city of Paris, all the public bodies, were on the verge of bankruptcy; and while the increasing, and now appalling misery of the working-classes rendered an immediate expenditure of money indispensable, the general confusion had entirely stopped the collection of the revenue, and general insecurity kept the now trembling capitalists aloof from all advances of money by them. Specie had disappeared from the circulation: distrust was universal: credit annihilated. The days were past when, on the return of Necker to power, the funds rose thirty per cent in a day; the reality of Revolution had dispelled all its illusions. The loan of 30,000,000 francs, voted by the Assembly to assist the government, had proved entirely illusory, for no one would advance money: a second loan of 80,000,000 since attempted, had met with little better success. At the same time, not only were the forced purchases of grain by government, and their sale at a reduced price, unavoidably increasing; but a large body of workmen, thrown out of employment, were maintained at the public expense, for whose support not less then 12,000 francs, or about L.500, was daily issued from the treasury in Paris alone. The King and Queen had sent the whole of their plate to be melted down at the mint, but this proved an inadequate supply for the public necessities, and assuaged but for a short time the miseries of the poor. Finding these projects ineffectual, the minister had the boldness to propose a contribution of a fourth of the income of each individual, and did not disguise that there was no other alternative, and that the rejection of the measure would lead to a stoppage of the pay of the army, and of the interest of the public debt.[1]

Sept. 24.

[1] Lab. iii. 458, 459. Lac. vii. 178. Th. i. 159, 161. Deux Amis, iii. 31, 33.

53. Necker's picture of the public distress. Sept. 24.

Necker, in this debate, drew a graphic and memorable picture of the state of bankruptcy to which a successful and almost bloodless revolution had, in two months, reduced the finances of so great and flourishing a kingdom. "The finances," said he, "are daily falling into a worse condition. Since August last every species of credit has disappeared. During the same time every

imaginable difficulty has accumulated round the sinking exchequer. The lessened supply of grain, the necessity of making purchases of food at the royal expense in foreign countries, have gone far to diminish the circulation. Distrust has augmented with fearful rapidity, and political events have carried to the utmost point the contraction of the currency. Money has disappeared: every one is hoarding. For a brief period I indulged the hope that the loan of 30,000,000 francs might succeed; but my expectations were disappointed. I next flattered myself that the second loan, at an advanced rate of interest, would be more successful; but here, too, lenders have come in so slowly, that it has become indispensable to have recourse to some extraordinary resources. Alarm is continually increasing: distress is universal: the demands on the treasury increase, its receipts disappear. The discounting office (Caisse d'Ecompte) is labouring under the utmost difficulties; the distress of the royal treasury is at its height; it has become such that it is no longer possible to conceal it under the veil of mystery. The King prefers making a full disclosure; he and the Queen have sent their whole plate to be melted down; the ministers have all followed their example; but it is not an extraordinary supply of 900,000 francs, (L.36,000,) thus obtained, which will relieve the public distress. The pay of the troops, the interest due to the public creditors, the service of the court, will all be stopped if an immediate and effectual supply is not obtained for the public exchequer."[1]

[1] Rapport de M. Necker. Moniteur, Sept. 23 and 25, 1789, pp. 254, 255, 258.

54. Mirabeau supports the proposal for a property-tax.

This project, like all proposals for taxation in a popular body, was coldly received in the National Assembly; and it was strongly insisted by the popular orators, that no contributions were necessary, as the funds of the Church, after providing for the whole ecclesiastical establishments and the wants of the colleges and the poor, would yield a clear surplus of 60,000,000 francs (L.2,400,000) yearly, which might be applied to the public service. To the surprise of all, however, Mirabeau, in a speech of unequalled power, supported it. "Two centuries of depredation and abuse," said he, "have created the gulf in which the kingdom is in peril of being lost. It must be filled up: take the list of the French proprietors, choose among them those whose fortune is adequate to supply the deficiency; let two thou-

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sand be sacrificed to the good of the whole. You recoil at the barbarous proposal: alas! do you not see that if you proclaim a bankruptcy, or, what is the same thing, refuse this impost, you commit an action not less unjust, and still more destructive? Do you believe that the millions of men who will instantly be ruined by such a step, or by its necessary cansequences, will allow you to enjoy the fruits of your villany? that, starving for food, they will suffer you to indulge in your detestable enjoyments? Shall we be the first to give to the world the example of an assembled people being wanting in public faith? Shall the first apostles of freedom sully their hands by an action which will surpass in turpitude those of the most corrupt governments? The other day, on occasion of a ridiculous motion in the Palais Royal, they exclaimed, 'Catiline is at the gates of Rome, and you deliberate!' With truth may it be said now, hideous bankruptcy is there; it threatens to consume yourselves, your honours, and your fortunes; and you deliberate!" Carried away by this reasoning, the Assembly voted the supply; but the relief to the treasury was inconsiderable, for the distracted state of the kingdom prevented the decree from being carried into execution.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 16. Moniteur, Sept. 23 and 25, 1789, p. 255, 260. Lac. vii. 178.

55. Famine in Paris, Aug. 10 to 30.

But while the Assembly was occupied with these discussions, a still more pressing evil began to be felt in the capital. Famine, the natural consequence of the public convulsions—want of employment, the inevitable result of the suspension of credit—pressed severely upon the labouring classes. Mobs became frequent in the streets; the bakers' shops were surrounded by clamorous multitudes demanding food. The most extravagant reports were circulated by the press, and greedily swallowed by the populace, in regard to the causes of the distress. It was the aristocrats who caused the corn to be cut green; they paid the bakers to suspend their labours; they turned aside commerce; they threw the grain into the river; in a word, there was no absurdity or falsehood which was not implicitly believed. The cry soon became universal, that the measures of the court were the cause of the public suffering, and that the only way to provide for the subsistence of the people was to secure the person of the King. An attack upon the palace was openly discussed in the clubs, and recommended by the orators

of the Palais Royal; while the agitated state of the public mind, and the number of unemployed artisans who filled the streets, rendered it but too probable that these threats would speedily be carried into execution. Alarmed at these dangers, the court deemed it indispensable to provide for its own security, which hitherto had depended entirely on the fidelity of four hundred of the Gardes du Corps, who remained on guard at the palace. For this purpose, the regiment of Flanders, and some troops of horse, were brought to Versailles. The arrival of these troops renewed the alarm of the people; the King, at the head of fifteen hundred soldiers, was supposed to be ready to fall upon the insurgent capital, containing a hundred thousand armed men; and it was alleged with more probability by the better informed, that the design of the court was to retire, with such of the troops as remained faithful, to Metz, where the Marquis de Bouillé, at the head of his army, was to join them, and there declare the States-General rebellious, and revert to the royal declaration of the 23d June.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 173, 175. Deux Amis, iii. 143, 147. Dumont, 176. Lac. vii. 184. Toul i. 130. Mig. i. 87. Th. i. 164, 166.

56. Designs of the Orleanist conspirators.

The Orleans conspirators, with Mirabeau at their head, took immediate advantage of this agitation to bring to maturity their long-cherished design of supplanting, by the younger, the elder branch of the House of Bourbon. The partisans of this ambitious and wicked, but irresolute prince, had important objects in view in fomenting this burst of popular fury, and directing it against the royal family at Versailles. Their object was to produce such consternation at the court as would induce the King and all the royal family to follow the example of the Count d'Artois, and leave the kingdom. The moment this was done they intended to declare the throne vacant, and offer it, with the title of lieutenant-general, to the Duke of Orleans. But the firmness of the King and his brother, afterwards Louis XVIII., who saw through the design, caused the plot to fail; and the multitude, who were to be the instruments in producing the alarm, but could not, of course, be let into the secret, rendered it totally abortive, by insisting, at the close of the tumult, that the King and royal family should be brought to Paris; the event of all others which the Orleans party most ardently desired to avoid.[2] So little anxious were they to conceal their

[2] Bert. de Moll. ii. 173, 174. Lab. iii. 474. Moniteur, Sept. 28, 1789.

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schemes, that Mirabeau spoke openly of them in public; and even warned some of his friends at Versailles not to be alarmed when the storm burst there, for it would roll over their heads.*

57. Views of the King at this period. Sept. 15.

The ministers of Louis were warned by their friends in Paris of the designs which were in agitation, and a royal council was in consequence held at the hotel of M. Malouet on the 15th September, in which the project of the Orleans conspirators was disclosed, and it was proposed that, to defeat it, the King should transfer the court to Tours, where they would be beyond the reach of the mobs of Paris, and where they had reason to believe they would be followed by a majority of the Assembly. After much deliberation, it was agreed to recommend this to the King; but Louis could not be brought to agree to it,† although he acquiesced in the necessity of doing something to put the Assembly and himself in a state of safety. But nothing definitive was arranged; and, meanwhile, the Orleans conspirators, to inflame the populace, spread abroad the report of the discovery of a conspiracy for the flight of the King and the overthrow of the Assembly, which speedily appeared in the columns of the *Moniteur*, and diffused universal consternation.‡ At the same time, a letter, imprudently written by the Count d'Estaing, commander of the National Guard of Versailles, to the Queen, warning her of the danger of such a project, and requesting an audience, which appeared in the same journal, augmented the general alarm.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 173, 174. Montjoye, Consp. d'Orleans, i. 174, 181. Moniteur, Sept. 28 and 29, 1789, p. 261. Lab. iii. 474. Ferrieres, Mém. i. 263, 267.

The minds of the populace were in the highest state of

* On the 24th September Mirabeau said to Blaizot, the librarian of the court, "Mon ami, je prevois de malheureux évènemens ici dans dix à douze jours. Mais que tous les honnêtes gens, et tous ceux qui ressemblent Blaizot, ne s'alarment point: l'orage ne se crevera sur eux;" and about the same time he said, "Qu'importe, après toute, à la chose publique, un Louis XVI. ou un Louis XVII.? Voulez-vous que ce soit toujours *ce bambin* qui nous gouverne!" And to Mr Jefferson, the American minister, he said, "Qu'on ne se flatte pas d'atteindre à la liberté sans operer *une révolution en sein même des salons*. La gangrène est là; à tout prix il faut l'extirper." —Prudhomme, *Crîmes de la Révolution*, ii. 162.

† "Il est douteux," dit-il, "que mon evasion put me mettre en sureté, et il est hors de doute qu'elle serait le signal d'une guerre qui ferait verser des torrens de sang."—*Note de* Malouet, *Sept.* 14, 1789; Labaume, iii. 475.

‡ "On resolut d'investir encore une fois la capitale et Versailles, à dissoudre l'Assemblée les armes à la main, d'allumer dans tout l'empire la guerre civile, et d'ensevelir dans les flammes la constitution, les droits de l'homme, et jusqu'au nom du patrie et citoyen. La ville de Metz fut choisie pour la scène de l'entreprise et le centre d'opérations."—*Moniteur*, *28th Sept.* 1789, p. 261.

excitement from these causes, when an accidental incident fired the train. A public dinner, according to an old custom in the French army, was given upon their arrival, by the Gardes du Corps, to the officers of the regiment of Flanders, and of the Urban Guard of Versailles. The banquet was held in the saloon of the opera, while the boxes were filled with illustrious spectators, and all the rank and elegance which still adhered to the court graced the assembly with their presence. The enthusiasm of the moment, the recollections of the spot, formerly the scene of all the splendour of Versailles—the influence of assembled beauty, all conspired to awaken the chivalrous feelings of the military; the health of the King was drunk with enthusiasm, and the wish loudly expressed that the royal family would show themselves to their devoted defenders. The officers of the Swiss, and of some other regiments, were admitted to the repast; and the King, who had just returned from hunting, yielding to the solicitations of the Duke of Luxembourg, appeared, attended by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Elizabeth. At this sight, the hall resounded with acclamations, and the monarch, unused to the expression of sincere attachment, was melted into tears. After the royal family retired, the musicians of the court struck up the pathetic and well-known air, "Oh, Richard! oh, my King! the world abandons thee!" At these sounds the transports of the moment overcame restraint; the officers drew their swords and scaled the boxes, where they were received with enthusiasm by the ladies of the court, and decorated with white cockades by fair hands trembling with agitation.[1]

58. Banquet at Versailles, Oct. 1.

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 181. Campan, ii. 70, 71. Ferrieres, i. 276. Mig. i. 89. Lac. vii. 185, 189. Toul. i. 132. Th. i. 167.

Accounts of this repast were speedily spread through Paris, magnified by credulity, and distorted by malignant ambition. It was universally credited the following morning at the Palais Royal, in the clubs and market-places, that the dragoons had sharpened their sabres, trampled under foot the tricolor cockade, and sworn to exterminate the Assembly and the people of Paris. The influence of the ladies of the court, and the distribution of the white or black cockades, was represented as particularly alarming by those who had employed the seductions of the Palais Royal to corrupt the allegiance of the French Guards. Symptoms of insurrection speedily

59. Agitation in Paris at the news of it.

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manifested themselves; the crowds continued to accumulate in the streets in an alarming manner, until at length, on the morning of the 5th, the revolt openly broke out. A young woman seized a drum, and traversed the streets, exclaiming, "Bread! bread!" She was speedily followed by a crowd, chiefly composed of females and boys, which rolled on till it reached the Hôtel de Ville. That building was at once broken up, and pillaged of its arms. It was even with difficulty that the infuriated rabble were prevented from setting it on fire. In spite of all opposition, they broke into the belfry and sounded the tocsin, which soon assembled the ardent and formidable bands of the Faubourgs. The cry immediately arose, raised by the agents of the Duke of Orleans, "To Versailles!" and a motley multitude of drunken women and tumultuous men, armed and unarmed, set out in that direction. The National Guard, which had assembled on the first appearance of disorder, impatiently demanded to follow; and although their commander, La Fayette, exerted his utmost influence to retain them, he was at length compelled to yield, and, at seven o'clock, the whole armed force of Paris set out for Versailles. The Gardes Françaises, who, notwithstanding the medals, fêtes, bribes, and courtesans they had received as a reward for their treachery, were in secret ashamed of the part they had taken, announced their determination to resume their service at the Royal Palace. They formed the centre of the National Guard, and openly declared their resolution to seize the King, and exterminate the regiment of Flanders and the body guard, who had dared to insult the national colours. Hints were even thrown out that the monarch should be deposed, and the Duke of Orleans nominated lieutenant-general of the kingdom.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, iii. 150, 155. Bert. de Moll. ii. 193, 195. Lac. vii. 189, 195, 199. Toul. i. 134. Mig. i. 90. Th. i. 170, 174.

60. State of the Assembly and the Court, and arrival of the mob at Versailles.

The minds of the members of the Assembly, and of the inhabitants of Versailles, though less violently excited, were in an alarming mood. The King had refused his sanction to the Declaration of the Rights of Man; and the Assembly, piqued at any obstacle to their sovereignty, were in sullen hostility. The Queen had been heard to express her delight with the banquet of the officers; and the assemblage of troops, joined to some hints dropped by the courtiers, led to a general belief that a movement of the seat of the Assembly,

and of the court, to Tours or Metz, was in contemplation. No one, however, anticipated any immediate danger; the King was out on a hunting party, and the Queen seated, musing and melancholy, in an arbour in the gardens of Trianon, when the forerunners of the disorderly multitude began to appear in the streets. She instantly rose and left the gardens to go to the palace: she never saw them again. At the first intelligence of the disturbance, the monarch returned with expedition to the town, where the appearance of things exhibited the most hideous features of a revolution. The gates in front of the court-yard of the palace were closed, and the regiment of Flanders, the body guards, and the National Guard of Versailles, drawn up within, facing the multitude; while, without, an immense crowd of armed men, National Guards, and furious women, uttering seditious cries and clamouring for bread, were assembled. The ferocious looks of the insurgents, their haggard countenances, and uplifted arms, bespoke but too plainly their savage intentions. Nothing had been done to secure the safety of the royal family. Though the Swiss Guards lay at the distance of only a few miles, at Ruel and Courbevoie, no attempt was made to bring them to the scene of danger—a decisive proof that the reports of the warlike designs ascribed by the Orleans conspirators and furious democrats to the court were entirely destitute of foundation. The commander of the National Guard of Versailles, the Count d'Estaing, seemed to have lost that daring spirit which he had formerly evinced, and subsequently displayed on the scaffold.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 74. Mig. i. 91. Th. i. 168, 172. Lac. vii. 192, 204, 205. Bert. de Moll. ii. 190, 201. Deux Amis, ii. 177, 179.

61.
The insurgents surround the Assembly.

The multitude soon broke into the hall of the Assembly; and that august body, for the first time, beheld themselves outraged by the popular passions which they had awakened. For above an hour they were insulted by the insolent rabble, who seated themselves on the benches, menaced some of the deputies with punishment, and commanded silence to others. "Lose no time," they exclaimed, "in satisfying us, or blood will soon begin to flow!" Maillard, the orator of the insurgents, who had taken so active a part in the attack on the Bastile, openly denounced Mounier, Clermont Tonnerre, and other courageous deputies, who had exposed the designs of the Orleans faction. "We have come to Versailles," said he, "to demand bread, and at the

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same time to punish the insolent body guard who have dared to insult the national colours. We are good patriots, and have torn all the black and white cockades which we have met on our road. The aristocrats would have us die of famine. This very day they have sent two hundred livres to a miller to bribe him not to grind flour." "Name him! name him!" resounded from all parts of the Assembly; but Maillard was obliged to confess he could not specify a name. A voice in the crowd then called out, "the Archbishop of Paris;" but on all sides the cry arose, he was incapable of such an atrocity. Still the intimidation of the Assembly was such, that they were obliged to give in to all their demands. In the gallery a crowd of fish-women were assembled, under the guidance of one virago with stentorian lungs, who called to the deputies familiarly by name, and insisted that their favourite Mirabeau should speak. "Speak," said they to one deputy; "Hold your tongue," to another.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, iii. 181, 182. Dumont, 181, 182. Lac vii. 208. Toul. i. 135. Bert. de Moll. ii. 207, 209.

62. Soon after break into the palace.

In the confusion on the outside, an officer of the guard struck with his sabre a Parisian soldier, who immediately discharged his musket at him; a general discharge of fire-arms from the guards ensued, which produced great consternation, but did little or no execution. The National Guard of Versailles, aided by the multitude, followed the body guards to their barracks, whither they had been ordered by the King to retire, forced the gates, pillaged the rooms, and wounded some of the men. The court was in consternation, and the horses were already harnessed to the carriages, to convey the royal family from the scene of danger; but the King, who knew the real object of the conspirators, and was with reason apprehensive that if he fled, the Duke of Orleans would be immediately declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom, resolutely, at whatever hazard, refused to move. The mob soon penetrated into the royal apartments, as the guards were prohibited from offering any resistance, and were received with so much condescension and dignity by the King and Queen, who listened attentively, and answered mildly, to all their requests, that they forgot the purpose of their visit, and left the royal presence exclaiming *Vive le Roi!*[2] A heavy rain, which began to fall in the evening, cooled the ardour of the multitude, and before nightfall, the arrival of La Fayette, with the National Guard of

[2] Campan, ii. 75, 76. Deux Amis, iii. 188, 189. Memoirs of Louis XVIII. iv. 382. Toul. i. 136, 137. Mig. i. 92.

Paris, restored some degree of order to the environs of the palace.

63. Irresolution of the King, and heroism of the Queen.

During these tumults, the King was distracted by the most cruel incertitude. Mounier, at the head of a deputation from the Assembly, conjured him to vanquish his scruples, and accept simply the articles of the constitution proposed by the Assembly; the Queen, to act boldly, and defend his kingdom. Two carriages, ready harnessed, were kept at the gate of the Orangerie; but the crowd discovered them, and assembled to prevent their departure: the King commanded the Count d'Estaing to disperse the mob at that point; but he declined, alleging that the thing was impossible: the King urged the Queen to depart, and take the royal family with her; but she declared that nothing should induce her, in such an extremity, to separate from her husband. "I know," she added, "that they seek my life; but I am the daughter of Maria Theresa, and have learned not to fear death." Nothing could induce Louis to allow the troops in front of the palace to fire on the people. "Come now," said he, "would you have me declare war on women?" The cries, in consequence, redoubled; the crowd, seeing their impunity, became furious. Assailed by so many subjects of anxiety, the monarch at length resolved upon submission, and Mounier was authorised to announce to the Assembly his unqualified acceptance of the nineteen articles of the constitution already framed, and his adhesion to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. But matters were now arrived at a pass when these concessions could produce no effect. A multitude of drunken women had broken into the hall of the Assembly, lay extended on its benches, and one shameless Amazon occupied the President's chair, and in derision was ringing his bell. The deputies in vain endeavoured to restore order; the debates were incessantly interrupted by cries of "Bread! bread!" and nothing but the authority of Mirabeau could procure silence even for the discussion of measures for providing for the public subsistence. At three in the morning the sitting was broken up, and the hall left in possession of its unruly invaders.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ii. 209, 212. Lac. vii. 215, 219. Th. i. 176. Deux Amis, iii. 191, 193. Camp. ii. 75, 76. Weber, i. 432, 435. Toul. i. 159.

La Fayette had an interview with the royal family, and assured them in the strongest terms, in presence of a numerous circle, that he could guarantee the security of

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64. La Fayette retires to sleep.

the palace. He added, that he was so well convinced of the pacific disposition of his army, and had so much confidence in the preservation of the public tranquillity, that he was resolved to retire to rest. Misled by these assurances, the Assembly dispersed and repaired to their several homes; and the King and Queen, overcome with fatigue, withdrew to their apartments. The Queen went to bed at two in the morning, and, being utterly exhausted, fell asleep. The external posts were entrusted to the troops commanded by La Fayette; the interior were still in the hands of the body guard of the King. Unfortunately for his reputation, and for the honour of France, General La Fayette followed the example of the sovereign, and repaired, for the remainder of the night, to the chateau de Noailles, at some distance from the palace, where he soon after fell asleep.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 75. Riv. 300. Weber, i. 441. Th. i. 178.

65. The mob again break into the palace, and heroic defence of the body guard.

Nothing occurred to interrupt the public tranquillity from three till five in the morning; but the aspect of the populace presaged an approaching storm. Large groups of savage men and intoxicated women assembled round the watchfires in all the streets of Versailles, and relieved the tedium of a rainy night by singing revolutionary songs. In one of these circles their exasperation was such, that, seated on the corpse of one of the body guard, they devoured the flesh of his horse half-roasted in the flames, while a ring of frantic cannibals danced round the group. Every thing announced that they were determined to assuage their thirst for blood by some indiscriminate massacre. The whole leaders of the Orleans party, Mirabeau, Laclos, Sillery, Latouche, and D'Aguilar, were in the crowd.* At six o'clock, a furious mob surrounded the barracks of the body guard, broke them open, and pursued the flying inmates to the gates of the palace, where fifteen were seized, and doomed to immediate execution. At the same time, another troop of insurgents besieged the avenues to the palace, and finding a gate open, rushed in, and speedily filled the staircases and vestibules of the royal apartments. Two of the body guard, posted at the head of the stair, made the most heroic resistance, and by their efforts gave time to the

* It was said by some of the witnesses at the trial, relating to these proceedings, that the Duke of Orleans was there on horseback, but that was never clearly proved.

Queen to escape into the apartments of the King, but they perished in the heroic act. The assassins, by continued efforts, drove the body guard back into the apartment of the Queen, but did not reach it themselves. Meanwhile Marie Antoinette, in passing almost undressed into the apartments of the King, found an inner door barred, but, by knocking violently, it was at length opened. The King was absent. Alarmed by the noise, he had repaired, by the principal passage through the Œil de Bœuf, into the Queen's apartment, which he found filled with the body guard; but soon after the dauphin and children came in, and the King having returned, the inner doors of the Œil de Bœuf were closed, and the antechamber filled with grenadiers, who succeeded in keeping out the mob from that last asylum. But, with that exception, the whole interior of the palace was ransacked by the savage multitude; the splendour of ages was suddenly exposed to the indiscriminate gaze of the lowest of the people.

> "Apparet domus intus, et atria longa patescunt:
> Apparent Priami et veterum penetralia regum:
> Armatosque vident stantes in limine primo."

But for the intrepid defence of the body guard, and the exertions of the Marquis de Vaudreuil, who succeeded in reviving in the French Guards some sparks of their ancient loyalty, the King himself, and the whole royal family, would have fallen a prey to the assassins. They dragged the bodies of two of the body guard, who had been massacred, below the windows of the King, beheaded them, and carried the bloody heads in triumph upon the point of their pikes through the streets of Versailles.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 77, 78, 80. Lac. vii. 234, 237. Riv. 305, 307. Mig. i. 93. Th. i. 180. Weber, i. 442, 448.

66. Tardy arrival of General La Fayette.

At the first alarm General La Fayette, whose unfortunate absence from the scene of danger had produced such alarming effects, threw himself upon his horse, and hastened to the spot. He made an impassioned harangue to the grenadiers of the guard, and succeeded in prevailing upon them to defend the captives. The fifteen prisoners were thus rescued from impending death; and the King himself having come to the windows and demanded their lives from the multitude, they ultimately escaped. Three others, who had already the halter about their necks, and were on the point of being strangled, were saved by some of the Gardes Françaises, who flew to their deliverance,

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exclaiming, "Let us save the body guard, as they saved us at Fontenoy." Amidst the fury of the multitude, and the atrocities of faction, it is pleasing to record, that in moments of extreme danger the ancient generosity of the French military character frequently manifested itself on both sides of this dreadful contest.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 238. Riv. 309. Th. i. 180.

67. Heroic conduct of the Queen.

The conduct of the Queen during these moments of alarm was worthy of the highest admiration, and she then, for the first time, gave proof of that heroic courage, which has since given immortality to her name. Notwithstanding the shots which were fired at the windows, she persisted in appearing at the balcony, to endeavour to obtain the pardon of the body guards, who were in peril from the exasperated multitude: and when M. Luzerne strove to place himself between her and the danger, she gently removed him, alleging that that was her post, and that the King could not afford to lose so faithful a servant. Shortly after the crowd vociferously demanded that she should appear at the window; she came forth, accompanied by her children; twenty thousand voices immediately exclaimed, "Away with the children!" and the Queen, sending them in, reappeared alone, in presence of a mob from whom she expected instant death. This generous contempt of personal danger overcame the fury of the populace, and universal shouts of applause testified at once their sense of the reality of the peril which she had braved, and the impression which her courage had made upon the multitude.[2]*

[2] Campan, ii. 81. Weber, i. 451. Riv. 312. Lac. vii. 241. Th. i. 182.

68. The mob insist on the royal family going to Paris. Oct. 6.

The Republican leaders of the tumult seeing themselves foiled in their design of making the King fly, resolved to derive some advantage from their success, by removing him and the royal family to Paris, where they would be entirely subjected to their control. Immediately the cry was raised among the populace, "Let us bring the King to Paris! it is the only way of securing bread to our children." La Fayette persuaded the King, as the only means of appeasing the tumult, to accede to the wishes of

* "L'air de grandeur de la reine," says an eyewitness, "cette preuve de courage dans une obéissance si perilleuse, s'emportèrent à force de surprise sur la barbarie du peuple. Elle fut applaudie universellement. Son genie redressa tout-à-coup l'instinct de la multitude égarée : et il fallait à ses ennemis des crîmes, des conjurations, et des longues pratiques pour la faire assassiner."—*Témoin Oculaire*, given in WEBER, i. 451.

the people; and, accompanied by the King and Queen, appeared at the balcony of the palace, and gave that assurance to the multitude. Mirabeau and his associates violently opposed this design, as it entirely thwarted the views of the Orleans conspirators; but the incessant clamour of the populace, who deemed their victory complete if they could secure their august captives, overbore all opposition. "My children," said the monarch, "you wish that I should go to Paris: I consent, provided I am not to be separated from my wife and children, and that my guards are to be protected." Loud cries of "Vive le Roi—Vivent les Gardes du Corps," immediately resounded on all sides. The Assembly, informed of his determination, hastily passed a resolution, that it was inseparable from the King, and would accompany him to the capital. Thus, the democratical party, as the fruit of their violence, obtained the immense advantage of having both branches of the legislature transferred to a place where their own influence was irresistible.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 94, 95. Riv. 31. Th. i. 182. Campan, ii. 81, 82. Weber, i. 452.

69. The royal family come to Paris. Oct. 8.

At noon the royal party set out for Paris; a hundred deputies of the Assembly accompanied their carriage. Such was the haste used to urge them on, that in passing to the carriage the King and Queen were compelled to step in a pool of blood which had collected where the two *gardes du corps* had been beheaded.* All the exertions, all the authority of M. La Fayette, were unable to prevent the people from carrying in the front of the procession the two heads of the privates of the body guard who had been decapitated under the windows of the palace. At Sèvres, a village on the road to Paris, they forced a hairdresser to powder and curl the gory locks of the heads. Jourdan, a monster in human form, afterwards nicknamed *Coup-tête*, marched first with naked arms, bearing a huge hatchet on his shoulder, drenched in blood. The remainder of the noble *gardes du corps*, two hundred in number, almost all wounded and still bleeding, in the deepest dejection, followed the carriage; around it were cannon, dragged by the populace, bestrode by frantic women, many armed with swords and pikes. From every side arose shouts of triumph, mingled with revolutionary songs.

* A fact communicated by General La Fayette to the historian Labaume. —Labaume, iii. 545. *Note.*

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"Here is the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice!" exclaimed the women in derision at the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. These exclamations were intermingled with the cries of "All the bishops to the lamp-post!" which were received with unbounded applause, and demonstrated the general and deadly hostility to religion. Loaves of bread, borne on the point of pikes, every where appeared to indicate the plenty which the return of the sovereign was expected to confer upon the capital. The regiment of Flanders followed in deep dejection at being obliged to surrender their sovereign to his rebellious subjects. The Gardes Françaises, profoundly ashamed of the associates who had seduced them from their duty, marched in military order in the hideous procession, without ever taking their eyes from the ground. The monarch, after a painful journey of seven hours, during which he was compelled to drink, drop by drop, the bitterest dregs in the cup of humiliation, entered Paris, a captive among his own subjects, and adorning the triumph of the most inveterate of his enemies. He was conducted to the Hôtel de Villle, and thence to the Tuileries, which thenceforward became his palace and his prison.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 95. Riv. 322, 323. Th. i. 182. Lac. vii. 248. Burke, v. 142. Dep. de Chatelet, 170. Campan, ii. 83, 84. Web. i. 453. Lab. iii. 545.

70. Vast changes introduced by the Assembly.

Thus terminated the first era of the revolutionary government; the first period, during which a shadow of independence was left to the legislature. The revolution of the 14th July had overturned the crown, by depriving it of the whole military force of the kingdom; but the revolt of the 6th October subjugated the legislature as well as the sovereign, by bringing them both captive and defenceless into the capital, when the only armed force was at the disposal of the municipality, elected by the universal suffrage of the inhabitants. Just five months had elapsed since the meeting of the States-General; and during that time, not only the power of the sovereign had been overthrown, but the very structure of society changed. Instead of an absolute government, there was now to be seen a turbulent democracy; instead of an obsequious nobility, a discontented legislature; instead of the pride of ancient, the insolence of newly acquired power. The right to tithes, the most venerable institution of the Christian church; the feudal privileges, flowing from the first conquest of Gaul by the followers of Clovis; the immunities of corporations, purchased by the

blood of infant freedom—all had perished. The principle of universal equality had been recognised; all authority admitted to flow from the people; and the right of insurrection numbered amongst the most sacred of the social duties. The power of the sovereign was destroyed; he had been insulted, and narrowly escaped being murdered in his own palace, and was now a captive, surrounded by perils, in the midst of his capital. Changes which have hardly been brought about in England from the time of Alfred, were effected in France in less than five months.

71. Their excessive rashness.

Experience might well have taught the promoters of the French Revolution, that such excessive precipitation could lead to nothing but disastrous results. Nothing durable in nature is made except by the slowest degrees; the flowers of the summer are as ephemeral as the warmth which produces them; the oak, the growth of centuries, survives the maturity and the decay of empires. The dominion of Alexander, raised in a few campaigns, perished within the lifetime of those who witnessed its birth; the Roman empire, formed in a succession of ages, endured a thousand years. It is in vain to suppose that the habits of a nation can be changed, and its character altered, by merely giving it new institutions. We cannot confer on childhood the firmness of maturity by putting on it the dress of manhood. It is no apology for the Constituent Assembly to say, that they committed no violence themselves; that their measures were in great part adopted from the purest philanthropy; that they were themselves the victims of the faction which disgraced the Revolution. In public men we expect not merely good intentions, but prudent conduct; it is no excuse for those who have done evil, to assert that they did so that good might come of it. If we pull down with too much haste, we do as much mischief as if we retain with too much obstinacy. The virtuous should always recollect, that if they remove the half, the reckless will speedily destroy the whole.

72. Danger of sudden innovation.

The danger of political changes arises not from their immediate, but their ultimate consequences; not so much from those who originate, as those who follow them up. Alterations once rashly commenced, cannot easily be stopped; the fever of innovation seizes the minds of the energetic part of mankind, and the prudent speedily become unable to stem the torrent. The prospect of gain

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rouses the ambitious and the reckless; they issue from obscurity to share the spoil, and in the struggle rapidly acquire a fatal ascendancy. They do so, because they are not restrained by the scruples which influence the good, nor fettered by the apprehensions which paralyse the opulent. Having nothing to lose, they are indifferent as to the consequences of their actions; having no principles, they accommodate themselves to those of the most numerous and least worthy of the people. Revolutions are chiefly dangerous, because they bring such characters into public situations; the Constituent Assembly was chiefly blamable, because it pursued a course which roused them in every part of France. It was itself the first to experience the truth of these principles. In its haste to subdue the throne it raised the people, and speedily became subjected to the power it expected to govern.

73. The victory of the 6th October was really over the Assembly.

The victory of the 6th October was not less over the legislature than the throne. Brought to Paris without protection, it was at the mercy of the populace, and not less enthralled than the King in his prison. The ultimate consequences did not appear for some years; but the Reign of Terror flowed naturally from the publication of the Rights of Man, and the decimation of the Convention from the rashness of the Constituent Assembly. It soon became apparent that the position of the National Assembly, and the residence of the monarch, during its sitting, in the capital, was a fatal circumstance, of which both had ample cause to repent. Freedom of deliberation was out of the question in such a situation; at first, the deputies were carried away by the applauses of the galleries, and the contagion of popular feeling; latterly, they were enslaved by the terror of popular violence. All the insurrections which established the Reign of Terror, the captivity of the King, the subjugation of the Assembly, were owing to the perilous vicinity of Paris. If the great work of national reformation is to be successfully carried through, it must be in a remote or secure situation, where the applause and the violence of the multitude are equally removed, and the minds of men are not liable to be swayed by the flattery, or intimidated by the threats, of the people entrusted to their care.

Before the era at which we have now arrived, the period had come when it was evident that the popular party had

resolved on an entire usurpation of the whole powers of the state; and that determined resistance was the only course which could have arrested their treasonable encroachments. The forcible union of the legislature in a single chamber, the confiscation of the church estates, the formation of a highly democratic constitution, inconsistent with any thing like public order, and the refusal of the absolute veto, in defiance of the cahiers from every part of France, were all acts of violence, from which nothing but the establishment of democratic tyranny was to be anticipated. But when, in addition to all this, the King was besieged by a furious mob in his own palace, when his apartments were ransacked, and his consort all but murdered by hired assassins, the rule of law as well as of authority was at an end; the hour had arrived to conquer or die. By resistance in this extremity, he at least had a chance of rousing the better class of the nation to his and their own defence: but for the fatal emigration of the noblesse, he unquestionably would have done so. When, by their desertion and the treachery of the army, he was compelled to yield to such outrages, to submit to be led a captive amidst savage and drunken mobs to his own palace, he was in effect forced to place his neck beneath the lowest of the populace, and prepare, in the unresisted ascent of guilt, for all the sanguinary excesses which followed.[1]

74. The period had arrived when resistance was necessary.

[1] Mounier, ii. 90, 91.

If the army and the *Tiers Etat* were the parties chiefly in fault in the previous stage of the Revolution, the nobility have most to answer for in this. It was their fatal defection which paralysed the monarch, when he and all his councillors had become sensible of the insatiable ambition of the commons, and which rendered it impossible to adopt any plan that might extricate the Assembly and himself from their fatal state of dependence on the mobs and armed force of Paris. That they were entirely at the command of the Orleans wealth and the revolutionary leaders was sufficiently apparent; but Paris was then at least not France, and the elements of strenuous, and perhaps successful, resistance were to be found in the provinces, if the nobility had remained to lead and direct it. In many districts, indeed, the fury of the populace, and the treachery of the soldiers, had deprived the landed proprietors of the possibility of continuing on their estates, and removal to the capital or some considerable town

75. Great fault of the nobility at this period.

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had become a matter of necessity: but this was far from being the case universally; and in at least a half of France the people in the country were still steady in their loyalty to the throne. It required some courage, doubtless, to remain and face the revolutionary dangers which were arising on all sides; but when does duty not require courage, and where are men entitled to expect it, if not in the descendants of a chivalrous and military nobility? Recollecting what the peasants of La Vendée and Brittany, the citizens of Lyons and Toulon, subsequently did, it is impossible to admit the excuse for the whole French nobility, that emigration had become a matter of necessity. This wide-spread and paralysing defection, therefore, was the great sin of the noblesse after the Revolution had set in, as their obstinate retention of their pecuniary exemptions was their great sin before it commenced.

76. Sins of the peasantry and people.

Nor can the peasantry and citizens of France be absolved from a still greater share of blame for the savage ferocity which they evinced from the very outset of the struggle. Never had a revolution been accomplished with so little difficulty: never had power been transferred from the crown to the people with so little bloodshed. With the loss of fifty killed and a hundred wounded at the attack on the Bastile, the military monarchy had been overthrown. No resistance had any where else been attempted. Every thing, therefore, called for humanity and moderation in the use of victory: never had so few deaths required to be avenged. Yet the people generally evinced the most savage and malignant spirit, and assailed their unresisting landlords with a degree of barbarity of which history has preserved few examples. It was no excuse for these hideous atrocities that they were avenging centuries of oppression, and rising against the chains of feudal slavery. It belongs to God alone, in his inscrutable wisdom, to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children; it is the first principle of human justice, to deal with every one according to his individual deserts. The melancholy catalogue of predial and urban crimes which stained the very first stages of the Revolution, proved but too clearly that the French were unfit for liberty, and unworthy of that blessing; for they had not yet laid the corner-stone of the structure, in learning to be just.

CHAPTER VI.

FORMATION OF A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION.—FROM THE REVOLT AT VERSAILLES TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.—OCT. 7, 1789—SEPT. 14, 1791.

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1. Ruinous effects of the removal of the Assembly to Paris.

"In every country," says Sallust, "those who have no property envy the good, extol the bad, deride antiquity, support innovation, desire change from the alarming state of their own affairs, live in mobs and tumults; since poverty has nothing to fear from such convulsions. But many causes made the city populace pre-eminent in these respects; for whoever in the provinces were most remarkable for their depravity or self-sufficiency—all who had lost their patrimony, or their place in society—all whom wickedness or disgrace had driven from their homes, found their way to Rome as the common sewer of the Republic."[1]* The French Assembly experienced the truth of these principles in a remarkable manner upon the removal of the seat of its deliberations to the metropolis. To the natural depravity of a great city, its population added the extraordinary corruption arising from the profligacy and irreligion of preceding reigns. To these were now added the unbounded license and vehement desires, which had grown up with the enthusiasm of the time and the sudden acquisition of supreme power by the multitude. Never were objects of such magnitude offered to the passions of a people so little

[1] Sallust, Bellum Cat. sec. 37.

* "Semper in civitate," says the historian, "quibus opes nullæ sunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt; vetera odere, nova exoptant, odio suarum rerum mutari omnia student; turba atque seditionibus sine cura aluntur; quoniam egestas facile habetur sine damno. Sed urbana plebes eo, vero, præceps ierat multis de causis; nam qui ubique probro atque petulantia maxime præstabant, item alii per dedecora patrimoniis amissis, postremo omnes quos flagitium aut facinus domo expulerat, hi Romam sicuti in sentinam confluxerant."—Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* § 37.

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accustomed to coerce their passions; never was flattery so intoxicating poured into the minds of men so little accustomed to withstand it. The National Assembly, with a fatal precipitance, placed itself without any protection at the mercy of the most corrupted populace in Europe, at the period of its highest excitation. It did not require the gift of prophecy to foretell what would be the result of such a prostration.

2. Duke of Orleans sent to England. Oct. 14.

The removal of the court to Paris produced immediate changes of importance in the contending parties. The Duke of Orleans was the first to decline in influence. General La Fayette exerted himself with vigour and success to show that the duke was the secret author of the disturbances which had so nearly proved fatal to the royal family, and declared publicly that he possessed undoubted proofs of his accession to the tumult, with the design of making himself lieutenant-general of the kingdom. That abandoned prince had now lost the confidence of all parties. The court was aware of his treason; the people saw his weakness; his own associates were in despair at his pusillanimity. No one can long remain at the head of a band of conspirators who wants courage to reap, for the common behoof, the fruits of their crimes. "The coward!" said Mirabeau, "he has the appetite for crime, but not the courage to execute it." Even at the Palais Royal his influence was lost, except with his hireling supporters; and the King, glad to get quit of so dangerous a subject, with the entire concurrence of the National Assembly, sent him into honourable exile on a mission to the court of London.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 152. Lac. vii. 259. Th. i. 184, 185, 186.

3. Retirement of Mounier and Lally Tollendal.

From this departure nothing but good was to be expected; but the secession of other members diminished the influence of reason in the Assembly, and left a fatal ascendancy to revolutionary ambition. Mounier and Lally Tollendal, despairing of the cause of order, retired from the capital; and the former established himself in Dauphiny, his native province, where he endeavoured to organise an opposition to the Assembly.* The departure

* The latter thus justified himself to one of his friends for retiring from public life:—"My health renders my continuance in the Assembly impossible; but laying that aside, I could no longer endure the horror occasioned by that blood, those heads, that Queen half-murdered, that King led a captive in the midst of assassins, and preceded by the heads of the unhappy guards who had died in his service; those murderers, those female cannibals, that infernal cry, 'A la lanterne tous les évêques;' Mirabeau

of these well-meaning, though deluded patriots, who had taken so decided a part in the first usurpation of the *Tiers Etat,* was a serious calamity to France: it weakened the friends of rational freedom, and by extending the fatal example of defection, left the country a prey to the ambitious men who were striving to raise themselves on the public calamities. They had expected that the people, after having delivered the Assembly on the 14th July, would immediately submit themselves to its authority; they were the first to find that popular commotions are more easily excited than regulated, and that the multitude will not shake off one authority merely to subject themselves to another. Those who were the heroes of the nation on the occasion of the Tennis Court oath and the union of the orders, had already fallen into neglect; the parliaments had been passed by them in the career of democracy, and they were already outstripped by their more ambitious inferiors.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 255. Mig. i. 97. Th. i. 191.

4.
Tumult in Paris, and murder of François.
Oct. 11.

The National Guard of Paris, under the command of the deluded La Fayette, who still fondly clung to the illusion that order could be preserved under democratic rule, for some days succeeded in re-establishing tranquillity in the capital. Erelong, however, the former scenes of violence recurred. A baker named François was murdered in the streets on the 19th October, by a mob who were enraged at finding that the return of the King had not immediately had the effect of lowering the price of provisions. With the savage temper of the times, they put his head on a pike, and paraded it through the streets, compelling every baker whom they met to kiss the remains. The wife of François, far advanced in pregnancy, who was running in a state of distraction towards the Hôtel de Ville, met the crowd; at the sight of the bloody head, she fainted on the pavement. The mob had the barbarity to lower it into her arms, and press the lifeless lips against her face. The magistrates and National Assembly did nothing to prevent or punish this barbarity: elected by universal suffrage, they were paralysed at every

exclaiming that the vessel of the Revolution, far from being arrested in its course, would now advance with more rapidity than ever; these are the circumstances which have induced me to fly from that den of cannibals, where my voice can no longer be heard, and where for six weeks I have striven in vain to raise it."—LACRETELLE, vii. 265, 266.

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step by the dread of losing their popularity. Such unparalleled atrocity excited the indignation of all the better class of citizens: martial law was proclaimed, and La Fayette, putting himself at the head of the National Guard, attacked the mob, and seized the ruffian who carried the head, who was executed next day. The indignant populace murmured at this severity: "What!" they exclaimed, "is this our liberty? We can no longer hang whom we please!" But this first and almost single punishment of popular crime which took place during the Revolution had a surprising effect for a short time in restoring order, and clearly demonstrated with how much ease all the atrocities of the Revolution might have been checked by proper firmness, first in the King, and after this period, in the Assembly, if they had been seconded by the faithful obedience of the troops.[1] *

[1] Toul. i. 168. Mig. i. 98. Th. i. 192. Lac. vii. 226. Parl. Hist. iii. 190. Prud. Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 169, 170.

5. Decree against seditious mobs. Oct. 21.

The Assembly, acting under the impulse of the indignation which this murder excited, entertained a motion for a decree against seditious assemblages, known by the name of the decree of *Martial Law*. It was proposed, that on occasion of any serious public disturbance, the municipality should hoist the red flag, and immediately every group of citizens should disperse, on pain of military execution. Mirabeau, Buzot, and Robespierre, vehemently opposed the measure: they felt the importance of such popular movements to aid their sanguinary designs. "If we do not awaken from our stupor," said the last named, "it is all over with public freedom. The deputies of the municipality demand bread and soldiers. Why? to repress the people at a moment when passions and intrigues of all sorts are conspiring to render abortive the Revolution. Those who excite them are well aware that popular tumults are the most effectual means of repressing the people and extinguishing freedom. When the people are dying of famine they will always collect in mobs; to remove these disturbances you must ascend to their cause, and discover their authors, who would ruin us all. There can be no mistake so great as to suppose that the duty of repressing those delinquencies should be committed to

* "L'Assemblée Constituante devait du moins s'empresser de punir avec éclat, mais chacun voulait se populariser, et ce motif *seul en fait presque tous les crimes qui souillèrent la Révolution*."—PRUDHOMME, iii. 168.

others; the National Assembly alone is entitled to take cognisance of crimes committed against the nation. We should organise a tribunal in this Assembly, to take a final and definite cognisance of all state offences; we should trust nothing to the Procureur du Roi at Chatelet. If we do not do this, the constitution, amidst all our deliberations, will be stifled in its cradle." Already Robespierre had the Revolutionary Tribunal in view. But the recollection of the 6th October, the peasantry in the provinces, and the murder of François, was too recent; and the law authorising the magistrates to hoist the red flag, and proclaim martial law to disperse seditious assemblies, was passed by a large majority.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. iii. 201, 207. Deux Amis, iii. 316, 322.

6. Fresh tumults. Oct. 23.

But notwithstanding this enactment, the people, who never thought it would be carried into execution, would not relinquish without a struggle the agreeable office of public executioners. Two robbers were seized by them, under pretence that the tribunals were too slow in executing justice, and hung upon the spot; a third was on the point of being strangled, when La Fayette arrived with his grenadiers, and inflicted a summary chastisement on those self-constituted authorities. Shortly after, he suppressed, with equal vigour and courage, a dangerous revolt of the armed guard of Paris, which was already beginning to form a nucleus to the disaffected. Yet, even at the time that he was daily exposing his life in his efforts to restore the force of the laws, he was proclaiming, from the tribunal of the National Assembly, the dangerous doctrine, that "when the people are oppressed, *insurrection becomes the most sacred of duties*." How often do expressions, incautiously used, produce consequences which life bravely exposed is unable to prevent! With profound wisdom Homer styled words "winged:"* deeds are limited to a spot; words make the circuit of the globe.[2]

[2] Deux Amis, iii. 324, 326. Lac. vii. 263, 267, 269. Th. i. 192. Buzot, 174.

7. Virtual captivity of the royal family, and insults to which they are exposed. April 1791.

The King, Queen, and whole royal family, were no sooner settled at the Tuileries, than they received convincing proof, not only that they were state prisoners, but that they were exposed to the most humiliating insults from the lowest of the populace. On the morning after their arrival, the same impassioned viragos who had

* "Ἔπεα πτερόεντα."

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bestridden the cannon in the frightful procession of the preceding day, assembled under the Queen's windows, and insisted that she should show herself. No sooner did she appear than they overwhelmed her with reproaches, to which she answered with such gentleness and dignity, that an involuntary burst of applause was elicited from the multitude. Aware, however, to what a degree she was the object of jealousy to the popular leaders, a committee of the constitutionalists, or middle party in the Assembly, suggested to the Queen, by means of the Duchess de Luynes, that, till the constitution at least was formed, she should retire from France. But Marie Antoinette immediately answered—"I am well aware of your motives, but I will never separate myself from my husband; if necessary, I would willingly sacrifice my life in his behalf; but the throne is what they seek to destroy, and therefore my departure, when he remained, would be an act of cowardice on my part without benefiting him." The royal family were guarded by the National Guard and Gardes Françaises, who were entirely in the interest of the Revolutionists, and night and day they were so closely watched, and such a crowd surrounded the Tuileries, that they never attempted to go out, and all thoughts of escape were out of the question. On one subsequent occasion, when the King endeavoured to go to St Cloud to hunt, the populace assembled at the gates of the gardens of the Tuileries and cut the traces of the carriage, without La Fayette, who was present, either venturing or being able to interfere. So gross were the insults to which the Queen was exposed, when she went to the windows to take the air, that she soon ceased to do so, and occupied herself entirely with the education of her children, to which she paid the most unremitting attention; or, like Queen Mary at Lochleven, in large pieces of needlework, one of which yet adorns an apartment in the palace.[1]

April 17, 1791.

[1] Campan, ii. 87, 93. Montjoye, Vie de Marie Antoinette, i. 241. Weber, ii. 1, 7.

8. Anecdotes of the Dauphin, and serenity of the Queen.

The dauphin, who was now of an age to receive impressions of external things, and who was of a serene, contemplative character, was profoundly afflicted by the sudden change which the royal family experienced on their removal to Paris. The ancient dilapidated furniture of the rooms, which had not been inhabited for a very long period; the absence of all their wonted comforts;

above all, the disappearance of the body guard, and the substitution of entirely new faces in the service of the palace, filled him with astonishment. He repeatedly asked its cause. "My son," said the Queen, "the King has now no other guards but the hearts of the French!" Louis one day took him on his knee, and explained to his infant mind the history of the Revolution in terms so clear and yet just, that no account of equal value, in a similar space, has yet been given.* On one occasion, one of the ladies of the court having observed that some one was as happy as a queen; the dauphin said, "Surely it is not mamma that you mean when you speak thus." "Why," said Madame de Neuville, "is the mamma of your Royal Highness not happy?" Looking then carefully round him to see that he was not overheard, he said, "No, she is not happy, she weeps all the night." This first explained to the ladies in the palace the cause of the red and inflamed eyes of the Queen: for such was her strength of mind, that she was never seen during the day but with a serene countenance, and generally a smile on her lips.[1]

[1] Weber, ii. 7, 8. Campan, ii. 89, 90.

9. Meeting of the Assembly and of the Jacobin club in their new halls.

The Assembly, after its translation to Paris, at first held its sittings in one of the halls of the Archbishop's palace. The first meeting there took place on the 19th October, the Assembly having been adjourned in the intervening period. Imposing ceremonies attended its installation in its new place of meeting: deputations from the municipality of Paris, headed by Bailly, and from the National Guard, by La Fayette, presented themselves to congratulate the Assembly on its arrival in the capital; and the deputies, in a body, waited on the King to renew their protestations of fidelity. The Queen, with the dauphin in her arms, went through their ranks: many tears were shed at the touching spectacle. But an ominous

* Louis le prit sur ses genoux, et lui dit, à peu de mots près, ce qui suit, —"Mon enfant, j'ai voulu rendre le people encore plus heureux qu'il ne l'etait; j'ai eu besoin d'argent pour payer les dépenses occasionées par les guerres. J'en ai demandé à mon peuple, comme l'ont toujours faits mes predecesseurs; des magistrats qui composent le parlément s'y sont opposés, et ont dit que mon peuple avait seul le droit d'y consentir. J'ai assemblé à Versailles les premiers de chaque ville par leur naissance, leur fortune, ou leurs talens; voila ce qu'on appelle les Etats Généraux. Quand ils ont été assemblés, ils m'ont demandé des choses que je ne puis faire, ni pour moi, ni pour vous, qui serez mon successeur; il s'est trouvé des méchans qui ont fait soulever le peuple; et les excès, où il s'est porté les jours derniers, sont leur ouvrage; il ne faut pas en vouloir au peuple."—MADAME CAMPAN, ii. 89, 90.

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event occurred on the same day. The club Breton, which, as already noticed, contained all the extreme revolutionary characters,* hitherto however confined to members of the States-General, followed the Assembly from Versailles, and established its sittings in the library of the convent of the JACOBINS, in the Rue St Honoré, which thenceforward gave its name, since become imperishable, to the club. From this time admission was given to all persons who were recommended by two members of the society as fit to belong to it. Their sittings were so far secret, that no one could be admitted but by tickets of admission; but they were freely given to all persons of known republican principles, especially if distinguished by their talents for writing or public speaking.[1]

[1] Moniteur, Oct. 15 and 19, 1789, p. 308. Hist. Parl. iii. 188, 189. Deux Amis, iii. 304, 305.

10. Trial and execution of the Marquis de Favras. Dec. 25, 1789, and Feb. 19, 1790.

The Baron de Besenval, in whose favour M. Necker had so generously interfered on his return to Paris, was shortly after tried before the High Court of Chatelet, and acquitted. In preparing for his defence, his counsel had urged him to make use of a document signed by the hand of the King, which authorised him to repel force by force. "God forbid," said he, "that I should purchase life by endangering so excellent a monarch!" and tore the writing in pieces. The Marquis de Favras was shortly after brought before the same tribunal, and the indignation of the people at the former acquittal was such, that from the beginning of the trial his fate was apparent. The crime laid to his charge was of the most absurd and incredible description—that of having entered into a conspiracy to overturn the constitution—and it was unsupported by any adequate evidence; but he was condemned by a tribunal which was intimidated by a ferocious multitude, who never ceased exclaiming, even in the hall of justice, "A la lanterne! A la lanterne!" On the day of his execution he was conducted at three in the morning, clothed in a white shirt, to the Place de Grève, where, with a torch in his hand, he read with a firm voice his sentence of death, and died with heroic firmness, protesting his innocence to the last—the first victim of JUDICIAL INIQUITY which the Revolution had produced. He admitted having received a hundred louis from a nobleman of high rank; but refused to divulge his name, and uniformly declared that he was no

Feb. 19, 1790.

* Ante, ii. 39.

further implicated in any conspiracy. So evident was the injustice practised in this trial, that it attracted the notice, and excited the fear even of the supporters of the Revolution, by whom it was justly regarded as of sinister augury thus to sacrifice an innocent man to a supposed state necessity.* The people assembled in vast crowds, and with savage joy, to witness his punishment, though it was conducted at midnight by torchlight. The unusual spectacle of a marquis being hanged, a punishment unknown for persons of that rank heretofore, was a visible proof of the equality in condition which the Revolution had occasioned; and, after it was over, brutal jests and innumerable parodies on the mode of his execution were heard in every street.[1]

[1] Moniteur, Feb. 20, 1789. Prud. Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 187, 188. Th. i. 210, 211. Lac. vii. 271, 275.

11. Division of France into departments and municipal establishments. Jan. 9, 1790.

The first great legislative measure of the Assembly was directed against the rising jealousies of the provinces. These little states, proud of their ancient privileges, had beheld with profound regret the extinction of their rights and importance in the increasing sovereignty of the National Assembly, and were in some places taking measures to counteract its influence. To put a stop to their designs, the kingdom was distributed into new divisions, called departments, which were nearly equal in extent and population. Eighty-four of these comprehended the whole kingdom of France; each department was divided into districts, and each district into cantons, which last usually embraced five or six parishes. A criminal tribunal was established for each department; a civil court for each district; a court of reference for each canton. Each department had a council of administration, consisting of thirty-six members, and an executive council, composed of five. The district had its council and directory organised in the same manner. The purpose of the canton was electoral —not executive; the citizens united there to elect their deputies and magistrates; the qualification for voting was a contribution to the amount of three days' labour. The deputies elected by the cantons were entrusted with the

April 1790.

* "'Votre vie est un sacrifice nécessaire à la tranquillité publique,' furent les expressions sorties de la bouche du rapporteur Quatremere, et addressés au Marquis. La supplice du Marquis de Favras fut regardée comme de plus sinistre augure pour une révolution naissante, et ce pressentiment fut trop vérifié dans le temps. Les bons citoyens fremirent de voir la cour et l'Assemblée Constituante laisser naitre *un crîme juridique*, et le crîme justifier par les circonstances."—Prudhomme, iii. 156; and *Révolution de Paris, No.* 32, pp. 31, 32.

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nomination of the representatives in the National Assembly, the administrators of the department, those of the district, and the judges in the courts of law. To secure still further the control of the people, the judges were appointed only for three years; after which their appointment required to be renewed by the electors—a pernicious state of dependence, even more dangerous when upon a sovereign multitude than an arbitrary prince, inasmuch as the latter is permanent, and may find his interest or that of his family injured by deeds of injustice, whereas the former is perpetually fluctuating, and neither influenced by a feeling of responsibility, nor any durable interest in the consequences of iniquity.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. iii. 260, 278, 430, 439. Mig. i. 98, 99. Toul. i. 172. Th. i. 196. Madame de Staël, Rév. Franç. i. 375.

12. Municipal regulations, and elective franchise.

This decree arranged the rights and limits of the rural districts; another settled the powers and privileges of the inhabitants of towns. The administration of cities was entrusted to a general council, and a municipality, whose number was proportioned to the population they contained. The municipal officers, or magistrates, were named directly by the people, and were alone authorised to require the assistance of the armed force; and as they were appointed by universal suffrage, the whole civil authority of the kingdom was thenceforward at the command of the people. There were neither officers nor judges appointed by the crown, nor any resident noblesse or proprietors to oppose their mandates. Domiciliary visits, searches, imprisonments, informations of suspected hostility to the Revolution, all were at the command of these executive committees of the majority. Whoever resisted or counteracted them, found himself engaged alone in a contest with the whole civil and military power of the state, based upon the concurrence of an overwhelming superiority of members.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. iii. 328, 335, 415, 417. Deux Amis, iii. 329, 352. Mig. i. 99, 100. Th. i. 196.

13. Vast effects of these changes.

The execution of these decrees was the most important step in the history of the Revolution. They were a practical application of the principle recognised in the "Rights of Man," that all sovereignty flows from the people. By this gigantic step, the whole civil force of the kingdom was placed at the disposal of the lower orders. By the nomination of the municipality, they had the government of the towns; by the command of the armed force, the control of the military; by the elections in the departments, the appointment of the deputies to the Assembly,

the judges to the courts of law, the bishops to the church, the officers to the National Guard; by the elections in the cantons, the nomination of magistrates and local representatives. Every thing thus, either directly, or by the intervention of a double election, flowed from the people; and the qualification for voting was so low, as practically to admit every able-bodied man. Forty-eight thousand communes, or municipalities, were thus erected in France, and exercised, concurrently and incessantly, the rights of sovereignty; hardly any appointment was left at the disposal of the crown. After so complete a democratical constitution, it is not surprising that during all the subsequent changes of the Revolution, the popular party should have acquired so irresistible a power; and that, in almost every part of France, the persons in authority should be found supporting the multitude, upon whom they depended for their continuance in it.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 100. Th. i. 97, 196. Lac. vii. 339. Deux Amis, iii. 336, 350.

14. General excitement in the provinces.

This great change, however, was not brought about without causing the most violent local discontents. It shocked too many feelings, and subverted too many established interests, not to produce a general excitement. Divisions as ancient as the time of the fall of the Roman Empire; parliaments coeval with the first dawn of freedom; prejudices nursed for centuries; barriers of nature incapable of removal; political aversions still in their vigour—were all disregarded in this great act of democratic despotism. Remonstrances accordingly were sent in on all sides, and in many districts serious disturbances arose, especially in Brittany and Languedoc. But the protests of the provinces, the resistance of the local parliaments, the clamour of the states, could neither deter nor arrest the National Assembly. A change greater than the Romans attempted in the zenith of their power, which the vigour of Peter, or the ambition of Alexander, never dared to contemplate, was successfully achieved by a popular assembly, a few months after its first establishment,—a memorable proof of the force of public opinion, and the irresistible power of that new spring which general information and the influence of the press had now, for the first time, brought to bear on public affairs. In parcelling out France into these arithmetical divisions, the Constituent Assembly treated it precisely as if it were a conquered country.[2] Its patriots realised

[2] Deux Amis, iii. 340, 352. Mig. i. 100. Lac. vii. 336, 337.

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for its free inhabitants, what the Roman historian laments as the last drop of bitterness in the cup of the vanquished.* Acting as conquerors, they imitated the policy of the harshest of that cruel race.†

15. Lowering of the elective franchise.

At the same time, the right to the elective franchise for the primary assemblies was fixed at twenty-five years of age, and the contribution of a *marc* of money, or the value of three days' labour. By the law, the qualification to be eligible for the electoral assemblies was somewhat higher —it was a contribution of ten days' labour: for the National Assembly it was fixed at an imposition of a marc of silver, and the possession of some property. In practice, however, the latter condition soon came to be disregarded, the choice of the people being held to supersede every other qualification. The election of members of the legislature took place by two degrees; the electors in the first instance, in their primary assemblies, choosing the delegates who were to appoint the legislators, and they in their turn selecting the deputies for the Assembly.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, iii. 352, 354. Hist. Parl. iii. 430, 432. Th. i. 197.

16. Lasting effects of these changes.

These two measures, the division of the kingdom into departments, and the prodigious degradation of the elective franchise, rapidly proved fatal to freedom in France. The latter brought up a body of representatives in the next Assembly which overturned the throne, and induced the Reign of Terror and the despotism of Napoleon; the former, by destroying the influence of the provinces, and concentrating the whole authority of the state in Paris, has left

* "Non ut olim universæ legiones deducebantur cum tribunis et centurionibus et sui cujusque ordinis militibus, ut consensu ut caritate Rempublicam afficerent: sed ignoti inter se diversis manipulis, sine rectore, sine affectibus mutuis, quasi ex alio genere mortalium repente in unum collecti numerus magis quam colonia."—TACITUS, *Annal.* xiv. c. 27.

* "The policy of such barbarous victors," says Mr Burke, "who contemn a subdued people, and insult their inhabitants, ever has been to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country in religion, policy, laws, and manners: to confound all territorial limits, produce a general poverty, crush their nobles, princes, and pontiffs; to lay low every thing which lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people under the standard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which their ancient friends to the rights of mankind freed Greece, Macedon, Gaul, and other nations. If their present project of a Republic should fail, all securities for a moderate freedom fail along with it: they have levelled and crushed together all the orders which they found under the monarchy: all the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed, insomuch that if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy in France, under *this or any other dynasty*, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth."—BURKE'S *Consid.*, *Works*, v. 328, 333.

no power existing capable of withstanding the weight, whether in popular, monarchical, or military hands, of the capital. It was not thus in old France;—for sixteen years Paris was occupied by the English, and an English monarch crowned at Rheims; but the provinces resisted and saved the monarchy. The League long held the capital; but Henry IV., at the head of the forces of the provinces, reduced it to submission. But since the separation into departments, the extinction of provincial courts and assemblies, and the concentration of all the authority of the state in the ruling power in the metropolis, every thing has come to depend on its determinations; the ruling power at the Tuileries has never failed to be obeyed from the Channel to the Pyrenees; and the subjection of France to the mobs of Paris has become greater than that of the Empire was to the Prætorian bands.[1]

[1] Vicomte St Chamans, sur la Rév. 82.

17. New Hall of the Assembly, and introduction of the guillotine.

Before this great change had taken place, the Assembly had commenced its sittings in the Riding-School Hall, (*Salle du Manège*,) near the Tuileries, between that Palace and the Palais Royal, where the Rue de Rivoli is now situated; and the memorable scenes of that body, and of the succeeding Assembly, and of the Convention, took place in that room. The parties took their seats on the right and left, as they had done in the Salle de l'Archevêché. The centre, or "plain," as it was called, became at the same time a place of importance, as the members who sat there clearly held the balance between the extremes on the right hand and the left. Shortly after, Dr Guillotin brought forward a long and laboured motion for the reformation of the penal code; and proposed that, instead of the axe of the executioner, or any other kind of death, one uniform mode of punishment should be adopted in all capital cases, which should consist of a heavy knife, descending in a frame on the neck of the condemned person. This proposal was adopted by the Assembly, and the new machine obtained the name, from its inventor, of the GUILLOTINE. "With the aid of my machine," said M. Guillotin, "I will make the head spring off in the twinkling of an eye, and the victim shall feel nothing." But the researches of men of science since that time, and the ample experience of its effects which the Revolution afforded,

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have suggested a doubt, it is to be feared on probable grounds, whether this supposed humanity is really as well founded as the friends of lenity in punishment would wish. There is reason to fear that the head, in some cases, may retain sensation, and even recollection, for some minutes, even as much as ten, after it has been severed from the body. Melancholy examples of this will occur in the sequel of this work.[1] *

[1] Hist. Parl. iii. 307, 447.

18. Enquiry at the Court of Chatelet into the outrages of 5th and 6th Oct. at Versailles. Dec. 1.

Meanwhile an investigation was commenced before the High Court of Chatelet, at the instance of the Procureur du Roi, on the information of the public prosecutor of the City of Paris, as to "the *authors* of the troubles of the 5th and 6th October." Though the greatest pains were taken to stifle this enquiry, and direct it from its proper object, yet it went on, and the evidence and revelations which it brought out soon attracted general notice. Above two hundred witnesses were examined during the course of many months, and at length it was clearly proved, that the Orleans conspirators had taken advantage of the excitement in Paris, owing to the high price of provisions, to direct the vehemently excited mob to Versailles, in the hope that the King would take to flight, and the Duke of Orleans might be declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The proceedings, however, were found to implicate too many persons of importance to permit of their being followed out. Mirabeau, in particular, was so clearly pointed at in the evidence, that M. Chabroud, who drew up the report, alluded in its commencement to the "great criminals whom it involved." After a vehement debate, in which that great orator exerted all his talent, and evinced all his influence in his own defence, the Assembly, fearful of implicating so many of its members, determined that there was no ground for ulterior proceedings. No one was surprised at this result—it had been distinctly foreseen

* It has been demonstrated by modern physiologists, that the heads of animals sometimes hear, see, and feel, for ten, fifteen, and even eighteen minutes, after being severed from the body.—(See, in particular, Jegallon's experiments.) The same has been observed of human beings; it having been ascertained that decapitated heads have given unequivocal signs of a retention of will, by fixing their eyes on loved objects, or moving the lips as if in an effort to speak; and this is particularly the case with those who die with most courage and resolution.—See *Histoire Parlémentaire*, iii. 447, 448; and *Journal du Progrès des Sciences Medicales—Essai sur le Système Nerveux.*

throughout. But the magnanimity which the proceedings brought to light on the part of the Queen, excited universal admiration in every generous breast. When pressed by the committee of the municipality of Paris, and also by a deputation from the Court at Chatelet, to state what she knew or had seen on the occasion, she answered, "Never will I become an informer against the subjects of the King: I have seen every thing, known every thing, and forgotten every thing."[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. iii. 332, 347. Hist. Parl. vii. 336, 339.

19. Excessive embarrassment of the finances.

The constant embarrassment of the finances next occupied the attention of the Assembly. All the measures taken for the relief of the public necessities since the convocation of the States-General had proved utterly unavailing. The nation in truth was subsisting entirely on borrowed money: the revenue had almost every where failed, and the public debt had increased in the last three years by the enormous amount of 1,200,000,000 francs, or nearly L.50,000,000 sterling.* Matters had at length reached a crisis: the capitalists, so long the ardent supporters of the Revolution, had become sensible of its tendency, and would not advance a shilling to the public service. The contribution of a fourth part of the revenue of every individual, granted to the entreaties of Necker and the eloquence of Mirabeau, had produced but a momentary relief; it had proved, from the general emigration of the noblesse, and universal stagnation of commerce, much less productive than had been expected. The confusion of public affairs rendered all sources of revenue unavailing, and some decisive measure had become indispensable, to fill up the immense deficit which the Revolution had produced.† In this emergency, the property of the church was the first fund which presented itself, and it was sacrificed without mercy to the public necessities.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. iii. 147, 152. Deux. Amis, iv. 1, 2.

Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, proposed that the ecclesiastical property should be devoted to the support of the ministers of religion, and the payment of the public debt.

* Total debt in April 1787,	3,002,000,000 francs	or	L.120,080,000
... in April 1790,	4,241,000,000 ...	or	169,640,000
Increase, . .	1,239,000,000 ...	or	L.49,560,000

—See Calonne, 74.

† "Il fallait donc de nouvelles resources, et elles étaient toutes épuisées: il fallait de credit, et il était anéanti—cependant l'infame banqueroute était là: il fallait l'écarter à l'instant, ou souiller de la tache la plus honteuse la gloire Française."—*Deux Amis*, iv. 2.

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20. Argument of Talleyrand in favour of church spoliation. 2d Oct.

In support of this spoliation, he argued:—"The clergy are not proprietors, but depositaries of their estates; no individual can maintain any right of property, or inheritance in them; they were bestowed originally by the munificence of kings or nobles, and may now be resumed by the nation which had succeeded to the rights of these. It is not necessary to destroy the entire body of the clergy, who are required for the purposes of worship; but it is alike just and expedient to extinguish those ecclesiastical incorporations, those agglomerations of property, which are useless and hurtful. The enjoyment of this power by the nation, gives its representatives an equal title to interfere with the present distribution of church property. All the benefices without charges attached to them may immediately be confiscated to the profit of the nation; and even in regard to those to which duty is attached, it is clear that the only portion of their funds which is really sacred is what is required to the decent support of the incumbent, or maintenance of the hospital or college to which it belongs. By undertaking the burden of these, therefore, the nation may now, with perfect justice, appropriate the whole ecclesiastical estates." This proposal, seconded by Thouret, was supported by Mirabeau, Barnave, Garat, and the whole strength of the Revolutionary party.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, iv. 4, 5. Hist. Parl. iii. 151, 152.

21. Answer of the Abbé Maury and Siêyes.

To this it was replied by the Abbé Maury, and Siêyes:—"It is an unfounded assertion that the property of the church is at the disposal of the state; it came from the munificence or piety of individuals in former ages, and was destined to a peculiar purpose, totally different from secular concerns. If the purposes originally intended cannot be carried into effect, it should revert to the heirs of the donors, but certainly does not accrue to the legislature. This great measure of spoliation is the first step in revolutionary confiscation, and will soon be followed up by the seizure of property of every description; and it is, in truth, a sacrifice of the provinces, and their estates, to the capitalists of the metropolis who hold the public debt, and the vociferous mob who rule the counsels of the Assembly. The clergy have enjoyed their possessions for a thousand years; is there a noble or proprietor in the land who can exhibit a title as ancient? Are the immense sacrifices of their possessions the clergy have already

made—their junction with the *Tiers Etat*, which first gave victory to the cause of the Revolution, to go for nothing? Is destitution, confiscation, and beggary, the reward which France reserves for the first, the most important, the most valued friends of freedom? The benefices, in some cases, are without cures—pray, what are the fortunes of the nobles, the wealth of the capitalists? A thousand francs a-year would maintain every one of these gentlemen; the rest, according to your argument, is at the disposal of the nation. Have they a cure attached to them? And are you prepared to apply a test to property, as liable or not liable to confiscation, which would at once place within the former category the whole property of the nation, above what was necessary for the bare subsistence of its possessors?"[1]

[1] Moniteur, 30th Oct. to 2d Nov. 1789. Hist. Parl. iii. 256

22. Confiscation of the property of the church. 2d Nov.

But it was all in vain. The property of the church was estimated at two thousand millions of francs, L.80,000,000; this appeared a fund sufficient, at least for a considerable time, to maintain the clergy, endow the hospitals for the poor, defray the interest of the public debt, and meet the expenses of the civil establishment. To a Revolutionary government overwhelmed with debt, the temptation was irresistible; and, in spite of the eloquence of the Abbé Maury, and the efforts of the clergy, it was decreed, by a great majority, that the ecclesiastical property should be put at the disposal of the nation. The funds thus acquired were enormous; the church lands were above a third of the whole landed property of the kingdom. The clergy were declared a burden upon the state, and thenceforward received their incomes from the public treasury. But the Assembly made a wretched provision for the support of religion. The income of the Archbishop of Paris was fixed at L.2000 a-year, (50,000 francs;) that of the superior bishoprics at 25,000 francs, or L.1000 a-year; that of the inferior at L.750; that of the smallest at L.500 a-year. The curés of the larger parishes received 2000 francs, or L.80 a-year; 1500 francs, or L.60, in the middle-sized; and 1200 francs, or L.48, in the smallest. The incomes of the greater part of the clergy, especially the great beneficiaries, were, by this change, reduced to one-fifth of their former amount.[2]*

[2] Mig. i. 104. Toul. i. 170. Th. i. 193, 194. Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. iii. 284. Hist. Parl. iii. 256, 258. Deux Amis, iii. 20, 21. Lac. viii. 24. Th. i. 195.

* This decisive measure of spoliation was carried by a majority of 568 to

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23. Reflections on this step.

The arguments which prevailed with the Assembly were the same as those urged on similar occasions by all who endeavour to appropriate the property of public bodies. It is, no doubt, plausible to say, that religion, if true, should be able to maintain itself; that the public will support those who best discharge its duties; and that no preference should be given to the professors of any peculiar form of faith. But experience has demonstrated that these arguments are fallacious, and that religion speedily falls into discredit unless its teachers are not only maintained, but amply maintained, at the public expense, or from separate property of their own. The marked, and almost unaccountable irreligion of a large proportion of the French ever since the Revolution, is a sufficient proof that the support of property, and a certain portion of worldly splendour, is requisite to maintain even the cause of truth. The reason is apparent. It arises from the difference between immediate interests obvious to all, and ultimate interests powerful only with a few. Worldly enjoyments are agreeable in the outset, and only painful in the end. Religious truth is unpalatable at first, and its salutary effects are only experienced after the lapse of time. Hence, the first may be safely entrusted to the inclinations or taste of individuals; the last require the support or direction of the state. If individuals are left to choose for themselves, they will select the best architects or workmen; but it does by no means follow that they will pitch upon the best religious guides. The ardent will follow, not the most reasonable, but the most captivating; the selfish or indifferent, the most accommodating; the wicked, none at all. Those who most require reformation will be the last to seek it. An established church, and ecclesiastical property, are required to relieve the teachers of religion from the necessity of bending to the views, or sharing in the fanaticism of the age. Those who live by the support of the public will never be backward in conforming to its inclinations. When children may be

341. Forty declined voting, and 246 were absent. As resistance to this spoliation was unpopular, it may be presumed that in secret they disapproved of it, but stayed away from fear. Had they come forward and opposed the great measure of robbery, it would have been prevented, and the whole character of the Revolution might have been changed.—*Histoire Parlémentaire*, iii. 256.

allowed to select the medicines they are to take in sickness, or the young the education which is to fit them for the world, the clergy may be left to the voluntary support of the public, but not till then.

24. Leads to the issuing of assignats, and sale of the church property. 13th Dec.

This violent measure led to another, attended by consequences still more disastrous. The church estates were immense, but no purchasers for them could be found; and it was indispensable immediately to raise a fund on the security of the property thus acquired. The necessities of the state required the sale of ecclesiastical property to the amount of 400,000,000 of livres, or L.16,000,000 sterling; to facilitate it, the municipality of Paris, and of the principal cities of the kingdom, became the purchasers in the first instance, trusting to reimbursement by the sale of the property, in smaller portions, to individuals. But an insuperable difficulty arose in finding money sufficient to discharge the price of so extensive a purchase before the secondary sales were effected; to accomplish this, the expedient was adopted of issuing promissory notes of the municipality to the public creditors, which might pass current till the period of their payment arrived. This was immediately done; but when they became due, still no means of discharging them existed; and recourse was had to government bills, which might possess a legal circulation, and pass for money from one end of the kingdom to the other. Thus arose the system of ASSIGNATS, the source of more public strength, and private suffering, than any other measure in the Revolution. By a decree of the Assembly, passed in the following spring, government was authorised to issue assignats to the amount of 400,000,000 francs, or about L.16,000,000 sterling, to be secured on the domains of the crown, and the ecclesiastical property, to that value. Thus was the public hand for the first time laid on private property, and the dangerous benefit experienced of discharging obligations without providing funds at the moment for their liquidation: an expedient fostering to industry, and creative of strength in the first instance; but ruinous to both in the end, if not accompanied by prudent management, and based on provision made for ultimate payment.[1] It is a remarkable fact, that this irrevocable step was taken by the Assembly in direct opposition to the opinions

19th Dec.

March 17, and April 9, 1790.

[1] Decree, 22d April. Hist. Parl. v. 321, 325. Deux Amis, iv. 154, 157. Hist. Parl. iv. 4, 16, 37, 292. Th. i. 234, 235. Calonne, 28.

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of the country. Out of thirty-seven addresses from the principal commercial cities of France, only *seven* were in favour of assignats. The clamour of demagogues, the passion for spoliation, and financial necessity, had already overturned the whole influence of property, whether landed or commercial.

25. And to the subdivision of land.

By this means, the alienation of the ecclesiastical property was rendered irrevocable, and the foundation of a paper circulation laid in the kingdom. The necessities of the state made the continuance and extension of the system in future years unavoidable; and this led to a third consequence, more important in the end than either of the former, viz., the establishment of a vast body of small landholders, whose properties had sprung out of the Revolution, and whose interests were identified with its continuance. The public creditor was not compelled, in the first instance, to accept land instead of money, but he received assignats, which passed current in the market, and ultimately came into the hands of some prudent or far-seeing individuals, who made them the investment of a little capital, and, instead of circulating them as money, presented them for discharge, and received small fragments of the ecclesiastical estates. The extreme difficulty of finding a secure place of deposit for funds in those distracted times, and the innumerable bankruptcies of mercantile men which took place during the progress of the Revolution, produced an universal opinion among the labouring classes, that the purchase of land was the only safe way of disposing of money. And this feeling, coupled with the excessive depreciation which the assignats afterwards reached, and the great accession to the national domains which the confiscated estates of the nobles produced, occasioned that universal division of landed property which forms the most striking feature in the modern condition of France.[2]

[1] Baron de Staël, 72. Mig. i. 106. Toul. i. 179.

26. Clergy vehemently resist.

The clergy, finding the administration of a large portion of their estates transferred to the municipalities, and a paper money created which was to be paid from their sale, were seized with the most violent apprehensions. As a last resource, they offered to lend the state the 400,000,000 francs upon being reinvested with their property; but this offer, as tending to throw doubt upon the confiscation of

their estates, was immediately rejected. The utmost efforts were immediately made by the church to excite public opinion against the Revolution. The pulpits resounded with declamations against the Assembly; and the sale of the ecclesiastical estates was universally represented to be, as in truth it was, iniquitous in the highest degree. But these efforts were in vain. Some disturbances broke out in the south of France, and blood was shed in many of the provinces in defence of the priesthood, but no general or national movement took place; the emigration of the nobles had deprived the peasantry in the country of their natural leaders, and after some resistance, the clergy were every where dispossessed of their property. The irreligious spirit of the age secured this triumph to the enemies of the Christian faith; but no violent or unjustifiable proceeding can take place without ultimately recoiling on the nation which commits it. From this flagrant act of injustice may be dated the unconquerable aversion of the clergy in France to the Revolution, and the marked disregard of religious observances which has since distinguished so large a portion of its inhabitants. From this may be dated that dissoluteness of private manners which extended with such rapidity during its progress, which has spread the vices of the old noblesse through all the inferior classes of the state, and threatens, in its ultimate effects, to counterbalance all the advantages of the Revolution, by poisoning the fountains of domestic virtue, from which public prosperity must spring. From this, lastly, may be dated the commencement of the fatal system of assignats, which precipitated and rendered irrevocable the march of the Revolution, and ultimately involved in ruin all the classes who participated in this first deed of unpardonable iniquity.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 106, 107. Lac. vii. 290, 291. Th. i. 199, 211, 235. Deux Amis, iv. 146, 151. Hist. Parl. iv. 4, 7.

27. Only mode of resisting these evils.

The only way in which it is possible to avoid these dreadful calamities, which at once dry up all the sources of national prosperity, is to assume it as a fundamental principle, that the estates set apart for the church are inalienable property, not to be encroached on or impaired, without the same violence which sets aside all private rights. Without that safeguard, the church will in every country, at some period or other, fall a prey to financial embarrassments. Having no bayonets in its hands,

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like the army; having lost the spiritual thunder which maintained its authority in the ages of superstition; speaking to the future, not the present, wants of mankind; it will ever be the first to be sacrificed to the penury of government incident to an advanced state of civilisation, if not protected by the shield of an interest common to it with ordinary proprietors. It is to the firm hold which this principle has on the English nation, that Mr Burke ascribes the long duration and extensive usefulness of its national establishment.[1] *

[1] Burke's Consid., Works, v. 191, 192.

28. New-modeling of the civil constitution of the church. June 1790.

The interior organisation of the church next came under the revision of the Assembly. The bishoprics were reduced to the same number as the departments; the clergy and bishops declared capable of being chosen only by the electors who were entrusted with the nomination of deputies; the cathedrals and the chapters suppressed, and the regular orders replaced by parochial clergy.† In these reforms, if we except the election of the clergy and bishops by the people—for which they were manifestly disqualified, and which is utterly inconsistent with a national establishment—nothing flagrantly unjust was attempted; the church, purified of its corruptions, and freed from its splendid but invidious appendages, might still have maintained its respectability, had no spoliation of its possessions previously taken place. But the progress of the Revolution, and the efforts of more audacious reformers, soon completed its destruction.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. iv. 397, 399; v. 216. Mig. i. 107, 108. Th. i. 210.

* "The people of England," says Mr Burke, "never have suffered, and never will suffer, the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps extinguished by fiscal difficulties, which may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and are in fact often brought about by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. They will not turn their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners. They tremble for their liberty from the influence of a clergy dependant on the crown—they tremble for the public tranquillity from the disorders of a factious clergy, if they were made to depend on any other than the crown. For the consolation of the feeble and the instruction of the ignorant, they have identified the estate of the church with the mass of private property, of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but only the guardian and regulator—they have ordained that the provision of this establishment should be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and not fluctuate with the oscillations of funds and actions."

† Robespierre supported the reduction of the church to bishops and parochial clergy by these characteristic arguments:—"Premier principe—Toutes les fonctions publiques sont d'institution sociale: elles ont pour but, l'ordre et le bonheur de la société; il s'ensuit qu'il ne peut exister dans la société aucune fonction qui ne soit utile. Devant cette maxime

29. Judicial establishment. May 4.

The judicial establishment underwent a total change about the same period. The parliaments of the provinces were suppressed. The work of destruction had now become so common, that the annihilation of these ancient courts, coeval with the monarchy, hardly excited any attention. New tribunals were created throughout the whole country on the most democratical basis; the judges were appointed, not by the crown, but by the electors; that is—by the whole labouring classes. Even the power of pardon was taken from the sovereign. Trial by jury was universally introduced, and the jurymen were taken indiscriminately from all classes of citizens. Reforms of the most salutary description were effected in the criminal courts; trials made public, the accused allowed counsel, and indulged with every facility for their defence. The inhuman punishments which disgraced the ancient monarchy were abolished, and the punishment of death was limited to a smaller class of delinquencies. The cognisance of charges of high treason was entrusted to a supreme court at Orleans; but it must be added, to the glory of the National Assembly, that during their continuance not one trial took place before it. A new tribunal, entitled the Court of Cassation, was established at Paris to revise the sentences of inferior tribunals; the utility of this institution was such, that it has been continued through all the subsequent changes of government.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. v. 408, 477. Lac. vii. 344, 346. Th. i. 238.

Robespierre's speech on the Church Establishment.

disparaissaient les benefices et les établissemens sans objet, les cathedrales, les collegiates, les curés, et tous les archevêques que ne demandent pas les besoins publiques. Second principe—Les officiers ecclesiastiques étant institués pour le bonheur des hommes et pour le bien du peuple, il s'ensuit que le peuple doit les nommer. Il est de principe qu'il doit conserver tous les droits qu'il peut exercer; or le peuple peut élire ses pasteurs comme les magistrats et autres officiers publics. Troisième principe—Les officiers publics étant établis pour le bien de la société, il s'ensuit que la mésure de leur traitement doit être subordonnée à l'interêt et à l'utilité générale—et non au désir de gratifier et d'enricher ceux qui doivent exercer ces fonctions." Here is the principle of a voluntary church clearly and manfully stated, and traced back to its true origin and only feasible basis, the principle of *utility*. Of all the orators in the Reformation, there was none who so uniformly referred to principle as Robespierre, and it was that which, in the end, raised him to its head. Robespierre's *deductions*, as will appear clearly in the sequel, were all correct; his whole errors and crimes arose from his setting out with false principles. Every thing in this question turns on the meaning of the word "*utility*." Is it pecuniary or spiritual utility? economy in this world, or salvation in the next? It is refreshing, amidst the declamation of the Revolution, to read his speeches; they so uniformly go back to principle, though those principles are universal innocence in the people, vice in the governors, and worldly utility.—See *Histoire Parlémentaire*, vi. 31, 22.

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30. Efforts of the clergy to dissolve the Assembly. April 19.

The revolutionary party having now declared open war against the church, the partisans of the latter exerted themselves to the utmost to abridge the duration or operations of the Assembly. The moment was favourable, as the period when the powers of the Assembly should expire had arrived; the deputies were only appointed for a year, and that time had now elapsed. The clergy and aristocratic party took advantage of this circumstance to insist that the Assembly should be dissolved and reappointed by the electors, as they were well aware that the abolition of all the parliaments, courts of law, and incorporations, in the provinces, and the total confiscation of the property of the church, had created such violent heart-burnings among the people, as would probably render the next Assembly decidedly anti-revolutionary. To support that proposal, they urged the sovereignty of the people, so recently proclaimed as the basis of government by the popular leaders. "Without doubt," says Chapelier, "sovereignty resides in the people; but that principle has no application in the present instance. The dissolution of the Assembly, before the work of the constitution is finished, would lead to the destruction of the constitution; it is now urged by the enemies of freedom, with no other view but to secure the revival of despotism, of feudal privileges, court prodigality, and all the countless evils which follow in the train of these."—"We deceive ourselves," replied the Abbé Maury, "when we speak of perpetuating our own power. When did we become a National Assembly? Has the oath of the 20th June absolved us from that which we took to our constituents? The constitution is finished; you have nothing now to do but declare that the King possesses the executive power; we are sent here for no other purpose but to secure the influence of the people upon the legislature, and prevent the imposition of taxes without their consent. Our duties being now discharged, I strenuously resist every decree which shall interfere with the rights of the electors. The founders of liberty should be the last to invade the rights of others; we undermine our own authority, when we trench upon the privileges of those by whom it was conferred." [1]

[1] Hist. Parl. v. 381, 385.

Loud applause followed these energetic words; but Mirabeau immediately ascended the tribune. "We are asked," said he, "when our powers began, how, from being

simple deputies of bailiwicks, we became a national convention? I reply, from the moment when, finding our place of assembly surrounded by bayonets, we swore rather to perish than abandon our duties towards the nation. Our powers have, since that great event, undergone a total change; whatever we have done has been sanctioned by the unanimous consent of the nation. We became a national convention when, but for us, the nation would have perished. You all remember the saying of the ancient patriot, who had neglected legal forms to save his country. Summoned by a factious opposition to answer for his infraction of the laws, he replied, 'I swear that I have saved my country.' Gentlemen, I swear that you have saved France." The Assembly, electrified by this appeal, rose by a spontaneous movement, and declared its session permanent, till the formation of the constitution was completed. Thenceforward they had not a shadow of legal title for their proceedings: the period for which they had been elected had expired, and by sheer usurpation, without venturing to appeal to the people, they continued their powers.[1]

31. Mirabeau's speech in reply.

[1] Hist. Parl. v. 381, 395. Mig. i. 109, 111. Th. i. 218. Ferriere's Memoirs, i. 237.

Having thus, by a decree of their own, resolved to prolong their powers, the Assembly next entered on the consideration of the important question—in whom, under the new constitution, the powers of declaring peace and war should be vested? A difference which had arisen between Great Britain and Spain, which threatened hostilities at no distant period, brought the necessity of determining this question prominently forward. It was discussed with great vehemence in the Assembly for above a fortnight; and, as the result appeared at one period doubtful, the Revolutionists had recourse to their usual resource of getting up mobs in the streets, and threatening a civil war. Mirabeau, who had now become sensible of the perilous tendency of the Revolution, and began to thirst for employment from the crown, since he had become hopeless of the success of treason under the Duke of Orleans, on this occasion gave the first indication of a change of policy, by proposing, as a middle course, that the right of declaring peace and war should be vested in the King and the Assembly jointly. Instantly he became suspected by the people;[2] rumour spread abroad that he had been gained

32. Discussion as to vesting right of making peace and war in the crown. May 20.

[2] Hist. Parl. vi. 34, 132. Moniteur, 15th May 1790, p. 547. Lab. iv. 232, 236.

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by the court, and the "Grande Trahison du Comte Mirabeau" was hawked through the streets. At the same time, the excitement became so vehement, that it was openly announced in the Revolutionary journals, that if this power were not conceded exclusively to the Assembly, it would lead to a general massacre of the nobles and clergy, and the most frightful convulsions.*

33. Mirabeau's speech in favour of the crown on this point.

"If, on this subject," said Mirabeau, "we had much to fear from the ambition of kings and the corruption of their ministers, have we nothing to apprehend from the enthusiasm of a large Assembly, which may mistake a false resentment for the dictates of wisdom, or the counsels of experience? Read the history of republics, and you will see that ambition has always precipitated them into the most unjust and barbarous wars. Is it not under the empire of the passions, that political assemblies have ever resolved on war? Are we to reckon as nothing the inconvenience of convoking the Assembly, when action, and decided action, is called for? Can we hope to maintain our constitution, if forms essentially at variance with a monarchy are introduced into it? Rome was destroyed by the strife of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic forms. A powerful citizen is more dangerous than a victorious king in such a republic. What were Hannibal and Cæsar to Rome and Carthage? (*Vehement clamour.*) Do not suppose I am to be intimidated by your threats. A few days ago the people wished to carry me in triumph, and now they cry in the streets 'Great Treason of Count Mirabeau.' I had no need of that lesson to learn, that there is little distance between the Capitol and the Tarpeian rock; but the man who combats for truth for his country, is not so easily put down.[1] He who is conscious of having deserved well of the commonwealth—who covets no vain celebrity, and disdains the

20th May. [1] Hist. Parl. vi. 84,112. Moniteur, May 22, 1790, pp. 574, 575. Lab. iv. 276, 280.

* "Si le droit de la guerre et de la paix eut été accordé au Roi, c'eu était fait; la guerre civile éclatait dans la nuit du Samedi ou Dimanche, et aujourd'hui Paris nagerait en sang. A minuit le tocsin aurait appélé les citoyens aux armes: le chateau des Tuileries eut été livré aux flammes; le peuple eut pris sous sa sauvegarde le Monarque et sa famille: mais St Priest, mais Necker, mais Montmorin, auraient été lanternés, et leurs têtes promenées dans la capitale. Qu'on se figure tous les attentats qu'une pareille nuit aurait couvert de son ombre; les massacres, les brigandages, le son des cloches, le fracas d'artillerie, les cris des mourans! Aucun aristocrat n'aurait échappé à la fureur du peuple."—*Orateur du Peuple, par* FRERON, 23 *Mai* 1790.

success of a day for real glory; he who is determined to tell the truth, independent of the fluctuating waves of public opinion, bears within himself his own reward. He awaits his destiny, the only reward which really interests him, from the hand of time, which does justice to all." But it was all in vain; fear of the people prevailed over the eloquence of Mirabeau, the fervour of Abbé Maury; and the power of declaring peace and war was, without qualification, vested in the National Assembly.

34. Settlement on the crown.

Satisfied with having wrested this important prerogative from the Crown, the Assembly, in pecuniary matters, acted with liberality towards the sovereign. Louis demanded twenty-five millions of francs (L.1,000,000 sterling) annually for his household expenses and civil list, which was instantly granted; and the jointure of the Queen was fixed at four million of francs, or L.160,000 a-year. A conceding monarch is always, for a brief space, a favourite with a democratic legislature.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. vi. 246, 249. Lac. viii. 48. Th. i. 238. June 10.

35. Abolition of titles of honour. June 20.

In the fervour of innovation, titles of honour could not long be maintained. M. Lamboin proposed, and Charles Lameth seconded, a decree, "That the titles of duke, count, marquis, viscount, baron, and chevalier, should be suppressed." "Hereditary nobility," said the latter, "wounds equally reason and true liberty. There can be no political equality, no virtuous emulation, where citizens have other dignities than those belonging to their office, or arising from their virtues." "Let us annihilate," said M. de Noailles, "those vain titles, the arrogancy of pride, and ignorance, and vanity. It is time that we should have no distinctions save those arising from virtue. What should we say to Marquis Franklin, Count Washington, Baron Fox? Will such titles ever confer the lustre attaching to the simple Franklin, Fox, Washington? I give my warmest support to the motion, and would add to it, that liveries should be abolished." "A nobility," replied the Abbe Maury, "is part of our constitution: destroy the nobility, and there is no monarchy." So determined were the Assembly to extinguish honours, that the decree was passed in an evening sitting with very little discussion. The noblesse and the clergy made vain efforts to prevent the sacrifice; it was carried by an overwhelming majority.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. vi. 284, 298.

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36. Reflections on this change.

Thus in one day fell the ancient and venerable institution of feudal nobility; an institution sprung from conquest, and cradled in pride, but productive of great and important consequences on the social body, and the cause of the chief distinction between European and Asiatic civilisation. The conquests of the East have seldom produced any lasting institutions, because they have always depended on a single race of warriors, who left behind neither honours nor hereditary possessions to perpetuate the fabric of society. Hence every thing has been ephemeral in Eastern dynasties; national glory, public prosperity, have in every age been as shortlived as their original founders. In Europe, on the other hand, the establishment of hereditary dignities, and of the right of primogeniture, has perpetuated the influence of the first leaders of the people; and, by creating a class whose interests were permanent, has given a degree of durability to human institutions, unknown in any other age or quarter of the globe. Whatever may be said of the vanity of titles, and the unworthy hands into which they frequently descend, it cannot be denied that they have stamped its peculiar character upon European civilisation; that they created the body of nobility who upheld the fabric of society through the stormy periods of anarchy and barbarism, and laid the first foundation of freedom, by forming a class governed by lasting interests, and capable, in every age, of withstanding the efforts of despotic power. Whether the necessity of such a class is now superseded by the extension of knowledge and the more equal diffusion of property, and whether a system of tempered liberty can subsist, without an intermediate body interposed between the power of the crown and the ambition of the people, are questions which time alone can resolve, but on which the leaders of the French Revolution had unquestionably no materials to form an opinion.

37. Military organisation.

But all these changes, great and important as they were, yielded in importance to the military organisation which at this period took place throughout all France. The progress of the Revolution, the overthrow of the invading armies, the subjugation of the European powers, were mainly owing to the military establishments which sprang up during the first fervour of patriotic exertion. The army of France, under the old government, partook of the

aristocratic spirit of the age; the higher grades of military rank were exclusively reserved for the court nobility, and even ordinary commissions were bestowed only on those whose birth or connexions united them to the favoured class of landed proprietors. The consequences of such an exclusive system, in an age of advancing civilisation, might easily have been anticipated. The privates and non-commissioned officers had no interest in common with their superiors, and, like the parochial clergy, felt their own inclinations coincide with those of the *Tiers Etat.* Hence the rapid and decisive defection of the whole army, the moment that they were brought into collision with the Revolution, and exposed to the contagion of popular enthusiasm. Injudicious changes in the regulation of the household troops had recently introduced extensive dissatisfaction even amongst that favoured body, and furnished a pretext for the revolt of the Guard, which was the immediate cause of the fall of the royal authority.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 124, 126, 127.

38. Extraordinary difficulties experienced by the military in contending with the people.

The difficulties experienced by the military in all contests with the populace at this time were so great, that they practically amounted to an entire suspension of the authority of government. The duties of a municipal officer, or of the commander of a fortress, were more appalling than those arising from the most formidable force of regular enemies. In most places the troops, seized with the same mutinous spirit as the nation, refused to act against the insurgents, or openly ranged themselves on their side. A handful of mutineers, a despicable rabble, were thus sufficient to make the governor of a citadel tremble; every act of vigour, even in self-defence, came to be considered as a capital crime; and the clamours of the populace were regarded with more alarm than the thunder of the enemy's artillery. It was universally felt, that in all contests between the military and the people, the officers, even if obeyed by their men, ran far greater risks than the mob to whom they were opposed: if not so obeyed, their immediate destruction was inevitable. Hence anarchy was universal in the army, and more formidable than among the people, from the arms and superior discipline which the former possessed. Out of a hundred and twenty battalions and eighty squadrons that M. De Bouillé had under his command in the east of France, he could only reckon

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on five battalions, all of whom were foreign troops, as likely in a crisis to support the royal cause. Mirabeau became fully sensible, when it was too late, of the ruinous consequences of such a distracted state of things, and proposed to remedy it by the proclamation of martial law; but the Assembly, terrified at the very thought of offending the nation, did not venture to adopt so vigorous a step.* Shortly after the taking of the Bastile, a new oath was tendered to the soldiers, which bound them never to employ their arms against their fellow-citizens, but on the requisition of the civil authorities. This circumstance, immaterial in itself, became important in its consequences, by accustoming the military to other duties, and the protection of other interests, than those of the sovereign.[1]

[1] Bert de Moll. Mém. i. 23, and Dumont, 202.

39. General establishment of National Guards.

With extraordinary rapidity the organisation of the National Guards, in imitation of that of Paris, was completed over the whole kingdom. The middle classes, every where attached to the Revolution, because it promised to remove the disabilities under which they laboured, formed the strength of its battalions; and in a few months three hundred thousand men, enrolled and disciplined in the provinces, were ready to support the popular cause. The influence of this immense body of armed men, great in itself, was increased by the democratic constitution under which it was constructed. Formed in a moment of revolutionary fervour, and during the abeyance of the royal authority, it received no regular organisation from any superior power; the privates elected their own officers, and learned the rudiments of discipline from instructors of their own

* M. De la Tour Dupin, Minister of War, on the 4th June 1790, gave the following account, in a Report to the Assembly, of the disorders of the army:—"His Majesty has this day sent me to apprise you of the multiplied disorders of which every day he receives the most distressing intelligence. The army is threatened with ultra-anarchy. Entire regiments have dared to violate at once the respect due to the laws, to the order established by your decrees, and to the oaths which they have taken with the most awful solemnity. Whilst you are indefatigable in moulding the empire into one coherent and consistent body, the administration of the army exhibits nothing but disturbance and confusion. The bonds of discipline are relaxed or broken; the most unheard-of pretensions are avowed without disguise; the ordinances are without force, the chiefs without authority; the military chest and the colours carried off; the authority of the King himself is proudly defied; the officers are despised, degraded, threatened, or prisoners in the midst of their corps, dragging on a precarious life in the bosom of disgust and humiliation. To fill up the measure of all these horrors, the commandants of places have had their throats cut under the eyes, and almost in the arms, of their own soldiers!

"These evils are great, but they are neither the only nor the worst

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selection; and these, chosen during a period of extraordinary excitement, were of course the most vehement supporters of the power of the people. Hence the marked and steady adherence of this influential body, through all the changes of the Revolution, to the popular side; and hence the facility with which regular armies were subsequently formed on the same democratic model, on the first call of national danger. The National Guard of Paris, thirty thousand strong, under the command of La Fayette, was capable of being increased, by beat of drum, to double that number, all in the highest state of discipline and equipment. But, as usually happens where officers owe their appointment to the privates, his authority became powerless when his commands ran counter to the wishes of his inferiors. On one occasion he resigned the command, and entered an evening party in the dress of the privates. "What, general!" exclaimed the guests; "we thought you were commander of the National Guard."—"Oh!" said he, "I was tired of obeying, and therefore entered the ranks of the privates."[1] *

[1] Toul. i. 88, 126, 127.

40. And of armed pikemen in the towns.

A force more formidable to the actual administration of government or the magistracy, consisted in a multitude of artisans and manufacturers in all the great towns, armed with pikes, and trained to a certain degree of military discipline. These tumultuous bands, raised in moments of alarm, were always ready for insurrection, and anxious to share in the plunder of the opulent classes. Having nothing to lose themselves, they supported every measure of spoliation and cruelty. The worst of the popular leaders found in them a never-failing support, when the

produced by such military insurrections. The nature of things requires that the army should never act but as an instrument. The moment that, erecting itself into a deliberative body, it shall act according to its own resolutions, the government, be it what it may, will immediately degenerate into a military despotism; a species of monster which has always ended by devouring those who produced it."—See *Report*, quoted by BURKE, *Cons.*, *Works*, v. 377.

"So far, however, was the King from listening to this sound advice, that, under the influence of his superstitious dread of occasioning the shedding of blood, he sent round circulars to all the regiments of the army, with orders that the soldiers should join several clubs and confederations in the different municipalities, and mix with them in their feasts and civil entertainments. "Sa Majesté a pensé qu'il convenait que chaque regiment prit part à ces fêtes civiques, pour multiplier les rapports, et resserrer les liens entre les citoyens et les troupes."—*Ibid.* v. 382.

* The author received this anecdote from his late revered and lamented friend, Professor Dugald Stewart, who was present on the occasion.

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more measured fervour of the National Guard was beginning to decline. Their numbers in Paris alone amounted to above fifty thousand; and their power, always great, received an undue preponderance from the disastrous gift from the municipality of two pieces of cannon to each of the forty-eight sections, shortly after the capture of the Bastile. These guns were worked by the ablest and most determined of the populace; the higher ranks all shunned that service, from the fatigue with which it was attended; it thus fell into the hands of the most ardent of the lower, and, from their terrible energy, those cannoniers soon acquired a dreadful celebrity in all the bloodiest tragedies of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 357.

41. Fearful depreciation of assignats. June 17 to Sept. 29.

The agitation of the public mind was, during these changes, increased by the changes which the assignats of the country underwent, and the multitudes whom their progressive depreciation reduced to a state of beggary. Government having once experienced the relief from immediate pressure, which paper credit never fails in the first instance to afford, speedily returned to the expedient; and fresh issues of assignats, secured upon the church property, appeared upon every successive crisis of finance. Eight hundred millions of new assignats, in addition to the 400,000,000 (L.16,000,000) already in circulation, were authorised to be issued by a decree of the Assembly, on 29th September 1790. This was done, notwithstanding the warning voice of Talleyrand, at the instigation of Mirabeau, who clearly perceived what a body of revolutionary interests and proprietors the measure would soon create.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. vi. 274. Toul. i. 204. Th. i. 254.

42. Argument of the Abbé Maury and Talleyrand against their further issue.

M. Talleyrand and the Abbé Maury clearly predicted the fatal consequences which would ensue from this continued issue of assignats to meet the wants of the treasury. "You ask," said they, "why should that paper money be always below the metallic currency? It is because distrust will always exist as to the proportion between its amount and the national domains on which it is secured; because for long their sales will be uncertain; because it is difficult to conceive when two thousand millions (L.80,000,000,) the value of these domains, will be extinguished; because silver issuing at par with paper, both will become objects of merchandise; and *the more plentiful any merchandise becomes, the more it must decline in price.* From this must

necessarily result inextricable confusion; the purchase of land for a nominal value; the discharge of debts for an illusory payment; and, in a word, a universal change of property, by a system of spoliation so secret, that no one can perceive from whence the stroke that ruins him has come. Consider only the effects of an immoderate issue of paper; not to speak of an issue of two thousand millions, for no one probably would support such an absurdity: suppose only that the depreciation became ten per cent. The treasury at that rate will gain ten per cent on the whole debt it owes. Is not that national bankruptcy? And, if it continues and increases, will not all debts be thus depreciated and creditors ruined? Assignats will become an object of commerce and gambling: you will see them rise and fall like bank shares; and, erelong, you will see their holders swallow up the debts of the country, its wealth, and the whole national domains."[1]

[1] Moniteur, Sept. 29, p. 1129; and Sept. 26, p. 1114.

43. Mirabeau's argument in favour of the assignats.

Mirabeau exerted himself to the uttermost to support the issue of assignats, and rested his arguments mainly on its obvious tendency to force on the sales and division of the national domains. "I reckon among the number of enemies to the state, as criminal towards the nation, whoever seeks to shake that sacred basis of our social regeneration, the national domains. We have sworn to maintain and complete the constitution: what is our oath if we do not defend the national domains? There is not a lover of freedom, there is not a true Frenchman, who should not strive for this object. Let the sale of the national domains continue; let it continue over the kingdom, and France is saved. It is in vain to assimilate assignats secured on the solid basis of these domains, to an ordinary paper currency possessing a forced circulation. They represent real property—the most secure of all possessions, the land on which we tread. Why is a metallic circulation solid? Because it is based on subjects of real and durable value, as the land, which is directly or indirectly the source of all wealth? Paper money, we are told, will become superabundant; it will drive the metallic out of circulation. Of what paper do you speak? If of a paper without a solid basis, undoubtedly; if of one based on the firm foundation of landed property, never. There may be a difference in the value of circulation of

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different kinds, but that arises as frequently from the one which bears the higher value being run after, as from the one which stands the lower being shunned—from gold being in demand, not paper at a discount. There cannot be a greater error than the terrors so generally prevalent as to the over-issue of assignats. It is thus alone you will pay your debts, pay your troops, advance the Revolution. Reabsorbed progressively in the purchase of the national domains, this paper money can never become redundant, any more than the humidity of the atmosphere can become excessive, which, descending in rills, finds the rivers, and is at length lost in the mighty ocean."[1]

1 Hist. Parl. vi. 240, 271. Moniteur, Sept. 28. pp. 1121, 1126.

44. Their rapid fall. Sept. 29.

These documents at first bore interest at the rate of four per cent; but this was soon discontinued; notwithstanding which, they for some time maintained their value on a par with the metallic currency. By degrees, however, the increasing issue of paper produced its usual effects on public credit; the value of money fell, while that of every other article rose in a high proportion; and at length the excessive inundation of fictitious currency caused a universal panic, and its value rapidly sunk to a merely nominal ratio. Even in June 1790, the depreciation had become so considerable as to excite serious panic, and the attention of the Assembly was anxiously drawn to the means of allaying it; but as they continually went on issuing fresh assignats, their value, of course, underwent a still greater reduction. Eight or nine per cent was all that could be got, after some years, for these dangerous documents, and in many cases they would hardly pass for one fifteenth of their legal value. So prodigious a change in the state of the circulating medium occasioned an unparalleled fluctuation in the fortunes of individuals, and augmented to an incredible degree the number of those who were ruined by the public convulsions. But it extended in a proportional measure the ramifications of the Revolution through society, by swelling the number of the holders of national property, and thus enlisting a large influential class, by the strong bond of interest, on its side.[2]

2 Hist. Parl. vi. 274. Deux Amis, Th. i. 204. Mig. i. 106. Toul. i. 205. Lac. viii. 56.

The 14th July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastile, approached, and the patriots resolved to signalise it by a fête worthy of the birth of freedom in the greatest

45. Preparations for a fête on the 14th July.

of the European states. A confederation of the whole kingdom in the Champ de Mars was resolved on; and there the King, the deputies of the eighty-four departments, the Assembly, and the National Guard, were to take the oath to the constitution. Every exertion was made to render the ceremony imposing. For several weeks before, almost the whole labouring population of Paris had been employed in constructing benches in the form of a theatre in that noble plain, for the innumerable spectators who were expected; while the municipality, the national guard, and the deputies of the departments, vied with each other in their endeavours to signalise their appearance on the stage by the utmost possible magnificence. The presence of the Monarch, of the National Assembly, of a hundred thousand armed men, and above four hundred thousand spectators, it was justly supposed, would impress the imagination of a people even less passionately devoted than the French to theatrical effect.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, v. 148, 154. Th. i. 245. Mig. i. 114, 115. Lac. vii. 359.

46. Particulars of the fête itself.

Early in the morning of the 14th, all Paris was in motion. Four hundred thousand persons repaired with joyful steps to the Champ de Mars, and seated themselves, amidst songs of congratulation, upon the benches which surrounded the plain. At seven o'clock, the procession advanced. The electors, the representatives of the municipality, the presidents of the districts, the national guards, the deputies of the army and of the departments, thirty thousand strong, moved on in order to the sound of military music, from the site of the Bastile, with banners floating, bearing patriotic inscriptions, and arrayed in varied and gorgeous habiliments. The splendid throng crossed the Seine by a bridge of boats opposite the Ecole Militaire, and entered the amphitheatre under a triumphal arch. They were there met by the King and the National Assembly at the foot of a great altar, erected after the manner of the ancients, in the middle of the plain; at its foot was a model of the Bastile overturned. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, and two hundred priests, dressed in tricolor robes, celebrated high mass in presence of the assembled multitude; after which, La Fayette, as commander-in-chief of the National Guards of France, mounted on a superb white charger, advanced and took the oath in the following terms:—“We swear to be faithful to the

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nation, to the law, and to the King; to maintain with all our might the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King; and to remain united to all the French by the indissoluble bonds of fraternity." Immediately after, the President of the National Assembly and the King took the oath, and the Queen, lifting the Dauphin in her arms, pledged herself for his adherence to the same sentiments. Discharges of artillery, the rolling of drums, the shouts of the multitude, and the clashing of arms, rent the skies at the auspicious event, which seemed to reunite the monarch and his subjects by the bonds of affection. But a dreadful storm arose at that instant; the lowering clouds discharged themselves in torrents of rain, and in an instant the innumerable spectators were drenched to the skin. It soon cleared up, however, and in the evening illuminations and festivities prevailed in Paris; and the King, in a concealed calèche, enjoyed the general expression of happiness. A ball took place upon the site of the Bastile; over the gate was this inscription —"Içi on danse." "They danced in effect," says a contemporary writer, "with joy and security, on the same spot where formerly fell so many tears—where courage, genius, and innocence have so often wept—where so often were stifled the cries of despair."[1]

[1] Prudhomme, Rév. de Paris, ii. 53, 54. Moniteur, July 16, 1790, p. 807. Deux Amis, v. 142, 172. Fer. Mém. i. 18, 23. Mig. i. 117. Lac. vii. 367. Th. i. 246, 249.

47. Accusation of the Duke of Orleans and Mirabeau. Aug. 8, 1790.

These festivities interrupted only for a short period the animosity of the factions against each other. The Duke of Orleans, who had recently returned from his exile in London, was accused before the Assembly soon after, along with Mirabeau, of having conspired to produce the revolt of the 5th October. Never was accusation more ill-timed and unfortunate. At that very moment, Mirabeau, disgusted at the revolutionary proceedings of the Assembly, was secretly lending the aid of his great talents to support the cause of the throne, a course to which he had been inclined ever since the beginning of the year. He had long foreseen the approaching ruin of the state, and had resolved to do his utmost to stem the torrent of those passions he had had so large a share in creating. The Abbé Maury, who took the lead in the impeachment, had become aware, before it came on for debate, that Mirabeau now in secret inclined to the throne, and confessed that the evidence did not warrant any criminal

proceedings against that illustrious man ; and the fact of his having been accused restored all his popularity, which was beginning to decline. Never did he sway the Assembly with more absolute power than when he ascended the tribune to make his defence. The Assembly quashed the accusation, both against Mirabeau and the Duke of Orleans, by adjourning it till the general report of the court at Chatelet on the proceedings of the 5th October was brought up ; but the latter never afterwards regained his reputation, and from that period his influence in the Revolution was at an end.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 83, 84. Mig. i. 118. Th. i. 187, 250, 252. Moniteur, Aug. 8, 1790.

48. Noble speech of Cazales on this occasion.

Cazales, on this occasion, made a noble speech, and for once compelled the Assembly to listen to the words of truth and justice. "Is there one in the Assembly," said he, "who can really wish to screen from justice the authors of a crime which has stained the Revolution, and will be its eternal disgrace? (*Loud murmurs.*) Yes, I repeat it, if the authors of the infamous crimes of 5th October are not discovered, are not punished, what will France say, what will Europe say? The asylum of our kings has been violated, the steps of the throne stained with blood; its defenders murdered; infamous assassins have put in danger the life of the daughter of Maria Theresa, the queen of the French." "We have no queen!" exclaimed a hundred voices.— "Of that woman," then added Cazales, "whose name will survive those of the infamous conspirators of October 5th —they are deputies; they are Frenchmen; they are men: they are stained by that crime. If you adopt the motion, you at least clear yourselves of the stain; it will rest only on its authors. If you reject it, you adopt the infamy; you earn for the National Assembly the odious title of being at once capable of crimes and above punishment."[2]

[2] Moniteur, Aug. 8, 1790, p. 910.

49. Retirement of Necker, Sept. 4.

Shortly after, M. Necker retired from the ministry. Ill health was assigned as the motive for this step, which was really taken from a sense of declining influence and lost popularity. His own words had proved prophetic; the day of his triumphant entry into Paris had been the first of his decline. He had lived to see the folly of his favourite opinion, that reason, if forcibly stated and blended with sentiment, would in the end sway the most vehement popular bodies. His resignation, couched in

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eloquent and touching language,* was received in the Assembly without regret; and he set out for Switzerland, unattended and a fugitive, over the route which he had so lately traversed in triumph. He was arrested at Arcis sur Aube, and narrowly escaped the fate from which he had so generously saved his enemy M. de Besenval. Permission to continue his journey was coldly conceded by the Legislature, which owed its existence and popular constitution to his exertions; a memorable instance of the instability of the applause of the people, but such as must always be looked for in a revolution. Its early promoters are uniformly neglected, when other and more audacious leaders have succeeded; all classes aim at supremacy; its course is always onward; none who have risen by its impulse can long maintain their ascendancy, because, by remaining at the head of affairs, they check the elevation of inferior ambition.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. vii. 163. Mig. i. 118. Lac. vii. 85. Th. i. 257, 258.

50. Change of Ministry. Sept. 5.

The retreat of Necker produced a total change in the ministry. Duport du Tertre was made prime minister, Duportail, Fleurieu, Lambert, and De Lessart, succeeded to the several offices of government. Duport du Tertre, who had risen from an income of 1000 francs a-year to the rank of prime minister, from the effects of the Revolution, was a zealous partisan of the new order of things, which had done so much for him; and he owed his appointment to the influence of La Fayette. He was intimately connected with Lameth, Barnave, and the leaders of the Revolution, and represented the dominant party in the Assembly. Sincerely desirous to uphold the constitution, such as they had made it, he experienced erelong the usual difficulty felt by the leaders of a movement at one period, when they attempt to check it at another; and he became in the end the object of the most envenomed hostility to the Jacobins, when they passed the innovators of the Constituent Assembly in the career of Revolution. Two of these ministers were destined to perish on the scaffold; one by the sword of revolutionary assassins. The period was fast approaching when eminence in public life was a sure passport to a violent death.[2]

[2] Lac. viii. 92. Th. i. 259. Bert. de Moll. Mem. i. 265.

* "Les inimities, les injustices, dont j'ai fait l'épreuve, m'ont donné l'idée de la guarantie que je viens d'offrir; mais quand je rapproche cette pensée de ma conduite dans l'administration des finances, il m'est permis de la réunir aux singularités qui ont accompagné ma vie."—NECKER's *Histoire Parlémentaire*, vii. 164.

51. Revolt at Metz and Nancy.

The state of the army was soon such as to require the immediate attention of the Assembly. The recent military code was eminently favourable to the inferior officers; the ancient distinctions and privileges of rank were abolished, and seniority was made the sole title to promotion. In proportion as this change was beneficial to the private soldiers, it was obnoxious to their superiors, who found their advancement obstructed by a multitude of competitors from the inferior ranks, from whom they formerly experienced no sort of hindrance. The result was a general jealousy between the privates and their officers. Where the former preponderated, Jacobin clubs, in imitation of those in the metropolis, were formed, and discipline, regulations, and accoutrements, subjected to the discussion of these self-constituted legislators; where the latter, dissatisfaction with the established government generally prevailed. Nowhere had the anarchy risen to a higher pitch than in the garrison of Nancy. It was composed of three regiments, one of which was Swiss, the others French; the proportion of officers in these regiments was much greater than usual in other corps, and they were drawn from a class most hostile to the Revolution. After a long series of disputes between them and the privates, who, being decided Revolutionists, could with difficulty be got to submit to the restraints of discipline, it was found that all subordination was at an end. Many concessions had been made to them, which, as usual, only aggravated the mutiny; and, at length, they broke out into open revolt, and put their officers under arrest in their own barracks.[1]

Aug. 31.

[1] Bouillé, 137, 140. Deux Amis, v. 215, 219. Hist. Parl. vii. 60, 61. Toul. i. 237, 239. Th. i. 254.

52. Character of M. de Bouillé.

The Assembly, perceiving the extreme danger of military insubordination in the unsettled state of the public mind, took the most energetic measures to put down the revolt. Mirabeau exerted his powerful voice on the side of order; and Bouille, commander of Metz, received orders to march with the military force under his command against the insurgents. No man could be better qualified for the discharge of this delicate but important duty. In addition to the highest personal courage, he possessed the moral determination which is the invariable charácteristic of a great mind. Connected with the aristocratic class by birth, and attached to the throne by

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principle and affection, M. de Bouillé was yet no enemy to those moderate reforms which all intelligent men felt to be indispensable in the state and the army. He was an enemy to the Revolution, not such as it was, but such as it had become. Firm, intrepid, and sagacious, he was better calculated than any other individual to stem the torrent of disaster; but the time was such, that not even the energy of Napoleon could have withstood its fury. Within the sphere of his own command, he maintained inviolate the royal authority: by separating his soldiers from the citizens, he did all that was possible, and that was but little, to preserve them from the contagion of revolutionary principles; while at the same time, by the natural ascendant of a great character, he retained their affections. For long he declined the new military oath, to be faithful "to the nation, to the law, and to the King;" at length, moved by the entreaties of Louis, he agreed to take it, in the hope of preventing the latter part from being entirely forgotten in the first.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. iii. 279, 280. Toul. i. 119. Lab. iv. 396, 397.

53. Great difficulties of De Bouillé's situation.

Never was a more difficult task committed to a general than that now devolved on Bouillé; for he had, with a small band of foreign mercenaries, to suppress a revolt of troops ten times as numerous, composed of native soldiers, supported by the wishes of the whole inhabitants of the provinces in which they were placed. Out of the ninety battalions which he was empowered to collect, he could only reckon on twenty, and they were all Swiss or German troops; and though more than half of the hundred and four squadrons he commanded were faithful, yet they were cantoned, for the sake of forage, in villages at a great distance from each other, and could not be drawn together without exciting suspicion, and probably extending the revolt. The King, as in all other cases, had enjoined force not to be employed but in the last extremity, when it could not by any possibility be avoided.* Nevertheless immediate steps were necessary, for the revolt at Nancy was daily attracting numbers to the standard of mutiny and plunder.[2] Four French and two Swiss battalions, and some regiments of horse, had already joined it; four thou-

[2] Bouillé, 143, 144. Procès verbal de la Municipalité de Nancy, Aug. 14, 1790. Ibid. 391, 394. Lab. iv. 396, 397.

* "Sa Majesté désire, que la force ne soit pas employée que lorsque, à l'extremité, les departemens se trouveront forcés à la requérir."—*See* La Tour Dupin, *Ministre de la Guerre, à* M. De Bouille, 24 *Août* 1790; Bouille, 142.

sand men had flocked in from the vicinity, and were armed by the pillage of the arsenals, which had been broken open; the military chests had been plundered, every sort of excess perpetrated; and, by threats of instantly hanging the magistrates in case of refusal, and the general sack of the town, they had succeeded in extorting first 27,000 francs (L.1100,) and then 150,000 (L.6000,) from the municipality; the immediate spending of which in debauchery had procured for them the unanimous support of the lower orders of the people.

54. Bouillé marches against Nancy.

Bouillé's first care was to secure, by small garrisons on whom he could rely, the fortress of Bitch, Phalsbourg, and Vic; and at the same time he sent M. de Malseigne to Nancy, armed with the decree of the Assembly, in order to endeavour to prevail on the soldiers to return to their duty, and also to enquire into their alleged grievances. The soldiers and people, however, intoxicated with their success, laughed at his speech, and trampled under foot the decree of the Assembly, fiercely exclaiming, "Money! money!" The Swiss were particularly loud in this demand; and to such a height did their violence proceed, that it was only by a great exertion of personal strength and courage, and with no small difficulty, that M. de Malseigne escaped death at their hands, and got off to Luneville, where a regiment of carbineers afforded him protection. Upon hearing of this, M. de Bouillé instantly collected the few troops nearest at hand on whom he could rely, and marched on Nancy at the head of three thousand infantry and fourteen hundred horse. He found the town, which was slightly fortified, occupied by ten thousand regular troops and National Guards, with eighteen pieces of cannon; but not intimidated by this great superiority, he forthwith summoned the rebels to leave the town, deliver up their guns, and four ringleaders from each regiment, and submit; threatening them, at the same time, with instant attack in case of refusal. This vigour produced a great impression, as Bouillé's character, at once humane and firm, was well known to the soldiers; a deputation waited on him to state the proposals of the rebels, but their terms were so extravagant and their manners so insolent, that he deemed them wholly inadmissible, and prepared for an immediate attack.[1]

[1] Bouillé, 149, 151. Lab. iv. 402, 403. Deux Amis, v. 249, 252.

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55. Bloody action there. Aug. 31.

When Bouillé's men approached the gates of Nancy, they were met by a deputation, which promised, on the part of the mutineers, immediate submission; and a convention was entered into, in virtue of which the officers in confinement were liberated, and one of the regiments began to defile out of the town. But a quarrel arose between Bouillé's advanced guard and some of the mutineers, who insisted upon having their colours and defending the town, and they turned a gun, loaded with grape, on the entering column. Instantly a noble youth, M. Desilles, an officer in the regiment which had mutinied, but who had remained with it to moderate the excesses of the soldiers, placed himself across the mouth of the cannon, exclaiming, "They are your friends;—they are your brothers; the National Assembly sends them: would you dishonour the regiment of the king?" This heroic conduct had no effect on the mutineers; they dragged him from the mouth of the gun—he returned and clasped it by the touch-hole, upon which he was pierced with bayonets, and the gun discharged. Fifty of Bouillé's men were struck down by the discharge, and a conflict began. But mutineers, though superior in number, are seldom able to resist the attack of soldiers acting in their duty. Bouillé's columns penetrated into the town; the regiment of the King, wavering, retired at the solicitation of its officers to the front of its barracks, and soon capitulated; and the remainder of the rebels, driven from one street to another, were obliged to surrender, after a resistance which cost them three hundred killed and wounded. The victorious general and troops signalised their triumph by their clemency; but the inflexible probity of the Swiss government condemned twenty-two of the regiment of Chateauvieux to death, and fifty-four to the galleys, which sentence was rigidly executed. Very different was the conduct of the National Assembly. A hundred and eighty of the French mutineers, and three hundred National Guards, were taken with arms in their hands; they were all pardoned by the French legislature, and soon paraded through the streets of Paris in triumph by the Jacobins; while Bouillé, whose firmness and humanity had shone forth with equal lustre on this trying occasion, became the object of secret terror and open hostility to the whole Revolutionary party.[1]

[1] Bouillé, 152, 159. Moniteur, Sept. 1, 1790, p. 1009. Deux Amis, v. 254, 270. Lab. vi. 404, 407. Bert. de Moll. iii. 282, 284.

56. Tumult in Paris, and proceedings in the Assembly.

The rapid and decisive suppression of this revolt excited the utmost sensation among the Jacobins of Paris; they dreaded, above all things, the demonstration of the ease with which a formidable revolutionary movement could be arrested by the decision of a general, supported by the fidelity of a small body of soldiers. Indefatigable, accordingly, were the efforts they made to excite the public mind on the subject, and, if possible, effect the overthrow of the ministry which had sanctioned, however remotely, so unwonted and alarming an act of vigour. "It is the despotism of the aristocracy," said Robespierre, "which has made use of the army to provoke a massacre of soldiers whose patriotism was their only fault." The massacre of Nancy, the cruelty of Bouillé, were in every mouth; inflammatory addresses were hawked in every street. Marat, in his journal, thundered out against the government; the victorious general was held up to universal execration. Forty thousand men speedily surrounded the Hall of the Assembly, loudly demanding the dismissal of the ministers and the punishment of La Tour Dupin. But the National Guard for once stood firm; the Assembly had too clear a sense of the dangers they had escaped, by the suppression of this revolt, to be diverted from their purpose; and they voted, by a large majority, the thanks of the legislature to M. de Bouillé, the troops of the line, and the National Guards, who had been concerned in the suppression of the revolt. Mirabeau even went so far as to propose a decree disbanding the whole existing army, and readmitting into its ranks only such as should take the oath of implicit obedience prepared by the Assembly. But although this proposal was loudly applauded, yet its execution was evaded by an amendment to refer that matter to the committee which was already charged with a report on the internal organisation of the army, and this caused it eventually to fall to the ground.[1]

Sept. 2.

[1] Marat, L'Amis du Peuple, No. 208, 209. Ferrières, Mém. ii. 143. Deux Amis, v. 273. Hist. Parl. vii. 159, 163. Prudhom., Rév. de Paris, No. 60, p. 381.

57. Frightful disorders in different parts of France.

This explosion at Nancy was but a manifestation of the general spirit of insubordination which had now penetrated every part of France, and pervaded equally the army, the navy, the towns, and the provinces. A reaction against the Revolution had arisen from its evident tendency to destroy all local jurisdictions and authorities in the provinces: the confiscation of the property of the Church had

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excited profound feelings of indignation among that portion of the people, still a large one in the rural districts, which adhered to the faith of their fathers. The dissolution of the bonds of discipline, and the removal of the restraint of authority, had let loose at once the angry, the revengeful, and the selfish passions among the community. At Nismes, a fearful contest took place between the Protestants and Catholics, the former supported by the revolutionists, the latter by the Church party; and the popular magistrates, as usual, did nothing to resist the multitude. The disorders continued through May and June, and were only at last suppressed after fresh numbers of lives had been lost on both sides, the red flag hoisted, and martial law proclaimed. At Brest, the sailors on board the ships of war, indignant at the naval code prepared by the Assembly, which trenched on the license they had arrogated to themselves during the Revolution, broke out into a most alarming mutiny, which was only allayed by the Assembly conceding the principal demands of the insurgents. An insurrection at Toulon led to the same result: at Toulouse a frightful civil war was only arrested by the firmness of the magistrates, who there did their duty: at Marseilles, a ferocious mob fell on an officer named De Beausset, who was labouring to discharge his duty, cut off his head, and tore his body in pieces, which were divided among his assassins; at Montauban, six men were killed, and forty-five wounded; the heads of the dead were paraded on pikes, the wounded dragged, bleeding as they were, in triumph through the streets: at Angers, eight men were killed, and forty-five wounded, during a tumult occasioned by the high prices of provisions. It is painful to dwell further on such atrocities; they are to be met with, alas! in too many pages of history; but at this time, the peculiar disgrace attached to the revolutionary government and authorities, that scarce any of the guilty parties were either inquired after or brought to punishment. The only persons really endangered were those who bravely discharged their duty.[1]

April 6. Sept. 10. April 18. May 1. May 10. Sept. 6.

[1] Lab. iv. 427, 428. Prudhomme, Crimes de la Rév. i. 207, 259.

But all these disorders were thrown into the shade by those which arose from the oppression which the Assembly soon after exercised on the church. On 27th November 1790, an iniquitous decree was passed by this body, ordering that the same oath should be tendered to the eccle-

58. New ecclesiastical oath. Its disastrous effects. Nov. 27.

siastics which had been prescribed for the military, viz.:— "to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the king," with this addition, "and to maintain, with all their power, the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the king." In case of refusal, it was enacted, that they should be held to have renounced their benefices, which were immediately to be filled up in the mode prescribed by the civil constitution of the church. Eight days only were allowed to the resident, and two months to the absent clergy, to testify their adherence. A large part of the bishops and curés in the Assembly refused the oath, and their example was followed by the great majority of the clergy throughout France—a memorable example of conscientious discharge of duty, which might have opened the eyes of the Assembly to the impolicy, as well as injustice, of carrying on any further persecution against this important class. Such, however, was the spirit of the times, that their refusal was universally ascribed to the most factious motives, and immediately followed by the confiscation of their livings. The dispossessed clergy, threatened by this cruel measure with destitution, filled the kingdom with their complaints, and excited, in those districts where their influence still remained, the strongest commiseration at their approaching fate. The people beheld with indignation new churchmen filling the vacant pulpits, and administering, with unconsecrated hands, the holiest offices of religion. The dispossessed clergy still lingered in their dioceses or livings, subsisting on the charity of their former flocks, and denouncing as impious the ordinances and proceedings of the intrusive ministers. Inflamed with resentment at their proceedings, the Assembly at length fixed a day for the adherence of all the clergy in France, and upon its expiry the decree of forfeiture was universally and rigorously enforced. Mirabeau in vain raised his voice against this tyrannical step; the dictates of justice, the feelings of humanity, even the attachments of the rural population, were alike drowned by the clamours of the populace in the larger towns.[1]

Jan. 4, 1791.

[1] Hist Parl. viii. 141, 142, 362. Toul. i. 258, 259, 261. Mig. i. 121, 122. Th. i. 266.

In this extremity, and when the adherence of the ecclesiastics to the oath, or the sacrifice of their benefices, was unavoidable, the clergy, dignified and ordinary, of France, evinced a disinterested spirit and grandeur of character

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59. Reasons which led them to resist this oath July 10, 1790.

[1] Flossan, Hist. Dip. de Franc. vii. 489. Abbé Georg. 39, 41. Savines Exam. de la Const. Civile de la Clergé, 169. Lab. v. 33.

worthy of the illustrious church to which they belonged, and which almost make us forget the previous corruptions which had been instrumental in producing the Revolution. The Pope had expressly refused his sanction to the civil constitution of the clergy, as established by the Assembly, and written to two of the bishops to that effect. In addition to this, a consistory had been held of the whole bishops in France, by whom it was unanimously agreed, one archbishop and four bishops only dissenting,* that they would not take the oath to be faithful to the constitution, as it vested the whole nomination of priests and bishops in a simple numerical majority of their several parishes or dioceses, to the entire exclusion of the appointment or control of the church. It had become, therefore, a matter of conscience with the clergy to refuse the oath.[1]

60. Remarkable speech and prophecy of Cazales on this occasion. Jan. 28, 1791.

Cazales, in this contest, animated by the greatness of the cause he was defending, rose to the highest pitch of eloquence, and pronounced a speech which proved to be prophetic. "The clergy, in conformity with the principles of their religion, are compelled to refuse the oath. You may expel them from their benefices; but will that destroy their influence over their flocks? Do you doubt that the bishops, driven from their stations, will excommunicate those who are put in their place? Do you doubt that a large part of the faithful will remain attached to their ancient pastors, to the eternal principles of the church? There is a schism introduced, the quarrels of religion commence: the people will come to doubt the validity of the sacraments; they will fear to see disappear from the land that sublime religion which, receiving man in the cradle, and following him to the grave, can alone offer him consolations amidst the vicissitudes of life. Thus will commence the division of the people, the multiplication of the victims of the Revolution. You will see the Catholics, over the whole country, following their beloved pastors amidst forests and caverns: you will see them reduced to the misery and desolation which the Protestant clergy experienced on the revocation of the edict of Nantes.[2] Is that a result to be desired of a Revolution

[2] Moniteur, Jan. 28. p. 113; and Lab. v. 53.

* Talleyrand, the Bishops of Lidda, Orleans, and Vivier, and the Archbishop of Aix.

which proclaimed peace on earth, good-will towards men? Driven from their episcopal palaces, the bishops will retire to the huts of the cottagers who have sheltered them in their distress. Take from them their golden crosses, and they will find others of wood; and it was by a cross of wood that the world was saved."

61. Noble conduct of the clergy in refusing the oath. Jan. 4.

When the fatal day arrived, fixed for the final taking of the oath by the bishops and dignified clergy in the Assembly, a furious multitude surrounded the hall, exclaiming, "To the lamp-post! to the lamp-post with all who refuse!" The Abbé Maury raised his powerful voice in the last extremity, but he was interrupted by incessant cries. "Strike; but hear me!" exclaimed the intrepid champion of the church; but it was all in vain. "Swear! swear!" resounded on all sides; and the grey-haired heads of the French church came forth. The Bishop of Agen was the first called: he had never before spoken in the Assembly, and it was with great difficulty he could obtain a hearing. "Swear or refuse!" was the universal cry of the galleries. "I feel no regret," said he, "at the loss of my preferment; I feel no regret for the loss of my fortune; but I should feel regret, indeed, if I lost your esteem: believe me, then, I cannot take the oath." M. Fournes was next called. "I glory," said he, "in following my bishop, as St Lawrence did his pastor." Le Clerc was the third named. "I am a member," said he, "of the Apostolic church." "Swear or refuse!" said Rœderer, in a voice almost hoarse with fury. "This is tyranny indeed!" exclaimed Foucault; "the emperors who persecuted the Christian martyrs, allowed them to pronounce the name of God, and testify, in dying, their faith in their religion." The Bishop of Poictiers then presented himself. "I am seventy years old," said he; "I have passed thirty-five years in my bishopric: I will not dishonour my old age; I cannot take an oath against my conscience." "Say yes or no." "I prefer, then, living in poverty, and will accept my lot in the spirit of penitence." Only one curé, named Landrin, took the oath; even the hundred and eighteen who had first given victory to the *Tiers Etat*, by joining their ranks, held back.[1] At length the President said—"For the last time I call on the bishops and

[1] Hist. Parl. viii. 354, 362; and Moniteur, Jan. 5.

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ecclesiastical functionaries to come forward, and take the oath, in terms of the decree." A quarter of an hour of dead silence ensued, during which no one came forward, and the meeting adjourned. Such was the last act of the church of France, and never certainly did it more worthily evince the divine spirit of its faith.

62. Ruinous effects of this measure.

From these measures may be traced the violent animosity of the clergy against the Revolution, and to this cause ascribed the irreligious spirit which in so remarkable a manner characterised its progress. The clergy being the first class who suffered under the violence of popular spoliation, were the first to raise their voice against its proceedings, and to rouse a portion of the nation to resist its progress; hence the contending parties began to mingle religious rancour with civil dissension. In the cities, in the departments, the people were divided between the refractory and the revolutionary clergy; the faithful deemed none of the exercises of religion duly performed but by the dispossessed ministers; the democrats looked upon these nonjuring ecclesiastics as fanatics, alike inaccessible to reason and dangerous to society. The clergy who refused the oath, composed the most respectable part of this body, as might have been expected from men who relinquished rank and fortune for the sake of conscience. Those who accepted it were in part demagogues, whose principles readily succumbed to their ambition. The former influenced a large portion of the community, especially in the remote and rural districts; the latter were followed by the most influential part of the inhabitants, the young, the active, the ambitious. In this way the Revolution split the kingdom into two parties, who have never ceased to be strongly exasperated against each other: the one, those who adhered to the religious observances of their fathers; the other, those who opposed them. The latter have proved victorious in the strife, at least in France itself, and the consequence has been, that irreligion has since prevailed in France to an extent unparalleled in any Christian state.[1]

[1] Toul. 262. Mig. i. 122.

This iniquitous measure was speedily followed by another, equally alluring to appearance, and attended in the end by consequences to public freedom fully as disastrous—the abolition of the right of primogeniture, and

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63. Revolutionary laws of inheritance. March 18.

establishment of the right of equal succession to landed property to the nearest of kin, whether in the descending, ascending, or collateral line, without any regard either to the distinction of the sexes, or of the full and the half blood.* This prodigious change, which laid the axe to the root of the aristocracy, and indeed of the whole class of considerable landed proprietors in the kingdom, by providing for the division of their estates on their decease among all their relations in an equal degree of consanguinity, was at the moment so agreeable to the levelling spirit of the times, that it met with very little opposition, and proved so acceptable to the revolutionary party throughout the kingdom, that it survived all the other changes of the government, and remains the common law of inheritance in France at this hour. Napoleon was compelled to adopt it, under a slight modification, into the code which bears his name; and though fully aware of its dangerous tendency in extinguishing the aristocratic class, who were the only permanent supporters of the throne, or the cause of order, he never felt himself strong enough to propose its repeal. Other changes introduced by the French Revolution have produced consequences more immediately disastrous, none so ultimately fatal to the cause of freedom. It provided for the slow but certain extinction of that grand and characteristic feature of European civilisation, a hereditary and independent body of landed proprietors; removed the barrier which alone has been proved by experience to be permanently adequate to resist the ambition of the commons, or the tyranny of the crown; and left the nation no elements but the burghers in the towns, and the poor and helpless peasants in the country, to resist the encroachments of the central power in the capital, armed, by the short-sighted ambition of the popular party, with almost all the powers in the state.[1]

In 1802.

[1] Hist. Parl. ix. 187, 194. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 150.

About the same period, the clubs of Paris began to assume that formidable influence which they subsequently exercised in the Revolution. They consisted merely of voluntary associations of individuals who met to discuss

* See c. xxxv. § 91, where a full account is given of the Law of Succession introduced on this occasion, and subsequently adopted in the Code Napoleon.

64. Clubs of Paris. Jacobins and Monarchique.

public affairs; but from the number and talent of their members, they soon became of great importance. The most powerful of these was the famous Club of the JACOBINS, which, after the translation of the Assembly to Paris, rapidly extended its ramifications through the provinces, and by the admission of every citizen, indiscriminately, became the great focus of revolutionary principles. The moderate party, to counterbalance its influence, established a new club, entitled the Club of 1789, at the head of which were Sièyes, Chapelier, La Fayette, and La Rochefoucault. The latter at first prevailed in the Assembly; the former was the favourite of the people. But as the tendency of all public convulsions is to run into extremes, from the incessant efforts of the lower classes to dispossess their superiors, and of the latter to recover their authority, the moderate club soon fell into obscurity, while the Jacobins went on, increasing in number and energy, until at length it overturned the government, and sent forth the sanguinary despots who established the Reign of Terror. The Royalists in vain endeavoured to establish clubs as a counterpoise to these assemblies. Their influence was too inconsiderable; their numbers too small to keep alive the flame; the leaders of their party had gone into exile; those who remained laboured under the depression incident to a declining cause. A club, entitled Le Monarchique, had some success at its first opening; but its numbers gradually fell off, and it at length was closed by the municipal authority, under pretence of putting an end to the seditious assemblages which it occasioned among the people.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ix. 118, 122. Deux Amis, iv. 271, 278. Mig. i. 123.

65. Departure for Rome of the Princesses Adelaide and Victoria April 18.

The increasing emigration of the noblesse augmented the distrust and suspicions of the nation. It was openly announced at the Jacobin club that the King was about to fly from Paris. The departure of the Princesses Adelaide and Victoria, aunts of the King, who had set out for Rome, gave rise to a rumour that the whole royal family were about to depart; and to such a height did the public anxiety arise, that the mob forcibly prevented a visit to St Cloud, which the King, whose health was now seriously impaired by his long confinement in the Tuileries, was desirous to make. La Fayette, who wished to prove the personal liberty of the monarch, endeavoured in vain to

prevail on his guards to allow him to depart; his orders were disobeyed by his own troops, and openly derided by the assembled multitude; "Hold your tongue!" they exclaimed; "the King shall not go." The popularity of this once adored leader was already gone, in consequence of a vigorous and successful attack which he had made, on the 28th February, on a body of rioters who had issued from the Faubourg St Antoine, and were beginning to demolish the castle of Vincennes. Disgusted at his want of success with the troops, he resigned the command of the National Guard, and was only prevailed on to resume it by the earnest entreaties of the whole regiments of Paris. The Assembly, alarmed at the possibility of the King's escaping, passed a decree, declaring that the person of the King was inviolable; that the constitutional regent should be the nearest male heir of the crown; and that the flight of the monarch should be equivalent to his dethronement.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 117, 118. Deux Amis, vi. 22, 24. Hist. Parl. ix. 118, 411, 414.

66. Continued emigration.

The emigration of the nobility, however, meanwhile continued with unabated violence. The heads of the noblest families in France repaired to Coblentz, where a large body of emigrants was assembled; no disguise was attempted of their destination; several young noblemen, on leaving the opera, ordered their coachmen to drive to that city. The fever of departure became so general, that the roads leading to the Rhine were crowded with elegant equipages, conveying away those who had hitherto remained of the first families of France. They did not, as in the time of the Crusades, sell their estates, but abandoned them to the first occupant, trusting soon to regain them by the sword. Vain hope! The Assembly confiscated their properties; the republican armies vanquished their battalions; and the nobility of France for ever lost their inheritances. Vain, frivolous, and self-sufficient, the aristocracy at Coblentz had not laid aside their character when they left their country; their vices were at least as conspicuous in exile as their misfortunes; and declining to avail themselves of the only aid which could have retrieved their fortunes, they refused all offers of assistance from the middle ranks of society.[2] The Prince of Condé, at the head of a brave band, stationed himself on the Upper Rhine, strangers to the intrigues

[2] Deux Amis, vi. 3. 7. Th. i. 270, 271. Lac. viii. 117.

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that were going on, but determined to regain their rights by the sword.*

67. Arrest of the royal princesses.

This general defection, which was magnified in the revolutionary journals, produced so great an impression, that the two royal princesses were arrested on their journey towards Switzerland, and the Assembly felt the utmost difficulty at allowing them to proceed. Mirabeau, who was now secretly inclined to the royal party, raised his powerful voice to facilitate their departure. "An imperious law," exclaimed the Jacobins, "forbids their departure." —"What law?" said Mirabeau. "The safety of the people!" replied Lameth.—"The safety of the people!" rejoined Mirabeau; "as if two princesses advanced in years, tormented by the fears of their consciences, would compromise it by their absence or their opposition! The safety of the people! I expected to have heard these words invoked for serious dangers: when you act as tyrants in the name of freedom, who will hereafter trust your assurance?"—"Europe will be surprised to learn," said the Baron de Menou, "that the Assembly has been occupied, during two hours, with the journey of two old ladies, who prefer hearing the mass at Rome to doing so at Paris." The ridicule of the thing at length prevailed over the fears of the democrats, and the two princesses were allowed to continue their journey without further interruption.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vi. 7, 10. Hist. Parl. ix. 41, 44. Lac. viii. 122. Th. i. 272.

These discussions were but the prelude to the great question of the law against the emigrants, which now

* The best defence of the emigrants that has ever been made, is that by Chateaubriand in his unpublished Memoirs:—"A worthy foreigner by his fireside, in a tranquil state, sure of rising in the morning as safe as he went to bed in the evening, in secure possession of his fortune, with his door well barred, surrounded by friends within and without, will find it no difficult matter to prove, while he drinks a good glass of wine, that the French emigrants were in the wrong, and that an upright citizen should in no extremity desert his country.—It is not surprising that he arrives at such a conclusion. He is at ease—no one thinks of persecuting him: he is in no danger of being insulted, murdered, or burned in his house, because his ancestor was noble—his conclusions are easily formed. It belongs only to misfortune to judge of misfortune; the hardened heart of prosperity cannot enter into the delicate feelings of adversity. If we consider calmly what the emigrants have suffered in France, where is the man now at his ease, who can lay his hand on his heart and say, 'I would not have acted as they did?' The persecution commenced every where at the same time in all its parts, and it is a mistake to suppose that difference of political opinion alone was its cause. Were you the warmest democrat, the most burning patriot, it was enough that you bore an historic name to subject you to the risk of being prosecuted, burned, or hanged, as is proved by the example of Lameth and many others, whose properties were laid waste,

68. Discussions concerning emigrants. March 1.

occupied the attention, not only of the Assembly, but of all the clubs in France. The project of the law introduced by Chapelier, it is said with the humane design of preventing its adoption, was marked by undisguised severity. It authorised a committee of three persons to pronounce upon refractory emigrants the sentence of outlawry and confiscation. A general horror pervaded the Assembly at the cruel proposal, and Mirabeau, taking a skilful advantage of the first impression, succeeded in preventing its adoption. Never was his eloquence more powerful, or his influence more strongly displayed, than on that occasion, the last on which he ever addressed that body. "The sensation which the project of this law has excited," said he, "proves that it is worthy of a place in the code of Draco, and that it should never be received into the decrees of the National Assembly of France. It is high time you should be undeceived; if you or your successors should ever give way to the violent counsels by which you are now beset, the law which you now spurn will come to be regarded as an act of clemency. In the bloody pages of your statute-book, the word DEATH will every where be found; your mouths will never cease to pronounce that terrible word; your statutes, while they spread dismay within the kingdom, will chase to foreign shores all who give lustre to the name of France; and your execrable enactments will find

notwithstanding their ardour in defence of the people in the Constituent Assembly."—See CHATEAUBRIAND's *Memoirs—Fragments*, p. 78.

Admitting the caustic eloquence of these remarks, the British historian cannot allow their justice. The example of the nobility of his own country, in the disastrous days which succeeded the passing of the Reform Bill, has furnished him with a decisive refutation of them. The flames of Bristol and Nottingham proved that danger had reached their dwellings as well as those of the French noblesse; and if they had in consequence deserted their country and leagued with the stranger, it is hardly doubtful that similar excesses would have laid waste the whole fair realm of England. They did not do so; they remained at home, braving every danger, enduring every insult, and who can over-estimate the influence of such moral courage in mitigating the evils which then so evidently threatened their country? The general massacres in France did not begin till after the 10th August 1792; and yet the whole nobility had emigrated and were assembled in menacing crowds at Coblentz, before the end of 1791. Previous to this, there had, indeed, been a vast catalogue of frightful rural disorders, immediately consequent on the abandonment of the feudal rights in August 1789; but these excesses had been of short duration, and the two last years of the Constituent Assembly had been comparatively calm and tranquil. Their emigration was excusable in the autumn of 1789; it was no longer so in the autumn of 1791; and the frightful exasperation of parties which followed, may in a great measure be traced to that culpable desertion of their first patriotic duties, and unhappy union with foreign armies for the invasion of their country.

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subjects for execution only among the poor, the aged, and the unfortunate. For my own part, far from subscribing to such atrocious measures, I should conceive myself absolved from every oath of fidelity to those who could carry their infamy so far as to name such a dictatorial commission. Your murmurs are unavailing : to please you is my happiness ; to warn you, my duty : the popularity which I desire is not a feeble twig, fanned by the breath of momentary favour ; it is an oak, whose roots are spread in the soil—that is to say, fixed on the immutable basis of justice and liberty. I understand the vexation of those, who, now so ardent, or rather so perfidious, in their love of freedom, would be puzzled to tell when it arose in their bosoms." These last words excited a violent murmur among the Jacobins. "Silence those thirty voices !" said Mirabeau in a voice of thunder, and the hall was instantly silent.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. ix 48, 62. Moniteur, March 1. Lac. viii. 122, 126. Mig. i. 125. Th. i. 277, 279.

69. Mirabeau joins the throne.

With such prophetic truth did this able man foresee the result of the violent counsels, and angry passions, which were now beginning to characterise the career of the Revolution. He plainly perceived that his popularity was on the wane, not because his eloquence was less powerful, his arguments less cogent, his energy less commanding, than when he reigned the lord of the ascendant, but because he no longer headed the popular movement, and now strove to master the passions he had excited among the people. The failure of the Duke of Orleans to take advantage of the revolt of 6th October, had entirely alienated him from that pusillanimous leader, and he sighed for the offices and favour of the court. Already the cry had been heard in the streets, "Grande trahison du Comte Mirabeau," and the populace followed the career of less able, but more reckless leaders. Disgusted with the fickleness of the multitude, and foreseeing the sanguinary excesses to which they were fast approaching, he had, since the beginning of February, made secret advances to the constitutional party, and entered into correspondence with the King, for the purpose of restraining the further progress of the Revolution.*

* In the beginning of February he opened those communications by the following note to M. Malouet, one of the King's ministers :—" Je suis plus de votre avis que vous ne pensez ; et quelle que soit votre opinion sur mon compte, la mienne n'a jamais varié sur vous. Il est temps que les gens sensés s'approchent et s'entendent. Auriez-vous de la repugnance à vous

He received for a short time a pension of 20,000 francs, or L.800 a-month, first from the Count D'Artois, and afterwards from the King; but it was not continued till the time of his death, from finding that he was not so pliant as the court party expected. He was even honoured with a private interview with the Queen in the gardens of St Cloud, who was with reason most anxious to secure his great abilities in defence of the throne.* His style of life suddenly changed; magnificent entertainments succeeded each other in endless profusion, and his house resembled rather the hotel of a powerful minister, than that of the leader of a fierce democracy. Yet mere venality was not the motive for this great change; he allied himself to the court, partly because he saw it was the only way to stop the progress of the Revolution; he took their pensions, because he regarded himself as their minister to govern the Assembly; and he would have rejected with disdain any proposition to undertake what was unworthy of his character. His design was to support the throne, and consolidate the constitution, by putting a stop to the encroachments of the people. With this view, he proposed to establish, in reality and not in name, the royal authority; to dissolve the Assembly, and reassemble a new one; restore the nobility, and form a constitution as nearly as possible on the English model: a wise and generous object, entertained at different times by all the best friends of freedom in France, but which none were able to accomplish, from the flight of the great and powerful body by whom it should have been supported.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 127. Weber, ii. 37. Dumont, Souv. de Mirabeau, 285, 312, 313. Bouillé, 247. Lac. viii. 128. Mig. i. 126.

The plan of Mirabeau was to facilitate the escape of the King from Paris to Compeigne, or Fontainbleau; that he should there place himself under the guidance of the able and intrepid M. de Bouillé, assemble a royal army, call to his support the remaining friends of order, and openly employ force to stem the torrent. He pledged himself for the immediate support of thirty departments, and the ultimate adhesion of thirty-six more. Between

trouver avec moi chez un de vos amis, M. de Montmorin? Indiquez-moi le jour, pourvu que ce soit après une séance du soir."—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, iv. 174.

* So charmed was Mirabeau with the Queen's manner, that he took leave of her with these words,—"Madame, la monarchie est sauvée."—CAMPAN, ii. 127; and WEBER, ii. 37.

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70. His plan on its behalf.

the contending parties, he flattered himself he should be able to act as mediator, and restore the monarchy to the consideration it had lost, by founding it on the basis of constitutional freedom. "I would not wish," said he, in a letter to the King, "to be always employed in the vast work of destruction;" and, in truth, his ambition was now to repair the havoc which he himself had made in the social system. He was strongly impressed with the idea, which was in all probability well founded, that if the King could be brought to put himself at the head of the constitutional party, and resist the further progress of democracy, the country might yet be saved. "You know not," said he, "to what a degree France is still attached to the King, and that its ideas are still essentially monarchical. The moment the King recovers his freedom, the Assembly will be reduced to nothing: it is a colossus with the aid of his name: without it, it would be a mountain of sand. There will be some movements at the Palais Royal, and that will be all. Should La Fayette attempt to play the part of Washington, at the head of the National Guard, he will speedily, and deservedly, perish." He relied upon the influence of the clergy, who were now openly committed against the Revolution, with the rural population, and on the energy and intrepidity of the Queen, as sufficient to counterbalance all the consequences of the vacillation of the King. But, in the midst of these magnificent designs, he was cut off by death. A constitution naturally strong sunk under the accumulated pressure of ambition, excitement, and excessive indulgence.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 127, 128. Staël, i. 405. 406. Th. i. 280. Dum. 207, 210, 211, 257. Weber, ii. 53.

71. His death. April 2.

His death, albeit that of a sceptic, had something in it sublime. He was no stranger to his approaching dissolution; but, far from being intimidated by the prospect, he gloried in the name he was to leave. Hearing the cannon discharge upon some public event, he exclaimed, "I already hear the funeral obsequies of Achilles: after my death, the factions will tear to shreds the remnants of the monarchy." His sufferings were severe at the close of his illness: at one period, when the power of speech was gone, he wrote on a slip of paper the words of Hamlet, "To die is to sleep." "When a sick man is given over, and he suffers frightful pains, can a friendly physician refuse to give him opium?" "My pains are insupportable; I have

an age of strength but not an instant of courage." A few hours before his death, the commencement of mortification relieved his sufferings. "Remove from the bed," said he, "all that sad apparatus. Instead of these useless precautions, surround me by the perfumes and the flowers of spring; dress my hair with care; let me fall asleep amidst the sound of harmonious music." He then spoke for ten minutes with such vivid and touching eloquence, that every one in the room was melted into tears. "When I am no more," said he, "my worth will become known. The misfortunes which I have held back will then pour on all sides on France; the criminal faction which now trembles before me will be unbridled. I have before my eyes unbounded presentiments of disaster. We now see how much we erred in not preventing the commons from assuming the name of the National Assembly; since they gained that victory, they have never ceased to show themselves unworthy of it. They have chosen to govern the King, instead of governing by him; but soon neither he nor they will rule the country, but a vile faction, which will overspread it with horrors." A spasm, attended with violent convulsions, having returned, he again asked for laudanum. "When nature," said he, "has abandoned an unhappy victim, when a miracle only could save his life, how can you have the barbarity to let him expire on the wheel?" His feet were already cold, but his countenance still retained its animation, his eye its wonted fire; as if death spared to the last the abode of so much genius. Feigning to comply, they gave him a cup, containing what they assured him was laudanum. He calmly drank it off, fell back on his pillow, and expired.[1]

[1] Chronique de Paris, 3d and 4th April. Hist. Parl. ix. 385, 389. De Staël, i. 408. Lac. viii. 133. Dumont, 267, 268.

72. His character.

Such was the end of Mirabeau, the first master-spirit who arose amidst the troubles of the Revolution. He was upwards of forty years of age when he entered public life; but his reputation was already great at the opening of the States-General, and he was looked to as the tribune who was to support the cause of the people against the violence of the crown. Endowed with splendid talents, but impelled by insatiable ambition; gifted with a clear intellect, but the prey of inordinate passions; sagacious in the perception of truth, but indifferent as to the means by which distinction was to be acquired; without great infor-

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mation derived from study, but with an unrivalled power of turning what he possessed to the best account; bold in design, but reckless of purpose—he affords a memorable example of the inefficacy of mere intellectual power and resolution to supply the want of moral, or to make up for the absence of religious feeling. He was too impetuous to make himself master of any subject; studied nothing profoundly, and owed almost all the writings to which his name was attached, and many of the speeches which he delivered, to Dumont and Duroverai, who aided him in his herculean labours. His greatest talent consisted in a strong and ardent imagination, a nervous elocution, and an unrivalled power of discerning at once the spirit of the assembly which he was addressing, and applying the whole force of his mind to the point from which the resistance proceeded. Great as his influence was in the Assembly, it was less than it would have been, but for the consequences of his irregular life; and the general belief entertained of his want of principle, made the league with the court, in the close of his career, be ascribed to venal, when it was rather owing to patriotic motives. His inordinate passions cut him short in the most splendid period of his career—in the vigour of his talents, and the zenith of his power, when he was about to undertake the glorious task of healing the wounds of the Revolution. His primary object was to acquire distinction; he espoused at first the popular side, because it offered the fairest chance of gaining celebrity; he was prepared at last to leave it, when he found the gales of popular favour inclining to others more sanguinary, and less enlightened than himself.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 186, 259. Th. i. 123, 124, 125. Dum. 276, 277.

73. And funeral obsequies. April 4.

His death was felt by all as a public calamity; by the people, because he had been the early leader and intrepid champion of freedom; by the royalists, because they trusted to his support against the violence of the democratic party. All Paris assembled at his funeral obsequies, which were celebrated with extraordinary pomp by torchlight, amidst the tears of innumerable spectators. Twenty thousand National Guards, and delegates from all the sections of Paris, accompanied the corpse to the Pantheon, where it was placed by the remains of Des Cartes.[2] The coffin was borne by the grenadiers of the battalion of La Grange Bateliere, which he commanded: deputations from

[2] Hist. Parl. x. 389, 390. Deux Amis, vi. 49. 51. Th. i. 282. Lac. viii. 135. De Staël, i. 408.

the sixty battalions of the National Guard of Paris, with La Fayette at their head, joined in the procession. The church of St Genevieve was hung with black, and the body lowered into the grave at midnight, amidst volleys of musketry. The bones of Voltaire, and subsequently those of Rousseau, were soon after removed to the same cemetery; over the noble portico of which were inscribed the words —"Aux Grandes Ames la Patrie Reconnoissante."

74. Changed views of the literary men in Paris on the Revolution.

The literary and philosophical characters in Paris, who had done so much to urge on the tempest of democracy, were now fully sensible of the ungovernable nature of the power which they had excited. Volney, long one of Mirabeau's intimate friends, openly expressed, in his caustic way, his sense of the thraldom which the Assembly had imposed on itself. "Can you pretend," said he, "to command silence to the galleries? Our masters sit there; it is but reasonable they should applaud or censure their servants' speeches."—"I am astonished to hear you," said one of the bystanders to the Abbé Sabatier, who had first originated the cry for the States-General, "rail so violently at an assembly which you had so powerful a hand in calling into existence."—"Yes," replied the abbé, "but they have changed my States-General at nurse."—"The States-General," said Marmontel, "always remind me of an expression of Madame de Sevigné—'I would admire Provence if I had never seen the Provençaux.'"[1]

[1] Dumont, 250, 252. Ségur, iii. 384.

75. Debate in the Assembly on the punishment of death, and Robespierre's speech on it. May 30.

On the 30th May a motion was brought forward in the Assembly by Lepelletier St Fargeau, for the entire abolition of the punishment of death. It proceeded on the report of a committee to whom the matter had been referred, which bore, "That punishments should be humane, justly accommodated in gradation to crime, equal towards all citizens, exempt from all judicial power; repressive chiefly by their prolonged nature and privations; public, and carried into execution near the places of the crime; that they should improve the mind of the convict by the habit of labour, and decline in severity as the period of their termination approached." Few probably will dispute that these are the proper principles of criminal jurisprudence; the difficulty is to render them effectual in repressing crime. But what renders this debate chiefly remarkable, is the strong opinion expressed by Robespierre in the

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course of it *against the punishment of death.* "The news," said he, "having been brought to Athens that some citizens at Argos had been condemned to death, the people ran to the temple, and prayed the gods to turn aside the Argives from such cruel and fatal thoughts. I am about to pray not the gods, but the legislators, who should be the interpreters of the eternal laws which the Deity has imprinted in the human heart, to efface from the code of the French *those laws of blood which command judicial murders*, and which our feelings and the new constitution alike repel. I undertake to prove that the punishment of death is essentially unjust; that it has no tendency to repress crimes; and that it multiplies offences much more than it diminishes them.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. x. 55, 67.

"Before society is formed and the force of law established, if I am attacked by an assassin or a robber, I must kill him, or I will be killed myself. But in civilised society, when the power of all is concentrated against one alone, what principle either of justice or necessity can authorise the punishment of death? A conqueror who kills his prisoners in cold blood is justly stigmatised as a barbarian. A grown man who murders a child whom he can disarm and punish, appears a monster. An accused person, whom law has condemned, is neither more nor less than a vanquished and powerless enemy; he is more at your mercy than a child before a grown man. In the eyes of truth and justice, therefore, those death-scenes which are got up with so much solemnity are nothing but base assassinations, solemn crimes, committed not by individuals, but entire nations, and of which every individual must bear the responsibility.

"The punishment of death is necessary, say the partisans of ancient barbarity: without it, there can be no adequate security against crime. Have those who say so duly estimated the springs which really move the human heart? Is death the most terrible of all things? Alas! to how many things does the catalogue of human woes tell you it is a relief. The love of life yields to pride, the most injurious of all the passions which sway the human heart. It is often sought after as a cessation from pain by the lover, the bankrupt, the drunkard. The punishment which is really overwhelming is opprobrium: the general

expression of public execration. No one seeks *it* as a refuge from the ills of life. When the legislator can strike the guilty in so many ways, merciful yet terrible,—bloodless yet efficacious, why should he ever recur to the hazard of a public execution? The legislature which prefers death to the milder chastisements within its power, outrages public feeling and brutalises the minds of the people. Such a legislature resembles the cruel preceptor who, by the frequent use of savage punishments, degrades and hardens the mind of his pupil. The judgments of human tribunals are never sufficiently certain of being based on justice to warrant the inflicting of a punishment which can never be recalled." The Assembly, however, was not carried away by this eloquent reasoning, but decreed that the punishment of death should be preserved, but should be inflicted only by beheading, without any previous torture.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. x. 55, 69.

76. Designs of the Royal family to effect their escape.

The death of Mirabeau did not arrest the plans which he had formed for the escape of the King. His state of thraldom was too obvious to be disguised: coerced at every step by hostile guards, deprived of the liberty of even visiting his own palaces; restrained by the mob, whom even La Fayette could not control; without power, without money, without consideration, it was mere mockery to talk of the throne as forming a constituent part of the government. The experiment of constitutional monarchy had been tried and failed; the president of a republic would have had more real authority; his palace was nothing but a splendid prison. M. de Bouillt was the person on whom the royal family depended in their distress, and Breteuil the counsellor who directed their steps. The noble and intrepid character of the former, and the great reputation he had acquired by the successful suppression of the revolt at Nancy, as well as his position in command of the principal army on the frontier, naturally suggested him as the person to prepare the means of escape. For some time past he had arranged every thing for this purpose; and under cover of a military movement on the frontier, had drawn together the most faithful of his troops, to a camp at Montmedy.[2] Detachments were placed along the road to protect the journey, under the pretext of securing the safe passage of

[2] Bouillé, 229, 236. Bert. de Moll. v. 53, 55. Mig. i. 132. Th. i. 287.

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the military chest, containing a considerable treasure, which was expected from Paris.

77. M. de Bouillé's arrangements for the journey.

M. de Bouillé's dispositions to receive and protect the august fugitives, had been made with his wonted ability, had been submitted to and approved of by the King, and promised entire success. Forty hussars of Lauzun, under M. Boudet, an approved Royalist, received orders to proceed on the 19th June to St Menehould, and early on the following morning to Pont de Sommevelle, on the road to Chalons, and await there the King's coming up from Paris—escort him to St Menehould, and return, after depositing the royal family, to Sommevelle, and allow no one to pass the bridge for eighteen hours. The Duke de Choiseul and M. de Goguelat, of the *état major*, who were both known to their Majesties, and were in the secret, were to accompany this detachment. M. Dandoins, captain of the royal dragoons, was to be at St Menehould on the 20th, and escort the carriage with his troops to Clermont, where a hundred dragoons of the regiment of Monsieur, and sixty of the royal dragoons, under Count Charles de Damas, were to be on the 19th, and accompany the royal carriage to Varennes, where sixty hussars of Lauzun's regiment were to be stationed. Since the 19th a hundred hussars of the same regiment were at Dun, which lay on their road to the Meuse, a very important station, on account of the bridge over that river, and the narrow street which leads to it. At Mouza, a little village between Dun and Stenay, M. de Bouillé stationed fifty horsemen of the regiment Royal Allemand, which could be entirely relied on; while that devoted chief himself was to be with the remainder of the regiment between these two towns, ready to give orders and succour any point which might require it. M. de Goguelat himself was previously instructed to reconnoitre the whole road to Paris, and repair there in person to inform the King of the whole details of the road and arrangements, which he did to their Majesties' entire satisfaction.[1]

[1] Weber, ii. 78, 79. Bouillé, 255.

Every precaution on their side had been taken by the royal family to secure their departure from Paris under feigned names, and with the most profound secresy. It was at first proposed that the Princess Elizabeth, the

78. Preparations at Paris for the escape of the Royal family.

Dauphin, and his sister, should proceed separately to Flanders; and the Queen warmly supported this plan: but nothing could bring the King to sever himself from his children, to whom he was tenderly attached. The event proved that the Queen was right. Monsieur, his brother, with Madame, who set out at the same time, arrived safe at Brussels. Passports were obtained for the royal family under feigned names: Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the children, was the Baronne de Korff; the Queen was her *gouvernante;* the King her *valet de chambre;* the Princess Elizabeth, a young lady of the party; the Dauphin and the Duchess d'Angoulême, the two daughters of the Baroness, under the names of Amelia and Aglae. Three *gardes du corps,* under feigned names, were to accompany the carriage: two seated on the outside, one riding as a courier to provide horses. An unlucky accident, arising from the illness of the Dauphin's maid, who was a faithful Royalist, which had occasioned another, who had a leaning to the Revolution, to take her place, caused the departure, after every thing had been arranged for the 19th at midnight, to be delayed until the 20th at the same hour; but M. de Bouillé was warned of the change, and the detachments on the road were kept back accordingly.[1]

[1] Bouillé, 255, 257. Weber, ii. 57, 59, 80, 84. Relat. de la Duchesse D'Angoulême, p. 34.

79. Plans of the Court. June 20.

Their design, known to few, was betrayed by none; their manner indicated more than usual confidence; and at length, on the 20th June, at eleven at night, the King, with the Dauphin and the Duchess d'Angoulême, the Princess Elizabeth, and Madame de Tourzel, after supping quietly, succeeded in reaching in disguise a carriage on the Boulevards. The Dauphin was disguised in girl's dress, and in the highest spirits; he said they were going to play a comedy, as they were in strange dresses. Having got into the carriage, he soon fell fast asleep. The Queen, who set out with a single attendant to avoid suspicion, had nearly betrayed their design. Both being ignorant of the streets of Paris, they lost their way, and accidentally met the carriage of Lafayette, which they only avoided by concealing themselves under the colonnade of the Louvre. At length they reached the trembling fugitives in the suburbs, and instantly set out in another carriage at the barrier St Martin, on the road to Montmedy and Chalons. They passed the barrier without being discovered, but an

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hour was unhappily lost not far from the capital by an accident to a wheel; notwithstanding they proceeded several stages from Paris in perfect safety. The success of their enterprise appeared certain. But the distance from the capital, and the near approach of the royal corps under Bouillé, occasioned a fatal relaxation in their precautions. The King delayed too long on the road, and had the imprudence to show himself publicly at Chalons, where he was recognised by some persons, who, however, had the humanity to keep the secret. Many even offered up prayers for his success. The expected detachment, however, was not found at the bridge of Sommevelle, and the carriage proceeded unattended to Saint Menehould, the next stage, where the postmaster, Drouet, was struck by the resemblance of his countenance to the engraving on the assignat. The age, the number of the royal family, confirmed him in his suspicions, and, after the carriage had departed, he sounded the alarm, and dispatched one of his friends on a swift horse to cross the country, and intercept him at the succeeding post of Varennes.[1]

[1] Relat. du Voyage de Varennes, par la Duchesse D'Angoulême, 34. Campan, ii. 139, 143. Weber, ii. 535. Lac. viii. 248, 256. Bouillé, 239, 244. Mig. i. 132. Th. i. 289.

80. Journey to Varennes, and extraordinary fatalities which caused it to miscarry.

It is painful to reflect on the number of accidents which, by a strange fatality, combined to ruin the enterprise at the very moment when its success seemed certain. The officer in command at St Menehould, who had left Sommevelle an hour before the King came up, and returned to his quarters there, observing the motions of Drouet, sounded his trumpets to horse; but the National Guard surrounded the stables, and prevented the dragoons from mounting their horses. An intrepid sergeant, whom he dispatched on the footsteps of the emissary, with the design, if he proved what he suspected, of shooting him, though he got sight of Drouet's messenger, lost him again in a wood. The officer commanding the detachment at Clermont no sooner heard of the arrival of the Royal carriages, than he mounted his horse and commanded his men to follow; but a rumour of the quality of the fugitives had got abroad, and they refused to obey. At Varennes, where they arrived at eleven at night, by a still more deplorable fatality, the post-horses were waiting for the king at the further end of the town, not at the place which had been agreed on; and when the carriage stopped, sixty hussars under the command of a young Royalist officer were in the town, but at its further end.

The royal family were seized with consternation at finding neither relays of horses, nor a guard of soldiers. Such was the anxiety of the queen, that she went herself, from door to door, enquiring for the horses; in vain they urged the postilions to proceed; the obstinate men delayed their journey for some hours, till Drouet, who had now arrived, had time to rouse the National Guard, and barricade a bridge at the eastern side of the town, through which the road passed. When the King at length got horses, and arrived at the bridge, the two *gardes du corps* who were seated on the front of the carriage, prepared their arms to force a passage; but the King, finding his progress opposed by a considerable force, and the muskets of the National Guard presented at the carriage, commanded them to submit. The royal fugitives were seized, and reconducted by the armed multitude to the post, from whence information was immediated dispatched with the important intelligence to Paris.

81. The King reveals himself to the Mayor, who takes measures to arrest the party.

Meanwhile the dragoons from St Menehould arrived, and were soon followed by those of Lauzun, who ranged themselves round the Royal party. The mayor, named Sausse, approached the carriage when it was brought back, and insisted on seeing the passports. These were immediately shown, and proved entirely correct; but Drouet still maintained that they were the Royal family, observing, "If you are strangers, as you say, how have you sufficient authority to order up the dragoons who awaited you at St Menehould; how are you surrounded by those of Lauzun?" Sausse then approached, and said in a low voice to the King, "The report is spread abroad that we have the happiness to possess the King and his family. The tocsin sounds: the concourse of people from the country will soon be immense. To avoid the chance of a tumult, I have the honour of offering my house as a place of safety." The King, knowing that Bouillé was not far distant, deemed it prudent to accept the offer, and taking his children by the hand, entered the house, followed by the Queen and Madame Elizabeth. Their anxiety was extreme: in speechless suspense they listened for the joyful sound of Bouillé's dragoons, who would at once have effected their deliverance. But not a sound was heard save the increasing murmur of the mob in the street.

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Meanwhile the perfidious Sausse surrounded the quarter where the hussars and Royal family were, with National Guards, and wrote off to the municipalities of Clermont and Verdun, with information that the Royal family were arrested, and urging them to send their National Guards to aid in detaining them, which they instantly did. On the other side, the officer in command of the hussars of Lauzun left Varennes to inform M. de Bouillé of what had happened; and the Royal family, in the deepest anxiety, sat up all night. Towards morning, seeing M. de Bouillé had not arrived, he revealed his quality to the mayor, as Marie Antoinette did to his wife:—"I am your King," said he, "placed in the capital in the midst of poniards and bayonets: I am going to seek for my faithful subjects liberty and peace. Yes, my friend, it is your King who is in your power: it is your King who implores you not to betray him to his most cruel enemies. Ah! save my wife, my children: fly with us: I will make your fortune, and your town second to none in the kingdom." But all entreaties were in vain, and the stern republican refused to allow them to proceed on their journey.[1]

[1] Fontange, Relat. du Voyage de Varennes, 37. Goguelat, 27. Lab. v. 263, 265.

82. He is forcibly detained till the aides-de-camp of La Fayette arrive.

At length the detachments from Sommevelle arrived, under M. Choiseul and Goguelat, and M. de Damas with those from Clermont. In spite of the menaces of the National Guards, they penetrated into the town, and drew up opposite the house where the King was. M. de Damas entered the building, and in a whisper entreated the King to take a decided part; but he, looking at his wife and children, said he could not, adding, "Ah! if they were not with me." Upon this, M. de Goguelat, in despair, went to the window, and endeavoured to rouse the dragoons to declare for the King; but they had been for the most part made drunk by the citizens, and answered all his appeals by cries of "Vive la Nation." Upon this he went down, singly, to strive against the crowd who surrounded the house; and in a struggle with the major of the National Guard, he was pierced by two balls, which caused him to fall from his horse. About the same time the dragoons came up from Dun; but, by this time, the streets were barricaded, and the commanding-officer, with the utmost difficulty, obtained liberty to penetrate alone to the King.[2] Shortly after, the two aides-de-camp of La Fayette arrived from

[2] Choiseul, 104, 110. Bouillé, 251. Rap. de Damas. Goguelat, 32. Lac viii. 266, 267. Lab. v. 264, 267.

Paris, with orders to arrest and bring back the fugitives. —"Thus M. de La Fayette," said the King, "arrests me a second time."—"He has nothing but the United States in his head," replied the Queen; "he will soon see what a French Republic is." Requesting, then, to see the decree of the Assembly, she read it, and threw it from her; it fell on the bed where the dauphin and his sister, in a tranquil sleep, lay locked in each other's arms.

83. Arrest of the King, and his return to Paris.

During the whole of this fatal night, M. de Bouillé was on horseback, under the walls of Stenay, anxiously expecting the arrival of the King. Informed at four in the morning of the arrest at Varennes, he ordered the regiment of Royal Allemand, on which he could rely, and which lay in that town, to sound to horse; but though they had received directions to be ready to start at daybreak, they took three quarters of an hour before they left the town. In vain he sent his son five times to quicken their movements. When they did come, he informed them of what had happened, read to the troops the King's order to escort him, and do every thing for the safety of the Royal family, and asked the men if they would deliver their sovereign. The brave Germans answered with the acclamations of honest hearts; and he instantly gave a louis to each man, and set off with all possible expedition for Varennes. But it was five o'clock before he was in motion, and the distance to that place was twenty-six miles of a hilly road. He arrived there at a quarter past nine; but it was too late. An hour before, the Royal family had set off, under a strong guard, on the road to the capital; and the horses of the German regiments were so totally exhausted by the exertions they had made, that further pursuit was impossible. With inexpressible anguish M. de Bouillé was compelled to renounce an object so long the dearest wish of his heart, and doomed soon to witness the succession of unfortunate events, which consigned this virtuous monarch to a prison and the scaffold. If the officers at Varennes had sent off instantly on the arrival of the Royal family to M. de Bouillé, if the orders to start at daybreak had been obeyed by the regiment of Royal Allemand, the troops could have gone the twenty-six miles in three hours instead of four,[1] and he might

[1] Bouillé, 240, 245. Lac. viii. 268. Lab. v. 268, 270.

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84. Real causes of the failure of the journey to Varennes.

have been there two hours sooner—in time to have delivered the Royal family, and altered the fate of Europe.

Various accidents, doubtless, contributed to disconcert this well-combined enterprise; but they might all have been surmounted save for the treachery or disgraceful irresolution of the royal troops at Varennes, who revolted against their faithful officers, and the officious zeal with which the National Guard assembled to prevent tho escape of their sovereign. History can find no pardon for such conduct. Patriotism cannot excuse the citizen, who sought to consign a virtuous monarch and his innocent family to the scaffold. Honour blushes for the soldiers, who forgot their loyalty amidst the cries of the populace, and permitted their sovereign, the heir of twenty kings, to be dragged captive from amidst their armed squadrons. The warmest friend of freedom, if he has a spark of humanity in his bosom, the most ardent republican, if not steeled against every sentiment of honour, must revolt at such baseness. Britain may well exult at the different conduct which her people exhibited to their fugitive monarchs under the same circumstances, and contrast with the arrest of Louis at Varennes, the fidelity of the western counties to Charles II. after the battle of Worcester, and the devotion of the Scotch Highlanders to the Pretender after the defeat of Culloden.* Nor was this treachery without its appropriate punishment. On that day twenty-four years upon which the lawful sovereign of France was arrested at Varennes, Napoleon, the adored chief of the Revolution, was compelled to sign his final abdication at Paris, and to leave France, defeated and humiliated, to bear the yoke of the stranger.†

Paris was in the utmost consternation when the escape of the King was discovered. The public joy was proportionally great when the intelligence of his arrest was received. Three commissioners, Pétion, Latour Maubourg, and Barnave, were dispatched to reconduct the prisoners to Paris. They met them at Epernay, and travelled with

* The secret of Charles Edward's place of concealment was entrusted to above 200 persons, most of them in the very poorest circumstances. L.30,000 was offered for his apprehension; confiscation and death pronounced against his adherents: yet not one Highlander was faithless to his sovereign.

† On 21st June 1815.

85. Consternation at Paris. Commissioners sent for the King, and Barnave won to the Royal cause.

them to the Tuileries. During the journey, Barnave and Pétion were in the carriage with the King and Queen; and the difference in the character of these two men was soon apparent. The Queen, perceiving from the manners and conversation of Barnave, that he was a man of generous feeling and enlightened intellect, conversed openly with him, and produced an impression on his mind which was never afterwards effaced. His attentions to her were so delicate, and his conduct so gentle, that she assured Madame Campan on her return, that she forgave him all the injuries he had inflicted on her family—an indulgence which she could not extend to the many nobles who had betrayed the throne by joining the popular cause. Pétion's conduct, on the other hand, was so gross, and his manners to the illustrious captives so insolent, that it was with difficulty that Barnave could restrain his indignation. A poor curate approached the carriage to address the King: the mob who surrounded it instantly fell upon him, threw him on the ground, and were on the point of putting him to death. "Tigers!" cried Barnave, "have you ceased to be Frenchmen? Calling yourselves brave, have you become assassins?" The difference between the Constitutionalists and Democrats was already greater than between the former and the throne. From that time forward the Queen entrusted her cause to his care more than to any other man in the Assembly.[1]

[1] Madame de Campan, ii. 150, *et seq.* Th. i. 289, 299 Lac. viii. 270 272.

86. Return to Paris, and barbarity of the people on the road.

The barbarity of the people was singularly evinced during the journey back to Paris. The two body-guards, who had perilled their life in the service of their sovereign, were chained on the outside of the carriage; peasants, armed with scythes and pitchforks, mixed with the escort, uttering the bitterest reproaches; and at each village the municipal authorities assembled to vent their execrations upon the fallen monarch. Unable to bear such inhuman conduct, the Count de Dampierre, a nobleman inhabiting a chateau near the road, approached to kiss the hand of the King. He was instantly pierced by several balls from the escort, his blood sprinkled the royal carriage, and his remains were torn to pieces by the savage multitude.[2] Notwithstanding these atrocities, the King conversed with Barnave and Latour Maubourg with

[2] Thiers, i. 289. Campan, ii. 150, 151. Lab. v. 277, 284.

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such judgment and benevolence on his views of the kingdom and constitution, that they were often melted into tears, and bitterly lamented the part they had taken in the Revolution. "How often," says Thiers, "would factions the most opposite be reconciled, if they could meet and read each other's hearts!"

87. Universal consternation in Paris on this event.

During the first transports of alarm and indignation, La Fayette was nearly murdered by the populace of Paris, so general was the belief that the royal family could not have escaped without his connivance. The aide-de-camp whom he had dispatched on the first alarm on the road to Varennes, narrowly escaped the same fate. Had he been killed, the royal fugitives would have still been at Varennes when M. de Bouillé arrived, and all their subsequent misfortunes have been avoided. An immense crowd assembled round the Tuileries on the first rumour that the royal family had escaped: the Palais Royal, the Place de Grève were crowded. At ten, the discharge of three guns from the municipality announced the event: that body declared its sittings permanent, as did the Assembly and Jacobin club. No such decisive evidence could be afforded of the extent to which the King and Royal family had been kept enthralled, as the universal consternation which followed their escape. All business was at a stand. Agitated crowds assembled in every street; the public anxiety for news was indescribable. An immense crowd inundated the Tuileries, ransacked the private apartments of the King and Queen, and were astonished to find no instruments of torture, or preparations for massacring the people in them. The National Guard all assembled at their rallying points. The brewer Santerre headed the pikemen of the Faubourg St Antoine: one would have thought, from the preparations, that Europe in arms was approaching the capital—not an unarmed monarch, with his wife and children, flying from it. But, meanwhile, the skilful leaders of the Revolution were not slow in turning to the best account this unexpected event, and the public vehemence which had ensued from it. The club of the Cordeliers passed a resolution, that the National Assembly had enslaved France by declaring the crown hereditary, and demanding the immediate abolition of royalty;[1] the Jacobins unani-

[1] Prudhomme, Rév. de Paris, No. 102. Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, No. 442. Freron, L'Orateur du Peuple, No. 46. Journal des Jacobins, June 21. Hist. Parl. x. 240, 241, 247.

mously summoned La Fayette to attend at their bar, to answer the interrogatories of Danton, and took an oath to defend Robespierre, who declared his life in danger. The name of the King was generally effaced on all signs and monuments; Marat announced in his journal that a general insurrection was indispensable; in a few days, the sanguinary monarch would return at the head of a numerous army, and a hundred guns, to destroy the city by red-hot shot;* and Freron thundered in the *Orateur du Peuple* against the infamous Queen, who united the profligacy of Messalina to the bloodthirstiness of the Medici.†

88. Proceedings in the Assembly. June 22.

In the midst of this general effervescence, the Assembly took more efficacious measures to seize the reins of the executive power, and prevent, by every possible means, the escape of the royal fugitives from the kingdom. Couriers were instantly dispatched in all directions to the departments, ordering the municipalities and National Guards to arrest all travellers, and, above all, allow none to leave the kingdom: a letter, which proved to be a forgery, was published in the name of the Queen, in which it was announced that they were proceeding to Flanders, and expressing violent intentions on their return; and a real address to the French people left by Louis, containing the reasons for his departure, couched in simple and touching terms. After recapitulating the sacrifices he had made for the public good, the violence to which he had been subjected, and the thraldom in which he had so long been kept, he declared that he had no intention of quitting the kingdom, and only desired to regain his personal freedom, in order to be able, unrestrained, to carry into effect his wishes for the restoration of liberty in France, and the formation of a constitution. In answer to this, the Assembly published a counter-address,[1] in which they justified their conduct in every

[1] Hist. Parl x. 245, 282, 313. Decrees, June 22. Deux Amis, vi. 102, 128.

* "Une insurrection générale peut seule sauver la Republique. Dans quelques jours Louis XVI., reprenant le ton d'un despot, s'avancera contre vos murs, à la tête de tous les fugitifs, de tous les mécontens, et des legions Autrichiennes; cent bouches à feu menaceront d'abattre votre ville à boulets rouges, si vous faites la moindre résistance; les écrivains populaires seront trainés en cachots."—MARAT, *L'Ami du Peuple*, 21 *Juin* 1791.

† "Il est parti ce roi imbécile, ce roi parjure, cette reine scélérate, qui réunit la lubricité de Messaline à la soif du sang qui dévorait Medicis. Femme exécrable, Furie de la France, c'est toi qui étais l'âme du complot!" —FRERON, *L'Orateur du Peuple*, No. 46.

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particular, and called upon the nation to rally round the representatives of the people. But, meanwhile, they assumed to themselves the whole executive government of the state, and commenced their new duties in the most effective of all ways, by ordering the National Guards throughout the whole kingdom to be put in a state of activity, and the departments of the whole northern and eastern departments to place theirs on permanent duty.*

89. Return of the Royal family to Paris.

At length the captives entered Paris. An immense crowd was assembled to witness their return, who received them in sullen silence. The National Guard nowhere presented arms; threatening and frightful cries were heard from the multitude; the people, without uncovering themselves, gazed upon their victims. The appearance of the Queen excited general surprise: her hair had all turned grey, in some places white, during the anxieties of that dreadful journey. It required the utmost efforts of Latour Maubourg and Barnave to prevent the two faithful body-guards from being murdered on the stairs of the Tuileries. Opinions were much divided at Paris upon the consequence of the seizure of the royal family: the Democrats openly rejoiced in the re-establishment of their power over them; the humane were already terrified by the prospect of the fate which, to all appearance, awaited them; the thoughtful, embarrassed as to how they were to be disposed of. In truth, however, after they were fairly gone, although the mob thirsted for vengeance, and were in the greatest agitation at the thought of the escape of the royal fugitives, few of the

[1] Moniteur, 27th June. Campan, ii. 151. M. Dumas, Souv. i. 492, 505. Lac. viii. 271, 281-2-3. Lab. v. 278, 285.

* Louis dwelt, in this proclamation, in an especial manner, on the personal thraldom in which he had been kept, and the action of the Jacobin clubs, which had come entirely to supersede the government. "Toutes les machinations," says he, "étaient dirigées contre le Roi et la Reine. C'est aux soldats des Gardes Françaises et à la Garde Nationale Parisienne que la garde du Roi a été confiée sous les ordres de la Municipalité de Paris, dont le commandant-général releve. Le Roi s'est ainsi vu prisonnier dans ses propres états. * * * La forme du gouvernment est surtout vicieuse par deux causes: l'Assemblée excède les bornes de ses pouvoirs en s'occupant de la justice et de l'administration de l'interieur; elle exerce par ses comités le plus barbare de tous les despotismes. Il est établis des associations connues sous le nom des Amis de la Constitution, (Jacobins,) qui offrent des corporations infiniment plus dangereuses que les anciennes; elles exercent une influence tellement preponderante que tous les corps, sans en excepter l'Assemblée Nationale, ne font rien que par leur ordre. Français, est-ce là ce que vous entendiez en envoyant vos representans? Desiriez-vous que *le despotisme des clubs* remplace la monarchie, sous laquelle le royaume a prospéré pendant quatorze cent ans?"—Louis *au Peuple Français*, *20th June* 1791; *Histoire Parlêmentaire*, x. 272, 273.

men of any consideration in Paris were anxious for their arrest.

90. Views of the parties on the flight of the King.

The leaders of the popular party were rejoiced at the near prospect of a republic, which the King's flight afforded: the Constitutionalists, in good faith, desired to see him established at Montmedy, and emancipated from the state of thraldom in which he had so long been held by the populace: many of the Royalists were not displeased at the abandonment of the helm by a sovereign, whose concessions had brought the monarchy to the brink of ruin; all were gratified at his extrication from the iron despotism of Parisian democracy. In sending the commissioners to arrest the King, the Assembly, in opposition to its better judgment, yielded to the clamours of an impassioned populace. "The National Assembly," says Napoleon, "never committed so great an error, as in bringing back the King from Varennes. A fugitive and powerless, he was hastening to the frontier, and in a few hours would have been out of the French territory. What should they have done in these circumstances? Clearly facilitated his escape, and declared the throne vacant by his desertion; they would thus have avoided the infamy of a regicide government, and attained their great object of republican institutions. Instead of which, by bringing him back, they embarrassed themselves with a sovereign whom they had no just reason for destroying, and lost the inestimable advantage of getting quit of the royal family without an act of cruelty." These are the words of a man who never scrupled at the means necessary to gain an end; who was weakened by no mawkish sensibility, and deterred by no imaginary dangers. They are a striking illustration of the eternal truth, that cruelty is in general as short-sighted as it is inhuman, and that no conduct is so wise as that which is the least open to moral reproach.[1]

[1] Napoleon's Memoirs, i. 1. Th. i. 292, 293.

91. First open avowal of Republican principles, and new division of parties in the Assembly.

The return of the King a captive to Paris, and the necessity of settling something definitive as to his fate, occasioned an immediate division between the parties in the capital, and first led to the open avowal of Republican principles. The mob, with savage ferocity, openly demanded his head; a Republic was loudly called for in the clubs of the Cordeliers and Jacobins; Robespierre, Marat, and their associates, daily inflamed the public mind by publications

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and speeches, having the most revolutionary tendency. "If a Republic," said Condorcet, "ensues in consequence of a new Revolution, the results will be terrible; but if it is proclaimed just now, during the omnipotence of the Assembly, the transition will be easy; and it is incomparably better to make it when the power of the King is wholly prostrated, than it will be when he may so far have regained it as to make an effort to avert the blow." No one at that period ventured to argue in the Assembly that royalty was desirable in itself, or as a counterpoise to the ambition of the people; the fact that such a doctrine could not be broached in the legislature, is the strongest proof how indispensable it is to regulated freedom that it should exist. Seditious cries were incessantly heard in the streets; an expression of ferocity characterised the countenances of the numerous groups assembled in the public places; and the frightful figures began to be seen who had emerged from obscurity on the 5th October, and who subsequently proved triumphant during the Reign of Terror. On the other hand, the upright and intelligent part of the Assembly, awakened by the threatening signs which surrounded them to a sense of the impending danger, united their strength to resist the multitude. Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, although passionate friends of freedom, coalesced with La Fayette and the supporters of a constitutional monarchy. In the struggle which ensued, the want of the powerful voice of Mirabeau was severely felt. But even his commanding eloquence would have been unavailing. In these days of rising democracy and patrician desertion, nothing could resist the new-born energy of the people.[1]

[1] Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, No. 500, 501. Journal des Jacobins, 10th July. Dumont, 325. Deux Amis, vi. 135, 211, 225. Lac. viii. 284, 285, 292. De Staël, i. 361.

92. The royal authority is suspended by a decree of the Assembly. 23d June.

On the morning after his return, Louis was, by a decree of the Assembly, provisionally suspended from his functions, and a band, composed of National Guards, placed over his person, that of the Queen, and the Dauphin. All the three were judicially and minutely examined by three deputies, but nothing tending to criminate any was elicited. They were strictly watched in the palace, and allowed only to take a morning walk in the garden of the Tuileries before the public were admitted. National Guards even kept guard all night in the Queen's bedroom. Meanwhile the Assembly prepared a legislative measure on the subject

of his flight. Barnave and the two Lameths now had the generosity openly to espouse the cause of the unfortunate monarch; and it was in a great degree owing to the address and ability of the former, who suggested the answers of the King and Queen to the commissioners of the Assembly, that he was able to show that he never intended to leave France, but only to extricate himself from the dangers of the capital. Bouillé, who had retired to Luxembourg, beyond the frontier of France, at the same time wrote a letter to the Assembly, in which he generously took upon himself the entire criminality of the journey, by protesting that he was its sole author; while he declared, in the name of the allied sovereigns, to whose territories he soon after retired, that he would hold them responsible for the safety of the royal prisoners.[1]

[1] Weber, ii. 136. Deux Amis, vi. 186, 196. Hist. Parl. x. 402. Th. i. 302, 303.

93. Object of the Republicans.

The object of the Republicans was to make the flight of the King the immediate pretext for his dethronement and death; that of the Constitutionalists, to preserve the throne, which they had done so much to shake, notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of that attempt. The examination of Louis, on the subject of his journey to Varennes, was intended by the Republicans to be the groundwork of his prosecution; but it was so adroitly managed by the committees to whom it was referred, that, instead of effecting that object, it went far to exculpate him even in the eyes of the most violent of the Jacobin party, by showing that it was not his intention to have left the kingdom, but only to have withdrawn to a place of safety within it. The seven committees, to whom that important examination was entrusted, reported that the journey of the King afforded no foundation for an accusation against him. The debate on this report called forth the energies of the most distinguished leaders, and developed the principles on both sides. The inviolability of the King's person, which had been solemnly agreed to by the Assembly, was the basis of the argument on the constitutional side.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. xi. 1, 68.

94. Argument of Robespierre against the King.

"To admit," said Robespierre, in answer, "the inviolability of the King for acts which are personal to himself, is to establish a god upon earth. We can allow no fiction to consecrate impunity to crime, or give any man a right to bathe our families in blood. But you have decreed, it is said, this inviolability: so much the worse. An authority

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more powerful than that of the constitution now condemns it; the authority of reason, the conscience of the people, the duty of providing for their safety. The constitution has not decreed the absolute inviolability of the sovereign; it has only declared him not responsible for the acts of his ministers. To this privilege, already immense, are you prepared to add an immunity from every personal offence—from perjury, murder, or robbery? Shall we, who have levelled so many other distinctions, leave this, the most dangerous of them all? Ask of England if she recognises such an impunity in her sovereigns? Would you behold a beloved son murdered before your eyes by a furious king, and hesitate to deliver him over to criminal justice? Enact laws which punish all crimes without exception, or suffer the people to avenge them for themselves. You have heard the oaths of the King. Where is the juryman, who, after having heard his manifesto, and the account of his journey, would hesitate to declare him guilty of perjury, that is, felony towards the nation? The King is inviolable; but so are you. Do you now contend for his privilege to murder with impunity millions of his subjects? Do you dare to pronounce the King innocent, when the nation has declared him guilty? Consult its good sense, since your own has abandoned you. I am called a Republican: whether I am or not, I declare my conviction, that any form of government is better than that of a feeble monarch, alternately the tool of contending factions."[1]

[1] Moniteur, 15th July. Hist. Parl. xi. 242, 244. Lac. viii. 292, 295. 296. Mig. i. 135, 136.

95. And of Barnave in reply.

"Regenerators of the empire," said Barnave, in reply, "follow—continue the course you have commenced. You have already shown that you have courage enough to destroy the abuses of power; now is the time to demonstrate, that you have the wisdom to protect the institutions you have formed. At the moment that we evince our strength, let us manifest our moderation; let us exhibit to the world, intent on our movements, the fair spectacle of peace and justice. What would the trial of the King be, but the proclamation of a republic? Are you prepared to destroy, at the first shock, the constitution you have framed with so much care? You are justly proud of having closed a Revolution, without a parallel in the annals of the world: you are now called on to commence a new one: to open a gulf, of which no human wisdom can see the bottom; in

which laws, lives, and property, would be alike swallowed up. With wisdom and moderation, you have exercised the vast powers committed to you by the state; you have created liberty; beware of substituting in its stead a violent and sanguinary despotism. Be assured that those who now propose to pass sentence on the King, will do the same to yourselves when you first thwart their ambition. If you prolong the Revolution, it will increase in violence. You will be beset with clamours for confiscations and murders; the people will never be satisfied but with substantial advantages, and they cannot be obtained but by destroying their superiors. The world hitherto has been awed by the powers we have developed; let it now be charmed by the gentleness which graces them." Moved by these generous sentiments, and in secret alarmed at the general avowal of republican principles with which they were surrounded, the Assembly adopted the report of the committee, with only seven dissentient voices. But to this decree was annexed, as a concession to the popular party, a clause, declaring, that if the King shall put himself at the head of an armed force, and direct it against the nation, he shall be deemed to have abdicated, and shall be responsible for his acts as an ordinary citizen. Of this enactment the popular party made fatal use in the subsequent insurrections against the throne.[1]

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[1] Moniteur, 17th July. Hist. Parl. xi. 67, 68. Deux Amis, vi. 211, 227. Mig. i. 137. Lac. viii. 298, 302. Th. i. 309, 310.

96. Revolt in the Champ de Mars.

Foiled in their endeavours to influence the Assembly, the Democrats next attempted to rouse the people. A petition for his immediate dethronement, drawn up by Brissot, editor of the *Patriot Français*, and an able republican, in conjunction with Marat, was taken to the Champ de Mars for signature. The clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers declared that they would no longer recognise Louis as sovereign, and published the most inflammatory harangues, which were immediately placarded in all the streets of Paris. A general insurrection was prepared for the following day. "We will repair," said they, "to the Field of the Federation, and a hundred thousand men will dethrone the perjured King. That day will be the last of all the friends of treason." The 17th July was the day fixed for the insurrection; there was no regular force in Paris; every thing depended on the firmness of the National Guard. On the morning of that day, two different bands

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of the people were in motion; one decently clothed, grave in manner, small in number, headed by Brissot; the other, hideous in aspect, ferocious in language, formidable in numbers, under the guidance of Robespierre. Both were confident of success, and sure of impunity; for hitherto not a single insurrection had been suppressed, and hardly one popular crime, excepting the murder of the baker François, had been punished. Two unhappy Invalids had placed themselves under the steps of the altar on the Champ de Mars to observe the extraordinary scene; a cry arose that they were assassins placed there to blow up the leaders of the people; without giving themselves the trouble to ascertain whether any powder was there, they beheaded the unhappy wretches on the spot, and paraded their heads on pikes round the altar of France.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vi. 229, 245. Moniteur, July 18. Lac. viii. 308, 312. Th. i. 311.

97. Vigorous measures of the Assembly. Victory of La Fayette.

The Assembly, in this emergency, took the most energetic measures to support its authority. It declared its sittings permanent, and caused the municipality to summon the National Guards to their several rendezvous; La Fayette put himself at their head, and proceeded towards the Champ de Mars, followed by twelve hundred grenadiers. On the road, a traitor in the ranks discharged a pistol at him, which fortunately missed its aim; he had the magnanimity to liberate the offender from the confinement in which he was placed. Meanwhile the red flag was boldly hoisted, by order of Bailly, at the Hôtel de Ville, and the good citizens earnestly urged the proclamation of martial law. Arrived in sight of the insurgents, La Fayette unfurled the red flag, and summoned the multitude, in name of the law, to disperse: cries of "A bas le drapeau rouge! à bas les baionnettes!" accompanied by volleys of stones, were the only answer. A discharge in the air was then given, which, not being attended by the effect of intimidation, La Fayette resolutely ordered a volley point-blank, which immediately brought down a great number of the insurgents. In an instant the crowd dispersed, and the Champ de Mars was deserted. Robespierre, Danton, Freron, Marat, and the other leaders of the insurrection, disappeared, and the discouragement of the party was complete. Trembling with apprehension, the former implored an asylum from his friends, deeming himself insecure, notwithstanding his inviolability as a deputy, in his obscure abode. The revolu-

tionary fury was effectually quelled, and had the government possessed the energy to have marched on the clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers, and closed these great fountains of treason, the constitutional monarchy might have been established, and the Reign of Terror prevented. But this act of vigour, being followed by no others of the same character, gradually lost its effect; the clubs resumed their inflammatory debates: Marat, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Freron, and the other popular leaders, seeing that no prosecutions followed the arrests, reappeared from their retreats, and the march of the Revolution went on with redoubled vigour. The recollection of so signal a defeat, however, sunk deep in the minds of the democrats, and they took a bloody revenge, years afterwards, upon the intrepid Bailly, who had first hoisted the signal of resistance to popular licentiousness.[1]

98. But the constitutionalists do not follow it up.

The Assembly was embarrassed by the consequences of its own success. It received congratulatory addresses from every part of France; the cities, the provinces, vied with each other in the expression of satisfaction at the stand at last made against a faction which had disgraced the Revolution. All of them had a moderate, many a royalist tendency: a signal proof of the ease with which at this period the Revolution might have been checked by proper firmness in the government and union among the higher classes. So pressing did the danger to the Jacobins become, that Pétion published a long letter on the subject, which produced a great impression. But it was difficult for the Assembly, in the close of their career, to depart from the principles with which they commenced: and they were alarmed at the new allies who crowded round their victorious standard. Indecision, in consequence, characterised their proceedings. Recollection of the past inclined them to popular, dread of the future to constitutional measures. In their efforts to please all factions, they acquired an ascendancy over none, and left the monarchy a prey to the furious passions which now agitated the people, from the consequences of the excitement they themselves had originated. The termination of their labours was now approaching. The several committees to whom the different departments of the constitution had been referred, had all made their reports;[2] the members were fatigued

[1] Prudhomme, Rév. de Paris, No. 106, p. 65. Deux Amis, vi. 245, 251. Hist. Parl. xi. 107, 112. Bert. de Moll. v. 178. Lac. viii. 312, 315. Th. i. 311, 312.

[2] Hist. Parl. xi. 175, 177. Bert. de Moll. v. 183, 210. Lab. v. 361. Mig. i 139, 140. Th. i. 316. Lac. viii. 317, 318.

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with their divisions, the people desirous of exercising the powers of election. Nothing remained but to combine the decrees regarding the constitution into one act, and submit it for the sanction of the King.

99. Proposal to modify the constitution.

It was proposed, in consolidating the different decrees regarding the constitution, to revise some of its articles. The democratic tendency of many parts was already perceived; and the Assembly trembled at the agitation which pervaded the empire. All the subordinate questions which remained were decided in favour of the royal authority; but they wanted courage, and perhaps had not influence, to alter the cardinal points of the constitution. They were strongly urged, before it was too late, to correct their faults. "Have the courage," said Malouet, "to confess your errors, and repair them. You are inclined to efface some blemishes; go a step further, and correct some deformities. While the work is still in your hands, is it not better to give more strength and stability to the fabric?" The design of Barnave, Malouet, and the Lameths, who were now fully alive to the perilous nature of the constitution they had framed, was to restore the separation of the chambers, and give the absolute veto to the crown. For this purpose, it was agreed that Malouet should propose the revision of these and many other articles of the constitution; that Barnave should reply in vehement strains, but at the same time give up those that were agreed on, as proved by experience to be inexpedient. But while this was the general opinion of the rational and prudent members, the violent party-men on both sides, though from different motives, combined to hasten the dissolution of the Assembly. The Royalists wished that the faults of the constitution should remain so glaring, as to render it impossible to put it in practice. The Jacobins, more alive to the signs of the times, dreaded the reaction in favour of order which had recently begun among the higher, and hoped every thing from the revolutionary spirit which was now spreading among the lower orders. "My friends," said Robespierre to the mobs which began to collect, in order to intimidate the Assembly, "you arrive too late: all is lost, the King is saved."[1] In vain Barnave, Lameth, Chapelier, and other enlightened men, implored them to retain the legislative power yet a while

[1] Ferrière's Mém. ii. 453. Hist. Parl. xi. 350, 371. Bert. de Moll. v. 211, 215. Mig. i. 140, 145. Lac. viii. 320, 321. Th. i. 315.

in their hands; they were met by complaints of their unpopularity, and of the necessity of dissolving while yet any influence remained; and the majority, weary of the work of regeneration, resolved to separate. As a last measure of security, they declared that the representatives of France might revise the constitution, but not till after the expiration of thirty years; a vain precaution, immediately forgotten amid the impetuosity and struggles of their successors.

100. Self-denying ordinance. Sept. 4.

Before finally submitting the constitution to the King, the Assembly, on the motion of Robespierre, passed a destructive measure, similar to the self-denying ordinance of the English Parliament, declaring that none of its members should be capable of election into the next legislature. This resolution, so ruinous in its consequences, was agreed to under the influence of various motives. The desire of regaining their power on the part of the aristocrats; inextinguishable resentment against the leaders of the Assembly on the part of the court; wild hopes of anarchy, and a fear of reaction in the existing members, on the part of the democrats; patriotic feeling among the friends of their country; a wish for the popularity consequent on a disinterested action, combined to secure the passing of a decree fraught with the last miseries to France. The King was so ill advised at this juncture, that he employed all his own influence, and that of the Queen, to procure the enactment of this ordinance. The idea was prevalent among the Royalists that the public mind was entirely changed: that the people had become attached to the sovereign; and that, if the old members could only be excluded, an Assembly would be returned at the next election which would undo all that the present one had done. When the question accordingly was proposed, the Royalists united with the Jacobins, and, stifling all arguments by a cry for the vote, passed the fatal resolution. This system of changing their governors at stated periods, always has been, and always will be, a favourite one with Republicans, because it magnifies their own, and diminishes their rulers' importance;[1] but it is more ruinous than any other system that can be devised to national welfare, because it places the direction of affairs constantly in inexperienced hands, and

[1] Hist. Parl. xi. 389, 392. Moniteur, Sept. 5. Dumont, 338, 339. Mig. i. 141. Th. i. 314. Lac. viii. 323.

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removes ability from the helm at the very time it has become adequate to the guidance of public affairs.

101. The king re-invested with his power.

Sept. 13.

Previous to the act of the constitution being submitted to the King, he was reinvested with the power of appointing a guard, and restored to the freedom of which he had been deprived, since his arrest at Varennes. After several days' careful examination, he declared his acceptance in the following terms:—"I accept the constitution; I engage to maintain it alike against civil discord and foreign aggression, and to enforce its execution to the utmost of my power." This message occasioned the warmest applause. La Fayette, taking advantage of the moment, procured a general amnesty for all those who had been engaged in the flight of the King, or compromised by the events of the Revolution. On the following day, the King repaired in person to the Assembly, to declare his acceptance of the constitution. The Queen, accompanied by the Dauphin, was in the reporters' box; and in the enthusiasm of the moment was received with applause. An immense crowd accompanied the sovereign with loud acclamations; he was the object of the momentary applause of the tribunes of the people: but the altered state of the Royal authority was evinced by the formalities observed even in the midst of the general enthusiasm. The monarch was no longer seated on the throne apart from his subjects; two chairs, in every respect alike, were allotted to him and to the president; and he did not possess, even in appearance, more authority than the leader of that haughty body.[1]

Sept. 14

[1] Moniteur, Sept. 14, p. 1070. Hist. Parl. xi. 399, 403. Deux Amis, vi. 312, 316. Lac. viii. 351. Th. i. 316.

102. Closing of the Assembly.

At length, on the 29th September, the sittings of the Assembly were closed. The King attended in person, and delivered a speech full of generous sentiments and eloquent expressions. "In returning to your constituents," said he, "you have still an important duty to discharge; you have to make known to the citizens the real meaning of the laws you have enacted, and to explain my sentiments to the people. Tell them, that the King will always be their first and best friend; that he has need of their affection; that he knows no enjoyment but in them, and with them; that the hope of contributing to their happiness will sustain his courage, as the satisfaction of having done so will constitute his reward." Vehement and sincere

applause followed these expressions. The president, Thouret, then, with a loud voice, said, "The Constituent Assembly declares its mission accomplished, and its sittings are now closed." Magnificent fêtes were ordered by the King for the occasion, which exhausted the already weakened resources of the throne. The palace and gardens of the Tuileries were superbly illuminated; and the King, with the Queen and the Royal family, drove through the long lighted avenues of the Champs Elysées amidst the acclamations of the people. But a vague disquietude pervaded all ranks of society; the monarch sought in vain for the expressions of sincere joy which appeared on the fête of the Federation of the 14th July: then all was confidence and hope—now, the horrors of anarchy were daily anticipated. The Assembly had declared the Revolution closed; all persons of intelligence feared that it was only about to commence.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vi. 312, 316. Lab. v. 423, 426. De Staël, i. 434, 436. Lac. viii. 352, 353. Mig. i. 142.

103. Merits of the Constituent Assembly.

Such is the history of the Constituent Assembly of France; an Assembly which, amidst much good, has produced more evil than any which has ever existed in the world. Called to the highest destinies, entrusted with the noblest duties, it was looked to as commencing a new era in modern civilisation, as regenerating an empire gray with feudal corruption, but teeming with popular energy. How it accomplished the task, is now ascertained by experience. Time, the great vindicator of truth, has unfolded its errors and illustrated its virtues. The great evils which then afflicted France were removed by its exertions. Liberty of religious worship, but imperfectly provided for in 1787, was secured in its fullest extent; torture, the punishment of the wheel, and all cruel corporal inflictions, other than death, were abolished; trial by jury, publicity of criminal proceedings, the examination of witnesses before the accused, counsel for his defence, fixed by law; the ancient parliaments, the fastnesses of a varied jurisprudence, though ennobled by great exertions in favour of freedom, were suppressed, and one uniform system of criminal jurisprudence was introduced. *Lettres-de-cachet* were annihilated; exemptions from taxation on the part of the nobles and the clergy extinguished; an equal system of finance established through the whole kingdom; the most oppressive imposts, those on salt and tobacco, the taille, and

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the tithes, suppressed; the privileges of the nobility, the feudal burdens, abolished. France owes to the Constituent Assembly the doubtful experiment of national guards; the opening of the army to courage and ability from every class of society; and a general distribution of landed property among the labouring classes—the greatest benefit, when not brought about by injustice or the spoliation of others, which can be conferred upon a nation.[1] * The beneficial effect of these changes was speedily demonstrated by the consequences of the errors into which her government subsequently fell. They enabled the nation to bear, and to prosper under, accumulated evils, any one of which would have extinguished the national strength under the monarchy—national bankruptcy, depreciated assignats, civil divisions, the Reign of Terror, foreign invasion, the conscription of Napoleon, subjugation by Europe.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 276, 288.

104. And its errors and faults.

The errors of the Constituent Assembly have produced consequences equally important, some still more lasting. By destroying, in a few months, the constitution of a thousand years, it set afloat all the ideas of men, and spread the fever of innovation universally throughout the empire. By confiscating the property of the church, it gave a fatal precedent of injustice, too closely followed in future years, exasperated a large and influential class, and rendered public manners dissolute by leaving the seeds of war between the clergy and the people. By establishing the

* It is impossible to travel through Switzerland, Tyrol, Norway, Sweden, Biscay, and some other parts of Europe, where the peasantry are proprietors of the land they cultivate, without being convinced of the great effect of such a state of things in ameliorating the condition of the lower orders, and promoting the development of those habits of comfort and those artificial wants which form the true regulators of the principle of increase. The aspect of France since the Revolution, when compared with what it was before that event, abundantly proves that its labouring poor have experienced the benefit of this change; and that, if it had not been brought about by injustice, its fruits would have been highly beneficial. But no great act of iniquity can be committed by a nation, any more than an individual, without its consequences being felt by the latest generations. The confiscation of land has been to France what a similar measure had before been to Ireland, a source of weakness and discord which will never be closed. It has destroyed the barrier alike against the crown and the populace, and left the nation no protection against the violence of either. Freedom has been rendered to the last degree precarious, from the consequences of this great change: and the subsequent irresistible authority of the central government, how tyrannical soever, at Paris, may be distinctly traced to the prostration of the strength of the provinces by the destruction of their landed proprietors. The ruinous consequences of this injustice upon the future freedom of France, will be amply demonstrated in the sequel of this work.

right of universal suffrage, and conferring the nomination of all offices of trust upon the nation, it habituated the people to the exercise of powers inconsistent with the monarchical form of government which it had itself established, and which the new possessors were incapable of exercising with advantage either to themselves or the state. It diminished the influence of the crown to such a degree as to render it incapable of controlling the people, and left the kingdom a prey to factions arising out of the hasty changes which had been introduced. By excluding themselves from the next Assembly, its members deprived France of all the benefit of their experience, and permitted their successors to commence the same course of error and innovation, to the danger of which they had been too late awakened. By combining the legislature into one assembly, in which the representatives of the lower ranks had a decisive superiority, it in effect vested supreme political power in one single class of society: a perilous gift at all times, but in an especial manner to be dreaded when that class was in a state of violent excitement, and totally unaccustomed to the powers with which it was entrusted. By removing the check of a separate deliberate assembly, it exposed the political system to the unrestrained influence of those sudden gusts of passion to which all large assemblages of men are occasionally subject, and to which the impetuosity of the national character rendered such an assembly in France in an especial manner liable. By destroying the parliaments, the hierarchy, the corporations, and the privileges of the provinces, it swept away the firmest bulwark by which constitutional freedom might have been protected in future times, by annihilating those institutions which combine men of similar interests together, and leaving only a multitude of insulated individuals to maintain a hopeless contest with the executive and the capital, wielding at will the power of the army and the resources of government. By the overthrow of the national religion, and appropriation to secular purposes of all the funds for its support, it not only gave the deepest wound to public virtue, but inflicted an irreparable injury on the cause of freedom, by arraying under opposite banners the two great governing powers of the human mind—diminishing the

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influence of the elevated and spiritual, and removing all control over the selfish principles of our nature.

105. Which were all committed in the face of their instructions.

It is a fact worthy of the most serious consideration from all who study the action and progress of the human mind under the influence of such convulsions, that all these great and perilous changes were carried into effect by the Assembly, not only without any authority from their constituents, but directly in the face of the cahiers containing the official announcement of the intentions of the electors. The form of government which it established, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property which it introduced, the abolition of the provincial parliaments, the suspensive veto, the destruction of titles of honour, the infringement on the right of the King to make peace or war, the nomination of judges by the people, were all so many usurpations directly contrary to the great majority of these official instruments, which still remain a monument of the moderation of the people at the commencement, as their subsequent acts were proof of their madness during the progress, of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Calonne, 216, 218, 222, 223, 290, 304.

106. Vicious principle which led to all these disasters.

The single fault of the Constituent Assembly, which led to all these disastrous consequences, was that, losing sight of the object for which alone it was assembled, the redress of grievances, it directed all its efforts to the attainment of power. Instead of following out the first object, and improving the fabric of the state, to which it was called by the monarch and sent by the country, it contended only for the usurpation of absolute power in all its departments; and in the prosecution of that design destroyed all the balances and equipoises which give it a steady direction, and serve as correctives to any violent disposition which may exist in any of the orders. When it had done this, it instantly, and with unpardonable perfidy, laid the axe to the root equally of public faith and private right, by confiscating the property of the church. It made and recorded what has been aptly styled by Mr Burke a digest of anarchy, called the Rights of Man, and by its influence destroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. "The real object," says Mr Burke, "of all this, was to level all those institutions, and sever all those connexions, natural, religious, and civil, which

hold together society by a chain of subordination—to raise soldiers against their officers, tradesmen against their landlords, curates against their bishops, children against their parents." A universal liberation from all restraints, civil and religious—moral, political, and military—was the grand end of all their efforts, which the weakness of the holders of property enabled them to carry into complete effect. Their precipitance, rashness, and vehemence in these measures, were the more inexcusable, seeing they had not the usual apology of revolutionists, that they were impelled by terror or necessity. On the contrary, their whole march was a continued triumph—their popularity was such that they literally directed the public movement: in unresisted might, their pioneers went before them, levelling in the dust alike the bulwarks of freedom, the safeguards of property, the buttresses of religion, the restraints of virtue.[1]

[1] Burke, v. 14, 15, 89.

107. Fatal creation of revolutionary interests.

But the most ruinous step of the Constituent Assembly, that which rendered all the others irreparable, was the great number of revolutionary *interests* which they created. By transferring political power into new and inexperienced hands, who valued the acquisition in proportion to their unfitness to exercise it; by creating a host of new proprietors, dependant upon the new system for their existence; by placing the armed and civil force entirely at the disposal of the populace—they founded lasting interests upon fleeting passions, and perpetuated the march of the Revolution, when the people would willingly have reverted to a monarchical government. The persons who had gained either power or property by these changes, it was soon found, would yield them up only to force; the individuals who would be endangered by a return to a legal system, strove to the utmost of their power to prevent it. The prodigious changes in property and political power, therefore, which the Constituent Assembly introduced, rendered the alternative of a revolution, or a bloody civil war, unavoidable; for though passion is transitory, the interests which changes created by passion may have produced are lasting in their operation. The subsequent annals of the Revolution exhibited many occasions on which the people struggled hard to shake off the tyranny which it had created; none in

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which the gainers by its innovations did not do their utmost to prevent a return to a constitutional or legal government. This was the great cause of the difference between the subsequent progress of the French and the English Revolutions; the Long Parliament and Cromwell made no essential changes in the property or political franchises of Great Britain, and consequently, after the military usurper expired, no powerful revolutionary inte-ests existed to resist a return to the old constitution. In France, before the Constituent Assembly had sat six months, they had rendered a total change in the structure of society unavoidable, because they had transferred to the multitude nearly the whole influence and possessions of the state.

108. Proves the impossibility of extinguishing revolutionary passion by concession.

The Constituent Assembly, if it has done nothing else, has at least bequeathed one important political lesson to mankind, which is, the vanity of the hope, that by conceding to the demands of a revolutionary party an increase of political power, it is possible to put a stop to further encroachments. It is the nature of such a desire, as of every other vehement passion, to be insatiable; to feed on concessions and acquisitions; and become more powerful and dangerous in proportion as less remains for it to obtain. This truth was signally demonstrated by the history of this memorable Assembly. Concession there went on at the gallop; the rights of the King, of the nobles, the clergy, the parliaments, the corporations, and the provinces, were abandoned as fast as they were attacked. Resistance was nowhere attempted; and yet the popular party, so far from being satisfied, incessantly rose in its demands. Democratic ambition was never so violent as when it had triumphed over every other authority in the common-wealth. The legislature, the leaders of the state, in vain strove to maintain their ascendancy by giving up every thing which their antagonists demanded: in proportion as they receded, their opponents advanced; and the party which had professed at first a desire only for a fair proportion of political influence, soon became indignant if the slightest opposition was made to its authority.[1]

[1] Burke's Consid. v. 89.

This extraordinary fact suggests an important conclusion in political science, which was first enunciated by Mr Burke, but has, since his time, been abundantly verified by expe-

rience. This is, that there is a wide difference between popular convulsions which spring from real grievances, and those which arise merely from popular zeal or democratic passion. There is a boundary to men's passions when they act from reason, resentment, or interest, but none when they are stimulated by imagination or ambition. Remove the grievances complained of, and when men act from the first motives, you go a great way towards quieting a commotion. But the good or bad conduct of a government, the protection men have enjoyed, or the oppression they have suffered under it, are of no sort of moment, when a faction proceeding on speculative grounds is thoroughly roused against its form. It is the combination of these two different principles, so opposite in nature and character, but yet co-operating at the moment to induce the same effect, which renders the management of a nation in such circumstances so extremely difficult; for the concessions and reforms which are the appropriate remedies for, and are best calculated to remove the discontent arising from the real grievances, are precisely the steps likely to rouse to the highest pitch the fervour springing from the imaginative passions.[1]

109. Cause to which this was owing.

[1] Burke, vi. 259.

The great point of difficulty, and that on which the judgment of a statesman is most imperatively required, is to determine *when the proper period for resistance has arrived.* That such a period will arrive in all revolutions, may be predicted with perfect certainty, because their effects will erelong display themselves in a way obvious to every capacity. Even during the sitting of the Constituent Assembly this event had taken place; for during the two years and five months it lasted, no less than three thousand seven hundred and fifty-three persons perished of a violent death, and a hundred and seven chateaus were committed to the flames. It was a poor compensation for those disasters, that the Assembly passed two thousand five hundred and fifty laws, the great majority of which were repealed or forgotten during the progress of the Revolution.[2] But though such disasters will ever be present to the prophetic vision of foresight, from the very outset of Revolutionary troubles, and amidst the general transports of the unthinking multitude, yet it is by no means safe for the statesman to act on such anticipations

110. When should resistance to revolution be made?

[2] Prudhomme, Crîmes de la Rév. iii. 312, and 324.

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the moment they become pregnant in his own mind, and those of the few historic students or thinking men in the country. Government has need of the support of physical strength to enforce its measures; and if the great majority of the nation have become embued with revolutionary sentiments, it is generally in vain to hoist the standard of decided resistance, till the holders of property and better class of citizens have become sensible of its necessity, from a practical experience of the effects of an opposite system. Philosophers and historians, who trust to the unaided force of truth, can never state it too early or too strongly; but statesmen, who must rely on the support of others, should wait for the moment of action, the period when dangers or catastrophes, which strike the senses, have procured for them the support, not only of the thinking few, but of the unthinking many.

111. Undue humanity and irresolution of the King.

The personal character of the King was doubtless the first and greatest cause, which in France prevented this resistance being opposed to the work of innovation, even when the proper season for it had arrived, and converted the stream of improvement into the cataract of revolution. So strongly was this fatal defect in the monarch's character felt by the wisest men of the popular party in France, that they have not hesitated to ascribe to it the whole miseries of the Revolution.[1] Had a firm and resolute king been on the throne, it is doubtful whether the Revolution would have taken place, or at least whether it would have been attended by such horrors. All the measures of Louis conspired to bring it about; the benevolence and philanthropy which, duly tempered by resolution, would have formed a perfect, when combined with weakness and vacillation, produced the most dangerous, of sovereigns.* His indecision, tenderness of heart, and horror at decided measures, ruined every thing; the inferior causes which

[1] Dumont, 343.

* "Pison a l'âme simple et l'esprit abatu;
S'il a grande naissance, il a peu de vertu;
Non de cette vertu qui deteste le crime;
Sa probité sevère est digne que l'on estime—
Elle a tout ce qui fait un grand homme de bien,
Mais en un souverain c'est peu de chose ou rien—
Il faut de la prudence, il faut de la lumière,
Il faut de la vigueur adroite autant que fière;
Qui penetre, eblouisse, et seme des appas
Il faut mille vertus enfin qu'il n'aura pas."

CORNEILLE, *Othon*. Acte ii. § 4.

conspired to bring about the same disastrous result, in some degree, at least, emanated from that source. There were many epochs during the sitting of the first Assembly, after its dangerous tendency began to be perceived by the great body of the people, when an intrepid monarch, aided by a faithful army and resolute nobility, might have averted the tempest, turned the stream of innovation into constitutional channels, and established, in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of the nation, a limited monarchy, similar to that which, for above a century, has given dignity and happiness to the British empire.[1]

[1] Dumont, 343.

112. Treachery of the troops, and emigration of the noblesse.

The treachery of the troops was the immediate cause of the catastrophe which precipitated the throne beneath the feet of the Assembly; and the terrible effects with which it was attended, the bloody tyranny which it induced, the ruinous career of foreign conquest which it occasioned, and the national subjugation in which it terminated, is to be chiefly ascribed to the treason or vacillation of these, the sworn defenders of order and loyalty. But for their defection, the royal authority would have been respected, democratic ambition coerced, a rallying point afforded for the friends of order, and the changes which were required confined within safe and constitutional bounds. The revolt of the French Guards was the signal for the dissolution of the bonds of society in France; and they have been hardly reconstructed, even by the terrible Committee of Public Safety, and the merciless sword of Napoleon. What the treachery of the army had commenced, the desertion of the nobility consummated. The flight of this immense body, estimated, with their families and retainers, by Mr Burke at seventy thousand persons, completed the prostration of the throne by depriving it of its best defenders. The friends of order naturally abandoned themselves to despair when they saw the army revolting, the crown yielding, and the nobility taking to flight. Who would make even the show of resisting, when these, the leaders and defenders of the state, gave up the cause as hopeless? The energy of ambition, the confidence arising from numbers, the *prestige* of opinion, passed over to the other side. A party speedily becomes irresistible when its opponents shrink from the first encounter.[2] This, then, is the great

[2] Dumont, 347.

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moral to be drawn from the French Revolution: its immediate disasters, its bloody atrocities, its ultimate failure, did not arise from any necessary fatality, any unavoidable sequence, but are solely to be ascribed to the guilt of some, the treachery of others, the delusion of all, who were concerned in its direction.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE OPENING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, TO THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY.—SEP. 14, 1791—AUG. 10, 1792.

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1. Great experiment in government made by the Constituent Assembly.

UNIVERSAL suffrage, or a low qualification for electors, has, in every age of democratic excitement, been the favourite object of the people. All men, it is said, are by nature equal; the superior privileges enjoyed by some are the growth of injustice and superstition, and the first step towards rational freedom is to restore the pristine equality of the species. This principle had been acted upon, accordingly, by the Constituent Assembly. They had given the right of voting for the national representatives to every labouring man of the better sort in France; and the Legislative Assembly affords the first example, on a great scale, in modern Europe, of the effects of a completely popular election.

2. Dangers of universal suffrage.

If the object of government were only the protection of persons from injury or injustice, and nothing except danger to them were to be apprehended from the disorders of society, and every man, in whatever rank, were equally capable of judging on political subjects, there can be no question that the claims of the lower orders to an equal share with the higher in the representation would be well founded, because every man's life is of equal value to himself. But its object is not less the protection of property than that of persons; and from this double duty arises the necessity of limiting the right of election to those interested in the former as well as in the latter of these objects. In private life, men are never deceived on this subject. In the

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administration of any common fund, or the disposal of common property, it never was for a moment proposed to give the smallest shareholder an equal right with the greatest—to give a creditor holding a claim for twenty shillings, for example, on a bankrupt estate, the same vote as one possessed of a bond for £10,000 ; or to give the owner of ten pound stock in a public company the same influence as one holding ten thousand. The injustice of such a proceeding is at once apparent. The interests of the large shareholders would run the most imminent risk of being violated or neglected by those whose stake was so much more inconsiderable. Universally it has been found by experience, to be indispensable to make the amount of influence in the direction of the concern be in some degree proportional to the amount of property of which the voter is possessed.

3.
Causes to which they are owing.

In the political world, the supposed or immediate interests of the great body of the people are not only different, but adverse to those of the possessors of property. To acquire is the interest of the one ; to retain, that of the other. Agrarian laws, and the equal division of property, or measures tending indirectly to that result, will, in every age, be the wish of the unthinking multitude, who have nothing apparently to lose, and every thing to gain, by such convulsions. Their real and ultimate interests, indeed, will, in the end, inevitably suffer, even more than those of the holders of property, from such changes ; because, being dependant for their subsistence on the wages of labour, they will be the greatest losers by the intermission of labour from the effects of such a convulsion. But that is a remote consequence, which never will become obvious to the great body of mankind. In the ordinary state of society, the superior intelligence and moral energy of the higher orders give them the means of effectually controlling this natural, but dangerous tendency, on the part of their inferiors. But universal suffrage, or a low franchise, levels all barriers, and reduces the contests of mankind to a mere calculation of numbers. In such a system, the vote of Napoleon or Newton, of Bacon or Burke, has no more weight than that of an ignorant mechanic. Representatives elected under such a system are in reality nothing more than delegates of the least informed and most

dangerous, but at the same time most numerous portion of the people. Government constructed on such a basis, is a mere puppet in the hands of the majority. It is the tyranny of mediocrity over talent: for the vast majority of men are always mediocre. The contests of party in such circumstances resolve themselves into a mere strife of contending interests, in which the wishes of the majority, however it may be composed, speedily become irresistible. In periods of tranquillity, when interest is the ruling principle, this petty warfare may produce only a selfish system of legislation; in moments of agitation, when passion is predominant, it occasions an universal insurrection of the lower orders against the higher.

4. Formation of the Legislative Assembly.

The truth of these observations was signally demonstrated in the history of the Legislative Assembly. By the enactments of its predecessor, the whole powers of sovereignty had been vested in the people: they had obtained what almost amounted to universal suffrage, and biennial elections; their representatives wielded despotic authority; they appointed their own magistrates, judges, and bishops; the military force of the state was in their hands; their delegates commanded the National Guard, and ruled the armies. In possession of such unresisted authority, it was difficult to see what more they could desire, or what pretence could remain for insurrection against the government. Nevertheless, the legislature which they had themselves appointed, became, from the very first, the object of their dislike and jealousy; and the history of the Legislative Assembly is nothing more than the preparations for the revolt which overthrew the monarchy. "This," says the republican historian Thiers, "is the natural progress of revolutionary troubles. Ambition, the love of power, first arises in the higher orders; they exert themselves, and obtain a share of the supreme authority. But the same passion descends in society; it rapidly gains an inferior class, until at length the whole mass is in movement. Satisfied with what they have gained, all persons of intelligence strive to stop; but it is no longer in their power, they are incessantly pressed on by the crowd in their rear.[1] Those who thus endeavour to arrest the movement, even if they are but little elevated

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 178. Th. ii. 7.

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above the lowest class, if they oppose its wishes, *are called an aristocracy, and incur its hatred.*"

5. State of the country during the primary elections.

Two unfortunate circumstances contributed, from the outset, to injure the formation of the Assembly. These were, the King's flight to Varennes, and the universal emigration of the nobles during the period of the primary elections. The intelligence of the disappearance of the Royal Family was received in most of the departments at the very time of the election of the delegates who were to choose the deputies. Terror, distrust, and anxiety, seized every breast; a general explosion of the royal partisans was expected; foreign invasion, domestic strife, universal suffering, were imagined to be at hand. Under the influence of these alarms, the primary elections, or the nomination of the electoral colleges, took place. But before these delegates proceeded to name the deputies, the panic had in some degree passed away; the seizure of the King had dissipated the causes of immediate apprehension; and the revolt of the Jacobins in the Champ de Mars had opened a new source of disquietude. Hence the nomination of the deputies was far from corresponding, in all instances, with the wishes of the original electors; the latter selected, for the most part, energetic, reckless men, calculated to meet the stormy times which were anticipated: the former strove to intersperse among them a few persons who might have an interest in maintaining the institutions which had been formed; the one elected to destroy, the other to preserve. The majority of the deputies were men inclined to support the constitution as it was now established; the majority of the original electors were desirous of a more extensive revolution, and a thorough establishment of republican institutions.[1]

June 26.

July 21.

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 14, 37. Deux Amis, vi. 337, 342. Bert. de Moll. vi. 25, 37. Th. i. 192.

6. Total want of property or decorum in the new Assembly.

But there was one circumstance worthy of especial notice in the composition of this second Assembly, which was its almost *total separation from the property of the kingdom.* In this respect it offered a striking contrast to the Constituent Assembly, which, though ruled by the *Tiers Etat* after the pernicious union of the orders, yet numbered among its members some of the greatest proprietors and many of the noblest names in the kingdom. But in the Legislative Assembly there were not

fifty persons possessed of £100 a-year. The property of France was thus totally unrepresented, either directly by the influence of its holders in the elections, or indirectly by sympathy and identity of interest between the members of the Assembly and the class of proprietors. The Legislature was composed almost entirely of presumptuous and half-educated young men, clerks in counting-houses, or attorneys from provincial towns, who had risen to eminence during the absence of all persons possessed of property, and recommended themselves to public notice by the vehemence with which, in the popular clubs, they had asserted the principles of democracy. They had, in general, talent enough to make them both self-sufficient and dangerous, without either knowledge profound enough to moderate their views, or property adequate to steady their ambition. So great was the preponderance of this dangerous class in the new Assembly, that it appeared at once in the manner in which the debates were conducted. The dignified politeness, which, amidst all its rashness and crimes, the Constituent Assembly had displayed, was no more. Rudeness and vulgarity had become the order of the day, and were affected even by those who had been bred to better habits. Such was the din and confusion, that twenty deputies often rushed together to the tribune, each with a different motion. In vain the President appealed to the Assembly to support his authority, rang his bell, and covered his face with his hat, in token of the most abject despair. Nothing could control the vehement and vulgar majority. If a demon had selected a body calculated to consign a nation to perdition, his choice could not have been made more happily to effect his object.[1] *

[1] Bert. de Moll. vi. 40, 41. Burke, Thoughts on French Affairs. Works, vii. 51. Prudhomme, iv. 118.

7. Increased emigration of nobles.

This deplorable result was, in part at least, owing to the flight of the nobility, so prolific in all the stages of the Revolution of disaster to France. The continued and increasing emigration of the landholders contributed in the greatest degree to unhinge the public mind; and proved,

* L'Assemblée Legislative fut nommée par une foule de gens sans aveu, courant les villes et les champs, vendant leurs suffrages pour un dîner ou un broc de vin. Le corps legislatif était plein de gens de cette trempe; Royalistes ou Republicains sélon le vent de la fortune: et il faut le dire, quoiqu' à la honte de la Révolution, ce furent là les élémens de la journée du 10 Août."—PRUDHOMME, *Crîmes de la Révolution*, iv. 116, 118.

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perhaps, in the end, the chief cause of the subsequent miseries of the Revolution. The number of these emigrants amounted by this time, with their families, to nearly one hundred thousand, of the most wealthy and influential body in France.[1] All the roads to the Rhine were covered by haughty fugitives, whose inability for action was equalled only by the presumption of their language. They set their faces from the first against every species of improvement; would admit of no compromise with the popular party; and threatened their adversaries with the whole weight of European vengeance, if they persisted in demanding it. Coblentz became the centre of the anti-revolutionary party; and to men accustomed to measure the strength of their force by the number of titles which it contained, a more formidable array could hardly be imagined. But it was totally deficient in the real weight of aristocratic assemblies, the number and spirit of their followers. The young and presumptuous nobility, possessing no estimable quality but their valour, were altogether unfit to cope with the moral energy and practical talent which had arisen among the middle orders of France. The corps of the emigrants, though always forward and gallant, was too deficient in discipline and subordination to be of much importance in the subsequent campaigns, while their impetuous counsels too often betrayed their allies into unfortunate measures. Rashness of advice, and inefficiency of conduct have, with the exception of La Vendée, characterised all the military efforts of the Royalist party in France, from the commencement to the termination of the Revolution.

[1] Burke, viii. 72. Lac. i. 191.

8. Its disastrous effects.

In thus deserting their country at the most critical period of its history, the French nobility manifested equal baseness and imprudence: baseness, because it was their duty, under all hazards, to have stood by their sovereign, and not delivered him in fetters to a rebellious people; imprudence, because, by joining the ranks of the stranger, and combating against their native country, they detached their own cause from that of France, and subjected themselves to the eternal reproach of bringing their country into danger for the sake of their separate and exclusive interests. The subsequent strength of the Jacobins was mainly owing to the successful appeals which they were

always able to make to the patriotism of the people, and to the foreign wars which identified their rule with a career of glory; the Royalists have never recovered the disgrace of having joined the armies of the enemy, and regained the throne at the expense of national independence. How different might have been the issue of events, if, instead of rousing fruitless invasions from the German states, the French nobility had put themselves at the head of the generous efforts of their own country; if they had shared in the glories of La Vendée, or combated under the walls of Lyons! Defeat, in such circumstances, would have been respected, success unsullied; by acting as they did, overthrow became ruin, and victory humiliation.[1]

[1] Madame de Staël, ii. 1, 9.

9. Opening of the Assembly. Oct. 1.

The new Assembly opened its sittings on the 1st of October. An event occurred at the very outset which demonstrated how much the crown had been deprived of its lustre, and which interrupted the harmony between them and the King. A deputation of sixty members was appointed to wait on Louis; but he did not receive them, as the ceremonial had not been expected, and merely sent intimation by the minister of justice that he would admit them on the following day at twelve o'clock. The meeting was cold and unsatisfactory on both sides. Shortly after, the King came in form to the Assembly; he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. His speech was directed chiefly to conciliation and the maintenance of harmony between the different branches of the government. But in the very outset, Louis experienced the strength of the republican principles, which, under the fostering hand of the Constituent Assembly, had made such rapid progress in France. They first decreed that the title of Sire and Your Majesty should be dropped at the ensuing ceremonial; next, that the King should be seated on a chair similar in every respect to that of the President. When the monarch refused to come to the Assembly on these conditions, they yielded that point, but insisted on sitting down when he sat, which was actually done at its opening. The King was so much affected by this circumstance, that when he returned to the Queen, he threw himself on a chair, and burst into tears. He was deadly pale, and the expression of his countenance so mournful, that the Queen was in the greatest alarm.[2] "All is lost:

Oct. 4. Oct. 5. Oct. 6.

[2] Hist. Parl. xii. 52, 74, 77. Deux Amis, vi. 337, 341. Madame Campan, ii. 169. Mig. i. 147. Th. ii. 18, 19. Moniteur. Oct. 7, 1791.

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ah! madam, and you have been a witness of that humiliation. Is it this you have come into France to witness?"

10. General character of the Assembly.

Though not anarchical, the Assembly was decidedly attached to the principles of democracy. The court and the nobles had exercised no sort of influence on the elections; the authority of the first was in abeyance; the latter had deserted their country. Hence the parties in the Legislative Assembly were different from those in the Constituent. None were attached to the royal or aristocratical interests; the only question that remained, was the maintenance or overthrow of the constitutional throne. "Et nous aussi, nous voulons faire une révolution," said one of the revolutionary members shortly after his election; and this, in truth, was the feeling of a large proportion of the electors, and a considerable portion of the deputies. The desire of novelty, the ambition of power, and a restless anxiety for change, had seized the minds of most of those who had enjoyed a share in the formation of the first constitution. The object of the original supporters of the Revolution had already become, not to destroy the work of others, but to preserve their own. According to the natural progress of revolutionary changes, the democratic part of the first Assembly was the aristocratic of the second. And this appeared, accordingly, even in the places which the parties respectively occupied in the Assembly; for the *Côté droit*, or friends of the constitution, were the same party who had formed the *Côté gauche*, or democrats, in the Constituent Assembly; and the *Côté gauche* of the New Assembly consisted of a party so republican, that, with the exception of Robespierre, and a few of his associates in the Jacobin Club, they were unknown in the first.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vi 341, 343. Toul ii. 89. Lac. i. 192. Th. i. 10, 11.

11. Parties in the Assembly. Feuillants and Girondists.

The members of the right, or the friends of the constitution, were called the Feuillants, from the club which formed the centre of their power. Lameth, Barnave, Duport, Damas, and Vaublanc, formed the leaders of this party, who, although for the most part excluded from seats in the legislature, by the self-denying ordinance passed by the Constituent Assembly, yet, by their influence in the clubs and saloons, in reality directed its movements.[2] The National Guard, the army, the magistrates of the departments, in general all the constituted authorities, were in

[2] Mig. i. 150. 151. Th. ii. 11, 12, 13.

their interest. But they had not the brilliant orators in their ranks who formed the strength of their adversaries; and the support of the people rapidly passed over to the attacking and ultra-democratic party.

12. Character of the Girondists.

The Girondists, so called from the district near Bordeaux, called the Gironde, from whence the most able of their party were elected, comprehended the Republicans of the Assembly, and represented that numerous and enthusiastic body in the state who longed for institutions on the model of those of antiquity. Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Isnard, and Brissot, were the splendid leaders of that party, and from their powers of eloquence, and habits of declamation, rapidly rose to celebrity. Brissot was at first the most popular of their leaders, from the influence of his journal, the *Patriot*, in which he daily published to France the ideas which his prodigious mental activity had the preceding evening produced in the meetings of the municipality, in the National Assembly, or in the club of the Jacobins. Condorcet exercised the ascendant of a philosophic mind, which gave him nearly the place which Sièyes had held in the Constituent Assembly; while Pétion, calm and resolute, and wholly unfettered by scruples, was the man of action of his party, and rapidly acquired the same dominion in the municipality of Paris, of which he was a member, which Bailly had obtained over the middle classes in the commencement of the Revolution. They flattered themselves that they had preserved republican virtue, because they were neither addicted to the frivolities, nor shared in the expenses or the vices of the court; forgetting that the zeal of party, the love of power, and the ambition of popularity, may produce consequences more disastrous, and corruption as great, as the love of pleasure, the thirst of gold, or the ambition of kings. They were never able to get the better of the reproach, continually urged against them by the popular party, that they had abandoned their principles, and now, yielding to the seductions of the court, not only embraced the doctrines, but occupied the very places, which had been hitherto held by their antagonists in the Revolution. They fell at last under the attacks of a party more revolutionary and less humane than themselves,[1] who, disregarding the graces of composition and the principles of philosophy, were now assiduously employed

[1] Deux Amis, vi. 342, 343. Th. ii. 11, 13. Hist. Parl. xii. 34, 36. Mig. i. 151. Dum. 381. Th. ii. 12.

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13. Their principles and errors.

in the arts of popularity, and becoming adepts in the infernal means of exciting the multitude.

A passion for general equality, a repugnance for violent governments, distinguished the speeches of the Girondists. Their ideas were often grand and generous, drawn from the heroes of Greece and Rome, or the more enlarged philanthropy of modern times; their language ever flattering and seductive to the people; their principles, those which gave its early popularity and immense celebrity to the Revolution. But yet from their innovations sprang the most oppressive tyranny of modern times, and they were at last found joining in many measures of flagrant iniquity. The dreadful war which ravaged Europe for twenty years was provoked by their declamations; the death of the King, the overthrow of the throne, the Reign of Terror, flowed from the principles which they promulgated. The common proverb, that "Hell is paved with good intentions," shows how generally perilous conduct, even when flowing from pure motives, is found to lead to the most disastrous consequences. They were too often, in their political career, reckless and inconsiderate—ambition and self-advancement were their ruling motives; and hence their eloquence and genius only rendered them the more dangerous, from the multitudes who were influenced by the charm of their language. But they were by no means insensible to less worthy motives, and we have the authority of Bertrand de Molleville for the assertion, that Vergniaud, Brissot, Isnard, Guadet, and the Abbé Fauchet, had all agreed to sell themselves to the court for 6000 francs a-month to each: and that the agreement only broke off from the crown being unable or unwilling to purchase their services at so high a price.*

Disappointed thus in their hopes of advancement from the court, the Girondist leaders threw themselves without reserve into the arms of the people, and their influence in

* "Ce même Sieur Durant avait été chargé par M. De Lessart, vers la fin de Novembre 1791, de faire des propositions pécuniaires aux deputés Brissot, Isnard, Vergniaud, Guadet, et l'Abbé Fauchet; *et ils avaient tous consenti à vendre au Ministère leur influence* dans l'Assemblée à raison de 6000 livres par mois pour chacun d'eux. Mais M. De Lessart trouva que c'était les payer bien cher; et comme ils ne voulurent rien rabattre de leur demande, cette négociation n'eut aucune suite, et ne produisait d'autre effet que d'aigrir davantage ces cinq députés contre le Ministère."—*Mémoires de* BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, ii. 355, 356.

that quarter erelong proved fatal both to the King and to themselves. Powerful in raising the tempest, they were feeble and irresolute in allaying it; invincible in suffering, heroic in death, they were destitute of the energy and practical experience requisite to avert disaster. The democrats supported them as long as they urged forward the Revolution, and became their bitterest enemies as soon as they strove to allay its fury. They were constantly misled, by expecting that intelligence was to be found among the lower orders; that reason and justice would prevail with the multitude; and as constantly disappointed by experiencing the invariable ascendant of passion or interest among their popular supporters;—the usual error of elevated and generous minds, and which so generally unfits them for the actual administration of affairs. Their tenets would have led them to support the constitutional throne, but they were too ambitious to forego ambition for the sake of duty; unable to stem the torrent of democratic fury which they themselves had excited, they were compelled, to avert still greater disasters, to concur in many cruel measures, alike contrary to their wishes and their principles. The leaders of this party were Vergniaud, Brissot, and Roland; men of powerful eloquence, generous philanthropy, and Roman firmness; who knew how to die, but not to live; who perished, because they had the passions and ambition to commence, and wanted the audacity and wickedness requisite to complete a Revolution.[1]

14. Their fatal mistake as to the character of man.

[1] Mig. i. 213, 214. Buzot, 84.

The Girondists had no point of assemblage, like the well-disciplined forces of their adversaries; but their leaders frequently met at the parties of Madame Roland,* where

* Manon Jeanne Phlipon, afterwards Madame Roland, was born in Paris in 1754, the daughter of an obscure engraver. She received, nevertheless, like many other women in her rank of life at that period in France, a highly finished education; at four years of age she could read with facility; and she soon after made rapid progress in drawing, music, and history. From the very first she evinced a decided and energetic character, refused to embrace dogmas which did not convince her reason, and hence became early sceptical on many points of the Romish faith in which she was brought up. She never, however, became irreligious, and retained to the close of life a devout sense both of an all-powerful Creator, and of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Her ardent mind, deeply imbued with liberal principles, at first reverted with enthusiasm to the brilliant pictures of antiquity contained in the ancient writers. She wept that she had not been born a Greek or Roman citizen, and carried Plutarch's Lives, instead of her breviary, to mass. Religious ardour soon after got possession of her mind; and she entreated her mother to be allowed to take the veil in a convent in the Faubourg St Marcel. Though this was not acceded to by her

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15. Character of Madame Roland.

all the elegance which the Revolution had left, and all the talent which it had developed, were wont to assemble. Impassioned in disposition, captivating in manner, unrivalled in conversation, but masculine in ambition, and feminine in temper, this remarkable woman united the graces of the French to the elevation of the Roman character. Born in the middle ranks, her manners, though without the ease of dignified birth, yet conferred distinction on an elevated station; surrounded by the most fascinating society in France, she preserved unsullied the simplicity of domestic life. She had as much virtue as pride, as much public ambition as private integrity. But she had all a woman's warmth of feeling in her disposition, and wanted the calm judgment requisite for the right direction of public affairs. Her sensitive temperament could not endure the constant attacks made on her husband at the

parents, she entered the convent as a pensionary, and returned from it with a mind enlarged and a heart softened. The elevated reasoning of Bossuet, as she has herself told us, first arrested her attention, and roused her reason; the eloquence of the *Nouvelle Heloïse* soon after captivated her imagination. Indefatigable in study, ardent in pursuit, she devoured alternately books on theology, philosophy, oratory, poetry, and romance; and became successively a Cartesian, a Jansenist, and a Stoic. She even wrote an essay on a question proposed by the academy of Besançon. In 1780, at the age of twenty-six, she married M. Roland, then an inspector of arts and manufactures at Rouen, who subsequently became Minister of the Interior. She was now in possession of wealth and independence, and though her marriage with him was a union founded on esteem only, as he was twenty-four years her senior, yet she proved a faithful and affectionate wife. Partly in the line of his profession, and to gain information on the manufactures of foreign countries, partly for pleasure, she travelled much with him in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and England; and she there entered warmly into her husband's pursuits, and gave him not a little assistance in them by her skill in drawing. He was inspector at Lyons when the Revolution broke out, and, in common with Madame Roland, immediately and warmly embraced its principles. It was the general indignation of the class of society to which they belonged at the invidious exclusions to which they were subjected, exclusions which they were conscious were undeserved, which gave that convulsion its early and irresistible strength. The first occasion on which she openly espoused the popular cause, was in a description of the Federation of Lyons on 30th May 1790, which, from its energy and talent, acquired great celebrity. Attracted by the Revolution, she came to Paris in July 1791, and immediately became a constant attender of the debates of the Assembly and at the Jacobin club. Four times a-week a small circle of liberal deputies, consisting of Brissot, Pétion, Buzot, Barbaroux, and others, met at her house, and there, as at cabinet dinners in English administrations, the whole measures of their party were arranged. It was chiefly owing to the sway she thus acquired among the Girondists, that her husband was soon after made Minister of the Interior. Her influence over the minister, however, then appeared excessive, and exposed him to ridicule, her to obloquy. "If you send an invitation," said Danton, "to Monsieur, you must also send one to Madame: I know the virtues of the minister; but we have need of men who can see otherwise than by the eyes of their wives."—See ROLAND's *Memoirs*, i. 272, and *Biographie Universelle*, xxxviii. 460-463.

tribune. She interfered too much with his administration, and replied, often with undue warmth, by articles in pamphlets and public journals, which bore his name. An ardent admirer of antiquity, she wept, while yet a child, that she had not been born a Roman citizen. She lived to witness misfortunes greater than were known to ancient states, and to bear them with more than Roman constancy.[1] *

[1] Roland's Memoirs, i. 32. Mig. i. 165. Th. ii. 63, 64. Lac. i. 225. Hist. de la Conv. i. 38.

16. Her great influence in the Assembly.

This remarkable woman, by the concurring testimony of all her contemporaries, exercised a powerful influence over the fortunes of her country. More than her husband, even when he was minister of the interior, she directed the royal counsels while he held office, and led the bright band of gifted intellects which assembled in her saloons. The fire of her genius, the warmth of her feeling, the eloquence of her language, enabled her to maintain an undisputed ascendancy even over the greatest men in France. But she was by no means a perfect character. The consciousness of talents tempted her to make too undisguised a use of them ; her obvious superiority to her husband led her to assume, too openly, the lead in the direction of political affairs. Vehement, impassioned, and overbearing, she could not brook contradiction, and was often confirmed in error by opposition. Hence, she was more fitted, as women eminent in talent generally are, for adversity than for prosperity, and owes her great celebrity chiefly to the extraordinary heroism of her last moments. She lived to lament the crimes perpetrated in the name of liberty, and died a victim to her conjugal fidelity ; evincing, in the last hour, a degree of intrepidity rarely paralleled even in the annals of female heroism, and which, had it been general in the men of her party, might have stifled the Reign of Terror in its birth.[2]

[2] Lac. ii. 14, 15. Roland, i. 18, 19.

* She was too active and enterprising for a statesman's wife. " When I wish to see the minister of the interior," said Condorcet, " I can never get a glimpse of any thing but the petticoats of his wife."—*Hist. de la Convention*, i. 38. It is a curious proof of the manners of the times, that though Madame Roland's deportment as a woman was never suspected, and she died the victim of conjugal fidelity to her husband, who was twenty-four years older than herself, she has left in her memoirs, written in prison, and in the hourly expectation of death, details of her feelings and desires when a young woman—" les besoins," as she called it, " d'une physique bien organisée,"—with which, as Sir Walter Scott has justly observed, a courtesan of the higher class would hardly season her private conversation to her most favoured lover.—See ROLAND's *Memoirs*, i. 78-82

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17. Character of Vergniaud

Vergniaud* was the most eloquent speaker of the Gironde, but he had not the vigour or resolution requisite for the leader of a party in troubled times. Passion, in general, had little influence over his mind: he was humane, gentle, and benevolent; difficult to rouse to exertion, and still more to be convinced of the wickedness, either of his adversaries, or of a large portion of his supporters. Indolence was his great defect: an ignorance of human nature his chief want. But when great occasions arose, and the latent energy of his mind was roused, he poured forth his generous thoughts in streams of eloquence, which never were surpassed in the French Assembly. His eloquence was not like that of Mirabeau, broken and emphatic, adapted to the changing temper of the audience he addressed; but uniformly elegant, sonorous, and flowing, swelling at times into the highest strains of impassioned oratory. That such a man should have been unable to rule the Convention, only proves how unfit a body elected as they were, is to rule the destinies of a great nation, or a man of such elegant accomplishments to sustain the conflict with a rude democracy.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 137, 138.

18. Brissot. His character.

But the one of all the Girondist party who took the most decided lead in the Assembly was Brissot.† Unlike Vergniaud, he was activity itself; and poured forth the stores of an ardent, but ill-regulated mind, with a profusion which astonished the world, even in those days of universal

* Pierre Victorin Vergniaud was born at Limoges in 1759; so that in 1791 he was only thirty-two years of age. His father was an advocate in that town, and bound his son to the same profession, designing him to succeed him in his business there; but young Vergniaud, being desirous of appearing on a more important theatre, repaired to Bordeaux, where his abilities and power of speaking soon procured him a brilliant reputation, though his invincible indolence prevented him from succeeding in the more thorny, but lucrative branches of his profession. Like all the young barristers of his province, he at once, and with the utmost ardour, embraced the principles of the Revolution; and he was even remarkable among them for the vehemence of his language, and the impassioned style of his eloquence. He was, however, indolent in the extreme; fond of pleasure, and, like Mirabeau, passionately desirous of enjoyment; but when roused, either by his feelings or necessity, he rivalled that great man in the power and influence of his oratory. He had little ambition for himself, but lent himself to the designs of others who were consumed with the desire to raise themselves to the head of affairs. He was chosen one of the deputies for Bordeaux, in 1791, for the Legislative Assembly, and soon rose to eminence by his remarkable oratorical powers.—*Biographie Universelle*, xlviii. 192, 193. (Vergniaud.)

† Jean Pierre Brissot was born at Duarville, near Chartres, on the 14th January 1754. His father was a pastrycook; but gave his son a college education, and before he left the seminary where he received it, he had already become an author. A pamphlet he published on the inequality of

excitement, and almost superhuman exertion. But he was neither a speaker nor a writer of distinguished talent. His style in the Assembly, as well as in his pamphlets, was verbose and monotonous; his information often scanty or inaccurate; and he was totally destitute either of philosophic thought or elevation of sentiment. He owed his reputation, which was great, and his influence, which for a considerable time was still greater, to his indefatigable industry, to the prodigious multitude of his pamphlets and speeches, which, by the sheer weight of number, kept him continually before the public; to his ultra-revolutionary zeal, which rendered him ever foremost in supporting projects of innovation or spoliation; and to his continual denunciation of counter-revolutionary plots in others, which rendered his journals and pamphlets always an object of curiosity. Like the rest of his party, he was irreligious, with all the fanaticism of politics which then supplied the place of religion. Calm and imperturbable in manner, he was full of hatred and envenomed in character. Consumed by revolutionary passions, he was superior to the vulgar thirst for money; and though he had many opportunities of making a fortune, he left his wife and children, when brought to the scaffold by Robespierre, in a state of poverty. He was weak in constitution, ungainly in figure, with a pale countenance, and an affectation of Jacobin simplicity or rudeness of attire. He was one of the many men who are always beneath their reputation, which was in a great degree owing to the abilities of Secretary Girey Dupry, who wrote the best articles in his journals, and shared his fate on the scaffold.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. v. 624, 625. Mém. de Brissot, i. 121, 232. Mém. de Condorcet, i. 179.

ranks, in 1775, procured for him a place in the Bastile, from which he was liberated by the influence of Madame Genlis, one of whose maids he soon after married. From thence he was sent to England, on a secret mission from the French police, and afterwards went to America, vainly seeking for some fixed employment; but no sooner did the Revolution break out in France in 1788, than he returned to that country, and immediately began to take an active part in promoting republican principles. After commencing with the publication of several pamphlets, he set up a journal entitled, "Le Patriot Français," which continued to be issued for two years, and acquired a great reputation. This procured for him, on occasion of the Revolution of 14th July, a place in the municipality of Paris—a body then, and still more afterwards, of not less importance than the National Assembly itself. In conjunction with Laclos, of the Orleans faction, he drew up the famous petition of the Champ de Mars, which demanded the dethronement of the King after the journey to Varennes, which procured him a place in the Legislative Assembly, where he became an ardent opponent of La Fayette and the Constitutional party.—See BRISSOT, *Mémoires*, i. 9-213: and *Biog. Univ.* v. 624, 625. (BRISSOT.)

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19. Guadet, Gensonné, Isnard. Barbaroux, and others.

Guadet was more animated than Vergniaud: he seized with more readiness the changes of the moment, and preserved his presence of mind more completely during the stormy discussions of the Assembly. Gensonné, with inferior talents for speaking, was nevertheless looked up to as a leader of his party from his firmness and resolution of character. Barbaroux, a native of the south of France, brought to the strife of faction the ardent temperament of his sunny climate; resolute, sagacious, and daring, he early divined the bloody designs of the Jacobins, but was unable to prevail on his associates to adopt the desperate measures which he soon foresaw would be necessary, to give them any thing like an equality in the strife. Isnard, Buzot, and Lanjuinais were also distinguished men of this illustrious party, who became alike eminent by their oratorical talents and the heroism which they evinced in the extremity of adverse fortune. But what they and all the leaders of their party wanted, and which rendered them unlike unfit to rule or contend with the Revolution, was a feeling of duty or rectitude on the one hand, and true knowledge of mankind on the other. The want of the first induced them, under the impulse of selfish ambition, to engage in a treasonable conspiracy against the throne, which led to its destruction; the want of the latter disqualified them from contending, after their common victory, with the associates whom they had summoned up for that criminal enterprise, and at once conducted themselves to the scaffold, and totally destroyed the last remnants of freedom in France.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 138, 139.

20. Picture of the Jacobins.

Very different was the character of the JACOBINS, that terrible faction, whose crimes have stained the annals of France with such unheard-of atrocities. Their origin dates back to the struggles in 1789, when, as already noticed, a certain number of deputies from the province of Brittany met in the convent of the Jacobins, formerly the seat of the Assemblies of the League, under the name of the "Club Breton." The popularity of this club soon attracted the most audacious and able of the democratic party: the nave of the church was transformed into a hall for the meeting of the members; and the seat of the President made of the top of a Gothic monument of black marble, which stood against the walls. The tribune,

from whence the orators addressed the assembly, consisted of two beams placed across each other, in the form of a St Andrew's cross, like a half-constructed scaffold; behind it were suspended from the walls the ancient instruments of torture, the unregarded, but fitting accompaniments of such a scene; numbers of bats at night flitted through the vast and gloomy vaults, and by their screams interrupted the din of the meeting. Such was the strife of contending voices, that muskets were discharged at intervals to produce a temporary cessation of the tumult. A great number of affiliated societies in all the large towns of France, early gave this club a decided preponderance: the eloquence of Mirabeau thundered under its roof; and all the principal insurrections of the Revolution were prepared by its leaders. There the revolts of the 14th July, the 20th June, and the 10th August, were openly discussed long before they took place; there were rehearsed all the great changes of the drama which were shortly afterwards to be acted in the Assembly. The massacres of 2d September alone appear to have been unprepared by them; their infamy rests with Danton and the municipality of Paris.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 232, and v. 137. Chateaub. Mém. 76.

21. Tests applied previous to admission.

As usual in democratic assemblies, the most violent and outrageous soon acquired the ascendancy; the mob applauded those who were loudest in their assertion of the sovereignty of the people. Fifteen hundred members usually attended its meetings; a few lamps only lighted the vast extent of the room; the members appeared for the most part in shabby attire, and the galleries were filled with the lowest of the populace. In this den of darkness were prepared the bloody lists of proscription and massacre; the meetings were opened with revolutionary songs, and shouts of applause followed each addition to the list of murder, each account of its perpetration by the affiliated societies. Never was a man of honour, seldom a man of virtue, admitted within this society; it had an innate horror of every one who was not attached to its fortunes by the hellish bond of committed wickedness. A robber, an assassin, was certain of admission; as sure as the victim of their violence was of rejection. The well-known question put to the entrants, "What have you done to be hanged if the ancient *régime* is restored?" exemplifies at once the tie which held to-

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gether its members. The secret sense of deserved punishment constituted the bond of their unholy alliance. Their place of meeting was adorned with anarchical symbols, tricolor flags, and busts of the leading revolutionists of former times. Long before the death of Louis XVI., two portraits, adorned with garlands, of Jacques Clement and Ravaillac, were hung on the walls: immediately below was the date of the murder which each had committed, with the words, "He was fortunate; he killed a king."[1]

[1] Hist. de la Conv. i. No. 110, 112. Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, ii. 42, 74.

22. The secret of their success.

Inferior to their adversaries in learning, eloquence, and taste, they were infinitely their superiors in the arts of acquiring popularity: they succeeded with the mob, because they knew by experience the means of moving the mass from which they sprang. Reason, justice, humanity, were never appealed to: flattery, agitation, and terror, constituted their never-failing methods of seduction. Incessant fabrications or denunciations of counter-revolutionary plots, and fearful pictures of the dangers to which, if successful, they would expose the whole revolutionary party, were their favourite engines for moving the popular mind. As strongly as Napoleon himself, and for a similar reason, they felt that conquest was essential to existence; they were all aware, and constantly maintained, that the Revolution must advance, and crush its enemies, or it would recoil, and crush themselves. The extreme of democracy was the form of government which they supported, because it was most grateful to the indigent class on whom they depended; but nothing was further from their intentions than to share with others the power which they so strenuously sought for themselves. The greatest levellers in theory, they became the most absolute tyrants in practice; having nothing to lose, they were utterly reckless in their measures of aggrandisement; restrained by no feelings of conscience, they reaped for a time the fruits of audacious wickedness. The leaders of this party were Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, St Just, and Collot d'Herbois; names destined to acquire an execrable celebrity in French annals, whose deeds will never be forgotten so long as the voice of conscience is heard in the human heart—who have done more to injure the cause of freedom than all the tyrants who have preceded them.[2]

[2] Toul. v. 179. Lac. ii. 10. Mig. i. 214. Buzot, 72, 84. Hist. de la Conv. i. 110, 112. Chateaub. Mém. 76.

23. Early history of Danton.

Danton was born at Arcis-sur-Aube on the 28th October 1759. Nature seemed to have expressly created him for the terrible part which he played in the Revolution. His figure was colossal, his health unbroken, his strength extraordinary: a countenance ravaged by the smallpox, with small eyes, thick lips, and a libertine look, but a lofty commanding forehead, at once fascinated and terrified the beholder. A commanding air, dauntless intrepidity, a voice of thunder, soon gave him the ascendancy in any assembly which he addressed. He was bred to the bar, but never got any practice; and was already drowned in debt when the Revolution in 1789 drew him to Paris, as the great centre of attraction for towering ambition and ruined fortunes. Mirabeau there early discerned his value, and made use of him, as he himself said, "as a huge blast bellows to inflame the popular passions." In July 1789, he was already a sort of monarch in the markets: and he was chosen, on its institution, president of the club of the Cordeliers, which gave him a durable influence. He then attached himself to Marat, and, in conjunction with him and Brissot, drew up the famous petition of the Champ de Mars, which prayed for the dethronement of the King.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. (Danton.)

24. His character.

He was the first leader of the Jacobins who rose to great eminence in the Revolution. Born poor, he had received, as he himself said, no other inheritance from nature but "an athletic form, and the rude physiognomy of freedom." He owed his ascendancy not so much to his talents, though they were great, nor to his eloquence, though it was commanding, as to his indomitable energy and dauntless courage, which made him rise superior to every difficulty, and boldly assume the lead, when others, with perhaps equal abilities, were beginning to sink under apprehension. At first ambition was the mainspring of his actions; individual gratification the god of his idolatry: situated as he was, he saw that these objects were to be gained only by a zealous and uncompromising support of the popular party, and hence he was a revolutionist. But he was ambitious, not philanthropic; a voluptuary, not a fanatic; he looked to the Revolution as the means of making his fortune, not of elevating or improving the human race. Accordingly, he was quite willing to sell himself to the court, if it promised

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him greater advantages than the popular side ; and at one time he received no less than a hundred thousand crowns (L.25,000) from the royal treasury, to advocate measures favourable to the interest of the royal authority ; an engagement which, as long as it lasted, he faithfully kept.* But when the cause of royalty was evidently declining, and a scaffold, not a fortune, promised to be the reward of fidelity to the throne, he threw himself without reserve into the arms of the democracy, and advocated the most vehement and sanguinary measures.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 354. Barbaroux, 57. Garat, 175, 180.

25. His redeeming qualities.

Yet Danton was not a mere bloodthirsty tyrant. Bold, unprincipled, and daring, he held that the end in every case justified the means ; that nothing was blamable provided it led to desirable results ; that nothing was impossible to those who had the courage to attempt it. A starving advocate in 1789, he rose in audacity and eminence with the public disturbances ; prodigal in expense and drowned in debt, he had no chance, at any period, even of personal freedom, but in constantly advancing with the fortunes of the Revolution. Like Mirabeau, he was the slave of sensual passions ; like him, he was the terrific leader, during his ascendancy, of the ruling class ; though he shared the character, not of the patricians who commenced the Revolution, but of the plebeians who consummated its wickedness. But he had no fanaticism in his character ; he was not impelled to evil in the search of good. Self-elevation was his object throughout ; when that was secured, he was not inaccessible to better feelings. Inexorable in general measures, he was indulgent, humane, and even generous to individuals ; the author of the massacres of the 2d September, he saved all those who fled to him, and spontaneously liberated his personal adversaries from prison. Individual elevation, and the safety of his party, were his ruling objects ; a revolution appeared a game of hazard, where the stake was the life of the losing party:[2] the strenuous supporter of exterminating

[2] Mig. i. 201, 202. Roland, ii. 14, 17.

* "Par les mains du Sieur Durand, Danton avait reçu plus de 100,000 écus, pour proposer ou appuyer différentes motions au Club des Jacobins ; il remplissait assez fidèlement les engagements qu'il prenait à cet égard, en reservant toujours la liberté d'employer les moyens qu'il jugeait les plus propres à faire passer ses motions ; et son moyen ordinaire était de les assaisonner de declamations les plus violentes contre la Cour et contre les Ministres, pour qu'on ne le soupçonne de leur être vendu."—Bertrand de Molleville, *Mémoires*, i. 354.

cruelty after the 10th August, he was among the first to recommend a return to humanity, after the period of danger was past.

26. Biography and character of Marat.

Marat was the worst of this band.* Nature had impressed the atrocity of his character on his countenance: hideous features, the expression of a demon, revolted all who approached him. His talents were considerable; his reading extensive; his industry indefatigable; and, previous to the Revolution, he had been known by a great variety of writings on different subjects. But that convulsion at once roused all the dark and malignant passions of his nature; and to such an extent did they obtain the mastery of him, and so strongly was he convinced that they afforded the only passport to success, that he was careful to depict himself in his compositions as worse than he really was. For more than three years his writings incessantly stimulated the people to cruelty; buried in obscurity, he revolved in his mind the means of augmenting the victims of popular passion. In vain repeated accusations were directed against him; flying from one subterraneous abode to another, he still continued his infernal agitation of the public mind. Terror was his constant engine for attaining his objects. His principle was, that there was no safety but in destroying the whole enemies of the Revolution; he was repeatedly heard to say, that there would be no security to the state till two hundred and eighty thousand heads had fallen. He was not venal: the lust of power, the thirst for blood were his motives of action.[1] The Revo-

[1] Barbaroux, 57. Garat, 174, 187. Lac. i. 281. Mig. i 220.

* Jean Paul Marat was born in 1744, at Boudry, in the principality of Neufchatel. He was sprung of Calvinistic parents, and bred to medicine, which he studied at the university of Edinburgh, and in 1774 he published in English, in that city, a pamphlet entitled "The Chains of Slavery." Subsequently he removed to Paris, where he established himself in practice; but he never succeeded in his profession, and was living in obscure lodgings and great poverty in that city when the Revolution broke out. His learning, however, was considerable, his information extensive, and he had, before that convulsion brought him into notice, already published a great variety of works in different departments of knowledge, which indicated the extent and variety of his studies. Literature, science, philosophy, criticism, had alternately occupied his pen, and attested at once his talents and his perseverance. But from the moment that popular passions got possession of the public mind, he directed the whole force of his intellect to the inflaming of them, and he rapidly became, in consequence, one of the most powerful as well as dangerous agents of the Revolution. In July 1789 he began his celebrated journal "L'Ami du Peuple," which he continued to publish daily till his death in 1793, and which now forms nineteen volumes, one of the most curious monuments of those fearful times. He soon made himself remarkable in the primary assemblies which every where arose in Paris after the insurrection of 14th July, by the vehemence of his lan-

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lution produced many men who carried into execution more sanguinary measures ; none who exercised so powerful an influence in recommending them. Death cut him short in the midst of his relentless career; the hand of female heroism prevented his falling a victim to the savage exasperation which he had so large a share in arousing.

27. Birth and early years of St Just.

St Just was born at Decize, in the Nivernois, in 1768, the son of a chevalier of St Louis, but not noble, who lived near Noyon. He received the elements of his education at Soissons, and was early distinguished by his intense application, and the vehement ardour with which he pursued whatever he undertook. Ambitious of distinction, he embraced the principles of the Revolution, though still a youth, the moment that it broke out; and so desirous was he of entering on the career of public life, that he introduced himself by stealth, in 1791, when under the legal age, to the Electoral Assembly of Chauni, from which he was expelled as soon as the deception was discovered. He afterwards was elected, from the violence of his democratic principles, adjutant-major in a legion of the National Guard, and in 1792 was chosen deputy to the Convention for the department of the Aisne. From that time he became an intimate friend of Robespierre, and adopted more thoroughly the principles of that remarkable man than any other member of the Convention.

28. His character.

At once an ardent fanatic and a sanguinary despot, St Just, in conjunction with Robespierre, directed his whole efforts to two objects—the destruction of all the enemies

guage, and the bloody proscriptions which he from the first, and in the most undisguised manner, advocated. So early as August 1789, he was found there maintaining, that the Revolution would retrograde unless eight hundred deputies in the Assembly were hung on eight hundred trees in the garden of the Tuileries, with Mirabeau at the head of them, as he had ventured to propose that the army should be disbanded, and reconstructed on a new principle. The minister, Malouet, proposed he should be prosecuted for this; but Mirabeau said, such sallies merited only contempt, and prevailed on the Assembly to pass to the order of the day. The municipality of Paris afterwards ordered him to be arrested, and La Fayette invested his house, but Danton furnished him with the means of escape. Undeterred by these dangers, Marat continued, without intermission, his infernal agitation in his journal, ever keeping a little in advance of the popular feeling, and leading the people on to commit atrocities, by previously accustoming them to hear of them. At first he was hooted down, and hissed at the doors of the clubs and primary assemblies, when he had concluded his sanguinary harangues; but he went on without being deterred either by danger or obloquy, well knowing that the progress of a revolution is ever onward; and erelong his demands for proscriptions were received with thunders of applause.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxvi. 556, 560. (Marat.)

of democracy, and the centralisation of all its powers in the hands of a few. He trusted nothing to reason among the people, still less to virtue in public men; but constantly urged the necessity of destroying all the enemies of the Revolution. Terror was his engine, as the only means either of private safety or national regeneration; death, the means by which it was to be produced. He always maintained that abuses would never cease, as long as the King and a single man of the noblesse lived. "I insist," said he, "that the whole Bourbons should be banished, except the King, who should be kept, *you know why*. Let hatred of kings mingle with the blood of the people." To excite their rage, he fabricated the most audacious lies, as, that in 1788 Louis XVI. had massacred eight thousand victims in Paris alone, and hung fifteen thousand smugglers, and that the bodies found every morning in the Seine were those of the persons who had been strangled the preceding night in prison by the King's orders. Falsehood to excite his adherents, death to intimidate his adversaries, were his two weapons, as they are those of all men in the last stages of religious or political fanaticism. Wrapt up in ambition, he was above the sordid desire of wealth, but not insensible to other passions. He loved women, had an elegant figure, and affected the ancient polish of manners; but a dark melancholic countenance, and a profusion of lank black hair, revealed at once to the spectator the unrelenting fanatic of the nineteenth century.[1]

[1] Biographie Universelle, xxxix. 604, 609. (St Just.)

29. Early years and education of Robespierre.

But all the leaders of the Jacobins sink into insignificance before their ruler and despot, FRANCIS MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE. This extraordinary man, whose name will never be forgotten, was born at Arras in 1759, the son of an obscure procurator in that town, who, being ruined by dissipation, had fled to Cologne to avoid his creditors, where he set up a French school; and who removed from thence to America, where he was never more heard of. His mother, Marie Josephine Caneau, the daughter of a brewer, died when Maximilien was only nine years of age, leaving her young family totally destitute. Young Robespierre was succoured in this extremity by the Bishop of Arras, who procured for him a bursary at the college of Louis le Grand at Paris, and paid for his board there, while the Abbé Proyart, its principal, received him in the kindest manner.

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His progress in classical knowledge was respectable, and he is marked, from the year 1772 to 1775, as one of the most promising students of the college. On leaving that seminary he studied law, and set up as an advocate in his native town of Arras; but his success was not remarkable, as the turn of his mind was always towards principle and speculation rather than business. Ardent in the pursuit of these, his earliest expedition from college was to make a pilgrimage on foot of thirty miles to see Rousseau, at Ermonville, then the object of his most enthusiastic admiration.[1]

[1] Robespierre, Mém. i. 204, 206. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 232, 233.

30. His prize essay at Metz in 1784.

His first appearance in public was still more remarkable, considering the career which ultimately awaited him. The academy of Metz having, in 1784, proposed a prize for the best essay on an existing law in France, which affixed to his whole family the infamy of a criminal's condemnation to the scaffold, Robespierre engaged in the competition, and carried off a prize of four hundred francs for his composition. He was strongly urged to try his fortune by a young friend destined to future celebrity, and who afterwards became his colleague in the Committee of Public Safety—Carnot.* Carried away by the philanthropic feelings then so generally prevalent, which ushered in, in such deceitful colours, the dawn of the Revolution, Robespierre went a step further, and eloquently contended for *the total abolition of capital punishments in all cases.* Thus the most sanguinary despot known in modern times, owed his education and preservation from destitution to the benevolence of two kind-hearted ecclesiastics; he made his first pilgrimage as a youth to see the celebrated philanthropist, J. J. Rousseau, and his first appearance in life by an essay in which he eloquently contended for the abolition, in all cases, of capital punishments.[2] †

[2] Robespierre, Mém. i. 239. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 233.

* "'Ecris,' me dit-il, (Carnot,) 'avec tout l'ardeur de votre âme patriotique: grave en lettres de sang les vérités que tu vas dire à tes concitoyens; *et arrachez au moins une victime* à cet affreux préjuge, tu seras bien payé.'" —*Mémoires de* ROBESPIERRE, i. 239.

† Robespierre's motto for this Essay was the line of Virgil:—

"Quid hoc genus hominum? quæve hunc tam barbara morem
Permittet patria?"

Lacrételle wrote an article in the *Mercure de France* on this composition when it appeared, in which he bestowed on it the highest commendations. "Son ouvrage," said he, "sera lu avec interêt, et obtiendra une attention honorable.—Il est rempli de vues saines et de traits d'une éloquence simple, d'un talent heureux et vrai. On en concevra encore plus d'espérances, quand on saura que l'auteur, voué à la profession d'avocat, plaidait sa

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31. First appearance in public life.

The first cause in which Robespierre gained any distinction, was one against the sheriffs of St Omer, in which he pronounced a glowing eulogium on the virtues and patriotism of Louis XVI., of whom he was hereafter to be the cruellest enemy; and soon after he acquired a great reputation with the popular party, by a violent memorial against the superior council of Artois. This procured for him a place in the States-General in 1789, from which period his biography is written in the annals of France. He there adhered to his repugnance to the shedding of blood, and was found in 1791 warmly and eloquently supporting, in the National Assembly, a proposal for the total abolition of capital punishments.* He was not re-elected into the Legislative Assembly, in consequence of the self-denying ordinance, which he himself had passed; but he was an active member of the Jacobin club during all the time of its sitting, and in that way exercised an unseen but most effective control, both over the proceedings of that Assembly and the dreadful catastrophe which at its close overturned the throne.[1]

[1] Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 232, 233.

Of all the characters which the Revolution produced, Robespierre was by far the most remarkable, and without the details now given of his previous life, his character would be altogether inexplicable. No one has been so

première cause dans le temps où il écrivait ce discours."—*Mercure de France*, Sept. 29, 1784, in *Mémoires de* Robespierre, i. *Pièces Just.* B, p. 229.

In this Essay Robespierre observed, speaking of the family of a condemned criminal:—"Avec l'innocence ils ont encore les droits les plus touchants à la commisération de leurs concitoyens. C'est, par exemple, une famille desolée, à qui l'on arrache son chef et son appui pour le trainer à l'échafaud: on juge qu'elle serait trop heureuse si elle n'avait que ce malheur à pleurer—on la devoue elle-même à un opprobre éternel. Les infortunés!—avec toute la sensibilité d'une âme honnête, ils sont réduits à soutenir tout le poids de cette peine horrible, que le scélérat peut seul soutenir. Ils n'osent plus lever les yeux, de peur de lire le mépris sur le visage de tous ceux qui les environnent: tous les dédaignent; tous les corps les répoussent; toutes les familles craignent de se souiller de leur alliance; la société entière les abandonne, et les laisse dans une solitude affreuse. L'amitié même ne peut exister pour eux. Enfin, leur situation est si terrible, qu'elle fait pitié à ceux même qui en sont les auteurs: on les plaint du mépris qu'on sent pour eux, et on continue de les flétrir; on plonge le couteau dans le cœur de ces victimes innocentes, mais ce n'est pas sans être un peu ému de leurs cris. Le cri maternel, les prières de l'innocence, les supplications de la beauté, l'interressante voix de l'amitié, les services, les vertues, les talens—tout ce que peut émouvoir le cœur d'homme est employé contre le cours de la justice. On est plus consterné de la vengéance que du crîme. D'où vient de si grandes désordres? C'est que la punition est plus à craindre que le crime."—*Essai de* Robespierre, 1784. *Mémoires de* Robespierre, ii. 320, 331.

* *Ante*, Chap. VI. § 75.

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32. His character has been disfigured by his contemporaries.

much disfigured in representation and description by contemporary annalists of every description: a peculiarity not to be wondered at, considering that he nearly destroyed them all, and had wellnigh succeeded, before his fall, in guillotining all the greatest and most eminent men of all parties in France. But a calm retrospect of his career will at once show to what his extraordinary rise and long-continued power was owing, and reconcile the otherwise incomprehensible contradictions of his character.

33. His character and principles.

Robespierre was a great, nay, in some respects, he was a good man; but he was a sanguinary bigot, a merciless fanatic. His talents were of the very highest order; his eloquence was condensed, his reasoning powerful; his intellect cool, his sagacity great, his perseverance unconquerable. His disposition was of that peculiar kind which affords the only sure foundation for lasting popularity with the people. He adhered steadily to principle, and constantly appealed to it. There was no shuffling or tergiversation about him; he was ever the same. His doctrines were simple, flattering to the many, and perfectly adapted to every capacity. He maintained that the multitude can do no wrong: "que le peuple est *toujours bon*, le magistrat toujours corruptible;"* that they are the fountain of all power, and that by their delegates alone it should ever be exercised. It was to effect this object that he strove to destroy all the higher classes of society, because he was convinced it would not be attained otherwise; but his ultimate object was equality and social happiness. Philosophers and statesmen will probably be inclined to dispute these first principles, and deduce many arguments against them from his own career; but none can deny to Robespierre the merit of having steadily adhered to them in his reasonings, and followed them out with invincible constancy in his conduct. Adopting the prevailing doctrine of the day, that the end will justify the means, he went steadily on destroying every one who thwarted the popular will, of which he considered himself, and with reason, as the true incarnation, till he had wellnigh annihilated the whole intellect and virtue of France. Napoleon did not prosecute savage warfare for the external glory of the republic

* His own words.—BUONAROTTI, *Conspiration de Babœuf*, i. 273.

with more vigour and perseverance, than Robespierre did internal massacre to exterminate its domestic enemies; and the extraordinary success and long-continued power of both, proved that each had rightly judged the popular mind in his own day: that they both marched, as Napoleon said, "with the opinion of five millions of men." No man in troubled times ever rose to lasting greatness but by steady and courageous adherence to principle. In this view Robespierre's character and career possess an interest and an importance far beyond what can belong to any individual, how eminent soever. He was the incarnation of a principle, the touchstone of a system; that principle was the natural innocence of man—that system, to do evil that good may come of it.

34. His personal appearance and weaknesses.

Although, however, the public career of Robespierre was thus the manful assertion of a principle, and its results a *reductio ad absurdum* of its doctrines; yet a close examination reveals in him, in addition to his unrelenting cruelty, many of the weaknesses, some of the littlenesses, of humanity. Unlike Mirabeau and Danton, he owed nothing to physical strength, or the ascendant of manner. Ungainly in appearance, with a feeble voice and vulgar accent, he owed his elevation chiefly to the inflexible obstinacy and dauntless moral courage with which he maintained his opinions, at a time when the popular cause had lost many of its supporters. But under the mask of patriotism was concealed the working of other and less worthy feelings. Vanity, terror, and revenge exercised a powerful influence over his mind. His hatred was implacable; it fell with unmitigated fury on his nearest and dearest relations.* Cautious in conduct, slow, but implacable in revenge, he avoided the perils which proved fatal to so many of his adversaries, and ultimately established himself on their ruin. Insatiable in his thirst for blood, he disdained the more vulgar passion for money: no bribes from the court ever sullied his hands; at a time when he disposed of the life of every man in France, he resided in a small apartment, the only luxury

* "Que cêtte passion de la haine doit être affreuse puisqu'elle vous aveugle au point de me calomnier auprès de mes amis. *Votre haine pour moi* est trop aveugle pour ne pas se porter sur tout ce que me témoignera quelque intérêt."—*La Citoyenne* ROBESPIERRE *à son frère*, 18 *Mess. Ann* ii. *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez* ROBESPIERRE, ii. 114.

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of which consisted in images of his figure, and the number of mirrors which, in every direction, reflected his form. While the other leaders of the populace affected a squalid dress and dirty linen, he alone appeared in elegant attire. His countenance had something in it which was repulsive; he was pale, inclining to a livid hue, and was deeply marked by the smallpox. His smile was painful, and at times satanic; a convulsive quiver of the lips, whenever he was strongly agitated, often gave a frightful expression to his countenance. An austere life, a deserved reputation for incorruptibility, a total disregard of human suffering, preserved his ascendancy with the fanatical supporters of liberty, even though he had little in common with them, and though there was an elevation of purpose in his cruelty, to which they were strangers. He had great designs in view in the reconstruction of the social edifice, after three hundred thousand heads had fallen. He had visions of an innocent republic with equal fortunes arising out of the sea of blood. But it was in general only that he was philanthropic; to individuals he was merciless and cruel in the extreme. He was more consistent than Danton, but less humane: he never abandoned a principle, but he never saved a friend. It was hard to say whether his supporters, or his enemies, fell fastest beneath the scythe of his ambition. His terrible career is a proof how little, in popular commotions, even domineering vices are ultimately to be relied on; and how completely indomitable perseverance, and a steady adherence to popular principles, can supply the want of all other qualities. The approach of death unveiled his real weakness; he was the perfection of moral courage, but destitute of personal firmness. When success was hopeless, his boldness deserted him; and the assassin of thousands met his fate with less courage than the meanest of his victims.[1]

[1] Roland, i. 298. Barbaroux, 63, 64. Mig. i. 217. Hist. de la Conv. i. 74. Barère, Mém. i. 116.

35. Club of the Jacobins.

The leaders of the Jacobins in the Legislative Assembly were Chabot, Bazire, and Merlin; but it was not there that their real influence lay. The clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers were the pillars of their authority; in the first, Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, ruled with absolute sway; the latter was under the dominion of Danton, Carrier, Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine. Robespierre was excluded from the Assem-

bly by the self-denying ordinance which he himself had proposed; but he had acquired an omnipotent sway at the Jacobins', by the extravagance of his opinions, the condensed energy of his language, and the reputation for integrity, which had already acquired for him the surname of the Incorruptible. The extensive galleries, erected round the hall of the Assembly, gave the most unruly and violent of their body constant access to the Legislature, where they never failed to cheer on their own partisans as loudly as they drowned by clamour the few remaining friends of order or regular government. In the Faubourg St Antoine, the brewer Santerre, well known in the bloodiest days of the Revolution, had obtained an undisputed ascendancy; while the municipality of Paris, elected according to the new system, by the universal suffrage of the inhabitants, had fallen, as might have been anticipated, into the hands of the most violent and least respectable of the demagogues. The importance of this body was not at first perceived; but, possessing, as it did, the means of rousing at pleasure the strength of the capital, it soon acquired a preponderating influence, and was enabled to enthrall a government which the armies of Europe sought in vain to subdue.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 72, 74. Mig. i. 152. Th. ii. 13, 15. Toul. ii. 93.

36.
Views of the King at this period.

It is admitted by the republican writers, that at this period the King and Queen were sincerely inclined to support the constitution.[2] In truth, Louis had great hopes of its success; and though he was not insensible to its faults, and desired its modification in several particulars, yet he trusted to time, and the returning good sense of the nation, to effect these changes, and was resolved to give it a fair trial. The Queen participated in the same sentiments; and, from the comparative tranquillity of the last year, began to entertain sanguine hopes that the anarchy of the nation might at length be stilled. The establishment of the Constitutional Guard, eighteen hundred strong, for the service of the palace, since the King had accepted the constitution, gave them the shadow, at least, of independence. Louis's ministers were far, however, from entertaining such sanguine sentiments; and Bertrand de Molleville, in particular, strongly expressed to him his opinion in private, that the royal prerogative was so abridged, under the new constitution, that it could not

[2] Th. ii. 365.

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possibly exist for any length of time.—"M. Bertrand," replied the simple-hearted monarch, "there are many things in the constitution which I have endeavoured to prevent, which I would wish to see altered; but the time for that is past: I have sworn to maintain it, and maintain it I will. Nay, I am convinced that a sincere and honest endeavour to abide by it in all respects, is the best way to open the eye of the nation to its defects. Courage, M. Bertrand!—all may yet be well."[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 261. Bert. de la Moll. vi. 22, 23.

37. Formation of the constitutional guard of the King.

The constitution having vested in the King the power of forming a guard for the protection of his person and family, he commenced, soon after the meeting of the Legislative Assembly, the formation of it. This was a matter of extreme delicacy, for both the National Guard and the people of Paris were excessively jealous of the influence, all but unbounded, which they had long enjoyed by the possession of the King's person, and viewed with undisguised aversion any measures which might even tend to render him independent of them. In the hope of reconciling all difficulties, and at the same time taking advantage of the revived sentiments of loyalty which had been awakened in the rural districts, especially of the south and west of France, Louis determined to have the National and Constitutional Guards always in equal numbers in the service of the palace; and to choose the latter from the provinces, in the proportion of three or four from each department. This plan was well-conceived in appearance, from the obvious justice on which it was founded; but, like all other mediatorial measures attempted during a period of general excitement, it discontented both parties. It was soon discovered that, though it contained several violent Revolutionists, sent from the departments having that tendency, the great majority of the Constitutional Guard was faithful to the King; and old Marshal Brissac, its commander, was so in a remarkable degree. It excited, in consequence, from the very first, the most violent jealousies in the National Guard of Paris; insomuch that an insurrection among the latter would infallibly have broken out, if the King had not constantly admitted them to the interior service of the palace, and used his utmost efforts with the officers on both sides to preserve a good understanding between them.[2] But the reconciliation was seeming only, and the

[2] Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 153, 154. Deux Amis, vi. 341, 350.

discord erelong broke out, with fatal effects to the King and whole Royal family.

38. Vehement discontent of the Church.

The first serious contest of the New Assembly was with the emigrants and the clergy. By one flagrant act of injustice, the Constituent Assembly had left the seeds of eternal discord between the revolutionary party and the Church. The sufferers naturally were indefatigable in their endeavours to rouse the people to support their cause. The bishops and priests exerted all their influence to stimulate the country population; and they succeeded, especially in the western provinces, in producing a most powerful sensation. Circular letters were dispatched to the curés of the parishes, and instructions generally transmitted to the people. The constitutional clergy were there represented as irregular and unholy; their performance of the sacraments impious and nugatory; marriage by them as nothing but concubinage; divine vengeance as likely to follow an attendance on their service. Roused by these representations, the rural population in the districts of Calvados, Gevendan, and La Vendée, broke into open disturbances.[1]

Oct. 6.

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 77, 93. Deux Amis, vi. 357, 359. Ferrière's Mém. i. 32.

39. Argument of Brissot and others against the emigrants. Oct. 26.

Brissot proposed to take instant and vigorous measures with the dissident clergy and refractory emigrants. "Every method of conciliation," said Isnard, "with these classes, is useless: what effect has followed all your former indulgence towards them? Their audacity has risen in proportion to your forbearance: they will never cease to injure till they lose the power of doing so. They must either be conquerors or conquered; matters have fairly come to that; and he must be blind indeed who does not see this in the clearest light." "The right of going from one country to another," said Brissot, "is one of the inherent rights of man; but the right ceases when it becomes a crime. Can there be a more flagrant offence than that of emigrating, for the purpose of bringing on our country the horrors of foreign war? What other object have the crowds who now daily leave France? Hear their menaces, examine their conduct, read their libels, and you will see that what they call honour is what the universal voice of mankind has condemned as the height of baseness.[2] Can we be ignorant that at this moment the cabinets of Europe are besieged by their importunity, and possibly preparing to second

[2] Hist. Parl. xii. 163, 174. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 266. Ferrière, i. 32. Mig. ii. 155. Th. ii. 274.

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their entreaties? Confidence is every day sinking; the rapid fall of the assignats renders nugatory the best devised plans of finance. How is it possible to put a curb on the factions of the interior, when we suffer the emigrants to escape with impunity, who are about to bring the scourge of foreign war upon all our homes?"

40. Answer of the Constitutionalists.

The Constitutional party could not deny the justice of these alarms, but they strove to moderate the severity of the measures which were proposed to be adopted against the emigrants. "We are about," said Condorcet, "to put the sincerity of the King to too severe a trial, if we require him to adopt measures of severity against his nearest relations. Foreign powers can hardly be convinced that he really enjoys his freedom; and is it by his consenting to such an act that their doubts are to be removed? What will be the effect of the extreme measures which are proposed? Are they likely to calm the passions, soothe the pride, or heal the wounds which have been inflamed? They will bring back few of the absent, irritate many of the present. Time, distress, the frigid hospitality of strangers, the love of home, a sense of our justice, must be the means of restoring the love of their country in their bosoms; by the proposed measures you will extinguish it. The Constituent Assembly, more wise than ourselves, beheld with contempt those assemblages of discontented spirits on the frontier, who would be more really formidable if exercising their spleen at home. A signal of alarm so sounded by us, will at once excite the jealousy of all the European powers, and really bring on those foreign dangers which would never have arisen from the supplications of our nobility. The pain of confiscation is odious in the most tyrannical states; what must it be considered in a nation exercising the first rights of freedom? Are all the emigrants culpable in an equal degree? How many has fear rendered exiles from their country? Are you now to proclaim to the world that these fears were well founded, to justify their desertion of France, and to demonstrate to mankind that the picture they have drawn of our government is nowise overcharged? Let us rather prove that their calumnies were unfounded, and silence their complaints by pursuing a conduct diametrically opposite to that which they anticipate."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 173, 218. Lac. i. 207.

41
Decree against the emigrants.
Oct. 31.
Nov. 9.

The Assembly, influenced by the pressing dangers of emigration, disregarded all these considerations. Two decrees were passed, the first of which commanded the King's brother, the heir-apparent to the regency during the minority of the Dauphin, to return to France, under pain of being held to have abdicated his eventual right to the regency; while the second declared all the French without the kingdom engaged in a conspiracy against the constitution; and subjected all those who should not return before the 1st of January to the penalty of *death and confiscation of their estates,* under reservation of the rights of their wives, children, and creditors. This proceeding on the part of the French Assembly cannot be better characterised than in the words of the eloquent author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ,* who cannot be suspected of undue prejudice against the Revolution. "Examples of this kind," says Sir James Mackintosh, "are instances of that reckless tyranny which punishes the innocent to make sure of including the guilty, as well as of that refined cruelty, which, after rendering home odious, perhaps insupportable, pursues with unrelenting rage such of its victims as fly to foreign lands."[1]

[1] Mackintosh's England, iii. 162. Mig. i. 156. Lac. i. 208. Th. ii. 24. Hist. Parl. xii. 207, 208, 218.

42.
Argument in favour of the clergy in the Assembly.
Nov. 11.

The disposal of the refractory clergy was the next question which occupied the Assembly: it excited debates more stormy than those on the emigrants, in proportion as religious rancour is more bitter than civil dissension. "What are you about to do?" exclaimed the advocates of the clergy. "Are you, who have consecrated the freedom of worship, to be the first to violate it? The declaration of the rights of man places it on a basis even more solemn than the constitution; and yet you seriously propose to subvert it! The Constituent Assembly, the author of so much good to France, has left this one schism as a legacy to its successors; close it for God's sake; do not widen the breach. To refuse an oath from a sense of duty can never be blamable; to take it from a desire of gain is alone disgraceful. Shall we deprive those, who decline from conscientious scruples, of the slender subsistence which they enjoy? Destroyers of political inequality, shall we re-establish a distinction more odious than any, by crushing to the dust a meritorious class of men? Who shall guarantee ourselves from similar spoliation, if we reduce to beggary the earliest

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supporters of the Revolution, those who first joined our standard after the immortal oath in the Tennis Court? Beware of driving to desperation a set of men still possessing extensive influence over the rural population. If you are dead to every sentiment of justice, yet pause before you adopt a measure so likely to awaken the flames of civil war among ourselves."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 129, 134.

43. Severe decrees against the clergy. Nov. 5.

But the days of reason and justice were past. The leaders of the popular party all declared against the priests. Even Condorcet, the advocate of freedom of worship, was the first to support the violent measures proposed against them. It was decreed that all the clergy should be ordained instantly to take the oath to the constitution, under pain of being deprived of their benefices, and declared suspected of treason against the state. They were ordered to be moved from place to place, to prevent their acquiring any influence over their flocks, and imprisoned if they refused to obey. On no account were they to exercise any religious rites in private. Such was the liberty which the Revolution had already bestowed upon France—such its gratitude to its first supporters. The adoption of these severe and oppressive enactments was signalised by the first open expression of irreligious or atheistical sentiments in the Assembly. "My God is the Law—I acknowledge no other," was the expression of one of the opponents of the church. The remonstrance of the constitutional bishops had no effect. These and similar expressions were loudly applauded, and the decree was carried in the midst of tumult and acclamation.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. xii. 129, 157. Moniteur, 7th Nov. Lac. ii. 209. Mig. ii. 156.

44. King refuses to sanction these decrees. Nov. 11.

When these acts were submitted, agreeably to the constitution, to the King for his consideration, he sanctioned the first decree against his brother, but put his veto upon the last, and the one against the priests. He had previously and openly censured his brother's desertion of the kingdom, and his disapproval of the general emigration of the noblesse was well known to all parties, for on the 14th October he had issued a pressing proclamation, urging them, in the strongest manner, to return;* but he was

* "Français qui avez abandonné votre patrie, revenez dans son sein: c'est là qu'il est le poste d'honneur; parcequ'il n'y a de véritable honneur qu'à servir son pays et à defendre les lois. Venez leur donner l'appui que tous les bons citoyens leur doivent: elles vous rendront à leur tour ce calme et ce bonheur que vous chercheriez en vain sur une terre étrangère.

unwilling to give his sanction to the extreme measures which were now meditated against them. It was proposed in the council, that to pacify the people, whom it was well known the exercise of the veto would exasperate, the King should dismiss all his religious attendants, excepting those who had taken the oaths to the constitution ; but to this Louis, though in general so flexible, opposed an invincible resistance, observing, that it would ill become those who had declared the right of every subject in the realm to liberty of conscience, to deny it to the sovereign alone. In acting thus firmly, he was supported by a large portion of the constitutional party, and by the directory of the department of Paris ; and he stood much in need of their adhesion, in thus coming to open rupture with the people and the legislature. The announcement of the King's refusal was received with very different feelings by the different parties in the Assembly. The Republicans could not disguise their satisfaction at a step which promised to embroil him still further with the nation, and to give to their ambitious projects the weight of popular support. They congratulated the ministers in terms of irony on the decisive proof they had now given of the freedom of the throne. On the following morning, a severe proclamation from Louis appeared against the emigrants. The Feuillants animadverted upon it as an unconstitutional stretch of prerogative; the Jacobins, as too indulgent in its expressions.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 221, 223. Moniteur, 13th Nov. Deux Amis, vi. 360, 372. Lac. i. 211. Mig. ii. 157. Th. ii. 30, 31.

Nov. 12.

45.
Election of a Mayor of Paris.
Nov. 17.

The choice of a mayor for the city of Paris, in the room of Bailly, whose period of holding that dignity had expired, shortly after occupied the attention of the capital. La Fayette had retired from the command of the National Guards, and was a candidate for that dignity. He was supported by the Constitutionalists ; while Pétion, the organ of the now united Girondists and Jacobins, was the favourite of the people. The court, jealous of La Fayette, who had never ceased to be an object of dislike, especially to the Queen, since the 5th October, had the imprudence to throw the influence of the crown into the scale for

Revenez donc, et que le cœur cesse d'être déchiré entre ses sentimens qui sont les mêmes pour tous, et les devoirs de la Royauté qui l'attachent principalement à ceux qui suivent la loi."—*Proclamation de* Louis XVI. *aux Emigrés*, 14*me Oct.* 1791 ; *Hist. Parl.* xii. 160, 162.

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Pétion, and even to expend large sums of money for that purpose. "M. La Fayette," said the Queen, "aspires to the mayoralty, in the hope of soon becoming a mayor of the palace; Pétion is a Jacobin and a Republican, but he is a fool, incapable of rendering himself the head of a party." Pétion accordingly was elected, and threw the whole weight of his influence into the scale of the Revolution. The majority which Pétion obtained on this occasion, by the coalition of the whole democratic party, was immense, and showed in a decisive manner the vast preponderance which the democrats, who were carrying on the Revolution, had already acquired over the Constitutionalists who commenced it; for Pétion had 6,708 votes—La Fayette only 3,125.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 330. Moniteur, 20th Nov. 1791. Mig. i. 158.

46. Distraction and misery of France, and fall of the ministry.

Meanwhile, the King's ministers were daily becoming more unpopular, from the decided resistance he had at length made to the iniquitous measures sought to be forced on him by the Assembly. The Jacobin and Cordelier clubs thundered against them, night after night, in the most violent and indignant strains; and the general misery of the country, which in reality was owing to the Revolution, was universally ascribed to their factious resistance to it.* A contemporary writer has left the following picture of the state of France at this period. "In truth, the real evils of France at this period were such, that they could hardly be exaggerated even by the most malignant ambition. Two parties, equally inveterate in their animosities, equally rancorous in their hatred, divided the country from one end to the other. The Jacobins reproached the Feuillants with labouring in secret for the restoration of the old *régime*; the Feuillants retorted on the Jacobins that they had organised, by means of their affiliated clubs, the most infernal despotism that had ever oppressed mankind. The constitution for which the nation had so ardently panted, and which it was fondly hoped would prove a remedy for every evil, was finished, and yet the public miseries were augmented. Every day saw fresh crimes against persons and property

* "Celsus et Paulinus, cum prudentia eorum nemo uteretur, inani nomine ducum, alienæ culpæ prætentabantur—Tribum, centurionesque ambigui, quod spretis melioribus deterrimi valebant; miles alacer, qui tamen jussa ducum interpretare quam exsequi mallet."—TACITUS, *Hist.* ii. 39.

committed, and all with impunity. The public peace was in no degree re-established: the laws were powerless, the magistrates impotent. It had been expected that the public tranquillity would be effectually restored by the Juges de Paix, elected by the people, and therefore possessing their confidence; but they had proved totally powerless. Public and private credit had alike perished amidst the general convulsions. Specie had disappeared from the circulation. The assignat had fallen to a third of its value, and occasioned such an amount of ruin to private fortunes, that numbers already wished for a return to the ancient *régime*, and were doing their utmost to promote it. Famine, the usual attendant on public calamities, had appeared, and its pangs were aggravated by their being felt in the midst of abundance. The peasants, tenacious of their property, every where refused the assignats, to the fall of which no limit could be assigned, and the purchasers in towns had nothing else to offer. Thus sales could not be effected: both parties were in despair, and poverty was universal, though there was plenty in the land. In this extremity, crowds of famishing citizens threw themselves on the barn-yards of the farmers, and took grain by force: while the rural population sounded the tocsin in their villages, and forced the municipal officers to put themselves at their head to resist this violence, or retaliated by pillaging the burghs; and the law, equally trampled under foot by both parties, was alike impotent to repress or punish the violence of either. This was the state of France during the whole winter." Such is the picture of France at this period, drawn by two ardent supporters of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vi. 345, 350.

47. Decay and ruin of the navy.

One branch of the public service had, in an especial manner, fallen into disorder, from the confusion consequent on the Revolution, and this, from its subsequent importance during the war, deserves particular notice. The Navy had in a few years become so disorganised, that hardly a vestige of the noble fleet which Louis XVI. had nursed up with so much care, to counterbalance that of England, could be said to remain. The ships indeed were there, the arsenals full, but discipline and subordination were at an end. The national riches were dried up in their sources by the destruction of credit and capital

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during the Revolution: St Domingo, the most important colony of France, was in a state of insurrection or discord; the marine was discontented; the dockyards, the vessels, the arsenals, presented a frightful picture of insubordination, license, and neglect. "The cause of these evils," says Bertrand de Molleville, the minister of marine, "was evident. Those who should obey had every where assumed the direction: those who should direct, being deprived of all authority, were overwhelmed with impunity by outrages and abuse. In truth, there was not a single instance of a mutiny in the ports, or on board the royal vessels, in which the mutineers had been punished. The most legitimate and necessary acts of authority were deemed insults, by men who had suddenly passed from a state of necessary subjection to one of absolute independence. Clubs of all sorts, incorporations a thousand times more dangerous and powerful than those which the constitution had destroyed, and which set every species of authority at defiance, were established in every port, and proscribed, outraged, or put to flight their superiors. These facts are notorious—no words can exaggerate them."[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. Compte rendu à l'Assemblée Nationale, 28th March 1792. Mém. i. 299, 302.

48. Commencement of agitation in St Domingo.

While the royal navy was in this deplorable state of disorganisation and mutiny, the noblest colony of France, which singly sustained the colossus of its maritime power, had fallen, from the effects of the Revolution, into a series of disasters, the most dreadful recorded in history. The slaves in that flourishing colony, agitated by the intelligence which they received of the levelling principles of the Constituent Assembly, had early manifested symptoms of insubordination. The Assembly, divided between the desire of enfranchising so large a body of men, and the evident dangers of such a step, had long hesitated as to the course they should adopt, and were inclined to support the rights of the planters. In the debate which ensued in the Assembly, decisive evidence was afforded of the length to which the Jacobins were inclined to push their principles, and the total disregard of human suffering in carrying them into practice, by which they were distinguished. "Perish the colonies," said Moreau de St Mery, "rather than that one principle be sacrificed!" "Perish the colonies," added Robespierre, "rather than affix a stain to your happiness, your glory, your liberty! Yes, I

repeat it. Perish the colonies, rather than let them, by their menaces, compel us to do what is most loudly called for by their interests!" Pressed by the dangers clearly depicted on one side, and the clamour as loudly expressed on the other, the Assembly steered a middle course, by decreeing that all persons of colour, born of free parents, should have the right of entering the colonial Assemblies; but declaring that beyond that they would not go, unless the colony itself took the initiative.[1]

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[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 96, 97. Toul. ii. 98. Lac. i. 214. Deux Amis, vi. 402, 403.

49. Dreadful insurrection there.

But these steps were too slow for the revolutionists. The passions of the negroes were excited by the efforts of a society, styled "The Society of Friends of the Blacks," of which Brissot was the leading member; and the mulattoes were induced, by their injudicious advice, to organise an insurrection. They trusted that they would be able to control the ferocity of the slaves even during the heat of a revolt; they little knew the dissimulation and cruelty of the savage character. A universal revolt was planned and organised, without the slightest suspicion on the part of the planters, and the same night fixed on for its breaking out over the whole island. Accordingly, at midnight on the 30th of September, the insurrection began. In an instant twelve hundred coffee, and two hundred sugar plantations, were in flames; the buildings, the machinery, the farm-offices, were reduced to ashes, the unfortunate proprietors hunted down, murdered, or thrown into the flames by the infuriated negroes. Erelong a hundred thousand rebels were in arms, who committed every where the most frightful atrocities. The horrors of a servile war universally appeared. The unchained African signalised his ingenuity by the discovery of new and unheard-of modes of torture. An unhappy planter was sawed asunder between two boards; the horrors inflicted on the women exceeded any thing known even in the annals of Christian ferocity. The indulgent master was sacrificed equally with the inhuman; on all alike, young and old, rich and poor, the wrongs of an oppressed race were indiscriminately wreaked. Crowds of slaves traversed the country with the heads of the white children affixed on their pikes; they served as the standards of these furious assemblages. In a few instances only, the humanity of the negro character resisted the contagion of the time; and some faithful

Sept. 30.

Oct. 30.

[1] Hist. Parl. xii. 295, 305 Deux Amis, vi. 403, 404. Lac. i. 214. Toul. ii. 98.

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slaves, at the hazard of their own lives, fed in caves their masters or their children, whom they had rescued from destruction.[1]

50. The Assembly rashly concedes universal emancipation. Nov. 7.

The intelligence of these disasters excited an angry discussion in the Assembly. Brissot, the most vehement opponent of slavery, ascribed them all to the refusal of the blessings of freedom to the negroes; the moderate members, to the inflammatory addresses circulated among them by the Anti-Slavery Society of Paris. At length it was agreed to concede the political rights for which they contended to the men of colour; and in consequence of that resolution, the blacks were at once emancipated, and St Domingo obtained the nominal blessings of freedom. But it is not thus that the great changes of nature are conducted; a child does not acquire the strength of manhood in an hour, or a tree the consistency of the hardy denizens of the forest in a season. The hasty philanthropists who conferred upon an ignorant slave population the precipitate gift of freedom, did them a greater injury than their worst enemies. The black population remain to this day, in St Domingo, a memorable example of the ruinous effect of precipitate emancipation. Without the steady habits of civilised society; ignorant of the wants which reconcile to a life of labour; destitute of the support which a regular government might have afforded, they have brought to the duties of cultivated, the habits of savage life. To the indolence of the negro character they have joined the vices of European corruption; profligate, idle, and disorderly, they have declined both in number and in happiness: from being the greatest sugar plantation in the world, the island has been reduced to the necessity of importing that valuable produce: and the inhabitants, naked and voluptuous, are fast receding into the state of nature from which their ancestors were torn, two centuries ago, by the rapacity of Christian avarice.[1] *

[1] Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 193, 201. Lac. i. 215. Toul. ii. 98. Deux Amis, vi. 403, 405.

51. Origin of the disturbances at Avignon.

An internal disaster, attended with circumstances of equal atrocity, though not on so great a scale, occurred in Avignon. This city, belonging to the Pope, had been the theatre of incessant strife and bloody events ever since the

* The details of this dreadful insurrection, with a full account of the subsequent history of St Domingo, will be given in a succeeding chapter, which treats of the expedition of Napoleon to that island. It is not the least important period of the eventful era. Vide *infra*, chap. xxxvii.

project had been formed, in 1790, by its ardent democrats, to procure its severance from the Ecclesiastical States, and effect its union with the neighbouring and revolutionised provinces of France. This project was rejected by the Constituent Assembly in May 1790, from the apprehension of exciting the jealousy of the European powers, by the open spoliation of a neighbouring and friendly state: but the democratic party, ardently desirous of promoting the union with France, rose in insurrection on the night of the 11th June, chased the Papal legate from the city, who retired to Chambery in Savoy, and put the arms of France over the gates of his palace. With this revolt terminated the government of the Pope in this distant and diminutive possession. A long period of discord and self-government ensued, during which the ruling democrats of Avignon, having shaken off the authority of the Holy See, were striving to effect its junction with France; and at length, on the 14th September, the Constituent Assembly, on the very last day of its sitting, decreed, amidst loud applause, the annexation of this little state to France: commencing thus that system of propagandism and foreign aggression, in which revolutionary passions find their natural vent, and which was destined to carry the French arms to the Kremlin, and to bring the Tartars and Bashkirs to the walls of Paris.[1] *

June 11.

Sept. 14.

[1] Prudhomme, Crîmes de la Rév. iv. 587. Moniteur, Sept. 15.

52.
Progress of the disorders in Avignon.

It was predicted, and perhaps expected, by the Revolutionists, both in Paris and Avignon, that this long agitated incorporation would at once still the furious passions which had so long torn this unhappy community. But this was very far from being the case; and the annexation shortly led to a massacre more frightful than any which had yet stained the progress of the Revolution. The municipality passed a decree, ordering the whole bells and plate of the cathedral and of the churches to be seized and publicly sold.[2] The rural population, roused by the priests, and indignant at this act of sacrilege, assembled in crowds, loudly demanding an account of the dilapidation and em-

Oct. 16.

[2] Prudhomme, iv. 16, 20. Deux Amis, vi. 374.

* "L'Assemblée Nationale, considérant qu'en vertu des droits de la France sur les états réunis d'Avignon et du comtat Venaissin, et conformément au voue librement et solennellement émis par la majorité des communes et des citoyens de ces deux pays, pour être incorporé à la France, les dits deux états réunis d'Avignon et du comtat Venaissin sont, dès ce moment, partie intégrale de l'empire Française."—*Decree*, 14th Sept. 1791: *Moniteur*, 15th Sept. 1791, p. 1073.

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bezzlement of the municipality; and having got hold of Lescuyer, the clerk to the municipality, they murdered him on the spot; and a woman, with her scissors, scooped out the eyes of the dead body.[1]

53. Massacres of Avignon. Oct. 30.

The revenge of the popular party was slow, but not the less atrocious. In silence they collected their forces; and at length, when all assistance was absent, surrounded the city. The gates were closed, the walls manned, so as to render all escape impossible, and a band of assassins sought out, in their own houses, the individuals destined for death. Sixty unhappy wretches, including thirteen women, were speedily seized and thrust into prison, where, during the obscurity of night, the murderers wreaked their vengeance with impunity. One young man put fourteen to death with his own hand, and at length only desisted from excess of fatigue; the father was brought to witness the massacre of his children, the children that of the father, to aggravate their sufferings; twelve women perished after having undergone tortures worse than death itself; an old priest, remarkable for a life of beneficence, who had escaped, was pursued, and sacrificed by the objects of his bounty. A mother big with child, was thrown, yet alive, into a ditch filled with dead bodies and quicklime; a son having thrown himself into his father's arms to save his life, they were precipitated, locked in each other's embrace, into the ditch, where they were found both dead, with their lips pressed together. The women were violated before being murdered; and such was the fury of the people that they actually devoured human hearts, and had dishes served up formed of the bodies of their victims.* The recital of these atrocities excited the utmost commiseration in the Assembly. Cries of indignation arose on all sides; the President fainted after reading the letter which communicated its details. But this, like almost all the other crimes of the popular party during the progress of the Revolution, remained unpunished.[1] The Legislature, after some delay, felt it necessary to proclaim an amnesty, and some of the authors of this massacre afterwards fell the victims, on the 31st May, of the sanguinary passions of which they had

March 29, 1792.

[1] Lac. i. 213. Toul. ii. 97. Prudhomme, iv. 21. Hist. Parl. xii. 421.

* "Comment oublir ces répas barbares de cœurs palpitans, et ces festins inouis où les entrailles fumantes servirent de mets?"—PRUDHOMME, iv. 21.

given so cruel an example. In a revolution, the ruling power, themselves supported by the populace, can seldom punish its excesses; the period of reaction must be waited for before this can in general be attempted; and thus vice advances with accelerated strides from the very magnitude of the crimes committed by itself.

54. Fall of the ministry, and admission of the Girondists to power.

All these accumulated horrors and disasters, though brought about by the passions of the Revolution, were ascribed by the Jacobins of Paris to the resistance opposed by the King's ministers to the progress of its principles. It was their fanaticism which roused the rural population; it was their gold which hired miscreants to commit these atrocities, in order to bring discredit on the Revolution; it was they who famished the people; it was they who hindered the sales of grain, who depreciated the assignats, and had ruined St Domingo. The clamour soon became universal, irresistible. The people believed every thing they were told: and as usual, in the presence of danger, divisions soon appeared among the ministers themselves. The one half, led by Delessart and Bertrand de Molleville, were inclined to the aristocratic and decided,—the other, headed by Narbonne and Cahier de Gerville, to the democratic and conceding side. Sensible of the weakness of their adversaries, the popular leaders in the Assembly pushed their advantages, and preferred an accusation against the two former of the ministry. Though they were baffled for some time by the ability and presence of mind of Bertrand de Molleville, yet at length the King was obliged to yield, and make a total change in his councils. The principle adopted in the formation of the new ministry was the same as that acted on in similar extremities by Charles I., to divide the opposition, by the selection of the least intemperate of its members. Roland was made minister of the interior; Dumourier received the portfolio of foreign affairs; Lacoste, Clavière, Duranthon, and Servan, were severally appointed to the marine, the finances, the judicatory, and the ministry of war.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 164. Lac. i. 218, 224. Th. ii. 57, 58.

55. Character of Dumourier.

Dumourier was forty-seven years of age when he was called to this important situation. He had many of the qualities of a great man: abilities; an enterprising character; indefatigable activity; impetuosity of disposition; confidence in his own fortune; a steady and quick *coup-d'œil.* Fertile in resources, pliant in temper, engaging in

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conversation, unbounded in ambition, he was eminently qualified to rise to distinction in a period of civil commotion. But these great mental powers were counterbalanced by others of an opposite tendency. A courtier before 1789, a constitutionalist under the first Assembly, a Girondist under the second, he seemed inclined to change with every wind that blew, in the constant desire to raise himself to the head of affairs. Volatile, fickle, inconsiderate, he adopted measures too hastily to ensure success; veering with all the changes of the times, he wanted the ascendant of a powerful, and the weight of a virtuous character. Had he possessed, with his own genius, the firmness of Bouillé, the passions of Mirabeau, or the dogmatism of Robespierre, he might for a time have ruled the Revolution. An admirable partisan, he was a feeble leader of a party; well qualified to play the part of Antony or Alcibiades, he was unfit to follow the steps of Cæsar or Cromwell.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 164. Lac. i. 224. Th. ii. 59.

56. Of M. Roland.

Austere in character, simple in manners, firm in principle, Roland was in every respect the reverse of Dumourier. His disposition had nothing in common with the age in which he lived; he aimed to bring to the government of France, in the eighteenth century, the integrity and simplicity of the Sabine farm. A steady republican, he was well qualified for a quiescent, but ill for an incipient state of freedom; uncompromising in his principles, unostentatious in his manners, unambitious in his inclination, he would probably never have emerged from the seclusion of private life, but for the splendid abilities and brilliant character of his wife. But he was opinionative and pedantic; ignorant alike of courts and the people; a devout believer in popular virtue and human perfectibility; and wholly unequal to struggle with the audacious wickedness which was arising on all sides with the progress of the Revolution. The court ladies named the new ministry, "Le Ministère sans Culottes." The first time that Roland presented himself at the palace, he was dressed with strings in his shoes, and a round hat. The master of the ceremonies refused to admit him in such an unwonted costume, not knowing who he was; but being afterwards informed, and in consequence obliged to do so, he turned to Dumourier, and said with a sigh, "Ah, sir, no buckles in his shoes!"[2]—"All is lost!" replied the minister of

[2] Roland, Mém. i. 32. Lac. i. 225. Hist. de la Conv. i. 38. Mig. i. 165.

foreign affairs with sarcastic irony. Yet was there more in this circumstance than superficial observers would be inclined to admit. The buckles were straws, but they were straws which showed how the wind set. Dress is characteristic of manners, and manners are the mirror of ideas. A very curious work might be written upon the connexion between changes in attire and revolutions in empires.[1]

57. Increasing difficulties of government, and distress of the country. March 27.

But the new ministers proved as inadequate as those who preceded them had been, to arrest or even to alleviate the public calamities. These were owing to the overthrow of the executive, and the suspension of all the powers of government, and were consequently rather likely to be increased than diminished by the accession of the liberal party to office. The Girondists, indeed, were propitiated, and Madame Roland gave cabinet dinners to their entire satisfaction: but that neither sustained the assignats nor filled the treasury; it neither stilled the Jacobins nor gave bread to the people. The King was firm in his determination to abide by the constitution, and gave, on several occasions, the most decisive and touching proofs of this determination.* But meanwhile the public distress was constantly increasing, and the people, inflamed by the speeches at the Jacobin clubs, ascribed them all to the resistance of the monarch to the severe laws against the clergy, which kept the nation, it was said, in continual turmoil, and alone prevented the completion of the glorious fabric of the Revolution. The difficulties of the exchequer were extreme, and all attempts to re-establish

* In a delicate matter brought before the Royal council in January 1792, the King had to choose between two courses, the one of which would have given a considerable extension to the royal authority, without exciting public jealousy, as it was generally called for, and the other was more conformable to the spirit and letter of the constitution. Louis, without a moment's hesitation, adopted the latter, assigning as his reason—"We must not think of extending the royal power, but of faithfully executing the constitution." On another occasion, when a proclamation was brought him to sign against the plundering and massacres which were going on in the country, he observed the phrase, "Ces désordres troublent bien amèrement le bonheur dont nous jouissons." "Effacez cela," said Louis: "ne me faites pas parler de mon bonheur. Comment voulez-vous que je sois heureux quand personne ne l'est en France? Non, monsieur, les Français ne sont pas heureux—je le sais: ils le seront un jour, j'espère: alors je le serai aussi, et je pourrai parler de mon bonheur." "During five months and a half," adds Bertrand de Molleville, "that I was in the King's ministry at this time, I never saw the King for a single instant swerve from his attachment to the constitution."—*Mémoires de* BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, i. 219, 311, 312.

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the finances, except by the continual issue of fresh assignats, had become nugatory, from the impossibility of collecting the revenue in the midst of the anarchy which prevailed in the country. Such was the penury of the royal treasury, that it was entirely exhausted by the equipment of the constitutional guard, though it only amounted to eighteen hundred men, and the King was indebted to a loan of 500,000 francs (£20,000) from the Order of Malta, for the means of defraying the necessary expenses of his household.[1]

[1] Bert de Moll. Mém. i 394, 395. Deux Amis, vi. 390, 395.

58. Disasters of the war augment the King's danger. April 20.

The Girondist ministers were no sooner in power, than they bent their whole force to impel the King into a foreign war; and they succeeded, by dint of clamour and popular pressure, in compelling the monarch, alike against his wishes and his interests, to take the fatal step. The details of the agitation by which this important step was brought about, and the negotiations which preceded it, will be fully given in a subsequent chapter, which treats of the causes which led to the Revolutionary war.* But the reaction of hostilities, when they did commence, on the King's situation in the interior, was terrible. All the enterprises of France, in the outset, proved unfortunate: all her armies were defeated. These disasters, the natural effect of thirty years' unbroken continental peace, and recent license and insubordination, produced the utmost consternation in Paris. The power of the Jacobins was rapidly increasing: their affiliated societies were daily extending their ramifications throughout France, and the debates of the parent club shook the kingdom from one end to the other. They accused the Royalists of having occasioned the defeats, by raising treasonable cries of *Sauve qui peut;* the aristocrats could not dissemble their joy at events which promised shortly to bring the allied armies to Paris, and restore the ancient *régime:* the generals attributed their disasters to Dumourier, who had planned the campaign; he ascribed every thing to the defective mode in which his orders had been executed. Distrust and recrimination universally prevailed. In this extremity, the Assembly took the most energetic measures for ensuring, as they conceived, their own authority and the public safety.[2] But the only measures which they thought of

May 29.

[2] Toul. ii. 121. Lac. i. 234. Th. ii. 80. Hist. Parl. xiv. 297, 342. Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 7, 9.

* Vide infra, chap ix.

were such as weakened the royal authority; all their blows were directed against the King. They declared their sittings permanent, disbanded the faithful guard of the King, which had excited unbounded jealousy among the democrats, and passed a decree condemning the refractory clergy to exile. To secure the capital from insult, and effectually overawe the court, they directed the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men near Paris, and sought to maintain the enthusiasm of the people by revolutionary fêtes, and to increase their efficiency by arming them with pikes.

59. Debate on the disbanding of the royal guard.

Of these measures, by far the most important was that which related to the disbanding of the royal guard; for it threatened to leave the monarch and his family without even the shadow of protection, in the midst of a rebellious city, and at the mercy of a revolutionary legislature. The discussion was opened by Pétion, mayor of Paris, who drew, in the darkest colours, a picture of the agitation in the capital. "Paris," said he "is every hour becoming more the object of general anxiety to all France. It is the common rendezvous of all without a profession, without bread, and enemies of the public weal. The fermentation is daily assuming a more alarming character. Facts on all sides demonstrate this. It is evident a crisis is approaching, and that of the most violent kind: you have long shut your eyes to it; but you can do so no longer." This was immediately followed by a deputation from the section of the Gobelins at Paris, consisting of fifteen hundred pikemen, preceded by the regiment of grenadiers of the section, who, after defiling through the Assembly with drums beating and colours flying, took post round its walls to overawe the deliberations. Nevertheless, many deputies courageously resisted the dissolution of this last remnant of protection to the sovereign. "The veil," says Gerardin, "is now withdrawn; the insurrection against the throne is no longer disguised. We are called on, in a period of acknowledged public danger, to remove the last constitutional protection from the crown. Why are we always told of the dangers to be apprehended from the royalist faction; a party weak in numbers, despicable in influence, whom it would be so easy to subdue? I see two factions, and a double set of dangers, and one advances by hasty strides to a regicide government.[1] Would to God my anti-

[1] Lac. i. 171. 234. Toul. ii. 121. Th. ii. 80, 81. Hist. Parl. xiv. 305, 307. Moniteur, May 30.

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cipations may prove unfounded! But I cannot shut my eyes to the striking analogy of England and France; I cannot forget that, in a similar crisis, the Long Parliament disbanded the guard of Charles I. What fate awaited that unhappy monarch? What now awaits the constitutional sovereign of the French?"

60. King is forced to sanction the disbanding. May 31.

So clearly did Louis perceive the extreme danger of disbanding his guard, on the eve, as had now become evident to all, of a popular insurrection, that he immediately submitted to his ministers a letter which he proposed to write to the Assembly, refusing to sanction it. But the Girondist ministers to a man refused to countersign it. Upon this he proposed to go in person to the Assembly, and refuse his sanction, taking the whole responsibility upon himself; but they had the pusillanimity to refuse to accompany him. They then insisted so vehemently upon the extreme animosity which the guard had excited in Paris, and the peril of instant destruction to which the Royal family would be exposed if the decree was not instantly sanctioned, that at length he was compelled to submit. Hardly had he done so, when he received a firm and able remonstrance from Bertrand de Molleville against so fatal a step, in which that able minister demonstrated in the clearest manner the flagrant usurpation of which the Assembly had been guilty, in decreeing the dissolution of a guard which the constitution had expressly sanctioned, and subjected to his command alone; but it was too late. The King could only reply that he had been forced to do so by his ministers, and lament the necessity to which he had been subjected, of removing so faithful a councillor from his administration.* The Girondists had their reward. The insurrection which followed on the 10th August overturned them not less than the throne; and on *that very day year* on which they refused to stand by their sovereign, they were themselves arrested by the Jacobins, and consigned by a lingering process to the scaffold.[1]

[1] On the 31st May 1793. Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 11, 12.

The royal guard was remodeled after its dissolution; the

* "Il n'est malheureusement plus temps de faire ce que vous proposez. Les ministres m'ont assuré que la fermentation du peuple était si violente, qu'il n'était pas possible de differer la sanction du décret sans exposer la garde et le chateau aux plus grands dangers: j'en suis assez fâché: que voulez-vous que je fasse environné comme je le suis, sans avoir personne sur qui je puisse compter?"—LOUIS, 31*st May* 1792; BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, ii. 12, 13.

61. Resolute resistance of the King to the decree against the church.

officers in part chosen from a different class; the staff put into different hands, and companies of pikemen introduced from the faubourgs to neutralise the loyalty of their fellow-soldiers. The constitutional party made the most vigorous remonstrances against these hazardous innovations. But their efforts were vain: the approach of danger and the public agitation had thrown the whole weight of government into the hands of the Jacobins. The evident peril of his situation roused the pacific King to more than usual vigour. His ministers were incessantly urging him, as the only means of calming the public effervescence, to concede his sanction to the decree of exile against the non-juring priests, and to give the constitutional clergy free access to his person, in order to remove all ground for complaint on the score of religion. Concession to public clamour was their only system of government; their policy was not to resist injustice, but to yield to it. On these points, however, Louis was immovable. The Revolution had now reached a point which trenched on his conscientious feelings. Indifferent to personal danger, comparatively insensible to the diminution of the royal prerogative, he was resolutely determined to make no compromise with his religious duties. By degrees he became estranged from the party of the Gironde, and remained several days without addressing them, or letting them know his determination in that particular. It was then that Madame Roland wrote, in name of her husband, the famous letter to the King, in which she strongly urged him to become with sincerity a constitutional monarch, and put an end to the public troubles, by sanctioning the decrees against the priests. This letter, written with much eloquence, but in an irritated and indignant spirit, excited the anger of Louis, who now saw clearly that he could not retain his ministers without having violence done to his conscience. Upon this they tendered their resignation if the decree were not immediately sanctioned, and it was at length accepted.[1]*

June 10.

[1] Campan, ii. 208, 209. Weber, ii. 168, 169. Mig. i. 172, 173. Lac. i. 239. Th. ii. 87. Dumourier, Mém. ii. 174, 300.

* "L'état actuel de la France ne peut subsister longtemps; c'est un état de crise dont la violence atteint le plus haut degré; il faut qu'il se termine par un éclat, qui doit interesser votre majesté autant qu'il importe à tout l'empire. Les Français se sont donnés une constitution: elle a fait des mécontens et des rebelles; la majorité de la nation la veut maintenir; et elle a vu avec joie la guerre qui offrit un grand moyen de l'assurer. Cependant la minorité, soutenue par des espérances, a réuni tous ses efforts pour

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62. New ministry. June 12.

Dumourier endeavoured to take advantage of these events to elevate his own power in the administration. He consented to remain in the ministry, and separate himself from his friends, on condition that the King should sanction the decree against the priests. But Louis persisted in his refusal to ratify these decrees, or the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men at Paris. "You should have thought," said Dumourier, "of these objections before you agreed to the first decree of the Constituent Assembly, which enjoined the clergy to take the oaths."—"I was wrong then," answered the King; "I will not commit such an error on a second occasion." "Your objections," rejoined Dumourier, "were entirely well founded against the original decrees against the priests; but to refuse to sanction this one, is to put the dagger to the throats of twenty thousand innocent persons." The Queen, with that good sense which she often evinced in public affairs, saw the risk of now exposing the priests to be massacred by a furious rabble, and united her entreaties to those of the ministers; but still the King was immovable, alleging that he would not make himself a partner in the iniquity of the Assembly. "I expect death," said he, "and forgive my murderers beforehand: I esteem you and love you; but I cannot act against my conscience. Adieu! may you be happy." Dumourier, after having lost the confidence of his party, found himself compelled soon after to set out for the army, where he soon acquired a more lasting reputation as a general.[1] The Assembly broke out into the most furious invectives against the court upon the dismissal of

[1] Dumourier's Mém. ii. 174, 307. Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 173. Th. ii. 103, 104.

emporter l'avantage. De là, cette lutte intestine contre les lois—cette anarchie dont gémissent les bons citoyens—cétte division partout répandue, partout excitée. Il n'existe pas d'indifférence; on veut ou le triomphe ou le changement de la constitution. Votre majesté a été constamment dans l'alternative de céder à ses premières habitudes, à ses affections particulières, ou de faire des sacrifices dictées par la philosophie, exigées par la necessité, par consequent enhardir les rebelles en inquiétant la nation, ou d'apaiser celle-ci en vous unissant avec elle. Tout a son terme, et celui de l'incertitude est en fin arrivé. La fermentation est extrême dans toutes les parties de l'empire; elle eclatera d'une manière terrible, à moins qu'une confiance raisonnée dans les intentions de votre majesté ne puisse enfin la calmer; mais cette confiance ne s'établira pas sur des protestations. Elle ne saurait plus avoir base que des faits. La conduite des prêtres, en beaucoup d'endroits, a fait porter une loi sage contre les perturbateurs—que votre majesté lui donne sa sanction. Juste ciel! auriez-vous frappé d'aveuglement les puissances de la terre; et n'auront-elles jamais que des conseils qui les entrainent à leur ruine?"—ROLAND *au* ROI, 10 *Juin* 1792. *Hist. Parl.* xv. 40, 45.—(*Written by* MADAME ROLAND.)

the popular ministers, and declared that they carried with them the regrets of the nation.

63. New ministry from the Feuillants.

The new ministry were chosen from among the Feuillants. Scipion Chambonnas and Terrier Montiel were appointed to the foreign affairs and the finances; but they were soon found to be without consideration either with their party or the country. The crown lost the support of the only men in France who were sincere in their belief that they could advance the cause of freedom by means of the Revolution, at the very moment that its most violent excesses were about to break out. The King was so much disconcerted at the proved impossibility of forming an efficient administration, that he fell into a state of mental depression, which he had never experienced since the commencement of the public disturbances. For ten days together he hardly articulated a word, and seemed so completely overwhelmed, as to have lost almost the physical power of motion. The Queen, whose energy nothing could subdue, at length extricated him from this deplorable state, by throwing herself at his feet, and conjuring him, by the duty he owed to her and their children, to summon up more resolution; and if death was unavoidable, to perish with honour combating for their rights, rather than remain to be stifled within the walls of the palace. But if this heroic princess thus exerted herself to rouse the spirit of the King, it was not because she was either ignorant of, or insensible to, the dangers which threatened her. The Tuileries were constantly surrounded by a ferocious multitude, uttering the most violent sentiments, and vowing death to the King, Queen, and whole royal family. In the palace itself, where she was virtually confined as a prisoner, the cannoniers of the guard openly insulted her when she appeared at the windows, and expressed in the most brutal language their desire to see her head on the point of their bayonets. The gardens of the Tuileries were the scenes of every species of disorder. In one quarter, a popular orator was to be seen pouring forth treason and sedition to an enraptured audience; in another, an ecclesiastic was thrown down, and beaten with merciless severity;[1] while the people, with thoughtless confidence, pursued their walks round the marbled par-

[1] Dumont, 116. Camp. ii. 205, 208. Weber, ii. 164, 167. Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 174

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terres, as if they had no interest in the insults which were levelled at religion and the throne.

64. The King's secret correspondence with the Allies.

The King, at this time, seeing himself a prisoner in his own palace, deprived of his guard, and wholly unable to exercise any of the functions assigned to him by the constitution, had opened a secret correspondence with the allied courts, with the view of directing and moderating their measures in advancing for his deliverance. For this purpose he had dispatched M. Mallet du Pan to Vienna, with instructions written with his own hand, in which he recommended that they should advance into the French territory with the utmost caution, show every indulgence to the inhabitants, and cause their march to be preceded by a manifesto, in which they should avow the most moderate and conciliatory dispositions. The original document remains, a precious monument of the wisdom and patriotic spirit of that unhappy sovereign. It is remarkable that he recommends, in order to separate the ruling faction of the Jacobins from the nation, exactly the same language and conduct which was, throughout the whole period, strenuously advised by Mr Burke, and was twenty years afterwards employed with so much success by the Emperor Alexander and the allied sovereigns, to detach the French people from the standard of Napoleon.[1] *

[1] Bertrand de Molleville, Hist. de la Rév. viii. 38, 39. Th. ii. 109.

* The King recommended that the Emperor and King of Prussia should publish a proclamation, in which they should declare, " That they were obliged to take up arms to resist the aggression made upon them, which they ascribed neither to the King nor the nation, but to the criminal faction which domineered alike over the one and the other; that, in consequence, far from departing from the friendly feelings which they entertained towards the King of France, their Majesties had taken up arms only to deliver him and the nation from an atrocious tyranny which equally oppressed both, and to enable them to re-establish freedom upon a secure foundation: that they had no intentions of intermeddling in any form with the internal government of the nation, but only desired to restore to it the power of choosing that which really was in accordance with the wishes of the great majority; that they had no thoughts whatever of conquest; that individual should be not less protected than national property; that their Majesties took under their especial safeguard all faithful and peaceable citizens, and declared war only against those who now ruled with a rod of iron all who aimed at the establishment of freedom." In pursuance of these principles, he besought the emigrants to take no part in the war; to avoid every thing which could give it the appearance of a contest between one nation and another; and urged the Allies to appear as parties, not arbiters, in the contest between the crown and the people; warning them that any other conduct " would infallibly endanger the lives of the King and royal family; overturn the throne; lead to the massacre of the Royalists; rally to the Jacobins all the Revolutionists, who were daily becoming more alienated from them; revive an excitement which was fast declining, and render more obstinate a national resistance, which would

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65. Efforts of La Fayette to support the throne.

Alarmed at the evident danger of the monarchy, the friends of the constitution used the most vigorous means to repress the growing spirit of insubordination. Lally Tollendal and Malouet, of the ancient monarchical party, united with the leaders of the Feuillants, Duport, Lameth, and Barnave, for this purpose. La Fayette, who was employed on the frontier at the head of the army, employed his immense influence for the same object. From the camp at Maubeuge, he wrote, on the 16th June, an energetic letter to the Assembly, in which he denounced the Jacobin faction, demanded the dissolution of the Clubs, the emancipation and establishment of a constitutional throne; and conjured the Assembly, in the name of itself, of the army, and of all the friends of liberty, to confine itself to strictly legal measures. This letter had the success which may be anticipated for attempts to control a revolution by those who have been instrumental in producing it: it excited the most violent dissatisfaction, destroyed the popularity of the writer, and was totally nugatory in calming the populace.[1]*

June 16.

[1] Deux Amis, vii. 222, 227. Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 175. Th. ii. 116.

The Girondists, chagrined at the loss of their places in the administration, now proceeded to the most ruinous

yield at the first reverse, if the nation was only convinced that the fate of the Revolution was not wound up in the destruction of those who had hitherto been its victims." This holograph document was dated in June 1792, two months before the 10th August. There is not a more striking monument of political wisdom and foresight on record in modern times.—See BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, vii. 37—39.

* "La chose publique est en péril; le sort de la France repose principalement sur ses représentans; la nation attend d'eux son salut; mais en se donnant une constitution, elle leur a prescrit l'unique route par laquelle ils pensent la sauver. Les circonstances sont difficiles. La France est menacée au dehors et agitée au dedans; tandis que les cours étrangers annoncent l'intolerable projet d'attacher à notre souveraineté nationale des ennemis intérieurs, îvres de fanatisme ou d'orgueil, entretiennent un chimérique espoir, et nous fatiguent encore de leur insolente malveillance. Pouvez-vous vous dissimuler qu'une faction, et pour éviter les denominations vagues—que la *faction Jacobin* a causé tous les désordres? C'est elle que j'en accuse hautement. Organisée comme un empire à part, dans sa metropole et dans ses affiliations, aveuglement dirigée par quelques chefs ambitieux, cette secte forme une corporation au milieu du peuple Français, dont elle usurpe les pouvoirs en subjuguant ses représentans et ses mandataires. Que le règne des clubs, anéanti par vous, fasse place au règne de la roi; leurs usurpations à l'exercise ferme et indépendent des autorités constitués; leurs maximes dèsorganitrices aux vrais principes de la liberté; leur fureur délirante au courage calme et constant d'une nation qui connait ses droits; enfin, leurs combinaisons sectaires aux véritables intérêts de la patrie, qui, dans ce moment de danger, doit réunir tous ceux pour qui son asservissement et sa ruine ne sont pas les objets d'une atroce jouissance, et d'une infâme spéculation."—LA FAYETTE *à l'Assemblée*, 16 *Juin* 1792; *Histoire Parlémentaire*, xv. 69, 74. A curious picture of the result of the Revolution by one of its earliest and most impassioned supporters!

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66. The Girondists plan a revolt of the populace.

excesses. They experienced from the very first that cruel necessity to which all who seek to rise by the passions of the people are sooner or later subjected—that of submitting to the vices, and allying themselves with the brutality of the mob. They openly associated with, and flattered men of the most revolting habits and disgusting vulgarity, and commenced that system of revolutionary equality which was so soon to banish politeness, humanity, and every gentler virtue from French society. They resolved to rouse the people by inflammatory petitions and harangues, and hoped to intimidate the court by the show of popular resistance—a dangerous expedient, and one which in the end proved as fatal to them as to the power against which it was directed. A general insurrection, under their guidance, was prepared in the faubourgs; and, under the pretence of celebrating the anniversary of the Tennis Court oath, which was approaching, a body of ten thousand men was organised in the quarter of St Antoine. Thus, while the Royalists were urging the approach of the European powers, the patriots were rousing the insurrection of the people. Both produced their natural effects—the Reign of Terror, and the despotism of Napoleon.[1]

[1] Dumont, 388. Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 37. 38; and Hist. viii. 152, 154. Deux Amis, vii. 250, 252. Mig. i. 75. Th. ii. 124.

67. Coalition of the Girondists and the Jacobins against the crown.

The resistance of the King to the decrees against the priests, and the dismissal of Roland, Clavière, and Servan, produced a temporary coalition between the Girondists and the Jacobins. Though the principles, both moral and political, of the former, differed widely from those of the latter, yet they had no difficulty in now uniting their whole strength with them, to commit the greatest moral and political crime of which men could be guilty—that of effecting the dethronement, and ultimately the death, of a virtuous and patriotic monarch, whose whole life had been devoted to the good of his country; and that for no other fault but that he was striving to protect the innocent, and abide faithfully by the constitution which they themselves had imposed upon him. Fatal effect of the spirit of party; but one of which history, in such circumstances, affords too many examples! Moved by the concurring power of these two great parties, the agitation of the people was not long of reaching that point which was deemed by their leaders sufficient for the most audacious enterprises. And to increase the general excitement, a report was spread abroad,

and readily believed, as to a secret Austrian committee, which in reality ruled the court, and was now inducing the king to resist the execution of the laws against the priests, with the view of involving the country in a civil war, and paralysing the resistance to the Allies. This report, which was an entire fabrication, had a surprising effect in adding to the public agitation. The great object of the Girondists and Jacobins, in these measures, was to render the King's situation so painful, that he might be induced to abdicate the throne; and, but for a heroic sense of duty, he certainly would have done so; for both he and the Queen were in daily expectation of death, and even wished it, to put a period to their sufferings.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 220, 221. Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 359, 362; and ii. 56, 57. Hist. Parl. xiv. 278, 281, 416, 420.

68. Reasons which induced the Girondists to act immediately.

As nothing could shake the firmness of Louis in refusing his sanction to the atrocious decree against the priests, and that for the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men, the Girondists, in concert with the Jacobins, proceeded to a practical demonstration of their power. It was resolved to inundate the palace with the forces of the faubourgs, under the terror of which, it was hoped, the King would either abdicate or sanction the decrees. This was hastened by two petitions, signed, one by twenty thousand, the other by eight thousand, citizens of Paris—for the most part members of the National Guard—against the camp of 20,000 men near Paris, which were presented to the King. They were dictated by the jealousy of that civic force, at such an accumulation of the military in their neighbourhood; but the Girondists, alarmed at so unusual a manifestation of the reaction of public opinion against the oppression they were exercising on the King, determined on immediate and decisive measures.[2]

[2] Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 37, 39, and Hist. viii. 154.

69. Disgraceful tumult on the 20th June.

On the 20th June, a tumultuous body, ten thousand strong, secretly organised by Pétion, mayor of Paris, and the practical leader of the Girondists, in virtue of a decree of the municipality of that city on the 16th,* set out from the Faubourg St Antoine, and directed itself towards the Assembly. It was the first attempt to overawe the legis-

* "Mercredi suivant, le 20 Juin, les citoyens des fauxbourgs St Antoine et St Marceau presenteraient à l'Assemblée Nationale et au Roi des pétitions relatifs aux circonstances, et planteraient en suite l'arbre de la liberté sur la terrace des Feuillans, en mémoire de la séance du Jeu de Paume. Le conseil autorisait ces pétitionaires à se revêtir des habits qu'ils portaient en 1789 *et de leurs armes*."—*Décret du Conseil Municipale de Paris*, 16 *Juin* 1792: *Hist. Parl.* xv. 120.

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lature by the display of mere brute force. The deputation was introduced, after a considerable resistance from the Constitutionalists, into the hall, while the doors were besieged by a clamorous multitude. They spoke in the most violent and menacing manner, declaring that they were resolved to avail themselves of the means of resistance in their power, which were recognised in the Declaration of Rights. The petition declared—"The people are ready; they are fully prepared to have recourse to any measures to put in force the second article of the Rights of Man—resistance to oppression. Let the small minority of your body who do not participate in these sentiments, deliver the earth from their presence, and retire to Coblentz. Examine the causes of our sufferings: if they flow from the royal authority, let it be annihilated. The executive power," it concluded, "is at variance with you. We require no other proof of this than the dismissal of the popular ministers. Does the happiness of the people, then, depend on the caprice of the sovereign? Should that sovereign have any other law than the will of the people? The people are determined, and their pleasure outweighs the wishes of crowned heads. They are the oak of the forest; the royal sapling must bend beneath its branches. We complain of the inactivity of our armies; we call upon you to investigate its causes; if it arises from the executive power, let it be instantly annihilated."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 138, 139. Bert. de Moll. viii. 152.

70. The petitioners are supported by the Girondists, and received in the Assembly.

This revolutionary harangue was supported by the authors of the movement in the Assembly. Guadet, a popular leader of the Gironde, exclaimed, "Who will dare now to renew the bloody scene, when, at the close of the Constituent Assembly, thousands of our fellow-citizens were slaughtered in the Champ de Mars, round the altar of France, where they were renewing the most sacred of oaths? If the people are violently alarmed, is it the part of their mandatories to refuse to hear them? Are not the grievances we have just heard, re-echoed from one end of France to the other? Is this the first time that in Paris the conduct of the King, and the perfidy of his councils, have excited the public indignation? You have heard the petitioners express themselves with candour, but with the firmness which becomes a free people." It was thus that the Girondists encouraged the populace in their attempts

to intimidate the government. Overawed by the danger of their situation, the Assembly received the petition with indulgence, and permitted the mob to defile before them. A motley assemblage, now swelled to thirty thousand persons, men, women, and children, in the most squalid attire, immediately passed through the hall, uttering furious cries, and displaying seditious banners. They were headed by Santerre, and the Marquis de Saint Hurugues, with a drawn sabre in his hand. Immense tablets were borne aloft, having inscribed on them the Rights of Man; others carried banners, bearing, as inscriptions—"The Constitution or Death!"—"Long live the Sans Culottes!" On the point of one pike was placed a bleeding calf's heart, with the inscription round it—"The Heart of an Aristocrat." Multitudes of men and women, shaking alternately pikes and olive-branches above their heads, danced round these frightful emblems, singing the revolutionary song of *Ça Ira.* In the midst of these furies, dense columns of insurgents defiled, bearing the more formidable weapons of fusils, sabres, and daggers, raised aloft on poles. The loud applause of the galleries, the cries of the mob, the death-like silence of the Assembly, who trembled at the sight of the auxiliaries they had invoked, formed a scene which baffles all description. The passage of the procession lasted three hours. After leaving the Assembly, they proceeded in a tumultuous mass to the palace.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 141, 142. Deux Amis. vii. 253, 254. Lac. i. 243. Mig. i. 177. Th. ii. 133, 135.

71. Means by which the mob force the entry of the palace gates.

The outer gates leading into the palace were closed when this fearful assemblage presented itself before them; a hundred of the *gendarmerie à cheval* were on guard in the Place Carrousel, but they made little resistance. The National Guard, however, at the gates, were more determined, and refused admittance in a very resolute manner. "Why have you not entered into the chateau," said Santerre, at the head of his bands from the Faubourg St Antoine? "You must go in: we came here for nothing but that." Turning, then, to his cannoniers, he said—"If they refuse admission, we will blow the gate to atoms." A gun was brought up and pointed at the gate: a single discharge would have burst it open. As they were knocking violently, M. Boucher Rene, and another municipal officer, with their magisterial scarfs on, came forward, and

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promised to gain entrance in the name of the law. These magistrates, in a loud voice, demanded admittance, adding, that they had no right to keep them out. The National Guard still refused; upon which they were assured by the municipal officers, who headed the crowd, that a deputation, consisting only of twenty persons, the number limited by law, and without arms, should enter; but no sooner were the doors opened, than the mob, headed by two of the municipality, rushed in. In vain the National Guards at the inner doors offered to oppose resistance; they were commanded by the municipal officers to submit to the authority of the law.[1]*

[1] Rapport de Romainvilliers, Com. de la Garde Nationale sur le 20 Juin. Hist. Parl. xv. 149, 159.

71. The palace invaded by the multitude.

The multitude immediately broke through the court, ascended the staircase, cut open with hatchets the folding-doors, and entered the royal apartments. Louis appeared before them with a few attendants, but a serene air. Those in front, overawed by the dignity of his presence, made an involuntary pause; but, pressed on by the crowd behind, soon surrounded the monarch. With difficulty his attendants got him withdrawn into the embrasure of a window, while the crowd rolled on through the other rooms of the palace. Seated on a chair which was elevated on a table, and surrounded by a few faithful National Guards, who kept off the most unruly of the populace, he preserved a mild and undaunted countenance in the midst of dangers which every instant threatened his life. Never did he appear more truly great than on this trying occasion. To the reiterated demand that he should instantly give his assent to the decrees against the priests, and sanction the establishment of a camp near Paris, or die on the spot, he constantly replied, "This is neither the time nor the way to obtain it of me." A drunken workman handed him the red cap of liberty: with a mild aspect he put the revolutionary emblem on the head on which a diadem was wont to rest, and wore it for three hours. Had he

* "Quelle a été la surprise du commandant lorsque, s'informant de quelle manière la porte royale avait été ouverte, il apprit qu'elle l'avait été au nom de la loi, par l'ordre des municipaux, qui étaient à la tête de cette députation armée et l'avaient introduite tout entière. Les Gardes Nationales, toujours soumises à la loi, et prévenues de l'obéissance due a la municipalité, n'ont pu s'opposer à l'entrée de la députation, et pénétrées de douleur des circonstances, ont fait de leurs personnes ce que la loi leur défendait de faire de leurs armes."—*Rapport de* ROMAINVILLIERS, *Commandant de la Garde Nationale; Hist. Parl.* xv. 147, 148.

not done so, he would have been stabbed on the spot. Another presented him with a cup of water: though he had long suspected poison, he drank it off in the midst of applauses, involuntarily extorted from the multitude. Informed of the danger of the King, a deputation of the Assembly, headed by Vergniaud and Isnard, repaired to the palace. With difficulty they penetrated through the crowds which filled its apartments, and found the King seated in the same place, unshaken in courage, but almost exhausted by fatigue. One of the National Guard approached him to assure him of his devotion. "Feel," said he, placing his hand on his bosom, "whether this is the beating of a heart agitated by fear?" Vergniaud, however, who was in the secret of the real object of the demonstration, at length became apprehensive it would be carried too far, and was not without disquietude from the menaces which he had heard in the remoter parts of the crowd. With some difficulty he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and persuaded the people to depart. He was seconded by Pétion, and the mob gradually withdrew. By eight o'clock in the evening they had all dispersed, and silence and astonishment reigned in the palace.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 178. Lac. i. 224. Th. ii. 138, 141, 142. Hist. Parl. xv. 149, 157, 159. Bert. de Moll. viii. 167, 177. Campan, ii. 213.

73. Heroic conduct of the Queen and Princess Elizabeth.

During the terrors of this agitating day, the Queen and the Princess displayed the most heroic resolution. The whole Royal family would, without doubt, have been massacred, had it not been for the presence of mind of Adoque, a colonel of the battalion of the Faubourg St Marceau, and of two cannoniers of the National Guard, who interposed between them and the head of the columns, which had broken open or cut down with hatchets all the inner doors of the palace. "Sanction the decrees or death!" was the universal cry. Nothing would make the Queen separate herself from the King, "What have I to fear?" said she; "Death! It is as well to-day as to-morrow; they can do no more! Let me go to the King; it is at his side I will expire! There is my post!" As they were retiring before the furious multitude, the Princess Elizabeth, as she held the King at a moment of the greatest danger embraced in her arms, was mistaken for the Queen, and loaded with maledictions. She forbade her attendants to explain the mistake, happy to draw upon herself the perils and opprobrium of her

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august relative. Santerre shortly after approached, and assured her she had nothing to fear; that the people were come to warn, but not to strike. He handed her a red cap, which she put on the head of the Dauphin. The Princess-Royal, a few years older, was weeping at the side of the Queen; but the infant, with the innocence of childhood, smiled at the scene by which he was surrounded, and willingly put on an enormous red cap, which was handed to him by a ferocious pikeman.[1]

[1] Weber, ii. 177. Mig. i. 178. Lac. i. 244. Th. ii. 140. 141. Campan, ii. 213. 215.

74. First appearance of Napoleon.

A young officer, with his college companion, was a witness, from the gardens of the Tuileries, of this disgraceful scene. Though warmly attached at that period to the Jacobin party, he expressed great regret at the conduct of the populace, and the imbecility of the ministry; but when the King appeared at the window with the cap of liberty on his head, he could no longer restrain his indignation. "The wretches!" he exclaimed; "they should cut down the first five hundred with grape-shot, and the remainder would soon take to flight." He lived to put his principles in practice on the same spot—his name will never be forgotten: it was NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.[2]

[2] Bour. i. 73.

75. Indignation of France at the events of June 20.

The events of the 20th June excited the utmost indignation throughout France. The violence of their proceedings, the violation of the Assembly and of the royal residence, the illegality of a petition supported by a tumultuous and disorderly rabble, were made the objects of warm reproaches to the popular party. The Duke de la Rochefoucault, who commanded at Rouen, invited the King to seek an asylum in the midst of his army; La Fayette urged him to proceed to Compeigne, and throw himself into the arms of the constitutional forces; the National Guard offered to form a corps to defend his person; but Louis declined all these offers. He expected deliverance from the allied powers, and was unwilling to compromise himself by openly joining the constitutional party. He entertained hopes that the late disgraceful tumult would open the eyes of many of the popular party to the ultimate tendency of their measures. Nor were these hopes without foundation. The Girondists never recovered the failure of this insurrection. They lost the support of the one party by having attempted it, of the other by having failed in it. Mutual complaints in the Assembly, in the

clubs, in the journals, between them and the Jacobins, laid the foundation of the envenomed rancour which afterwards prevailed between them. Every one was now anxious to throw upon another the disgrace of an infamous outrage which had failed in its object. A petition, signed by twenty thousand respectable persons in Paris, was soon after presented to the Assembly, praying them to punish the authors of the late disorders ; but such was the terror of that body, that they were incapable of taking any decisive steps. The conduct of the King excited general admiration : the remarkable coolness in danger which he had evinced, extorted the applause even of his enemies, and the unhappy irresolution of his earlier years was forgotten in the intrepidity of his present demeanour. Had he possessed vigour enough to avail himself of the powerful reaction in his favour, which these events excited, he might still have arrested the Revolution ; but his was the passive courage of the martyr which could endure, not the active spirit of the hero fitted to prevent danger.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, vii. 7, 12. Bert. de Moll. viii. 185, 194. Dumont, 353. Jom. ii. 53. Th. ii. 144, 148, 149. Lac. i. 246.

76. La Fayette arrives at Paris. June 28.

La Fayette, who was now thoroughly awakened to a sense of the dreadful dangers which threatened France from the Revolution which he had done so much to advance, made a last effort to raise from the dust the constitutional throne. Having provided for the command of the army, and obtained addresses from the soldiers against the recent excesses, he set out for Paris, and presented himself, on the 28th June, unexpectedly at the bar of the Assembly. He demanded, in the name of his troops and of himself, that the authors of the revolt should be punished : that vigorous measures should be taken to destroy the Jacobin sect. "A powerful reason," said he, "has brought me amongst you. The outrages committed on the 20th June in the Tuileries, have excited the indignation and the alarm of all good citizens, and particularly of the army. In the one I command, all the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, have but one opinion. I have received from all the corps addresses, expressive of their attachment to the constitution, their respect for the authorities which it has established, and their patriotic hatred against all the factions. I lay at your bar these addresses. You will see that I have only expressed their unanimous opinion. I am convinced that their sentiments are those of all the French

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who love their country. It is time to save the constitution from the attacks which are so generally made upon it; to secure to the National Assembly, to the King, their independence and their dignity; to take from bad citizens their hopes of establishing a *régime*, which would only be for the good an insupportable tyranny. I supplicate the National Assembly to give directions, that the instigators of the crimes committed on the 20th June at the Tuileries be prosecuted for high treason, and that measures be taken to destroy a sect which at once invades the national sovereignty, tyrannises over the citizens, and daily affords, in its public speeches, decisive evidence of the designs by which it is animated."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 198, 200.

77. But fails in rousing the National Guard.

This speech was loudly applauded by the *Côté droit* of the Assembly, and excited the utmost dismay in the revolutionary party. They dreaded the promptitude and vigour of their adversary in the Champ de Mars. A majority of 339 to 234 was obtained by the Constitutional party in the Assembly, upon a motion to send La Fayette's letter to the standing committee of twelve, to report on its adoption. Encouraged by this success, slight as it was, the general next presented himself at the Court. He was coolly received by the King, who thanked him for his services, but did nothing to forward his views, and with difficulty succeeded in obtaining a review of the National Guard. The leaders of the Royalists anxiously inquired at the palace what course they should adopt in this emergency. Both the King and the Queen answered, that they could place no confidence in La Fayette. He next applied, with a few supporters who were resolved to uphold the crown in spite of itself, to the National Guard; but the influence of the general with that body was gone. He was received in silence by all the battalions who had so recently worshipped his footsteps, and retired to his hotel despairing of the constitutional cause.[2]

[2] Toul. ii. 281. Hist. Parl. xv. 204. Madame Campan, ii. 224.

78. And returns to the army without effecting any thing.

Determined, however, not to abandon his enterprise without a struggle, he appointed a rendezvous in the evening at his own house, of the most zealous of the troops, from whence his design was to march against the Jacobin Club, and close its sittings. Hardly thirty men appeared, and irresolution and uncertainty were painted in every countenance. In despair at the apathy of the public mind,

La Fayette, after remaining a few days in Paris, set off alone, and returned to the army, after having incurred the disgrace, with one party, of endeavouring to control the Revolution, with the other, of having failed in the attempt —the usual fate of the originators of a popular movement when they strive to check its excesses. He was burned in effigy by the Jacobins in the Palais Royal, so recently the scene of his civic triumphs, and instantly became the object of the most impassioned hostility to the people. Robespierre answered his letter in a long and able production: the Jacobins thundered against his tergiversation: the people could not find words strong enough to express their indignation. "The traitor La Fayette!" was heard in every street: "he is sold to the Austrians; let him go to Coblentz!" This was the last struggle of the Constitutionalists; thenceforward they never were heard of in the Revolution, except when their adherents were conducted to the scaffold. Their failure was the more remarkable, because, not a year before, they had acquired an absolute ascendant in Paris, and defeated an insurrection of the populace in a period of the highest public excitement. In such convulsions, more perhaps than in any other situation of life, it may truly be said, that there is a tide in the affairs of men. The moment of success, if not seized, is lost for ever; new passions succeed; fresh interests are called into existence; above all, no coercion by old leaders will ever be tolerated; and the leader of a nation at one period often finds himself, within a few months, as powerless as the humblest individual, the instant he attempts to restrain the passions he himself has aroused.[1]

[1] Lac. 249, 250. Th. ii 151, 155. Toul. i. 280, 281. Hist. Parl. xv. 205, 206. Journal des Jacobins, No. 211, 214, 216. Mig. i. 180.

79. The Girondists openly aim at overturning the throne. July 4. Debates in the Assembly on that subject.

The Girondists and Republicans, emboldened by the failure of La Fayette's attempt, now openly aimed at the dethronement of the King. Vergniaud, in a powerful discourse, portrayed the dangers which threatened the country. He quoted the article of the constitution, which declared, "that if the King put himself at the head of an armed force against the nation, or did not oppose a similar enterprise attempted in his name, he should be held to have abdicated the throne."—"O King!" he continued, "who doubtless thought with the tyrant Lysander, that truth is not more imperishable than falsehood, and that we amuse the people with oaths as we amuse children

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with toys; who feigned only to regard the laws, in order to preserve an authority which might enable you to brave them; do you suppose that we are any longer to be deceived by your hypocritical protestations? Was it to defend us, that you opposed to the enemy's soldiers forces whose inferiority rendered their defeat inevitable? Was it to defend us, that you suffered a general to escape who had violated the constitution? Did the law give you the choice of your ministers for our happiness or our misery? of your generals, for our glory or our shame? the right of sanctioning the laws, the civil list, and so many prerogatives, that you might destroy the constitution of the empire? No! One whom the generosity of the French could not affect, whom the love of despotism alone could influence, has obviously no regard for the constitution which he has so basely violated, for the people whom he has wantonly betrayed."—"The danger which threatens us," said Brissot, at the Jacobin Club, "is the most extraordinary which has yet appeared in the world. Our country is in peril, not because it wants defenders, not because its soldiers are destitute of courage, not because its frontiers are unfortified, its resources defective; but because a hidden cause paralyses all its powers. Who is it that does so? A single man. He whom the constitution has declared its chief, and treachery has made its enemy. You are told to fear the King of Bohemia and Hungary: I tell you that the real strength of the kings is at the Tuileries, and that it is there you must strike to subdue them. You are told to strike the refractory priests wherever they are found in the kingdom: I tell you to strike at the Court, and you will annihilate the whole priesthood at a single blow. You are told to strike the factious, the intriguers: I tell you, aim your blow at the royal cabinet, and there you will extinguish intrigue in the centre of its ramifications. This is the secret of our position; there is the source of our evils; there is the point where a remedy is to be applied."[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 280, 347, 349. Journal des Jacobins, No. 217, 218.

80
Country declared in danger.

While the minds of men were wound up to the highest pitch by these inflammatory harangues, the committees, to whom it had been remitted to report on the state of the country, published the solemn declaration—"Citizens, the country is in danger!" Minute guns announced to

the inhabitants of the capital the solemn appeal, which called on every one to lay down his life on behalf of the state. The enthusiasm of the moment was such, that fifteen thousand volunteers enrolled themselves in Paris in a single day. Immediately all the civil authorities declared their sittings permanent; all the citizens not already in the National Guard, were put in requisition; pikes were distributed to all those not possessed of firelocks; battalions of volunteers formed in the public squares; and standards displayed in conspicuous situations, with the words, "Citizens, the country is in danger!" These measures, which the threatening aspect of public affairs rendered indispensable, excited the revolutionary ardour to the utmost degree. An universal frenzy seized the public mind. The declamations at the Jacobin club exceeded any thing yet heard in audacity. A general insurrection was openly called for. "The all-powerful sovereign people," it was said, "can alone exterminate our enemies. Against crowned brigands, home traitors, and devourers of men, we have need of the club of Hercules." So far did this patriotic vehemence carry them, that many departments openly defied the authority of government, and, without any orders, sent their contingents to form the camp of twenty thousand men near Paris. This was the commencement of the revolt which overturned the throne.[1]

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[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 345, 358. Journal des Jacobins, No. 230. Mig. i. 183. Th. ii. 159, 163, 184.

81.
Fête of 14th July.

The approach of a crisis became evident on the 14th July, when a fête was held in commemoration of the taking of the Bastile. Pétion was the object of the public idolatry. He had been suspended from his office of mayor by the Department of Paris, in consequence of his supineness during the tumult on the 20th June; but the decree was reversed by the National Assembly. His name was inscribed on a thousand banners; on all sides the cry was heard "Pétion or death!" The King went in procession from the palace to the altar in the Champ de Mars; but how different was his reception from that which he had experienced two years before on a similar occasion! Pensive and melancholy, he marched with the Queen and the Dauphin through a single file of soldiers, who could with difficulty keep back the intrusion, and were wholly unable to prevent the maledictions of the mob. Innumerable voices reproached him with his perfidious flight;[2] the

[2] Deux Amis, viii. 72, 73. Mig. i. 183. Lac. i. 254. De Staël, ii. 54. Bert. de Moll. viii. 317, 320.

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intrepid aspect of the Swiss Guard alone protected him from actual violence. He returned to the palace in the deepest dejection, and was not again seen in public till he ascended the scaffold.

82. Vast accession of strength of the Revolutionary party from the rest of France.

The declaration by the Assembly that the country was in danger, procured a prodigious accession of power to the revolutionary party. On the 14th July, when the fête of the confederation was held, the persons who had arrived in the capital from the provinces did not exceed two thousand, but their numbers daily and rapidly increased. The solemn announcement put all France in motion. Multitudes of ardent young men hourly arrived from the provinces, all animated by the most vehement revolutionary fervour, who added to the already appalling excitement of the capital. The Assembly, with culpable weakness, gave them the exclusive use of its galleries, where they soon acquired the entire command of its deliberations. They were all paid thirty sous a-day from the public treasury, and formed into a club, which soon surpassed in democratic violence the far-famed meetings of the Jacobins. The determination to overturn the throne was openly announced by these ferocious bands; and some of the French guards, whose regiment, disgraced by its treason at the attack on the Bastile, had been disbanded, were incorporated by the Assembly with their ranks, from whose discipline and experience they soon acquired the elements of military organisation. Meanwhile measures were openly taken, which were best calculated to ensure the success of the revolt. The attacks on La Fayette were multiplied; he was denounced at the clubs, and became the object of popular execration. A proposition brought forward in the Assembly to have him denounced as guilty of high treason, was only postponed till the whole witnesses could be examined regarding it. The war party was every where predominant. The whole jealousy of the Assembly was directed against the court, from whom, aided by the Allies, they expected a speedy punishment for their innumerable acts of treason. By their orders, such battalions of the National Guard as were suspected of a leaning towards the court, especially the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas, were jealously watched; the club of the Feuillants was closed; the grenadiers and chasseurs of the

National Guard, who constituted the strength of the burgher force, were disbanded, and the troops of the line and Swiss Guard removed to a distance from Paris. The chiefs of the revolt met at Charenton; but none could be brought to accept the perilous duty of leading the attack. Robespierre spoke with alarm of the dangers which attended it; Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, and the other leaders of the popular party, professed themselves willing to second, but not fitted to head the enterprise. At length Danton presented Westerman; a man of undaunted courage and savage character, who subsequently signalised himself in the war of La Vendée, and ultimately perished on the scaffold.[1]

[1] Deux Amis, viii. 87, 88. Bert. de Moll. viii. 347, 360 Lac. i. 255, 261. Mig. i. 183. Th. ii. 192, 193.

83. Character of Pétion.

PETION, mayor of Paris, was the person most formidable to the Royal family at this period, as well from his official situation, which gave him the entire command of the physical force of the capital, as from his peculiar character. Unlike the other Girondists, he was a decided man of action; but he veiled his violent designs under the mask of the most profound hypocrisy. Like all the leading men of his party, he was bred to the provincial bar, and was translated to the Legislative Assembly from the town of Chartres, where he had practised. Poor and needy, rapacious and unprincipled, he early shared in the largesses of the Orleans family, and entered thoroughly into the views of its conspirators. But, with his violent associates, he soon passed the designs of the selfish and irresolute prince who formed their head, and joined the conspiracy, not for dispossessing the family on the throne to the advantage of the house of Orleans, but for overturning it altogether. He had an agreeable exterior, much address, and profound dissimulation. Though not a powerful speaker, his calmness and judgment procured him a lead, and constituted the secret of his power. He organised a revolt, prepared a massacre, or directed assassinations, with as much *sang-froid* as a veteran general directs movements on the field of battle. When the work of destruction was in preparation, no anxiety on his countenance betrayed that he was privy to its preparation: when it began, he looked with apathy on the suffering it produced.[2] He was alike a stranger to pity or remorse; virtue and vice, humanity and cruelty, were regarded by him as means to

[2] Montjoye, Vie de Marie Antoinette, ii. 284, 287.

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be alternately used to advance his purposes, which were private gain and public elevation.

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84. Of Santerre.

SANTERRE, the redoubtable leader of the Faubourg St Antoine, was an apt instrument in Pétion's hands to execute the designs which he had conceived. His influence in that revolutionary quarter was immense ; a word from him at once brought forth its forests of pikemen and formidable cannoniers, so well known in all the worst periods of the Revolution. Lofty in stature, with a strong voice and an athletic figure, he possessed at the same time that ready wit and coarse eloquence which is generally found to be the most powerful passport to the favour of the lowest class of the people. Vulgar and coarse in manners, and always foremost in the work of revolt, he became the object of unbounded horror to the Royalists, who often suffered from his power. Still he was not destitute of good qualities. Unlike Pétion, he had a heart. Though he engaged, and often took the lead, in many of the most violent revolutionary measures, yet he was far from being of a cruel disposition. An unfortunate victim, of whatever party, generally found access to his heart; tears or affliction disarmed his hands. He was a blind fanatic in politics; but neither cruel in private, nor relentless in public measures.[1]

[1] Montjoye, Vie de Marie Antoinette, ii. 286, 287.

85. Dreadful suspense and anxiety of the King and Queen.

Assailed by so many dangers, both external and internal, without guards, and with an impotent ministry; destitute alike of the means of escape or defence, the King and Queen abandoned themselves to despair. In daily expectation of private assassination or open murder, the state of suspense in which they were kept, from the 20th June till the final insurrection on the 10th August, was such that they had ceased to wish for life, and held by their station only from a sense of duty to their children. The Queen employed herself the whole day, and the greater part of the night, in reading; contrary to what was expected, her health became daily stronger as the danger increased. All feminine delicacy of constitution disappeared ; not a vestige of nervousness was to be seen. The Queen secretly made an under vest, dagger-proof, for the King, which was with great difficulty, and by stealth, given to Madame Campan to be conveyed to him ; but so closely was he watched by the National Guard on duty in

the palace, that it was three days before she got an opportunity of conveying it to him. When she did so, he said, "It is to satisfy the Queen that I have agreed to this: they will not assassinate me; they will put me to death in another way." Already he anticipated the fate of Charles I., and studied incessantly the history of that unhappy but noble-minded prince. "All my anxiety," said he to Bertrand de Molleville, "is for the Queen, my sister, and my children; for myself, I do not fear death! nay, I wish it; for it would increase the chances of safety to them if I am sacrificed. I will not attempt to escape, nor will I make resistance; if I did so, I should probably fail, and certainly increase their dangers. My only hope is, that my death may prove their salvation!" "As for me," said the Queen, "I am a stranger; they will assassinate me. It will be a blessing; for it will relieve me from a painful life: but what will become of our poor children?" and with these words she burst into a flood of tears. But she was perfectly strong, and refused all antispasmodic remedies. "Don't speak to me of such things," said she: "when I was prosperous I had nervous affections: they are the malady of the happy; but now I have no need of them."[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 216, 220. Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 327.

86. Indecision and want of preparation of the court.

The court, surrounded by such dangers, and amidst the general dissolution of its authority, had no hope but on the approach of the allied armies. The Queen was acquainted with their proposed line of march; she knew when they were expected at Verdun and the intervening towns—the unhappy princess hoped, at times, to be delivered in a month. All the measures of the court were taken to gain time for their approach. In the meanwhile, the Royal family laboured under such apprehensions of being poisoned, that they ate and drank nothing but what was secretly prepared by one of the ladies of the bedchamber, and privately brought by Madame Campan, after the viands prepared by the cook had been placed on the table. Great numbers of the Royalists, with faithful devotion, daily repaired to the Tuileries to offer their lives to their sovereign, amidst the perils which were evidently approaching; but, though their motives command respect, the diversity of their counsels confirmed the natural irresolution of his character. Some were for transporting him

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to Compeigne, and thence, by the forest of Ardennes, to the banks of the Rhine; others, amongst whom was La Fayette, besought him to seek an asylum with the army; while Malesherbes strongly counselled his abdication, as the only chance of safety. Bertrand de Molleville strenuously recommended a retreat into Normandy, and all the arrangements were made to carry it into effect with every prospect of success; but the King, on the 6th August, when it was to have been put in execution, decided against it, alleging that he would reserve it for the last extremity, and that till then it was too hazardous for the Queen and his family. In the midst of such distracting counsels, and in the presence of such evident dangers, nothing was done. A secret flight was resolved on one day, and promised every chance of success; but, after reflecting on it for the night, the King determined to abandon that project, lest it should be deemed equivalent to a declaration of civil war. Royalist committees were formed, and every effort was made to arrest the progress of the insurrection—but all in vain: the court found itself surrounded by a few thousand resolute gentlemen, who were willing to lay down their lives in its defence, but could not, amidst revolutionary millions, acquire the organisation requisite to ensure its safety.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. viii. 284, 300; and Mém. ii. 123, 129. Th. ii. 209, 213. Camp. ii. 125, 188, 230.

87. Advance and proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick.

The conspiracy, which was originally fixed for the 29th July, and afterwards for the 4th August, was postponed more than once, from the people not being deemed by the leaders in a sufficient state of excitement to ensure the success of the enterprise. But this defect was soon removed, by the progress and injudicious conduct of the allied troops. The Duke of Brunswick broke up from Coblentz on the 25th of July, and advanced at the head of seventy thousand Prussians, and sixty-eight thousand Austrians and Hessians, into the French territory. His entry was preceded by a proclamation, in which he reproached "those who had usurped the reins of government in France with having troubled the social order, and overturned the legitimate government; with having committed daily outrages on the King and Queen; with having, in an arbitrary manner, invaded the rights of the German princes in Alsace and Lorraine, and proclaimed war unnecessarily against the King of Hungary and

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Bohemia." He declared, in consequence, that the allied sovereigns had taken up arms to arrest the anarchy which prevailed in France, to check the dangers which threatened the throne and the altar, to give liberty to the King, and restore him to the legitimate authority of which he had been deprived, but without any intention whatever of individual aggrandisement; that the National Guards would be held responsible for the maintenance of order till the arrival of the allied forces, and that those who dared to resist must expect all the rigour of military execution. Finally, he warned the National Assembly, the municipality, and city of Paris, that if they did not forthwith liberate the King, and return to their allegiance, they should be held personally responsible, and answer with their heads for their disobedience; and that, if the palace were forced, or the slightest insult offered to the Royal family, an exemplary and memorable punishment should be inflicted, by the total destruction of the city of Paris.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ix. 32, 36. Mig. i. 186. Hist. Parl. xvi. 276, 281.

88. Impolicy of this proclamation when not followed up by active measures.

Had this manifesto been couched in more moderate language, and followed up by a rapid and energetic military movement, it might have had the desired effect: the passion for power might have been supplanted in the excited multitude by that of fear; the insurrection crushed, like the subsequent ones of Spain and Poland, before it had acquired the consistency of military power, and the throne of Louis, for a time at least, re-established. But, coming, as it did, in a moment of extreme public excitation; and enforced, as it was, by the most feeble and inefficient military measures, it contributed in a signal manner to accelerate the progress of the Revolution, and was the immediate cause of the downfall of the throne. The leaders of the Jacobins had no longer any reason to complain of the want of enthusiasm in the people. A unanimous spirit of resistance burst forth in every part of France; the military preparations were redoubled, the ardour of the multitude was raised to the highest pitch. The manifesto of the allied powers was regarded as unfolding the real designs of the court and the emigrants. Revolt against the throne appeared the only mode of maintaining their liberties, or preserving their independence; the people of Paris had no choice between victory and death. It is painful

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to think that the King so soon became the victim, in a great measure, of the apprehension excited by the language of the Allies, which differed so widely from what he had so wisely recommended. Even in the midst of his apprehensions, however, he never lost his warm love to his people: "How soon," he often exclaimed, "would all these chagrins be forgotten, in the slightest return of their affection!"[1]

[1] Mig. i. 186, Toul. ii. 220. Th. ii. 230.

89. Views of the leaders of the Girondists and Jacobins.

The leaders of the different parties strove to convert this effervescence into the means of advancing their separate ambitious designs. They met in a committee of eight at Charenton, where all the measures for their common operations were discussed and resolved on. But though thus far united, there was a wide difference in the ulterior measures which they severally had in view. The Girondists were desirous of having the King dethroned by a decree of the Assembly, because, as they had acquired the majority in that body, that would have been equivalent to vesting supreme dominion in themselves; but this by no means answered the views of the popular demagogues, who were as jealous of the Assembly as of the crown, and aimed at overthrowing, at one blow, the legislature and the throne. Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, and their associates, were the leaders of the popular insurrection, which was intended not only to destroy the King, but overturn the Girondists and establish the multitude. The seeds of division, therefore, between the Girondists and the Jacobins, were sown from the moment that they combined together to overturn the monarchy: the first sought to establish the middle class and the Assembly on the ruins of the throne; the last to elevate the multitude by the destruction of both.

[2] Hist. Parl. xvi. 269, 276. Deux Amis, viii. 92, 93. Mig. i. 187. Toul. ii. 21.

90. Preparations for the revolt. Aug. 3.

The arrival of the federal troops from Marseilles in the beginning of August, augmented the strength and confidence of the insurgents. On the 3d, the sections were extremely agitated, and that of Mauconseil declared itself in a state of insurrection. The dethronement of the King was discussed with vehemence in all the popular clubs; and Pétion, with a formidable deputation, appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and demanded it in the name of the municipality and the sections. That body remitted the petition to a committee to report. On the 8th, a stormy discussion arose on the proposed accusation of La Fayette;

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but the Constitutionalists threw it out by a majority of 406 to 224—so strongly confirmed was the majority in the legislature, on the very eve of a convulsion destined to overthrow both them and the throne! The clubs and the populace were to the last degree irritated at the acquittal of their former idol; all those who had voted with the majority were insulted as they left the hall; and the streets resounded with cries against the Assembly, which had acquitted "the traitor La Fayette!" To such a length did the public effervescence proceed, that D'Espremenil, once the idol of the people, was attacked on the terrace of the Feuillants by the populace, on his return home from the Assembly, where he had given an unpopular vote, thrown down, and pierced with pikes in several places. With the utmost difficulty he was extricated from the hands of the assassins, by a detachment of the National Guard which happened to be passing, and borne, streaming with blood, to the treasury. Pétion came past amidst the shouts of the mob, as he was carried in at the door, and approached to see if he still lived. "I, too," said D'Espremenil, "was once borne in triumph by the people; you see what they have now done to me! Anticipate your own fate!"[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. ix. 20, 21. Toul. i. 224. Mig. i. 187. Th. ii. 237.

91. Violent effervescence on the 9th August.

On the 9th the effervescence was extreme: vast crowds traversed the streets with drums beating and banners flying, and the hall of the Assembly and palace were filled with multitudes. The Constitutionalists complained of the insults to which they had been exposed on leaving the hall on the preceding day, and insisted that the Marseillaise troops should be sent to the camp at Soissons. While the discussion on the subject was going forward, it was announced to the Assembly that one of the sections had declared, that if the dethronement was not pronounced on that day, they would sound the tocsin, beat the *générale* at midnight, and march against the palace. Forty-seven out of the forty-eight sections of Paris had approved of this resolution, and declared their sittings permanent. The Legislature required the authorities of the department of the Seine, and of the city of Paris, to maintain the public tranquillity: the first replied that they had every inclination, but did not possess the power to do so;[2] Pétion answered in name of the latter, that as the sections had resumed their powers, his functions were reduced to mere

[2] Hist. Parl. xvi. 375, 393, 399. Toul. ii 228. Th. ii. 238, 239. Moniteur, Aug. 10.

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persuasion. The Assembly separated without having done any thing to ward off the coming blow. Already it had become apparent that the Revolutionary constitution had prostrated the Legislature not less than the throne: that the boasted advantages of the representative system had disappeared, and the mobs of the metropolis, as in the Greek democracies, had become the rulers of the state.

92. Description of the Carrousel at this period.

The court of the CARROUSEL, rendered immortal by the heroic conflict of which it soon became the theatre, and the frightful massacre in which that conflict terminated, was very different in 1792 from what it is at this time. The straight and noble façade of the Rue de Rivoli, the northern wing of the quadrangle which unites the Tuileries to the Louvre, projected and in part executed by the genius of Napoleon, did not exist. The Tuileries itself, with the long gallery of the Museum, which connects that palace with the Louvre, formed two sides of an incomplete quadrangle, which all the efforts of later times have not been able entirely to finish. On the ground where the Rue de Rivoli now stands, was placed the Salle du Ménage, where the meetings of the Assembly were held, which was separated from the garden of the Tuileries by a wall, running in the line where the gilded rail of the garden is now placed. This hall was placed near where the Rue de Castiglione now leads into the Place Vendôme; it communicated with the palace by a long court or avenue, which entered the part of the gardens of the Tuileries next the palace, called the terrace of the Feuillants, by a large doorway. On the other side of the palace, where the vast Place of the Carrousel now stands, the difference in former times was still more striking. That open space was then nearly filled with a great variety of narrow streets and courts, such as always grow up, if permitted, in the vicinity of a palace. The open part of the Place itself was of comparatively small extent, and was situated in that portion of the space within the quadrangle which was next to the palace. The buildings next it formed several courts, appropriated chiefly for lodgings to the different guards of the palace: one, which was the largest, and situated in the middle, was called the Royal Court; another, nearer the river, the Court of Princes, in which the royal stables were placed; a third, on the northern side of the Rue St Honoré, was

called the Court of the Swiss, from its containing the barracks of the Swiss Guards; and it had two entrances, one into the Place of the Carrousel, one into the Rue de l'Echelle, which leads to the Rue St Honoré. Thus, upon the whole, the open space of the Carrousel was not a fourth part of what it now is; and it was incomparably less capable of defence, from the number of entrances which led into it, and the variety of courts and lanes, under shelter of the buildings of which the columns of attack might be formed.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xv. 145; xvi. 451, 452.

93. Insurrection of the 10th Aug.

At length, at midnight on the 9th August, a cannon was fired, the tocsin sounded, and the *générale* beat in every quarter of Paris. The insurgents immediately began to assemble in great strength at their different rallying points. The survivors of the bloody catastrophe which was about to commence, have portrayed in the strongest colours the horrors of that dreadful night, when the oldest monarchy in Europe fell. The incessant clang of the tocsin, the rolling of the drums, the rattling of artillery and ammunition-waggons along the streets, the cries of the insurgents, the march of columns, rang in their ears for long after, and haunted their minds even in moments of festivity and rejoicing. The club of the Jacobins, that of the Cordeliers, and the section of Quinze-Vingt, in the Faubourg St Antoine, were the three centres of the insurrection. The most formidable forces were assembled at the club of the Cordeliers; the Marseillaise troops were there, and the vigour of DANTON gave energy to all their proceedings: "It is no longer time," said he, "to appeal to the laws and legislators: the laws have made no provision for such offences, the legislators are the accomplices of the criminals. Already they have acquitted La Fayette; to absolve that traitor is to deliver us to him, to the enemies of France, to the sanguinary vengeance of the allied kings. This very night the perfidious Louis has chosen to deliver to carnage and conflagration the capital, which he is prepared to quit in the moment of its ruin. To arms! to arms! no other chance of escape is left to us." The insurgents, and especially the Marseillaise, impatiently called for the signal to march; and the cannon of all the sections began to roll towards the centre of the city.[2]

[2] Hist. Parl. xvi. 400, 415. De Staël, Rév. Franc. ii. 61. Bert. de Moll. ix. 81, 84. Lac. i. 264. Th. ii. 214, 216.

Aware of their danger, the Court had for some time been

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94. Preparations of the Court.

making such preparations as their slender means would admit to resist the threatened attack. All the sentinels in and around the palace were tripled; barriers had been erected at the entry of the court, and forty grenadiers of the section Filles de St Thomas, and as many gendarmes on horseback, were drawn up opposite the great gate. But those precautions were as nothing against an insurgent city. The only real reliance of the Royal family was on the firmness of the Swiss guards, whose loyalty, always conspicuous, had been wrought up to the highest pitch by the misfortunes and noble demeanour of the King and Queen. The Assembly had, a few days before, ordered them to be removed from Paris; but the ministers, on various pretexts, had contrived to delay the execution of the order, though they had not ventured to bring to the defence of the palace the half of the corps, which lay at Courbevoie. The number of the guard actually in attendance was about eight hundred; they took their stations, and were soon drawn up in the court of the Carrousel in the finest order, and with that entire silence which formed so marked a contrast to the din and strife of tongues in the city forces. The most faithful of the National Guard rapidly arrived, in number about four thousand five hundred, and filled the court of the Tuileries; the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas had been at their post even before the signal of insurrection was given. Seven or eight hundred Royalists, chiefly of noble families, filled the interior of the palace, determined to share the dangers of their sovereign; but their presence rather injured than promoted the preparations for defence. A motley group, without any regular uniform, variously armed with pistols, sabres, and firelocks, they were incapable of any useful organisation; while their presence cooled the ardour of the National Guard by awakening their ill-extinguished jealousy of the aristocratic party. The heavy dragoons, nine hundred strong, on horseback, with twelve pieces of artillery, were stationed in the gardens and court, but in that formidable arm the Royalists were deplorably inferior to the forces of the insurgents.[1] The forces on the Royal side were numerous, but little reliance could be placed on a great proportion of them; and the *gendarmerie à cheval*, a most important force in civil conflicts, soon gave a fatal example

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[1] Campan, ii. 217, 218. Weber, ii. 241. Lac. i 265, 266. Th. ii. 245. Mig. i. 189. Hist. Parl. xvi. 433.

of disaffection, by deserting in a body to the enemy. This powerful corps was chiefly composed of the former French guards, who had thus the infamy, twice during the same convulsions, of betraying at once their sovereign and their oaths.

95. Abominable treachery and dissimulation of Pétion.

Pétion arrived at midnight, and inspected the posts of the palace, ostensibly to examine into the preparations for defence; really to be enabled to report to the insurgents how they might be best overcome. The grenadiers of the Filles de St Thomas, by whom he was attended in the palace, had resolved to detain him as a hostage; but the Assembly, playing into his hands, eluded this intention by ordering him to the bar of the Assembly, to give an account of the state of the capital. No sooner was he there, than they ordered him to repair to his post, not at the Tuileries, which was threatened, but at the Hôtel de Ville, which was the headquarters of the insurgents. The object of this was soon apparent. While this was going on at the Assembly and in the palace, the whole forty-eight sections of Paris had appointed commissioners who had met at the Hôtel de Ville, supplanted the former municipality, democratic as it was, and elected a new one, still more revolutionary, in its stead. When Pétion arrived there at six o'clock in the morning, he found the new municipality installed in power; and he suffered himself, without the slightest opposition, to be made prisoner by the civil force there. Still carrying on his detestable system of hypocrisy, he next issued an order, as mayor of Paris, summoning Mandat, the commander of the National Guard, a man of honour and courage, to repair to the Hôtel de Ville, without making him aware of the change which had taken place in the municipality. In obedience to the civil authority, Mandat went there; he was immediately seized by order of the authorities, and accused of having ordered his troops to fire upon the people. Perceiving from the new faces around him that the magistracy was changed, he turned pale; he was instantly sent under a guard to the Abbaye, but murdered by the populace on the very steps of the municipal palace. The new municipality forthwith gave the command of the National Guard to the brewer Santerre, the leader of the insurgents.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xvi. 409, 431. Camp. ii. 240, 242. Weber, ii. 217, 218. Mig. i. 190. Toul. ii. 233. Th. ii. 249.

The death of Mandat was an irreparable loss to the Royal

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96. Irresolution of the National Guard.

cause, as his influence was indispensable to persuade the National Guards to fight, who had become already much shaken by the appearance of so many Royalists among the defenders of the King. At five in the morning, the King visited the interior parts of the palace, accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Elizabeth. The troops in the inside were animated with the best spirit, and the hopes of the Royal family began to revive; but they were cruelly undeceived on descending the staircase, and passing in review the forces in the Place Carrousel and the garden. Some battalions, particularly those of the Filles de St Thomas and the Petits Pères, received them with enthusiasm; but, in general, the troops were silent and irresolute; and some, particularly the cannoniers and the battalion of Croix Rouge, raised the cry of "Vive la Nation!" Two regiments of pikemen, in defiling before the King, openly shouted, "Vive la Nation!" "Vive Pétion! A bas le Veto, à bas le Traitre!" Overcome by these ominous symptoms, the King returned, pale and depressed, to the palace. The Queen displayed the ancient spirit of her race. "Every thing which you hold most dear," said she, to the grenadiers of the National Guard, "your homes, your wives, your children, depends on our existence. To-day, our cause is that of the people." These words, spoken with dignity, roused the enthusiasm of the troops who heard them to the highest degree; but they could only promise to sacrifice their lives in her defence; nothing announced the enthusiasm of victory. Though the air of the King was serene, despair was fixed in his heart. He was dressed in violet-coloured velvet, the mourning of the Royal family, and his appearance sufficiently showed he had not been in bed all night. He had no apprehensions for himself, and had refused to put on the shirt of mail which the Queen had formed to avert the stroke of an assassin. "No," replied he, "in the day of battle the King should be clothed like the meanest of his followers." But he could not be prevailed upon to seize the decisive moment. Nothing is more certain than that, if he had charged at the head of his followers, when the Swiss Guard had repulsed the insurgents, he would have dispersed the insurrection, and possibly, even at the eleventh hour, restored the throne.[1]

[1] Campan, ii. 212, 244. Weber, ii. 217, 219. Toul. ii. 236. Mig. i. 190. Lac. i. 267. Th. ii. 252, 253, 255.

97. Vast preparations of the insurgents.

While irresolution and despondency prevailed at the Tuileries, the energy of the insurgents was hourly increasing. Early in the morning they had forced the arsenal, and distributed arms among the multitude. A column of the Faubourg St Antoine, composed of fifteen thousand men, joined by that of the Faubourg St Marceau, five thousand strong, had marched towards the palace at six in the morning, and was every moment increasing on the road. A post, placed by order of the directory of the department on the Pont Neuf, had been forced, and the communication between the opposite banks of the river was open. Soon after, the advanced guard of the insurrection, composed of the troops from Marseilles and Brittany, had debouched by the Rue St Honoré, and occupied the Place Carrousel, with their cannon directed against the palace. Rœderer, in this emergency, exerted himself to the utmost to do his duty. He first petitioned the Assembly for authority to treat with the insurgents, but they paid no regard to his application. He next applied to the National Guard, and read to them the articles of the constitution, which enjoined them, in case of attack, to repel force by force; part answered with loud acclamations; but a slender proportion of them only seemed disposed to support the throne, and the cannoniers, instead of an answer, unloaded their pieces. Finding the popular cause every where triumphant, he returned in dismay to the palace.[1]

[1] Montjoye, Vie de Marie Antoinette, ii. 80, 81. Récit de Pétion, Hist. Parl. xvi. 437, 440. De Rœderer, Ibid. 447, 454. Lac. i. 267.

98. The King leaves the palace, and joins the Assembly.

The King was there sitting in council with the Queen and his ministers. Rœderer immediately announced that the danger was extreme; that the insurgents would agree to no terms; that the National Guard could not be relied on; that the destruction of the royal family was inevitable if they did not take refuge in the bosom of the Assembly; and that in a quarter of an hour retreat would be impossible. The King still was silent: he feared not for himself; but the thought of the destruction that in the event of defeat awaited his wife and children, paralysed every resolution to resist. "I would rather," said the Queen, "be nailed to the walls of the palace than leave it!" and immediately addressing the King, and presenting to him a pistol, exclaimed, "Now, Sire, this is the moment to show yourself!" The King remained silent: he had the resignation of a martyr, but not the spirit of a hero. "Are you

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prepared, Madame," said Rœderer, "to take upon yourself the responsibility of the death of the King, of yourself, of your children, and of all who are here to defend you?" Every one was silent for a time, when M. Montjoye said—"Let us go, and no longer deliberate: honour commands it: the safety of the state requires it: let us forthwith go to the Assembly." These words decided Louis: he rose up, and addressing himself to those around him, said, "Gentlemen, nothing remains to be done here." Accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and the royal family, he descended the stair and crossed the garden, protected by the Swiss Guards, and the battalions of the Filles de St Thomas and the Petits Pères. These faithful troops had the utmost difficulty in getting them into the Assembly in the adjoining street, amidst the menaces and execrations of the multitude. "No women! the King alone!" was heard on all sides as they pressed through the dense throng on the terrace of the Feuillants. Such was the pressure, that one of the National Guard carried the Dauphin in his arms; and it was only by great exertions of strength and resolution that actual violence was averted from the royal family. The Queen was robbed of her purse and her watch on the passage. "Gentlemen," said the King, on entering the Assembly, "I am come here to save the nation from the commission of a great crime; I shall always consider myself, with my family, safe in your hands."—"Sire," replied the President Vergniaud, "you may rely on the firmness of the National Assembly; its members have sworn to die in defence of the rights of the people, and of the constituted authorities; it will remain firm at its post; we will die rather than abandon it." In truth, the Girondists, having gained from the insurrection their real object of humbling the King, were now sincere in their wish to repress the multitude—a vain attempt, which only showed their ignorance of mankind, and total unfitness to guide during the stormy days of a revolution.[1]

[1] Montjoye, ii. 64, 65. Campan, ii. 246. Lac. i. 267, 269. Weber, ii. 225, 226. Hist. Parl. xvi. 461, 463.

99. Desperate fight in the Place Carrousel.

Meanwhile the new municipality, organised by Danton and Robespierre, was directing all the movements of the insurrection. A formidable force occupied the side of the Place Carrousel next the Louvre, and numerous pieces of artillery were pointed against the palace, the defenders of which were severely weakened by the detachment of the

Swiss guard and the Royalist battalions who had accompanied the King. The *gendarmerie à cheval*, posted in front of the palace, had shamefully quitted their post, crying, "Vive la Nation!" the National Guard was so divided as to be incapable of action; the cannoniers had openly joined the enemy; but, with heroic firmness, the Swiss guard remained unshaken in resolution amidst the defection of all around them. After the retreat of the King, however, these brave men were left without any orders in the most dreadful of all situations, threatened by thirty thousand armed insurgents, in a state of unprecedented exasperation, in their front, and yet with too strong a sense of honour to recede. The insurgents, led by Santerre, and preceded by fifty pieces of artillery, now advanced against them at the Carrousel. Their officers anxiously asked for orders: "Not to let yourselves be forced," was the reply of the Maréchal de Mailly. Meanwhile the porters at the gates of the railing were so intimidated, that they opened the royal doorway to the Marseillaise, who rushed up the great stair sword in hand, massacred five Swiss guards who opposed resistance, and ascended to the Royal chapel. Whilst the struggle was going on, one of the Swiss officers tried to address the insurgents, but frightful howlings drowned his voice. A minute after, the bands of Santerre fired a volley at the Swiss and the grenadiers of the Filles de St Thomas, who immediately returned the fire, and the action became general.[1]

[1] Récit de Col. Pfyffer, Col. de la Garde Suisse. Weber, i. 552, 563. Hist. Parl. xvi. 455, 456. Deux Amis, viii. 181, 182.

100. Massacre of the Swiss.

Never was seen, in so striking a manner as then appeared, the superiority of order and discipline against the greatest numerical amount of physical force. The Swiss troops, firing from the windows, speedily drove back the foremost of their enemies; immediately after, descending the staircase, and ranging themselves in battle array in the court of the Carrousel, by a heavy and sustained fire they completed their defeat. The insurgents, recently so audacious, fled in confusion as far as the Pont Neuf, and many never stopped till they had reached their homes in the faubourgs. Seven guns were taken and brought back by the Swiss to the foot of the great stair. Three hundred horse, at that critical moment, might have saved the monarchy. Had the eighteen hundred of the constitutional guard been there, the victory would have been com-

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plete. But the heroic defenders of the palace, few in number, and destitute of cavalry, did not venture to follow up their victory beyond the Carrousel; the populace gradually regained their courage when they perceived they were not pursued, and a new attack, directed by Westerman, was prepared under cover of a numerous artillery. The Marseillaise and Breton troops returned in greater force; the Swiss were mown down with grape-shot, and their undaunted ranks fell in the place where they stood, unconquered even in death. In its last extremity, it was neither in its titled nobility, nor its native armies, that the French throne found fidelity, but in the freeborn mountaineers of Lucerne, unstained by the vices of a corrupted age, and firm in the simplicity of rural life.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 271, 273. Toul. ii. 252, 253. Deux Amis, viii. 182, 183. Hist. Parl. xvi. 456. Weber, ii. 563.

101. Capture and sack of the palace.

At this critical moment, when the Swiss, still unconquered, were nobly combating where they stood, M. D'Hervilly, who with heroic courage, and in the midst of a thousand dangers, had penetrated from the hall of the Assembly to the scene of conflict, with orders from the King to terminate the resistance, reached, blinded and wounded, the foot of the great stair, and gave them orders to cease firing, and withdraw to the Assembly. "Yes, brave Swiss!" cried the Baron de Veomenil, "go to save your King: your ancestors have often done so." Conceiving they were called elsewhere to defend the person of the monarch, the Swiss drummers beat the "assemblée," and the faithful mountaineers took their places in their ranks with the precision of a parade, under a terrible fire of grape and musketry. They withdrew under the archway of the Tuileries, and bent their course by the terrace of the Feuillants towards the Assembly. But the loss was dreadful as they crossed the gardens. The pursuers, emboldened by their retreat, pressed them on all sides with a murderous fire, to which the Swiss, now in serried ranks, could make no reply. Three hundred fell in a few minutes. Soon it was no longer a battle, but a massacre; the enraged multitude broke into the palace, and cut down every one found within it; the fugitives, pursued into the gardens of the Tuileries by the pikemen from the faubourgs, were unmercifully put to death under the trees, amidst the fountains, and at the feet of the statues.[2] Some miserable wretches climbed up the marble monuments

[2] Scott's Paris Revisited, 291. Personal knowledge. Récit de Pfyffer. Weber, ii. 564, 565. Duval. Souv. de la Terreur, ii. 124, 125. Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 276.

which adorn that splendid spot; the insurgents abstained from firing lest they should injure the statuary, but pricked them with their bayonets till they came down, and then murdered them at their feet; an instance of taste for art, mingled with revolutionary cruelty, perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world. During the whole evening and night, the few survivors of the Swiss guard were sought out with unpitying ferocity by the populace, and wherever they were found, immediately massacred; hardly any escaped, and those that did so, owed their lives almost uniformly to the fidelity of female attachment.

102. Dethronement of the King.

While these terrible scenes were going forward, the Assembly was in the most violent agitation. At the first discharge of musketry, the King declared that he had forbidden the troops to fire, and signed an order to the Swiss guards to stop the combat, but the officer who bore it was slain on the road. As the firing grew louder, the consternation increased, and many deputies rose to escape; but others exclaimed, "No! this is our post." The people in the galleries drowned the speakers by their cries, and soon the loud shouts, "Victoire, victoire!—les Suisses sont vaincus!" announced that the fate of the monarchy was decided. In the first tumult of alarm, the Assembly published a proclamation, recommending moderation in the use of victory. A deputation from the new municipality shortly after appeared at the bar, demanding that their powers should be confirmed, and insisting on the dethronement of the King, and the immediate convocation of a National Convention. They were received with thunders of applause, and said, with a stern voice, "Pronounce the dethronement of the King; to-morrow we will bring the act in form. Pétion, Manuel, and Danton are our colleagues; Santerre is at the head of the armed force." Other deputations speedily followed, pressing the same demands, and enforcing them with the language of conquerors. Yielding to necessity, the Assembly, on the motion of Vergniaud, passed a decree, suspending the King, dismissing the ministers, and directing the immediate formation of a National Convention. The municipality was irresistible: it had usurped the sovereignty of the state, and the legislature was only a puppet in its hands.[1]

August 10.

[1] Hist. Parl. xvii. i. 54. Moniteur, Aug. 11. Mig. i. 195. Toul. ii. 252, 256. Deux Amis, vii. 186, 192. Lac. i. 272.

The secret committee at the Hôtel de Ville, who organised

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103. Who were the leaders of the insurrection.

this insurrection, and directed its movement after the new municipality was installed in power, consisted of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, Manuel, Panis, Osselin, Marat, Freron, Tallien, Duplace, Billaud Varennes, Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, Durfort, Cailly, Chenier, Leclerc, and Legendre. Chabot and Bazire were deeply implicated in the previous proceedings; but they were in the Assembly, and not in the insurrectionary committee. This list is important in a general point of view—it demonstrates that the Girondists, though they concurred in the previous steps of the conspiracy at Charenton which organised the insurrection, yet took little part in its execution. Some were apprehensive of proceeding to such extremities, or had become alarmed at the conduct of their Jacobin allies: others had not energy enough to engage in the active part of the strife: many wished only to intimidate the crown, by the threat of insurrection, into restoring them to office and the direction of government. The insurrection of 20th June was their work, and illustrated their designs and objects; the revolt of the 10th August was the work of the Jacobins, who had already passed them in the career of revolution, and never rested till they had brought them all to the scaffold.[1]

[1] Hist. Parl. xvii. 54. Toul. ii. 257. Peltier, Rév. de 10 Août, 74, 79.

104. Frightful massacres by which the victory of the insurgents was stained.

Imagination itself can conceive nothing so dreadful, as the vengeance which the infuriated and victorious mob took on the remnant of the Swiss guard which survived the action, and the whole Royalists and faithful National Guards who had combated in defence of the palace. An immense multitude of above thirty thousand persons, all armed and in the most vehement state of excitement, broke into the palace, ransacked every room, or pursued with relentless fury the Swiss, who, now broken and dispersed, were seeking refuge singly, or two and three together, in the adjoining houses and streets. Almost all the Royalist nobles in the palace were massacred. Pursuing them from room to room, they broke open all the doors, smashed to pieces the mirrors, ransacked the cellars, pillaged the furniture, and strewed the floors with dead bodies. The whole valets and porters who did not succeed in throwing themselves out of the windows, were put to death.[2] In half an hour the palace was in flames; the savage multitude attacked the fire brigade, which was

[2] Deux Amis, viii. 186, 187. Prudhom., Crimes de la Rév. iv. 68, 69. Duval, Souv de la Terreur, ii. 126, 129.

hastening to extinguish the conflagration, and it was only by reiterated orders from the Assembly that they were at last suffered to advance, and succeeded in putting it out.

105. Abominable cruelty of the women.

Fiends in the form of women were here, as ever in the Revolution, foremost in deeds of cruelty. With inexpressible fury they threw themselves on the wounded Swiss; cut their throats as they lay bleeding on the ground; tore out their hearts and their entrails, which they carried about in triumph on pikes, with the gory heads, through all the adjacent streets. The Cour des Suisses was entirely covered with the mangled remains of these noble defenders of the monarchy, weltering in a sea of blood, and mutilated by French women in a way which civilised depravity, joined to savage barbarity, could alone have conceived. Nor did their ferocity stop there. They cut off legs and arms of the dead Swiss, roasted them, and ate cutlets made of the flesh: while others stripped the bodies naked, anointed them with oil, and threw them into huge frying-pans, to serve as a repast to a circle of cannibals.* Almost all the Swiss porters in the hotels of the city were massacred by savage bands who traversed the streets after the action was over. Above five thousand persons perished in this dreadful massacre, among whom must be included two hundred of the insurgents, who died of drinking the intoxicating liquors in the cellars of the palace.[1]

[1] Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, ii. 129. Deux Amis, viii. 186. Prudhomme, Crîmes de la Rév iv. 67, 69.

The 10th August was the last occasion on which the means of saving France were placed in the hands of the King; but there can be little doubt that, had he possessed a firmer character, he might even then have accomplished

* "On a vu des femmes dépouiller, égorger, des Suisses désarmés, leur mutiler tous les membres, leur arracher les intestines, et leur couper les parties viriles, qu'elles portaient ensuite au bout d'une pique."—*Histoire de la Révolution, par Deux Amis de la Liberté*, viii. 186. (A Republican work.)

"Le sang ruissait partout. Dépouillés aussitôt qu'égorgés, ces corps sans vie ajoutaient à l'horreur de leur aspect le spectacle des nombreuses mutilations, que la pensée peut comprendre, mais que la pudeur défend de retracer. Et c'étaient des femmes qui avaient exécuté sur ses cadavres là étendus ces dégoûtantes mutilations."—DUVAL, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, ii. 129. (An eyewitness.)

"Des femmes ivres coupaient les génitoires d'un Suisse, et les enveloppaient dans un mouchoir pour les porter chez elles.—D'autres femmes graissirent des cadavres nuds, les exposèrent au feu des cuisines, et dans leur brutale ivresse, se vantèrent d'avoir accommodé un Suisse comme on apprête un maquereau.—La plupart de ces atrocités furent commises par des femmes. On invitait ses amis, comme les sauvages d'Amérique, avec les mots, 'Ici au soir nous mangerons un Jésuite.'"—PRUDHOMME, *Crîmes de la Révolution*, iv. 69. (A contemporary Republican writer.)

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106. Small additional force which would have saved the monarchy.

the task. The great bulk of the nation was disgusted with the excesses of the Jacobins, and the outrage of the 20th June had excited an universal feeling of horror. If he had acted with vigour on that trying occasion, repelled force by force, and seized the first moment of victory to proclaim as enemies the Jacobins and the Girondists, who had a hundred times violated the constitution,—dissolved the Assembly, closed the clubs, and arrested the leaders of the revolt, that day might possibly have re-established the royal authority. But that conscientious prince never imagined that the salvation of his kingdom was indissolubly connected with his private safety ; and he preferred exposing himself to certain destruction, to the risk of shedding blood in the attempt to avert it.* Nothing can be more certain, than that if the other half of the Swiss guard who lay at Ruel and Courbevoie had been brought up to the scene of action, the insurgents would have been defeated ; and the same result would have happened if the faithful constitutional guard had remained, or even if the nine hundred *gendarmerie à cheval* had proved faithful to their oaths.[1]

[1] Dumont, 438.

107. Reflections on the fall of the monarchy.

It is not at the commencement of revolutionary disturbances that the danger to social happiness is to be apprehended, but after the burst of popular fury is over, and when the successful party begin to suffer from the passions to which they owed their elevation. The 10th August did not come till three years *after* the 14th July. The reason is evident : in the first tumult of passion, and in the exultation of successful resistance, the people are in good-humour both with themselves and their leaders, and the new government is installed in its duties amidst the applause and hopes of their fellow-citizens. But, after this ebullition of triumphant feeling is over, come the sad and inevitable consequences of public convulsions—disappointed hopes, exaggerated expectations, industry without employment, capital without investment. The public suffering which immediately follows the triumph of the populace, is

* " A cet instant quand les Suisses déblayent la Cour du Carrousel, si le Roi, monté à cheval, précédé et suivi des Suisses et des Grenadiers Nationales, eut parcouru les environs du chateau, son trône existerait peut-être encore, la monarchie constitutionelle était maintenue, et les conjurés n'avaient que la fuite pour éviter l'echafaud ; mais il était à l'Assémblée."—*Deux Amis*, viii. 183.

invariably and incomparably greater than that which stimulated their resistance. Capital, the most sensitive of created things, declines any investment; credit is annihilated; and the mass of the people, who are sustained only by the combined efforts of both, are speedily reduced to starvation. The ablest Republican writers confess "that one half of the misery which desolated France during the Revolution, would have overwhelmed the monarchy."[1] This suffering is inevitable; it is the necessary consequence of shaken credit, invaded property, and uncontrolled licentiousness; but coming, as it does, in the train of splendid hopes and excited imaginations, it occasions a discontent and acrimony in the lower orders, which can hardly fail of producing fresh convulsions. The people are never so ripe for a second revolution, as shortly after they have successfully achieved a first.

1 Mig. i. 127.

108. The middle orders begin a revolution, but the mob finish it.

It is the middle ranks who organise the first resistance to government, because it is their influence only which can withstand the shock of established power. They accordingly are at the head of the first revolutionary movement. But the passions which have been awakened, the hopes that have been excited, the disorder which has been produced in their struggle, lay the foundation of a new and more dangerous convulsion against the rule which they have established. Every species of authority appears odious to men who have tasted of the license and excitement of a revolution; the new government speedily becomes as unpopular as the one which has been overthrown; the ambition of the lower orders aims at establishing themselves in the situation in which a successful effort has placed the middle. A more terrible struggle awaits them than that which they have just concluded with arbitrary power; a struggle with superior numbers, stronger passions, more unbridled ambition; with those whom monied fear has deprived of employment, revolutionary innovation filled with hope, inexorable necessity impelled to exertion. In this contest, the chances are against the duration of the new institutions, unless the supporters can immediately command the aid of a numerous and disciplined body of men, proof alike against the intimidation of popular violence and the seduction of popular ambition.

The event had already clearly proved, that the constitu-

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109.
The Constituent Assembly had destroyed the elements of freedom in France.

tion of 1791 was inconsistent with monarchy; for despite all the efforts of Louis to abide by its spirit, it was destroyed in less than a year after its institution. Subsequent events have not less clearly demonstrated that it was inconsistent with public freedom; and that the ruthless spoliation of the Constituent Assembly had destroyed the elements of freedom in France. Previous to the Revolution, the provinces maintained a long and honourable struggle with the crown for the national liberties, and foremost in the contest were to be seen the most illustrious of the aristocracy of France. The parliaments, both of Paris and the provinces, derived their chief lustre from the consideration, character, and importance of their members, and it was by their influence and example that the whole nation was stimulated to the resistance which ultimately led to the Revolution. But since the destruction of the aristocracy, nothing of the kind has occurred. France has invariably submitted without a struggle to the ruling power in the capital, and whoever obtained the ascendancy in its councils, whether by the passions of the populace or the bayonets of the army, has ruled with despotic authority over the remainder of the kingdom. The bones and sinews of freedom were broken when the aristocracy was destroyed. Louis XV. and his ill-fated successor found it impossible to control the independent spirit of the provincial parliaments, but Napoleon had no more obsequious instruments of his will than in the Conservative Senate. The passions of the multitude, strong and often irresistible in moments of effervescence, cannot be relied on as permanent supporters of the cause of freedom; it is a hereditary aristocracy, supported when necessary by their aid, which alone can be depended upon in such a contest, because it only possesses lasting interests which are liable to be affected by the efforts of tyranny, and is influenced by motives not likely to disappear with the fleeting changes of popular opinion. Had the English Puritans confiscated the property of the aristocracy in 1642, a hundred and forty years of liberty and glory would never have followed the Revolution of 1688. It was not Napoleon who destroyed the elements of freedom in France: he found them extinguished to his hand—he only needed to seize the reins so strongly fixed

on the nation by his revolutionary predecessors. There never was such a pioneer for tyranny as the National Assembly.

110. Errors of the Allies, which led to these events.

The error of the allied sovereigns at this period, and it was one fraught with the most disastrous consequences, consisted in attacking France at the period of its highest excitement, and thereby converting revolutionary frenzy into patriotic resistance, without following it up with such vigour as to crush the spirit which was thus awakened. France was beginning to be divided by the progress of the Revolution; the cruel injustice of the Constituent Assembly to the priests had roused the terrible war in La Vendée, when the dread of foreign invasion for a time reunited the most discordant interests. The catastrophe of the 10th August was in a great degree owing to the imprudent advance and ruinous retreat of the Prussian army: the friends of order at Paris were paralysed by the danger to the national independence, the supporters of the throne ashamed of a cause which seemed leagued with the public enemies. Mr Burke had prophesied that France would be divided into a number of federal republics; this perhaps would have happened, but for the foreign invasion which soon after took place. The unity of the republic, the triumphs of the consulate, the conquests of the empire, were accelerated by the ill-supported attacks of the Allies. France, indeed, like every other revolutionary power containing the elements of military strength, would ultimately have been driven into a system of foreign aggression, in order to find employment for the energy which the public convulsions had developed, and alleviation of the misery which they had created; but it is extremely doubtful whether, from this source, ever could have arisen the same union of feeling and military power which sprung up after the defeated invasion of the Allies in 1792. In combating a revolution, one of two things should be done; either it should be left to waste itself by its own divisions, which, if practicable, is the wiser course, or attacked with such vigour and such a force, as may speedily lead to its subjugation.

If there is any one cause more than another, to which the disastrous progress of the Revolution may justly be ascribed, it is the total want of religious feeling or control,

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111.

Fatal effects of the want of religious principle in France.

in many of the ablest, and almost all the most influential, of its supporters. It was the absence of this check on the base and selfish feelings of our nature, which precipitated the revolutionary party in the outset of its career into those cruel and unjust measures against the nobles and clergy, which excited the cupidity of all the middle orders in the state, by promising them the spoils of their superiors, and laid the foundations of a lasting and interminable feud between the higher and lower ranks, by founding the interests of the latter upon the destruction of the former. The dreams of philosophy, the dictates of enthusiasm, even the feelings of virtue, were found to be but a frail safeguard to public men in the calamitous scenes to which the progress of change speedily brought them. In this respect the English Revolution affords a memorable contrast to that of France; and in its comparatively bloodless career, and the abstinence of the victorious party, save in Ireland, from any of those unjust measures of sweeping confiscation which have proved so destructive in the neighbouring kingdom, may be traced the salutary operation of that powerful restraint upon the base and selfish principles of our nature, which arises from the operation, even in its most extravagant form, of religious feeling. Mr Hume has said, that fanaticism was the disgrace of the Great Rebellion, and that we shall look in vain among the popular leaders of England at that period for the generous sentiments which animated the patriots of antiquity; but, without disputing the absurdity of many of their tenets, and the ridiculous nature of much in their manners, it may safely be affirmed, that such fervour was the only effectual bridle which could be imposed on human depravity, when the ordinary restraints of law and order were at an end; and that, but for that fanaticism, that revolution would have been disgraced by the proscriptions of Marius, or the executions of Robespierre.

The elevation of public characters is often not so much owing to their actual superiority to the rest of mankind, as to their falling in with the circumstances in which they are placed, and representing the spirit of the age in which they have arisen. The eloquence of Mirabeau would have failed in rousing the people on the 10th August; the energy

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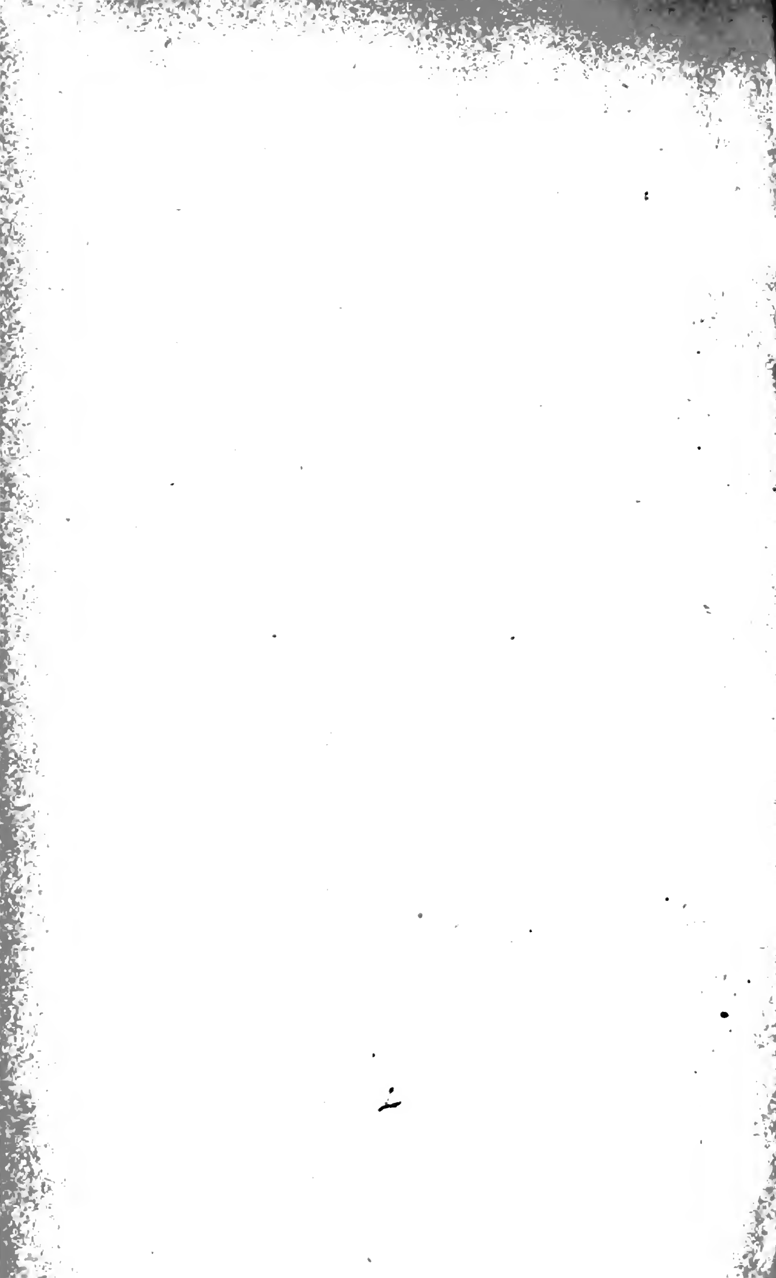
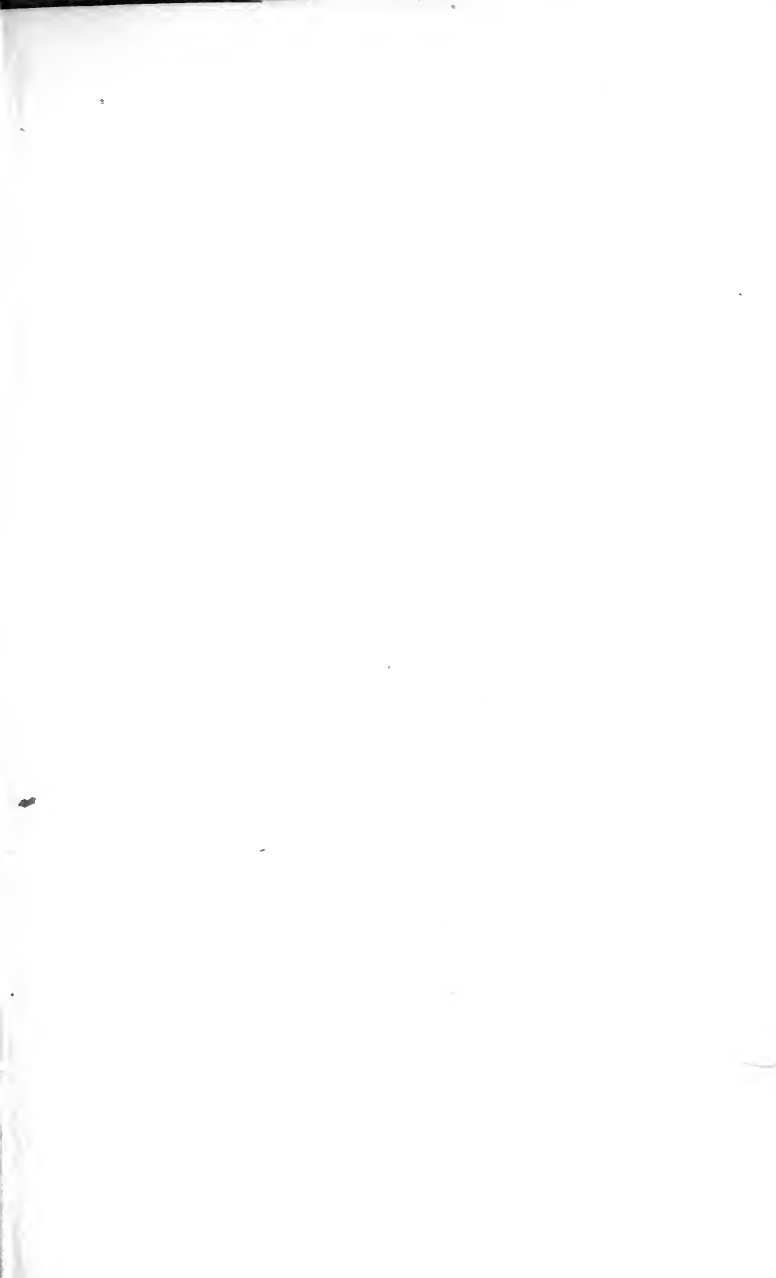
112. Coincidence of the successive leaders of the Revolution with the characters of its stages.

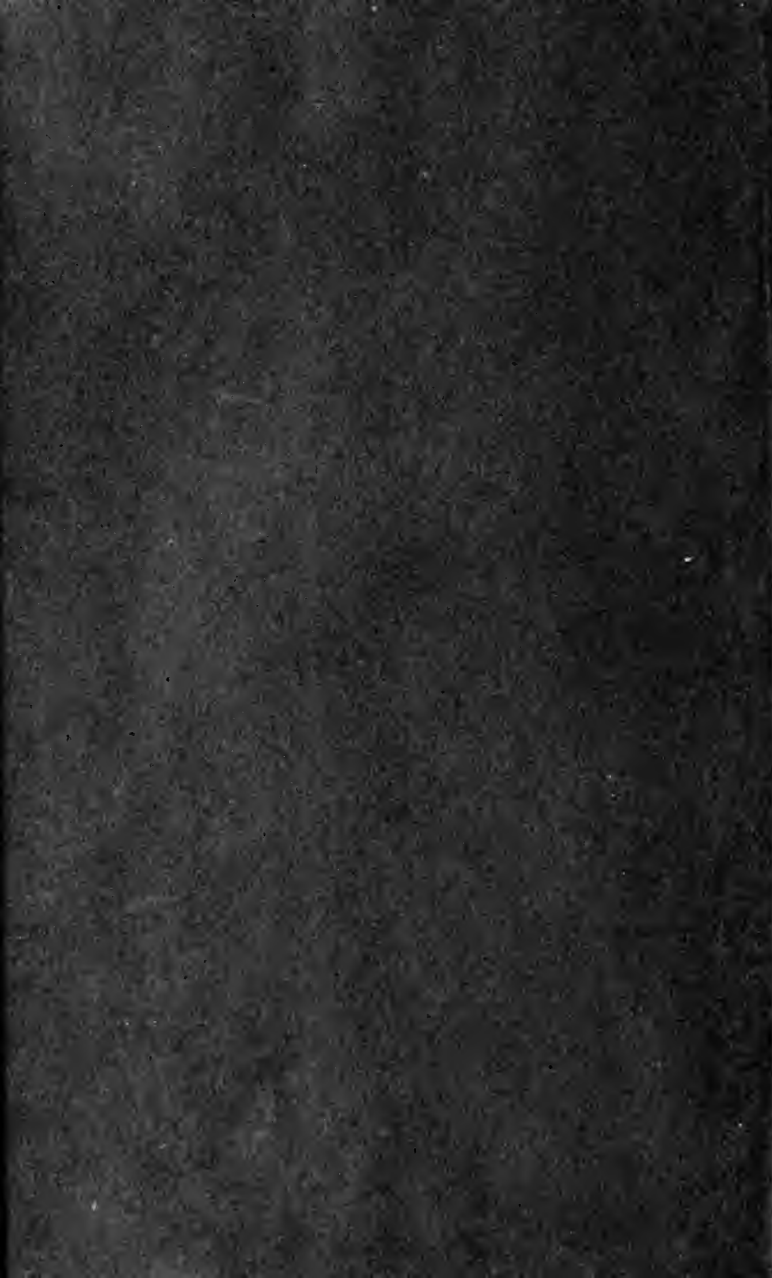
of Danton would have brought him to the block in the commencement of the Revolution; the ambition of Napoleon would have been shattered against the democratic spirit of 1789. Those great men successively rose to eminence because their temper of mind fell in with the current of public thought, while their talents enabled them to assume its direction. Mirabeau represented the Constituent Assembly: free in thought, bold in expression, undaunted in speculation, but tinged by the remains of monarchical attachment, and fearful of the excesses its hasty measures were so well calculated to produce. Vergniaud was the model of the ruling party under the legislative body: republican in wishes, philosophic in principle, humane in intention, but precipitate and reckless in conduct, blinded by ambition, infatuated by speculation, ignorant of the world and the mode of governing it, alike destitute of the firmness to command, the wickedness to ensure, or the vigour to seize success. Danton was the representative of the Jacobin faction: unbounded in ambition, unfettered by principle, undeterred by blood; rising in eminence with the public danger, because his talents were fitted to direct, and his energies were never cramped by the fear of exciting popular excesses. It is such men, in every age, who have ultimately obtained the lead in public convulsions; like the vultures, which, invisible in ordinary times, are attracted by an unerring instinct to the scene of blood, and reap the last fruits of the discord and violence of others.

END OF VOLUME II.

EDINBURGH: BALLANTYNE AND HUGHES.







Robarts Library
DUE DATE:
Aug. 11, 1991

Fines increase 50¢ per day

Return all currently overdue books before September 3, 1991 when the new fine rate of 50¢ per item per day takes effect.

This new rate will apply for all overdue days including those prior to September 3, 1991.