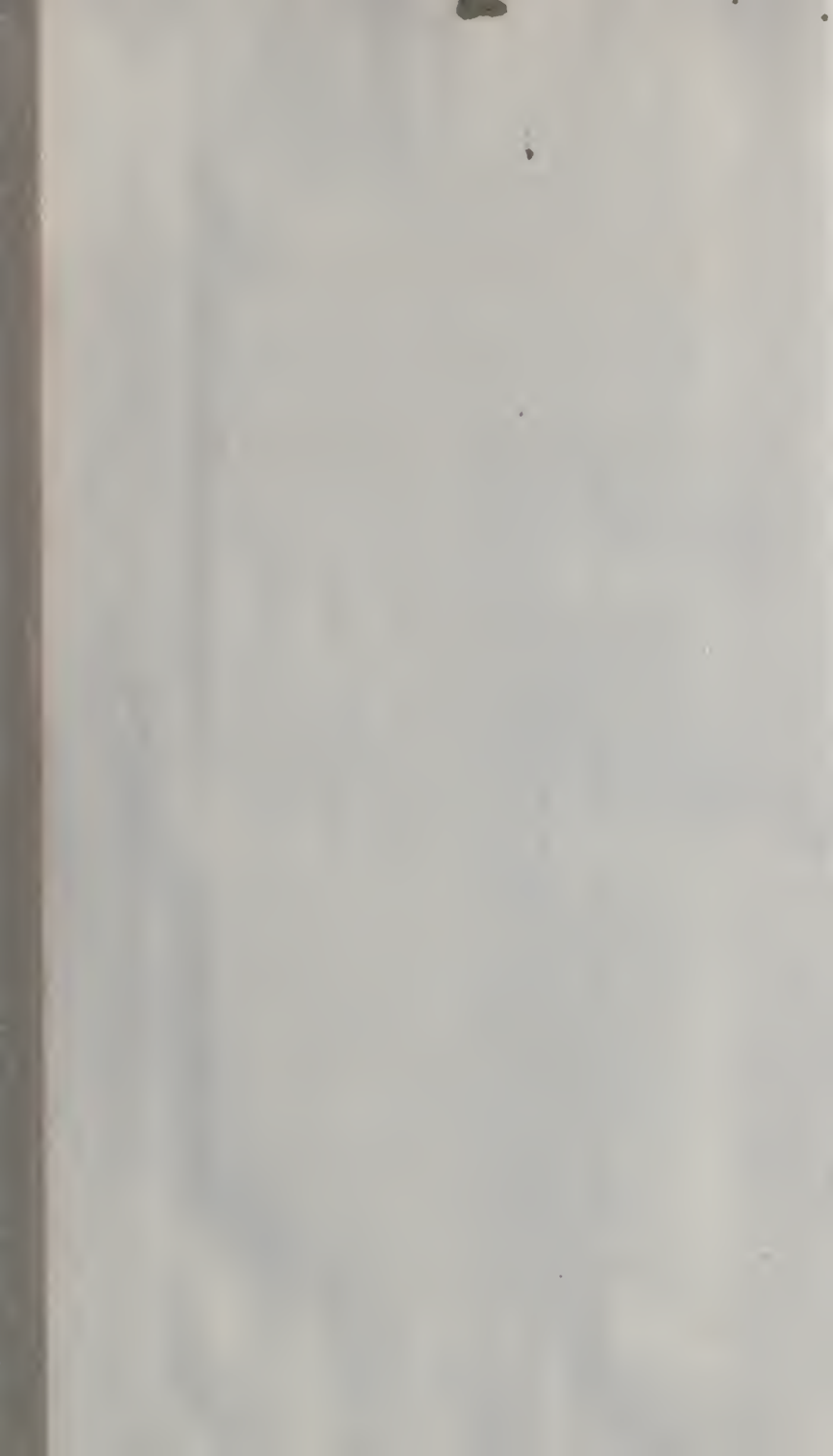


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AN
HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION
FROM ITS
COMMENCEMENT
TO THE
YEAR 1792.

Il *Buon* si perdé

Talor cercando il *Meglio*.

Metastasio, Ipermestra, Act. II. Scene I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite Burlington House,
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HISTORICAL SKETCH.
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

AMIDST the innumerable Publications which the French Revolution has occasioned, I have long wished to see a concise historical statement of the principal facts, and of the Constitutional questions and disputes which led to that awful and unparalleled event. But as I have wished and waited in vain, and as most of the ingenious writers who have lately addressed themselves to the English nation, have preferred eloquent declamation or metaphysical discussion of abstract Rights to plain history and chronology,

B

logy, I have at last been tempted to take up the pen, and engage for the first, and probably the last time, in that field of literary warfare, to which my temper and my situation are equally opposite, and in which I think myself obliged to seek the protection of inviolable concealment: an impulse—perhaps, too romantic—but an impulse of duty has urged me on, and I have thought that there were some periods so momentous, that the weakest and most retired member of society was called forth into action, and was particularly obliged to draw away the veil of illusion from the eyes of the multitude.

If my strict secrecy with regard to myself should excite doubts of my sincerity, I shall endeavour to prove it, by composing this sketch chiefly of extracts from the most approved French writers, and by advising my readers not to trust to Mr. Burke, or to me, or to Dr. Priestly, or to Dr. Towers, but to study the French accounts himself, or else to suspend his opinion on this dubious transaction.

But that I may not assume the praise of more impartiality than is really my due, I
must

must confess, that after following with attention the progress of the Revolution, I do heartily espouse the greatest part of Mr. Burke's sentiments, although some of them are carried a little too far.

It has happened unfortunately in this business, that the private enmity which Mr. Burke has drawn upon himself by former political quarrels, has indisposed many against the most evident truths, if they fall from his pen, or from one of his adherents. I too, have frequently disapproved his sentiments; I too, could enter into personal contest; I could ask Mr. Burke whether he does not see that this Revolution which he abhors, is the natural offspring of that *American Revolution*, which he approved and patronized? But all personal considerations, all needless retrospect ought to be banished from a dispute of so extensive and serious a nature. The feelings of individuals ought to be spared; it is their public writings, not their private actions, which lie before the tribunal of the public. Since I began this pamphlet, Dr. Price has paid the debt to nature, but his famous sermon and its appen-

dix remain behind, and I hope it will not be thought ungenerous sometimes to criticise them.

The French writings which I shall often have occasion to quote, are as follows :

“ Essai Historique sur l’Histoire des Comices de Rome, des Etats-Generaux de France, et du Parlement d’Angleterre.”

A book written with a portion of learning and philosophy, but with an evident partiality to the *monied* above the *landed* interest. The author endeavours frequently to prove, that great landed proprietors are the most vicious of mankind, and that the vices of men possessed of great personal wealth become trifling in comparison. From various passages it may be collected that his moral and religious principles are not very sound. But this discussion is foreign to the present subject. I have particularly mentioned this book because it confirms Mr. Burke’s system, that the jealousy of *monied men* against *landed proprietors* has had a great share in this Revolution. To me, one half of the new French laws prove that unhappy jealousy; especially the introduction

roduction of *gavel kind*, or equal division of all property, *real* as well as *personal*, which, if ever carried to the height that was first proposed in the Assembly, *will make it almost impossible for the same estate to remain two generations in the same family.* But to return to the list of authorities :

“ Histoire de la Revolution et de la Constitution Française.” A book violently democratic.

The “ Procedure Criminelle du Chatelet,” on the transactions of the 5th and 6th of Oct. 1789.

“ Calonne’s pamphlets in favour of the “ Ancient Government.”

“ L’Ami du Roi,” a history violent and partial to the Court, and intolerant towards Calvinists, but full of curious facts as far as it goes.

The “ Mercure de France,” the literary part of which is carried on by Marmontel, la Harpe, Chamfort, Berquin, and Framery ;

some of whom are men of great distinction in the literary world, and this half is exceedingly anti-aristocratic. The other half of this compound work, the historical and political part, is written by a M. Mallet-du-Pan, a native of Geneva, born a republican, but partial to a limited monarchy. At the first opening of the States, he was also an anti-aristocratic, but since the complete triumph of the democratic party he has espoused the cause of the vanquished, and censures the behaviour of the conquerors almost as strongly as Mr. Burke.

All the works of M. Mounier and of Lally-Tolendal, principal leaders of the moderate party, especially their respective *Exposés de leur Conduite*, and Mounier's *Observations sur les Etats Generaux*.

From some of these books may be collected the little that is now to be known of the ancient Constitution of France, and it appears to be a subject involved in greater obscurity than the Constitution of most other European nations. It is only clear that the States-General, whenever they did assemble,
were

were composed of three chambers, who had a right to deliberate separately, although they might sometimes forego it; the deputies from the Clérge, the *Noblesse* or Nobles, and the *Tiers-Etats* or Commons. Once for all it is necessary to observe, that whenever the word *Nobles* is used, I shall include under that denomination those two classes whom we are accustomed to separate by the words *Nobility* and *Gentry*; and that although I shall often use the word Commons as more intelligible to English ears, yet it is not the proper technical French term. It is certain that the Nobles and Clergy composed the General Assembly long before the Commons were admitted under the name of *Tiers-Etat* or *Third Estate*. The first clear evidence of the admission of the Commons is in the reign of Philip le Bel, about the year 1301.

The original rulers of Europe, after the destruction of the Roman Empire, were independent soldiers, who held lands by the tenure of military service performed to a chief whom they elected, and whom they obeyed no farther than suited their own

convenience. From this root are derived, even to this day, our European ideas of nobility. Mirabeau has told us in a pamphlet called "A Letter to the Bishop of Langres," that *Kings created Nobility*. The contrary position is the truth. *Nobles first elected Kings*: take as an instance the form of inauguration of the old Kings of Arragon by their Nobility; "We that are your equals, chuse you for our King, on condition that you maintain our Rights."

The ages of this military aristocracy bear the name of feudal times, and were so fruitful in violence and disorder, that some corrective quickly grew necessary. The clergy profiting by the religious fears of their masters, were soon admitted to a share in their Legislative Assemblies. The elective chief grew insensibly into hereditary absolute Kings, whilst their turbulent Nobles deeply felt that regal power was an invasion of their ancient independence. The Kings, jealous of Nobility, endeavoured to raise the people from that oppression in which merchants, farmers, artificers, had long been held by a haughty and victorious fol-

soldiery ; and to Kings in most countries (though perhaps not in England) is owing the first admission of the Commons into Legislative Assemblies. But throughout Europe the idea remained fixed in the breasts of the Nobles, that *they* were as the parent stock from whence all other power was derived, and whenever they did meet in general Assemblies, a distinguished and an independent share in the government was always claimed on their side, and ceded by the other branches of society. Such a form of government and such prejudices cannot, perhaps, be justified by the strict rules of philosophy, but the error (if it be one) has prevailed from the Euxine to the Atlantic, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the limits of the Polar Circle. . Therefore I confess it to be my general system, that the Revolution of France, which aims *at once* to extirpate this wide-extended prejudice from the minds of Frenchmen, nay of Europeans, is a most rash, precipitate, and dangerous measure. Philosophers should have been contented at first with the extirpation of despotism ; and in these days of commerce, expence, debt, credit, and paper-money,

Nobility would soon have descended quietly to its proper level.

That Constitution of three independent chambers who have each (to use an ancient word new vamped up) a *veto* on each other, that Constitution so detested by the French and vilified as a political monster, is or has been the constitution of almost every country in Europe, even of those that hitherto had thought they enjoyed freedom. I am far from bestowing praise on so complicated a government, but I must doubt whether it was lawful to overturn it by calumny, sedition, rapine, and murder, for the sake of establishing a Constitution of very dubious tendency. Four *vetos* (including the royal veto) are certainly too many, but a Constitution so simple as to admit of *no veto* is thought by many to be much worse, and by none more so, than by the author of the "Essais Historiques," that vehement enemy of Clergy and Nobles: he says,* "Whatever be the Constitution of the political body, that machine stands in need of a

* Essais Hist. vol. ii. p. 212.

“ *regulator* which may check the rapidity
 “ of its motion and maintain an equilibri-
 “ um between all its parts.” He reasons
 afterwards for sixteen pages upon this idea,
 and justifies the French *Parlemens*, or Courts
 of Law, for usurping this necessary office
 of a regulator, when it could not be exercised
 by any other body of men. Emboldened
 by this example, I shall use sometimes the
 word *regulator* and sometimes *veto* to ex-
 press the same idea, for the sake of their
 conciseness.

England has happily escaped without convulsions from this multiplicity of *vetos*, and reduced its Legislative Assembly into two distinct portions. But even here that phrase consecrated in our law, that the Parliament is the * representative of *all the estates* in the kingdom, reminds us of a time when there were *Three Estates* in England as well as other countries. That day, whenever it was, on which the Bishops descended from their independent pretensions and sat along with the Barons in the King's Great Council ;

* See it lately used in the vote on the Regency, Dec. 16th, 1788.

that

that day still more important and still more obscure, when the lesser Nobles, or Gentry, condescended to become the representatives of the boroughs; those days, if they could be remembered, would more deserve to be celebrated by *jubilees* than the *Revolution* itself; for to *them* it is owing that we have been able to attain a free Constitution, without sowing the seeds of perpetual hatred between the descendents or representatives of those classes into which society was divided during the feudal times.

England was at different periods so distracted by civil commotions, arising from a disputed succession, or from religious opinions, that it has gained the reputation of a turbulent country. But it is a singular fact not enough observed by some historians, that many of those great changes which have drenched and may again drench Europe in blood, have taken place in England silently and imperceptibly.

There is but one short instance of a *direct levelling insurrection*, that of Wat Tyler in
the

the reign of Richard II.* From that period to the days of Elizabeth, the slavery of the peasants, commonly called *Villainage*, was extinguished little by little with the free consent of their masters, and so far from being repealed by express law, the old statutes relative to *Villainage* still remain in our law books; but happily there are no persons to whom they apply. The final renunciation of the clergy to the important right of taxing themselves in convocation, and their acceptance in its stead of the right of voting for knights of the shire, was adjusted so *very* silently *indeed* after the Restoration, that some have doubted whether it ever received the express sanction of the legislature.

The gradual progress of that mixture of the different ranks of society which distinguishes England from most other European kingdoms, has been discussed both by M. de Lolme and Dr. Miller; and to their works the reader should apply. Perhaps the for-

* The revolt of Jack Cade was a political contrivance of the House of York.

mer lays a little too much stress on the tyranny of William the Conqueror, which forced the barons to pay court to the people, and Dr. Miller, on the other hand, has too much excluded it from his system.

From these premises I would infer that Mr. Burke has not enough considered the obstacles that lay in the way of the French nation before they could have given themselves a *British Constitution*, arising from the rooted antipathies and prejudices of different classes of citizens, which acted strongly upon French minds and less forcibly upon English ones. But I agree with him, that they might have fabricated a better machine even from the bad materials which lay before them, and above all, that their Constitution need not have resembled a *watch without a regulator*.

I somewhat differ from Mr. Burke in the very severe censure which he passes on their singular mode of representation, in which the body of the people are no otherwise concerned than to chuse electors, who have absolute power to chuse the people's representatives.

sentatives. It is certainly liable to this great defect, that the deputy hardly knows whether he is properly answerable to his *immediate* or his *remote* constituents; but it might, with * some additional precautions, be made a barrier against that venality which has hitherto disgraced all popular representation, and it seems a necessary barrier against that excess of democratic principle which in general pervades the French Constitution. But it is somewhat strange that neither Mr. Burke nor Dr. Price should have discovered, that this representation so vilified by the first, so admired by the last, is no new invention of modern philosophers, but the *ancient mode of Election* used in France, at least since the days of Charles the VIII.

For my authority I shall again quote the *Essais Historiques*, † which were published before the present States General were elected :

* Perhaps it would be necessary to shut up electors as soon as chosen, in the same manner as jury-men.

† Vol. ii. p. 189.

“ This

“ This is the manner, in which the elec-
 “ tions of deputies are generally speaking
 “ carried on in France, for there are in some
 “ places trifling variations which it would
 “ be tedious to relate.

“ At the end of high mass or of vespers
 “ the *Procureur Fabricien*, (N. B. the
 “ French names of offices must be retained,
 “ for we have no precise equivalent) as-
 “ sembles in the church all the inhabitants
 “ of the parish, and the king’s letter of con-
 “ vocation is read to them.

“ The assembly elects one or two depu-
 “ ties, and they draw up the *Cabier*, or me-
 “ morial of grievances. Every peasant,
 “ every individual in the assembly has a
 “ right to mention whatever he dislikes, and
 “ whatever he wishes to see reformed, and
 “ the memorial of each parish is compiled
 “ from all these separate observations.

“ The deputy chosen by the parish goes
 “ on the appointed day to the court of the
 “ judge, to whose *jurisdiction* his parish be-
 “ longs. He has a right to be attended by
 “ the

“ the notary and *Proctreur Fiscal* of his
“ parish, in order that these men, less ig-
“ norant than himself, may, if it be neces-
“ sary, speak in his name, and support the
“ rights of his constituents; they may be
“ called the deputies assessors and cannot
“ give their votes. This deputy finds at
“ the court of his judge or *Bailli*, all the
“ other deputies of the parishes who belong
“ to the same jurisdiction; he also finds
“ all the ecclesiastics and all the gentlemen
“ who inhabit within the limits of the same
“ jurisdiction.

“ The *Bailli* reads to them all, the king’s
“ letter of convocation. The ecclesiastics
“ claim their right to form a separate cham-
“ ber to proceed to the election of their de-
“ puty, and draw up their memorial: the
“ gentlemen make the same demand, and
“ the *Bailli* grants it. From this moment
“ the three orders are divided into three
“ different chambers. The *Bailli* assists at
“ the election of the ecclesiastics, his lieu-
“ tenant at that of the gentlemen, another
“ judge at that of the commons.

“ The deputies of all these parishes elect
“ a new deputy, who may be considered as
“ the general representative of all the pa-
“ rishes of that particular jurisdiction. From
“ the separate *Cashiers* or memorials of
“ these parishes is formed a general memo-
“ rial for the whole of the jurisdiction. So
“ here is for one jurisdiction, three depu-
“ ties, and three memorials, that is to say,
“ one for each order.

“ The three deputies carry separately
“ the memorial of their respective orders
“ to the *Great Bailliage* to which their re-
“ spective *jurisdiction* belongs. At the
“ great *Bailliage* they meet the three de-
“ puties of each of its subordinate jurif-
“ dictions. There all these deputies united
“ perform the same operation which had
“ been performed in those inferior *Bailliages*.
“ A messenger comes from the bishop, in-
“ viting the ecclesiastics to repair to the
“ episcopal palace, there to elect their de-
“ puty and draw up their memorial. The
“ nobles also form a separate chamber.

“ All

“ All these deputies of the little Bailliages
“ chuse each a deputy in their respective
“ order, and compile afresh all the memorials
“ (which were already extracted from the
“ memorials of the parishes) to form one ge-
“ neral memorial for the great Bailliage.

“ Finally, the three deputies of the great
“ Bailliage, one ecclesiastic, one gentleman,
“ one commoner, appear in the States Ge-
“ neral, and carry thither the three memo-
“ rials of their respective orders, as they
“ were compiled at the great Bailliage.

“ Thus it is plain that the deputies who
“ meet in the States General, are only the
“ representatives of the deputies of the lesser
“ jurisdictions, who were themselves only
“ the representatives of the deputies of pa-
“ rishes.”

I am afraid this long detail will have ap-
peared tedious, and what is worse not very
intelligible, although translated as carefully
as possible; but at least it may prove, that
the system of composing a National As-
sembly of the *Representatives of Represent-*

tatives, has existed for ages in France, and therefore was not first suggested by Mr. Hume in his idea of a perfect commonwealth (as Dr. Price thinks.) The author of the *Essais Historiques* does not seem much to approve of the system, and in the form in which he has detailed it, is certainly too complicated. The National Assembly have had the merit of simplifying this form, and reducing the three * gradations into two, and Mr. Burke has been led into an error when he supposes, that there are *three elections* before the member returned to the National Assembly is really chosen. Still, however, there are *two*, and that circumstance gives him a right to say that the French Constitution is the very reverse of ours.

But a more important consideration presents itself—namely, the little connection that often appears between the effects of institutions when they are delineated in theory; and when they are realized in practice. Dr. Price says of this form of election,

* See Dr. Price's Appendix to his sermon, p. 43, 44.

† See Mr. Burke's Pamphlet, p. 247.

“ that

“ that a method better fitted to exclude
 “ corruption, and to collect into a legisla-
 “ ture as much as possible of the wisdom
 “ and ability of a kingdom, can hardly
 “ be conceived. Compared with such a
 “ representation; what is our own?” The
 comparison is too humiliating.

The real fact unfortunately is, that all the
 ancient French States General, chosen ac-
 cording to this perfect method; never passed
 one good law, redressed one vexatious
 grievance, or did the least service to the
 kingdom, by the confession of the most
 zealous defenders of French liberty; whilst
 our British Parliaments, chosen according to
 a method so disgraceful, that Dr. Price
 thinks “ it renders our boast of a free consti-
 “ tution ridiculous, must be allowed, by
 “ their worst enemies, to have done *some*
 “ *good, at least, in their generation.*”

The anonymous French writer of *Essais*
Historiques attributes, with many plausible
 arguments, the total nullity of the French
 States General, to the distinction of *Three*
Orders. Still, according to Dr. Price's sys-
 tem,

tem, the men of most wisdom, ability, and virtue, amongst the nobles and clergy, stood the best chance of being returned by so excellent a mode of representation; but if such men did ever meet in the States, their wisdom most strangely evaporated in frivolous, unmeaning, and obstinate disputes.

Let us consider, on the other hand, the States of the Belgic Provinces, who meet according to this exploded system of three separate orders, and are chosen by more imperfect forms, and we shall find that they had (through a hundred changes of government) still retained power and union sufficient to preserve their constituents in the possession of a moderate degree of liberty, and to render those Provinces happy. The *innovating despotism* of Joseph II. having attempted to change their old constitution, and provoked them to revolt, they are, at present, involved in disputes, little less violent than those of France; and it is equally difficult to say where they will terminate.

Now, let us suppose, that the *innovating republicanism* of modern philosophers had partly

partly obtained its great end, and had convinced the English that their Constitution hardly deserved to be called free, and that, in consequence, one universal National Assembly was called upon *Salisbury Plain* to fix on some new mode of representation. Up starts an adherent (let us suppose) of Mr. Flood, and proposes, as his principal did in the House of Commons, that all who pay taxes, should vote for Members of Parliament, and quotes the French Constitution, without sufficiently understanding it. From the opposite side rises a Member of the Revolution Society, who had been taught his lesson more perfectly under the late Dr. Price; * Sir, you are mistaken! he exclaims, the all-perfect French Constitution admits every one who pays taxes to vote; but *not* for Members of Parliament. No; the French are too well acquainted with the manner in which our Westminster Elections are carried on. In order to avoid rioting, drunkenness, and bribery, the people only choose *electors*; and after that are as little concerned in choosing *Representatives* as in making laws.

* See Price's Appendix, page 44.

Why then, the d—l take French liberty !
 It is no liberty at all ! cry two or three
 rough *John Bulls*. It is the only true li-
 berty, vociferate the scholars of Dr. Price !
 The dispute grows hotter every moment ;
 from words they proceed to blows ; the Af-
 sembly is converted into a field of battle ;
 the victorious side brands the vanquished as
 rebels and traitors ; and the vanquished
 brand the victors as tyrants and murderers.

This seemingly fantastical picture is, alas !
 but too seriously the compendious represen-
 tation of most reformations which are not
 carried on in a slow and gradual manner.
 There may be abuses in our parliamentary
 system ; but two such violent and opposite
 schemes of reform, as Mr. Flood's and Dr.
 Price's, are enough to disgust moderate men
 from attempting alterations, and to make
 them exclaim with Hamlet,

Let us rather bear the ills we have,
 Than fly to others we know not of.

I will not presume to apply those lines to
 the French nation : they had more ills than
 the

the English to bear, as will appear by the sequel of my narration.

The general result of all the revolutions in French government is thus shortly stated by the author of *Les Essais Hist.*

“ In England, the Monarchs opposed
“ the liberty, both of the noblemen and of
“ the people; whilst the French Monarchs
“ invited the people to freedom, in hopes of
“ opposing them to the Grandees. The
“ Kings in England were (in a manner)
“ pressed and crushed between the people
“ and the great Lords; whilst in France,
“ the great Lords were crushed between
“ the Kings and the people.”

This statement is confirmed by the authority of all the best French writers, and it gives an explanation of that superstitious attachment to their monarchs, which has so long been the characteristic of the French nation, and on account of which it has often been ridiculed by those who do not consider how long the effects of popular traditions
continue,

continue, after their causes have ceased, and even after their history is almost forgotten.

The gradations of the imperfect and obscure constitution of France, may be also collected from the same author. Under the two first races, the nobility and clergy were alone convoked, if we except an imperfect and doubtful attempt of Charlemagne to call in assessors chosen from the people. Saint Louis admitted into the public assemblies some deputies from the towns. Philip le Bel, in 1302, called deputies from almost all the principal towns, and regularly established the *Third Estate*. Charles VIII. in 1484, added deputies from the inhabitants of the country, elected in the popular manner lately described. It does not appear that so important a change produced any disputes or oppositions. Perhaps it may be inferred that the right of sending deputies to the States was not then considered as an important privilege. The old States General preceding 1484, had been always weak and inefficient, and had never been able to assert that exclusive right of granting supplies, which

which Philip le Bel, in 1314, had almost invested them.

The States General of 1484, are the only ones in which French authors acknowledge some good intentions to have existed, and some efforts to have been made to redress abuses. Even these, at last, were disgraced by a violent quarrel which broke out between the different Orders, on the question of paying the expences of the deputies. However, they demanded that the States General should meet every two years, and that no money should be levied in future without their consent. This request, which would have given liberty and happiness to France, was never once thought of after they parted; a circumstance, which French historians attribute to the claims of each separate Province to grant subsidies for itself.

The five States General which followed present nothing but scenes of discord and fanaticism, both civil and religious. The last States General were called in 1614, and, like all the rest, broke up abruptly, from the quarrels and animosities of the three
Orders.

Orders. After this period they never were called by the Kings, who grew more and more absolute, and even scarcely seem to have been desired by the people.

In this interval the * Parlemens, who were, at first, only courts of justice, gradually assumed some of the rights which should have belonged to the representatives of the nation: especially the Parlement of Paris, which assumes the lofty name of *Cour des Pairs*. All who were created *Ducs et Pairs* by the King, had a right to take their seat in this great court of justice, and considered themselves as the King's hereditary counsellors, (though the King but seldom *troubled* them with asking their advice.) This pretension always excited the envy of the inferior nobility, and particularly of the gentry, so that the class of nobles was divided against itself, as well as at variance with the other Orders. No law was considered as obligatory, till it was registered by the Parlement of Paris, which

* The French spelling is here preserved, to avoid confusion with our English Parliaments.

had certainly the right of remonstrance, and which claimed, till it had gone through that form, the right of denying its sanction. The King, on these occasions, used to come in person, and command the law to be registered, which was called holding a *Bed of Justice*, (probably, from the form of the King's seat) and the Parliament used regularly, but in vain, to enter its protest.

In the mean time, the abuse of arbitrary imprisonment, by the King's sign manual, (called *Lettre de Cachet*) had increased to an extraordinary degree. It was the aggravating and peculiar distinction of the despotism of France; and, perhaps, was never carried to so great a height in any European Kingdom, except in Russia. Mr. Burke has not quite taken sufficient notice of this dreadful evil, and his only excuse must be found in his 200th page; where he says, "Upon a free constitution there was but one
" opinion in France. The absolute mo-
" narchy was at an end. It breathed its
" last without a groan, without a struggle,
" without convulsion." Considering despotism as extinct, he might think it of little
confe-

consequence to enumerate the crimes of the dead; but the impression left on the minds of sufferers, was too deep to be easily eradicated.

The latter years of the reign of Louis XV. were, from his own weak and sensual conduct, and from the violent actions of his Ministers, regarded with a mingled sensation of detestation and ridicule. He died, unlamented, in 1774, and was succeeded by the present Lewis XVI. his grandson, scarce 20 years of age, improperly educated, but possessed of an excellent heart; and a head, not incapable of application, but, unhappily, incapable of steadiness and perseverance. The young King gained an early popularity, by recalling the Parlemens banished by his grandfather, and by the aversion which he shewed to vice and expensive follies; but he did not sufficiently restrain the vices or follies of his courtiers, his brothers, and his Queen. Mr. Burke might have censured the ferocity with which the Queen has been treated, without having become the declared knight errant of a Princess, decried not only by one single calumniating pamphlet,
written

written by the * infamous La Motte, but by the general voice of France and of all Europe, till her misfortunes, and the courage with which she has supported them, have redeemed some part of her lost character, and made impartial spectators willing to believe, that her faults were greatly aggravated by the spirit of party. The author of the *Sketch of the last Ten Years* has described so truly the opinions entertained of the private characters of the King, the Queen, her favourites, the Polignacs, the Count of Artois, and the Duke of Orleans, that it is unnecessary to assume the task so painful to a liberal mind of repeating tales of private scandal.

In 1777, the King suffered himself to be led into the treaty with America, and the subsequent war with England; by which the mercantile part of the nation expected to gain millions of money; a speculation in which they have been disappointed. That war with England is justified in the † In-

* See Burke's Pamphlet, page 124.

† Page 18.

roduction to a very democratic book called *Memoires de la Revolution*, as “ *un Coup de*
 “ *politique precieux et hardi*; a valuable and
 “ and bold stroke of policy, which dimi-
 “ nished by at least one third the resources,
 “ power, and strength, of a most formida-
 “ ble neighbour.” Let England remember
 with what enmity democracies can write!

The expences of the American war, joined to the debts of his brothers, which the King was weak enough to pay, exhausted the public treasury. Neckar was put at its head; his aim was popularity; he avoided the odium of new taxes, he made loans, and trusted the payment of their interest to the uncertain resources of economy. He published his famous *Compte rendu*, in which he pretends to demonstrate, that under his administration, the revenues of the State surpassed its expences. It has long been a dispute whether that book contained truths or errors, and whether its author was an able Statesman, or an empiric in politics. Opinion now inclines to the latter side; but, at least, there remains to Neckar the reputation of an honest man, which is only dis-
 puted

puted by a few *bigots* to the opposite *heresies* of despotism and democracy.

He was sacrificed chiefly to the jealousy of the Parlemens, who feared his scheme of *provincial administrations*; but it was supposed that his fall was hastened by the restraints he endeavoured to impose on the prodigality of the Queen and the Comte d'Artois. From that moment they became the objects of popular aversion; and Necker was regretted as another Sully. Fleury and d'Ormesson, who succeeded him, could not gain the public confidence; and Calonne, who succeeded d'Ormesson in 1783, was universally disliked, except by courtiers. His character is thus drawn in the *Histoire de la Revolution*:* —“ A man who dilapidated his
 “ own patrimony—a man inconsiderate by
 “ character, immoral upon principle; who,
 “ grown old amidst amorous and courtly
 “ intrigues, loaded alike with debts and
 “ with infamy, came to *devour* the finances
 “ instead of *administering* them.”

* Page 18.

I translate this character, because it holds out an awful lesson to princes, and affords a striking proof, that a man of pleasure, a man of expence, will never be trusted as a statesman. Of all the crimes charged upon M. de Calonne, none have yet been proved, but that kind of immoral life, which by *courtesy* of *England*, is called a gay life, and that indulgence to his friends, which, by a similar *courtesy*, adopts the name of good nature; but these have sufficed to make him universally hated.

Calonne, for a few years, flattered the nation with promising accounts of its situation, till in the year 1787, the King, by his advice, convened an assembly of *Notables*. The *Notables* were certain members of the three estates, named expressly by the King, and not by the free choice of their respective orders; they had ever been considered in France as a legal assembly, though not equal in authority to the States-General.

To this assembly Calonne disclosed the fatal truth, that the expences of the State surpassed its revenues by near 100 millions
of

of livres, and that the national debt had indeed been funded, but that there was no money to pay the interest of the loans. Necker's *Compte rendu*, was at that time universally credited; and the astonishing contrast struck the most insensible with horror. It was quickly spread abroad that Calonne, the Polignacs, the Queen, and the Comte d'Artois, had spent that immense sum in the gratification of their vices.

The vast expences of the English war, subsequent to Necker's dismissal, were forgotten; because the people knew that war to be their own choice, and did not care to take any part of the blame on themselves, when two or three faulty characters were at hand to bear the whole disgraceful burden. Here began the first injustice of the people, and the first fatal mistake of the Nobles quickly followed.

Calonne proposed certain taxes to supply the *deficit*; and also proposed the reformation of certain unpopular abuses. But every scheme that came from his odious suggestion was disliked; and the Nobles objected to his

proposed territorial tax, because their lands had hitherto been almost exempted from taxes. In shewing some unwillingness to contribute their share of expence, they imitated the example of the Nobles of Denmark in 1660, and they have suffered accordingly. Between the Nobles, the Clergy, and Calonne's other enemies, a party was formed, who compelled the King to dismiss him. M. de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, (now Archbishop of Sens) took his place, and soon made himself more detested than all his predecessors. He too was a man of pleasure, and distinguished at Court by his intriguing temper.

He proposed taxes very similar to those of Calonne; the Notables artfully excused themselves from the unpopularity of passing them, because they were not the Representatives of the Nation.

The Notables were peaceably dismissed, the edicts were sent to the Parlement of Paris, who, for the first time in the course of ages, declared themselves incompetent to register taxes, and demanded a meeting of the
the

the States-General. The angry Minister banished the Parlement to Tours, then, terrified by the popular fury, recalled them, only to enter into new quarrels, and gave hopes of the States-General without convoking them. He and the Garde des Sceaux, M. de Lamoignon, concerted a plan of reform of civil and criminal jurisprudence, which they hoped would become popular; and a plan of a new body, composed chiefly of Peers and great Officers of State, who, under the name of *Cour Pléniere*, should register edicts instead of the Parlement. The latter scheme was detested, the former was disregarded, the King was seduced into the measure of banishing the Duke of Orleans, and imprisoning Monsieurs d'Epresmesnil and Goelard, who were seized in the midst of the Parlement. This was the first palpable act of despotism which had stained his reign, and most of the misfortunes that have followed may be traced to this original.

The Gentlemen of Brittany now threatened a rebellion, public credit began to fail, the city of Paris grew riotous, the Archbishop,

bishop, in the summer of 1788, was terrified into resignation, and advised the King to recall M. Necker, who was received with universal joy, and who decisively fixed the meeting of the States-General for April 1789.

The dawn of liberty now appeared in France, after a night that had lasted for ages; but it was instantly overclouded by storms and tempests, which did not take their rise from the atmosphere of a Court, but from the fermentation kindled and diffused through every part of the nation.

If the three orders of Clergy, Nobles, and People, had remembered the mischief and slavery produced by their ancient quarrels, had mutually agreed to give up a few points to each other, and to form a constitution that should defend them in future from Kings and Ministers—they would have set an example that might, indeed, have fired and illuminated all Europe, and England might, perhaps, have blushed to see herself outdone. Instead of such noble behaviour, they immediately broke out into quarrels, and

and though all sides have deserved censure, yet it seems to me that the first marks of obstinate violence were given by the people.

It cannot be denied, that the Commons had several just causes of complaint against the Nobles, but they openly shewed a disposition to redress their grievances by force rather than by gentle means. Their complaints may be ranked under the following heads :

1st. The Clergy and Nobles were exempted from some taxes paid by the People, particularly the land-tax called *Taille*, which, from the oppressive mode of levying it, was considered as a great and unequal burden. On this account they were called the privileged classes—*Classes Privilegiés*. They had fatally shewn, in 1787, a disinclination to abandon their pecuniary exemptions ; they were now beginning to repent of their error, but repentance did not come in time to save them from punishment.

2dly. The estates of the Nobles were still, in some measure, governed by the

feudal system. *Vassalage* was abolished in the greatest part of France, but it subsisted under the name of *Droit de Main-morte* in Franche-Comté and a few other places: but there were rents paid in some places by the peasants, as a compensation to their lords for having abolished vassalage ages ago; and modern philosophy had taught, that it was a grievous oppression to pay a price for the enjoyment of the rights of men. There were also many different kinds of feudal services or rents paid to compensate for them, which were very liable to be abused, but which many *Gentilhommes*, of small fortunes, thought they could not give up without ruining their families. I trust that every dispassionate Englishman will acknowledge, that this was a wound in the commonwealth which ought to be touched with a most delicate hand, because it affected the rights of property. Would it be just, would it be even popular in England to abolish at once all the prerogatives of the Lords of the Manor, with a whole train of barbarous phrases, Courts-Baron, Courts-Leet, Heriots, Deodands, all derived from Gothic legisla-

legislation, and which possibly may be sometimes abused ?

No doubt the abuses were much greater in France, from the resentment expressed against them by the People ; but those abuses will not overturn my principle, that it required a long term of years and many successive States-General to have gradually abolished these evils, and enriched the tenant without impoverishing the landlord. If I may presume to offer my opinion, as the nation gradually became more wealthy, the States-General might have set apart annually a portion of the public treasure to buy up and extinguish these latent causes of discontent between the Nobles and the People, and have bestowed marks of distinction on those who relinquished them voluntarily.

In the present moment, when each side was asserting exorbitant pretensions, one set of writings made these tenures so odious, that the Nobles thought their interest obliged them to declare, that they held all the feudal rights to be inviolable property, and thus
their

their unpopularity was considerably augmented.

3dly. A more unjust though a more latent hardship had been gradually increasing, even within the last hundred years. It had been the policy of Richlieu, and of Lewis the XIVth. to draw the Nobility and even the Gentry from their own estates, to attend on the person of their Sovereign. This policy carried too far, had made the Nobles spend all the money, drawn from their country tenants, at Paris and at Versailles. Being excluded from all professions but the military, and continually engaged in the pleasures of an expensive Court, they were unable to support themselves without the favors of that Court, which were dispensed in pensions to the great families, and in military rank to the inferior gentlemen. It had not been originally the wish of the French Kings to employ none but Nobles : the Duc de St. Simon blames Lewis the XIVth. for being jealous of the very ancient families, and chusing his Ministers of State amongst men of inferior birth. But the influence of solicitation and intrigue had too much

much in the last reign confined all military and naval preferment to the class of *Gentilhommes*. The *Parlemens*, who boasted a Nobility of their own, had in some places attempted a regulation of admitting none but *Gentilhommes* into their body, which excited even still greater odium.

These grievances, which were founded upon temporary regulations and not upon positive law, would easily have been redressed, and many words need not be spent on the subject. Preferment would have showered down upon the Third Estate, from the moment that they had become of political importance.

But no political importance could satisfy the Commons, so long as the Nobles and Clergy enjoyed any importance separate from theirs; nor could they devise any means of redressing their grievances, but by forcing those two classes to *amalgamate* (if I may use the word) entirely with their own. This system acquired new credit from the abilities and virtues of M. Mounier, a native of Dauphiné, a Member of the Tiers-Etat, probably

bably bred to the law, and Secretary to the new-formed States of Dauphiné. He became a principal instrument, and at last a conscientious victim of the French Revolution.

The work called *L'Ami du Roi et des François*, too partial to the old government, is compelled, by truth, thus to praise the man whom yet it wishes to condemn:— After describing the selfish ambition of Mirabeau, he says, * “ M. Mounier brought
 “ also his plan of government to the Af-
 “ sembly, but that plan was his own work,
 “ the work of an unspotted soul, and of a
 “ noble genius ; it was virtue which had
 “ formed this brilliant dream, and it was
 “ by virtuous means alone that Mounier
 “ intended to realife it.”

This brilliant dream consisted partly in consolidating the Three Orders into One by common consent ; and he had the astonishing success to execute it in the States of Dauphiné, which had been permitted to

* *Ami du Roi.* Page 56.

meet after a very long cessation. Proud of this glorious victory, he advanced boldly to the new field of battle, and thought he could conquer prejudice by the mere force of reason, in a great kingdom as well as in a small province.—His future disappointment affords a most awful warning to all speculative politicians.

He might have very soon observed an omen of that disappointment: the Province of Brittany had always enjoyed a little more freedom than the rest of France. The Tiers-Etat now grew discontented, and demanded that their States should be altered after the model of Dauphiné. The Gentlemen who probably thought that this was a bad reward for their opposition to M. de Brienne's tyranny, obstinately refused to comply, and claimed the constitution which had existed from time immemorial. During the whole spring of 1789, Brittany was almost in a state of civil war.

Mounier's principal work is entitled, "Nouvelles Observations sur les Etats-Generaux;" it contains an historical account

count of the old States-General, and his outlines of a plan for a new constitution. In the first part he endeavours to shew that, in some of the earlier meetings of the States, and particularly in that of 1784, the Orders of Clergy, Nobility, and People, sat and voted in one house. Unluckily, the anonymous author of the *Essais Historiques*, writing on the same side, assumes quite different premises, asserting, that none of the ancient States had voted in one Assembly, and *therefore* none of them had ever done good.

No Englishman, and very few Frenchmen, are competent to the decision of this question.—If I could venture to offer a very doubtful opinion, it would be, that in the ancient States-General, the Orders deliberated separately, but that the *Cabier*, or Memorial of Grievances, was presented in their joint names.—Whatever be the truth of this obscure point, it is allowed on all hands, that the five States-General between 1484 and 1614, sat and voted in three separate houses; and this, said the partizans of the Clergy and Nobility, is sufficient to give those

those Orders the right of possession in this valuable privilege.

The plan of government explained by Mounier in the conclusion of his pamphlet, consists of a total amalgamation of the *Three Orders* into One, and a House of Representatives chosen, not by separate classes, but by all the citizens at large, almost as it is now decreed, but with this difference, that he had no intention to abolish hereditary titular honors.

The first States-General he thinks should only consist of one House of Representatives, because a single Assembly is best fitted to establish a constitution which might be lost in the endless disputes between two Houses. But a constitution, he adds, must be preserved by different means from those by which it is established. Therefore, in all future States-General, there must be an *Upper House* to defend Monarchy against the inroads of seditious leaders of faction. This *Upper House* he, indeed, composes in a very Aristocratic style—the Princes of the Blood, the Chancellors of France, a certain number
of

of the *Pairs*, (we have seen their pretensions to a share in the government), some Marshals of France, some Deputies from the Supreme Courts of Justice, were to be its principal members.—He desires, in a note, that his enemies will not compare his Upper House with the *Cour Pleniere* of M. de Brienne. Unfortunately, they were a little alike in their composition, though not in their functions, and that was sufficient to throw all the unpopularity of the one upon the other. Add to this, the jealousy before-mentioned of the lesser Nobles or Gentry against the Dukes and Peers of France.

But, supposing that these particular obstacles had not existed, there were still three leading questions which Mounier (like most men of bright parts) had never staid to ask himself.

1st. Although the amalgamation of the Three Orders into the single class of fellow-citizens of one great empire, be in itself a very desirable measure, yet if it cannot be accomplished without offering violence to one or two branches of the legislature, and shocking the prejudices of thousands, nay of hun-

hundreds of thousands, may it not be attended with evils little inferior to those which France now endures.

2dly. Although one Assembly will more easily settle a constitution than three, is it quite so certain that it will also settle it in a manner that moderate men will deem equitable? After it has tasted the sweets of unrestrained dominion, will it consent to shackle its successors, by creating a new and balancing power in the State? And is it not likely that a great many heads will never comprehend the distinction between the *Assembly* that *creates*, and the *Assembly* that *preserves* a constitution?

3dly. Supposing the Assembly should agree to restrain its successors, who will ensure us that any Royal prerogatives will be left for this subsequent Upper House to watch over and preserve? Who is there that shall hinder this single Assembly, this single Power which can devour every thing, (as Lally Tolendal called it when too late) from removing all the old landmarks of property, and overwhelming the King, the

E

Princes

Princes of the Blood, the Peers, and the Parlemens, in one general ruin.

But it is needless to make remarks upon a *fairy vision* that never could be realized. I have given an abstract of Mounier's work as an abstract of the general principles of the popular authors of that period, when they hoped the King would join them against the Nobles, and therefore inveighed strongly against feudal aristocracy, and were very indulgent towards regal power.

Two great questions were now at issue between the three classes, and the King's *absolute* authority was appealed to by all parties to determine them.

The first and the leading question was this :

Are the Deputies of the three Orders of the State to meet together in one assembly, in which all the concentrated power of the States-General shall reside ? or shall they be divided, as in 1614, into three chambers, through each of which a resolution must be

car-

carried before it becomes the acknowledged will of the States? The first of these alternatives was called, for conciseness, *voting by heads*, “voter par tetes;” the other, *voting by orders*, “voter par ordres.”

The second and relative question was as follows:

Shall the number of the Deputies from each Order be the same as in 1614, that is, nearly three hundred from the Clergy, about as many from the Nobles, and as many from the Third Estate? or shall the Third Estate send six hundred Deputies, whilst the Clergy and Nobles send, as before, about three hundred Deputies each? This latter alternative was called, *the Double Representation of the People*.

Upon the decision of this question depended the value and benefit of the other question to the Third Estate. It was unhappily laid down by all the popular writers, that the three Estates met to quarrel and to subdue one another before they subdued despotism. It was also taken for granted, that the Clergy and Nobility being “*privileged*

“*classes*,” would mostly stand together; and, therefore, if each Order sent three hundred, the Commons would have only three hundred votes against nearly six hundred votes, and then it would be less disadvantageous for the People if the Orders voted in separate chambers as in 1614. But, on the other hand, if the *double representation* was allowed, the Commons would have six hundred votes against the three hundred of each separate Order, and would be equal to the two other Orders joined. The voting *by heads*, viz. in one consolidated assembly, would then decide the victory for the Commons, because it was expected that all their members would hold together, and that some of the Curates would join them.

Necker, skilled in finance and political œconomy, has proved himself unequal to the greater task of political legislation. He was embarrassed with these unexpected difficulties, and yet does not seem to have been aware of the dreadful consequences which might result from them. His own opinion, as to the first question, seems never to have been thoroughly decided; he inclined to the

voting

voting by heads, but yet was unwilling to compel it by arbitrary power. As to the second question, he was more decided on the popular side.

The Parlement of Paris early declared itself for the principle of convoking the States-General according to the regulations of 1614, and by that circumstance lost, in the heated minds of the Commons, all the popularity that it had gained by its resistance to M. de Brienne. M. d'Epresmesnil, especially, was considered, from that moment, as the tool of Aristocracy, and no longer as the martyr of Freedom.

The Comte d'Artois, the Princes of Conde and of Conti, (who now went by the name of the *Triumvirate*) declared themselves strongly for the pretensions of the Nobles, and presented a Memoir to the King, in which the pretensions of the Third Estate were not treated with sufficient respect, although they declared themselves willing to consent to an equalization of taxes, but as a matter of favor rather than of right. The Comte d'Artois probably thought that

two hundred thousand *Gentilhommes*, (for at that number they are in general reckoned up both by friends and by foes) trained to arms, would probably get the better in the event of a civil war, and therefore thought he should acquire the popularity of success. But the idea was so universally impressed, that his profligate life had, in great measure, occasioned the distresses of France, that his name carried along with it a sort of poisonous infection. The Duke of Orleans, in no wise superior to him in purity of morals or in general esteem, yet, as he had never been supposed to receive money from the public treasury, had now an opening to regain popularity, which his friends taught him how to employ. He declared for the *Third Estate*, scattered money amongst the poor of Paris, and became, for a time, *le Roi des Halles*, as De-Rets calls the Duc de Beaufort. (In English we might term it, the *King of Billingsgate*.)

The *Dukes* and *Peers*, glad of the opportunity to take some share in public affairs, addressed a letter to the King, in which they intreated him to receive their solemn resolution :

lution: “Voeu folemnel, to fupport all
 “public taxes and charges, in the juft pro-
 “portion of their fortunes, without any
 “pecuniary exemption whatever;” and
 doubted not but thefe fentiments would be
 expreffed by all the other gentlemen in the
 kingdom.

The Parlement of Paris wifhing to recover
 the affection of the People, about the begin-
 ning of December 1788, affembled in great
 formality, inviting the Princes and the
 Peers (which was always a mark of fome
 important intention) and publifhed a refolu-
 tion, intituled, “*Arreté fur la Situation aétu-
 elle de la Nation,*” which was fuppofed to
 be dictated by M. d’Epremeſnil. It traces
 a general outline of French Liberty, and
 declares, that no *Affembly* could truly be
 called National, if certain eſſential points
 were not granted to the nation, namely,
 The periodical return of the States-General—
 no ſubſidy to be allowed under any pretence,
 if it was not granted by the States;—no
 law to be executed by the Courts of Juſtice if
 the States had not conſented to it:—the ſup-
 preſſion of all thoſe taxes that marked a dif-

inction between the Orders, and their replacement by common subsidies equally imposed on all :—the responsibility of Ministers :—the right of the States-General to bring accusations before the Courts of Justice for crimes that interest the whole nation :—the protection of the liberty of citizens, by obliging every man detained in a Royal prison, to be put into the hands of his natural judges :—and lastly ; the lawful freedom of the Press.*

I believe most Englishmen will think that here was a fair opening towards a plan of liberty, and that such a plan coming from a body which had but lately appeared so highly respected, would have been received with some degree of gratitude, and have become a standard to guide honest and moderate men :—Not in the least !—No body liked this plan : and virulent pamphlets against the Parlement went on as much as ever.

My readers must here be informed, that as the places of Judges in these Parlemens

* See l'Ami du Roi, pages 28 and 29.

were most frequently considered as hereditary from father to son, the *pleading lawyers* could not easily obtain them, and had, therefore, formed a powerful phalanx, determined to ruin the old courts of justice in the minds of the people. Some cases, in which accused persons had been condemned to death without sufficient evidence, had given occasion to just complaints; but on the other hand, the popular lawyers advanced principles which would make it almost impossible to convict criminals. One of these principles was, that the persons actually injured by any crime, must only be allowed to bring their complaint, and not to give their evidence on the trial.* To explain this to Englishmen, by a familiar instance, none of the women, supposed to have been stabbed by Renwick Williams, ought to have appeared at the bar, or sworn to the identity of his person.

I have reserved to this place a remarkable passage of Mounier, in which he lays

* See the Plaidoyers of M. Dupaty, in favor of three men condemned to the wheel for a supposed burglary.

down the following opinion—" Let us
" suppose, that in the ensuing States-Gener-
" al patriotism had strength enough to al-
" low of some useful reforms, notwith-
" standing the separation of the three Or-
" ders, I assert, that if they did not proscribe
" this separation in future, *it would be very*
" *unhappy that they should have produced any*
" *advantages*; their inutility or their quar-
" rels might have shewn us our danger in
" time; but their success would hide the
" precipice into which we were falling.*"

It appears, afterwards, that the precipice which he fears, is a military aristocracy like that of Poland. I may venture to say, that in the present state of Europe, when commerce is as essential as arms to the grandeur of every nation, it would be impossible that an aristocracy of military gentlemen should rise to such a dangerous height; although it is difficult to abolish it in a country like Poland, where it has been the established government from time immemorial.

* See Mounier's *Nouvelles Observations*, page 254.

Let my readers now compare this strong declaration of an individual, at that time very important, with the general contempt shewn to the *Arrêté du Parlement*, and judge whether it be true, as the author of *Temperate Comments on Intemperate Reflections* supposes, that the French would never have thrown themselves into anarchy, if they could have escaped despotism without it. To me it appears that liberty was rejected, nay, detested by the French, if she did not come dressed exactly in the garb in which she had been represented by their speculative philosophers. Mounier has, indeed, become a martyr to his honest obstinacy, for he has rejected a government more democratical than he wished, with the same scorn that he would have rejected a government more aristocratical.

Necker, in the mean time, overpowered with pamphlets, protestations, and *Arrêtés du Parlement*, could discover no better resource than to assemble the Notables, as Calonne had done before him. That assembly met in the months of November and December 1788, and terminated as unfortunately

tunately in the one case as in the other; for it decided, against Necker's will, for the representation of 1614, and yet added no real strength to the party which desired that representation, nor abated Necker's wish to carry, at least, one of the *two points* in favour of the people. His single influence, opposed to the Notables, and opposed, it is said, to almost all the other ministers, determined the King, in the beginning of January, 1789, to issue his decree, which granted to the Third Estate the privilege of *a double representation*, (about 600 members to the 300 of the other two estates) but did not touch on the essential question of one, two, or three chambers. Necker's Memoire, * which finally determined the King, is not much more explicit, but hints, distantly, at the possibility of the union of the three Orders into one assembly. It concludes in this remarkable manner :

“ If this difference in the number of the
 “ deputies of the Third Estate should become
 “ a subject, or a pretence of discord ; if from

* Dated December 27, 1788.

“ private

“ private views there were persons who
“ undertook to weary out the honourable
“ perseverance of your Majesty ; if your will,
“ Sire, is not sufficient to remove those
“ obstacles, I turn my eyes from such ideas ;
“ I cannot give them attention—I cannot
“ believe them : but what advice could I
“ then give your Majesty ? One only ad-
“ vice, and it would be my last—sacrifice
“ the minister who has had the greatest
“ share in this your deliberation.”

The friends of M. Necker applauded this peroration, as an act of the most exalted self-relinquishment, “ *un Devouement Sublime* ;” his enemies called it a ridiculous piece of egotism, and asked whether the removal of one single minister could appease revolts or civil wars, arising from the jarring pretensions of thousands. Without entering into any question personal to M. Necker, it is apparent that the King’s decree tended to make the Third Estate more strenuous in their pretension of consolidating the three chambers into one, because it was now their evident interest, and they might now hope to be supported at Court, whilst yet it did
not

not take away from the Clergy and Nobles one jot of their power or inclination to oppose this re-union, and therefore was more calculated to increase than to diminish the general confusion. I am apt to think it would have been better (as the popular party was willing to allow the King to be a temporary legislator, "*legislateur provisoire*") if the question had been at once decided, and the Clergy and the Nobles had been commanded to sit and vote with the People: but it must be confessed that measure presented many difficulties and dangers; they might have refused to appear in the States, (as actually did happen in Brittany) and defied the King and Commons to make laws without them. By some passages in *l'Ami du Roi*, it should seem that it would then have been the turn of the aristocratic party to have talked of the sacred obligations of a King's *Coronation oath*, which forbids him to infringe the rights of any class of people. On the other hand, the Third Estate, it was feared, might have refused to obey, if summoned according to the regulation of 1614. So inextricable were the difficulties arising from factious violence.

M. Calonne, in a letter addressed to the King, unpopular, like every thing that falls from an unpopular pen, but deserving to be read with attention, * proposes as a plan of conciliation to unite the Nobles and Clergy into one assembly, like the *upper house* in England, leaving the Third Estate by itself, under the name of *House of Commons*.

Lally Tolendal † gives his readers a fuller and a better project, though rather as the suggestion of some worthy friends than as his own. It may be thus expressed; unite the Clergy and Nobility in one house, reduce the seats in this upper house to a number chosen amongst the Clergy by rotation, and in the class of Nobles chosen amongst the elder sons, or amongst the noble possessors of a given quantity of land; let all the other Nobles and Clergy be eligible for the Commons.

We should then, says Lally, have had counterpoises to every power; we should

Lettre au Roi, page 137.

† Memoire de Lally Tolendal, pages 36 and 37.

have escaped this single power which devours every thing; “*cette force unique qui devore tout.*” We should have had the government of England with a better representation of the Commons.

(That better system of representation, I have proved that the French had already, and that they do not owe it to the present revolution.)

Something like the foregoing project is hinted by M. Calonne, but not sufficiently developed.

Calonne is mentioned by Mr. Mitford, at the end * of the second volume of his excellent History of Greece, as the first writer who has discovered the principal secret of the British Constitution, and the true cause of that concord between the gentry and the people, that latent harmony which reconciles our most violent civil dissensions. But it

* From page 671 to page 674.

was previously to Calonne described by Sheridan in his * account of the Revolution of Sweden. To him, and to Mr. Mitford I refer the reader, as I should only weaken their arguments by giving them in any language but their own. The difference between England and France must, however, be summed up in a few words. In England, the younger branches of noble families are mixed with the people; and it is the ambition of the elder branches to have them sit in the House of Commons. In France there was no law which prohibited the *Third Estate* from choosing a *Gentilhomme* for their representative, but an unhappy prejudice had made it a matter of reproach, either for a *Gentilhomme* to offer himself, or for a body of popular electors to choose him as one of the popular representatives. Hence arose that peculiar composition of the Third Estate, that great proportion of lawyers, attorneys, physicians, artists, authors, which surprises Mr. Burke, whilst the chamber of Nobles was full of private gentlemen, who

* See pages 141, 142, and 143.

in England would sit in the House of Commons as knights of the Shire.*

Whether any new regulations proposed by M. Necker could have prevented the sad effects of ancient prejudice, must ever remain *uncertain*; but *certain* it is, that he suggested no laws, and took no precautions which could tend in any degree to promote a spirit of harmony between the Three Estates. In Dauphiny alone did that harmony prevail; but the united States of Dauphiny set an unfortunate example, which did almost as much mischief as the discord which raged in other provinces.† They sent the deputies of Dauphiny to the States-General with positive instructions to secede if it was resolved to vote in three separate Assemblies, and not in one consolidated Assembly.

* If it was possible, which happily it is not, to taint English minds at once with French principles, it is not *merely* our *King*, our *Nobility*, our *Clergy*, it is our *whole body of Country Gentlemen* that would be ruined.

† Particularly in Bretagne, Provence, and Franchecomte. The melancholy details may be seen in the *Hist. de la Revolution*, and in *l'Ami du Roi*.

Mounier in his works endeavours to defend this instruction, (which had probably been drawn up by himself) but the event has determined against him, and has proved that the obstinate virtue of Mounier, and the irresolute yielding virtue of Necker, were equally hurtful to that monarchy which they meant to reform, and much to their own surprise, have overturned. What a melancholy reflection for men of virtue! and what a discouragement to attempt reformations!

The Nobles were enraged at these instructions, and rashly determined to shew a similar obstinacy. In a great number of their meetings, they repeated the same fatal order that their deputies should secede, if the question was carried against them to vote in one consolidated Assembly, and they even bound their deputies by the solemn tie of an oath. This was evidently sending them to begin a civil war, rather than to form a new constitution: the meetings of the Commons were ashamed of going quite so far, but they repeated the most positive

orders to their deputies to insist on one consolidated Assembly.

It is impossible for any Englishman to have studied four or five hundred instructions and memorials from as many elective Assemblies, but if we may believe M. Calonne in his *Etat de la France*, the instructions of the different Orders were all for a *free Constitution*, but for a Constitution essentially different from that which the National Assembly has framed. He asserts, (and it may be collected even from Mounier and Lally*) that the instructions of the *Orders* did not greatly vary, except in that important point of one or three chambers, and in that other delicate question the suppression of *feudal rents* and services. The worst enemies of Nobility have not yet brought to light any *Cabier* in which the Nobles insisted on their exclusive right to military and naval preferments, and several *Cabiers* had expressly renounced their old pecuniary exemptions.

* See L. Tol. Memoire, page 110.

The democratical writer of *l'Histoire de la Revolution** is forced to own, that “ the Nobles and the Third Estate wished equally to be free;” but he accuses the Nobles of “ wishing to weaken the royal power in order to raise a despotic aristocracy.” He brings no direct proofs, however, of this accusation, and I cannot see that it is despotism to defend the rights ensured to you by the established laws of the land; at worst it only shews an obstinate unaccommodating spirit. But it appears from Lally Tolendal that the violence with which the Commons, and the invectives which the popular writers poured against Nobility, had soured the tempers of the Nobles, and made them apprehend thus early the total destruction which has since taken place. In Lally’s speech at the Assembly of Dourdan were these words:†

“ You are deceived, noble citizens, by those who tell you that the Third Estate re-claims justice only to be itself unjust—

* Vol. i. page 144.

† Memoire de Lally, page 13.

“ that when your pecuniary privileges are
“ destroyed, it will attack your honorary
“ prerogatives, and abolish your dignities.
“ This good people, whose defence I as-
“ sume, have not even the idea of such
“ impracticable excesses.” After quoting
his own speech, he exclaims, “ How cruel
“ is the reflection that I did not utter one
“ sentiment which was not just; and yet,
“ that I did not speak one word which is
“ not belied by the event.”

The States had been summoned for the 27th of April, and most of the deputies were assembled on that day at Versailles; but as the numerous deputation from Paris was not yet elected, the King deferred the opening of the States to the 4th of May. The factions who were thus brought to clash together from the different parts of the kingdom, were by this time pretty well distinguished, and ranged under their respective chiefs. They may be classed under *three great divisions*, which were broken into other smaller parties.

1st. The aristocratic party who were resolved to support, at all hazards, the separation of the States into three chambers, and the respective veto of each chamber on the others.

Mess. d'Epresmesnil and Cazales led this party amongst the Nobles, and l'Abbé Maury amongst the Clergy, from his eloquence though not from his rank; for he is universally agreed to be one of their most able *extempore* speakers; a talent which few Frenchmen as yet possess.

This party were supposed to be connected with the detested party of the Comte d'Artois, the Princes of Condé and Conti, the Polignacs, the Queen (influenced by the Polignacs who had long held supreme ascendancy over her) and in short, all the courtiers whose vices and expences were said to have occasioned the misfortunes of the State. I myself believe that it was the violence of the Commons which drove the aristocrats into this *very august*, but in the common opinion, *very bad* company: of this, however, every reader must judge for

himself.* Not one member of the Third Estate ventured to declare himself of this faction.

2dly. The moderate or middle party, who though averſe to the diſtinction of three ſeparate Orders, wiſhed for a *British Conſtitution*, or as that phraſe implies a little *British vanity*, let it be called a *Conſtitution founded on the principle of reciprocal controul*. Mounier led this party in the Third Eſtate, and along with him M. Bergaffe, and M. Malouet, deputy from Auvergne. Lally Tolendal, ſon to the famous and unfortunate Lally, and the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre led this party in the houſe of Nobles, and the Biſhop of Langres was its chief partiſan amongſt the clergy.

The work called l'Ami du Roi, though it diſapproves its principles, conſiders it as a party formed moſtly of virtuous men, and hints, that for that reaſon it ever was and

* A Letter lately published from M. de Polignac, in which he complains of the contempt with which Cazales had mentioned him in a ſpeech, comes in ſupport of my conjecture.

ever would be the least numerous party.* Whoever compares that courtly work with the opposite letter of M. Depont to Mr. Burke, (taking its genuineness for granted) will find that the majority both on the courtly and popular sides, agreed in disliking a close imitation of the British constitution. If the like prejudice should appear in some English writers against the new French institutions, their own example should prevent Frenchmen and their admirers from severely condemning it. Of the five professed adherents to the *British principle of reciprocal controul*, Mounier and Lally are in exile, Clermont-Tonnerre, Malouet and the Bishop of Langres, have only staid behind to experience repeated affronts and ill usage.

In the third place must stand the most considerable and triumphant democratic party, whose leaders are too numerous to recite. The Bishop of Autun, and the curate Gregoire amongst the Clergy, M. Chapelier, a lawyer deputed from Rennes, Bar-

* Ami du Rois, page 56.

nave, a Protestant deputed from Dauphiny, Rabaud de St. Etienne, a Protestant clergyman deputed from Nimes, Pethion de Villeneuve, Charles de Lameth, and Roberfpierre amongst the Commons, may be named as the principal. But it is private and separate views of a subdivision of this party led by the famous Mirabeau, that the royalists attribute most of the cruel scenes which have disgraced the rising liberty of France.

The history of Mirabeau would of itself fill a volume, but I am not well acquainted with its detail, neither do I think that private libels are useful and instructive. From his earliest youth he was distinguished by superior talents, and by the most restless turbulent spirit. One of his enemies, Lally Tolendal, thus indirectly describes his conduct and adventures, (in the Observations sur la Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau au Comité des Recherches.) “ To the former
 “ merit of M. de St. Priest, M. de Mirabeau
 “ proudly opposes the *Donjon* of Vincennes,
 “ and his long confinement in state-prisons.
 “ Imprisonment may not be *singly* a proof of
 “ guilt, but it is certainly not *singly* a proof
 “ of

“ of virtue. No doubt a man may say, I
 “ have been accused, imprisoned, con-
 “ demned, and *yet* I was innocent, and *yet*
 “ I never had left the path of virtue. But
 “ strange would be the reasoning of him
 “ who should venture to say—Paternal re-
 “ sentment fell heavy on my head, my wife
 “ cast me off with horror, my hosts ex-
 “ claimed against my violations of hospitali-
 “ ty, public authority, enforced by my own
 “ relations, secluded me from society, the
 “ tribunals of justice proscribed my person
 “ and condemned my book to the flames:
 “ *therefore* I am a virtuous man, *therefore* I
 “ am a meritorious citizen.

Let us turn from his private life, and
 consider his writings. His *Considerations sur*
les Lettres de Cachet, his *Denonciations de*
l'Agiotage, and his *Doutes sur la Liberté de*
l'Escaut, denote a most violent and male-
 volent temper, even when the cause that he
 defends is good, or at least plausible; but it
 is in his famous Letters written from the
 Court of Prussia, that his character appears
 in its most odious shape. Those Letters
 were published at the time that he offered
 him-

himself as a Candidate for the States, some think against his knowledge and on purpose to disgrace him. He protested against the publication, owning that he had written private letters to M. de Calonne, but pretending that they had received additions and alterations. But as he never vouchsafed to explain what those alterations and additions were, it is not surprising if the world ranked his imperfect renunciation with Voltaire's denials of his impious books, (every one of which Voltaire had notwithstanding written); Mirabeau stands, therefore, accused, and in a manner convicted of ingratitude towards Prince Henry of Prussia, whose favour he enjoyed of servile flattery towards Calonne, and of having deceived the French ministry by wilful misrepresentation, and by a monstrous exaggeration of the King of Prussia's defects, to gratify his own virulence of temper and talents of invective.

He had endeavoured to be elected by his own Order of Nobles, but finding himself rejected and despised, he threw himself on the side of the people, declaimed against all
here-

hereditary honors, espoused the resentments of the *Tiers-Etat* of Provence, could foment or allay at his pleasure, the civil commotions of Aix and Marseilles, and was finally returned member for the *Tiers-Etat* of Aix. An Englishman will not readily blame him for being elected by the Commons, but it was contrary to French prejudices, and his enemies compared him (ingeniously enough) to *Clodius*, who was adopted by a Plebeian, that he might be chosen *Tribune of the People*, and overturn the Roman Republic under the pretence of liberty.

The most curious circumstance in all this transaction is the *excellent judgement* of this new *Sovereign* by *Right Divine*, the *People*, (or rather the *Populace*) who rejecting its former *ministers* for their immorality, chose for its *favorite*, a man as notoriously immoral as the worst of the courtiers, a man who had descended to the base office of a *spy*, a *calumniating spy*!—as Dryden says,

Why! That's a Name abhor'd in Hell!

Prince Arthur, A& III. Scene last.

There

There was, indeed, another *Sultan* by *Right Divine*, the *People of Paris*, which did not at that time enter into the feelings of its *Brother-Sultan of Provence*; Mirabeau was the professed enemy of Necker, and Necker was then the idol of the Parisians. Their affections were however a little diverted by the liberal and hitherto unusual alms and benefactions of the Duke of Orleans. That Prince had for many years been opposed to the Court; his exile during the ministry of M. de Brienne had fixed his wavering resentment, and a private family reason is by many suspected to have confirmed it. A marriage was in agitation between his daughter and the eldest son of the Count d'Artois. The * *Ami du Roi* plainly hints that if that marriage had taken place, it might have prevented some of the misfortunes that have ensued. The King of France had but two sons, the eldest was at that time known to be dying, and the other did not pass for a healthy child. The Comte de Provence had no children, the Comte d'Artois and his sons stood next to

* *Ami du Roi*, page 48.

the succession, and whoever married his eldest son, was then supposed to have a good chance to become a Queen. It was therefore hinted by foreign newspapers, that the Queen broke off the marriage of Mlle. de Chartres, with the intention of giving her own daughter to the Comte d'Artois' son, and thus ensuring that crown to her daughter by right of marriage which women are forbid to claim by right of birth. If this be true, it will account for the mortal hatred of the Duke of Orleans; but we English, who are not governed by the *Salic Law*, will hardly think this supposed project a *very Enormous Crime*: it may be justified by the policy of one of their most beloved Kings, Lewis the Twelfth, who having no sons, gave his eldest daughter to his cousin and heir, Francis the First.

The Duke of Orleans was by this time chosen a member of the States for his own Bailliage of Crepy in Valois. He had got his instructions drawn up in a very democratic style by the Abbe Sieyes, a modern speculative politician, but more respectable than many others of the Duke's associates.

Amongst

Amongst the *least respectable* has been named La Clos, better known as the author of a certain *Notorious Romance*, called *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Mirabeau, conscious that in Paris his own popularity wanted support, attached himself to the Orleans party, and they are all accused by their enemies of having formed a project to extirpate or drive away the present Royal Family, and give the Crown of France to the house of Orleans. It must here be observed, that although the question of deposing kings has been unnecessarily discussed by English Writers, as a question resulting from the French Revolution, yet it has not till very lately been openly mentioned in France. The French in general think it a greater crime to change one Royal Family for another, than the English ever did, or do even at this present hour of loyalty. This prejudice, like many others, may be traced up to important æras in French history, and to the just abhorrence entertained of the wicked attempts to deprive Charles the Seventh of his crown in ancient times, and Henry the Fourth in a more recent period.

If

If it be now asked, what were the probable intentions of the King himself? it must be answered, that as far as conjecture can fathom the human heart, they seem to have been honest and sincere. Lally Tollandal has thus given his opinion ;* “ The
 “ Commons wished to conquer, the Nobles
 “ wished to preserve what they already possessed, the Clergy waited to see which
 “ side would be victorious in order to join
 “ the conquerors.—If any one sincerely
 “ wished for peace, it was the King.”

The author of *the Sketch of the Last Ten Years* has too severely described the King, as “ yielding with ungracious reluctance to
 “ the approaching storm, and consenting to
 “ adopt the humiliating and unwelcome
 “ advice of convoking the States-General.” These words might have applied to the ministry of M. de Brienne, but from the time that Necker was called in, I can see no marks of ungracious reluctance in the King’s conduct. He readily adopted all Necker’s measures without appearing to

* Memoire de L. T. p. 23.

consider them humiliating; he fondly hoped to experience from Necker's wisdom, that tranquillity and happiness which he pathetically told his minister he *had only enjoyed for moments*.* And had not that minister's flattering predictions of tranquillity proved delusive, it does not appear that all the machinations (real or supposed) of his wife and his brother would have shaken his confidence in Necker. The *Courtiers* might (as described in page 116th of that pamphlet) rejoice in the sources of internal discord that were opened in the States, but the *King* is described as sincerely lamenting them by Mounier and Lally, witnesses present on the spot, witnesses who yet were angry at the imprudent measures into which the King was afterwards precipitated. It cannot be supposed that any King could wish to establish a constitution so republican as the present one of France; but he certainly meant to have given them a constitution much more free than his subjects had ever known before:—though perhaps it

* See Necker's Memoire, dated Dec. 27, 1788.

might rather have resembled that of Flanders and Brabant, than more perfect models.

M. Carra in a pamphlet called “Observations Rapides sur la Lettre de M. de Calonne,” after owning that he had once preferred the British form of dividing a Parliament into two Houses, gives as his reason for disapproving it in France,* “The ardour of the French is inconstant in its likings, but obstinate and extreme in its hatreds.”† A remarkable confession this of an *anti-aristocratic* writer! If *that* temper is the true French character, and I believe it is, it wants the very first requisite towards making a good use of unlimited liberty—patience to endure contradiction,—and the French ought to have rested satisfied with a constitution something short of the *Metaphysical Rights of Man*.

But whatever may be thought on that head, I shall ever consider it as an event to be lamented, and as a fatal example to mo-

* Page 63.

† Inconstant dans ses goûts; mais opiniâtre, mais extrême dans ses contestations.

narchs, that the first king who voluntarily offered to relinquish part of his power, should have been *rewarded* with such cruel humiliations.

A particular misfortune aggravated the ill-temper of the people during the months immediately preceding and following the opening of the States ; an uncommon dearth of corn, whether owing to scarcity or monopoly, is an undecided question.—Here the *two* violent factions may be said to *join Issue*, here begin their accusations against each other of every crime that disgraces humanity.

It is a principle laid down by the popular writers,* that the aristocratic party secretly raised disorders to have the pretence of repressing them by force, of assembling troops, and terrifying the representatives of the nation by the *irresistible* argument of cannons and bayonets. The other party cries out as loudly, † that the democratics had formed

* See Histoire de Revolution, vol. i. p. 168.

† See Ann du Roi, p. 92.

a regular plan to frighten all the burghers of the great towns into arming in their own defence, and when once armed, to employ them against the King's troops and all the *Gentilhommes* in the kingdom. Each side (almost in the same words) attributes to the other, forestalling and monopolizing of grain in order to occasion famine, and thus provoke the common people, and of hiring villains in Provence and Languedoc especially, who were guilty (it is said) of more murders, riots, and robberies in one Winter than had been heard of through a long course of years. The first open act of violence committed in Paris, happened on the 27th of April, (the very day that had been first appointed for the opening of the States.) The primary assemblies, as they are called, namely, the assemblies to chuse the electors of representatives, had hitherto gone on peaceably enough in the town of Paris, but accompanied with the most formidable apparatus of military preparation, the guards doubled at every post, with musquets and cannon loaded. These precautions were not then thought criminal, as all the rich citizens dreaded those primary

assemblies, which we have already seen, were constituted on the most democratic plan, and where the meanest individual had a right to give his opinion on national grievances.

M. Reveillon, a very worthy and meritorious citizen, (at the head of a great paper manufactory) had presided, along with a M. Henriot and some other *Notables Bourgeois*, at the Assembly of the *Distrikt St. Antoine*, and was supposed not to have always listened with *christian patience* to the political declamations of some of his workmen. These people, to revenge themselves, spread the false report, that he had proposed to diminish the wages of workmen. On the 27th, the whole tumultuous Fauxbourg St. Antoine was in motion, and burnt Mr. Reveillon's effigy; he applied for succour, a detachment of the French guards was sent him, but, as it proved, too small a one. On the 28th, the insurrection was renewed, M. Henriot and M. Reveillon's houses were destroyed; a large party of the guards at length advanced, and, after bearing for some time a shower of stones and tiles, fired on
the

the ruffians, killed a great number, and dispersed the rest. Reveillon had accused a certain Abbé Roy of forgery, he was now persuaded that his enemy had raised the mob; the Abbé was accordingly taken up, but no fact could be proved against him.

The popular party instantly reported, that this Abbé Roy was a creature of the Comte d'Artois, and had received money from him to hire ruffians. The other party was equally positive that the Duke of Orleans' gold had been employed to raise insurrections, and he complained at the time of these scandalous reports. Each party asserts positively, that wretches, dying of their wounds in the hospital, confessed that they had been hired; but *who* hired them is left in obscurity. The friends of the Court Party say, that the Abbé Roy was as poor and miserable after the insurrection as before, and if he had been an instrument in the hands of powerful princes, it would have become their interest to have mended his fortune.

It is not in the power of any Englishman, who knows the French only through the

medium of books and newspapers, to decide *which* were the *guilty*, and *which* were the *innocent*; or whether a humane hope may be indulged that *all* were innocent, at least of enormous crimes. But honest men, and especially *teachers of Christianity*, ought to be cautious how they bestow unqualified admiration on a Revolution suspected to have been promoted by such execrable means: as, on the other hand, I am very willing to own, that unqualified pity cannot be bestowed on the triumvirate of Princes of the Blood, unless they demonstrate their innocence by proofs as clear as day.

In the beginning of May peace was restored to the city of Paris, but it was a lowering and a dubious peace. It was necessary to put all the Gardes Françoises under arms to ensure the execution of two villains taken in the very act of plunder. A seditious temper still subsisted amongst the mob; women had been taught by this insurrection to forget the timidity of their sex, and mix in scenes of blood, while men were taught to disguise themselves in the dress of women

women to evade the punishment due to their crimes.

Under these sad auspices the States-General opened on the 4th of May; the ceremony was the grandest that imagination can paint, and answered to the most august conception that can possibly be formed:—a whole nation assembled under the eye of one common father, in order to restore their long-lost freedom, and insure their future happiness. But all who knew the unbrotherly dispositions which the different branches of this common family entertained towards each other, must have trembled at the prospect of those crimes and miseries that were likely to precede the return of peace and freedom.—Lally Tolendal* paints very naturally the change that had taken place in his mind, between the moment in which he eagerly longed to be elected to the States-General, and the moment in which he took his seat as a Deputy from the Nobles of Paris; terrified at the scene of intrigue and faction which opened before his eyes, and con-

* Memoire of L. T. page 17.

vinced that an honest man stood exposed to the fate of a martyr.

The King from his throne pronounced a short speech, in which he mentioned his satisfaction at seeing himself surrounded by the Representatives of his People, and at hearing that the two first Orders were disposed to renounce their pecuniary privileges, but expressed his uneasiness at the general restlessness which prevailed, and the excessive desire of innovation which had seized the minds of his People. Towards the end, he declared his resolution to support the principles of Monarchy, adding, “ but all
 “ that can be expected from the most tender
 “ attachment to public happiness, all that
 “ can be asked of a Sovereign the friend of
 “ his People, you may and you ought to
 “ expect from my sentiments. May a happy
 “ union reign in this Assembly, and this
 “ epoch become for ever memorable from
 “ the happiness and prosperity of my sub-
 “ jects !”

The Garde des Sceaux (Barentin's) speech conveyed the same general idea of a middle
 state

state between Absolute Monarchy and Republican Liberty. It just touched upon the formidable question of Three Chambers or One, but did not venture to go beyond the surface. It only said, "that the universal voice had solicited a double representation in favor of the most numerous of the Three Orders, of the Order on which the burden of taxes principally lies. In granting this demand, his Majesty has not changed the ancient form of deliberation, and though the deliberation by heads, *celle par tetes*, in giving one general result, appears to have the advantage of better displaying the general wish, yet the King has not willed that this form should take place without the free consent of the States-General, and the approbation of his Majesty."—This ambiguous language satisfied neither Party, nor did the long declamatory oration of M. Necker, partly read by himself, partly (on account of his weak voice) by a secretary, give the expected satisfaction. The Democrats were displeased at its tenderness for those who were called the Privileged Orders, and the mere Courtiers thought it too Republican.

Necker's

Necker's continual insertion of moral maxims and sentimental apostrophes, which had pleased in his writings, appeared tiresome in his speech, and the general voice declared, that he was fitter to compose academical harangues than to speak in the name of a great Monarch to the Representatives of a haughty and powerful nation.

It is observable, that he every-where considers the *deficit annuel*, or the disproportion between the annual revenues and expences of the State, as an evil that might be cured without having recourse to any *severe* or *violent* means; and that he has persisted in this opinion even to the last days of his unfortunate ministry, by telling the National Assembly, in one of his last Memorials, that in the month of May 1789, it would have been a business as easy as children's play, "*un jeu d'Enfans*," to have restored the national finances.

He preserved the same ambiguity in regard to the great question, as in his Memorial of December 1788; and after reading his speech with the strictest attention, it is very
difficult

difficult to comprehend his real opinion on the subject. He seems to dread the schism that would arise if the Commons should insist immediately on *voting by heads*, and to wish that the two first Orders should have the honor of renouncing, by a *separate* and therefore a *free* deliberation, all their obnoxious pecuniary exemptions.

It seems not improbable, that the violent democratic leaders apprehended such a step, and apprehended that the Clergy and Nobles might, by that means, regain some of the popularity they had lost. These able Generals had a *manœuvre* ready, which Necker and all the King's Ministers had not sufficiently foreseen: this manœuvre was grounded upon the ensuing form of words pronounced by the Garde des Sceaux, and I believe always used in France on similar occasions:

“ Gentlemen, it is the King's intention
“ that you should assemble to-morrow to
“ proceed to the *verification* of your *powers*,
“ and finish it as soon as possible, that you
“ may employ yourselves in the important
“ objects

“ objects that his Majesty has intimated to
“ you.”

Here was the *fatal pass*, the *furgæ caudina*, where the Democrats waited for the Clergy and Nobles, and from whence they were not suffered to issue without passing *unarmed under the yoke*.*

But an English reader cannot understand this point of French law without some explanation. If I should be inaccurate in any circumstance, I hope the slight errors of an author, whose only sources of information are books and pamphlets, may be interpreted with candour.

As our *Parliaments*, even in the most arbitrary times, were always considered as the necessary supports of Government, it is probable that the Kings of England thought it worth their while to get into their own

* Every school-boy knows how much the Samnites suffered for having despised this advice of the wise Herannius on the occasion here alluded to :—“ If you do not chuse to
“ *kill your enemies to the last man*; remember to grant them
“ honourable conditions.”

hands what may be called the *Original Title-Deeds* of the Parliament. The Sheriffs and Mayors send their writs of return to the Crown-Office, and from that time the Parliament, even before it meets, is considered as a *legal Assembly*, and every Member whose name is inserted in these writs of return, takes his seat with no farther ceremony than being sworn in. If a petition is lodged against him, he must answer that petition; but if none is lodged, the return of the writ into the *Crown-Office* is proof sufficient that he is the *legal Representative* of the People. It was far otherwise in France. It should seem as if the very contempt in which the ancient French Kings held the States-General, had operated towards their suffering the meetings of those States to assume, in point of internal regulations, a more Republican form than our Parliaments. Writs of return go in France by the name of *pouvoirs* or powers, but I shall preserve the English word to render the narration more intelligible. Every Member returned, either by the Clergy, Nobles, or Commons, was the depositary of his own writ till the meeting of the Assembly, when he laid it in ceremonious

ous form upon the table of his own Chamber; and Commissaries were appointed to examine the authenticity of all these writs. This examination usually took up several days, and till it was ended, the States-General were *not* a *legal Assembly*, and their resolutions were of no more weight than the resolutions of a *private club*; (indeed of much less than the resolutions of the Jacobine Club have since carried with them.) It will appear, no doubt, a great contradiction, that the King should meet them, and address them a speech, before they were become a *legal Assembly*; but every Constitution has its own contradictions, and the imperfect and obsolete French constitution had, perhaps, more than any.

The Commons, after having held one or two very tumultuous meetings, in which the spectators were confounded with the Members, and in which first began that indefinite liberty of admission, and that licence of noise and clamour, which have since occasioned so many scandalous scenes, at length adopted a plan proposed by M. Mounier, of a temporary president and temporary clerks,
who

who should be changed every fortnight; and on the 11th of May they invited the Clergy and Nobility to unite with the Third Estate, and proceed to verify in common their writs of return. By this means they stopped the Nobles and Clergy in their very first outset, and openly avowed this strong pretension: “No writs can be legally verified but in our chamber and in our presence, and till you have consented to that ceremony, *you Nobles, and you Clergy,* are no other than illegal assemblies, who speak in your own unauthorised name, and not in the name of your constituents.”

The majority of the Nobles thought that this bold assertion was pre-judging the great cause of *One or Three Chambers*, and therefore determined to oppose it at the hazard of their very existence. No doubt they were blameable; they should have answered, “We will shew a spirit of compliance in every point which is not directly forbidden by the instructions of our constituents, we will meet together for this single purpose, reserving to ourselves the right of a future separation.”—But, on the other

H

hand,

hand, it cannot be denied that the Commons would be satisfied with nothing less than *unconditional submission* from their co-partners in legislature; and if democratic writers think that the French Nobles rebelled against their *Lords and Masters*, the People, they will allow, at least, that *unconditional submission* is a claim very likely to excite *rebellion* in spirited minds,—for if this remark be allowed, it will *renew* a favorite opportunity for *insulting England*.

I have been the longer on this head, because the phrase of *verifying a power* was, in general, more unintelligible to English ears, than those of *voting by orders*, or *voting by heads*, which yet had puzzled many an honest Englishman. Few, besides Frenchmen themselves, saw that this odd phrase covered the deepest and ablest plan that ever was laid by one faction for the destruction of another. It does not even appear that M. Necker, for some weeks, apprehended the consequences of this manœuvre; he was, it is said, busy in laying schemes of finance, when the *one thing needful* was a scheme
to

to restore concord to the different Orders of the State.

The work called l'Ami du Roi is too favorable to absolute power, and too much prejudiced against Necker; but truth is truth, even from the mouth of an enemy; and the following passage seems to contain much good sense: * “ M. Necker was not ignorant, that the first necessary operation of the Three Orders was the verification of their respective writs, for no one had a right to call himself a deputy till his writ was verified.

“ The opening of the States was favorable to a decision; the King was present, he enjoyed, at that time, all the plenitude of regal power; the principle laid down by M. Mirabeau, that the King was the *provisory legislator*, could never be more applicable. There was not, properly speaking, any States-General, any deputies, till their mission was legally proved. Who had a right to decide the question of

* Ami du Roi, page 114.

“ a common or a separate verification, but the
 “ only legal authority which at that moment
 “ was acknowledged in France? The King,
 “ from his throne, should have pronounced
 “ his positive decision. Had the Three Or-
 “ ders obeyed—perhaps the nation was
 “ saved! If they had disobeyed, that Order
 “ or Orders, which had set the example of
 “ disobedience, would have incurred the
 “ guilt of a manifest insurrection, and at that
 “ time an insurrection might have been
 “ subdued.”

There can be no answer to this, but that Necker seriously thought it impossible that 1200 men, should, for the sake of party quarrels, forget their own real interest and the public good. He has given to the world the melancholy example of a statesman ruined, because he trusted to the virtue of mankind.

The Commons, * in the great contest in which they were engaged, had the advantage of a unanimity, real, or at least appa-

* Memoire de Lally Tolendal, pages 18, 19, 20.

rent ; even those amongst them, who were most favorable to the other Orders, dared not hint a wish that the old distinction might continue ; on the contrary, the Clergy and Nobility had dissensions amongst themselves, and a regular *majority and minority* were formed. The division, for and against a union with the Commons, ran so near in the Clergy, where the curates were almost all attached to the popular side, that it was presently seen how a very slight change of situation would convert the *minority* into the *majority*. It was far otherwise in the House of Nobles, where a large majority was decided against a re-union ; but the minority acquired splendor from the *name* of the Duke of Orleans, who affected to be thought its leader. The leaders of the majority, d'Epresmesnil and Cazales, were Nobles of a very recent creation, and of that Nobility of the gown (*Noblesse de Robe*) which had formerly been despised by the old military gentry, (*Noblesse d'Epee*.) However, they advanced their claims as proudly as if they had been descended from Clovis or Charlemagne. Intrepid obstinacy had carried d'Epresmesnil through an arduous contest with despotism ;

and he vainly thought it would carry him as easily through a contest with popular fury.

The Clergy answered to the invitation of the 11th of May, that they would name Commissaries to treat with those of the Nobles, and of the Third Estate. The Nobles, on the contrary, (encouraged by their large majorities) went on with their separate verification, and declared themselves a *Chamber legally constituted*. Their *ipse dixit* was treated as unparalleled arrogance, whilst the *ipse dixit* of the Commons was supposed to be unquestionable. M. Chapelier gave the first proof of his stubborn and violent republicanism, by a very harsh and haughty declaration which he proposed to the Commons. M. Malouet marked his opposite temper by a very gentle invitation which he moved, and which, at first, seemed to be heard with approbation. It professed, in one passage, that the Commons had no intention nor right to attack the properties and honorary prerogatives of the Clergy and Nobility. Here commence the direct accusations of the basest calumny, brought against the violent *patriots*. Malouet has asserted, in letters signed by himself,

himself, and printed in the *Mercure*, that he overheard, in a whisper, through some of the benches, “*put it about that he is sold to the Court;*” that the next day, chairmen were planted near the hall, to tell the mob that they carried him every night to the Comte d’Artois and M. de Polignac, (whom he affirms that he never conversed with) and that his own servant was tempted by unknown emissaries to spread the same false reports.

Neither of these opposite declarations were put to the vote: *l’Ami du Roi* pretends that the Patriots laid them both aside, fearing lest that which leaned to moderation should have carried it. Rabaud de St. Etienne proposed on the 15th of May to name Commissaries to confer with those of the Clergy and Nobles on the verification of writs, but with this restriction, never to depart from the principle of *voting by head*. These Commissaries were named on the 19th, and on the same day the Clergy voted by acclamation, that they *renounced all exemption from taxes*; (adding, however, a declaration, that they were not yet constituted as a legal

Chamber) and their Commissaries were appointed to assist at the conference as mediators between the Nobles and the Third Estate. The Commissaries met; Mounier was a principal speaker, and displayed all his knowledge relative to the ancient French States-General. The conference ended like most other public disputations, each party remained firm in their several opinions, and each assured their friends, that the arguments on their side were unanswerable.

On the 27th of May, Mirabeau carried a famous motion, to send a deputation to the Clergy, and invite them *in the name of the God of Peace*, and for the interest of the nation, to unite with the Commons in the Hall of the General Assembly, to consult together on the means of restoring peace and concord.

We shall see that the words of this motion afforded afterwards the occasion of a severe reproach to the Commons.

Necker

Necker now began to be alarmed at the prospect of affairs, and it was said that his health became affected by the uneasiness which he felt. It was now thought time for the King to interfere, and letters were sent in his name to the Nobles and Clergy, expressing his sorrow, that the difficulties relative to the verification of writs, had retarded the measures that ought to be taken for the happiness of his people, and desiring that the Commissaries should resume their conferences. This was evidently no better than putting off the evil day; for the obstinacy of both chambers had risen to its utmost height. The Nobles consented to the King's request, but made a solemn *Arrêté* (or resolution) that the deliberation by Orders was essential to the monarchical constitution, and that the Nobles would constantly persevere in these principles, necessary both to monarchy and to freedom. The unpopularity of this resolution was in great measure thrown on M. d'Epresmeuil.

The conferences recommenced, the old records were again tortured into twenty different interpretations; and the *verification*
of

of writs was left as uncertain as ever. On the 4th of June, the conferences came to a final termination; and M. Necker stepped forward with a conciliatory plan, which he read to the Commissaries, and which was in substance as follows:

The Three Orders, by an act of free and voluntary confidence, shall trust each other in regard to the verification of those writs, on which no difficulties shall be raised, but shall communicate to each other their acts of verification, to be speedily *examined*. If any contest arise on the validity of an election, they shall be carried, first, before a Commission chosen out of all the Orders; and, if the Orders refuse to ratify their Commissioner's sentence, the dispute shall finally be referred to the King.

Necker then had recourse to his usual exclamations of pathetic morality, and asked, "What man would charge his conscience
" with all the evils that may result from the
" schism that your very first steps seem to
" indicate? If you can even procure the
" public good by dividing the hearts of fel-
" low

“low citizens from each other, will not
“the public good be bought too dearly?”
This last sentence is excellent, and deserves
to be considered by all speculative reformers;
but the time had elapsed in which moral
sentences, elegantly turned, could answer
any good effect: at that unhappy moment,
repeated acts of mutual contradiction had
inflamed even moderation itself.

This plan was, however, proposed in
form by the King to the Three Orders, and
the Clergy was the only one who really ac-
cepted it. The Nobles declared they were
ready to accept it; but with the restriction
of never departing from their former *Arrêté*
concerning the separation of the Orders,
and with other modifications, which gave
the Commons a fair pretence to reject the
whole plan. On the 12th of June, they sent
this answer to the Nobles, declaring, at the
same time, that they intended to proceed to
what we should nominate in English *a call*
of the House; that the names of the Clergy
and Nobles should be called over along with
the Commons, who would constitute them-
selves into an *active assembly*; “*assemblée*
“*active,*”

active," and proceed on public business without them.

This menace startled the Nobles, and Lally Tolendal * endeavoured to persuade them to revoke their ill-timed modifications. He afterwards visited the chamber of Commons, and perceived, not without horror, that several of the violent *Patriots* expressed their fears, lest the Nobles should depart from their former obstinacy; and one of them said to him, "Will your House be mean enough to retract?"—He answered, "I fear we shall not be brave enough to be guilty of such a meanness." Returning to his own House, and not having a right to speak twice in the same debate, he endeavoured to circulate this story through the benches. But, says he, ironically, my advice was vain, "and the Nobles complied with the wishes of the Commons;" that is to say, by remaining inflexible, they gave the Commons an excuse for carrying things to extremity.

* *Memoire de Lally Tolendal*, pages 31, 52, 33.

In the mean while, the Nobles and the Commons addressed the King, each appealing to the principles of the Constitution, and each endeavouring to bring him over to their side. The King, in his letter to the Nobles, reprimanded them, though gently, for their want of *that confidence* in him, “which might have prevented the present situation of affairs.”

The party of the Commons was every day gaining ground amongst the Clergy; and on the 13th of June, three Curates of Poitou, at the moment that the deputies of their province were called over, presented themselves before the Commons with their *writs of return* in their hands: they were received with acclamations, embraced and applauded as the Saviours of France; and intelligence of this happy event was immediately dispatched to Paris in a *Bulletin*, which resembled a Gazette Extraordinary, published to announce a conquest; for the Commons well knew the importance of this single example, and how many other Curates had promised to follow these three early converts.

Every

Every thing was now preparing for that hour, when one branch of the Legislature was to swallow up all the other powers of the State.

It was now five weeks since the first meeting of the Assembly, and not one measure had yet been taken to promote the expected National prosperity. This inaction was attributed to the obstinacy of the Nobles; and their unpopularity, both in Paris and the Provinces, amounted to a degree of detestation. In the heat of passion, it was not perceived, that the previous obstinacy of the Commons had provoked the Nobles into this reprehensible conduct; that the total abolition of all distinction of birth was already announced in divers pamphlets, particularly in an answer of Mirabeau to a pamphlet of the Bishop of Langres,* that they only meant to use the natural right of self-preservation; but, unhappily, in the very first commencement, had mistaken the means, and their enemies had gradually driven them, by a most artful

* The Bishop of Langres wished for an imitation of the English House of Peers.

plan of *suppressed hostility*, into such a situation, that they knew not how to retreat with honor.

It may just be observed, that hitherto not a word had been spoken against the abuses of despotism. The Nobles were the only Order who had named Commissaries to examine the *Cahiers*, and lay down a plan for a Constitution. This step was thought very criminal, as it was taken in defiance of the Commons, who denied that the Nobles were a *legal assembly*. But had the Commissaries been suffered to proceed in their plan, they would, probably, have been very far from recommending an absolute Monarchy.

The verification of the writs of the Commons being now concluded, with the addition of those Curates, who came in day after day, the Commons unanimously resolved to constitute themselves (according to the French idiom) *an Active Assembly*; but the title which they should chuse occasioned long debates. Many were proposed and rejected; one of the most moderate was the proposition of M. Mounier; “ the majority
“ of

“ of the deputies, deliberating in the absence
“ of the minority duly invited.”—Perhaps
the length of such a name was enough to
render it inadmissible to the popular ear,
which, as a statesman of ours once observed,
must be attracted by *two lucky words*. The
two lucky words were at last hit upon by
one M. le Grand, and seconded by M. Syeyes;
Assemblée Nationale, a title, of all others,
most calculated to favour the idea, that all
the powers of the nation were concentrated
in one single body.

On the 7th of June,* this decisive ques-
tion was put to the vote, and carried by a
vast majority. A profound silence reigned
in the Assembly whilst the votes were col-
lecting; but as soon as the majority was
declared, the air resounded with one univer-
sal shout, “ Long live the *King!* Long live
“ the *National Assembly!*”

Having thus voted and acclaimed them-
selves sovereigns; they began their reign
with a strong and popular act of sovereignty.

* Hist. de Revolution, vol. I. page 228.

A decree was passed unanimously, which stated that difficulties might be raised upon the payment of taxes, “ the more serious, as
 “ they would be founded on a principle constitutional and sacred, acknowledged by
 “ the King, and solemnly proclaimed by all
 “ the Assemblies of the nation, a principle
 “ which forbid all levying of contributions,
 “ without the formal consent of the representatives of the nation; considering, that
 “ the contributions, as they are now levied
 “ in the kingdom, not having been consented to by the nation, *are all illegal*, and
 “ consequently *null*, in their creation, extension, or prorogation; declares that it,
 “ *viz.* the National Assembly, consents *provisoryly*, (*previsoirement*) for the nation,
 “ that the taxes and contributions, though
 “ illegally established and levied, shall continue to be levied in the same manner that
 “ they have hitherto been, until the day
 “ only of the separation of this Assembly.”

After that day, it is added, that they were to cease, if not *regranted* by the Assembly; and, in another part of the same decree, it introduces those famous words; “ We put the
 “ creditors of the State under the guard of

“ the honor and loyalty of the French nation.”

The whole of this decree will, perhaps, at first sight, be approved by English readers, whilst to my eyes it seems to have been one principal cause of the misfortunes that followed. I censure that particular expression, “ that all the contributions now levied *are illegal and null.*” When the English House of Commons declared ship-money illegal, they spoke the dictates of a well-known positive law, existing since Edward the First’s time. There was no such law, no such statute in France, whatever the National Assembly might assert; there existed at most some inefficient requisitions of their old States General, and for two hundred years and more, the greatest enemies of despotism had never ventured a hint of this lately discovered illegality. Their decree, as they worded it, *was really an ex post facto law.*

There was another serious objection, which may be explained by the same comparison. If the English Parliament, when it voted ship-

ship-money *illegal*, had ordered, by a *mere resolution*, that it should continue to be paid, till they had fixed on some better means of supporting the Navy, can we imagine that the English nation would have paid it very readily? Still less was it to be expected in France, where writers on finance have observed, that taxes were much more evaded than in England. The enormous defalcation in the receipt of taxes, which began immediately after the Revolution, is allowed on all hands, and it would not be surprising, if aristocratic writers were to assert, that it began from the day of this violent decree. Had they contented themselves with saying, *such taxes shall be illegal for the future*, their conduct would have been far more prudent. But the truth is, this measure, like most of their other actions, was the offspring of the moment. To use Mounier's words, "the protectors of *deliberation*, by Orders, surrounded the throne; their efforts to combat the project of the Assembly were but too certain, it was obliged to put itself in a state of defence."

Mounier, at the very time that he joined in pushing on this measure, was sensible of the tumultuous spirit, which the democratic party were infusing into the public mind.* He complains of the share which the spectators took in the debates, and of the printed lists which circulated round Paris, of those members who had voted for a title less *sovereign* than *National Assembly*; lists, in which they were stigmatized as enemies to their country—"from that day," says he, "began measures most fatal to the liberty of votes." But why was he not sensible of another danger? The King, trusting to Necker's promises of an easy and happy reign, was hitherto somewhat more favorable to the Commons than to the Nobles, who had suffered themselves to be led by the old *Parliamentarian* party, which the King had long disliked. From that important day, the King's measures indubitably changed. It is not probable that those "protectors of deliberation, by Orders," whose influence Mounier dreaded, might say to the King, "Observe, Sir, these leaders of party

* Mounier, *Exposé de Conduite*, pages 6 and 7.

"are

“ are not satisfied with having the power of
 “ taxation in their hands for the future ;
 “ they declare, without one positive law on
 “ their side, that every existing tax *is ille-*
 “ *gal* ; and by those words declare their in-
 “ tention to set up the *indefinite Rights of*
 “ *Nature* above all the *positive Law* in the
 “ kingdom. May not their next resolutions
 “ declare, that it is a sacred and constitu-
 “ tional principle, that legislation as well
 “ as taxation belongs to the People ; and,
 “ therefore, that every law now obeyed by
 “ the French *is null and illegal*, and must be
 “ re-voted by these self-constituted sove-
 “ reigns.”

In supposing the arguments that might
 be used against this strong resolution of the
 Commons, it is not my intention to enter
 into any controversy respecting the *natural*
rights of man—I only desire the assertors of
 metaphysical rights to *assume* as much mode-
 ration as the Jesuit Garnet,* who confessed
 that the Pope *might be imprudent* in his indi-
 vidual EXCOMMUNICATIONS, *although his*

* See the State Trials in James the First's Reign.

abstract right of excommunicating and deposing all the sovereigns in the world was an *article of faith*.—I only assert this principle,—that it is imprudent to hazard transforming a wavering friend into an enemy, for the sake of general positions uncertain in their interpretation.

Necker* at that time, says one of the popular writers, was attending the death-bed of his sister-in-law, and consequently left the King more exposed to the insinuations of those Courtiers or Princes who pretended a zeal for the Nobles : *I add, pretended a zeal*, because I do believe, that if the Commons had been at first more indulgent to the Nobles, it would have appeared that the Parliamentary *Noblesse*, and the Provincial *Gentilhommes*, were no better friends to the excesses of a Court, than Mounier or Chapelier themselves.

The Nobles were almost in the agonies of despair, and yet resolved not, in any degree, to descend from their inflexible haughtiness.

* Hist. de Revolution, vol. i. p. 240.

M. de Montesquieu* proposed, that the *Noblesse* should invite the Clergy to join them, and *constitute themselves an Upper House*.

This resource, though desperate and dangerous, was, perhaps, the only one remaining; but it was instantly rejected by a hundred angry voices, who hardly allowed the orator to finish his speech. One proof this, amongst others, of the antipathy that both sides were imbibing against the peculiar principles of the British constitution.

It is upon this occasion that Lally Tolendal traces that plan of a constitution which I have previously described, and which seems the best that could have been worked up from such heterogeneous materials as the French possessed. But it is not for *me*, or, perhaps, for any Englishman, to decide upon its practicability. The Nobles separated, after voting a strong Address† to the King, justifying their own conduct, accusing the Commons, and particularly marking as cen-

* Lally Tolendal, page 36.

† On June the 19th.

furable those strong words, that ALL the taxes *are illegal*.

It was now become too evident that nothing but *force*—force employed either by the King or the Mob, could drive the Nobles into a coalition with the Commons: both were most dangerous means for the friends of true freedom to employ, and I will not pretend to determine which was the least mischievous. The Patriots were disposed to call in the *sovereignty* of the *mob*; but I see no reason to suppose that they would have rejected the assistance of regal arbitrary power if they had hoped to obtain it.

The Clergy were in a different temper. The Party who sided with the Commons had almost attained a majority; the final decision was somewhat retarded by the influence of the Archbishop of Paris, and when it was at length taken, he joined in a protest against it; consequently, though a man of respectable character, and very charitable to the poor, he was, some days after, pursued by popular fury, attacked, insulted, and his life endangered. He was rescued with some
difficul-

difficulty, and on this occasion, the troops first expressed their unwillingness to act, as they called it, *against fellow-citizens*. It is remarkable, therefore, that the first time that the French troops assumed the terrible right of judging for themselves, it was not to *defend* the liberty of parliamentary suffrages, but to *constrain* it.

Numberless Councils,* mean while, had been held in the King's palace, and the result of every one of them was supposed to be contradictory. Necker himself thought it adviseable that the King should hold a *Royal Session* (Seance Royale) but wanted its result to be more favorable to the Commons than the rest of the Council approved. At last, a plan was drawn up, and notice was given of this Session, in a manner so rash and imprudent, that it doubtless was the origin of the ruin of Monarchy. The hall where the Commons met, being the largest of the three chambers, had been from the first the place where the King harangued the States. On the 20th of June, the heralds

* Lally Tolendal, pages 42 and 43.

proclaimed the Royal Session, the guards took possession of the Hall, workmen were sent in to prepare the King's throne, and M. Bailly, the President, with other Members of the Commons, were repulsed from the door. Had a letter been previously written to the President, informing him of this resolution, and declaring that the King had no intention to dissolve the States, the Commons might have behaved with calmness: but apprehensive of an immediate dissolution, and of the dangers to which each obnoxious individual would then be exposed, they were inflamed with resentment, hurried on foot and through storms of rain to an old tennis-court, and there, on the proposition of Mounier himself, took an oath *not to part till the constitution was completed*. He says, in his Answer to Mr. Chabroud, that he proposed it to prevent the more violent step of transferring the Assembly to Paris. The affecting spectacle of six hundred Representatives of the Nation, taking this awful oath under the *canopy of Heaven*, and exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, increased the universal indignation against the Court. But if the Representatives of the Nobles had,

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by the King's orders, been exposed to similar ill usage to *hunt* them into the Meeting of the Commons, what Patriot was at that moment impartial enough to have felt any resentment? And yet they too were the Representatives of two hundred thousand citizens, of citizens who had in their hands the largest share of the landed property of the nation.

The next day opened a very different and far more pleasing scene. The majority of the Clergy, in this most critical moment, flew off from the Court and boldly resolved to join the Commons: they met in the choir of the church of St. Louis, and the Commons in the body of the church. After some messages to arrange ceremonials, the doors flew open, the Clergy advanced with their Presidents, the Archbishop of Vienne, at their head, the Commons rose to receive them and yielded them the upper hand; the two Presidents embraced and set down by each other; the loudest shouts of applause, and the most pathetic effusions of eloquence, celebrated this happy reconciliation of two of the discordant Orders of Citizens.

Now

Now let this question be asked, Could a spectator of this august scene have supposed that, in the space of a twelvemonth, the Clergy would be ruined by these very Commons, and reduced to a worse condition than the hostile Nobles themselves? One hundred and forty-nine Deputies composed the majority who joined the Commons, and there were several Bishops amongst them, though I do not know the exact proportion. Many of the Curates have lately been rewarded by promotion to Bishoprics; but the constituents who sent them are not the less despoiled of their property; and the Bishops who supported the Rights of the Commons, were at first stripped of half the revenue of their dioceses, and at last turned out of them, (except three or four zealous Democrats) by the imposition of an oath, which, they assert, is contrary to their principles as Roman Catholics. I may not, perhaps, be quite as decided as Mr. Burke in the opinion, riches are necessary to a Christian church. But suppose it was lawful, nay meritorious, for all the world beside to seize the revenues of the Clergy, could it be *meritorious*, could it be even *lawful*

ful in the Commons of France, after they had received the Clergy with fraternal embraces as a band of Patriots, who were come in a moment of extreme danger to save them, or perish in their cause? Let every reader of sensibility lay his hand on his heart and answer,—Let divines and philosophers teach their pupils as many *axioms* as they please in the sciences of theology, philosophy, or politics, *one simple axiom* will remain *superior to them all*:—*There is no crime so odious as ingratitude, and no ingratitude so infamous as that which is blended with Machiavilian treachery!*—Nor will whole volumes of logical argument efface the impression of that exclamation which burst a few months afterwards from an incensed curate, “*Did you invite us to join you, in the name of the God of Peace, that you might have the surer opportunity of destroying us by famine?*”*

Emboldened by the junction of those allies whom they shortly treated as enemies, the Commons waited with revived courage for the expected day of the Royal Sessions :

* Appendix, Note 1.

it took place on the 23d of June, and the King, seated on that throne which he was never more to ascend in the plenitude of power, ordered a plan of government to be read to the assembled Orders, which is a document of such great importance, that it ought to be studied in the appendix in its original language.

I can only insert a short abstract in the body of this work, on account of its great length, and the number of French technical terms interspersed throughout :

“ The King wills, that the ancient distinction of the Three Orders should be preserved entire, as essentially connected with the constitution; and that the Deputies, freely elected by each of the Three Orders, forming Three Chambers, deliberating by order, but having a right, with the Sovereign’s approbation, to agree on deliberations in common, can alone be considered as the representative body of the nation : consequently, the King declares *null* the deliberations taken by the Deputies of the Third Estate, on the 17th
“ of

“ of this month, as well as all others that
“ may have followed it, as *illegal* and un-
“ *constitutional*.”

This was the article so mortifying to the Commons that its influence poisoned all the rest. But would they have been *equally* angry if the King, by his *sole power*, had annulled any decree by which the Nobles might have constituted themselves an *Upper House* ?

The declaration went on to annul all restrictions expressed in their writs of return, which hindered the Deputies from adopting such forms of deliberation as the Three Orders should approve ; and afterwards commanded that, in all future States-General, the constituents should only give *instructions*, but not *commands*.

(This article bore hardest upon the Nobles, who, of all the Orders, had been most guilty of that dangerous error.)

The King then exhorted, for *the salvation* of the State, (*le salut*, a phrase much stronger

ger than *la sureté* or *the safety*) the Three Orders to unite during the present States-General, and to deliberate in common upon the affairs of general utility, but excepted, from these common deliberations, the rights of the Three Orders, the feudal properties, the honorary prerogatives of each Order, and such regulations as affected religion or the discipline of the Clergy; for which the respective separate consent of the Nobles and Clergy should still be necessary.

The concluding article prohibited, for the sake of good order, of decency, and even of the freedom of voting, that any speculators should assist at the deliberations of the States.

(This article was highly unpopular, but the spectators had already, by their clamorous behaviour, proved themselves unworthy of the privilege of admission, and their conduct ever since has been much more scandalous.)

This declaration was followed by another, in which the King declared his intention as

to the benefits, i. e. *bienfaits*, which he meant to bestow on his people. It began by solemnly declaring, that no new tax shall be established, no old tax prorogued beyond the term fixed by the laws, or without the consent of the representatives of the nation; and that no taxes shall be established or prorogued for a longer term than the period that shall be fixed for the meeting of the next States-General. It renounced the right of borrowing money without the consent of the States, insisting, however, in case of war or national danger, for the liberty of borrowing a hundred millions of livres.

(This seems too large a *vote of credit*, but it might easily have been modified.)

The declaration proceeded to offer the States all the instruction that could enlighten them on the situation of the finances, and to submit to their disposal the expences of each department, and even of the King's own family.

It declares the King's intention, that there shall be no kind of privileges or distinctions
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between the Orders in the payment of taxes, and that the name of *La Taille*, (which was odious as a partial land-tax) shall be abolished and replaced by other taxes.

It declared, too plainly for the temper of the times, that all property should be sacred, and that tythes and feudal rents should be considered as property.

It goes on thus; “ the King, willing to
“ secure the personal liberty of all citizens,
“ on a solid and permanent footing, invites the
“ States-General to seek and propose to him
“ the best means to conciliate the abolition of
“ the Orders known by the name of *Let-*
“ *tres de Cachet*, consistently with the main-
“ tenance of public safety, and the neces-
“ sary precautions to be taken, sometimes
“ to respect (i. e. *menager*) the honor of fa-
“ milies; sometimes to repress quickly the
“ beginnings of sedition, or to save the
“ State from the effects of a criminal cor-
“ respondence with foreign powers.”

This article was censured, as not sufficiently explicit in favour of liberty; but, in
the

the first place, the Commons did not so much stand out upon this ground, as upon the mere ground of hatred to the Nobles. They might have demanded the most explicit *Habeas Corpus Act* before they would grant a single subsidy. The States were to vote in one assembly on general laws; consequently, the Commons would have had the majority on the subject of personal liberty. Secondly, had they a right to deny the necessity of an arbitrary power of imprisonment in times of public trouble, when their own inquisitorial committees of researches have imprisoned many persons for months together without legal warrants?

There was also an article desiring the States to provide for the liberty of the press, consistently with public decency and tranquillity; the declaration then went on to settle the form of provincial administrations, chosen favorable to the Commons in the same proportion as the present States, and where all the other Orders were to vote in one chamber; it left to the consideration of the States, the abolition of the salt tax, *droit-de-main-morte*, and a hundred other grievan-

ces; and concluded, * that none of the laws that should be established in these States-General, could ever be altered, but by the free consent of the future States-General, and that they should be considered as equally sacred with all other *national properties*.

I beg my readers to observe, with most serious attention, that at the very moment when the King's counsellors were driving him on to an unpopular action, the most despotic of them dared not propose any form of government more despotic than that now recited.

I do not give this scheme as the model of a perfect government; the first part is too complicated, and the second not sufficiently explicit; but I really believe it was as much liberty, as the French nation, just released from chains, were capable of enjoying without prejudice to themselves, and it was susceptible of gradual improvement; at least, I

* This conclusion should be noticed, as it has been entirely overlooked by those who pretend that the King's concessions would have been revocable at his pleasure.

think it could never have been equally *lawful* to revolt against such a constitution, as it would have been to have rebelled during the latter years of Lewis XIV. or XV. or even when M. d'Epresmeuil was seized in the very court of justice; and that many violent actions would then have been excusable, which became unpardonable after such a declaration from the King. I believe that many Englishmen, who exulted in the taking of the Bastille, did not know that the French, in order to obtain such a constitution as this, had only to stretch forth their hand and accept it. Messrs. Price, Priestley, Towers, &c. knew better indeed, and probably thought it lawful to oppose by force of arms any government not founded upon purely democratical principles. But let us suppose that some independent preachers had been then at Paris, and a conscientious member of the Commons had addressed one of these *clerical politicians* as follows:—Sir, we are both Christians, though we differ with regard to some speculative doctrines of Christianity.

The moral doctrines of our holy religion are acknowledged by all Christian sects, and

there is little difference of interpretation between them: to you, therefore, as a *minister* of the gospel of peace, I state this case of conscience—Shall I vote for accepting a constitution not entirely perfect, but which secures to us and our children the main points of personal liberty; and which may be obtained without shedding a drop of blood or committing a single crime? Or shall I refuse it? Shall I league myself with all that is *infamous* in both sexes, and connive at murder, rapine, and treachery, in the hopes of obtaining, after some years of wretchedness, a Constitution in Church and State, so free, and so perfect, that even metaphysicians cannot find one flaw in it? Our Divine law forbids us to do evil that good may come of it. What latitude does your sect allow in explaining that maxim? I know not what this supposed independent preacher would have answered; but I would have recommended to him, first to have deeply weighed the everlasting infamy attached to the memory of the Jesuit Garnet, on account of his answer to the gunpowder conspirators, that *it was lawful to do a small evil*

evil to procure a great good, and destroy a few innocents along with a multitude of criminals.

But though I think favorably of the matter of the King's declaration, I think quite differently of his manner of urging it. The procrastination of Necker, and divisions in the Council, had lost and thrown away the only moments in which a plan of government, recommended by the King's authority, could have succeeded. But a day, but an hour before the Commons had voted themselves a National Assembly, it might, at least, have received a fair hearing; but after that momentous crisis, the situation was entirely changed. Although I think the obligations of a conscientious member were still the same; yet *those* were miserable politicians, who could think that conscience, or the love of peace, would prevail over what had now become points of honour, and over the pleasure of exercising the rights of self-created and self-constituted sovereignty: besides, the expressions used in enforcing this plan, were too harsh and absolute, and gave sufficient occasion to say, that the King had

converted the *States-General* into a *Bed of Justice*.

The event was such as might have been expected; the Commons listened in sullen silence, and after the King was gone, absolutely refused to break up their session.

Mirabeau told the King's attendants, that bayonets alone should turn them out. By the vehemence which he displayed upon this occasion, he began to secure that desired popularity which he had almost lost by his enmity to Necker, and the suspicion that he wished the recall of his old friend Calonne.

The Commons, before they parted, passed a decree to declare the person of every deputy inviolable. This was intended for the protection of the popular party, but has since been frequently claimed by the defeated Aristocrates, and consequently has obtained from both sides of the House more respect than it deserves on the principles of liberty and impartial justice.

The populace of Versailles soon took the part of their injured friends the Commons, and the presence of Necker alone could calm their seditious fury. It was known that he had not assisted at the Royal Session, and that he disapproved of *part*, at least, of the plan of government, and it was added, that he intended to retire. This conduct made him more than ever the idol of the populace; they surrounded, caressed him; he promised never to quit them; and the King found that he was not in safety, till the mob believed that he had not quarrelled with his Minister. Such a mortification inflicted on a King was not likely to produce the effects that the people desired; and the ferment, which then reigned at Paris, was still more likely to create apprehensions and disgust.

I must here observe, that if in relating the actions of the Parisians, I ever seem to depart from the dignity and decorum of history, I am compelled by the necessity of explaining intelligibly the transactions of the times.

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The ferment at Paris had been gradually increasing ever since the beginning of May, in proportion as the Nobles, and afterwards the Court, endeavoured to controul the pretensions of the Commons. But it did not entirely arise from the unbiassed judgment of the people, infinite pains were taken to prejudice and inflame them by every means that could apply to their most dangerous passions. The fish women of Paris, (*Les Poissardes*, sometimes called *Les Dames de la Halle*,) had from time immemorial claimed the privilege of leading political mobs, and they were happy to step forward on so glorious an occasion. But *other allies* of a more *insinuating* kind, were hired from the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal, the Rue de Richelieu, and all the *suspicious* streets and lanes of Paris. Amongst this number, one name alone has appeared in print, a Mlle. Theroigne de Mericourt, who being accused before the Chatlet, as animating the fury of the mob on those shocking days the 5th and 6th of October, suddenly disappeared, and thus gave occasion for the enemies of the Duke of Orleans to suppose, that had she been taken, she could have unveiled
many

many of the mysteries of the Revolution, as far as the partisans and agents of that Duke were concerned.

The garden belonging to the palace of the Duke of Orleans, (called Le Palais Royal,) had long been a public garden, and was now fixed upon as the spot, where hired orators inflamed the populace to acts of violence; it had long (say the Duke's enemies) been the theatre of all the crimes of licentiousness, it was now become the theatre of all the crimes of ferocity. The form of parliamentary debates was mimicked in various places, orators upon chairs and benches harangued the mob, and moved strong resolutions of censure (blended with menaces of outrage) against the Princes, the Courtiers, the Nobles, and the Clergy; *Bulletins* containing the news of Versailles were read to the crowd and afterwards debated upon: when, if any one presumed to justify the Nobles or censure the Commons, he was assaulted, ill-treated, obliged to run away, or to make a formal *Amende Honorable*, and cry, *Vive le Tiers-Etat*.*

* Histoire de Revolution, vol. i. page 248.

Thus

Thus were the Parisians gradually trained to defy subordination, and to hear cruelty proposed without horror.

As an instance of the strange scenes which this garden exhibited, I must (desiring my readers to remember that I have apologised for it beforehand) repeat a story mentioned in all the foreign newspapers. M. D'Epresmeuil, as the great promoter of the obstinacy of the Nobles, was at that time the chief object of popular rage. An orator of the Palais-Royal made a motion one day *to fire his house at Paris, and murder his wife and children.* These horrid words were received with applause; but another orator, who felt that such proposals went *a little* too far, and yet they could not be warded off by appealing to justice and humanity, got up in his turn, and addressed the mob as follows: "Gentlemen, you
" may assure yourselves that the scheme of
" revenge now proposed would be no pun-
" nishment to the offender. His house and
" furniture belong to the landlord, his wife
" belongs to the public, and his children
" may, perhaps, belong to any one of you."

This

This jest equally false and brutal had, however, the desired good effect, the mob laughed, and were disarmed of their fury.

The general turn of the Parisian minds was become so heartily inclined to revolt, that Necker found it necessary to write a letter to M. Du Crosne, denying any intention in the Court to dissolve the States-General. Necker, though disliked by the leaders of each party, was as dear as ever to the Parisians, who thought that he had preserved them from bankruptcy and famine, and they trusted *a little* to his word, though *not at all* to their King's.

The Commons, encouraged by this prospect of general support, affected to treat the King's declaration with silent contempt, as an insignificant paper that scarcely existed.—The Nobles declared that they would adhere to it; but this imperfect adherence came too late, and a plan of concord, which, if proposed by themselves at first, might have been treated with justice, was now, however, falsely denominated a plan of slavery.

very.* The Archbishop of Paris, frightened by the mob, appeared in the National Assembly, and the minority of the Clergy withdrew their protest.

On the 24th of June, M. de Clermont-Tonnerre moved, that the Nobles should unite with the Commons; but though they were ready to vote a general adherence to the King's plan, it was impossible yet to bring the majority into the humiliating measure of entering the hall of the Commons.

In the speech that Lally made to second this motion, appears the strongest and best objection that the popular party ever made against the King's plan. It has been repeated in Depont's answer to Burke, and has lately appeared again in La Harpe's answer to Calonne in the *Mercure*; and therefore it may be worth while to pause for a moment to examine it. The plan was intitled *A declaration of the King's will*, which gives Lally occasion to say, "however just, "however beneficent such an act may be,

* *Histoire de Revolution*, vol. i. page 263.

“ what we only hold from the *will* of one
“ monarch, we may lose by the *will* of ano-
“ ther.” This observation sounds very
plausible ; but the experience of the English
nation proves that it is more plausible than
true. Were the English less inclined to
support *Magna Charta* as their right, be-
cause the mere outward form of it is that of
a Charter *granted* by the king to his sub-
jects ? Charters to corporations and compa-
nies are acknowledged by us to be mere
gifts from the king, yet from the moment
they are ratified by the Great Seal, they
are held as sacred and inviolable, perhaps
too much so, since the general prejudice of
their inviolability frequently stands in the
way of reformation.

Indeed the lawyers of all countries would
have told the French patriots, that there
are such things as *irrevocable deeds of gift*,
and means were not wanting to have ren-
dered this *French Magna Charta* irrevocable.
The King himself declared, that all the acts
passed in these States in favor of liberty,
should be considered as *National property* ;
an idea as sacred in France, as *Chartered*
Rights

Rights in England. Most of the French crown lawyers held that the King could not alienate his domains because they were *National Property*.* And the same argument has been used to vindicate Francis the First for breaking the treaty of Madrid, namely, that the provinces he had engaged to yield were the property of the Nation.

I must confess, that I cannot see how the present King or any of his successors could have broken the fetters of a law which was not imposed on him by force as Magna Charta was on King John, but was his own voluntary act and deed jointly with the Nation. If it be supposed that the obnoxious arbitrary expressions (which I do not approve) were added by a few courtiers on purpose to cause the whole to be rejected, the friends of liberty, by accepting the general plan unexpectedly, would have outwitted their enemies, and were not precluded from insisting on particular amendments. I have already disclaimed all arguments on the metaphysical rights of man ;

* See *Essais Historiques*, vol. ii. page 41.

I only repeat, that when liberty is offered into your hand, it is imprudent to dispute by force of arms, whether it be a *Favor* or a *Right*, provided it is allowed that you may claim it as your *right* from the instant you have grasped it. And, after all, the changes that have been rung in verse and in prose, about Liberty, Slavery, Chains, and Dungeons, I never can see any thing in the unqualified admiration of the French Revolution, but an indirect avowal of this dreadful principle, that the most enormous crimes become meritorious, for the sake of theory and speculation—for the sake of having only one chamber of Parliament.

It is now time to return to the course of our narration.

The speeches and motions of Clermont and Lally being as useless on the 24th of June as on the preceding days, the minority of the Nobles resolved that evening to unite with the Commons, and they made their appearance in the Hall of the National Assembly on the 25th of June. They had previously sent a letter to their President,

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the Duc de Luxembourg, expressing their concern at the step which necessity and duty forced them to take.

The King, on the 27th of June, sent a pressing exhortation to the solitary majority of the Nobles to unite with the other Orders, and hasten the accomplishment of his paternal views. A long and violent debate arose; the D. of Luxembourg read a letter from the Count of Artois, which intimated, that the King himself might be in danger, if popular fury was roused by their refusal. So little of a *King's friend* was M. de Cazales, the zealous opposer of the Commons, that he cried out, "The Constitution of the Monarchy is more sacred than the Monarch."

He no longer, however, found supporters, the vote of re-union was past, and, at four o'clock in the afternoon, word was brought to the Commons, that the Nobles were coming into their Hall. To do the Commons justice, all preparations were made to receive them with decency, and not to insult these *prisoners at discretion* by ill-timed applause.

applause.—The remaining dissidents of the Clergy accompanied them, headed by the Cardinal de Rochefoucault; both he and the Duke of Luxembourg took care to insert in their speeches, that respect to the King was a principal cause which induced them to this measure.

The town of Versailles resounded with joy, a general illumination took place, and the people fondly thought that the happiness of France was now complete. Happy, indeed, would it have been for France, if the imprudent measures of the Court had not given rise to the extraordinary scenes that followed; for there is reason to believe that the violent Democrats would have been over-awed by the presence of the Gentlemen and the Clergy. But a forced reconciliation is rarely durable or sincere! Clouds still gathered on the horizon; the malecontents of both Orders were still disposed to consider their re-union as a temporary step, and not as the fixed constitution of the State. Many of the Nobles were bound by the rash oath they had taken; they assisted at the debates without voting: it was held that no power

could set them free, but the authority of the constituents who had imposed that oath; and the meetings of the *Gentilhommes* in the Provinces were apprehended as occasions of disorder: but, above all, the gradual approach of troops raised suspicions, and soured the minds of citizens towards each other: these troops had been collecting ever since the meeting of the States. One Party asserts, that the triumvirate of Princes always intended to dissolve the States by their assistance; the other side is equally positive that the Democrats had resolved to overturn Monarchy by force, if the States did not chuse to overturn it; and, therefore, such precautions were necessary by the right of self-defence.

It cannot be denied, that the States-General, after their re-union, were guilty of no overt act sufficient to justify the King in dissolving them. A Committee was appointed to prepare materials for the new Constitution. Lally Tolendal* and Mounier heard, with uneasiness, some of its Members

* L. Tol. Memoire, page 57.

develope a system of liberty so abstract and metaphysical, that they thought it more fit to molest society than to render it happy; and, above all, were shocked to hear one man say, that the King's sanction was not necessary to laws; but they still hoped to bring over the majority to their way of thinking. The Committee of Verification had pronounced Malouet's election void. The moderate party immediately cried out, That the only flaw in his writ was the mild invitation to the Clergy and Nobles which he had proposed on the 16th of May. The House seemed to espouse this opinion; the vote of the Committee was over-ruled by a large majority, and good men accepted with joy this omen of returning moderation.

But it may easily be supposed, that every violent sentiment uttered in debate was carried, with aggravation, to the King's ears; and, unfortunately, the transactions at Paris were, more and more, calculated to unsettle a mind that appears to have been naturally irresolute.

The Gardes-Françoises, stationed in the town of Paris, had, like most troops stationed in towns, imbibed the opinions of the townsmen.

In a riot, at the conclusion of M. de Brienne's ill-fated administration, the mob having threatened to pull his house down, the troops had fired on them, and had killed several. That event had made them unpopular, and they were now determined to regain popularity by devoting themselves to the Parisians. About the time of the Royal Session, a Marquis de Varadi, who had once been their officer, and a Marquis de St. Huruge, a still more meddling and dangerous man, had run from barrack to barrack to animate their zeal for the Commons, and teach them that soldiers ought never to fire upon their fellow-citizens. The Gardes-Françoises were afterwards shut up within their barracks by order of their superiors. On the 25th and 26th of June* they left their barracks by hundreds at a time, came to the Palais Royal, were feasted by

* Histoire de Revolution, vol. i. page 281.

the multitude, received money and even bank notes, (i. e. *billets de caisse*) and joined with the crowd in huzzaing for the Third Estate. For these, and other acts of disobedience, eleven soldiers were committed to the prisons of the Abbaye de St. Germain. On the 30th of June, a letter was read aloud in the Palais Royal garden, inviting the people to deliver these brave men who suffered in their cause. The invitation was instantly obeyed, the prison was forced, the prisoners lodged at the Hotel de Geneve, and loaded with presents; and the next day a deputation of young Parisians asked the liberty of the prisoners from the National Assembly, but in terms that implied it was a right rather than a favour. The Assembly felt their embarrassed situation, and voted a moderate kind of resolution, by which it exhorted the Parisians to tranquillity, and intreated the King to use clemency. The King could do nothing but comply, the prisoners were set free, and all was apparently quiet.

Here it will not be amiss to quote one song, among many others, recorded in

foreign newspapers, as being fung through the streets of Paris to inflame the soldiery :

- “ Autrefois machine, le pauvre soldat
 “ Sous la discipline, etoit un forçat ;
 “ Depuis qu’il fait lire, il n’est plus oison,
 “ Il tient à l’empire,—mais par la raison.”

Not many months ago, the National Assembly voted “ *Que la force armée est essentiellement obeissante ;*” which may be translated—The *essence* of a military force is *obedience*.—Let this vote be compared with the popular song : Is it not evident that the Republicans, having turned the soldiers into politicians and philosophers to serve their own ends, would not be sorry to transform them once more into *machines*, if they had skill enough to work such a transformation ?

About the beginning of July different regiments approached nearer and nearer to Paris and Versailles ; the Assembly grew jealous, (not without reason) and on the 10th of July presented a spirited remonstrance to the King ; he returned answer, that he had no other motive than the necessity of maintaining good order at Paris ; and offered

offered to transfer the Assembly to Noyon or Soissons, and follow them to Compiègne. Some Members were satisfied with this proposal, others were displeas'd; Mirabeau distinguished himself amongst the latter, and two important conversations pass'd between him and Mounier.

The first pass'd in the presence of M. M. Bergasse and Duport, previous to the address of the 10th, in which Mirabeau told them, that he had met the Duke of Orleans, and had said, "Your Highness cannot deny
" that we may soon have Louis XVII. in-
" stead of Louis XVI. at least you may be
" Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. The
" Duke," he continued, "answered me in
" a very pleasing manner." Mounier was alarmed, and suspected some dark plot from his friend's side, as much as from his adversaries. After the King's answer, he press'd Mirabeau to lay aside the project of a second address, and hinted, that he was excessively alarmed at the manœuvres daily employ'd at Paris to seduce the troops from their officers; and that an ambitious prince appearing at the head of a discontented army, distributing money with one hand and libels with the
other,

other, might easily usurp the throne. Mirabeau answered, "Why you good simple man! (*Bonhomme!*) I am as much attached as you to Royalty; but what signifies whether we have Louis the XVIIth. or Louis the XVIth. and why need we have a child* to govern us?" Mounier represents himself (like our *Hastings*, in Rowe's *Jane Shore*) as swearing to plunge a dagger in the heart of the man who could conceive so wicked a scheme.

I have already mentioned the prejudices of the French in favor of unbroken hereditary succession; and when we consider how little France would have benefited by such an exchange, we cannot think the expressions too strong. Mirabeau is described as playing a part which we may compare to that which *Gloster* plays in the above-mentioned scene, as denying that he had the meaning which his words seemed to import, and hastily breaking off the conversation.

* *Bambin* was the word. I cannot be certain whether, as Mirabeau employed it, it imported *child* or *idiot*.

If Mirabeau held similar rash dialogues with others, as is very likely from his impetuous character; and if we take into consideration all the transactions of Paris, it will not appear very wonderful, that the King's brothers and his courtiers persuaded him that his crown would be torn from his head by a perfidious relation, if he did not exert the utmost spirit, and change his plan of government. It cannot be denied by the most zealous Democrats, that the cause of French liberty would have been purer, if it had never blended itself with the revenge of a discontented Prince, or the intrigues of his selfish agents.

An entire change of measures was now resolved on at court, but how far that change would have been carried, or what was the real degree of criminality in the plot, have not yet been sufficiently cleared.

If we believe the declamatory writer of the *Hist. de la Revolution*,* “ fifty thousand
“ men, one hundred pieces of cannon, *six*

* Vol. i. page 306.

“ *thousand*

“ *thousand banditti*, and *six Princes*, would
 “ have pulled down the sanctuary of liberty
 “ on its Ministers’ heads, and overturned the
 “ French empire. The National Assembly
 “ would have been dispersed, its resolutions
 “ declared seditious, its members proscribed,
 “ the Palais Royal and the houses of Pa-
 “ triots given up to plunder, the Electors
 “ and the Deputies given up to execu-
 “ tioners.

“ This is the horrible tissue of crimes and
 “ assassinations, which a troop of *villains*
 “ and *infamous women*, (*seclerats et femmes*
 “ *perducs*) meditated with barbarous joy in
 “ the tumult of their execrable orgies.” He
 afterwards declares, “ that he turns away
 “ his eyes with horror, wishing to find rea-
 “ sons to believe that the public opinion
 “ might be mistaken.”

It may be observed upon this declamation,
 that the *crimes* and *assassinations* of the *vil-
 lains* and *infamous women*, on the popular
 side, are in the class of actual realities; the
 crimes of *those*, on the Court side, are, as
 yet, only in the class of possibilities. Tibe-
 rius,

rius, it is said, used to lament, that *conspiracies against sovereigns were never believed, unless they had taken effect*. When the people, or rather the populace, have invested themselves with all the rights of despotic sovereigns, they must not be surpris'd if they meet with the like unfavorable incredulity.

The opinion of Lally Tolendal may now be properly quoted :

“ For my part, I thought that the new
 “ counsellors, who had surpris'd the King's
 “ confidence, when they banished the Mi-
 “ nister, who was a friend to liberty, (Nec-
 “ ker) had projects adverse to liberty itself;
 “ that the troops had been assembled, not
 “ only to prevent the explosion that was
 “ feared after that Minister's departure, but
 “ to put in execution the declaration of the
 “ 23d of June. I thought that we (the
 “ States) should be required to ratify that
 “ declaration; that if we consented, no en-
 “ terprise would be formed; that if we did
 “ not consent, the King would be persuad-
 “ ed to use the right he ought to have of dis-
 “ solving

“ solving the National Parliament;* and
 “ that if we refuse to separate, which would
 “ certainly have happened, as the Constitu-
 “ tion was not yet established, and the right
 “ of dissolution could not exist but by the
 “ Constitution, and, consequently, could not
 “ take place till after its formation, there
 “ would be an attempt to dissolve us by au-
 “ thority; then the military would be called
 “ in to repress the tumults that might be
 “ caused by our forced separation. I was
 “ indignant against this project, both for the
 “ sake of the nation, and of the King—but
 “ a blockade—but a siege—but the project
 “ of overturning the capital of the kingdom
 “ —but that list of deputies, who, it was
 “ said, would be seized upon—Never did even
 “ the ideas of such transactions enter into
 “ my mind; never were they presented to
 “ me by others, that I did not repulse them
 “ with indignation; and none, perhaps, have
 “ believed them less than the very persons

* One reason for trusting the dangerous power of dissolution in the hands of the King of England, is to prevent the ill effects of an obstinate quarrel between the Lords and the Commons.

“ who have taken such pains to propagate
“ them abroad.”

To this apparently candid explanation may be added, the suppositions repeated in some foreign newspapers, that the Nobles and Clergy had promised the King large sums of money to supply the public Treasury, till another States-General could be called together in October or November, elected according to the proportion and forms of 1614.

If this be true, we see that even despotism itself could no longer hope to govern France without a States-General; the dispute was, whether those States should be chosen in a manner favorable to one, or to the other class of citizens.

That the dispute but little resembled a dispute between a despotic Monarch and his subjects, appears from this paragraph of an answer of M. de la Harpe to M. de Calonne's pamphlet, inserted in the *Mercure de France* of the 9th of April, 1791.

“ In

“ In regard to the Clergy, the Nobility,
“ the Magistrature, (that is, the old Parle-
“ mens) it is well enough known, what
“ was the wish expressed in the *Cahiers* for
“ the abolition of privileges of all kinds;
“ and when the resistance of the privileged
“ Orders, who had recourse to *force** when
“ *reason* was wanting, put the nation into
“ the necessity of joining force to reason;
“ when from one end of France to the
“ other, all France was in arms in the
“ space of eight days, reckoning from the
“ 14th of July, 1789, did not the nation,
“ by its actions, then declare its representa-
“ tives, We are put into the exercise of all
“ our rights by the opposition made to those
“ that we reclaimed? A general insurrec-
“ tion proves a general will, and the wish;
“ and the want of a new constitution. It
“ was no longer in question to reform the
“ Clergy, the Magistracy, the Nobility;
“ since these oppressive Orders shew them-
“ selves so obstinately your enemies, that
“ they must be destroyed.”

* Had not the Commons appealed to force, when their leaders set the mob upon the Archbishop of Paris.

We see that the power of the King is not directly interested in this argument. A case might be supposed, by way of explanation, that petitions were sent from all parts of England, to oblige the House of Lords to sit along with the House of Commons, that a civil war was ready to break out between the two Houses, and the King, unluckily for himself, joined with the unpopular side. Or another supposition might be made of a violent quarrel arising between the *Knights* and the *Burgesses* on the first formation of our English Constitution, and the Henry or Edward of the age, deciding in favor of the Knights. For our Knights of the shire, in their first institution, bore some similitude to the representatives of the French *Gentilhommes*, and that similitude may still be traced in the Members for the Scotch Counties.

But it must be confessed that all these comparisons are very imperfect, and only serve to shew, that there is no true similitude between the French Revolution, and any of the English victories over despotism, from Magna Charta downwards. It is the

false and malicious art of a faction, to pretend that those who dislike the French Revolution, disapprove of the principles of the English Revolution in 1688. English liberty and French liberty are built on totally different foundations; the first is grounded on the concord of the Nobles and the people; the latter on the hatred of the people against the Nobles. From thence it may be inferred, that the English should be very cautious how they attempt transferring into their constitution, even what may be good in the French, because the materials that suit one foundation, might only ruin a building, whose foundation was essentially different.

Let me again observe, that it might be supposed, from La Harpe's arguments, that the hated Orders obstinately refused to abandon any one of their privileges. The fact is, that they were ready to abandon the more odious of them; and that the privilege of being an *independent House of Parliament* in the *Legislature of a free State*, is so glorious, so dazzling in its nature, that we cannot

not wonder at that ambition which eagerly fought to retain it.

As to the Magistracy, (or Parlemens) although M. d'Epresmesnil, one of their Members, was blameably active and obstinate in the present dispute; yet most of those great bodies remained passive, although reluctant witnesses of the triumph of democracy; a universal panic produced a universal torpor, and the once dreaded Parlement of Paris, the great hereditary *Court of Peers*, was not *even named* amongst the strange events that followed upon Necker's dismissal.

If in my preceding arguments I have endeavoured to extenuate, it is not, by any means, my intention to justify the measures which the Court had now resolved upon; they were precipitate and ill-judged in the highest degree, equal in their rashness, (whatever they were in their criminality) to the famous attempt of Charles the First's to seize the six Members; they might, very probably, have led to a civil war, and perhaps it was the

intention of the mere Courtiers (those despicable tools of narrow dirty intrigues) that these measures should have restored the old reign of despotism. But I still think that corrupted base herd would have wanted instruments to assist their malice, if the Commons had ever shewn a disposition to offer conciliating terms to the Nobles.

The same remark may serve, as to all the real or pretended plots of counter-revolutions. If the classes that may be called the *law* and the *gentry*, have corresponded with the exiled Courtiers, one might, safely, in the English stile, *lay a bet*, that it was because their prejudices were treated with such arbitrary violence. Mr. Fox, when he did not think of the French Revolution, could very truly say, “That there is no tyranny so
“ severe, because there is none so hopeless,
“ as that which is exercised by the majority over the minority.” The impartial observers of the affairs of France may decide whether those words do not convey a true picture of the situation of that country ever since the celebrated 14th of July. Every mark of discontent in the Nobles or Clergy
has

has been followed by some severe resolution, which tended to blend them by force with the mass of the people; every such resolution has usually been followed with the terrors of a plot, and the mob has been called upon to prevent that plot by acts of cruelty. Thus *fear* has produced *tyranny*, and *tyranny* has produced *fear* with that continual *action* and *re-action* which is one of the peculiar characteristics of *despotism*.

I am far from denying the right of the majority to command the minority, or from denying that the interests of 20 millions are not of more consequence than the interests of 2 or 300,000. But I do assert, that if once malecontents come to be reckoned up by *hundreds of thousands*, it would be prudent in the *millions* to shew them a little indulgence.

It now only remains to mention, that I have been somewhat diffuse in the preceding narration, because I have thought that in general the preliminary events were little understood. Though the subsequent events were of much greater importance, yet as

they are universally known, they may be recited with more brevity.

On Saturday the 11th of July, M. Necker received an order from the King to give up his place and to quit the kingdom as soon as possible. Luzerne, St. Priest, Montmorin, and the other ministers were either turned out or resigned the next day; M. de Breteuil was raised to the chief situation in the ministry, and marshal Broglio, who had once been popular during the unsuccessful German war of 1757, accepted the important and unpopular place of commander in chief.

When this news was carried to Paris on the morning of Sunday the 12th, the fury of despair and enthusiasm animated every mind. The people considered Necker as the only pledge of liberty, his name resounded from every side, and the faction of the Palais-Royal contrived to join the less worthy name of the Duke of Orleans in the same acclamations. Their busts were taken from the sculptor's shop and carried about
in

in triumph. Witnesses* have since attested that a few voices were heard to cry, “ shall “ this prince be your king and shall Necker “ be his minister ?” but the Parisians were not *quite furious* enough to give *their* assent to the first of these propositions.

The Prince of Lambesc, colonel of the regiment of royal Allemand stationed just without Paris, advanced into the garden of the Thuilleries, and vainly endeavoured to disperse the populace, who threw stones at him ; he is accused of *assassination* because he struck and wounded some persons who, perhaps, were not the foremostward in the attack ; a case which frequently happens in these scenes of confusion.

He and his troops retired, nor did any of the surrounding regiments attempt that night to enter Paris, which some have considered as a proof, that the ministry of the hour had *foolishly* rather than *wickedly* thought it was easy to over-awe Paris by the presence of troops, and did not foresee the

* In the Procedure du Chatelet.

necessity of those sanguinary measures which their enemies affected to consider as decided and resolved upon.

All regal, all judicial, all municipal government was now at an end in the city of Paris, and one universal panic, dread of slaughter from the army, and of plunder from thieves and banditti, had seized the whole body of the people. The Parisians soon presented that extraordinary scene rare even in civil commotions, of a hundred thousand individuals animated by one common soul. On Monday the 13th the temporary bodies of the electors of representatives took the command in their several districts, and were obeyed more implicitly than Lewis the Fourteenth in the zenith of his power. The Gardes-Françoises offered their services and were accepted. Thirty thousand citizens unaccustomed to arms, were armed, nay, trained to some appearance of discipline in twenty-four hours : a green cockade was first taken (as the emblem of hope) and then rejected, for the since famous national cockade red and blue, (the colours of the arms of Paris) intermixed with white, (the
old

old national colour.) Some plunder and mischief did actually take place, especially at the house of the congregation of St. Lazare, (a truly pious and charitable institution, but at that moment suspected to have a quantity of corn in their granaries.) Many slighter robberies were committed,* and the robbers, when taken in the fact, were carried to the *greve*, and hung on the rope which commonly served to fasten a lantern. From hence originated all those barbarous conceits and quibbles about *lanterns*, which have since infected so many of the French writings, and that horrid custom of constituting themselves judges and executioners in the same moment, which the French people acquired in twenty-four hours, and have not forgotten in two years.

On Tuesday the 14th of July, (a day for ever memorable in the annals of mankind) the newly-formed army, after taking arms from the *Garde-Meuble* and the *Invalids*, who made no resistance, marched to sum-

* See a pamphlet called *Histoire des Evenemens remarquables arrivés dans la Capitale.*

mon De Launay, the Governor of the Bastille, to lay down his arms; and it is said, that he gave them ambiguous hopes of compliance.* A number of Parisians then came to the gates to demand arms and ammunition, De Launay admitted them, and as soon as they were within the first court, is generally said to have fired on them. This act of treachery, from a man so unpopular as the governor of an odious prison, and suspected besides of defrauding and starving his prisoners, inflamed the public revenge to a degree that blood itself could hardly expiate: but as Launay was not suffered to live to defend himself, it is impossible to know whether he could have explained or extenuated this apparent treachery. Bezenval on his trial affirmed, that he could not believe the crime imputed to Launay: however, no Parisian patriot doubted of it; the fortress was attacked with that energy which results from despair; and, to the astonishment of all military men, those seemingly inaccessible towers and ramparts yielded, in two hours, to a volunteer army, scarce one of whom

* Histoire de la Revolution, vol. ii. page 9.

had ever beheld a siege before. De Launay was dragged to the Place de Greve, murdered by the mob; and the savage custom of insulting the last remains of the dead, and exhibiting their heads upon pikes, as the despot of Constantinople exhibits the heads of his disgraced Vizirs, first commenced in this instance. If he broke the laws of war, as a criminal, he deserved it; but the example has been dreadful.—Crimes beget one another—the Major* of the Bastille was murdered with equal cruelty, although he is now lamented even by democratic writers, as a man who was merciful to the prisoners, and deserving of a better fate. A young man of fashion (the Marquis of Pelleport) who had received kindness from M. de Lofme when in prison, took him in his arms, and pathetically intreated the people to spare his friend. All intreaties were in vain, the Major's head was cut off, and his grateful defender could, with difficulty, escape the same fate. The new-formed†

sol-

* Histoire de Revolution, vol. ii. page 37.

† I believe it would not be difficult to prove from history,

that

soldiers of Democracy loudly exclaimed, “let us hang the whole garrison!” but the *French Guards*, who had once been the *soldiers of Monarchy*, (now stiled *Tyranny*) had not yet forgot their old *monarchical* and *military honor*; they begged mercy for those soldiers who had once served under the same banners with themselves, and they were too useful allies to be refused.*

The *Prevot des Marchands*, M. de *Fleffelles*, had been, in the mean time, detected in a correspondence with the Court; he was turned out of his office by the Committee of *Electors*—shot, as they were conveying him to prison, and his body was dismembered in the same savage manner.

After some hours had passed away in the double intoxication of joy and revenge, some humane persons recollected that the prisoners ought to be delivered; their cells were broke open, and they were conducted in

that *ferocity towards enemies* is the leading vice of *Democracy*; that *luxurious dissipation* is the leading vice of *European Monarchy*; whilst the *Oriental Despot* unites them both.

* *Histoire de Revolution*, vol. ii. page 42.

triumph

triumph round the garden of the Palais-Royal.

Seven prisoners* only were found in the Bastille, most of whom were persons accused of forgery, and two or three only were objects of compassion, as they had been detained ever since the reign of Louis the XVth. and having lost their reason, had remained prisoners because nobody knew what to do with them. The Municipality of Paris were obliged, in a few days, to send them to *Charenton*, which answers to our hospital of Bedlam.

After all the detestation excited against the Queen and the Comte d'Artois, it does not appear that any victims of their revenge were discovered—whilst Mademoiselle Pompadour, the idol of all the wits and philosophers of those days—the idol of that *Voltaire* to whom the French are going to erect monuments,—that *infamous idol* had filled, with her victims, all the prisons of France.

* Hist. de la Revol. vol ii. pages 52, 53.

Any one instance of a miserable being confined in solitude, without knowing his crime or his accuser, till his reason sinks beneath the load of misery, is alone sufficient to fix indelible disgrace upon a Government;—and bold must that pen be which could attempt to vindicate *the Bastille*. Had the gates of that horrible fortress opened to a *peaceable deputation* from the *Three Orders of the State*, charged with collecting materials to prove the necessity of those laws in favour of personal liberty, which the King himself had left to their consideration and free votes,—such a day would have deserved to be celebrated by *one universal jubilee* of all the *Friends of Freedom*. And I cannot yet see any reason to believe, but that such a glorious day would have taken place, if the Constitution of the 23d of June had been accepted.

But as the event now stands, the feelings of impartial men ought to remain suspended. *The taking of the Bastille has betrayed the secret of all governments, Republican as well as Monarchical*: it has proved that nothing can withstand the unanimous force of an
enraged

enraged multitude : an awful truth ! upon which all *Kings* and *Senates* should meditate in trembling silence, but of which the multitude ought ever to remain ignorant.

Is this speaking like a friend of despotism ? Then let me ask those scholars, with which our sect of Independents is undoubtedly well provided, whether Tacitus is a friend to despotism ? and then, whether he expresses any *transport* at the *fall* of *Nero* ? Can they not perceive, through the veil of his obscure conciseness, that his deep-searching mind was more affected with the misfortunes threatened to the Roman empire, from the want of *subordination* of the *soldiery*, than gratified by the death of a single tyrant, although he was the most enormous monster that ever disgraced humanity ? What panegyrics are bestowed, both by Tacitus and by Pliny, on Virginius Rufus, whose uncommon merit was to have refused the empire from the hands of the soldiery, and told his army, that he would not take arms against a tyrant, until the *Senate* had ordered him !

If

If any citizen of Paris* had made a similar excuse for not arming, his head would probably have been on a pole the next moment.

It is difficult to say what provocations would have induced the National Assembly to have given the decisive *orders* that would have *sanctioned resistance* by force of arms; for, at that momentous period, the Democrats seem to have yielded the *post of honor* to the moderate party, who always intended resistance without bloodshed.

The Assembly, on hearing of the disgrace of Necker, thought that its own ruin was determined; the Members assembled on Monday the 13th with the terrors of dissolution and imprisonment before their eyes, but were resolved not to give up a single point. Mounier began a firm yet temperate speech, by acknowledging the great and immutable line that must be drawn between the legis-

* I humbly beg pardon of Mr. *Paine*, and of the whole clan of the *Mackintosh's*, if I am not yet persuaded that they are superior to Tacitus.

lative and the executive power; a line, which having once acknowledged, the Assembly has since pretended to respect, but, in fact, has continually overpassed. He owned that the Assembly had no legal right to direct the King's choice of Ministers; but as the choice he had now made led to the most dangerous consequences, it was necessary to vote their solemn and grateful thanks to M. Necker, and declare, that the new Ministry had not the confidence of the nation. Lally Tolendal seconded his efforts, and votes of a similar nature passed *almost* unanimously.

The Assembly, before it parted, voted a famous resolution, by which it declared, "that the actual counsellors of the King
" were personally responsible for the present
" misfortunes, and for all that might ensue." Mounier, in his answer to Chabroud, confesses, that this vote had too much resemblance to an *ex post facto* law; but says, it was necessary in their desperate situation. The King was also solicited to recal his troops, and to entrust Paris to the guard of his own citizens. He gave a general answer,
N " That

“ That he was deeply afflicted with the melancholy situation of Paris ; that it was impossible that the troops he had sent for could be the real cause of it ; that they were indispensably necessary for the preservation of peace and order ; and that he invited the Assembly to go on with its labours.”

On Tuesday, the 14th of July, messengers of ill news came from all sides to the Court, (as fast as the messengers in the Book of Job) and every hour announced some new disaster : not only the *Gardes-Françoises* had deserted, but the faith of the whole army was wavering. The national troops had strongly imbibed the idea, that it was unlawful to fight against their fellow-citizens ; and the foreign regiments, who had never been popular in France, and who were dreaded as the ready instruments of plunder and carnage, appear, on the contrary, to have been very cold and indifferent to the cause they were called to support.

At last, the news of the taking of the Bastille, and the sad fate of Launay and Fles-

Fleffelles; like a thunderbolt, levelled to the ground all the fond presumption and busy intrigue of the French Court. Whether any sanguinary projects were then meditated by those courtiers who read their own fate in that of Launay, can only be matter of conjecture; for the wild assertions of their enemies, though still repeated, have never yet been proved.

The National Assembly dreading the greatest evils, resolved not to break up their session, but to pass the night in their Hall; a spirited resolution, which we shall see, that they ought to have repeated at a very different period.—It is said, that the King was kept in ignorance of the real state of affairs; and that about midnight the Duc de Liancourt broke into his apartment, informed him of the whole truth; and, besides, informed the Count d'Artois, that the Parisians had set a price upon his head. This *last piece* of information was irresistible, and the Count no longer endeavoured to keep up his brother's courage. The most *unconditional submission* was resolved upon; the King went early on Wednesday morning,

ing, without any guards, to put himself entirely into the power of the Assembly.

In his speech he took occasion to tell them, that he knew some had dared to publish, that the *persons* of the Deputies were not secure: he asked if it was necessary to contradict such criminal reports, belied by his well-known character; and added, that he entrusted himself into their hands, and called on them to save the State; concluding with the information, that he had ordered all the troops to leave the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles.

This speech was received with loud acclamations, and all the Members rising, as by common consent, accompanied him back to the palace.—From this instant he had, in effect, resigned the sovereignty into their hand; and, from this instant, the middle party, led by Mounier, Lally, Malouet, were reconciled to him, and seem to have relied upon his faith; whilst the friends of extreme democracy, either feared or affected to fear, that his known irresolution would throw him back into the hands of their enemies;

mies: consequently, they resolved to fetter him to the utmost of their power; and, what was much worse, they were indifferent as to the criminality of the means by which those fetters were imposed.

The Parisians were still preparing against sieges and blockades; the old office of *Prevot des Marchands* was suppressed; M. Bailly, formerly known for his astronomical writings, was named Mayor of Paris; and La Fayette was elected to the command of their new-formed army. La Fayette, distinguished by having served under Washington, has acted a nobler part than any of the French Revolutionists; and though his principles may have been mistaken, and his conduct sometimes erroneous, yet to him it seems owing that Paris and Versailles have not exhibited massacres, quite as extensive and horrid as that which dishonoured the fatal period of the St. Barthelemi.

A deputation of eighty-four Deputies was now sent from the National Assembly to the city of Paris; not in the dignified manner in which the Long Parliament might have

ordered the Earl of Effex to lay down his arms, if it had concluded peace with Charles the First: No! the Revolution of the 14th of July stood upon a very different footing. However, the just odium of the Bastille has varnished over the events of that time; the real state of facts is no other than this: that it is lawful for any corporation to take up arms, seize the King's garrisons, and put his officers to death, if a frantic apprehension has seized *them* that they shall be murdered by the King's troops. The National Assembly have, on other occasions, shewn some jealousy of the principle, that all garrisons ought to be entrusted to burghers; and would, probably, have shewn more jealousy of the new-formed Republic of Paris, if they had been safely out of its reach. Their Deputies, who went to *offer*, almost to *implore* peace, were received with great applause; but still the general mistrust* and fear of massacre remained: the King himself was advised to visit the city of Paris, and on Friday, July the 17th, he resolved

* The pamphlet before quoted says, that some persons died raving mad from their terrors.

on this humiliating and dangerous measure ; fully convinced, at the same time, that he encountered the peril of instant assassination. He was received at Seve by 25,000 *National Guards* (as they are now to be called) ; the procession was, indeed, melancholy—the cry of “ *Vive la Nation,*” alone prevailed, and the favorite cry of “ *Vive le Roi,*” was not once heard till, at the Hotel de Ville, he had declared his affection for his people, and accepted the Parisian cockade. During a speech of M. de St. Merry, which hinted at the supposed designs of the Court against Paris, Lally Tolendal * says, that a denial so involuntary, so positive, burst from the King’s lips, that it was impossible for bystanders not to be convinced, that it was the language of innocence falsely accused. He returned in the evening to Versailles, and was received with transport by his courtiers, of whom many had never expected to see him again.

A very extraordinary conversation is deposed upon *oath*, by two Members of the

* Lal. Tol. Memoire, page 75.

National Assembly, (M. Duchey and M. de la Maisonneuve) to have passed in their hearing, between M. Malouet and M. Corollet, a Deputy from the Commons of Brittany, as they were accompanying the King to Paris. It may be disputed, whether it was strictly proper in those two witnesses to mention this private conversation, but I see no possibility of disputing its truth.

If we *could* take it in its literal sense, it would give a strange picture indeed of *revolution morality*. — The dialogue was as follows:

Malouet. “ Why have you Bretons been
“ so eager in spreading calumnies against
“ me ?”

Corollet. “ We know you are an honest
“ man ; but you are too moderate for a
“ Revolution.”

Malouet. “ Your Revolution would never
“ have begun, if the rabble had not threat-
“ ened to stone the Archbishop of Paris.”

Cor. "It was *we* who set them on."

Mal. "You could not have completed
" your purpose without the defection of the
" French guards and the troops of the
" line."

Cor. "We were sure of the troops, and
" had, for a long while, correspondencies
" in all the regiments."

Mal. "In spite of all your arts, you
" would never have succeeded, if the Court
" had not so imprudently dismissed M.
" Necker."

Cor. "That event only hastened the
" execution of our schemes. *We would have*
" *compelled the Parisians to take arms, by*
" *setting fire to the Palais Bourbon.*"

Mal. "I have not a word more to say:
" you did wisely not to let me into your
" secrets, for I never could have joined in a
" Revolution brought about by *such means.*"

I am

I am willing to allow a great deal for the *etourderie*, *forfanterie*, and *jaëctance* of the French character, (three most expressive French idioms, which our English words *giddiness* and *boasting* express but imperfectly.) I am willing to suppose that much of this strange conversation was the trick of an *etourdi*, to frighten a grave man. But whoever allows this indulgence has a right to demand as much favor for the opposite party, and to suppose that most of the bloody schemes, which to this day are attributed, in Revolution Histories, to the Court, took their rise from the heated expressions of half a dozen Courtiers and Nobles cursing the rabble, (*la Canaille*) over a bottle; but forgetting all their so much dreaded *conspiracies* the instant they were sober.

No such indulgence, however, was, or perhaps could be allowed at that moment; whatever was most atrocious was most * readily believed; spies were planted in every

* The known credulity of the Parisians, of which many ridiculous instances might be given, takes away much of the credit due to their unanimous belief.

corner, and servants encouraged to repeat the unguarded expressions of their masters. Notwithstanding the safe return of the King, the vanquished party expected no mercy from their enemies. In the course of a week or ten days, Marshal Broglio, the Polignacs, the Luxembourgs, all who were even *supposed* to have accepted posts in the short Ministry of three days, and, lastly, the Princes of Condé and Conti, the Count of Artois and his two sons, (the very family next in succession to the Crown) all disappeared one after another, protected by the broken and retreating army; and after a series of romantic adventures and dangers, reached England, Germany, or Italy in safety—but a safety at once shameful and precarious.

The Queen alone remained—the Queen, equally hated by the people, who supposed that she had induced her husband to listen to the Count d'Artois advice, she was left by those favourites who had poisoned her unexperienced youth with the false taste of prodigality and dissipation, was left alone and unprotected, to confront a danger from
which

which the blood of the great Condé, and of Henry the IVth, shrank with apprehension. From that moment, whatever may have been her former errors, she becomes an object of compassion to generous minds.

Cazales, d'Epresmeuil, and Maury, retired for a short time, and then returned, encouraged by that inviolability, which the Assembly persisted in claiming for its members. They have since continued the most intrepid opposition to the measures of the triumphant party; but that party very well know that their opposition may be despised as ineffectual, because so many (even of moderate men) think that they, in a great measure, caused the misfortunes of France by their obstinacy in refusing a temporary union for that verification of writs, which would have legally sanctioned their respective chambers.

All the refractory Nobles hastened to renounce their former protest, and held themselves absolved by necessity from the oath taken to their constituents. It was agreed to bury the name of *States-General* in
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in oblivion, and the name of *National Assembly* was henceforth used by all parties. But no concessions softened the savage spirit of the Parisians, and, indeed, much pains were taken to keep it up to its utmost height. A song was fabricated and became the most popular *vaudeville* at Paris, which, alluding to some phrases used by the defeated party, “*C’à n’ira pas,*” this business can never go on, repeated for its burden, “*C’à ira, C’à ira,*” it will go, it will go on; and ended with wishing all the Aristocrats to be hanged at the Lantern: “*Tous les Aristocrates à la Lanterne.*”

These barbarous words (which are set to no inelegant tune) have been sung as the *death signal*, “*Le signal de la mort,*” as Mallet du Pan expresses it, in every part of France, and some attempts have been made to introduce them into foreign countries, where the people had any cause of variance with their Magistrates, particularly at Geneva.

Let it be observed, that the word *Aristocrate*, (Aristocrat) was chosen from the first, instead

instead of *Royaliste*, to express the victims devoted to popular fury, probably because it was more difficult to make the word *Royalist* sound odious to a Frenchman's ears. But it is a much more dangerous word to be made the *shibboleth* of party, because it is much more extensive and undefined, and might devote to the Lantern the friends of the Republic of Berne, or of the kingdom of England, as well as the supporters of the despotic Nobility of Poland, or of the French tyrannical Lettres de Cachet.

The fruits of these seeds of revenge and murder soon appeared in the horrible deaths of Foulon, an old rich financier, a man of bad character, and suspected of having accepted a place under M. Broglio, and of Berthier, the intendant of Paris, and Foulon's son-in-law.

They were seized in their flight, dragged to Paris on the 21st of July, and murdered, with all those circumstances of refined insult and inhumanity, which are notorious to all Europe, and which, *very near*, if not *quite*, transformed a civilized city into a *Hippah* of
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New Zealand Cannibals. I never heard but one imputation denied, that of the mob having obliged Berthier to *kiss* the *head* of his *murdered* father-in-law.*

It is confessed in the Democratic history of the Revolution, that the mob were actually going to present him the head for that purpose; but some degree of humanity remained in La Riviere, the *Elektor*, who brought Berthier to Paris, and he obliged them to take away that dreadful object. Bailly and Fayette exerted themselves to preserve these miserable victims for farther examination; but soon found that they must either abandon them to the populace, or share their fate. La Fayette expressed himself with much indignation, and threatened to resign the command of the Parisian troops, but was persuaded to retain it, in order to prevent greater mischiefs. Here let a native of England be permitted to remember with exultation, with what ease the Lord Mayor and Common Council were able to rescue the hated Jefferies from the hands of

* See Hist. de la Revol. vol. ii. page 132.

an English mob, and that too in a moment, when all the bands of Government were dissolved by the flight of James the II.

As the scarcity of corn still continued, some scenes of horrid murder had actually taken place at St. Germain, Pontoise, and Poilly, on the supposition of monopoly; others had with difficulty been prevented. The moderate party grew alarmed, and Lally Tolendal was one of the first to lay before the Assembly the dangers of that increasing sanguinary spirit.

It has been usual with the friends of the French Revolution, to ask whether the *National Assembly* ever approved of the crimes, which they were forced to allow were unnecessarily committed. To which it may be answered, that the enemies of the Revolution, the middle party, as well as the Aristocrats, concur in accusing the *majority* of that Assembly of *conniving* at all these crimes; and never, even to the present day, having punished any enormity committed against any person suspected of favoring the Nobles or the Clergy.

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The true test of the *liberty* and *impartial justice* of any State is to be found in its behaviour towards those who do not love the *governing faction*. For it may be asked in the words of Scripture, with a small alteration, “If you *are just* to those who love you, “what thank have ye, for tyrants even do “the same?”

But the writers to whom I allude go farther, and positively accuse many of the violent *Patriots*, Mirabeau in particular, of inciting the mob to wicked actions, and bring as proof, the difficulty that Lally and Mounier found to carry their point, when they proposed a proclamation to warn the people from thus making themselves judges and executioners. One set told them that “their “business was to make laws, and not to attend to a few disorders.”—Another said, “if they interfered, the town of Paris would “declare against the Assembly,” which, indeed, I believe was the great motive of its inactivity. One cried out, “if it was not “for these Parisians, whom you blame, you “would not now be sitting here;” and when Lally described the horrid deaths of Berthier

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and Foulon, the celebrated patriot Barnave ironically asked, “if the blood he lamented “was so *very pure*;”* whilst Mirabeau told him “it was a time to *think* rather than to “*feel*;” to which he answered, “Tiberius “*thought*, and our good King Lewis the “Twelfth *could feel*.”

Here is a passage in a speech of Mirabeau, which is commended in the democratic “*Histoire de la Revolution*,”† “If these “scenes which have passed at Paris had “passed at Constantinople, the most timorous characters would say, the people “have done themselves justice, the measure “of iniquity was full, and the punishment “of one vizier will become a lesson to another.”—I believe, on the contrary, that the first impression of a reader of such paragraphs from Constantinople would be, to thank Heaven that he was born under a European government; and that few besides Mirabeau would have ventured to hold out the crimes of Constantinople as an excuse for the crimes of the *polite* city of Paris.

* *Memoire de Lally Tol.* page 86.

† *Hist. Rev.* vol. ii. page 141.

At last the sense of shame had a little effect on the Assembly; and on the 23d of July a proclamation was decreed, inviting all Frenchmen to peace, order, and tranquillity; but it was worded in the least coercive style that could be chosen, and every strong expression suggested by Lally, that "whoever excited troubles was a bad citizen," and that "the punishment of a crime was itself a crime when not commanded by the law."—All these were carefully retrenched from this tame composition.

Necker had been recalled by the King's letters of the 16th or 17th of July, and was now on his way to Versailles. He learnt at Nogent the horrid deaths of Berthier and Foulon, and the danger of M. de Bezenval, commander of the Swiss troops, detained at Villenaux, and threatened with the same fate, because a letter had been intercepted, in which he ordered M. de Launay to defend the Bastille to the last. Necker wrote to the magistrates of Villenaux to intercede in his favor, and received in answer, that they had sent to Paris for orders concerning
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him. He was welcomed at Versailles with transports of joy so excessive, that the historian of the Revolution compares them to the transports of the Romans when Cicero was recalled from exile : presented himself before the National Assembly, complimented them, was complimented and flattered in his turn ; and little, perhaps, could *that Cicero of the day* imagine, that *another exile* awaited him in *another year*, when he should quit France for the last time, as much neglected as he was then adored.

On the 30th of July he made his triumphal entry into Paris, a triumph more flattering than the vanity of an old Roman or of Lewis the Fourteenth ever enjoyed, and those voices that a few days before could hardly cry *Vive le Roi*, now made the air resound with the shouts of *Vive M. Necker*. He endeavoured to make an excellent use of this moment of popular favor, and persuaded the Parisians in an eloquent speech to send orders for the release of M. Bezenval, and to set the example of a general amnesty, which might restore peace to the agitated kingdom.

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But in this attempt, so consonant to virtue and humanity, he committed two important political errors, which lessened the enthusiasm of his admirers. The first and greatest was applying to the city of Paris for the liberty of an accused criminal, and for a general pardon, since no power but the National Assembly (which now filled the place both of Sovereign and of Parliament) could lawfully grant either. It was but too true that Paris was assuming the shape of an independent Republic, but the Assembly did not wish to have it treated as such, although it had not spirit to confine that turbulent city within the bounds of subjection. The second fault was addressing the *electors* of Paris as a *legal body*, whereas their proper function was merely to chuse representatives, and the Parisians had only suffered them to assume command on the 13th of July, because there was no other body of men on whom they could rely. It is not, therefore, surprising if a spirit of jealousy seized the districts of Paris. They grew enraged against the joint councils which sat at the Hotel de Ville, both for promise which they had made of Bezenval's liberty, and for a proclamation

of pardon and peace which were ordered to be sent round to all the Municipalities; another tumult was threatened, the Hotel de Ville was obliged to retract both these measures, and the electors finding themselves become unpopular, and regarded as usurpers, resigned their places in council. The only Assembly then remaining to govern Paris, was called *Assemblée des Représentans de la Commune de Paris* with the Maire, M. Bailly, at their head.

A deputation was sent from the malecontent districts, to complain to the National Assembly of the promise of an amnesty. The Assembly, who had more than one reason to dislike it, declared that a tribunal should soon be established to try the late ministers, and a committee to examine into the accusations against them: it also decreed, that Bezenval should be kept under safe guard at Brie-Comte-Robert, the town where he was then confined. This last clause saved his life; for the historian of the Revolution owns* that no human power could have

* Vol. ii. page 263,

have prevented another murder if he had been brought to Paris.—Thirty thousand frantic Parisians waited for him a whole day at the *Grève*, and had prepared with savage pleasure all the instruments of his death.

It was high time to put some curb upon the revengeful spirit of the people, for it had spread into the provinces, which had almost all taken up arms on the news of the Revolution at Paris. Every man was ready to attack his own enemies under pretence of public good, and above all, the tenants thought this was their time to revive every old quarrel with the proprietors of land.—The first marks of this spirit appeared in Franche-Comté, where the peasants were still under a kind of vassalage.

M. Mesmay, a counsellor of the Parliament of Besançon, and known to be attached to the party of the Nobles, had, in order to shew a forced satisfaction at the state of things, invited his neighbours and tenants to an entertainment. Some mischief happened by gunpowder, but its cause

and extent have never been clearly ascertained. It was immediately said, that Mesmay, from the fanaticism of humbled vanity, had designedly blown up as many of the people as he could collect together. The *Hist. de la Revolution* tells the story in the same horrid way that it was first reported. Lally Tolendal, in the most opposite and strongest terms, calls it "an *infernal fable*, " which was buried in oblivion as soon as " the calumniators found that the tide of " public indignation would be turned against " them." The peasants of Franche-Comté were already beginning to rise, the horror inspired by this story hastened their taking up arms, many gentlemen's seats were plundered and burnt, and the same dreadful contagion of revolt spread even into other provinces, where the peasants were not enslaved.—Here follows a short, imperfect list given by Lally Tolendal of some of the atrocious cruelties which were the *first fruits* of liberty in France.* The reader will, perhaps, take it for the annals of Catharine

* See Memoire de Lally Tolendal, pages 104, 105, 106.

of Medicis, or an account of the Dragoonades of Louvois.

“ In Languedoc, M. du Barras, cut in
“ pieces in the presence of his wife, who
“ was big with child and died of terror.

“ At Mans, M. de Monteffon, shot to
“ death after having seen his father-in-law
“ murdered.

“ In Normandy, a paralytic gentleman
“ thrown into the fire, and taken out again
“ after his hands were burnt.

“ A steward, whose feet were burnt off
“ to make him give up his master's title
“ deeds.

“ In Franche-Comté, Mad. de Battenay,
“ forced to give up her title deeds with an
“ ax held over her head.

“ Mad. de Liffenay, who also gave up her
“ deeds with a fork at her neck, and her
“ daughters in a swoon at her feet.

“ The

“ The respectable Marquis d’Ormenan,
“ a paralytic old man, driven from his
“ castle in the night, pursued from town to
“ town, and who arrived in the Canton of
“ Basil just in time to save himself and his
“ daughters.

“ The Count of Montefu and his wife,
“ who were held for three hours with
“ pistols at their throats, and begged death
“ as a favor from their enemies, dragged at
“ last from their carriage, and on the point
“ of being drowned in a pond, when a
“ regiment passed by and saved them.

“ The Chevalier d’Ambli, taken from
“ his house, dragged naked through his vil-
“ lage, his hair and eye-brows torn off, and
“ thrown into a dunghill, whilst his tor-
“ mentors danced round him.

“ The Baron de Monjustin, one of the
“ twenty-four *popular* gentlemen, (gentle-
“ men who some months before had signed
“ a declaration favorable to the people) was
“ suspended over a well for an hour and a
“ half, while he heard his enemies deliberate
“ whether

“ whether they should drown him, or put
“ him to some other death.”

I almost wish that Lally had been more particular in these stories, because they relate to that class of sufferers by Revolutions who deserve more pity than princes and courtiers: but their truth seems undeniable, since they are shortly told even by the author of *L'Histoire de la Revolution*.

In Maçonnois and Beaujolois the fertile banks of the Saone were desolated by still more terrible because more concerted tumults. A village attorney forged an order from the King to destroy all gentlemen's seats (called *Chateaux* in the French idiom.) He assembled six thousand followers, some peasants, some thieves and smugglers, and in a few days burnt seventy-two gentlemen's houses, and plundered the churches and small towns: at last the gentlemen assembled, and levied a kind of army, and on the 29th of July defeated this banditti with great slaughter. It was said in foreign newspapers, but I know not if with truth, that the lawyer who headed them was tortured for

for three days together to make him discover his abettors, and died without confessing that any one had set him on. A kind of temporary tribunal was erected at Maçon, and twenty or thirty of the banditti were condemned and executed. The democratic writers * are of opinion that this tribunal was illegal, and its sentences and proceedings too severe.

There were many other troubles in many other parts of the kingdom. In Brittany several gentlemen were imprisoned on a false and absurd accusation of intending to give up Brest to the English. At Caen, M. de Belzunce, an officer, was murdered with all the cruel circumstances of *cannibalism* which Paris had taught the provinces, because it was suspected that he had excited his soldiers to insult other soldiers who wore the National cockade. At Strasbourg a riot happened, in which the troops got intoxicated, and exerted their *natural right* of judging and acting for themselves, in deeds of outrage and plunder. But these

* Hist. de Revolution, vol. ii. page 371.

particular evils' were not so terrible to a reflecting mind, as the fear of one universal *jacquerie* throughout the whole kingdom, and of seeing the name and the spirit of that dreadful insurrection of 1358; revived in the *humane* eighteenth century.

The democratic writers* are ashamed of these horrors, and endeavour to throw them on the aristocratic party, who, they say, excited these revolts in hopes of dissolving the National Assembly. But what individuals of that forlorn party can they rationally accuse? Did the *gentlemen* in a body forge orders from the King to destroy *gentlemen's* seats? This is a conspiracy so much in *Mr. Bayes' style*, that the *Revolution historian* is himself ashamed of asserting it. Can the exiled courtiers and princes be suspected? Supposing them capable of such wickedness, they were fugitives, and had at that time barely money sufficient for their own maintenance. The author so often quoted accuses the petty agents of despotism, such as tax-gatherers, for instance, who were afraid of

* See Hist. de Revolution, from page 373 to 377.

losing their places. This is not *quite* impossible; but the democrats ought first to justify themselves from having employed a rabble of low villainous agents, who, in particular cases, probably went farther than their masters intended. It was the democratic books which had marshalled in array against the great landed possessors all the enormities (some true, some false) that had ever been committed by noble landlords since the days of Charlemagne, and thus had suggested arguments by which knaves that *could* read might seduce the poor that *could not*. It was not the aristocrats who had wrote that bloody song of "*Tous les Aristocrates à la Lanterne,*" or designed those equally bloody prints which Lally Tolendal describes,* and which excited the people to cut off the heads of all who were called their enemies. Some of the democrats, Mirabeau in particular, always affected a careless indifference to all these tales of horror, as will appear to the readers of his *Courier de Provence*; and to crown the whole argument, the National Assembly

* Lally Tolendal Memoire, page 100.

has always endeavoured to suppress any strict researches into the causes of these tumults, and have lately put a stop to the inquiries that were still carrying on in the *Maçonnois*. With what joy would they have produced any evidence that could have affected even the lowest agent of aristocracy!—And as for the banished princes, could they have been proved to have employed such a monster as the lawyer aforementioned, their rank would not have protected them from a sentence of death in any country under Heaven.

As these horrid scenes of murder and fe-
dition were perpetually going on in every
quarter, and the non-payment of taxes was
joined to all the other evils, the National
Assembly began to be alarmed. On the 4th
of August, a motion was made to remove
all these sources of confusion by some vigo-
rous resolution. The Vicomte de Noailles
observed, that in the present fermentation of
the people's minds, such a declaration
would only provoke them to worse violence,
if it was not accompanied by some decrees
in their favour. He proposed that it should
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be voted, that all taxes should, in future, be equally supported by all citizens ; that all the *feudal rights* of landlords should be redeemable by the peasants for a sum of money ; and that the *main-morte* and the *corvees*, or the right of employing the peasant's labour, should be abolished without indemnity.

The first of these articles had been already very nearly agreed upon by the Clergy and Nobles even before the meeting of the States : the second was the great point in dispute betwixt the Orders ; the latter article, relative to the *main-morte* or vassalage, was a reformation at which the King had laboured for several years, and which was expressly proposed in the Declaration of the 23d of June ; but he and his Ministers intended an indemnification to the landlords.

If there is not too much national egotism in quoting the example of England, it may be observed, that when the *heritable jurisdictions* were abolished in Scotland, our Parliament did not stand upon metaphysical principles, that it was contrary to the nature
of

of government to lodge justice in private hands, but sweetened this bitter potion to the great lords, by purchasing these rights out of the public money. And if there are still any relics of the feudal system left behind, it is to be hoped that Britons may live to see them extirpated gradually and silently, even if we should never boast of "the glorious night of the 4th of August," nor strike medals, nor sing *Te Deum* on the occasion.

That night, which I am alluding to, was, no doubt, in its appearance, extremely honorable to the French nation. (A spirit of generous enthusiasm animated the whole Assembly; the Nobles renounced their feudal rights, and their rights of hunting; the Clergy their tythes; the Deputies of those Provinces governed by their own States, renounced their right of taxing themselves. A hundred other petty renunciations were voted by acclamation, and room could scarce be found at the table for the Deputies, who crowded upon one another to sign their renunciations with their own hand.

But notwithstanding the apparent brilliancy of this scene, I will boldly assert, that all these series of laws, most difficult and intricate in their execution, voted in this romantic manner, were not so likely to do real good, or to promote lasting concord between the rich and the poor, as *one* bill to remove *one* grievance; voted according to the slow forms of our acts of Parliament, after a full discussion, and a fair hearing of the arguments on both sides.

The impression would still be left on the minds of the people, that this apparent generosity proceeded from fear; and the constituents of the clerical and noble Deputies would have reason to say, that their Representatives had given away their rights, without asking for instructions, or hearing their defence.

One of the most democratical French writers has owned, there was much good in the unpopular code of laws proposed by Brienne and Lamoignon in 1788, but, says he, “they rashly attempted to execute, in “four months, changes that could only be
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“the slow produce of many years.” May not this argument be retorted upon the admirers of this hasty Revolution?

The inconveniences of voting important laws by acclamation appeared the next day, when these hasty acclamations were to be compiled into decrees; the Nobles made few objections, and seemed resigned to their losses; but the Clergy had understood the vote about tythes in a different sense from the *patriotic* party; they had expected that the odious mode of collecting tythes in kind was alone to be abolished, and that they should receive the same amount by a *composition* with their parishioners. The Abbe Sieyes, a friend of the Orleans party, and one of the most metaphysical republicans in the whole Assembly, pleaded, however, the cause of his brethren with great spirit, as the cause not of the *church*, but of the *rights* of property; and boldly said to the Assembly, “if you wish to be *free*, begin by being *just*.” Mirabeau distinguished himself on the other side, as well as many popular orators. The Clergy were obliged to yield, and to give up their future subsistence en-
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tirely to the disposal of the nation, with the reserve that tythes should be paid them as formerly, till the end of the year: but the mortification of many of them, at being stripped of what they deemed their property, by the party whom they had joined in the most dangerous crisis, may more easily be conceived than described.

In the very same session, all the fees or taxes paid to the Court of Rome were abolished, which is now no longer a dangerous enemy: but the French have been brought into greater difficulties by including, in their general reformation of feudal rights, the districts of Alface, and other Provinces, that once belonged to the German Empire, the Duke of Wirtemberg, the Prince of Deux-Ponts, and many other German Princes, secular and ecclesiastical. These districts, and the rights thereunto belonging, were guaranteed to the possessors, in 1648, by the famous treaty of Westphalia; that treaty, as much respected all over Germany as Magna Charta in England; the Diet of Ratisbon has been ever since exceedingly averse to the party that prevails in France; indem.

indemnifications were voted several months after, but the negotiations are not yet brought to an issue.

Had these indemnifications been proposed and voted on the 4th of August, and had the treaty of Westphalia been mentioned with respect, it would have taken off much of the odium which has attended that measure in Germany: but when laws are voted by acclamation, and with almost theatrical parade, all details and modifications are thrown aside with contempt; the sufferers conceive themselves more aggrieved than they really are, and the persons benefited expect greater benefits than the ordinary course of human affairs can admit: both are dissatisfied with all future modifications, and the animosity between the contending interests breaks out as violently as ever. The decree, collected from all the separate votes, excellent in itself, but exceptionable from the mode in which it was brought forward, was presented to the King, on the 13th of August, by the National Assembly in a body, and a *Te Deum* sung in the chapel at Versailles.

A few days before the 4th of August, the King had, by letter, informed the Assembly of the formation of his new Ministry; the great seal was given to the archbishop of Bourdeaux; the nomination of benefices to the archbishop of Vienne; and the war department to M. de la Tour du Pin; St. Priest and Montmorin had been recalled with Necker: the three first-named were Members of the Assembly, but from that time ceased to sit and vote. The Assembly expressed much satisfaction at this nomination, but this satisfaction soon gave place to new jealousies. Two great objects now occupied the Assembly; the first was, the declaration of the Rights of Man; the second, the Report of the Committee destined to fix the grounds of the new Constitution. Of the first performance, so admired by the Revolution Society, I shall say little; as I have often declared, that I leave abstract disputes to speculative authors by profession. The Clergy and the Nobles are the first to allow that many of its articles are excellent, but complain, that they have been cruelly violated whenever their interests are concerned. I shall only observe, that it was imprudent,
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in that moment of general fermentation, to lose so many days in metaphysical discussions; and that a declaration of the rights of man in general, without distinction of country or colour, was a rash measure for a nation which has *colonies*, and *colonies* cultivated by *slaves*, and yet is resolved to keep those colonies at all events. M. Barnave, in a subsequent debate on the situation of their colonies, was the first to tell the Assembly that, unfortunately, the *rights of men* could not apply to the West Indies; that if they endeavoured to make the application, they would lose their colonies, impoverish their trading and manufacturing towns; and that the common people, grown desperate, by the disappointment of their hopes, would be ready to sell themselves to the enemies of the Revolution. The history of the troubles in the French West India Islands, or even in St. Domingo alone, the disputes between the governors, three assemblies raised in three different portions of the Island, and the National Assembly in France; between the whites, their slaves, and the free mulattoes, who think they, as freemen, ought to have a vote for deputies, would,

of itself fill a volume; but they are as yet imperfectly known in Europe. I believe, however, they sufficiently confirm Mr. Burke's exclamation,—“ The Colonists rise
 “ on you, the Negroes rise on them;—
 “ troops again! massacres! tortures! hang-
 “ ing!—*These are your Rights of Men!*”

The arrangement of the new French Constitution was not, in itself, so difficult as the decision of the colonial quarrels, but gave rise to disputes almost as violent and dangerous.

Three questions were proposed by the Committee of Constitution: 1st. Shall the National Assembly be permanent or periodical? 2d. Shall it be composed of one or two chambers? 3d. Shall the King have a negative upon laws? and another question depended upon the third; if he has a negative, shall it be a final one, or shall it only suspend for a time? (*Veto absolu or veto suspensif.*)

The first question was easily decided, and nobody pretended to doubt, that the
 National

National Assembly ought to be permanent ; by which they did not mean that it should be always sitting, but that there never should be a period in which there did not exist a National Assembly ready to be called into action upon great occasions. This is the practice of our constitution, but it has never been declared by law to be its theory ; and, in that instance, I am willing to allow their theory was better than ours. Some time afterwards they fixed the term of each Assembly to be only two years ; and here their belief in the declamations that have been often poured out against our septennial bill, hurried them into a contrary extreme, of a still more dangerous tendency.

The second question, of one or two chambers, was almost decided beforehand in the public mind, by a strange but universal aversion that arose to the plan of the Committee of Constitution, which proposed a *Senate* and a *House of Representatives*, with a negative upon each other. That principle now displayed itself which I consider as the fundamental error of the French constitution, and is, perhaps, rooted in the French temper ;
that

that impatience of check and restraint, which is no less visible in the republican National Assembly, than in the despotic Privy Council of Lewis the XIVth. The Committee had not dared to propose an English House of Peers, an hereditary Senate, as they knew it would be universally odious, both to the lesser gentry, and to the democrats.—Lally, page 135.—Lally Tolendal persisted in proposing senators for life; Mounier* would have contented himself with a Senate chosen by the Provincial administrations, whose Members should possess a revenue of ten thousand livres, and be, at least, thirty-five years of age; and remain in place a given term of years, but longer than the House of Representatives; the French constitution would then have resembled the constitution of most of the American States; but the constitution of *America itself is not a Democracy that will satisfy the French Democrats.*

* Mounier was unjustly accused of being gaiand by the Court. The Senate which he then proposed, was much less favorable to Royalty, than the Senate proposed in his earlier work.

Every power, distinct from Representatives of the People at large, was called Aristocracy; and every *Senate* was seriously compared, in the Assembly, to the *Senate of Venice*.

It was in one of these debates that M. Wimpfen, a Deputy from Alsace, first used the extraordinary expression of a *Royal Democracy*, as the name that he would chuse for the new French government. It had, hitherto, been thought by the most speculative politicians, that these were amongst the words that, according to a lively French expression, “*burlorat d’effroi de se voir accouplés*” — *howled with fright at being coupled together*. The event will shew whether old or modern philosophers were in the right; but, hitherto, I cannot perceive in France any token that those *jarring animals are at all reconciled to their couples*.

The question of one or two chambers was, finally, put to the vote on the 10th of September, and only eighty-nine Members voted for two chambers; most of the Clergy and Nobles voted against it, because they
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thought it would preclude entirely the old division of Three Orders; the very reason why the friends of the new constitution should have voted for it. But Lally Tolendal expressly asserts, that several Members of the popular side said to him, “would you have me expose my wife and children to be murdered by the mob?”

Such was the freedom of suffrage enjoyed in this temple of Liberty! — and Mounier declares, that different Members came to him to beg certificates that they had not given unpopular votes, because they heard that their country seats were to be burnt. The great question now remained, how far the Royal sanction was necessary to the existence of laws, which had been incidentally treated of several days before; and every time it was debated, the popular fermentation had risen to a greater height. The moderate party positively bring this accusation against the violent patriots, that they connived at and excused all the barbarities of the people, that they might have at their disposal a body of frantic ruffians, sufficient to overawe the Assembly. All the old manœuvres,

nœuvres, which produced such effect in the months of June and July, were renewed in the Palais Royal garden, and in the Caffé de Foy, a famous political coffee-house adjoining.

The Clergy and Nobles, they cried, will resume all their power if the King's *veto* is allowed; we must act, and instantly too, else, in three days, France will be enslaved. The famous and turbulent St. Huruge proposed to send a deputation to Versailles, to insist that the King, the Dauphin, and the National Assembly, should reside at Paris; other deputies were sent to the Hotel de Ville to demand the approbation of the Representatives assembled there. Bailly, La Fayette, and the wiser heads, represented to them, that this violence to the liberty of the Assembly was as criminal as the violence threatened by the King's Ministers in July: arguments that did not avail on the 5th and 6th of October, and would not have availed then, but that the plots of the Democratic Cabal were not sufficiently ripe: a great deal of spirit was then exerted, both by the Hotel de Ville, and by La Fayette; the first

first prohibited all tumultuous assemblies, and the second, assisted by his national guard, put in prison St. Huruge, Tinlot, and some other of the zealous motion-makers. Lally, Clermont, and Mounier, complained heavily in the National Assembly of these rebellious attempts against the freedom of the King and the Assembly; against the *lists of proscription* that were spread through Paris; of the Members who wished well to the projects of two chambers and a Royal negative; and against the anonymous letters which were daily received, and which threatened them with destruction.

Mirabeau and one Chaffet silenced them, with shewing as violent threatening letters, which they had received for voting against tythes; and Mirabeau affected the greatest contempt for the panic terrors of some cowardly Members. The Assembly passed over the insults of the Parisians without shewing any spirit, and by that means exposed themselves to still greater insults.

At the very same time that Mirabeau was excusing all the excesses of the mob, he was strenuously supporting the Royal negative in the Assembly; and yet the scribblers whom he patronized assured the Parisians that he was against it, and, at last, he went away without giving his vote on that question. These apparent contradictions renewed the suspicions of some design still more dark and dangerous than had yet been avowed. If this great question had been decided by the original *cabiers* or instructions, it would have been clearly decided for the King; but the terrible apprehensions with which the people's minds had been filled, during the month of July, had absolutely turned their heads; the general discontent gave reason to fear a second explosion like the taking of the Bastille, of which two violent resolutions of the towns of Rennes and Dinant seemed the prelude; the Court resolved to abate in its pretensions, and the day after the question of one chamber had been decided, a *memoire* was sent by M. Necker, proposing a *veto* which should only have the power of suspending laws during one or two legislatures: the majority, afraid
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of ministerial influence, refused to have it read. Mounier, with all his zeal for an amicable correspondence between the King and his Assemblies, was the foremost to refuse to hear it; and thus contradicted his own principles for the sake of one particular point in his system: so attached was he to the Royal *veto*, that, with the same intrepid but obstinate spirit which made him once declare, that it was better no abuses should be rectified, than rectified by Three Orders, he declared, that the *veto* ought to be *forced* upon the King, even in opposition to the King's own opinion. The Assembly, however, adopted the system of a suspensive *veto*, as the best plan of conciliation; and it was afterwards agreed, that the King should have the power to suspend a law during two legislatures; but if the third Assembly persisted in it, he should be obliged to give his sanction. This was, perhaps, the best regulation that could then be made, and Necker's arguments in his memoir seem very plausible; but the party of Mounier, &c. never could pardon him for what they called an irreparable act of weakness. Finding that all the plans that they had carried

in the Committee of C^{on}stitution were disliked by the A^{ss}embly, they threw up their seats, which were supplied with more z^ealous Democrats.

The real importance of the King's *veto* depended upon the determined and final rejection which had been given to the plan of a Senate or Council of State, and it would have been doubly blameable in Mounier to have risked all that he risked by refusing every conciliatory plan, if it had been possible to have raised any other power to have performed the office of *Regulator*; that office, which we have seen, that some of the earliest popular writers in France held to be indispensably necessary in every constitution of whatever sort.—I will not say whether Necker was *quite* justifiable in asserting, that the King of England's veto is merely nominal; but every intelligent Englishman will allow, that the true *regulating spring* of our constitution lies in the House of Lords. I do not blame the French for not instituting a similar House of Peers, they were, perhaps, in the same predicament with the officer who excused himself for not firing

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the cannon, and who had twenty good reasons, the *first* of which was—that he had *no cannon* to fire: but their contemptuous, their abhorrent rejection of any Senate, in any shape whatsoever, can only arise from a temper governed by words more than by things, or from an innate partiality to unbalanced, that is, to arbitrary power, however disguised under republican names. An incident soon happened, which shewed the difficulty of lodging the offices of *King* and *Tribune* in the same person. The Assembly had demanded the King's sanction to the resolutions of the 4th of August; instead of the sanction, a letter came to them in the King's own name, approving the general spirit of their determinations, but declaring, that there were a few articles to which he could only give conditional assent; promising, however, to modify or renounce his own opinions, if convinced by the observations of the National Assembly. He then remarked the hardship of abolishing, without any indemnity to the landlord, those rents that had once, indeed, been paid as a compensation for personal servitude, but which, having been settled between the Lords and
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their vassals ages ago, had been exchanged, or bought and sold, without purchasers observing that their origin was of an odious nature : he touched on the danger of offending the Germans, who had great feudal property in Alsace, guaranteed by solemn Treaties ; and enumerated the various difficulties that would attend the abolition of tythes, consistently, without making an honourable provision for the Clergy, and laying the burden of their subsistence equally upon all classes of citizens.—This letter occasioned a general discontent, not so much for its matter, which they were forced to confess was not unreasonable, but because it was improper for the executive power to attempt to influence the legislative power, by discussing the laws when it was called upon to sanction them. There is truth in this remark ; but it was a dilemma which their scheme of a *Royal Democracy* naturally led them into. There are many laws, good in themselves, but of which particular clauses, inserted by the heat of faction, are too harsh or nearly impracticable : such laws require a *discussion* and not a *veto* ; a conference between two Assemblies, and not a total suppression

pression from the power of the Crown. But in France they must either place the regulating and discussing power where no friend to liberty can wish to see it placed, or invest one Assembly with more unbounded power than even the Kings of France possessed in the height of their despotism, who were often forced to sit with aching ears, listening to the spirited and repeated remonstrances of their Parlemens.

It may easily be supposed, that the King was obliged to send his *sanction pure et simple*; and the principle was avowed, that the King, so far from suspending, could not even criticise the measures of the present legislature.

All these jealousies and quarrels, within and without the Assembly, had only served to increase the general confusion, and reduce the finances to the lowest ebb.

Just after the famous Resolutions of the 4th of August, the King's Ministers had demanded an audience, and having obtained it, the archbishop of Bourdeaux, as keeper of the seal, gave a melancholy picture of the disor-

disordered situation of France; and Necker, as minister of finance, demanded that the Assembly would sanction a loan of thirty millions of livres as indispensably necessary. This loan was permitted after some objections, arising from the instructions of their constituents to complete the constitution before they granted subsidies. But the assumed admiration of the patriots of M. Necker was apparent and not real; they were determined to shew that they were not influenced by a *First Lord of the Treasury*; they altered the terms of the loan into others less favorable to the lenders; and thus declared at once to the nation their want of confidence in the man whom they had extolled even to adulation. The consequence was, that the monied men immediately closed their purse-strings; the loan was never filled; the failure of public credit, which might have been kept secret, was betrayed to all Europe; and the most democratic of their writers is forced to censure the Assembly on account of this rash measure. *Hist. Rev.* vol. ii. p. 355.—A loan of eighty millions was afterwards voted on terms proposed by M. Necker, but the effect was no

better, the first opportunity had been lost and could not be regained; the taxes were evaded or refused in every part of the kingdom, especially the hated salt tax; and smugglers exercised their employment openly, even in the very town of Versailles. This sin is also laid to the door of the disgraced Aristocrats; but, supposing it was justly laid, their treacherous insinuation could only be founded on democratic principles, consecrated by the Assembly, *the illegality of the present taxes*, and the right of every citizen to pay no subsidy against his own consent. So dangerous may it prove to infuse abstract general truths into unenlightened minds.

A scheme of patriotic contributions was now promoted, even silver buckles and gold ear-rings were received as gifts to the State; the King and Queen sent their plate to the Mint, not so much, as Necker expresses it, for the real value of the donation, as to gain a small supply of gold and silver for current coin. And the latter end of September, Necker presented a scheme to the Assembly of a tax, which Richlieu or Louvois would have started at, an extraordinary

nary contribution of the fourth part of each man's yearly revenue to be fixed by the word of honor of the contributor, and be payable at different epochs in the course of three years. This severe tax, almost unheard of in the annals of tyranny, one of the most republican Assemblies was obliged to vote, under pain of instant bankruptcy. Mirabeau, by his extraordinary eloquence, greatly contributed to their resolution, although he hinted all the time, that he regarded Necker with no esteem or confidence; but if the Assembly refused Necker's plan, they made themselves answerable for the evils that would follow. This miserable state of the kingdom, confessed by the most popular journalists, occasioned the renewal of the most atrocious accusations between the two parties, and gave birth to more extraordinary scenes than any that had yet disgraced the Revolution. The Nobles and Clergy were again accused of conspiracies against the Revolution. The Historian of the Revolution, vol. iii. page 227, positively affirms, that a subscription was secretly opened for the murder of good citizens; that Priests and Nobles signed this proscription; that it

was resolved to invest once more with an army, both Paris and Versailles, to dissolve, sword in hand, the National Assembly, and to kindle in all the Empire the flames of civil war. Let it be remembered that even this violent writer does not accuse Priests and Nobles of kindling a civil war to defend arbitrary taxation or imprisonment, but to defend their own wealth and their own honors. Mounier and Lally, on the other side, tell you, that the violent republicans were resolved, at the hazard of murder and civil war, to compel the King and National Assembly to reside within the walls of Paris, and be subservient to the influence of that turbulent capital,

That many of the Nobles and Clergy used rash language is probable; they saw their ruin determined, they saw that the slightest observations, which tended to make their disgrace less apparent and their fall more easy, were received as an affront by the violent party; and by La Harpe's confession, (in the *Mercure de France*) the writings in every coffee-house used to express their hope that the very word *Nobility* would soon

be banished from the language. On the other hand, the Courtiers, and the Queen especially, might very lawfully dread a compulsory residence amongst a people who had distinguished themselves by their cruelty, and who received the name even in some very Anti-Aristocratic newspapers, of the *Cannibals of Paris*: not that the people of Versailles were much more humane. A strange scene which had lately passed there, proves how strangely the *sovereignty of the people* was interpreted at that time. A man was condemned to the wheel for the murder of his father; he pleaded in the excuse, that his father kept a mistress, with whom he (the son) had frequent quarrels, and that the father interfering one day, received, unfortunately, a blow that was aimed at the mistress. The people took the son's part, and carried him off from the place of execution. Even this would have been tolerable, but they hung up a woman who loudly condemned their conduct; and though she was cut down alive, yet the poor creature had been so much hurt that she expired the next day: the mob then went to the *Garde des Sceaux*, and instead of imploring the pardon of their

their own crimes, loudly demanded the life of their most obnoxious criminal, and, I believe, obtained it.

However, though the *sovereigns* of Versailles had assumed the arbitrary power of life and death, yet Versailles was not a walled town, like Paris; and therefore it was possible to escape from their bloody mandates. The King was at that time still attended by his *Gardes des Corps*, a regiment detested by the people, because it was entirely composed of *gentlemen*; (our Life Guards here in England were once on the same footing, but it was found impracticable here to keep up the same regulation.) Versailles had its National Guards, and they had put themselves under d'Estaing's command, but they had shown little inclination to resist the mob, and still less to fight against the National Guard of Paris. The old *Gardes-Françoises*, now in the service of the town of Paris, in their hearts regretted the honor of guarding the King, and were, consequently, very open to the solicitations of that secret cabal, who were always willing to renew those projects of M. de St. Huruge, which

which La Fayette and Bailly had disappointed on the 30th of August: he wrote on the 16th or 17th of September a letter, mentioning how he had detected an attempt to persuade the grenadiers to set out for Versailles, and added, "this inclination was entirely destroyed by the few words which I said to them, and I think no more of the transaction, except that it gives me an idea of the unceasing resources of the caballers; *Ressources inepuisables des caballeurs.*" He therefore, though very Anti-Aristocratic, believed that there was a dark cabal, an under plot directed against the present possessor of the Crown: Mounier, Lally, and all their party, are equally possessed with the same idea, and fix upon Mirabeau and the Duc of Orleans as its heads. I do not mean to accuse them decisively, but only repeat historically the accusations of others, and as to the Duc of Orleans in particular, it is probable, that at worst, he was the *instrument* rather than the *head* of the cabal.

An incident that passed on the 15th of September, increased these suspicions. The Assembly had, in order to preserve the appearance

pearance of French loyalty, declared the King's person sacred and inviolable, and confirmed the succession to the crown as established by the Salic law. The friends of the Duc of Orleans proposed to declare, that the renunciations of Philip Vth of Spain to the French Crown were valid and legal, and therefore that the Orleans branch was next in the line of succession after the reigning branch. This great question was talked over, rather than debated, for three days, and at last adjourned from considerations of *prudence*. M. de Virieu has attested upon oath, (*Procedure*, dep. 140) that when he represented privately to Mirabeau the danger of offending the Spanish branch *unnecessarily*, as there were so many heads between them and the throne; Mirabeau answered, that the question might not be far distant; that the King and the Count de Provence were very corpulent, and might not be long lived; that the only remaining Dauphin was but a child; and that the Count d'Artois and his children might be regarded as fugitives, and almost out-laws; (*à-peu-près ex-lex.*) Other deputies overheard this conversation, and no doubt, such as heard it, and already entertained

tained a bad opinion of Mirabeau, did not go away convinced of his *tender regard* for the lives of the Royal Family. A few days after, about the 18th of September, La Fayette's letters were communicated by d'Estaing to the Municipal Committee of Versailles, and they were persuaded to demand an additional regiment to fortify the town against any sudden violence. This request being granted, with some difficulty the regiment of Flanders was sent for; but immediately the suspicions of the common people of Versailles and Paris were inflamed, and the orators of the Palais Royal affirmed, that the King was to escape from his people under the escort of this regiment.

Some rough * drafts of letters from the Count d'Estaing to the Queen found, when his papers were afterward seized, are brought as a kind of proof, but they only amount to vague reports of an escape to Metz, which he had picked up in Patriot company, and it appears that he being convinced how often the irresolution of the King

* Hist. de Revol. vol. iii. page 229.

had led him into embarrassments, was afraid, lest he should be influenced by such ideas; but had not the smallest personal knowledge of such councils. For my part, when I consider the utter impossibility of resisting 30,000 men with 2,000, (for the King had no more at Versailles) I cannot think that the plots of the King amounted to more than a wish to shew his enemies, that if they drove him to despair by using violence, he still had defenders who would die in his cause. But this measure, like all other measures of the unfortunate French Court, was so ill managed, that it brought on the catastrophe which it was intended to avert. No sooner had the regiment of Flanders arrived at Versailles, than (as is attested upon oath) the former *allies* of *Parisian liberty*, the women of pleasure, were detached to dissuade the soldiers to absent themselves from roll-calling, and to be guilty of all those petty acts of military insubordination, which provokes officers fully as much as greater enormities. In this temper their officers were invited to a dinner, given according to the usual etiquette of the service, by the *Gardes des*
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des Corps to the regiment just come into garrison.

The King and Queen were injudiciously persuaded to visit them after dinner, and bring the infant Dauphin. They were received with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy and loyalty, and the music played the air once so popular, "O Richard, "O mon Roi! l'univers t'abandonne." The banquet continued till late in the night, and ended with complete drunkenness. In their cups they drank the King's health, and refused to drink the health of the *nation*; the *Gardes des Corps*, who had never quitted the white cockade for the striped Parisian cockade, are supposed to have declared their resolution of not wearing it; and the officers of the regiment *de Flanders*, who knew that a soldier with that famous cockade thought himself superior to his officer, probably concurred in it; but the super-added accusation of tearing and insulting the National cockade has been denied, on the oath of all the gentlemen present. As soon as the news of this imprudent banquet were, with additional circumstances, transmitted to Paris, the highest

highest rage was excited in the populace, which were kept up by the price of bread, which had been very high during all the summer, and now amounted to an absolute scarcity, so that money itself could not purchase bread in the market.

On the morning of the 5th of October, the smothered flame burst forth, a number of women, chiefly of the classes before described, with men habited as women, and therefore evidently the disguised agents of conspiracy, broke into the Hotel de Ville, and plundered it. As an essay, I suppose, of the business of death, some of them hung up a poor ecclesiastic, whom they met on the stairs.* Others, more *charitable*, cut the man down, beat or kicked him into sensation, and sent him home to recover at leisure.

The cry was universal, to go to Versailles, demand bread of the King and the Assembly, and take vengeance on the *Gardes du Corps*. After seizing a magazine of

* Procedure Criminelle, au Chatelet, deposition 44

arms, and forcing open the prisons, a detachment of *Amazons* set out about noon, breathing threats and imprecations against the Queen, the Guards, and the Clergy. No modest tongue can repeat half the language of these *auxiliaries to liberty*; and every humane tongue must falter at repeating the other half. The party that remained behind were, at length, dispersed by La Fayette and his National Guard; but the latter refused to disperse them by any violence, and told their General, that they *could not fire upon their fellow citizens who asked for bread*. The same frenzy of going to Versailles seized upon these troops,* and some of the grenadiers plainly told La Fayette that they heard *the King was an idiot, and that matters would go on much better if a Council of Regency was appointed*.

Fayette endeavoured to temporize for some hours, but he and his officers being afraid for their own lives, were compelled at last to yield; and after obtaining an order from the Mayor of Paris *to lay before the*

* See Procedure, Deposition 30.

King the uneasiness of his people, about five in the afternoon he set forward with his National army, in all the form of military parade.

Verfailles was beginning to take its share in the general confusion. The first articles of the Constitution, which enacted that the National Assembly should only be One House, the King's suspensive veto, &c. &c. along with the declaration of the Rights of Men, had been laid before the King for his sanction; Mounier had lately been made president, and his enemies were already predicting that his presidency would be the occasion of his fall.

The King sent his answer on the morning of the 5th of October, and his answer did not give satisfaction.—These were some of the expressions that displeased, “ I grant, according to your desire, my accession to these articles ; but, on a positive condition, which I will never depart from, that by the general result of your deliberations, the executive power shall have its entire effect in the hands of the Monarch.”

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These words certainly shewed an inclination to capitulate with the Assembly, and not to surrender the whole kingly power at once, to the discretion of republicans; but whether such a meaning deserved the treatment due to a tyrant, I leave to the consciences of all honest men.

Violent debates were occasioned by the King's answer, and Mirabeau took occasion to inveigh against the imprudent feast of the Life Guards; another deputy said that it had been attended with criminal words and actions; and being asked if he meant to impeach (*denoncer*) any particular person,* Mirabeau rose, and with looks of fury cried out, "declare that the King's person alone is "*sacred*, and I will bring forward the impeachment myself."

Whilst he waited for an answer, he repeated with suppressed rage to his next neighbours, the names of the *Queen* and of the Duc de Guiche, Colonel of the Life Guards. Mounier values himself, that by

* Mounier, Appel-contre, M. Chabroud, page 229.

exerting, almost for the last time, his authority as president, he stopped this shocking question, which would have certainly led to that shocking catastrophe, the murder of a defenceless Princess, which many people suspect was intended by the *cabal*.

The army of male and female ruffians were now beginning to enter Versailles, and from that time the confusion was so great, that none of its historians have described it very clearly. The *Gardes du Corps* are accused of provoking their enemies by some rash actions, which are either denied or justified by their friends. It may be observed, once for all, that the indifference with which the Patriots had treated the murders committed at Paris, had convinced the real or supposed Aristocrats that they could hope for no protection from the laws, and that force alone must repel brutal force. We cannot, therefore, wonder if they are sometimes liable to the imputation of beginning the attack when they once heard their lives threatened by the mob. But in this particular instance I do not find any sufficient proof that the guards had recourse to illegal violence. The

Garde

Nationale of Versailles was rendered averse to them, and partly from the insinuations of a M. le Cointre, who was from the first their enemy and accuser. The regiment of Flanders had been gained by the double seduction of women and money. The King, convinced that their small number could do him no real service, sent them positive orders not to fire, and about six o'clock ordered the greatest part of them to leave the town, whilst some few still remained to guard the interior part of the palace. Whether in their retreat they fired rashly upon some of the banditti who insulted them, or whether those banditti fired purposely to throw on them the odium, seems uncertain; but the *Garde Nationale* of Versailles took the pretence to fire on the Guards, exclaiming first that some of their men were wounded, and vengeance was denounced on the regiment from all quarters.

In the mean time, the National Assembly was filled with enraged women, who, by the mouth of their orator, M. Maillard, inveighed against the Aristocrats, who occasioned famine, and wore white cockades; and sometimes they interrupted the debate with oaths

and menaces. A deputation of the most decent of this party was sent to the King, along with the president, M. Mounier ; the King received them kindly, and issued the strongest orders that could be given, for the immediate supply of Paris.

In the midst of this confusion, the most important of all possible transactions, the sanction of the leading articles of the Constitution was still under debate.

Mounier was a second time sent to the King, to demand the *acceptation pure et simple* of the proposed articles. The King granted it, and Mounier returned with this momentous act to the National Assembly. No words can express the extravagance of the scene which then succeeded. The women had got completely intoxicated ; the deputies had mostly fled from their Bacchanalian fury ; they crowded in every part of the hall, filled the seats of the deputies, and even the President's chair itself. Under *such auspices* and in *such company* was the National Constitution of France promulgated !

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Republicans may, doubtless, despise the violation of aught so insignificant in their eyes as a *regal palace*; but can they reflect without horror on this shameful violation of the *majesty of a republic*? America is the French model: Washington is their hero. Would Washington have permitted such insults on legislation to go unpunished?

Whilst the deputies were retreating to their homes, hoping the worst was over, the unexpected news was brought that Fayette was marching to Versailles with 30,000 men. Signals of musquetry and rockets were heard and seen at a distance, and the hoarse sound of the drum which Mounier had caused to be sent through the streets to summon the deputies to a second meeting, sounded to the affrighted inhabitants of Versailles like the prelude of war.

Fayette, however, seems to have come with pacific intentions; he made his troops stop in the avenue of Versailles, and swear fidelity to the King and to the Laws; he presented himself first before the King, and then before the Assembly, with the appear-

ance of great submission and respect ; he lamented to Mounier and his partisans the measures which a powerful cabal had forced him into ; and it was understood that a few submissions from the *Gardes des Corps*, and their adopting the national cockade, would reconcile every thing. About two or three in the morning he persuaded Mounier to break up the Assembly and retire to rest ; which afterward proved to have been a fatal error. It is probable that the fears and fatigues of the day had quite exhausted him ; but he ought to have resisted nature, and not have closed his eyes in sleep when ruffians were waking for murder ; and the Assembly, who had sat up one night for their own protection, might have sat up another for the protection of the King.

The dismay and embarrassment of the Court had been excessive, and some schemes had even been proposed of flight, which would certainly have been followed by the King's deposition. Mounier hints that he advised the King to give his *pure* and *simple* acceptation to the constitutional articles, though he himself thought many of them
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very faulty, but to resist courageously the violent attempts of the Parisians, and to call on the National Assembly to assert their own freedom and the freedom of their Sovereign. It appears as if the King himself was desirous that the Queen should retire to some place of safety, and that an attempt was once made to send for the royal carriages, which were stopped by the people.

The Queen nobly refused, and said, “ She would stay and die at the King’s feet.” Her whole behaviour, whilst a furious mob was at intervals cursing her and calling out for her blood, is attested upon oath, and allowed by her greatest enemies to have been firm and collected in the highest degree; nor does the eloquence of Mr. Burke interest one so much in her favour as the simple deposition of her bedchamber woman, who says, that at two o’clock, “ *La Reine se coucha fort tranquillement* ”—The Queen went to bed with great tranquillity. So much coolness at such a dreadful moment displays an innate greatness of mind, which the influence of bad example had warped, but could
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not annihilate.* A scene was, however, at hand, which no firmness was able to resist.

At six o'clock, a body of the same ruffians, who had left Paris the day before, broke with furious menaces into the courts of the Palace, seized two of the Life Guards on their posts, (Mess. de Huttes and Vari-court) dragged them into the outer court, and murdered them in the most cruel manner, their heads being severed from their bodies by the unexperienced hand of a self-constituted executioner, one Nicolas, who, from the beginning of the troubles, had prided himself in beheading or mangling the enemies of liberty.

Another party rushed into the Queen's apartments, roaring out, "That they would *eat her heart*, and make a *fricassée* of her *liver*."† (I beg my reader's pardon; but it

* Her mother's courage has been admired by all Europe; but Maria Theresa was never for a moment in danger of her life.

† See Procedure, Depositions 9, 18, 370, 375.

is necessary they should see Parisian liberty in its true colours.) The centinel, M. de Miomandre, after resisting a few minutes, opened the Queen's door, and called out, "Save the Queen, her life is aimed at; I stand alone against *two thousand tygers.*" He was soon after desperately wounded and left for dead, but crept away unseen, and has since recovered. The unhappy Queen flew almost naked through the apartments, starting at the sound of pistols that were fired in the courts, and calling out to every guard whom she saw, "O my friends! save my life, save my children." It appears certain that the attendants thought the life of the *Heir to the Crown* was in danger. The alarm spread fast; the children were hurried* from their apartments, and brought to the King's feet as their only chance of safety. Such was the reliance still placed on the superstitious respect that Frenchmen pay their King.

The King had been awakened by the noise, and flew through a private passage to the Queen's apartment, alone and unprotected.

* Deposition 158.

ed, to defend her life. He was met by some of his guards, and escorted back to his own apartment, where he found her in safety. Some say she fainted in his arms; but the circumstances of their meeting do not appear in any of the depositions.

What would have been the event had he met the ruffians in their frantic career of blood, is hard to say; perhaps traditional superstition would have pleaded in vain; perhaps it would have been as *proud a day* for France, as *some writers* think the 30th of January is for England.*

The murderers were now employed in breaking open an apartment, where the persecuted Life Guards had barricaded themselves; when, in that critical moment, La Fayette and his officers appeared. The ruffians were with some difficulty *persuaded* to desist—*persuaded*, and not *forced*; for the National Guards would not use force against men whom they called their fellow-citizens; and some of them had seen from their posts

* See Appendix, Note 2.

the murders of M. M. Huttes and Varicourt, without attempting to save them. Some other Life Guards had, I believe, been killed, and all were in danger; all were hunted from place to place by their enemies, like the Protestants after the Saint Barthelemi: but their particular escapes it were unnecessary to relate.

The King himself, attended by La Fayette, went through the Palace, recommending his Guards to the mercy of the Parisians, and declaring that they were unjustly accused. He now appeared on a balcony to repeat his intercession, and the mob violently called out for the Queen. Fayette went to seek her. She hesitated for a moment, and asked if her presence was necessary to appease the people.* He assured her it was. "Then, said she, "I will go, even if I was sure that "I went to execution"—*au dernier supplice*.

She did appear, bearing the Dauphin in her arms, and the popular fury seemed a

* Procedure, Deposition 190.

little appeased ; although some of the spectators, whether truly or falsely, still thought they saw amidst the crowd, musquets levelled at the Queen's head.* Presently a universal cry resounded, " To Paris, to Paris !" The whole Royal Family were now at the mercy of the people ; nor could La Fayette have insured their lives, if they had appeared to hesitate. The King assented ; papers were dispersed around to convey these tidings to the crowd ; the melancholy preparations were soon made, and the Royal Family set off, preceded by the bloody heads of their own guards, accompanied by ruffians and infamous women in savage triumph, and escorted by some of the dispersed obnoxious regiment, disarmed and treated as prisoners of war.

Mounier, who had reposed too much on La Fayette's vigilance, was awakened at eight o'clock by these horrid tidings. His imagination pointed out to him the downfall of Liberty, no less than that of Monarchy. He hastened to the Assembly, and proposed

* Deposition 365.

that they should immediately resort to the Palace, hold their meeting in the great saloon of Versailles, and assist the King with their advice in this momentous crisis. Mirabeau answered, that it was beneath their dignity to meet in the King's Palace, and this answer was accepted as a sufficient reason. Mounier asserts, that the joy of Mirabeau, of Barnarve, and the more violent *Patriots*, was indecently apparent; whilst the others imagined themselves surrounded by armed men, trembled for their lives, and dared not utter a word. It was voted, that *the National Assembly was inseparable from the King*; and they went on debating, or pretending to debate, on some trifling subject, whilst the dismal procession was moving off for Paris.

The broken remnants of the Middle Party met the next evening under as much apprehension as the Courtiers themselves, convinced that their own lives were aimed at, that the freedom of the Assembly was at an end, and that its laws would now be dictated by a triumphant faction. Some resolved

to stay; Mounier and Lally Tolendal resolved to quit the Assembly.

Whether their determination was blameable, would form too long a discussion. Mounier's life had been threatened by the mob, and therefore his enemies have accused him of fear. He says in his Defence, that he had resolved to stir up the province of Dauphiny to insist that the National Assembly should not be held at Paris, and to declare that its decrees could not pass as binding whilst it voted under the influence of a mob and an army; and other Deputies, he says, professed to have similar intentions. Whether this plan was lawful is also a matter of doubt; it might certainly have led to a civil war, that evil which Mounier had once so much deprecated. But his plan was soon disappointed: Barnave and many of his brother Deputies had prepossessed the people's minds against him; and in a short time this advocate for liberty was forced to leave France, to shelter himself from the resentment of that province, which but a few months before had adored him. He has

since resided at Geneva, fully prepossessed with the melancholy sentiment, that all his efforts had only ended in enslaving France to the despotism of Faction, instead of the despotism of Royalty.

I should not have been so minute in many of these little details, which Mr. Burke has already described, if they had not, from his relation, been ridiculed, and almost denied.

I have advanced nothing but what is asserted upon the oath of eye-witnesses, in the depositions taken before the Chatelet, omitting whatever bears the appearance of hearsay report; and I know but of one material fact *at issue* between the contending factions—Whether or no the ruffians entered the Queen's chamber, and searched her bed? Mounier values himself, amidst all his misfortunes, that he had first called the attention of the public to the horrid massacre intended and actually begun on the 6th of October, and thus compelled the National Assembly to order its authors to be prosecuted.

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There are three systems laid down with regard to this event, which must be explained to the reader.

Some think, like the writer of Dupont's Answer to Burke, "That the Revolution
" was already effected, and that the events
" of the 5th and 6th of October added to
" every species of atrocity the most perfect
" inutility."

Very different is the system of the author of *Histoire de Revolution*,* who calls them
" fatal days, if in respect to the bloody
" scenes which they presented: happy days
" in respect that they saved the King and
" the Nation, extinguished the torches of
" civil war, and stifled the conspiracies
" formed against the Constitution." † If
these days were such a *necessary supplement to
the Revolution*, an author may then be excused if he has detained his readers a little too long on their shocking transactions.

* Vol. iii. p. 398.

† I have the oftener quoted that book, because the *Mer-
cure de France* once praised its impartiality.

May it not fairly be observed, that a similar excuse might serve for the contrivers of the massacres of St. Barthelemi—"We Catholics were the majority of the nation, we wanted to stifle the conspiracies of the minority, and the popular fury went a little farther than we intended."

The third system, espoused both by the Aristocratic and the Moderate party, is, that two factions concurred in raising these tumults with very different intentions. The republican levellers meant to put it entirely out of the power of King, Nobles, or Clergy, to defend any one of their rights, not only by arms, but even by legal resistance. Another party, supposed to be headed by Mirabeau, was more favourable to *Monarchy*, but wished to change the *Monarch* and set up some *phantom* of power, under whose name Mirabeau and a few more of the cabal should govern with supreme authority. The object of the first party was to confine the King within the walls of Paris; the object of the second was to terrify him into flight; but it was the interest of both to unite in the use of the same means, sedition and murder.

The famine so often laid to the charge of the Nobles, is, by this system, laid to the charge of these factions; for, says Mounier, could the Courtiers wish to bring the enraged Parisians to Versailles, when they had not troops enough even to protect their flight? The famine ceased as soon as the King was lodged at Paris; another proof, say his advocates, that it was occasioned by the rulers of the people, and not by a weak disjointed party, who could not thus have produced, and then put a stop to it by their word of command.

The levelling party succeeded; the other faction, more criminal, because less heated by enthusiasm, were baffled, disappointed, and reaped no other harvest than disgrace and mortification.

The reader is left to judge between the two opposite systems; but in either case, it is plain, that the Revolution was from that hour completed, and that the republicans met with no obstacle in their future career: my task, therefore, is drawing to a conclusion. The object of this pamphlet is more
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the Revolution itself, than the laws and constitution which have been given to France in consequence of that Revolution. An author, acquainted with the French nation, chiefly from books, would unavoidably be led into mistakes in many technical details, of which the knowledge can only be acquired by conversation. Leaving that great work to some abler writer, I shall barely mark the progress and the dates of some of their principal transactions, and make a few observations on the spirit that appears to animate them.

Whatever triumph the principle leaders of the Assembly might feel at the entire humiliation of the Court, it was impossible that they should not startle at the reflection, that they were going to shut themselves up in a town where the populace had been permitted to assume the *right of life and death*. A false accusation, believed by the mob, might instantly destroy the most zealous Patriot; and two months before, the Marquis de la Salle had very nearly afforded a dreadful example of that truth.* They therefore took care to

* He had been falsely accused of conveying gunpowder to the Court, and was saved with great difficulty by Fayette's exertion.

pass the strongest votes on the subject of their own sacredness and inviolability, and even then the Assembly betrayed symptoms of reluctance and apprehension ; and so many Deputies asked for leave of absence, that it was, at last, thought necessary to give a general refusal. Soon after their residence in Paris, about the third week in October, another tumult happened, and an innocent baker was hanged in the sight of his wife and family, upon a false report that he was a monopolizer of bread.

The danger had now approached so near their own doors, that the Assembly were roused into exertion, and assuming courage from excess of fear, passed a severe law, on the plan of our riot-act, ordering the municipal Magistrates to proclaim martial law whenever the mob proceeded to outrage, and adding the formidable emblem of a red flag to be hung out from the Town-House. As this unfortunate baker was neither a *priest* nor a *gentleman*, his murder was deemed deserving of punishment, and two or three of the rabble were executed. The Parisians were a little reconciled to this severity,

verity, when they heard a few days afterwards, that a man, employed to buy corn for their own provision, had been almost hanged at a neighbouring town by the enraged inhabitants, who thought they had a *natural right* to eat bread at as cheap a rate as the people of Paris. The first person who attempted the rescue of the victim, was a spirited young English midshipman, who drew his cutlafs, and swore " he would " never *tamely see a man hanged without trial;*" and he was afterwards thanked in form by the magistrates.

The Assembly, now enjoying a few moments of peace, proceeded quietly to determine, that the elections of Deputies should be made by the citizens at large, and no longer by the three separate Orders, whose very names were now entirely abolished. The debates on the qualification for electors gave some satisfaction to the friends of property and law, as it was agreed that some qualification, though a very slender one, should be requisite, to vote in the Primary Assemblies; that the men thus entitled to vote, should be registered under the

name of the Active Citizens, (*Citoyens Actifs*) and that a qualification somewhat larger should be required of those who were chosen Electors.

The levelling party were very angry at these votes; but it is a most remarkable circumstance, that it never came into the head of any French Democrat to say, that *the people at large ought to chuse their own Representatives, and not employ the medium of Electors.*

Such is the influence of laws and customs of immemorial antiquity, even on the wildest spirits; and such, therefore, is their use for the preservation of peace and good order, though arguments may be brought to prove them defective. Let us place the scene in England, let us but suppose, for a moment, that the scheme of chusing electors was proposed to the freeholders of Middlesex, or the householders of Westminster, and consider whether they would bear to hear it without dangerous marks of impatience.

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I have mentioned this circumstance before; but I think the admirers of France, and the declaimers for reformation, cannot be too often reminded, that the unanimous consent of the French nation has in a manner consecrated this principle:—"It is dangerous to extend the right of voting to the whole body of the people, unless you interpose a middle power between the people at large, and their Representatives.

About the same time that it made laws for future elections, the Assembly begun that division of France into small districts, so much censured by Mr. Burke. The motive appears to have been good; namely, the suppression of the partial and hurtful privileges of the old Provinces, and the consolidation of them all into one undivided empire; but from the spirit of independence some districts have shewn, it looks as if the Assembly had cut off twenty Hydra's heads to give room for eighty new ones to sprout from the recent wounds.

The Assembly, also, ordered all the old Parlemens to remain in a state of vacation,

and thus declared their intention to abolish those independent courts of justice, which were once thought essential to the French Constitution.

Soon after the Assembly had removed to Paris, a letter was sent round in their name to the several Provinces, with the decree that ordered the contribution of the fourth of their revenues; a letter said to be drawn up by the Bishop of Autun, which fully explains the mistaken principle upon which the honest part of the Democrats acted: for the letter lays it down as a maxim, and comments on it for some pages, that “all abuses must be extirpated together, and at once.” To me it appears that few maxims are more calculated to throw society into universal disorder, and to make the reformation of abuses almost impossible, by interesting such numbers in the preservation of every separate abuse.

I have heard that when Mr. Howard laid before Catherine of Russia some of the abuses committed in her prisons, she answered, “*Ce sont des cloux qu’il faut tirer les*
“ uns

“ uns apres les autres,” these are nails which must be drawn out the one after the other. Perhaps there was more sound philosophy in this maxim, uttered by a despotic Czarina, than in all the declamations of a republican Bishop. The reader may also consult Mr. Burke's speech on the Civil List Bill, particularly the 14th page, where he will find several arguments against universal and precipitate reformations, which at least seem to prove that Mr. Burke's present sentiments are not so different from his former ones, as his enemies have alledged.

Mirabeau, at the very moment of the Assembly's departure for Paris, proposed an address to the Provinces, in which it was metaphorically said, that now “ the vessel of public business would proceed in its course more rapidly than ever.” This proposal excited indignation in many minds, as it seemed to convey a manifest approbation of the plot formed to force the National Assembly into Paris. Mirabeau was looked on with abhorrence by one party, with suspicion by all, and the slender reed on which he had tried to lean failed him at once. La Fayette

Fayette had neither forgotten nor forgiven the disobedient spirit of his troops on the 5th of October; he certainly attributed it to the Duc of Orlean's agents, though we know not exactly on what proofs he grounded his opinion; and he has certainly drove the Duc of Orleans into his well-known journey to England, though we are not acquainted with the private conversations that passed on the occasion. It was attested before the Chatelet, that when Mirabeau heard of the Duc of Orlean's resolution, he abused him with all the *energy* of the French *vulgar tongue*, and concluded by exclaiming, "He does not deserve *the trouble that has been taken for his sake!*" Mirabeau, in his speech of defence against the Chatelet, owned, that "indignation made him utter "indiscreet and insolent speeches," without confessing precisely what they were.

His next attempt was to compel the King, either to receive him as his Minister, or accept a Ministry entirely of his formation. It was necessary to engage the National Assembly into this scheme, and for that purpose, he made a motion to admit the King's
Ministers

Ministers into the Assembly; this proposal was very ill received: the Courtiers detested Mirabeau; the Republicans felt that they had not overturned the first throne of Europe, in order to be governed by one of their equals, and an equal too, disliked on account of his immoral character. It was, therefore, not merely silently rejected, but they positively decreed on the 7th of November, that none of their members should accept a place in the Ministry. Such was the particular effect of uncommon circumstances, that a law, most palpably unfavourable to Royal Authority, was received by the Royal Party with a kind of triumph. Mirabeau, disappointed in all his projects that related to *Princes, Regents, or Kings*, was compelled once more to devote himself to the people; but he always bore a smothered resentment against the leaders of the Democratic party.

The Assembly now proceeded to establish some legal method of trying persons accused of treason against the nation; both the Assembly and the city of Paris had established committees of research, who are still in existence, and are accused of proceeding in a very

very inquisitorial manner. They constituted the Chatelet of Paris supreme judge of such crimes, till they had *organized* some better court of justice; and they were forced by the reclamations of the moderate party to include in this list of crimes, the bloody scenes of the 6th of October, which at first the Democratic Journalists had represented as acts of self defence.

Bezenval, commander of the Swiss guards, was the first prisoner accused of *leze nation*, brought before this new tribunal, and the sturdy *Switzer*, baffled by his firmness all the malice of his enemies. The only fact they could urge against him, was his letter to Launay, giving orders to defend the Bastille.

To this he answered, “ I ordered him to
“ do his duty, and if I was at this moment
“ entrusted by the city of Paris, with the
“ care of the Hotel de Ville, I should
“ equally hold it my duty to defend it to
“ the last.”

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This argument could not have but weight with the Magistrates, who remembered the plunder of the Hotel de Ville on the 5th of October, and the danger of the municipal officers. The mob soon guessed the intention of the Chatelet to spare Bezenval, they raised a tumult in the Court, and demanded his blood. The steadiness of the Magistrates, and the good behaviour of the National Guard, prevented farther mischief; Bezenval was acquitted, and has ever since been acknowledged a quiet and peaceable citizen by that very people, who, on the 30th of July, would have murdered him without the least remorse.

The Chatelet soon after ventured on a bolder measure, in acquitting the Prince de Lambesc, Marshal Broglio, and some other principal fugitives, who were accused, in their absence, of the plot real or supposed, which occasioned the Revolution of July; but against whom nothing but conjectural proof appeared. To make *amends*, as was generally supposed, they sacrificed M. de Favras, a victim to popular prejudice, and condemned him to death for plotting a
counter

counter Revolution, on the oaths of two witnesses, who appear to have somewhat resembled *Titus Oats*. Whether he was entirely innocent of rash designs, is more than can be positively asserted; but if Richelieu or Louvois had sacrificed him on similar proofs, it would have been recorded as an act of ministerial despotism.

The great business of the National Assembly, through the winter of 1789, and the spring of 1790, consisted in totally despoiling the Clergy. Their first step commenced with a decree, passed early in November, which declared that all the estates of the church were at the disposal of the nation. Mounier asserts, that when he learnt in Dauphiné the details of that business, the active part which the mob had taken, either at the door or in the galleries; the threats against the Priests, and the cries of resentment against those members who spoke in their favor; he became entirely convinced, that the deliberations of the Assembly were no longer free, and that nothing remained for him but to resign his seat.

The next important step was taken on February 13th, 1790, when they suppressed all monastic establishments for ever, and seized on their lands, allowing, however, the present friars and nuns to observe their monastic vows; and granting to nuns the special indulgence not to be removed from the convents they then resided in, without their consent and free choice.

In the month of April they completed their plan; they voted away all the territorial possessions of the Church, giving to all Churchmen, in return, pensions much smaller than their former revenues; and giving to the creditors of the State *assignations*, i. e. assignats on these lands, as a new kind of paper money. Mirabeau was one of the strongest advocates of these violent proceedings, in opposition to his own sentiments, expressed in his pamphlet against the Emperor, called *Doutes sur la Liberté de l'Escaut*, where, amongst many similar passages, he says expressly, “ Despise * the monks as
“ much as you please, but do not rob them,

* Page 159, Note the second.

“ for it is unlawful to rob either the most
“ determined atheist or the most credulous
“ capuchin friar.”

It would appear very unfuitable to the philosophy of the present age, to assert that it is sacrilege to seize on the revenues of the Church, in order to supply the necessities of the State. Let it be allowed, that the National Assembly might fairly have taken the Church lands after the death of the present incumbents; but let it be also allowed, that it is injustice to take from any man, without compensation, a revenue which he had received as an undoubted life estate, and which had been considered as such through a long course of ages. The continually increasing *deficit* had made *immediate* supplies necessary—true; but the *deficit* increased in exact proportion to the increase of wild democratical liberty. Few of the taxes were now paid; and the salt tax, one of the most productive, was absolutely refused. Five collectors were hanged by the mob at Beziers, and associations against paying it were formed in some of the provinces: the terrified Assembly were obliged, on the 14th of March,

March, to repeal it, without providing any substitute; and in about a month afterwards they made the Clergy expiate the sins of the people.

The Clergy, who thought that the Commons had, *Judas-like, betrayed them with a kiss*, became from henceforth implacable enemies of the new Constitution, and were soon accused of stirring up troubles, especially at Nimes, and at Montauban. At Nimes, a dreadful tumult happened in June 1790, during which about twenty Protestants were killed by the Catholic party; the Protestants gained a complete victory, and, in revenge, are said to have murdered two hundred Catholics.

There is, certainly, no excuse to be made for the ecclesiastics, if they really fomented these disturbances; but does not the experience of all ages prove, that if you strip* one hundred thousand men of what they

* The number of Clergy, secular and regular, in France, has been reckoned at 130,000; but I suppose that many poor curates were gainers by the change.

think is their property, and reduce them to despair, sedition and rebellion will always follow as the consequences.

In the midst of these internal altercations, the unexpected dispute between Spain and England called forth the divided French nation to take a part in external politics. About the middle of May, the King sent a message to the Assembly, informing them of this dispute, of the English naval preparations, and desiring their assistance in equipping a fleet of fourteen ships. The Parisians, on this message, were very near returning to their wonted state of outrage; for they imagined that this message covered a plot to unite the French army with the Spanish troops, and bring about a counter revolution. The Assembly returned a general civil answer, and immediately proceeded to debate that important question, "into whose hands should
" be lodged the power of peace and war?" The Democratic party were of opinion, that it ought to be lodged in the Assembly, and all the usual common-place topics were repeated against *tyrants* and *conquerors*, whilst the many wars that have been occasioned by
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factionous demagogues were totally forgotten. One Deputy, however, told them in return, that if they took this power to themselves, “ a battle would soon be fought in the middle of their hall between Spanish piastres and English guineas.” Mirabeau, after having, in the beginning of his speech, courted popularity by a romantic dream of some future millenium of peace and concord between free States, was yet of opinion, that in the present situation of affairs, the power of peace and war must be left to the King: immediately it was reported that he was bribed by the Court, and a pamphlet was sold about the streets, giving an account of “ the great treachery of the Count Mirabeau.” He affected stoutness, and braved the Democrats; but, at last, a compromise took place, and a decree passed, importing that “ war shall not be made, but by a decree of the National Assembly after the King’s formal notification of his opinion of the necessity of war, and that the King shall be obliged to make peace if the Assembly require it.”

In this decree was contained that famous clause, which renounced all conquests in the

name of the French nation, a clause which has been the subject of much panegyric; but which, at the moment, was almost ridiculous, as the divisions of France would have left it an easy prey to foreign ambition. How far that Kingdom will repay the forbearance of its neighbours, must be left to the decision of time. When we reflect on their lofty disregard of treaties, their present illiberality to all the Governments of the rest of Europe, an illiberality which has provoked the strictures of other writers; and on the intriguing spirit shewn by some of their leaders, there is too much cause to fear that their pacific spirit will exist in *name* alone, not in *reality*.

After the decree was passed, and the people were pretty well satisfied, a Committee was appointed to examine into all the existing treaties of alliance. This appointment was grounded on an opinion very general amongst the violent Patriots, that all the treaties then existing were *null*; a consequence derived from that logic, which had taught them on the 17th of June, 1789, that

that *all the existing taxes were null and illegal.*

They had now leisure to look again at home, and proceed in their work of thorough reformatations. They had compelled the King to send round to all the provinces the resolutions of the 4th of August, under the authority of his great seal, and sanctioned as laws, whilst they themselves confessed that the laws were yet to make, had entrusted their formation to a special committee, and had promised to consider whether any modifications would be necessary. It is not surprising if this confusion between such different ideas as *votes* and *laws*, occasioned fresh confusion between the tenants and the landlords; the tenants taking the votes in their most enlarged sense, and insisting on immediate execution; the landlords holding off, and secretly expecting that the laws, when completed, would be modified rather more to their liking. New riots had happened in the course of the winter in Brittany, Auvergne, &c. and several gentlemens houses were attacked. Most of

the feudal *services* and *rents* had been declared redeemable, but ordered to be paid as before till redeemed. The peasants, who had been told by the enthusiastic admirers of the *glorious 4th of August*, that all feudal tenures were abolished, could not comprehend this distinction, and by the confession of M. Cerutti, a democratic writer, in several places erected gibbets, to hang the landlords or the stewards who claimed their wonted rents. Tumults had also happened in Burgundy, and much more dangerous riots at those important towns, Marseilles and Toulon, riots arising from municipal quarrels. The Assembly, some time in the Spring of 1790, passed a decree that all municipalities should be answerable for the damage done by rioters. I do not know whether this law has ever been executed.

But no conviction of the danger of exasperating the minds of the people against those who had been long their superiors, could with-hold the Democrats from their grand scheme of the total extirpation of

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Nobility. It is curious to consider some little steps which led to that event.*

A Grand Confederation had already been voted to take place on the 14th of July, to bind the King and the People to each other by new oaths, and in fact, to bind by the obligation of solemn oaths, the troops, of whose mutinous spirit they were every day growing more afraid, and the national guards, who were by no means under proper subordination.

On the 19th of June, M. de Clot, a malecontent Prussian residing at Paris, entered the National Assembly at the head of a number of strangers, collected (as he said) from every quarter of the globe, even from Turkey and the East Indies, and made a speech, the bombast of which defies all translation: but its chief purport was to represent the ambassadors from all existing governments as the ambassadors of tyrants, and to demand places for themselves at the

* See the *Mercure de France* for the end of June and beginning of July 1790.

ensuing ceremony, as the *virtual ambassadors* of all the enslaved nations, who wished to be free. Satirical report has affirmed, that the fellows who personated the Asiatics were afterwards seen at the door of the Assembly begging for the wages which had been promised them.

Will it be too severe to refer to Mr. Mitford's account of the pretended mourning procession, and the harangue of the sailor who had swam ashore on the barrel, employed by the factions at Athens as theatrical arts, to work up the Athenians to destroy seven meritorious generals?*

After M. de Clout and his motley crew had retired, a motion was made to remove the statues of slaves, which surrounded a famous statue of Lewis the Fourteenth, that the eyes of foreigners might not be wounded with such an exhibition. This was unanimously voted. The house was now thought worked up to a sufficient pitch of enthusiasm; it was an evening session, a

* Mitford's Hist. of Greece, vol. ii. pages 665, 666.

time when by tacit consent, important questions had been seldom moved, great numbers of the minority were therefore absent, the decree that abolishes all hereditary Nobility was introduced, and voted by stratagem and surprise. La Fayette was amongst its zealous supporters, and yet he appears to have retained many old French notions of loyalty to the King, and zeal for the Salic Law of strict masculine hereditary succession. Some impartial friend might have asked him, whether it was probable that the nation would retain the same veneration for hereditary monarchy when they were taught to look on all other hereditary distinctions not only with contempt, but with abhorrence; and when the family called to the supreme distinction of alone supplying the vacancies of the throne, was not permitted to claim any outward marks of honor that might at all separate it from a family of plebeians?

This famous decree carries in its very preamble, the strongest features of that conceit inherent in the French temper, that vanity which would square the opinions of all
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the world to its own ; of which it is difficult for other nations to speak, without betraying a little too much resentment. The Assembly were not satisfied with declaring that hereditary Nobility was incompatible with the *Liberty of France*, it declares in general terms, that *hereditary Nobility is incompatible with a Free State* ; and thus, by implication, declares all Europe enslaved, except a few Swiss Democrats. I defy the greatest enemy of England to assert, that in her proudest "*hour of insolence*," she ever declared by *Act of Parliament*, what foreign governments were or were not consistent with her ideas of liberty.

The decree then abolishes "for ever" all titles existing in France, including all the intermediate titles from prince to squire, i. e. ecuyer ; it forbids with a precision worthy of a synod of Quakers, that appellation of highness, excellence, &c. &c. should be given to any man or body of men ; it abolishes all names derived from estates, (a common practice in France) all coats of arms, and all liveries.

The decree next descends to such minutiae as to prohibit a trifling honor, paid sometimes to governors and noblemen, and sometimes to the *Seigneurs de Paroisses*, of burning incense when they came into the church. To this law may be joined a clause in a late decree, which forbids these *lords of parishes* to have a pew distinct from their parishioners.

One of the evils that had ever been lamented in France, was the non-residence of country gentlemen on their estates, and a wise legislature ought, by every means to have allured them, if possible, into a taste for rural life. On the contrary, may it not happen that these repeated mortifications will drive them still more into towns and cities, where the supposed disgrace will be less visible. Philosophers may laugh if they please at the importance that I suppose attached by a losing party to silly ceremonials and unmeaning coats of arms: but I appeal to every generous Briton, (no matter whether *noble* or *plebeian*) whether the most trifling degradation, inflicted as a studied insult by a triumphant faction, does not assume
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an importance far beyond its real value? Great injuries may be dictated by necessity or self defence, petty affronts appear to be the offspring of refined malevolence.

The King of France had suffered too much already in the cause of his Nobles, to attempt any resistance, and his sanction was accordingly sent on the 21st of June. Of all his ministers, Necker alone, Necker a plebeian, a republican, Necker born in a democracy, insisted that his disapprobation should be sent to the Assembly; and as the other ministers refused, he published his observations in a separate pamphlet, observations that do him credit, as being prudent, rational, and moderate. He asks them in one passage, whether, as they had voted *hereditary Nobility* inconsistent with a Free State, they meant to infer that *Nobility for life* might be allowable? Here was a door opened for discussion; upon this ground, philosophers might have endeavoured to combine the good derived from honors that do not taint the mind with selfish lucre, with their doctrines of the natural equality of man:

man: but the French philosophy is included in one word—Extirpation.

Montesquieu has a remarkable chapter, which intitles “*Idée du Despotisme,*” and when the reader expects a logical definition, he meets with a short expressive simile: “When the savages of Canada wish to gather fruit they cut down the parent tree.” —Such is the government of a Despot! May not a similar comparison apply to the National Assembly?—A savage found his cottage incommoded by the shade of an ancient wide-spreading tree, and instead of lopping the branches, he fell to grub it up by the roots. In the conduct of these enemies to despotism an observing mind may descry much of the rapid violence of a despot, always ready to exclaim like our Richard in Shakespeare,

———“Off with his head!—

“So much for Buckingham!”

This unparalleled decree was received with high indignation by all the *gentilhommes* in the kingdom, who sent up repeated protestations against it, which protestations were

were not allowed to appear on the journals. The Nobility and the Clergy of Alsace were more enraged than any of their brethren at the spirit of the late decrees, and, indeed, with better reason, for they had received their honors and emoluments from the German empire, not from the French nation; their rights had been confirmed to them by the treaty of Westphalia, and they denied the power of the National Assembly to alter that treaty. They have been suspected ever since of exciting the resentment of the German Princes against France; and it is by keeping alive the resentment of the commons against the gentlemen, that France must secure itself from henceforth against any attempt of the Empire to reconquer that ceded province.

The day of the Confederation was now approaching, and the unlucky Duke of Orleans, *no longer a Prince*, declared his intention to quit England and be present at the scene. The jealousy of La Fayette again endeavoured to prevent him, but was obliged to desist; *M. d'Orleans* returned, took the oaths with the rest, and his name
need

need not again have appeared in the narration, if it had not been from the accusation soon brought against him. (It may just be mentioned, however, that the name *La Clos*, his supposed friend, has been lately mentioned as a seditious orator at some seditious clubs.)

The Grand Confederation and the reciprocal oaths of King, People, and Army, took place on the 14th of July, with great splendor and without any confusion; nor can it be denied that this solemn ceremony gave an apparent legality to the constitution, even though its foundation might have been laid by force. But the revolt of Nancy, which happened soon after, proved the oaths which all the regiments of the army had taken by deputy, had not retained much influence on their conduct; in many regiments the soldiers, having now righted the public, had begun to think of righting their private wrongs, to complain that their officers cheated them, and to plunder the military chests. These discontents had risen at Nancy to the pitch of downright rebellion, and the Assembly had been obliged to au-

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thorize M. de Bouille, commander at Metz, to suppress them by force of arms. This step was taken very reluctantly, for they suspected Bouille of being an aristocrat, and according to their usual custom of never punishing democratic criminals, they were debating about sending commissioners to pacify, instead of troops to reduce the insurgents. But M. de Bouille, when armed with the first decree, marched directly to Nancy at the head of some regular and some national troops, and subdued them, not without considerable slaughter.

Here every historian, even the writer of an abridgement, should step out of his way to relate an action so heroic, that it equals all that is recorded in Greek or Roman annals. A young officer, M. Desilles, after endeavouring vainly to persuade the insurgents to capitulate, threw himself across the mouth of a cannon which they were going to fire off, and bade them complete their crime by blowing him to pieces. They did not put him to quite so dreadful a death, but they tore him from the cannon and stabbed him with bayonets. The struggle had,

had, however, gained some time for M. Bouille's troops to advance, and this more than generous sacrifice had some share in determining the success of the day. This real patriot, this martyr to his country, was found alive on the field of battle, but unhappily died of his wounds about three weeks afterwards; and it is but justice to say, that great honors have been paid to his memory.

When news of these transactions was brought to Paris, the Assembly felt embarrassed in the highest degree, as they suspected though unjustly, that Bouille would himself take up the business of rebellion, and yet forced to approve a man who had acted in conformity to their own orders. But the Parisians were enraged, assembled round the doors, and demanded Bouille's head and the heads of the ministers, though they could hardly tell why. The National Guard quieted them; but this event unexpectedly hastened the final resignation of Necker. Ever since the translation of the Assembly to Paris, he had sensibly felt that his credit was expiring; he was considered

as a tool who had done the business of party, and might now be laid aside at pleasure. M. Camus, the leader of one of their Committees on public accounts, a violent assertor of rigid œconomy, and many other members, had frequently quarrelled with all his plans, and brought cavilling accusations against him. In return, he had told them home truths, which only served to increase his unpopularity with the Assembly. On the night when the mob rose on receiving the tidings from Nancy, he was assured that his life was aimed at; he quitted his house, and spent many hours in the fields near Paris. Convinced that he had kept his place too long for his own honor, he pleaded ill health and infirmities, and sent his resignation to the National Assembly, who read it, and with the most careless indifference, called for *the order of the day*. Pierced to the heart with this disdainful treatment, he set out for Switzerland; but the bitter cup of his humiliation was not yet exhausted: he was stopped and confined like a prisoner by the National Guard of Arci-sur-Aube, who thought that no finance minister ought to leave France
with-

without first making up his accounts. He was set at liberty by a very dry letter from the Assembly, and retired to his native country without one single mark of esteem or regret from that nation, which, for his sake, had but the year before rebelled against their King.

On the 7th of August, a little while before Necker's retreat, the Chatelet, by the mouth of M. Boucher d'Argis, had informed the Assembly that two of its members had appeared liable to be accused (*decretéz*) for the tumults of the 5th and 6th of October 1789. It was presently known that these members were Orleans and Mirabeau, and all the true Democrats, from zeal to their cause rather than love to their persons, united in their defence. The affair was referred to a Committee, which, on the 2d of October, made its report, delivered by M. Chabroud, and the Assembly declared that there was no ground for the accusation.

It appears that the Chatelet had acted rashly in accusing with great solemnity two

members, against whom they had collected but very slight legal proofs, though the suspicions of the public were by no means slight : but the great partiality of the report of M. Chabroud did not the less scandalize all moderate persons, especially when he endeavoured to excuse the murder of the Life Guards, on the supposition that they fired on the 6th of October, when they saw the mob breaking into the Palace. The fact itself is positively denied ; but suppose it were true, let royalty be forgot, and let the case be stated thus :—A man's house is surrounded by ruffians, who attempt a forcible entry with the most horrid threats against his servants and his wife ; the servants fire, and kill one of the rabble. Where is the English law, or indeed the English lawyer, that would presume to call such an action murder, or to vindicate, as M. Chabroud has done, the vengeance of the ruffians against these faithful servants ?

But another and more important consequence resulted from the vote of the Assembly ; it became a legal and constitutional privilege of the Assembly, that no inferior court
could

could prosecute one of its members for any crime, until the Assembly itself had voted that there were grounds to prosecute him.

There is no need of spending many words to prove that such a privilege, granted to a sovereign, uncontrouled Assembly like that of France, may lead to a tyranny as oppressive as any the French have escaped from. The Chatelet grew hated by the people of Paris, who complained that they disgraced by their conduct the Revolution; for they had imprudently begun to unveil some of the odious manœuvres that led to it. The Parisians were forced to own there was some guilt in the transactions of the 6th of October; but they affirmed, that the tumult of the 5th was very patriotic, as if the indiscreet zeal of the Life Guards could not have been checked by a solemn and decent deputation sent from the Hotel de Ville to complain of the suspicious circumstances that attended their banquet, and as if the factions, who let out *a herd of two thousand tigers*, are not answerable for the mischiefs they commit. The affair was immediately taken out of the hands of the Chatelet, and the

prosecution was entirely laid aside; by which means the people received another proof that murder was not held to be deserving of punishment, in England we say *high treason*: but it is a new principle of law, adopted by the French patriots, that it is not high treason to conspire the death of a king's wife; wife is the phrase that they use, and they seem to wish to banish from the language the word *queen* as well as the word *noble*.

I should not have insisted so much on a subject, which is but an episode in this awful tragedy, if it did not give room to some apprehensions, that the unmanly ferocity which had seized the minds of the French, has extended itself to the party, the very small party, as I believe, of English who approve their conduct. One instance may be sufficient, in an answer to Mr. Burke, inserted in the Diary last December, and said to come from a gentleman of literature; I read with pain the following inhuman sentence; “If the Queen was guilty, was her beauty
 “to exempt her from the punishment due
 “to her crimes?” Such an expression would only have been allowable when Mary queen

of Scots was accused of the barbarous murder of her husband: it is horrid to apply it to mere female frailties and weakness, or even to indiscreet councils given to a husband at a moment when she might be persuaded, that the crown and the life of her husband and of her children were in danger.

The public transactions of Europe now call us back to the beginning of August, when M. de Montmorin laid before the National Assembly the application of the Spanish Court for assistance, and the Committee afore-mentioned made a report more favourable to Spain than to England.

The minds of the people were much changed since the month of May; speeches had been made, and violent pamphlets published against the supposed ambition of England; commercial jealousy had been roused, that modern source of war, as inexhaustible as the martial pride of the barons and knights of feudal ages; and the merchants of the southern provinces expressed their apprehension, that Spain, if deserted,
would

would make a treaty with England, that would be very prejudicial to the trade of France. The Committee and the Assembly joined, therefore, in recommending the fitting out of a powerful fleet, and a defensive alliance with Spain, deprecating at the same time any alliance for offensive purposes: but experience shews, that a defensive alliance means just what nations chuse it should mean, and may be converted at pleasure into an offensive; and there can be little doubt that France, unfit as it was for war, would have been dragged by Spain into the quarrel, if the business had not been brought to a specific termination; and all the fine compliments that passed between the Revolution Club and the Duc de Rochefoucault and the magistrates of Quimper, would not have retarded hostilities for a moment.

A fleet of about thirty sail was now fitted out at Brest with all possible expedition; but M. Albert de Rioms, who commanded it, though an able officer, was suspected not to be sufficiently democratic. It is probable that a scheme was laid in the private cabals of party, to turn out at once the Admiral and all the
Ministers,

Ministers, against whom there had been many petty accusations and many exceptions taken. A mutiny, therefore, suddenly broke out at Brest, upon occasion of some of the articles of a new penal code of Marine Law voted by the Assembly.

A Committee was as usual appointed, and M. Menou on the 20th of October made a report, in which, after censuring the sailors, he represented that the want of confidence in the Ministry was the latent cause of all the mutinies and riots in the kingdom. A motion was made to accuse the Ministers, but unexpectedly it was lost, at which the Democrats were enraged. The next day, M. Menou, who had before owned that the sailors and municipality of Brest were punishable, told the House with unequalled assurance, that since they would not punish the true authors of mischief, they ought not to punish men, who had only erred from excess of patriotism. The sailors were therefore mildly exhorted to return to their duty, the offensive articles were promised to be reconsidered, and a new strip'd flag was substituted for the white flag. This proposition
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of changing the national flag excited the resentment of the minority, and Mirabeau, giving way to his usual violence, cried out, "The Aristocrats are grown insolent from their victory of yesterday; a fortnight ago they dared not, for their own safety, have objected to this proposal." These words excited much noise and clamour from the opposite party, and were called "language worthy of a leader of banditti." I desire that my readers will compare them with similar words used by Mirabeau, on a debate on the dangers that might threaten from the side of Germany; he said, "That the Emperor would be unwilling to engage in the quarrel, when he recollected what an hostage was in the hands of the French (the Queen being Leopold's sister.)"

Does it not, then, appear, that *oblique threats of murder and assassination* were the favourite argument of that ambitious demagogue, who has so unjustly usurped the honours due to virtue,

The motions of M. Menou were all carried, and the assistants of executive government

ment saw that their fate was determined. Albert resigned, and Bougainville was made Admiral of the Brest fleet. Luzerne, Minister of Marine, resigned; Fleuriou was put in his room, but has met with so many mortifications from the Assembly, that a few months ago he gave up his place, and M. Thevenard succeeded. All the Ministers were *weeded out* one after another. M. Dupontail succeeded M. Tour du Pin as *War* Minister, and has hitherto not displeased the Assembly; but the malcontents reproach him with taking no care of the discipline of the army, and allowing the soldiers to become independent.

The sailors at Brest became pacified; but in the mean time the Court of Spain had heard terrible accounts of the mutinous spirit of the French fleet, and, if all the foreign newspapers deserve any credit, in consequence of those accounts signed the Convention with England.

Three great internal objects had occupied the Assembly for some time, and employed them during the remainder of the last year
and

and the beginning of the present, 1791—the Finances, the Administration of Justice, and the Discipline of the Church. Each of these would deserve a volume written by men conversant on the subject, in order to distinguish what is good, what is tolerable, and what is dangerous.

I shall only observe on the first head, that the scheme of forcing the *Assignats* or paper money into circulation, and obliging people to employ them in the purchase of the Church Lands, has hitherto succeeded better than was expected. But the want of current coin is still severely felt, especially at Paris; *Assignats* lose, when exchanged against money, sometimes 10 and sometimes 18 per cent.; and the money brokers who carry on this usurious traffic, have now succeeded to the millers and bakers in the hatred of the common people. The enemies of the Revolution say, that the *Deficit* is not yet filled up, and that when all the Church Lands are sold, it will appear that the finances of the nation are still in a state of embarrassment.

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The taxes have hitherto been very ill paid, by the confession of M. Camus, M. Montesquieu, and the Committee of Accounts; and in particular, M. Necker's contribution of the fourth of each man's revenue has not been acquitted. Trade has been relieved from many burthensome taxes; but as heavy taxes are indispensably necessary, it is probable they will fall severely upon land.

As to the second head, the friends of the Revolution celebrate exceedingly the adoption which the French have made of the English institution of Juries in criminal cases. That institution is most excellent in a country that has long been used to it; but time alone can shew whether it will be practicable in a kingdom where not the smallest traces of it had hitherto appeared. Here, as on every other subject, the French have carried good principles to that excess in which they become bad. A sort of *Aristophobia* (if I may coin the word) has seized the National Assembly, and they think that there is no liberty if any power exists independent of the choice of the people. Not
only

only they have dissolved their old Parliaments, and made Judges elective, by the same Electors as chuse the Members of the Assembly, but they have refused the King the smallest check on the election; and what is worst of all, the Judges are elected only for six years, and after that may be re-elected if agreeable to the people. Independent Judges and independent Juries awing one another, have given to England a purity of justice unknown to most other countries; but whether the same purity may be expected when the *two* powers are in fact reduced to *one*, and when the Judges are dependent on the intrigues of popular factions, not more consonant to morality than the intrigues of courtiers, experience must determine; but at present it appears very problematical.

The internal administration of the government and police of the kingdom may be ranked under this head, and the division of the kingdom into municipalities included within the districts and answerable to them, whilst the districts are included within and answerable to the elective administrations of the

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the eighty larger departments ; this division, I say, this gradual scale of elective powers, has been the subject of, to some writers, unbounded admiration. But where is the highest point of this political scale, and to what power are the eighty departments answerable ? This is somewhat like the question which is said to puzzle an Indian philosopher : “ The world is supported by an elephant, the elephant by a tortoise—
 “ *Very well, but how is the tortoise supported ?* ”

It will appear to all who read the debates of this last spring, that the National Assembly have often felt this difficulty, however their friends in England may have disregarded it. They dare not entrust any effectual power of controul to King or Minister, and to erect any body of magistrates, with power to call these petty republics to account, would be *Aristocracy*, a word more odious to a Frenchman's ears than *Despotism* itself.

Whilst the subject of internal police is mentioned, it may be proper to observe, that

the Assembly, who have scornfully rejected that *independence of Judges* which even Republicans in England have never attacked, have frequently shewn a disposition to adopt our system of *Poors Rates*, that part of our internal government which speculative writers have most questioned, and for which a hundred plans of reformation have been proposed, though none have been yet carried into execution. If the Committee of Mendicity, as it is called, can hit upon any plan that can reconcile humanity, œconomy, and the due encouragement of industry, may they prosper in their views! England, in this instance, will not deny that it may be outdone. But first let a native of England be allowed to tell the French Democrats à truth, which few Englishmen will deny. The internal management of our parishes is one of the most democratic parts of our Constitution, and at the same time one of the most abused. The churchwardens and overseers elected by the *Tiers-Etat* of England, and answerable to *that* alone, are frequently accused of gross corruption, litigiousness, and inhumanity. And on the whole, the best-managed parishes, and those
where

where the poor are most kindly treated, are those that are superintended by *landed gentlemen of considerable property and family long resident in the neighbourhood*, that order of society at present so persecuted* and degraded in France.

The discipline of the Church was the third great object of the National Assembly. The system they adopted is founded on the same principle, and every benefice, from a curacy to a bishopric, is elective:

One of their regulations is certainly blameable, and as such is particularly censured in the Pope's late briefs on the subject—the regulation which admits people of all religions to vote at these elections. I do not see how a Catholic can bear to have Protestants interfere with the choice of his teachers, nor how a conscientious Protestant can join in choosing a Catholic pastor:

The Clergy had by this time contrived a plan to gratify their resentment; they allow-

* Appendix, Note 3.

ed that the nation had the legal right to take away their revenues, but they denied its right to alter the church discipline, and in particular to change the limits of dioceses, or the mode of nominating to benefices, without a *National Council*, which the Assembly had not the least inclination to convoke. Incensed at this objection, they imposed, about the end of November, an oath on the Clergy, to observe the Constitution decreed by the Assembly. Great numbers refused, and many of those clergymen who were at the beginning the firm friends of the Commons. Some offered to take the oath, with a reserve that it did not extend to admit any spiritual authority in the Assembly; but though the Assembly declared it did not intend to meddle with the spiritual part of religion, it would not allow of any reserve in the oath.

All the refractory clergymen were without distinction ejected from their benefices, and others chosen in their room; and most of the curates who distinguished themselves in the Assembly have been elected to bishoprics. Meanwhile many devout and scrupulous

lous minds have refused to acknowledge these new pastors, especially since the Pope has publicly expressed his disapprobation of the oath. Thus the Assembly, whilst they they meant to subdue men's persons and consciences without reserve, have raised up a sect of French *Nonjurors*, who may prove as troublesome as the English *Nonjurors* after the Revolution. The English could not avoid that perplexity, because the dispute related to an oath of allegiance, which the English clergy had always taken. But as this French oath was entirely unprecedented, it has been said, that the Assembly acted both harshly and imprudently in forcing it at once upon minds unprepared to receive it.

The course of events now brings us to mention a tumult which happened at Paris about the end of November. M. de Castries having had some words with M. de Lameth, a violent patriot, a duel was fought, and M. de Lameth was slightly wounded. Immediately the mob cried out, that M. de Castries was bribed to assassinate a patriot, that his sword was poisoned, &c. &c. They rushed upon M. de Castries' hotel, plundered

it, and destroyed its furniture and pictures; whilst Castries himself escaped from their fury, and quitted France. This tumult is supposed to have proceeded from one of the principal sources which taints the rising liberty of France with the poison of licentiousness, the influence of a powerful club. There is at Paris a number of those societies, which imitate the proceedings of the National Assembly; have their president, their tribune for harangues, their motions, their divisions; and it is well known, that the decrees which pass in the Assembly, are often prepared and voted in these little self-elected oligarchies. One of the principal of these clubs is the Club of the Jacobins, or *Amis de la Constitution*, though another, called the Club of 1789, being almost as republican, sometimes lifts up its head, and endeavours to dispute the palm of popularity. But the Club *des Jacobins*, to which M. Lameth belonged, is by far the most formidable, as it has its corresponding clubs (*sés Affiliés* is the word) in most of the towns in France; and wherever a branch of the Jacobins is established, it may cost people their lives to affront one of its members, or set up
any

any political club which professes less democratical principles.

In Paris, the Count de Clermont Tonnerre (whose principles leaned to the moderate party) endeavoured to set up a club called *The Friends of Monarchy*. He alledged, that the books and journals publicly printed by Desmoulins and Brissot de Warville, members of the Jacobins, books which openly advised the French to constitute themselves a republic, justified a meeting of those friends to a limited government, who thought that monarchy was essential to the safety of a great nation. This unfortunate club has been the object of a persecution, carried even to ridiculous lengths, and of which the details may be read in the *Mercure*. Sometimes the orders of the mayor, M. Bailly, and sometimes the insults and threats of the mob, have perpetually prevented it from assembling. It was well asked, even in a French newspaper, when did the Whigs in England prevent the Tories from meeting at the Cocoa Tree?

But at Aix, in the month of December, much more dreadful events happened; the

Gibbet Law of Paris was revived, and an officer and two lawyers were hanged for setting up a club in opposition to the clubs already existing, and hanged in the face of the magistrates, who stood tamely by. The officer is owned to have been very indiscreet in his censures of the present government : but, alas ! he was *fourscore* ! an age that would have disarmed the fury of an eastern despot.

One of these lawyers, M. de Pascalis, was mentioned with esteem even by Patriots in the National Assembly, as having formerly published very good works on the Reform of the Provincial States. Unfortunately, he could not approve of breaking his native province into departments, and still less of abolishing the Parlemens, which many Frenchmen, once reckoned enemies to despotism, had been taught to regard as sacred and inviolable. He had signed a strong protest of the lawyers against dissolving the Parlement of Provence, and from that time the people were instigated to take away his life.

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It must be confessed that M. de Calonne's imprudent work, *l'Etat de la France*, in which he lays down the plan of a Counter Revolution, whilst neither he nor his party had the necessary means to effect it, had greatly contributed to infect the minds of the Revolutionists with malignant suspicions of plots. But it was not the less shameful for a legislator to utter, in the sanctuary of law and justice, "That it was no wonder if the people sometimes revenged themselves when they were continually attacked;" i. e. *Le peuple continuellement attaqué se venge quelquefois*. Such was the speech of M. Charles de Lameth in the National Assembly; and many of the republican Journals spoke with the same careless barbarity of the murder of a worthy man, for so all parties allowed him to be.

Montesquieu used to be mentioned as a friend to liberty, even in the writings of Price and Priestley; but he was attached to Nobility, still more attached to the privileges of the Judicial *Parlemens*, and of too active a spirit to have remained neuter in a time of civil commotion.

Can any one reflect without horror, that if Montesquieu's life could have been prolonged to these days, he might probably have died by the hands of a frantic rabble?

The internal war of the tenants against the landlords continued during the winter in several provinces, in Limousin, in Quercy, (where the gentlemen made a league to protect their country seats, which league was held suspicious, and some gentlemen murdered in consequence) in some parts of Brittany, and even near Amiens, where a lady's house was plundered and her life threatened by the peasants of the village, set on by the municipality itself, on a quarrel relative to some rights of commonage.

The political half of the *Mercure* has admitted many letters from angry *Gentil-hommes*, one of whom swears, in his wrath, "that the declaration of the Rights of Man may as well be called a declaration for the destruction of mankind, when one considers the use to which it has been applied."

The National Assembly sent troops and commissioners into Quercy, and restored tranquillity; but the criminals always found friends in the National Assembly, and the commissioners never attempted to inflict the least punishment. The sensations of the Assembly were very different, when on the 14th of March, 1791, a shocking riot happened at Douai, when M. Derbai and a M. Nicolau were barbarously murdered for having exported corn against the will of the people. The Assembly suspected that this riot had been connived at, with a view to suspend the election of a new Bishop. Justice was therefore called upon to unsheath her almost rusty sword, and the municipality was ordered to be impeached of *Leze Nation*, for not ordering the troops to fire. The Magistrates did not wait for their impeachment, and ran off; but the excuse they left behind them was the absolute refusal of the troops to fire upon the rioters. It is certainly probable that the troops might remember how the Parisians commended the grenadiers, who said to La Fayette, on the 5th of October, 1789, "We cannot fire upon our fellow citizens who ask for bread."

Far,

Far, very far, has the majority of the National Assembly shewn itself, from imitating the glorious, though bloody impartiality of Cromwell, who beheaded, in the same day, and on the same scaffold, Mr. Gerrard, who had conspired against his government, and Don Pantaleon de Sa, who, from a private grudge, had conspired against the life of that very Mr. Gerrard.

The National Assembly, however, opened the present year 1791, in a manner more honorable than their enemies expected; for it had sometimes been hinted that they would take advantage of their indefinite oath, not to part till the Constitution was settled, to perpetuate their authority and become another *long Parliament*. On that day, a list was brought in of the constitutional points which still remained to decide, and they decreed that a new Assembly should be chosen after that list had been adjusted.

Their attention this spring has been divided between the necessary preparations for the important work of a new Assembly; the alarms given them by the enmity of the
neigh-

neighbouring German Princes, both ecclesiastical and civil, who fill the Diet of Ratisbon with complaints, and are supposed to encourage the *Emigrants* in a rash and desperate scheme of invasion, and more than all the rest, in the perplexities occasioned by their harsh and violent treatment of the Clergy. The King had wished to temporise, had delayed giving his sanction to the decree imposing the *civic* oath, as it is called, and was endeavouring to negotiate with the Assembly: they *chid* the King into his speedy sanction, and set about the great work of dismissing all the Clergy, high and low, rich and poor, who scrupled taking the oath without explanation; but in some places, the country people refused to part with Curates whom they loved; and in others, especially at Paris, the rage of the populace against those who were called *refractory priests*, went beyond all bounds, and shocked even the Assembly itself. According to the principles of Popery, if any Bishops, Priests, &c. are turned out by an incompetent authority, and such is all civil authority acting without the spiritual, the usurping successors to those benefices become

come schismatics, and all the sacraments that they administer are invalid; the wafer of the Communion remains a mere wafer; their baptism is no baptism, and does not entitle the person baptised to a state of salvation. Some attempts were formerly made by our English Nonjurors to inculcate these prejudices; but they did not easily take root amongst Protestants: on the contrary, they are so suitable to the opinions of Roman Catholics, that there is reason to believe, many weak consciences all over France are at present exceedingly unhappy, afraid of hearing mass, and still more afraid of having their children baptised at the established parish churches. The Assembly are exceedingly perplexed, between their professions of unlimited toleration, their declarations that the magistrate has no right over private consciences, and their fear of giving a regular establishment to a sect of Nonjurors, whose teachers will be averse to the Constitution: The Pope threatens the new Gallican Church with excommunication—the Assembly defy him; and yet swear that they are good Roman Catholics, and make it a kind of treason to behave as if you thought the contrary.

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This was probably the secret motive which made the ruling party so enraged at the departure of the two remaining daughters of Lewis the XVth, who had staid whilst Monarchy was overturned; but fled, from the apprehensions of a schism. The month of February was passed over in ridiculous debates, whether, as one Member sarcastically expresses it, "two old ladies should hear mass at Rome or at Paris." The insults and delays those Princeesses met with at Moret and at Arnai-le-Duc, are too well known to be repeated. The National Assembly would willingly have authorised their detention; but as they could find no law to that purpose, they were obliged to order the Princeesses to be set free.

The *heroic* Poissardes of Paris began to shew, once more, their turbulent spirit, and taking an alarm, that the King's Brother, the Comte de Provence, was also going off, conducted him, by force, from his own Palace to the Thuilleries. On the 24th of February, the garden of the Thuilleries was full of rabble, who insisted that the King should order his aunts to return. La Fayette
and

and his National Guard dispersed them, and on the 28th of February were again called into action, to prevent the mob from pulling down the old state prison of Vincennes. Unluckily, on that day, a quarrel happened between the National Guard, and two or three hundred officers, or gentlemen who had imprudently gone to offer their services to defend the King from violence. Fayette was displeas'd at this intrusion, and they were disarmed with some circumstances of indignity.

Soon after, the King fell seriously ill of a bilious fever, and it was supposed that his late vexations and total want of exercise, shut up, as he is, at Paris, had occasioned it. When he recovered, as much bustle was made with illuminations and *Te Deums* as if he had been at the point of death. I know not whether hypocrisy dictates these demonstrations, or whether the slightest danger of that terrible misfortune, a long minority, had brought the nation to some sense of feeling.

The latter was probably the case, since the Assembly postponed all other business to
establish

establish a *law* of *Regency*, in which they declared that Regency should belong to the next heir, adding, however, this qualifying circumstance, “ that the Regent *never* should “ be the guardian of the King’s person.”

It cannot escape the reader, that the first part of this decree establishes that principle which our great leaders of opposition failed of establishing in England. I will be bold enough to say, that both nations acted wisely considering their respective circumstances, though they have acted in a manner diametrically opposite. The Crown of France is at present too weak to bear the shortest inter-regnum, or the shadow of an election of a ruler; and this decision is almost the only circumstance from which we may suppose that the Democrats do not entirely mean to abolish Monarchy.

They have not, however, shewn much respect to Royalty, in their law, voted on the 28th of March, on the residence of public functionaries, *fonctionnaires publics*, a French phrase not very easy to translate; besides confounding the chief Magistrate,

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the center of all public authority, with the lowest *functionaries* in the commonwealth, by the very title of their law, the Republicans have introduced the great question of deposition, that question so grating to French ears, as it were by a side wind, ordaining, that if the King leaves his kingdom, and refuses to return when summoned by the Assembly, he shall be considered as having abdicated. This might be justifiable, but they clogged the decree with the obligation of residing in the same town with the National Assembly; and though they did not express the penalty, the general enacting-*clause* of the *Bill*, that they who disobey this decree shall be deprived of their functions, hinted pretty strongly at the danger of deposition. The inconvenience of such a law being represented to them, as it might leave a King to the mercy of the rabble of a great city, they ridiculously marked out a geographical circuit of twenty leagues, within which he may travel at pleasure. In return for this tyranny, they have given power to a King to tyrannize over his son, or his nephew; for they enact, that the next heir shall not quit the Court without leave from the reigning

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ing King; and if he quits the kingdom without leave, he forfeits his title to the Crown. If the French nation and their Royal Family are not to live upon terms of more generous confidence, French liberty is not likely to be very tranquil or durable.

All the remaining Royalists in the Assembly received this law with every expression of abhorrence: Mirabeau, who was not on good terms with the Democrats, and was thought by many to be coming round to the Royalists, was not present at the decision. He was, at that very time, struck by the hand of death, and hurried off in a few days from that power to which he had sacrificed all the feelings of a man, and which he was just beginning to grasp. He had been elected one of the administrators of the department of Paris, a very important place, and which gave him a right to command the municipality of that turbulent capital. His colleagues had left to his care the drawing up of a proclamation, in which he had most strongly recommended obedience to that law, and submission to that order which he had once encouraged the populace to overturn.

turn. He expired on Saturday the 2d of April, after a short and violent illness, and considering the atrocious suspicions that the French factions entertain of each other, it will not appear extraordinary that poison should have been suspected. Several Magistrates and all the principal surgeons were ordered to attend at the opening of the body, and, happily for the tranquillity of Paris, they decided, that there were not the least traces of poison.

It would fill a volume to relate all the public honors bestowed on this unworthy character. A public funeral was ordered, at which almost all the Assembly walked; the Parisians all put on mourning for a week; the example spread through the country; the fleets of France lowered their topsails, even in foreign harbours, and to crown all, the National Assembly ordered, that first of all their great men should be buried in the new church of St. Genevieve, which is destined to receive the ashes and display the monuments of Patriots and of Heroes.

Few circumstances are more disgraceful to the Revolution, in a moral light, which, after all, is more important than all other lights, in which politicians view events.

The Assembly cannot now be angry if the cruelties of the populace are laid to their charge, since they have *deified* the man who appears to be one of the instigators of those cruelties; the man who had no God, no country but his interest, and who seems to have thought, like Cesar Borgia, or Catherine of Medicis, that crimes are necessary instruments of policy. Even the friends of peace and order regretted his death, (however strange it may seem) and thought that his proclamation showed that he was become sensible that his violence had gone to far. But when I read in that proclamation, that a Revolution must be made by one set of means, and a Constitution supported by another, I could not help translating it thus:—
“ My good friends, you have committed as
“ many murders as were necessary to bring
“ me into power; if you commit a single
“ murder more I will punish you.”

The people of Paris were more disposed to honor his memory than to obey his proclamation. The Passion Week is the time when most Catholics confess and receive absolution preparatory to receiving the sacrament on Easter Sunday, and consequently it was the time when the quarrels broke out between the new established church and the Nonjurors.

The department of Paris were willing to have allowed Nonjurors to celebrate divine service in chapels hired for that purpose, on the same footing as Lutherans or Calvinists. But the populace were inflamed to fury, and tore down the proclamation of the department; the *female allies* of Parisian liberty attacked the convents, fell upon that very respectable order of nuns who dedicate themselves to the care of the sick, stopped them when they came abroad, insulted, and even scourged them. The Nonjurors withdrew themselves from popular fury; but it appears that, encouraged by some late decrees of the Assembly to enforce obedience to magistracy, they had again ventured to hire a church for their meetings, and

and as soon as mass was concluded, the mob broke in and demolished the altar.

But these scandalous transactions all vanish before that famous day, almost as famous as the 5th of October, when the Parisians stopped the King's carriage as he was going to St. Cloud for the holidays, confined him in the Thuilleries, and thus demonstrated to all Europe, that after they have called their King, *the Restorer of their Liberty*, they will not permit him to enjoy his own, and dare not trust him out of the limits of a walled city. It was suspected that the King intended to have received the sacrament at Easter from the hands of a dispossessed Nonjuror, and it is very probable that he had not freed himself from his religious prejudices as easily as his subjects. The department addressed *one* reprimand to the King, and *another* to the people. The King was by far the most obedient of their subjects, for he dismissed his almoner at their desire, and all the Noblemen of his bed-chamber finally resigned.

La Fayette was the only person who shewed determined spirit. True to the principles of military subordination, he declared, that as the National Guard had on that occasion disobeyed his orders and behaved mutinously, he would command them no longer. The news of his resignation struck the Parisians with terror; all the arts of his enemies could not prevent the people and the soldiery from sending him repeated deputations, to express their penitence and entreat him to resume the command. On Easter Sunday, April the 24th, he complied with their desires, but first obtained orders from the mayor to break a mutinous company of Grenadiers, and bound the National Guard by a new oath, "to obey the laws and their General." (A plain proof that the solemn oath of the Confederation had not made a very deep impression.) Since that time the National Guard have been pretty zealous in the preservation of order, and in particular, have more than once rescued the unpopular race of money brokers from the *lantern*. But when order is preserved in a great city, chiefly by the influence that the spirit of one man

man has obtained over an army, we are tempted to ask, *if it was worth while to make a Revolution?* Such order and such tranquillity were to be found in the dominions of Alibeg or of Hyder Ally.

Though La Fayette thus obtained ample redress for his wrongs, the King could not obtain the least satisfaction, though he had, immediately after the insult, remonstrated to the Assembly, how dangerous it was that a pretence should be given to assert that his *sanction* was extorted. He has still remained to this present time (the month of June) shut up at Paris, and has not ventured to offend or terrify the Parisians by even taking the air.

The Assembly were, however, convinced of the necessity of putting some check on seditious clubs, one of which, (called *the Cordeliers*) had instigated the people to this last insult. They passed some laws against the licence taken by those clubs of sticking up in public places, their treasonable resolutions; but the laws were not severe enough to inspire much awe.

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They have since employed themselves in preparing the way for another National Assembly, which the French seem to wait for as eagerly and ardently, as they waited for the first meeting of the States-General. On the 16th of May they took the only resolution which can at all justify the *previous* panegyric that one of our great orators had passed upon the French Revolution. They voted that none of the present members should be re-elected in the next legislature. The jealousy of the two leading parties was one great cause that facilitated this kind of self-denying ordinance. They have executed strict justice on themselves; for both parties were so inflamed with anger and revenge, that it was high time the business of legislature should be consigned to cooler heads and milder bosoms. But when it was proposed that this particular exception should become a general standing law, then, as usual, whilst they aimed at patriotism they bordered on absurdity.

At last, an amendment was adopted and carried, which permits the members of a future Assembly to be re-elected to the Assembly

sembly immediately ensuing after that; they must remain excluded during the space of one Assembly, before the people can elect them a third time. Whether this amendment will be sufficient to obviate the dangers arising from such a constant succession of new and unexperienced members, must be demonstrated by time. On the 27th of May they fixed upon the beginning of July for the election of new deputies, intending to continue sitting till their successors were ready to fill their places. This decree was received with transports of joy and universal acclamations.

Impartiality obliges me to mention, that accounts just received also inform us, that they have voted M. Pascalis' death a *murder*, and directed its authors to be prosecuted. It will remain to be seen whether this prosecution will be more efficacious than the proceedings of the Chatelet. Whilst they are voting thus equitably, the populace at Tullies and Castelnau have murdered two or three suspected Aristocrats, who had given some cause of offence. It is this revival of the spirit of *political assassination* which is
the

the greatest danger of the example given by the French Revolution.

It is in vain that the friends of the Revolution tell us that all those crimes were the crimes of banditti, and that the Revolution itself is to be looked for in the glorious exploits of the 14th of July, and in the constitution which the Assembly establishes.* The seeds of those evil practices which have disgraced the French nation were sown on that very 14th of July, and the indiscriminate applause given to the taking of the Bastille, without bestowing the least censure on the cruelties which sullied that great event, confirmed the people in the idea that they might right their own wrongs whenever they chose to exert themselves. The power of arbitrary hanging without trial succeeded instantly to the expiring power of arbitrary imprisonment.

It has been said, that few Revolutions have been less bloody. I believe the number of victims is very considerable if we include

* See Dupont's answer to Burke.

the French Colonies and the district of Avignon.* But were they ever so few, the blood of one man, executed by the people returned into a state of savage nature, vitiates the public manners, and destroys the hopes of public felicity, much more than all the blood that was shed at Naseby or Marston Moor.

As to the French Constitution, I think it very faulty in many respects, and the Assembly seem to wish to preclude it from that gradual amendment which some of our orators supposed it would receive, by an oath they intend to impose on all members of future legislatures, not to propose or vote for any law contrary to the present Constitution. But was it as perfect as it is painted by its admirers, of what use are good laws without morals and subordination?

I will not presume to assume the tone of a prophet, and predict the final issue of this

* Each of these subjects would deserve a separate treatise. Small, as is the district of Avignon, its misfortunes have made it worthy of attention, and might yield important lessons.

unparalleled convulsion of the political world. Before this pamphlet appears abroad, it is probable that a new Legislature will be chosen in France, and my readers will then be better able to form their own conclusions as to the probable happiness or misery of that kingdom. But should these troubles, contrary to reasonable expectation, end in peace and felicity, it still will be difficult in the eyes of moralists to vindicate the majority of the National Assembly, who have sought a good end, through imprudent, unjust, and cruel means.

I shall equally preclude myself from inquiring into the meaning of that party, who have thought fit to keep up the celebration of the 14th of July with an affectation of enthusiasm, which it is probable that many of them *cannot* feel, because they would be ruined by the prevalence of *such* Revolution principles in England. I will agree with them if they please, that it is a day to be *noticed in the Calendar*; but not with cockades and feastings, and noisy toasts, and equally *noisy* poetry.

All ranks and all orders of men should meditate calmly on the events of which that awful day was the prelude, and learn moderation and prudence from the terrible examples which France has displayed.

Let all Kings and Princes, nay, all rulers of every kind, learn the danger of giving way to the seduction of their flatterers, and of extending their power till it breaks with instantaneous violence, and recoils upon themselves. Let them contemplate the unhappy situation of those, who a few years ago were amongst the wealthiest and proudest Princes in Europe and who are now driven from Court to Court, and scarce able to find a hospitable dwelling that will shelter their forlorn heads. Let Princes consider, that one leading cause of this general unpopularity was the unlimited indulgence of all those passions: gallantry, intemperance, dissipation, and prodigality, which in the hour of youth and mirth, are so often considered as entirely harmless. But let the people consider, in their turn, that by violating the rules of justice, from the pleasure of ruining luxurious and exorbitant wealth, there

there is nothing gained on their side but barbarity and poverty. And let all mild and virtuous men reflect on the melancholy fate that has attended the earliest assertors of French liberty. Behold them sharing the exile of those courtiers whose crimes or whose pleasures they would have scorned to share; and ruined by the success of those very projects which they fondly imagined were to diffuse universal happiness! Let moderate men consider this, and beware how they hastily engage in schemes of reformation along with men of violent or of artful characters; and beware, above all, never to *pledge* the *famous toast* of Dr. Price, or endeavour to transform the *Parliament of England*, (with all its imperfections on its head!) into *such a meeting* as the *National Assembly of France*.

A P P E N D I X.

NOTE I.

IT may not be amiss, when treachery and Machiavelism are mentioned, to quote Bishop Burnet's character of the independent faction during our civil wars:

“ I had much discourse with one who
“ knew Cromwell well, and all that set of
“ men, and asked him how they could ex-
“ cuse all the *prevarications* and other ill
“ things, of which they were visibly guilty
“ in the conduct of their affairs? He told

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me,

“ me, they believed there were great occasions in which some men were called to *great services*, in the doing of which, they were excused from the *common rules of morality.*”* It is very obvious how far this principle may be carried, and how all justice and mercy may be set aside on this pretence by a very bold enthusiast.

Let it be observed, once for all, that when I speak of the *Independents*, I do not mean to scrutinize or to censure the religious opinions of any set of men; but when the Dissenters, belonging to the Independent sect, act in political matters as one united body, it then becomes impossible not to recollect that they are the genuine heirs of those very *Independents*, who, in 1649, overturned the British Constitution, and reduced the English to a situation so miserable, (no matter whether in *fact* or in *opinion*) that the nation was glad to escape from it, by recalling the Stuarts, and running, once more, the chance of arbitrary power.

* Burnet's Hist. octavo edit. vol. i. p. 62.

NOTE 2.

IT may be objected to this implied simile, that there is a great difference between a murder by ruffians, and a judicial trial and execution.

I answer, that the difference is apparent rather than real. Charles the First was murdered against the sense of a large majority of his people; the forms of justice were but a mockery; he was not sacrificed to the guilt of his former offences, but to the revenge of Cromwell and Ireton, whom he had mortally offended by chusing to make peace with the Presbyterians rather than with the Independents. Let us again hear Burnet, who was sufficiently prejudiced against his cause and his memory :

“ The King’s trial and death was cer-
 “ tainly one of the most amazing scenes in
 “ history. The Presbyterians and the body
 “ of the city were much against it, and
 “ were every where fasting and praying for
 “ the King’s preservation.

“ There were not above 8000 of the army
 “ about the town ; but these were selected
 “ out of the whole army as the most en-
 “ gaged in enthusiasm ; and they were kept
 “ at prayer, in their way, almost day and
 “ night, except when they were upon duty :
 “ so that they were *wrought up to a pitch*
 “ *of fury that struck a terror into all peo-*
 “ *ple.*” — Vol. i. p. 63. Octavo edit.

The difference, we see, resolves itself at
 last into 8000 *tigers* mad with false religion,
 and 2000 tigers mad with debauchery. I
 confess the advantage is rather on the side
 of the first herd of tigers ; for they gave
somewhat more decent language to their vic-
 tim, and did not talk of *eating human flesh*.

NOTE 3.

MR. Burke has been unjustly accused
 of want of humanity to the poor, because he
 has said that they must respect that property
 of which they cannot partake ; and that
 when

when they find their success disproportioned to their endeavours, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportions of Eternal Justice.

Let us see how the author of the *Essais Historiques*, already mentioned as a violent enemy to Clergy and Nobles, and whose work was much commended at its first appearance in the republican *Mercure de France*; let us see with what deference this writer treats the poor.

After he had been describing the Third Estate as composed of celebrated lawyers, of learned academicians, of opulent merchants and manufacturers, of intelligent farmers, &c. &c. he proceeds as follows :

“ If there were only such men as these in
 “ the world, the earth would be a delight-
 “ ful place of abode. Unfortunately there
 “ is beneath them a class of *coarse* men,
 “ *hommes grossiers*, whose substance is at-
 “ tached to labours that demand no intellect,
 “ require neither meditation nor assiduity,
 “ and do not even bring them the hopes
 “ of a less painful mode of life. It is

“ by dispensing some money amongst the
 “ wretched class, that ambitious men fo-
 “ ment riots in town and country ; it is by
 “ offering them some alms, that the clergy
 “ formerly made them devoted fanatics ;
 “ it is by making these unprovided men hope
 “ for the pillage of the wealth of the Third
 “ Estate, that men eminent in dignity and
 “ pretensions kindle civil wars, of which
 “ the Third Estate is always the victim,
 “ rarely the accomplice, and never the in-
 “ stigator, But this mean hord, *horde in-*
 “ *fime*, which neither amongst the ancients
 “ nor the moderns was ever considered as
 “ a part of the body politic—it is not the
 “ Third Estate—it is abandoned to the rest-
 “ lessness of despair, as Nobility is aban-
 “ doned to the restlessness of ambition.”

Who talks most kindly of the poor, the
 religious English Aristocratic, or the irreligi-
 gious French Democratic ? The fact is, at
 that period the Democrats hoped to have
 carried their point against Nobility by the
 King's assistance, without the intervention
 of the populace ; and therefore treated the
 latter with contempt.

NOTE

NOTE 4.

SINCE the first part of this work was compiled, M. Necker has published an Account of his Conduct during his Two Administrations; a book which ought certainly to be read by all who would judge impartially of the French Revolution, although they will not find in it all the information that might have been expected. Whether he fully justifies himself from the charges of indecision and want of foresight, must be left to judges better acquainted with his real situation and character than Englishmen can pretend to be.

It is necessary, however, to mention two of his opinions, as they refer to certain passages in this book. He declares himself averse either to the distinction of three Orders meeting in three separate chambers, or to the system of one all-powerful Assembly, and inclining (like Mounier) to the balance of three powers, a King, a Senate, and a House of Commons. Amongst the other

misfortunes of France, perhaps it was none of the least that Mounier and his Party appear to have never forgiven Necker his preference of a *suspensive* to an *absolute* Veto. Necker seems to have intended that the King should have had a *suspensive Veto* over the present Assembly, strong enough at least to have forced them to reconsider those violent decrees, which, if one may judge by the late ill-judged attempt of the King's escape, and by the equally ill-judged Letter of M. Bouillé to the National Assembly, seem literally to have driven the Royalists and the Gentry into madness. Necker hints, that the tumults of the 5th and 6th of October, 1789, were excited for the purpose of deterring the King from claiming the right of suspending a decree; and he seems to approve and avow that answer of the King, which, on the morning of the 5th, excited such a flame in the National Assembly.

Necker's celebrated work, his Researches on the Finances, should also be consulted by impartial judges, especially the second volume. It will perhaps appear, that the exemptions from taxes of the Nobles and
Clergy

Clergy were not so very considerable as their antagonists have supposed.

NOTE 5.

THE illiberality of the French politicians towards all governments in which there is any mixture of Aristocracy, has already been mentioned on the occasion of their decree for abolishing Nobility. A fresh proof of illiberality has lately been given, which I do not recollect to have seen in our public prints.

The National Assembly had some time ago voted, that its Members should wear mourning for a few days in honour of Dr. Franklin's memory. On the 2d of last March, the American Congress decreed, that the President of the United States should write a letter of thanks to the National Assembly.

This letter, signed by Henry Jefferson, their foreign secretary, contained general expres-

expressions of friendship, but no particular compliment to their legislation. The Assembly of Pennsylvania (almost the only American State which resembles the French in having no senate) wrote at the same time a much longer and more florid epistle of thanks, in which, amongst other compliments, it praised them for abolishing all “ odious and arrogant distinctions between
“ man and man.”

On the 6th of last June, the National Assembly voted, that they were not obliged to answer the Letter of the Congress, written through the medium of a secretary, and approved of a pompous answer to the States of Pennsylvania, written by their President, M. d’Auchy, in the name of the Assembly, in which is found the following remarkable paragraph: “ We establish, under the con-
“ stitutional authority of a King, the same
“ liberty which she (Pennsylvania) has
“ established under republican forms;—
“ *A liberty very different from that which,*
“ *composed of charters and privileges, alters,*
“ *by hereditary distinctions, Civil Equality,*
“ *that unalienable patrimony of men united in*
“ *society,*

“ *society, which, balancing the eternal sove-*
 “ *reignty of the people by the prerogatives of*
 “ *birth and the rights of chance, yet shews on*
 “ *the bold features of a regenerated nation*
 “ *the scars of its ancient slavery.*”

There needs no far-fetched innuendo to interpret these *scars of ancient slavery* to be *Magna Charta* and the *House of Lords*. Such an *ingenious metaphor* might have been justifiable in a pamphleteer who combated Mr. Burke; but for the *majesty of one people* writing to the *majesty of another*, thus to quit its straight path in order to insult a *third nation*, I leave my readers to judge of what epithet it deserves!

In this pen and ink war, the National Assembly may proceed without fear of opposition; for though I belong to neither *Upper* nor *Lower House*, I can venture to assure our Gallic neighbours, that the *Chancellor* or the *Speaker* will never write a criticism on the French Constitution in the name of the *Parliament of Great Britain*.

DECLA-

DECLARATION DU ROI,

Concernant la présente tenue des Etats-Généraux, lue à la séance royale du 23 Juin 1789.

LE Roi veut que l'ancienne distinction des trois Ordres de l'Etat soit conservée en son entier, comme essentiellement liée à la Constitution de son royaume ; que les Députés librement élus par chacun des trois Ordres, formant trois chambres, délibérant par ordre, et pouvant, avec l'approbation du Souverain, convenir de délibérer en commun, puissent seuls être considérés comme formant les corps des Représentans de la nation. En conséquence, le Roi a déclaré nulles les délibérations prises par les Députés de l'ordre du Tiers Etats, le 17 de ce mois,

ainsi

ainsi que celles qui auroient pu s'ensuivre, comme illégales et inconstitutionnelles.

Sa Majesté déclare valides tous les pouvoirs vérifiés ou à vérifier dans chaque chambre, sur lesquels il ne s'est point élevé ou ne s'élèvera point de contestation ; ordonne sa Majesté qu'il en sera donné communication respectivement entre les Ordres.

Quant aux pouvoirs qui pourroient être contestés dans chaque ordre, et sur lesquels les parties intéressées se pourvoiroient, il y sera statué pour la présente tenue des Etats-Généraux seulement, ainsi qu'il sera ci-après ordonné.

Le Roi casse et annule, comme anti-constitutionnelles, contraires aux lettres de convocation et opposées à l'intérêt de l'état, les restrictions de pouvoirs, qui, en gênant la liberté des Députés aux Etats-Généraux, les empêcheroient d'adopter les formes de délibération prises séparément par ordre ou en commun, par le vœu distinct des trois Ordres.

Si,

Si, contre l'intention du Roi, quelques-uns des Députés avoient fait le serment téméraire de ne point s'écarter d'une forme de délibération quelconque, sa Majesté laisse à leur conscience de considérer si les dispositions qu'elle va régler, s'écarterent, de la lettre ou de l'esprit de l'engagement qu'ils auront pris.

Le Roi permet au Députés qui se croiront gênés par leurs mandats, de demander à leurs commettans un nouveau pouvoir ; mais sa Majesté leur enjoint de rester, en attendant, aux Etats-Généraux, pour assister à toutes les délibérations sur les affaires pressantes de l'état, et y donner un avis consultatif.

Sa Majesté déclare que dans les tenues suivantes d'Etats-Généraux, elle ne souffrira pas que les cahiers ou les mandats puissent être jamais considérés comme impératifs ; ils ne doivent être que de simples instructions confiées à la conscience et à la libre opinion des Députés dont on aura fait choix.

Sa Majesté ayant exhorté, pour le salut de l'état, les trois Ordres à se réunir pendant
cette

cette tenue d'états seulement, pour délibérer en commun sur les affaires d'une utilité générale, veut faire connoître ses intentions sur la manière dont il pourra y être procédé.

Seront nommément exceptées des affaires qui pourront être traitées en commun, celles qui regardent les droits antiques et constitutionnels des trois Ordres, la forme de constitution à donner aux prochains Etats-Généraux, les propriétés féodales et seigneuriales, les droits utiles et les prérogatives honorifiques des deux premiers Ordres.

Le consentement particulier du Clergé fera nécessaire pour toutes les dispositions qui pourroient intéresser la religion, la discipline ecclésiastique, le régime des ordres et corps séculiers et réguliers.

Les délibérations à prendre par les trois Ordres réunis, sur les pouvoirs contestés, et sur lesquels les parties intéressées se pourvoiroient aux Etats-Généraux, seront prises à la pluralité des suffrages ; mais si les deux
tiers

tiers des voix, dans l'un des trois Ordres, réclamoient contre la délibération de l'Assemblée, l'affaire sera rapportée au Roi, pour y être définitivement statué par sa Majesté.

Si dans la vue de faciliter la réunion des trois Ordres, ils désiroient que les délibérations qu'ils auront à prendre en commun, passassent seulement à la pluralité des deux tiers des voix, sa Majesté est disposée à autoriser cette forme.

Les affaires qui auront été décidées dans les Assemblées des trois Ordres réunis, seront remises le lendemain en délibération, si cent membres de l'Assemblée se réunissent pour en faire la demande.

Le Roi désire que, dans cette circonstance, pour ramener les esprit à la conciliation, les trois Chambres commencent à nommer séparément une commission composée du nombre de Députés qu'elle jugeront convenable, pour préparer la forme et la distribution des bureaux de conférence, qui devront traiter les différentes affaires.

L'Assemblée Générale des Deputés de trois Ordres fera présidée par les présidens choisis par chacun des Ordres, et selon leur rang ordinaire.

Le bon ordre, la décence et la liberté même des souffrages, exigent que sa Majesté defende, comme elle le fait expressément, qu'aucune personne, autre que les membres des trois Ordres composant les Etats-Généraux, puissent assister à leur deliberations, soit qu'ils les prennent en commun ou séparément.

DECLARATION DES INTENTIONS DU ROI.

AUCUN nouvel impôt ne sera établi, aucun ancien ne sera prorogé au-delà du terme fixé par les loix, sans le consentement des Représentans de la nation,

Les impositions nouvelles qui seront établies, ou les anciennes qui seront prorogées, ne le seront que pour l'intervalle qui devra

A a

s'écouler

s'écouler jusqu'à l'époque de la tenue suivante des Etats-Généraux.

Les emprunts pouvant devenir l'occasion nécessaire d'un accroissement d'impôts, aucun n'aura lieu sans le consentement des Etats-Généraux, sous la condition toutefois, qu'en cas de guerre, ou d'autre danger national, le souverain aura la faculté d'emprunter, sans délai, jusqu'à la concurrence d'une somme de *cent millions* ; car l'intention formelle du Roi est de ne jamais mettre le salut de son empire dans la dépendance de personne.

Les Etats-Généraux examineront avec soin la situation des finances, et ils demanderont tous les renseignemens propres à les éclairer parfaitement.

Le tableau des revenus des dépenses sera rendu public chaque année, dans une forme proposée par les Etats-Généraux, et approuvée par sa Majesté.

Les sommes attribuées à chaque département seront déterminées d'une manière fixe
et

et invariable, et le Roi soumet, à cette règle générale, les fonds mêmes qui sont destinés à l'entretien de sa maison.

Le Roi veut que, pour assurer cette fixité des diverses dépenses l'état, il lui soit indiqué par les Etats-Généraux les dispositions propres à remplir ce but, et sa Majesté les adoptera, si elles s'accordent avec la dignité royale et la célérité indispensable du service public.

Les représentans d'une nation fidelle aux loix de l'honneur et de la probité, ne donneront aucune atteinte à la foi public, et le Roi attend d'eux que la confiance des créanciers de l'état soit assurée et consolidée de la manière la plus authentique.

Lorsque les dispositions formelles annoncées par le Clergé et la Noblesse, de renoncer à leurs privilèges pécuniaires, auront été réalisées par leurs deliberations, l'intention du Roi est de les sanctionner, et qu'il n'existe plus dans le paiement des contributions pécuniaires, aucune espèce de privileges ou de distinctions.

Le Roi veut que, pour consacrer une disposition si importante, le nom de *taille* soit aboli dans son royaume, et qu'on réunisse cet impôt, soit aux vingtièmes, soit à toute autre imposition territoriale, ou qu'il soit enfin remplacé de quelque manière, mais toujours d'après des proportions justes, égales, et sans distinction d'état, de rang et de naissance.

Le Roi veut que le droit de franc-fief soit aboli du moment où les revenus et les dépenses fixes de l'état auront été mis dans une exacte balance.

Toutes les propriétés, sans exception, seront constamment respectées, et sa Majesté comprend expressément, sous le nom de propriétés, les *dîmes, cens, rentes, droits et devoirs féodaux et seigneuriaux*, et généralement tous les droits et prérogatives utiles ou honorifiques, attachés aux terres et au fiefs, ou appartenans aux personnes.

Les deux premiers Ordres de l'état continueront à jouir de l'exemption des charges personnelles : mais le Roi approuvera que les Etats-Généraux s'occupent des
moyens

moyens de convertir ces fortes de charges en contributions pécuniaires, et qu'alors tous les Ordres de l'état y soient affujettis également.

L'intention de sa Majesté est de déterminer, d'après l'avis des Etats-Généraux, quels seront les emplois et les charges qui conserveront à l'avenir le privilège de donner et de transmettre Noblesse. Sa Majesté néanmoins, selon le droit inhérent à sa couronne, accordera des lettres de Noblesse à ceux des ces sujets qui, par des services rendus au Roi et à l'état, se feroient montrés dignes de cette récompense.

Le Roi, désirant assurer la liberté personnelle de tous les citoyens d'une manière solide et durable, invite les Etats-Généraux à chercher et à lui proposer les moyens les plus convenables de concilier l'abolition des ordres connus sous le nom de *lettres de cachet*, avec le maintien de la sûreté publique et avec les précautions nécessaires, soit pour ménager, dans certains cas, l'honneur des familles, soit pour réprimer avec célérité les commencemens de sédition, soit pour garantir

l'état des effets d'une intelligence criminelle avec les puissances étrangères.

Les États-Généraux examineront & feront connoître à sa Majesté le moyen le plus convenable de concilier la liberté de la presse, avec le respect dû à la religion, aux mœurs & à l'honneur des citoyens.

Il sera établi, dans les diverses provinces ou généralités du royaume, des états-provinciaux composés de deux dixièmes de membres du clergé, dont une partie sera nécessairement choisie dans l'ordre épiscopal, de trois dixièmes de membres de la noblesse, & de cinq dixèmes de membres du tiers-état.

Les membres de ces états-provinciaux seront librement élus par les ordres respectifs, & une mesure quelconque de propriété sera nécessaire pour être électeur ou éligible.

Les Députés à ces états-provinciaux délibéreront en commun sur toutes les affaires, suivant l'usage observé dans les assemblées provinciales que ces états remplaceront.

Une commission intermédiaire, choisie par ces états, administrera les affaires de la province, pendant l'intervalle d'une tenue à l'autre, & ces commissions intermédiaires, devant seules responsables de leur gestion, auront pour délégués des personnes choisis uniquement par elles, ou par les états-provinciaux.

Les Etats-Généraux proposeront au Roi leurs vues pour toutes les autres parties de l'organisation intérieure des états-provinciaux, & pour le choix des formes applicables à l'élection des membres de cette Assemblée.

Indépendamment des objets d'administration dont les assemblées provinciales sont chargées, le Roi confiera aux états-provinciaux l'administration des hôpitaux, des prisons, des dépôts de mendicité, des enfans-trouvés, l'inspection des dépenses des villes, la surveillance sur l'entretien des forêts, sur la garde & la vente des bois, & sur d'autres objets qui pourroient être administrés plus utilement par les provinces.

Les contestations survenues dans les provinces où il existe d'anciens états, & les réclamations élevées contre la constitution de ces assemblées, devront fixer l'attention des Etats-Généraux, & ils feront connoître à sa Majesté les dispositions de justice & de sagesse qu'il est convenable d'adopter, pour établir un ordre fixé dans l'administration de ces mêmes provinces.

Le Roi invite les Etats-Généraux à s'occuper de la recherche des moyens propres à tirer le parti le plus avantageux des domaines qui sont dans ses mains, & de lui proposer également leurs vues sur ce qu'il peut y avoir de plus convenable à faire relativement aux domaines engagés.

Les Etats-Généraux s'occuperont du projet conçu depuis long-temps par sa Majesté, de porter les douanes aux frontières du royaume, afin que la plus parfaite liberté règne dans la circulation intérieure des marchandises nationales ou étrangères.

Sa Majesté désire que les fâcheux effets de l'impôt sur le sel & l'importance de ce
revenu,

revenu, soient discutés soigneusement, & que dans toutes les suppositions, on propose, au moins, des moyens d'en adoucir la perception.

Sa Majesté veut aussi qu'on examine attentivement les inconvéniens des droits d'aides & des autres impôts, mais sans perdre de vue la nécessité absolue d'affurer une exacte balance entre les revenus & les dépenses de l'état.

Selon le vœu que le Roi a manifesté par sa déclaration du 23 Septembre dernier, sa Majesté examinera, avec une sérieuse attention, les projets qui lui seront présentés relativement à l'administration de la justice, & aux moyens de perfectionner les loix civiles & criminelles.

Le Roi veut que les loix qu'il aura fait promulguer pendant la tenue & d'après l'avis ou selon le vœu des Etats-Généraux, n'éprouvent pour leur enregistrement aucun retardement, ni aucun obstacle dans toute l'étendue de son royaume.

Sa Majesté veut que l'usage de la corvée, pour la confection & l'entretien des chemins, soit entièrement & pour toujours aboli dans son royaume.

Le Roi désire que l'abolition du droit de mainmorte, dont sa Majesté a donné l'exemple dans ses domaines, soit étendue à toute la France, & qu'il lui soit proposé les moyens de pourvoir à l'indemnité qui pourroit être due aux seigneurs en possession de ce droit.

Sa Majesté fera connoître incessamment aux Etats-Généraux les réglemens dont elle s'occupe pour restreindre les capitaineries, & donner encore dans cette partie, qui tient de plus près à ses jouissances personnelles, un nouveau témoignage de son amour pour ses peuples.

Le Roi invite les Etats-Généraux à considérer le tirage de la milice sous tous ses rapports, & à s'occuper des moyens de concilier ce qui est dû à la défense de l'état, avec les adoucissmens que sa Majesté désire pouvoir procurer à ses sujets.

Le Roi veut que toutes les dispositions d'ordre public & de bienfaisance envers ses peuples, que sa Majesté aura sanctionnées par son autorité, pendant la présente tenue des Etats-Généraux, celles entr'autres relatives à la liberté personnelle, à l'égalité des contributions, à l'établissement des états-provinciaux, ne puissent jamais être changées sans le consentement des trois Ordres pris séparément. Sa Majesté les place à l'avance au rang des propriétés nationales, qu'elle veut mettre, comme toutes les autres propriétés, sous la garde la plus assurée.

Sa Majesté, après avoir appelé les Etats-Généraux à s'occuper, de concert avec elle, des grands objets d'utilité publique & de tout ce qui peut contribuer au bonheur de son peuple, déclare, de la manière la plus expresse, qu'elle veut conserver en son entier & sans la moindre atteinte, l'institution de l'armée, ainsi que toute autorité, police & pouvoir sur le militaire, tels que les Monarques François en ont constamment joui.

NOTE 6.

AMIDST the revolutions of Empires, it is still the duty of an historian to vindicate the injured innocence of an obscure individual. M. de Mesmay, mentioned as being accused of blowing up his vassals and tenants with gunpowder, has been acquitted of this dreadful accusation by the tribunal established at Vesoul; and on the 4th of June, the Assembly consented to have his acquittal inserted into the minutes of the day.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

PART THE SECOND.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

AS the National Assembly dissolved itself in a much shorter period, and a much more tranquil manner than was probable in the month of July last, I have been induced to continue my narration as far as that momentous event which closed the first period of this amazing revolution, and to add a few remarks upon its probable consequences to the rest of Europe; always premising, that I am sensible of the imperfection of human foresight, and freely abandon my predictions to be contradicted or verified by time, the only infallible test of prophecy.

The

The Reader will easily see that this Work was written before the change of scene, occasioned by the flight of the King, and Royal Family of France from Paris, and their subsequent capture,

This event does not alter my sentiments relative to the conduct of the National Assembly and the Parisians. They had *stretch- ed the pliant bow till it broke*; they had heaped affronts on a weak and yielding nature, till that very temper made the King liable to take desperate councils.

Full of suspicions, which they dared not own, the Assembly had not ceased, ever since the popular resolution which they took of calling a new Assembly for the month of August, to diminish the regal prerogative; first, in the mode of constituting the Assembly, as it was, in a manner, to convoke it- self without even the compliment of using the King's name; next, in taking from the King the power of dissolving the Assembly and calling a new one, and, perhaps, most of all, in fact, though least in appearance,

by

by the oath they intended to impose on each new member, neither to propose nor to vote for any motion contrary to the present Constitution.

They next proceeded to vote a new code of penal law, and at first they seemed to listen to some philosophical systems, which denied the right of a society to take away the lives of any of its members. But this fit of systematic humanity did not last long, and they soon agreed to punish with death, high treason and murder alone, reserving robbery and other petty crimes to be punished with imprisonment and labor; a system, which, if practicable, is in the abstract worthy of commendation. When they came to settle the nature of *leze nation*, or high treason against the Constitution, they shewed that the fear of shedding human blood did not influence them as much as might have been supposed from their first debates. They made a very complicated and bloody code of treason, even extending so far as to make it death for a Member of the Assembly to receive a bribe. All wise and humane legislators have endeavoured, on the contrary, to

render the code of treason against the State as simple and as narrow as possible, because there are no laws so liable to be converted into the instruments of faction and cruelty. And, to shew still more plainly the republican spirit that animated them, on the 2d of June, they decreed that the King should have no power to pardon; not only taking from him the right of granting a *free pardon*, which might be defended, but taking from him the power of commuting death into imprisonment, or of shortening the duration of imprisonment, or of shewing the least indulgence to a criminal. As the Count of Artois and the Prince of Condé were at that time suspected of an intended invasion of France, it was obvious that the King should suppose that he might be obliged to see his cousin and his own brother put to death before his eyes, without having the means to save them.

New tumults and divisions in various regiments occupied their attention about the middle of June, and they felt, involuntarily, the force of Mr. Burke's remarks, however controverted by theorists, relative to the
danger

danger of beginning a Revolution by debauching the soldiers from their officers. The spirit of dislike to the new Constitution existed amongst the officers; the spirit of anarchy existed amongst the common men; and the Assembly equally feared both, though from different reasons. It was even proposed to break at once the whole army, and re-create it immediately upon a new model. This, it seems, had been Mirabeau's scheme, but it was thought too violent. They contented themselves with decreeing a new oath to be taken by the officers, on their *honor*, thus affording a fresh proof of the weakness of their famous Confederation Oath of July 1790.

Thus, provoked by the violence of some measures, and emboldened by the embarrassment discoverable in others, the King took the desperate resolution of quitting his capital with all his family, and executed it, notwithstanding a thousand watchful eyes, on the night, between Monday the 20th and Tuesday the 21st of June. But misfortune still pursued his ill-concerted plans, and he was stopped and detained at Varennes.

The Comte and Comtesse de Provence were more fortunate than the King, and escaped unmolested into the territories of Flanders.

The National Assembly acted with more dignity and moderation on the news of the King's flight, than at any other period of their eventful history. Mirabeau was dead, that turbulent Artisan of Discord, so unnecessarily lamented, and so shamefully deified. Fayette had possessed uncontrolled dominion over the National Guard ever since the month of April, when he with equal firmness and ability broke a mutinous battalion in a manner the best calculated* to awaken that sense of military honour which preceding events had almost obliterated from the minds of French soldiers. Therefore it was no longer an easy task to revive the famous *Lanterne*, or to fill the benches of the National Assembly with thieves and street-walkers. The mob,

* Fayette on that occasion imitated the *pathos* of Cromwell, (though with better intentions) and absolutely shed tears at being obliged by his duty to inflict a punishment so grievous to the sensibility of Frenchmen.

however,

however, made some bold attempts to resume that licentiousness which heretofore had been not only tolerated but approved. They threatened the lives of M. Montmorin and the other Ministers of State, but were soon disarmed by the vigilance of the National Guard, who permitted them, however, to vent their fury upon inanimate objects, by tearing down the royal arms, and destroying even to the sign posts on which the King or Queen's name appeared.

The Assembly on this emergence assumed the executive as well as the legislative power, prudently declared that they had no suspicion of the Ministers, and ordered them to continue the business of their respective offices in the name of the National Assembly. All internal dissensions between the Patriots appeared to cease, and the Club of Seventeen Hundred Eighty-nine sent a deputation in form to reconcile itself with the rival Club of the Jacobins.

The news of the King's flight was received in the Provinces with equal horror, and equal perseverance in their former sentiments ;

timents; but the laws of humanity were not so well observed as at Paris. Some fatal catastrophes happened, and one in particular, the murder of M. Guillin Dumontet, an old officer in the neighbourhood of Lyons, made some noise, and afterwards occasioned debates in the National Assembly. The suspected Aristocrats were too much terrified by the fury of the people to make any attempt in the King's favour; Municipalities and Departments, as fast as the news spread abroad, vied with each other in sending up protestations of fidelity; and men's minds appeared in general so heated against Monarchy, that the zealous Republicans looked more disappointed than joyful when they heard that the King had not been suffered to leave the kingdom, but was detained at Varennes.

The Assembly, however, had not passed such votes as made a reconciliation impossible, and this unexpected news confirmed the majority in the resolution of taking a middle course, and giving themselves time to reflect before they entered on irrevocable measures. They named Commissioners to attend

attend the King and secure the persons of the Royal Family: it soon appeared that the King was not very unwilling to return, and felt none of those emotions which would have prompted a hero to tell his goalers— I am in your power, kill me if you dare— but I have openly declared my disapprobation of your Laws,* and never will retract it.

The King, the Queen, and the Dauphin were brought back to Paris on the 25th of June, accompanied with some of their servants and Life Guards who had assisted their escape, and were treated as criminals and as prisoners of State. Thousands of people were spectators of this melancholy procession, and the sullen silence which they observed, and the unanimous inflexibility with which they denied their unhappy Monarch the ordinary compliment of pulling off their hats, had somewhat much more awful and affecting than the savage scene of the 6th of October. That insulting triumph was the offspring of cruelty

* See, the Letter which the King left behind him, and the objections which it contains.

and debauchery ; but this appeared the result of heart-felt antipathy arising from conviction. No loud reproaches were permitted in the King's hearing, but, out of his presence, he was in every street of Paris openly called *Louis le Faux, le Parjure, le Cochon*, (alluding to some idle popular tales of his gluttony). He and the Queen were put under close confinement in the Tuilleries ; all Europe stood in awful suspense at their uncertain fate, and began to apprehend a renewal of that sanguinary scene which England exhibited in 1649.*

The Assembly persisted for some time in their equivocal conduct ; they refused to take any notice of hand-bills which invited people to demand the trial of their King ; they committed the partners of his flight to the prisons of the Abbaye St. Germain ; they sent Commissioners to interrogate the King and the Queen ; but they shewed the first symptoms of indulgence by declining the

* The Address from the Patriotic Club of Montpellier said expressly : " Nous laissons aux Juges la Hache de la vengeance, nous nous bornons à demander que le François n'ait plus d'autre Roi que Soi-même."

literal humiliating word *interrogation*, and availing themselves of a formality in the old French law, which allowed Judges in particular cases to desire the King and Queen to make their declarations. The King availed himself of the same pretence, to answer without appearing to regard his dignity as injured. His answer in its general substance imported, that the continual insults offered him at Paris, and for which he could obtain no redress, had made him apprehend that his own life and the lives of his family were in danger; that he did not mean to leave the kingdom, but to retire to the fortress of Montmedy, where he could more truly learn the real dispositions of his subjects, than in the tumultuous City of Paris; that he was now convinced that the* whole Kingdom was sincerely attached to the New Constitution, of which he had indeed animadverted upon particular articles, but could not decide fairly of its merits till the whole had been laid before him in one view. This answer sufficiently shewed his disposition to submit, and to concur in any

* See Note I.

evasion that should appear to reconcile his former discontent with his present approbation.

M. de Bouilli, who had waited for the King's arrival in the neighbourhood of Montmedy, fled to Luxembourg on the first news of his capture. From thence he sent a letter to the National Assembly, couched in the most furious terms of invective, in which he declared that the King had long refused his offers of a safe retreat, and was not persuaded till after the insults of the Passion Week; that he himself, alone and unconnected * with other parties, had formed the plan for his Sovereign's liberty, and ended with denouncing against them the revenge of all Europe, if they dared to proceed farther in their treason. The Assembly read this invective, and treated it with silent contempt.

Affairs now came nearer a crisis by the appointment of a Committee to draw up a Report on the nature of the King's flight.

* See Note 2.

And now a violent dissention, founded on difference of principle as well as interest, appeared in the old Democratic Party. It had long been suspected, and often kept under from the fear of common danger, but flamed out with redoubled fury at this important moment, and produced a mighty change in the situation of affairs.

A very considerable party headed by M. M. Thouret, Chapelier, Barnave, Rabaud de St. Etienne, Lameth, Andre, and the Abbe Sieyes, thought it necessary to retain the semblance of an inviolable Monarch as a phantom to awe turbulent spirits, whilst another set headed by M. M. Pethion, Roberespierre, Gregoire, and the leaders who then directed the Club of the Jacobins, were genuine Republicans, who delighted in the *cashiering of Kings*, and regarded this as a fair opportunity to establish the precedent; neither were they without some flattering hopes of abolishing Monarchy for ever. Mr. Paine associated with these leaders, in hopes that his principles of endless innovation would succeed better in France than in England; a periodical paper, called *Le*
Repub-

Republicain, was set on foot by him and M. Brissot de Warville, whilst the inferior Demagogues of the Club des Cordeliers* went beyond them all in circulating handbills, which demanded vengeance against the King, and making motions in their own assemblies to take into consideration the means by which France might constitute itself a Republic. These men were highly disappointed and exasperated when the Committee produced its Report, declaring that the King's flight was a dangerous error, but not a crime; that his advisers might be punished, but that his own person was inviolable, and that deposition was only appointed by the law in the case of a king's desertion of his kingdom and refusing to return when summoned by the Assembly.†

M. Barnave and several other members supported this opinion in studied and elo-

* Some of the defeated Orleans party were suspected to lurk in that Club.

† Hence it appears that they do not mean to depose a King for travelling beyond the prescribed limits, though the letter of their first law seemed to imply it.

quent speeches, displaying the perils that attended either a change of Government, or the establishment of a minor King, and the Assembly sanctioned their Report by a large majority.

The contest was now brought to a decisive issue between the two parties, the revolving month of July had brought back the prospect of another Revolution, and the situation of the contending factions was nearly the same at both these momentous periods. As the party of the Royal Democrats had risen on the ruins of those first assertors of legal Government, the Parliamentary party, and of the party who demanded a British Constitution; even so the unmixed Democrats were preparing to rise upon their ruins, and overturn with contempt the steps by which they had ascended to power. The Palais Royal again resounded with inflammatory motions. Barnave was reproached with conferring with the Ministers in the same manner Mounier had been reproached in the summer of 1789; lists were printed of the members who voted for the Report, with a preface, which accused

cused them of receiving bribes from the Civil List. Such artifices had already been used at the beginning of the Revolution, and complained of by Mounier as gross invasions of the freedom of suffrage. Barnave had probably looked on them with philosophic indifference when they served to ruin the popularity of his colleague,* and as probably saw their guilt in its blackest hue when now they exposed *himself* to be torn in pieces. But there was one essential difference, not in the justice of the cause, but in its probability of success: the Assembly could depend upon its General, and the General could depend on the fidelity of his army.

The Assembly had taken the alarm as early as Friday, July the 15th, and orders had been given to hold the National Guards in readiness for action. But the commotion did not break out till Sunday the 17th. A number of people, both men and women, assembled in the Champ de Mars, at the

* Barnave and Mounier were fellow members from Dauphiny.

altar of the Federation, to sign a petition; or rather a remonstrance to the Assembly, couched in the most violent terms, and protesting against the future acknowledgement of Lewis as their King. It is added, that M. Roberſpierre's buſt, crowned with laurels, was ready to be carried about in the ſame manner and for the ſame purpoſes as Necker's buſt was carried on the 12th of July, 1789. Two insignificant idle fellows, an invalid and a hair-dreſſer, were led by curioſity to conceal themſelves under the ſteps of the altar. They were diſcovered by the mob, conſidered in the light of traiteroſus ſpies, *gibbet law* once more took place, and the poor wretches were inſtantly hanged.* The news was preſently carried to the Municipality, who were ſitting in expectation of ſome important event. Not a moment was now to be loſt, the hour was at hand which muſt decide whether the National Aſſembly were to triumph over their new enemies, or be

* This is the laſt patriotic murder that we have heard of in France. The events that followed have perhaps given a uſeful leſſon to the mob.

driven from their seats with obloquy like the unfortunate Chamber of Nobles. The Municipality ordered martial law to be proclaimed, and the red flag to be hung out; M. Bailli himself marched with Fayette and the National Guard to the Champ de Mars (which was now indeed become a field of real battle)* proclamation was made for all bystanders to disperse; the mob refused, threw stones, and wounded some of the National Guard: the soldiers were ordered to fire with powder, and as that feint did not succeed, a second discharge was ordered with ball. The terrified populace now gave way, and were driven in heaps to the bottom of the amphitheatre; it is owned that ten or twelve were slain in the confusion, and probably the number was still greater; they fled trampling over one another out of every gate of the inclosure, and La Fayette remained master of the field. So ended for the present the pretensions of the French people to cashier their rulers for misconduct, as such pretensions always end, in a fair trial of military prowess.

* It had formerly been the exercising ground of the Ecole Militaire.

Next day the Municipality made a report to the Assembly of this affair, which they called "*un malheureux événement*," an unfortunate event. The Assembly bestowed its approbation upon their whole conduct, and thanked the National Guard. Two years before the Prince de Lambesc had been called an assassin for wounding a riotous Parisian; La Fayette was now called a patriot for killing at least ten Parisians on a similar provocation.

The unmixed Republicans were appalled at this disappointment, and, like similar factions in similar situations, began to assume the veil of moderation. Messrs. Pethion, Roberspierre, Gregoire, declared, that although they disapproved the Report of the Committee, yet as the Assembly had confirmed it, they now considered it as a law, and would support it with their lives. These protestations succeeded with some of them, but it is said that M. Roberspierre never regained the confidence of the Assembly.

C c The

The victorious party pursued its triumph, and ventured on measures unheard-of since the celebrated 14th of July. They turned a number of ragged orators out of that sacred asylum of sedition, the Palais Royal Garden, they voted decrees for the punishment of those who should incite the people to murder, or even to resist law and magistracy by force of arms, and they ordered the Municipality to inquire into the causes and authors of the sedition in the Champ de Mars. Many suspected persons were taken up, both natives and foreigners: reports were carefully spread amongst the people that these pretended Republicans were tools of the Aristocrats, who intended by their means to render the French nation odious, and give to foreign sovereigns a pretence to interfere; neither was the old fiction neglected, that England maliciously encouraged these foes to peace and order, and that Prussia (as England's ally) had several emissaries in pay.* The famous Club of the Jacobins was rent by an open schism, Barnave, Lameth, and other emi-

* See the Leyden Gazettes about that time.

nent leaders in the Assembly, separated from a Club which was no longer under their management, and formed a new one for themselves and friends, which took the name of *Club des Feuillans*. Each party endeavoured to win to its cause the different societies, *affiliés* or admitted into the brotherhood of the Jacobins, under the name of *Amis de la Constitution*. The greater part remained faithful to the ancient Club of the Jacobins, which is thus still left in possession of too overbearing an influence.*

The Royal Democrats, (new names must be adopted to distinguish new opinions,) felt themselves a little more indulgent towards Monarchy, since the power of their rivals had forced them to run the danger of another bloody Revolution, and of new *Lanternes* in its defence. They took ad-

* Most of the Parisian Clubs have met in empty convents, from whence the monks had been expelled, and have from thence assumed their names. The Club of 1789, is an exception: it was founded under Mirabeau's auspices, who afterwards left it in discontent, and it appears since to have been headed by M. André.

vantage of the door which the King had opened to them, and shewed themselves willing to review the Constitution, and mitigate some of the most offensive decrees ; but the fear of their enemies' invectives restrained them from making essential alterations.

The Committee of Constitution was ordered to separate the Constitutional Decrees from those regulations which subsequent Assemblies might revoke, in order to lay the Constitutional Code under the eyes of the King at one view, and demand his acceptance. M. Thouret presided over this great work, a man who at first seemed attached to Mounier's party, who had (with many other terrified members) joined the Democrats after the *glorious triumph* of the 6th of October, but who had never gone into their most violent excesses. The end of July and the whole month of August passed away in the debates which necessarily attended the final adjustment of so important a business.

The Constitutional Code is now printed at full length, and translated into English, so that every man is at liberty to make his own observations on its merits or its defects, and experience must be the only final umpire between its admirers and its detractors. I shall only make a few remarks on the alterations which the Committee either carried or lost, and observe certain articles which do not well accord with the unlimited popular principles laid down in the Declaration of Rights.

The King is called in one article “*Re-prensant Hereditaire de la Nation* ;” Pethion, Roberspierre, and their party opposed this honourable epithet with all their might, and wanted to substitute the odd and degrading title of “*Premier Fonctionnaire Public* ;” but the question was carried against them.

The Committee had become sensible of the absurdity (mentioned in the first part of this work) of reserving no particular distinction for a Family to whose blood the Throne is exclusively reserved. It was,

therefore, proposed to revive the title of *Prince* for the Royal Family only. This met with some opposition, and was called an artful attempt to bring back the detested feudal titles. However, as they could not at once invent a title entirely new, they tolerated that of *Prince* in a singular manner. The titles of Provence, Artois, Condé, were prohibited, and every one of the Royal Family was ordered to sign his Christian name, (without any name derived from family or estate) and after his name, Louis, Philippe, &c. to add the words "*Prince François.*" The title of Dauphin was abolished, and that of Prince Royal substituted in its stead.

Soon after the removal of the Assembly to Paris in October 1789, it had been decreed that none should be admitted to the Primary Assemblies (under the name of Active Citizens) but such as paid a direct* annual contribution equal to the value of three days labour. A contribution somewhat higher

* Direct taxes are those paid immediately to the revenue officers employed by Government, indirect taxes are those laid on articles of consumption.

was required for an elector, and the direct contribution of *a mark of five* was required for a representative. The present Committee in their revival of these important decrees succeeded in persuading the House to increase the qualification of an elector, but, to gratify the Republicans, were obliged to give up entirely the system of requiring any other qualification for representatives than the very small one required for Active Citizens.*

Thus they have voluntarily run the hazard of throwing the whole power of legislation and of government into the hands of the poorer and meaner sort of citizens. In this article they have contradicted the principles not only of the English but of their favourite American Constitution.†

The point which the Committee seemed most eager to carry, and which their ad-

* I do not presume to have sufficient local knowledge to settle the true value of a French qualification: but am inclined to think that the direct annual tax required from Active Citizens, amounts to something less than three shillings English money.

† At least of the principal American States.

versaries contested most strenuously, was the degree of connection that ought to exist between the Ministry and the Assembly. It was allowed on all sides that Ministers should not have votes in the Legislature, but it was earnestly contended by the Committee, that they should have seats in the House, and should be allowed to speak whenever they had any information to communicate to the Assembly. It was also strongly urged that the King should be enabled to chuse his Ministers amongst the Members of an Assembly immediately on its dissolution, whilst the violent Republicans insisted, that a Member of the Legislature should be incapable of receiving offices from the Crown till four years after the dissolution of the Assembly. On one side it was argued, that too rigid a line of separation drawn between a Ministry and a Legislature, tended to set them at perpetual variance with each other, and inspire the Ministers with a secret wish of counteracting the Assembly; and some ventured to hint, that it was absurd to forbid the agents who must execute the law from previously informing the lawgivers of the difficulties

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that might impede its execution. On the other side the danger of Ministerial influence was continually repeated, the example of England was urged as a country swayed by Ministers; and the names of *Fox* and *Pitt* were introduced in a manner that shewed the *one* to be no more respected* in France than the *other*.

The decrees which terminated this obstinate dispute, partook once more of the nature of a compromise. The heads of the principal departments, Justice, War, &c. were permitted to have a seat in the house, to speak on the business of their own department whenever they pleased, and on other subjects, if the house gave them express permission. The period of incapacity was still allowed to subsist, but it was reduced to the shorter term of *two* years, instead of *four*. M. Thouret and other members of the Committee still remained dissatisfied, and expressed their fears that France would suffer

* If I am not mistaken, one Member said, that England was always doomed to the government of some one artful man, and that *they* would neither have a *Pitt* or a *Fox* to govern them.

greatly

greatly from the want of able Ministers, well informed in the laws which they were to execute. As M. Barnave had insisted zealously on these arguments, he fell under the same suspicion which, on the removal of the Assembly to Paris, had almost overturned Mirabeau's popularity. He was supposed to have made his bargain with the Court, and received a promise to be placed at the head of the Ministry as soon as the Assembly separated.

It may be remarked in general, that the jealousy which each party has shewn of the power and abilities of their principal leaders, and the patient tameness with which they have endured (at least till very lately) the self-assumed authority of Clubs, are two of the most singular and distinguished features of the French Revolution.

Towards the end of August the Assembly entered on their great, their final, and of all others, most important question: What right of altering this Constitution should be recognized in the people at large? After

placing the whole right of sovereignty in the bulk of the people, and applauding the wild ideas of Paine's pamphlet on this particular question, it was difficult for the majority to recede from their former professions, and yet they had evidently a mind to suggest that the present Constitution was unalterable. Many awkward expedients were proposed, (contradictions must always be awkward and liable to ridicule) and after the rejection of at least half a dozen different systems, a decree was passed consisting of many articles, which should be read at full length in the Code itself. It will there appear that the first and second Legislature succeeding the National Assembly, are forbid to propose any alterations in the Code; and after the end of the second Parliament, no alteration can take place until three successive Legislatures have declared that there exists sufficient cause for a revision. The fourth Assembly is then to be augmented with 249 members, and called *Assemblée de Revision*: they shall have no right to alter any articles but such as shall be laid before them by the uniform votes of three preceding Legislatures, and when the Revision

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is finished, the 249 additional members must retire. Not a word is said of Conventions to be called at the pleasure of the people, and to be chosen in a manner entirely different from the common Legislatures. This has been a favourite system of some modern politicians, and a plan of a similar nature had been suggested in the late debates, with the ridiculous preamble of advising that many-headed despot, the People, not to exercise this his unalienable right under a term of thirty years. As well might the Parlement of Paris have advised Lewis XIVth, in his plenitude of power, to stay thirty years before he ordered them to enregister any new taxes.

It is no part of my intention to animadvert upon these restraints imposed by the Assembly on a spirit of innovation, but only to observe, that the defenders of the French Constitution can no longer defend it on Mr. Paine's principles. Their Code of Laws makes a pamphlet of seventy pages, and consists of almost innumerable articles, not one of which (however disliked by the people) can be changed, unless four Parle-

ments, immediately following one another, pronounce its revocation. But what if the people should say, we will have an Assembly of Revision without these tedious formalities, and we will name that Assembly ourselves without the intervention of electors? What umpire could decide that quarrel? No other umpire than that power of the sword, which on the 14th of July, 1789, decided that France should have but one house of Parliament, and on the 17th of July, 1791, decided that France should still be governed by Lewis XVith. Innumerable censures have by the French leaders of party been heaped upon the British Parliament, for usurping the unalienable sovereignty of the people; but these clauses which preclude the people from calling an extraordinary Assembly till three of their ordinary Parlements have given them leave, mark an equal assumption of sovereignty by the ordinary Legislature, though disguised under specious phrases. To this let us add the article which declares that the Nation can only exercise its power by delegation; let us consider the prohibitions laid on the

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Primary and Electoral Assemblies to debate on any subjects whatsoever; the general principle laid down in their debates, that all instructions to members are unconstitutional; the decree which forbids any petition to be presented in the name of a corporate body, but merely in the name of the individuals who actually sign it: let all these circumstances be considered in one view, and it will appear that the National Assembly, after making an open profession of Democracy, were as willing to evade the counterpoising power of the people at large, as any Aristocratical Senate whatsoever. In England, on the other hand, constituents may dictate instructions to representatives in a tone of some authority, though they cannot exact obedience; and every Parliament may repeal any law that it pleases. No part of the Constitution is supposed to be utterly unalterable by the whole Legislature united; but the general system of *three powers* acting under the names of *King, Lords, and Commons*. The danger of rash innovations equally remains as a most important consideration; but it is a consideration

ation left to the prudence, conscience, or interest of every individual legislator.

The declaration of the Rights of Man is inserted into the beginning of the Code as its essential and indispensable preamble. I have already mentioned how much the Clergy complain that the 17th article, respecting property, has been shamefully violated. But let the 6th article also be compared with these articles that relate to the Primary Assemblies. The 6th article says, that *All* Citizens have a right to concur personally, or by their representatives, to the formation of the laws, and that *all* Citizens are equally admissible to dignities, places, and public offices. The second section of the first chapter excludes from voting, *all* who do not pay a direct annual contribution (a small one indeed) to Government; and what seems harder, *all* who are not inscribed in the list of National Guards, and *all* who have not taken the Civic Oath. Thus the meaning of *all Citizens* is to be modified into *all* who have not an invincible dislike to military service, which may easily be the case of many an honest, nay wealthy,
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but sedentary, and therefore indolent manufacturer.* Those sects who, like the Quakers and Mennonites, prohibit their disciples from appealing to oaths or taking up arms, are likewise debarred from those *Rights of Men* which that famous declaration had expressly mentioned as common to *all*. It may hence be inferred, that although legislators ought to keep before their eyes the abstract principles of natural liberty, yet it is dangerous to publish them abroad as a catechism for the common people, since there never yet was, and never will be, a government who is not obliged sometimes to depart from those principles by the particular exigencies of their situation.

A strong push was made by the followers of Pethion and Roberfpierre to get inserted into the Code those decrees which forbid any pardon or any commutation of sentence. But the opposite party prevailed, and they were left amongst those regulations which

* This law which forces all citizens into the militia, was, I think, first suggested and warmly promoted by M. Rabaud de St. Etienne, the Calvinist minister.

the next Assembly had power to alter. The Republicans were more fortunate on another article; for it was decreed that all laws relative to taxation should be intirely within the hands of the Assembly, without any necessity of applying to the King for his sanction. It was, however, agreed that if the non-payment of taxes should oblige the Assembly to pass any new laws to punish the refractory, such laws (as referring to Criminal Justice) should be liable to the King's suspensive veto.

During all this period the majority continued to shew that bitter hatred to nobility which has so remarkably distinguished their whole conduct. On the 31st of July they passed a decree, abolishing the order of St. Esprit, and every other order, except that of St. Louis, reserved for the Military, and to be called from henceforth a *Military Decoration*, prohibiting at the same time any Frenchmen from entering into the order of Malta, or accepting any orders which are reserved for Nobility. Soon after they proposed to inflict penalties on all nobles who should use their old titles in any

deed, or insert the words *ci-devant autrefois*, contrivances which ingenious vanity had invented to struggle with unfeeling and arbitrary severity. M. Chabroud (the same man who could find no crime in the murders of the 6th of October) was not ashamed to think that retaining of titles was a crime which deserved the *pillory*. His motion, however, was disapproved, and after various debates it was decreed, that the parties who used such words should pay a fine, and be deprived of the rights of active Citizens (which includes disability to hold any office). The notaries who received the deeds in which such words were inserted, incurred the forfeiture of their office. A similar punishment of fines and disabilities was inflicted on those who should presume to give their servants a livery, or exhibit a scutcheon of arms on their houses or carriages.

About the end of August two formal complaints were laid before the Assembly by the King's Ministers, which somewhat contradicted their former principles. M. Duportail, the War Minister, after having permitted

mitted the troops to frequent, nay to enroll their names amongst the Jacobine societies, now lamented to the Assembly the total want of discipline which prevailed in the regular troops, and was encouraged by the maxims which they heard at those clubs. One side of the Assembly cried out, that the soldiers were mutinous because their officers were Aristocrats. M. Barnave answered, that the aristocracy of the officers, whether real or imaginary, was not the cause, but rather the pretence of that total want of subordination which pervaded the army. A decree of the Assembly had reserved a certain proportion of commissions to be in future disposed of amongst the non-commissioned officers and private men;* and he believed that in many regiments the sergeants and corporals were intriguing against their officers to hasten the hour of this desired preferment. He therefore moved, that the benefit of this law should be suspended in such regiments as were notoriously muti-

*. This was one of the many decrees passed to flatter private soldiers, and was celebrated, at the time, as a masterpiece of humanity and wisdom.

nous; and he carried this motion as well as some other severe articles against disobedience.

On the 21st of August, M. Duport du Tertre, the Minister of Justice, a man chosen for his known attachment to the Revolution, made a complaint of an equally important nature against the Jacobine Societies for interfering with the Courts of Justice, and in some cases for interfering with foreign transactions (of which more shall be said in the latter part of this work).

These and many other similar symptoms more and more convinced the National Assembly; that they would not long be suffered to hold the legislative and executive powers united, and that a general dissolution of all order might be expected, if they did not quickly restore the kingly power in one shape or other, as a centre of unity. They knew besides, that several foreign courts had taken the opportunity of the King's confinement to refuse any farther acknowledgement of the French Ambassadors; they were not ignorant of the intrigues carried on by the
exiled

exiled Princes, and saw an evident probability that any farther insult offered to their Monarch would be the signal of a foreign war. They proceeded therefore with greater dispatch in debating the remaining articles of the Constitution, and on the 3d of September declared, that the Code was completed, and ready to be submitted to the *free* examination and acceptance of the King. It is difficult to understand what can be the *free* examination of a king who is not allowed to make the slightest remark on the *Pacta Conventa* he is to sign with the Nation, who has been deprived of his liberty to qualify him for the acceptance of a crown, and who knows that his refusal will probably be followed by perpetual imprisonment.

To preserve, however, some appearance of freedom, it was agreed, that the King should be restored to the power of giving orders to the National Guards who surrounded him, and it was hinted, that he might retire into some other city to examine the Code at his leisure. It was probably well known and concerted beforehand, that

he would lay no claim to so dangerous a privilege. On the evening of the same 3d of September, a deputation, headed by M. Thouret, presented the Constitutional Code to the King, who returned a favourable answer, promising to give his decision as soon as possible, and adding, that he was determined to remain at Paris. This last clause was understood to imply a promise of consent, and consequently the answer was received with applause; but the interval of ten days, which ensued between the presentation and the acceptation of the Code, threw the minds of the people into agitation, and they were frightened with repeated tales that the Aristocrates were laying plots for the King's escape. This interval was in reality filled up with private intrigues, of which no certain account can be given, and for which we can only quote the paragraphs of news-writers and the narrations of journalists. The Queen was supposed to have been gained over by the Royal Democrats from a jealousy that the exiled Princes, if they returned victorious, would reduce the King and her to be mere cyphers of state. The enemies of M. Barnave asserted, that he pressed the
King

King to desire the alteration of one single article—that which forbade him to chuse his Ministers from the present Assembly, because *that* was the article which stood in the way of Barnave's ambition.

Mallet du Pan, in the *Mercure*, speaks of two projects of acceptation laid before the King. The first was drawn up by a secretary of the late Mirabeau, and dictated by some intriguing spirits whom he does not name. This may, perhaps, be the plan attributed to Barnave, for it is well known that the late Mirabeau always professed his opinion, that Ministers should be chosen from the Members of the Assembly. The second plan was concerted by another set of men, who employed an American, a member of the first Congress, to draw up a paper in the English tongue, which they translated into French, and which was a kind of memorial, stating in the King's name all the difficulties that he should meet with according to the present Constitution, in performing his office of executing the laws. The Ministry did not venture to adopt this project, as they saw that the majority were

persuaded that the King must not give his opinion on any one Constitutional Article. The King, on his part, disliked the letter composed by Mirabeau's secretary; and at last M. Thouret was permitted to draw up the decisive letter of acceptation. It is artfully and ably written to prove, that the King might reasonably be more satisfied with the Constitution and with the National Assembly than at the moment of his flight from Paris; but, like all equivocating performances, did not thoroughly satisfy the zealots of any party. The King at the same time endeavoured to earn a little popularity by refusing to wear the blue riband, formerly belonging to the order of St. Esprit, which the Assembly, after some debates, had reserved to the King and the Prince Royal as a mark of distinction.

On Tuesday the 13th of September, the letter of acceptation was carried to the Assembly; on Wednesday the mighty work of more than two years was accomplished by the King's coming to the Assembly and taking his last and final oath to observe the Constitution; and on Saturday the 18th, it
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was solemnly proclaimed throughout the city of Paris. Every pamphlet and every newspaper have been filled with the ceremonies observed on these great occasions, with the details of the public festivals given by the King and Queen to the people of Paris, with the visits of their Majesties to the different theatres, and the unbounded applause with which they were received. Time only can shew whether this applause was the pure effect of sincere attachment, or influenced by the awe inspired by the exertions of the National Guard on the 17th of July.

Certain it is, that the republican party are still numerous at Paris, and omit no opportunity to inspire the people with distrust of the King.

The public joy, whether real or dissimulated, was not interrupted by the strong protestation published by the remnants of the aristocratic party. It produced, however, a decree of the Assembly, declaring that protesters against the Constitution were incapacitated for any employment. M. Ma-

louet, left a solitary, neglected adherent of the moderate party, published at the same time a declaration, which imported that he could not approve the Code, as varying from his own principles and from the instructions given him by his constituents; but as it was now solemnly accepted by the King, his zeal for public peace did not allow him to protest against it.

On the 13th of September, and immediately after the King's letter had been read with applause, La Fayette had the honour of making the first propositions which, since the very commencement of the Revolution, had breathed in any degree the spirit of generosity or reconciliation. He moved a general amnesty, which should put a stop to all prosecutions begun on account of the Revolution, with a decree to abolish the necessity of passports, and to permit free egress and regress both to natives and foreigners. These decrees were voted by unanimous acclamation, and it was declared by the ruling party, that as the Revolution was fully completed it was time to lay aside those precautions which had hitherto been necessary.

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By virtue of the first of these decrees a great number of suspected persons were discharged from all the prisons in the kingdom, especially from the Abbaye St. Germain, which mal-contents had honoured with the name of the *new Bastille*, and the tribunal of Orleans was dissolved; a tribunal erected in the beginning of 1791, to try all the persons accused of plotting a counter-revolution. This establishment had been compared to those special commissions for trying special crimes, such as the *Chambre Ardente* for poisoning in Lewis XIVth's time, which had always been censured under the most despotic kings.

It is, however, allowed on all hands that these judges did not err on the side of severity. Their proceedings were dilatory and expensive, very few suspected criminals had been tried, and they had been acquitted for want of sufficient evidence. This amnesty was professedly intended to cover the errors of both sides, and therefore included the authors of the late sedition, and all soldiers accused of disobedience. But whether it
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was intended to shelter the murderers of M. Pascalis and of M. Guillin, remains as yet uncertain.

The second decree was intended to remove those restraints upon emigrants and emigrations, which had often been complained of as contrary to the Rights of *Man*. This topic had always been perplexing and painful to the National Assembly; for they had good reason to suspect the intentions of emigrants, and yet the voice of history told them, that to betray much fear of emigrations had ever been considered as the surest sign of a weak or oppressive government. They now hoped to check this mischievous spirit by affecting to despise it, but their hopes were vain. Numbers of land officers instantly quitted their regiments, and some marine officers followed their example. Numbers of provincial gentry, who had risked their lives by the imprudent joy they expressed at the King's escape, profited of this unexpected moment of liberty to fly from a country which was rendered unsafe or odious to many
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of its sons by the fury of contending factions.*

Whilst unremitting severity had hitherto been shewn with regard to all the prejudices of officers or gentlemen, the prejudices of the French West-Indian planters had sometimes been attacked and sometimes been indulged, according as different parties bore sway in the Assembly.

A complete history of the Colonial dissensions would (as I have already said) require more materials than are yet before the public. The National Assembly had boasted at first, that whilst England had treated its colonies tyrannically, France had proved its liberality by admitting colonial representatives into its Legislature. But these representatives were in much too small a proportion to prevent votes from passing that were disagreeable to their constituents, nor have they prevented a spirit

* The War Minister has told the new Assembly, that nineteen hundred officers had quitted their regiments since last August,

of independence from rising in the colonies. As soon as the news of the Revolution reached the colonies, the planters rose against their governors, and the régiments against their colonels, (two of whom have been cruelly murdered) M. Macnamara at the Isle de France, and M. Mauduit at St. Domingo. The Assembly applauded this glorious zeal for liberty, till they suspected that the colonies meant to separate from their mother-country, and they were as little disposed to bear that idea as the most unpopular of those English ministers who persisted in the American War. This independent spirit had, however, in the beginning of the present year, appeared less prevalent, when it was revived at St. Domingo by a dispute in the National Assembly relative to the civil rights of free mulattoes.

There are several thousand free mulattoes at St. Domingo; a strong enmity had broken out between them and the whites in consequence of the Revolution, and great numbers had been put to death for conspiracies or rebellions.

M. Bar-

M. Barnave was some months ago a leader of the Jacobine Club, and has always been connected with the planters, whilst several other Jacobines were connected with those societies known under the name of *Amis des Noirs*. His enemies, therefore, in his own party, and his rivals in the opposite club of 1789, pushed on a question favourable to mulattoes; a contest of popularity was tried between the two clubs, and was gained in a splendid manner by the club of 1789. A decree was passed on the 15th of May 1791, which gave the rights of *Active Citizens* to free mulattoes born of free parents; the decree was received with acclamations by the galleries, and the National Guards of a department near Bordeaux sent an address to the National Assembly, offering, in case of disobedience, to go over to the West Indies and enforce its decrees.* The Members of St. Domingo expressed great resentment and seceded from the National Assembly.

* Let our Revolution Societies consider how they reconcile these votes and these addresses to the received opinion that England had no right to interfere in the internal legislation of America.

The embarrassments which followed the King's flight, suspended these discussions for a while, but during the month of August such repeated accounts came of the indignation with which this decree was received at St. Domingo, and such suspicions were entertained of dark projects forming to call in the English, that the friends of the African race felt their influence much weakened. M. Andre and his club were reconciled to M. Barnave, who had quarrelled with the Jacobins, M. Robespierre and the violent Republicans were unpopular in the Assembly, and the cause of the planters gained ground in proportion as their influence declined.

The question was therefore debated a second time, and on the 24th of September, a decree was passed, which virtually revoked the famous decree of the 15th of May. In the first article of this important law they assumed the right of external legislation over the colonies; in the second, they left the fate of the negroes and the mulattoes, whether slaves or freemen, entirely to the discretion of the colonial assemblies, (inserting
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ing the words “ notwithstanding any preceding decree,”) in the third, they referred the discussion of all questions relative to the right of internal legislation over the Whites, to that future Assembly to whom they were preparing to yield up their seats. The King declared that he accepted this decree as a supplement to the Constitutional Code.

Will it be too severe to affirm, that the new Government of France has in its first outset fallen into the most important error that the English Government ever committed, who, by rashly passing the Stamp-Act, lost the affection of their colonies, and by timidly repealing it, forfeited their respect?*

The National Assembly was now drawing apace to its conclusion. On the news of the King's flight they had stopped the Electoral Assemblies from proceeding to the choice of another Legislature; but although

* Since this was written a terrible insurrection of the Blacks has completed the misfortunes of St. Domingo.

that decree was complied with in an hour of danger, yet the moment that security was restored, the Assembly felt its unpopularity, and were obliged to revoke it. New Members were continually pouring in from different parts of the kingdom, and Paris itself was occupied with electioneering intrigues, and divided by the opposite factions of the Jacobines and Feuillans, who were every day libelling each other's candidates (both in pamphlets and handbills) with the most inveterate malice.* The efforts of the Feuillans were chiefly directed against M. Brissot de Warville, vehemently suspected of promoting the riot in the Champ de Mars, but his perseverance carried the day. He was elected along with M. Garran de Coulon, another busy demagogue, and on the whole, the Jacobines had no reason to be displeased with the twenty-four Parisian Members, and their interest also prevailed in several other departments. It has been observed, that none of the former gentry are Members of the new Assembly, and not above twenty ecclesiastics, a very large proportion of lawyers

* See Note 3d.

(some say 500 out of the whole 749 Members,) and a very small number of landed proprietors—that class of men in whom several philosophers and statesmen have thought that the power of Government might be lodged with least danger.

As their successors were now coming into view, and ready to demand their rightful seats, the present Members found it was time to quit their elevation of power. Three questions of internal police had the best claim to occupy their last moments—the church, the army, and the finances. As to the church, they seem to have left it to its own fate; in some* departments the nonjuring priests persecute the Constitutional priests, and in others are persecuted by them, † whilst the Assembly did not latterly venture on coercive measures to compel either one side or the other to a pacification.

M. Du Portail, on the 25th of September, comforted them with some better tidings

* As for instance, in the department of Vendre.

† As more particularly in Paris itself.

respecting the army, and assured them that the soldiers were *tired of disobedience* and beginning to return to their duty:—words which convey but a melancholy idea of the general state of discipline.

The Minister of Finances gave information that the departments were completing their subsidy-books, and would soon pay up their taxes: yet it plainly appears, even by the Minister's favourable statement, that the nation still owes the public treasury the amount of half the taxes which it is bound to pay.

M. de Montesquieu read to the Assembly a memorial on the state of the finances, which gave flattering hopes of their complete restoration. M. Bergasse (one of the middle party) attacked this memorial in divers publications; and the Aristocrates spent their last hopeless efforts in attacking it in the House. The Abbé Mauray ascended the tribune and with his usual vehemence insisted that the Assembly owed to the nation a full and complete account of its administration of finance, with legal

proofs of each allegation, to justify itself from the charge of increasing that *deficit* which it was convoked to remedy. He was scarcely allowed to proceed in his speech, and the majority called out that the National Assembly was not accountable like a Minister of Finance; that its Members had never handled the public money; but that it had merely given directions to the accountable officers. There was a secret reason for this reciprocal fury, the suspicions circulated by the Aristocrates that several patriots had gained money by trafficking unfairly with assignats. Names of opprobrium resounded from each side of the House. M. Lavie, a Member from Alsace, cried out to the Aristocrates, "We'll *recom-*
mend you to the provinces;" and M. D'Epresmesnil retorted, "You are a villain, who would instigate assassination."

Thus these two desperate factions parted as they had met, preferring acrimony, invective, and revenge, to moderation, concord, or the love of their country.

A very short interval of political existence yet remained for the majority, and they employed it in a bold and equitable measure, though not expressive of much gratitude towards their old friends and supporters. On the 29th of September, they took into consideration the complaints of M. Duport du Tertre, and passed a decree prohibiting every club from assuming a public function, interfering with any branch of the public administration, or setting its name to any petition or declaration as a collective body,* under penalty, that its members should for six months be suspended from the rights of active citizens. Much of the peace and prosperity of the French nation, nay, perhaps of all Europe, will depend on the strict execution of this decree; but if the Jacobine Club should obtain a decided majority, it is too probable that its meaning will be evaded,

Immediately after passing this decree, a letter from the King informed them, that he intended the next day to close their ses-

* Such a law in England would take away from the assumed dignity with which the Constitutional Society publishes its advertisements.

sions. The countenances of the Members seemed to intimate, that this message was in rather too regal a style, but it was received without any objection. On the 30th of September this all-powerful Assembly met for the last time, and an unusual silence pervaded the hall. The King appeared, attended by his Ministers, and pronounced a good speech, which recommended moderation and obedience to the laws, in a style neither too haughty nor too timid. He departed, and after a moment of solemn expectation, M. Thouret the President pronounced these decisive words, "The Constituent Assembly has ended its sessions."

The House broke up, and all its Members returned home—no longer inviolable legislators, but private citizens. A more remarkable surrender of absolute power has never taken place since the abdication of the dictator Sylla; but let it be remembered, that Sylla's abdication has not absolved his memory from the guilt of usurpation and tyrannical government.

The surrender of power ever has a dazzling appearance, and no other part of the conduct of the Revolutionists can lay so plausible a claim to those encomiums with which a great orator astonished the English House of Commons. But those who look beyond the outside of things, will have sufficient reason to see nothing of genuine honesty or heroism, in these splendid transactions, nothing but the common game which divided and subdivided factions have a thousand times played against one another; the same game that was played by the Presbyterians, the Independants and the Churchmen, during our own unhappy civil wars. The National Assembly seem at last to have profited a little from reflecting on the misfortunes of the Long Parliament, but they might have learnt a great many more instructive lessons from those disgraceful pages of our English history.*

I HAVE now completed my intended abridgement of the history of the two most important and most wonderful years that
this

* See Note 4th,

this century has beheld, and desire my readers leave to make some observations on the principles and consequences of these events.

The first reflection that I must consider as the final result of the foregoing discussion, is, that the principle of resistance to despotism has had but a small share in the French Revolution; its three great leading principles have been, the utter impoverishment of the clergy, the utter annihilation of all distinctions of birth, and the establishment of an entire equality between the mechanical and the liberal professions. The two first points have been carried, but those clubs, who call themselves the *Friends of the Constitution*, think their triumph incomplete, unless they can carry the third. Whoever doubts of this fact may be satisfied by reading M. Brissot's works, especially the preface to his *Travels in America*.

When the States General were first summoned together, the universal voice of France proclaimed, that arbitrary power
could

could no longer be endured. The majority of Clergy, Nobles, and Commons, instructed their members to demand a constitution in which laws should be made by the people, subject to the King's negative; * judges should be named by the people, subject to the King's negative, and if approved by him, should receive their commissions for life, or good behaviour; arbitrary taxation and arbitrary imprisonment were to be utterly abolished. The King was at the mercy of the States; he might have temporised a little, but the slightest degree of legal peaceable resistance would have overcome the feeble efforts of his court. The Clergy had already given up their exemption from taxes, the Nobles were proceeding in the same course, though not quite so rapidly; but the Commons would be satisfied with nothing, unless they at once resigned their independence as legislators, and altered without examination the tenures of their estates. From

* Several instances of such requests from the meetings of Nobles are to be seen in Calonne's *Etat de la France*. And the *Ami du Roi* says, that the Provincial gentry were strongly prepossessed against *Lettres de Cachet*.

that hour party spirit took the place of rational zeal, and two violent factions turned against each other the arms which they had received from their constituents to employ against despotism,

From that hour, the troubles of France have been chiefly occasioned by the contests between those classes of mankind which exist more or less in every society emerged from a state of nature, a contest between the monied and the landed interests, between landlords and tenants, between families long distinguished and families rising from obscurity; and, worst of all, most implacable of all, a contest between the rich and the poor. These are contests of a much more fatal nature than contests that relate to the deposition of a king, or to the abolition of regal prerogative. In the latter case, only a few courtiers are really much concerned, but here every man's personal and family interests are involved in the quarrel, and every individual is fighting *pro aris et focis*; consequently these are the contests that good men would be most unwilling to begin. They would consider whether it is not better

ter to abandon many abuses, many prejudices to the lenient hand of time, and the gradual change of manners, rather than by a precipitate reformation inflame the passions of thousands, and leave the secret caustics of hatred and resentment to burn within their hearts for perhaps a century to come.

It were a tedious and difficult task to search into the latent reasons that have induced different portions of the world to adopt different forms of government, but the fact is certain, though the cause is obscure. Despotism has ever been the government of Asia; aristocracy has been the ground-work of all European governments, since that momentous period when the warlike tribes of the north enslaved the degenerate Romans; and democracy is, at this equally momentous hour, the first, the only government of independent America. I must avow my decided opinion, that utterly to annihilate in either of these continents that species of power to which the natives are accustomed, and to substitute an entirely new government in its room, would be both
a rash

a rash and a criminal attempt. I should equally condemn the man who would endeavour to erect a democracy at Peking, and the man who would introduce hereditary nobility at Philadelphia. But by parity of reason I must also condemn the anathemas lately poured out in France against those principles of hereditary distinction, which have for so many ages occupied the attention and flattered the vanity of Europeans, and which, in some countries, thousands are from their cradles taught to hold as more valuable than life, and no less sacred than religion.

It must not be dissembled, that it is the happy success of the American revolution which has turned the heads of almost all the French philosophers. Dean Tucker was, perhaps, the first who discerned the rising tempest, and announced it in the second and sixth letters of his *Cui Bono*, addressed to M. Necker. The *prophecies*, for they deserve that name, contained in the second letter are so remarkable that they ought to be read at full length in the original. But one extract from the sixth letter

is so much to the point, that it must not be omitted :

“ America—is a rising empire, without
 “ *Bishops!* without *Nobles!* without *Kings!*
 “ This, Sir, you know, is the language of
 “ that celebrated Republican, Dr. Price.
 “ But perhaps you have never yet been told
 “ the name of the original author of that
 “ prophetic sentence. It was your own
 “ predecessor, the late M. Turgot. Now
 “ he is dead I am at liberty to declare it.
 “ In a letter of his, dated Paris, 18th of
 “ February 1777, he says, *Je fais des*
 “ *vœux pour la liberté des Americains par-*
 “ *ceque ce fera le premier exemple d’un*
 “ *grand peuple qui n’ait ni Rois, ni No-*
 “ *blesse.*”

Thus early did the levelling spirit arise in France, and such were the true reasons which made their philosophers so zealous in the cause of America.

Turgot had once been the Minister of the present King of France, who is supposed to have sacrificed him to the resentment of his courtiers

courtiers and clergy, and thus to have given the first proof of that fatal indecision which has, hitherto at least, rendered all his virtues useless. But if these were Turgot's democratic principles,* he was an unfit Minister for any European king, whether despotic or limited. Men who abhor the European distinction of ranks in society, should go and inhabit that country where those doctrines are lawful and constitutional. It is the misapplication of the principle which is more censurable than the principle itself. America never had bishops, never had nobility, never saw royalty but through the medium of a governor's temporary and precarious power. They had nothing to do but sever the thread which united them to the throne of England, and the democracy was already completely formed. They rigorously expelled all the royalists, and then set themselves down, not without parties indeed, but without those formidable parties which arise from the prejudices imbibed by different

* In J. Adam's Defence of the American Constitution, other proofs may be found that Turgot was more a Democrat than the American Statesman.

classes of men from generation to generation. Cannot the French politicians, observe that it is safe and easy to decree, “*that* never shall exist which never has existed?” but difficult and dangerous to say, “*that* shall cease to exist which has existed for ages, and is still regarded by thousands with veneration?”

The Republic of Florence once tried a similar experiment, as is recorded by Machiavel, who, with all his sins, was yet a friend to republican liberty, and therefore may be admitted as competent evidence.*

After a dreadful civil commotion the Nobles were expelled, and were obliged to purchase their re-admission to the privileges of citizens by laying down their coats of arms, their family names, and enrolling themselves amongst some of the trading companies. But did this violent treatment ensure peace to that distracted Republic? By no means. The Nobles who submitted

* Machiavel's History of Florence, Book III. See Note 5.

to this degradation still were considered as a distinct body of men,* the old factions were still kept up, and new ones arose between the rich and the poor plebeians, between the companies of merchants and those of mechanics,† till the Republic, wearied out by incessant discord, sunk under the absolute power of the Medici family, who first paved their way to grandeur by courting the *Arti Minori*, or the companies of inferior tradesmen. It might be no unprofitable speculation to compare the third and fourth Books of Machiavel's History of Florence with M. Brissot's preface, where he complains that merchants and bankers consider mechanics as their inferiors; and to observe how similar passions operate alike in distant ages.

The National Assembly have guarded with infinite care against the invasions of kings and of certain privileged classes, but have left the door wide open to noisy, turbulent demagogues, those pests of a free

* Those nobles were called *Nobili Popolini*.

† They were called *Arti Maggiori* and *Arti Minori*, and sometimes *Popolani* and *Plebei*.

constitution, who wear the mantle of popularity, nay sometimes of charity, to cloak their unbounded ambition. Nothing can guard against their malevolence and rapacity so effectually as the fixed established power of *one man*, assisted by a certain number of *ancient families*, to whom the people are accustomed to look up with respect; I do not mean with servile respect, but with that *free subordination* which, however Mr. Burke's opponents may have laughed at the phrase, will ever be the surest pledge of good government on one side, and due obedience on the other.

A pamphlet has been lately published in which an English Leveller, for we have a few *animals* of that *genius* in England, a Leveller, illuminated, I suppose, with some inward light, first discovers the abolition of nobility in the Revelations, and then expatiates in much better language than might have been expected from such wildness, on the vices, the weaknesses, the incapacity of hereditary nobles: he tells us how they shrink in times of civil confusion before those nobles by nature, who are gifted by heaven with
superior

superior talents which require not the fostering aid of birth or education. I adopt his epithet and allow his assertion, but retort his reasonings on himself, and insist on the utility of *nobles* by *political convention* to counteract the *nobles* by *nature*, till he can prove, not by reasonings *à priori*, but by the surer guide of experience, that *nobles* by *nature*, when possessed of unbalanced power, are not fully as tyrannical and cruel in their government as they whose vanity is fed by the recollection of an illustrious line of ancestors.

It was an observation of classical antiquity, that the generality of tyrants were in their origin, demagogues set up by the people to overturn the nobly-born and the men of property. A long list of names might here be inserted (not much to the honour of *nobility* by *nature*) of men, who, from low and mechanical stations, have risen to sudden power by the force of original genius, and have grossly abused their talents. Cleon, the leather-seller, at Athens; Agathocles, the potter, at Syracuse; the tribune Saturnius; the warrior Marius, in ancient Rome;

Rienzi, the attorney, in modern Rome; (though Rienzi had something generous in his purpose) Massaniello, the fisherman, at Naples; Menzicoff, the pastry-cook, favourite to Czar Peter; Biron, the son of a groom, favourite to Czarina Anne: *—these make but a small part of the list of those tyrannical *nobles* by *nature* under whose government, whether it lasted ten days or twenty years, no Englishman would have wished to live.

Writers of the levelling class insist with no small complaisance, on the triumph of the Parliament Generals taken from shops or from the plough, over the generals selected from amongst the hereditary nobility. But, they ought to remember, that such a traditionary remembrance is left behind of the arbitrary conduct and insolent behaviour of Cromwell, and Ireton, and Desborough, and Harrison, and all the demagogues and committee-men of that unhappy period, that until length of time shall have obliterated

* Few favourites of despotic Princes have been *ennobled* by *nature*, but Biron and Menzicoff certainly were.

the deep impresson, England will not be disposed again to submit to the sole government of *nobles by nature*, although it will readily admit such characters to work their gradual way into the participation of power, and shame the torpid vanity which slumbers upon the scutcheons of its ancestors.

But none of these moderating principles are now to be admitted in France, no medium is to be adopted in argument, no examples from history are to be allowed to weigh with metaphysical reasoning, the pride of birth is to be utterly exterminated: it is become the hackneyed topic of abuse to every declaimer, and no journalist thinks he has given a good account of a book,* if he has not inserted some reflections against hereditary distinction. I am ready to acknowledge the ill effects it has often occasioned when carried to excess; but are we, therefore, to destroy any one principle

* As an instance, when the *Mercure* gives an account of the life of the late Marechal Richelieu, a very vicious nobleman, it does not so much attribute his vices to his irreligion and want of principle, as to his aristocratical pride.

which, by the universality of its influence, appears congenial to human nature.

These vain and airy pretenders to philosophy ought to know, that it would ill become a true philosopher to extirpate, if it were possible, one weakness from the human mind, unless he could be sure at the same instant to extirpate the weakness that leans to the opposite class of follies.

If pride of birth could be extinguished whilst the pride of wealth remains, it would be of fatal consequence. The former is much more analagous to noble feelings and much more convertible into something like virtue than the latter.

The desire of perpetuating our memory and of raising our descendents above the common level, will ever exist whilst the relation exists between parent and child; or if some unknown power could abolish it, woe be to the human race, it would probably sink many degrees nearer to the brute creation. Then, surely, is not the desire of leaving our children honours less likely to pro-

produce base actions than the desire of leaving them a mass of wealth? The French legislators have probably been aware of that difficulty, and have boldly tried to counteract that second and most common shape of the universal passion of raising a family, by proposing one general law of gavel kind. They have carried one half of their original intention; for it is decreed, that the personal and real estates of all who die intestate shall be equally divided, but they have not yet been able to take from a father the power of devising his estate to his eldest son. It is, however, a favourite topic with republicans, and will, probably, be revived in the present Assembly. They have never considered, whether such a law would not encourage that dangerous and sensual egotism which leads a man to say;—Why should I labour to improve an estate which must be sold after my death to facilitate an equal division? Why should I take much care of my property since it will never enrich any one of my children? Let me live without wife or children, enjoy momentary pleasures, and *eat and drink, since to-morrow we die.*

A rigid, unalterable law of gavel kind would, perhaps, answer very well in a country of primitive simplicity, and unacquainted with any art but agriculture; but in the present age of refinement, luxury, and fondness for great cities, there had need of many trifling attachments; such as affection for the farm our father improved, or the country-house he built, or the parks that travellers used to visit, or twenty other ideas, equally natural though equally unphilosophical, to counteract the fascinating influence of great cities, and of that voluptuous indolent life, which men of moderate but independent personal fortune may so easily lead in those seats of dissipation. These arguments are not intended to prove that no laws should be made to prevent the excessive accumulation of landed property in a few hands, but to shew the difficulty of making such laws as will not substitute some fresh evil in the place of the evils intended to be removed.

But the French Republicans seem to have argued that when nobility, gentry, and family influence were destroyed, the morals of
of

of the world would mend of themselves; an expectation in which I doubt they will be grievously disappointed.

But put the case, that this extirpating system should succeed in France, let us consider how it will be received in countries more devoted to antient prejudices, and from thence conjecture the probable influence of the French Revolution upon the freedom and the tranquillity of the rest of Europe.

I must join with many other friends to moderate liberty in expressing my apprehensions, that the extent to which this Revolution has been carried, instead of hastening will retard the progress of liberty, and when she does come, (for her hour must come at last) it will cause her footsteps to be disgraced by bloodshed and anarchy.—All good men ought to rejoice if such melancholy expectations should prove vain, but they are too consonant to another of the universal weaknesses of human nature—that obstinacy which attaches men with redoubled ardour to every little distinction which their rivals seek to efface. The
fury

fury with which the National Assembly has attempted to * *hew down prejudices with a sabre*, has made it the interest of a multitude of counsellors to divert Princes from advising with the people, or beginning the reformation of ancient abuses. Formerly that interest was confined to a few profligate Courtiers, but now it is extended to all that bear the name of *Gentlemen* or *Priest*.

If we in England are somewhat hurt at the proscription of the very words *Nobility* and *Gentry*, what sensations must the Germans (for instance) experience, with whom the prejudice of noble birth is carried to a height, that we Englishmen, placed in our happier medium, can scarcely tolerate, or even conceive? Do French philosophers imagine that their eloquence will at once persuade a German, vain of his *fifty-two quarters*, and his epithet of *Hogebornen*, that the title of *Citizen* is infinitely more honourable, and is *all* that the member of

* *Sabrer les Prejugés*, is an expression of censure used in the Leyden Gazette.

a free state should ever desire?—As well might they preach to a Bramin on the banks of the Ganges, that it was no dishonour to be excluded from his cast!

Let us suppose a German nobleman advising with his friends, and asking them what degree of liberty he should allow his vassals. May not those low dependents, to whom any oppressions of the nobility are usually imputable, hold up the example of France before his eyes, and plausibly, though falsely, say, the French people felt much less the yoke of feudal institutions, they had a political existence independent of their Lords—and for that *very reason* they were never satisfied till they had levelled their Lords with the dust of the earth? What a scope is here given to those pernicious flatterers whom Racine has so well described;*

“ Bientot ils vous diront—

“ Qu’aux larmes, au travail le peuple condamné,

“ Par un sceptre de fer veut être gouverné,

“ Que s’il n’est *opprimé*, tot ou tard il *opprimé*.

* Athalie, Act. IV. Scene 3.

Let it be supposed that a King of Denmark should become convinced that the famous and culpable States of 1660, had placed more power in his hands than any single mortal can exercise equitably; suppose he should hint a resolution to re-assemble the States and divest himself of despotic power, is it not too probable that he would see all his nobility on their knees exclaiming, Oh, Sir! let us not be ruined and degraded for ever? The hatred of the people divested us of our share in the government, and subjected us to your absolute authority; they madly enslaved themselves for the pleasure of enslaving us; do not revive the old interminable quarrels, and expose our castles to be plundered and our arms torn down by the hands of an enraged rabble?

Since the writers of the French side of the question have indulged themselves in a hundred romantic visions on the happiness caused by this revolution, not one of which visions has as yet been realised, why may not one of their opponents be indulged in a romance on the contrary side? Let imagination

nation picture forth the 'States' of France assembled, the Commons persuaded by some really wise men to endure the balancing power of a house of Nobles; and contenting themselves with establishing equality of taxation; the Courtiers awed to silence; the King yielding, whether from sense or from softness would then have been of little consequence; the Bastille opened by common consent, and a solemn covenant entered into between the King and the three orders of the State, with this difference, that as they contented themselves with settling the privileges of *Frenchmen*, and left the rest of the world to itself, they would not have voted a declaration of the *Rights of Man* one day, and in the next, that it did not include negroes and mulattoes. Gentlemen and landed proprietors obliged to reside on their estates, if they hoped for influence in elections,* would have felt the necessity of popularity amongst their tenants and neigh-

* That influence is by some confounded with the corruptions of Burgage-tenure. But what have the French substituted in its place? The influence of Clubs!

bours,

bours, and in the next States General, if not in the first, would have given way to the gradual alteration of feudal tenures. The glorious flame of liberty would have spread through Europe, but it would have been a lambent flame that warms and cherishes, not the flash attending a thunderbolt that withers and consumes every object placed within reach of its influence. The nobles of other enslaved countries would have learnt that it was more glorious to lead the people on to freedom, than to participate in their oppression; kings would more easily have given way, when they saw that the French Monarch had never for a moment lost the veneration which they naturally think is due to royalty; all those boasted discoveries of the natural equality of man might still have been made, slowly indeed, but smoothly and securely, and the European institution of hereditary nobility, though it ceased to be the moving spring of government, might still be retained as the counterpoise and regulator.

Another kingdom has lately made itself conspicuous in Europe by a revolution, which,

which, though far from being perfect or secure, may possibly realize in some degree the visionary picture which I have ventured to draw. But it is enough to excite a smile of contempt to see a revolution intended to suppress anarchy, perpetually confounded with a revolution which suppressed despotism, or to hear the French vainly boasting that the example of their revolution has induced the Poles to correct the abuses of aristocracy.

The partition of Poland was such an unparalleled lesson to the aristocratic pride of the Polish nobility, that it convinced them of some of their errors, when a hundred volumes of levelling declamations by Messrs. Sieyes, Condorcet, and Brissot, would probably have hardened them in obstinacy. It is a real *fact*, not a *supposition*, that when the admission of Deputies from the towns was first proposed to the Diet, some haughty Nobles urged the example of France as an objection to the measure, and a proof that if the people were admitted to the legislation, they would totally extirpate nobility. Happily the galling remembrance of foreign tyranny

tyranny obliterated these fainter impressions of remote danger. But such a remembrance will not induce to terms of conciliation the Nobles of Germany, or the Senators of Venice or of Berne, who never yet thought themselves liable to the infamy of a Polish partition.

It should also be observed, that the law which favours the rights of Burghers and Citizens, passed in the month of April, antecedent to what is commonly called the Polish Revolution, which did not take place till May, 1791.

It may seem a strange assertion at first sight, but that particular transaction, graced by the popular name of a *Revolution*, instead of being copied from the French Revolution, bears a resemblance to the unsuccessful attempt of the King of France to establish a constitution drawn up by his Ministers on the 23d of June, 1789.

Nay, a friend to the King of France might state the two events in such a manner

as would give the palm of true patriotism to his master. His parallel might run as follows:

Stanislas, born a private gentleman, elected by foreign influence to a nominal crown, and confessedly no more than the chief magistrate of a Republic, having assembled his Diet to correct the erroneous Constitution of Poland, and finding that their time was consumed in uselefs debates, comes suddenly to the assembly, having previously called out the armed burghers on whose affection he could depend. He draws forth and reads the plan of a Constitution, in which he gives himself an authority strictly limited indeed, but yet an authority greater than his predecessors had enjoyed for ages; and what was an action of still greater violence and unwarrantable, except from extreme necessity, he changes an elective into an hereditary Monarchy. He stifles the clamours of the minority by the louder voices of his own partizans, and obliges the Diet to vote the Constitution and swear to its observance before he leaves the hall.

Louis, descended from the most ancient royal family now existing in Europe, born to absolute power and educated with the idea that it was his right, becomes at last sensible that his people ought to have a share in the government, and assembles his States according to ancient forms. Instead of giving him the advice which he expected, they not only dispute with one another (as in Poland) but bring the kingdom to the eve of a civil war. He calls them together, and reads them the plan of a Monarchy less strictly limited, indeed, than England or Poland, but yet undeniably a limited Monarchy, in which he divested himself of powers which his ancestors had exercised for above 300 years, and endeavoured to compromise the disputes between his subjects. He tells them, in too peremptory a tone, that he expected obedience; but he quits the hall, and leaves them to their debates, uncontrolled by his presence.*

If the attempt of Louis was an invasion of the liberty of a National Assembly, the

* See Note 6.

attempt of Stanislas must be condemned by the same arguments. Yet Stanislas has been rewarded with acclamations and statues, and celebrated as the saviour of his country. Louis was rewarded with scorn and abhorrence; his attempt has been emphatically stiled * “The last crime of despotism,” his throne and life have been endangered, and he has received affronts, which, though he may forget, it will be very difficult for *his people* to think he has forgotten. Whilst after all, the real difference was simply *this*—Stanislas was sure of his party, and conducted a change of government with greater steadiness.

I have written these observations rather in the character of a French Royalist than in my own. I venerate the character, and am convinced of the patriotism of Stanislas; but it has happened to him as to Gustavus Vasa, that his interest and his patriotism have most fortunately coincided. The Constitution which he has established, is like all the works of mortals, liable to objections;

* By La Harpe in the *Mercure de France*.

but it would be invidious to descant upon its imperfections. Its authors have not, like the French Legislators, provoked reciprocal illiberality by illiberable declamations against all other governments.

May the present Constitution of Poland remain unshaken by factious resentment, and be gradually amended by temperate wisdom, and may it prove an antidote to the poison of the French Revolution, by shewing to Europe that Clergy and Nobility can be reformed without being annihilated. Such are the wishes of one who neither desires the name of an Aristocrate nor a Democrate; nor yet of a bigot even to the British Constitution, but a friend to well-balanced liberty, whatever be the nominal form of government.

But a very important consideration now presents itself. The partizans of the French insist, that if their favourite Revolution produces no other good effect, it will strengthen the bonds of amity between heretofore rival nations, convince them of the folly of war, and introduce a general spirit of peace and harmony.

harmony. This is the principal argument contained in the appendix to the late Dr. Price's Sermon; but is, in my opinion, a much less plausible argument than those arguments that assert the natural rights of man. I can see nothing like a proof, except the complimentary expressions of the clubs of Lille or Dijon, or Quimper, and the *ipse dixit* of the National Assembly; an *ipse dixit* which, as I shall afterwards shew, may be easily evaded.

As this is an argument very interesting to all the nations of Europe, it deserves to be carefully examined and set in different lights.

And here the first question must be, what is there in the natural spirit of a Democracy, even of the new French species, a Royal Democracy, which authorises philosophers to think that it breathes universal peace and concord more than any other institution? It is certainly the government most favourable to needy adventurers, and war is an easy way to repair an adventurer's broken fortunes. It is certainly the government

under which all violent passions display themselves most openly, and the passions of the inhabitants of different Democracies, stirred up to action, may as likely produce a war as the passions of two kings. The experience gathered from history confirms this supposition, and the 5th and 6th pages of Dr. Price's Sermon,* where he mentions the baleful effects of a mistaken love of our country, contain an indirect avowal of it.

We have been accustomed in these last ages to see great armies desolate the earth at the command of one man, and we are apt to forget, that there was an earlier age in which the earth was equally desolated by hundreds of small armies, where every individual soldier was inflamed to vengeance by the sense of his own wrongs as well as the wrongs of his country.

M. Mirabeau might, if he pleased, tell the National Assembly that there would be no wars, when there were no tyrants and no

* See the last edition.

slaves; * and the National Assembly (many of whom were no scholars) might be pleased with this beautiful picture, but it is impossible that men of letters, such as Messrs. Price, Towers, and Priestley, could in their hearts be satisfied with this more than Oriental fiction. Were the Athenians and the Spartans mercenary slaves and governed by the rod of tyranny, when their mutual dissensions shook the quiet of Greece? But it was, perhaps, the opposite form of their government which engendered this lasting hatred?

Then let us observe the Romans and Carthaginians, whose constitutions resembled each other in substance, though they differed in particular circumstances, and behold Spain, Italy, Africa, the whole circuit of the Mediterranean, deluged with blood, and the enmity never ceasing till the first commercial city of the ancient world sunk amidst devouring flames. Will it be said that Rome

* A doctrine which, from other passages in his works, it is plain he did not himself believe.

had an hereditary ambitious Nobility? * (for Nobles are the demons whom the modern French creed considers as the authors of evil.) Then let us return again to Greece, and view Athens and Syracuse (two as complete Democracies as ever existed) we may observe Athens assailing Syracuse by the most unprovoked invasion; and Syracuse, in revenge, violating public faith by the murder of Nicias, (the very general who, as long as he dared, had opposed his countrymen's fury) and treating the Athenian prisoners with a refined and lingering barbarity, which exceeds all that the tyrant Duke of Alva inflicted on his wretched victims. When, in defiance of such examples, peace, and concord, and humanity, are represented by scholars as the natural consequences of republican principles, one is tempted to suspect, that these empty declamations only cover some lurking insidious purpose, which the declaimers are as yet unwilling to acknowledge.

* It is believed by learned men, that Carthage had no patrician Order, but an elective Senate; yet Carthage was almost as ambitious as her great rival.

But recent examples have more influence than ancient histories, and can better enforce our argument: let us, therefore, examine the history of England for the last two hundred years, and consider how many of our bloody and expensive wars are justly to be charged to the Executive Power, upon whom such writers as Horne Tooke and Mr. Paine are so willing to lay the whole censure.

It is apparent, to the most superficial reader of history, how much of the unpopularity of James the First was owing to his indolently pacific temper, and how eagerly the whole nation longed to embark in the foreign wars, occasioned by the fruitless attempt of the Elector Palatine to possess himself of Bohemia.

His son, the unfortunate Charles, was driven into a short war with France by the caprice and unwarrantable passions of his favourite, Buckingham. That war, however, was popular, till Buckingham was defeated at the Isle de Re; the English ardently wished to invade France,
and

and succour the Protestants, engaged in a civil war with their King; nor can there be a greater proof of this assertion, than to observe, that twenty years afterwards the Republicans reproached the unhappy Charles on his trial, with having abandoned the Protestants of Rochelle, and seemed to consider it as one of those crimes which deserved a sentence of death.

Between the death of Charles and the usurpation of Cromwell, England was a Republic governed by a single Assembly. Holland, at that time, had no Stadtholder at the head of its government, and it might have been argued, *à priori*, that these two Republics would feel the advantages of peace and concord. Instead of fulfilling that expectation, they engaged in an obstinate and bloody naval war, fomented by commercial jealousy.

The same jealousy continued after the Restoration, and produced the second Dutch war, whose more immediate cause was the particular rivalry between the two African Companies.

It

It is very true, that James, Duke of York, and some other courtiers, had shares in the English African Company, and therefore some of the blame of that war may be imputable to the Court. But the brother of Speaker Lenthall, had he been at the head of a commercial company, might have had just as much power to kindle the flames of discord as the brother of Charles the Second.

The third Dutch war followed in 1672, and was evidently the sole act and deed of the Court, contrary to the interest and the temper of the nation. The consequence was, that the Parliament, even under the Stuarts, had power enough to enforce the unanimous will of their constituents. They did not, indeed, refuse all supplies, but their coldness and dissatisfaction were so evident, that Charles found himself obliged to relinquish the dangerous plots in which his criminal rashness had involved him.

Few words will be necessary to defend the war of 1689. As Louis openly avowed his intention to support the cause of James,
it

it was necessary to abandon all the benefits of the Revolution, or to embark in a tedious and expensive war against France.

The present century commenced with the war of the succession, to which the nation was impelled by three causes, distinct from the military ambition either of William the Third, or the Duke of Marlborough: the affront offered to the English honour, by Louis having insolently proclaimed the Pretender King of England:—jealousy of the wealth French merchants might acquire by trafficking with Spanish America;—and the still stronger jealousy, that France would possess itself of the coast of Flanders, and thus be enabled to over-awe our trade and navigation.

I will not enter into the long-disputed question of the merits or demerits of the treaty of Utrecht; I shall only observe, that the Whigs (the ancient Whigs of Mr. Burke) were loud for war and the faith of alliance, whilst the opposite party preached peace abroad with as much zeal as passive obedience at home.

After

After the accession of the Brunswic line there followed a long cessation of arms, interrupted only by some disputes with Spain, in which the Court was, perhaps, more concerned than the nation, but which did not occasion any considerable expence; but towards the close of Sir R. Walpole's Administration, the whole nation entered with such unanimity of violence into a commercial quarrel with Spain, as is alone sufficient to refute those declaimers, who charge all wars upon the Executive Power.

Sir R. Walpole had, doubtless, some blameable qualities, which might justly make him suspected by a nation jealous of its liberty, but his aversion to war (according to modern ideas) ought to have covered a multitude of sins. On the contrary, it was the deadly sin which precipitated his fall, it was the quality against which all the orators, and all the poets, and all the wits, who called themselves patriots, (and some of whom thought themselves such) directed every shaft of eloquence and of ridicule.

The honoured names of *Thomson* and of *Glover* are to be found amongst the bards, who, like *Tyrteus* of old, sung the praises of glorious war, and deprecated a tame submission to wrongs; the effect of that popular ballad, called *Hosier's Ghost*, is not yet quite forgotten, nor the admiration bestowed on that bold stroke of oratory of Lord *Chesterfield*, when looking on the tapestry which represents the defeat of the Spanish Armada, he exclaimed, "These walls, my Lords! these very walls blush for us!"

The next war, the successful but expensive war of 1755, was equally fomented by the clamours of our American Colonies, and of the merchants who traded with them. But as the Americans endeavoured to deny the fact, when called upon to bear their share of the heavy burthen, to which we had submitted for their sakes, it is possible that some of their republican friends may prevaricate in their turn, and doubt whether the war of 1755 was the work of the nation more than of the Court. To convince them, I will insert some extracts from

a pamphlet, called Naked Truth, which had its run in that day, since it reached its third edition.*

A pamphletteer, though he may have but little merit in his stile, or his argument, must state the temper of the people justly, or he will scarcely obtain that rapid sale, which is the only honour or profit he can aspire to.

“ Naked truth is always disagreeable to
“ weak minds ; as they compose the bulk
“ of mankind, she is most hateful to the
“ multitude.

“ I know it is as dangerous to write
“ against popular prejudices as against ty-
“ rants.

“ Let us call back a few years, and see
“ with what ardor the merchants cried out
“ for a Spanish war : a few ships were
“ plundered, a Captain lost his ears, no sa-

* It was printed for A. Price, Fleet-street, 1755.

“ satis-

“ dissatisfaction would go down ; even men of
 “ sense supported the Party.

“ We sent a noble fleet, covered the
 “ sea with our ships, and the islands with
 “ our soldiers ; but what return ? We bur-
 “ ried twenty thousand men without a
 “ battle.

“ Whence came the disappointment ?
 “ From the war’s being improper, and
 “ drove on by popular clamour. By be-
 “ lieving those popular prejudices, or not
 “ daring to oppose them, the Government
 “ was forced to carry on the war in un-
 “ wholesome climates.

“ It is hurting a Prince, or Minister,
 “ greatly, to urge them by popular cla-
 “ mour to a war. A magnanimous Prince,
 “ hearing such clamours, is unwilling to
 “ stem them, lest his glory should suffer ;
 “ —and a wise Minister must give way
 “ to the joint cry of the people, and urged-
 “ on courage of the Prince, though he
 “ knows the danger.

“ The

“ The merchant, manufacturer, ship-
“ builder, and infinite numbers employed
“ in fitting out shipping, may cry for war.
“ *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, said the
“ shrine-makers: perhaps they would be
“ less violent, would they but consider what
“ a desperate reckoning was paid for their
“ short harvest at the beginning of the late
“ war.”

As the war of 1755 was in a great measure urged on by the merchants, so the treaty of Paris was rendered unpopular by the same merchants, who did not find that it gave them as many monopolies as they expected.

A *quondam* patriot, now reduced to a state of neutrality, and living as much at his ease on the bounty of the City, as the Duke and Duchefs of Polignac formerly lived on the bounty of the King of France, was much applauded for his witty dialogue between Lord Bute and the Duke of Bedford, under the names of Earl Buchanan and Duke d’Ossuna. It was inserted in the North Briton, and those who read it

will observe, that Earl Buchanan is made to talk ironically the same.* *Patelin* language against too extensive empire and trade, as M. Rabaud de St. Etienne has feriously talked in his *Address to the People of England*, whilst Duke d'Offuna closes the conference with this comfortable promise; "Never fear, my Lord, *we shall not be over-burthened!*"

But another complaint arose against the Ministry of those days, less, perhaps, to have been expected from the former temper of the nation. The maxims of Lord Bute's politics almost coincided with this sentence of Horne Tooke's Address, "Separated as we happily are by nature, from the tumults of the Continent, we reprobate all systems and intrigues which sacrifice the blessings of our natural situation." Immediately the Patriots took the same turn as the Whigs had many years ago taken on the peace of Utrecht: nothing was heard of but the "advantages and necessity of foreign alliances, and parti-

* The French well understand the force of that term.

“cularly of an alliance with Prussia. Faith
“to our allies was preached up as the first
“national duty; insalating ourselves from
“the Continent was said to be the policy
“of the Stuarts.” Continental connections
were the policy of King William, and
hence it was *charitably* concluded, that the
maxims of the Stuarts would predominate
under the present reign, whilst the maxims
of the friends to liberty were to be disre-
garded.

Mr. Burke was angry that we did not
go to war for the independence of Corsica;
others wanted us to forbid the partition of
Poland, and the quarrel of Falkland-Island
wanted not kind Patriots ready and willing
to blow it into the same flame, as the quar-
rel about English smugglers under the ad-
ministration of Walpole.

That *unknown being*, that Junius, equally
admirable for his eloquence, and detestable
for his malignity; exhausted all his powers
to render the King odious, for his willing-
ness to accept of a slight satisfaction; and
used many arguments to prove, that it was

the interest of a Prince who aimed at absolute power at home, to avoid foreign wars, and stifle a military spirit in his subjects.*

At last the nation had a war, which turned out the most expensive and disgraceful war of any that has happened for three hundred years, and has almost cured us of our martial frenzy. I will not dispute to whom those calamities were principally owing; but will allow, for argument's sake, that the chief blame was due to the Executive Power. I shall only observe, that the same quarrel might have arisen under a popular Government; for when England was a Republic, the Long Parliament passed votes, asserting the right of England to bind its colonies by laws; that the sense of the people was by no means at first unanimous against it; that as soon as Lord Cornwallis's defeat had rendered the nation unanimous, the Executive Power was obliged to give way; and that when

* I confess, this is no particular argument against Horne Tooke, who was no friend to Junius, but Junius had then more admirers than Mr. Horne.

the people found out that their *brethren* the Americans exacted as severe terms as the French or Spaniards could have done, they grew enraged at the peace, and turned out the Ministry who had signed it.

From the following historical discussion we may conclude, that of nine or ten wars which have happened since the year 1600, only one third of the number are really imputable to the Crown; that the people had influence enough to put an end to two unpopular wars out of this small proportion; and that of four celebrated treaties of peace made during this century, three of them ruined the popularity of their authors, the Earls of Oxford, of Bute, and of Shelburne,

All the French writers make the same complaints of the restless ambition of England, that we were accustomed to make of France; they continue the same opinion of our conduct in their books published since the Revolution,* only they kindly suppose

* See the Memoires of the late Duc de Richelieu:

that all the blame lay in those *odious beings*, named Kings and Ministers. I will be less severe in my censures; I believe the English nation has never been hurried into a war, but under the specious idea of punishing oppressors and relieving the oppressed; but it has often been deceived by those nobly-sounding words, and deceived by Patriots oftener than by Kings; consequently, however adviseable it might be to diminish the influence of the Executive Power for other reasons, the pretence that it would insure peace to this harrassed country is a *base prevarication*, sufficient to corrupt and poison all the arguments with which it is joined.

Let us turn our eyes towards the new Republic of America, and see whether its *republican virtue*, so idolized by M. Brissot and others, has kept it in an uninterrupted state of peace. It has been lately engaged in a cruel, predatory war with the neighbouring Indians, and if savages wrote pamphlets, perhaps they could tell as many instances of the rapacity of land-jobbers, as Europeans can tell of the ambition of Kings. President Washington concluded a regular
treaty

treaty of peace with the Creek Indians, and immediately the American newspapers informed us, that the Georgians complained of his neglect of their interests. In one word, experience demonstrates, that in all free states, when Government is warlike, Opposition recommends peace, and clamours for war whenever Government is peaceable. And this evil will probably remain incurable, unless some *ingenious metaphysician* can invent a Republic without any Executive Government at all.

It may be answered to these arguments, that supposing free states in general to be capable of ambition as well as Kings, yet the renunciation of the French National Assembly to all views of conquest makes them an honourable exception to the general case. No doubt this renunciation sounds very nobly, but it admits of more than one evasion.

In the first place, the words actually inserted in the Constitution are less strong than the original vote of the Assembly which renounced conquest in general. It now stands, “ The French nation re-

“ nounces the undertaking of any war with
 “ *a view* of making conquests, and will
 “ never employ its forces against the liberty
 “ of any people.” But here is no renunciation of keeping the conquests made during the course of a war, as an indemnification for the expences incurred. There are very few instances of conquerors who have openly begun a war with professing an intention to conquer; they have usually invented some plausible colour of treaties violated, or of wrongs received by their subjects or their allies.

In the second place it may be asked, whether a *voluntary submission* is equivalent to a *conquest*, and whether its acceptance is an invasion of the liberty of other nations? If any one is desirous to know how such sophistry was anciently vindicated, and how such *voluntary submissions* were anciently procured, let him read Mitford's History of Greece, especially those chapters that treat of the rivalship between Sparta and Athens. A few years ago it would have been pedantic to introduce Athens and Sparta into modern politics; but since we behold empires
 founded

founded on principles more democratic than have been avowed since the decline of ancient Greece, it well becomes impartial reasoners to look back on the effects such principles once produced on the morality and the happiness of a country which discontented philosophers have falsely represented as a kind of elysium.

None of the Grecian States ever made a formal renunciation of conquest; yet it was generally understood, that none of them could exercise the rights of conquest over one another.* Meanwhile, every independent Athenian burgher indulged a vanity and ambition as insatiate as ever turned the head of a despot, and some expedients were requisite to gratify these craving appetites. Those leaders who sought power by courting the democracy, Themistocles, Pericles, Alcibiades, and worst of all, that low-born, low-minded villain, Cleon, carefully cultivated the friendship of the mal-contented in their neighbouring countries, and privately held forth the protection of Athens to all

* Not at least, over these who sent Deputies to the Amphycionic Council.

who wished to revolt against their magistrates. Magistrates are not gods, and, therefore, it is not difficult to find out some who had the vices of men to answer for as well as their fellow-citizens. The glorious insurrection took place, the magistrates were banished or murdered, and Athens was invited to take under its sheltering wing this generous people who were exerting themselves in the cause of democracy.

Thus it happened in Beotia, at Corcyra, and a hundred other petty States, whose stories are tedious and uninteresting, if it were not for the general and uniform instruction to be derived from them. The democratic factions, to ensure their own authority, enslaved their cities to Athens under the false name of allies, and every desertion from that alliance was treated as rebellion, and punished with the most deliberate cruelty. Sparta, who thought all these artifices aimed at her greatness, became the patron of the aristocratic factions, and hence arose such direful scenes of seditions and massacres as are shocking to the humane reader: the nobler qualities of the Greeks
were

were lost amidst intestine quarrels about various forms of republican government; they were first subdued by the cunning of Philip of Macedon, and their spirit sunk for ever under the better-conducted ambition of the Roman People.

It will be time enough for the Revolution Society to indulge their high-flown declamations on the benefits of French liberty, when experience shall have convinced us, that France will not act towards Europe, as Athens acted towards Greece.

Though France has sometimes protected tyrants, it has much oftener protected democratic factions in other countries. Intrigue, insinuation, and all the other qualities requisite for the tools of party, have hitherto seemed inherent in the French character; they were not created, but found and employed by despots, and it is difficult to believe that they will from henceforth be so concentrated at home, as never to find sufficient leisure to carry desolation abroad.

But

But let us again proceed from supposition to facts, and examine what benefits the neighbours of France have hitherto reaped from its Revolution, especially those weaker neighbours who are scarce able to cope with a great kingdom even in its divided state.

Liege revolted against its Bishop soon after the celebrated 14th of July; it professed much admiration of the French model, and desire to follow it, and some agents went to Paris, and privately conferred with the leaders of the Republicans. The consequence has been, that Liege has drawn down on itself the resentment of the German empire; it has been subdued by force, and refused that justice which it would have, perhaps, obtained against its unpopular Bishop, if it had contented itself with appealing to the laws of Germany.

The revolt of Brabant and Flanders followed in a few months, and what is most remarkable, after they had expelled the troops of Joseph II. they were ruined by intestine quarrels, and gave the world a new instance of that ancient hatred between arif-

aristocracy and democracy, which has induced many liberal-minded philosophers to think that the power of *one man*, equally elevated above all the jarring factions of the state, is a more tolerable form of government than a republic. As the aristocratic faction prevailed during the duration of those unsuccessful *United Provinces*, the French were not much interested in their cause. But a singular letter lately dispersed through Brabant, from one of the patriotic clubs to the returning emigrants, seems to imply, that they would not a second time observe the same neutrality.

“ *To the PATRIOTS.*

“ SIRS,

“ You know how to value liberty; you
 “ desired it, and unhappy events have pre-
 “ vented you from conquering it. The
 “ friends of the French Constitution *em-*
 “ *brace the whole world in their system of*
 “ *philanthropy*, and in virtue of that right,
 “ Sirs, they express their hopes, that when
 “ you return into your country, you will
 “ scatter the seeds of our beneficent pro-
 “ jects.

“jects, that they may produce a plentiful
“harvest.”

Let not this letter be passed over with contempt, because it is the production of one small club.—All those clubs who call themselves “Friends of the Constitution,” are connected by the new-invented tye of *affiliation* to the *Mother Club* of the Jacobines at Paris, even as all the Jesuits, whether at Goa, in China, or in Paraguay, were connected with the Jesuit’s convent at Rome, and acted under the order of their General and his Council.*

If

* This extraordinary letter ought to have the honour of making its appearance “in propria persona” before our readers.

Lettre des Amis de la Constitution de Maubeuge, aux
Patriotes Brabançons.

Le 18 Septembre 1791.

“*Messieurs le PATRIOTES,*

“Vous saviez apprecier la liberté, vous la desiriez, et
“des evenemens malheureux vous ont privés de sa con-
“quete. Les Amis de la Constitution Française *embrassent*
“*le monde entier dans leur systeme de philantropie*, et c’est à
“ce titre, Messieurs, qu’ils esperent qu’en retournant dans
“votre

If any one would fully ascertain the *benefits* which the *philanthropy* of the French clubs would extend to the whole world, he must study the history of the late Revolution at Avignon, which was formerly just touched upon, and of which it is now proper to lay a short abstract before our readers.

This country, situated between Dauphiny and Provence, was sold to the see of Rome above 400 years ago, by Joanna, Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence, to secure the protection of the Pope in a moment of distress and danger. The bargain was probably a hard one, but it has continued in force till the present time, and although the French Kings, when they quarrelled with the Pope, generally seized on this defenceless State, yet it was considered merely as

“votre pays, vous y jetterez le germe de nos projets bien-
 faisans pour qu'ils y produisent une recolte abondante.”

Signé, ROCHAMBEAU, *President,*
Imprimé par Ordre du Comité.

Signés, MOREL, ALEXANDRE, PHILIPPE,
Secretaires.

a de-

a deposit in their hands, and its restoration was always the pledge of returning amity. This little country is divided into two separate provinces, the district of Avignon, and the Comtat Venassin, of which the chief town is Carpentras; its inhabitants are entirely French in language and customs, and often became French subjects,* yet whilst they resided at home their allegiance was due only to the Pope. They paid hardly any taxes, had no game laws, were not compelled like the French peasants to labour on the highways, the practice of arbitrary imprisonment was not in use; they had only to complain of some grievances from the inferior ministers of government, and some mismanagement in their own limited finances.

Animated by the French example, they began in the autumn of 1789 to demand of their Sovereign redress of grievances and a new form of government. But whilst their petty States were disputing with the

* As for instance, the famous Crillon was a native of Avignon.

Popé's Legate, the most violent civil dissensions broke out at Avignon between the aristocratic and popular parties, between those who actually governed that municipality, and those who wished to get the government into their own hands. L'Escuyer and Tournal were amongst the principal leaders of the people, men who are now branded as villains by the unanimous voice of Europe, and the French Legislative Assembly themselves. The popular party at last got the better of their enemies on the 10th of June 1790. Like their friends at Paris, they endeavoured to sanctify their cause by pulling down the *Inquisition*, which was a much more harmless scarecrow than the *Bastille*, and did not contain one single prisoner. But they were determined to imitate such *excellent* models in every respect, and the next day they disgraced their cause by hanging in cold blood four leaders of the aristocratic party, who had capitulated on the promise of safety. One of these was a Marquis de Rochemont, a man much esteemed before these unhappy troubles; and to add the most injurious calumny to cruelty, they shewed the people an oil-cloth

great coat found in his house, pretending that it was a dress intended for some imaginary sufferer at an imaginary Auto-da-Fe, and had even the impudence to print this nonsense in the newspapers of Avignon.

After these noble exploits, they sent a deputation to offer their allegiance to the National Assembly, who were not a little embarrassed and divided on the occasion. The violent democratic party supported their cause with the utmost zeal, especially M. Camus, and M. Bouche, a deputy of Provence, who had entered into a close correspondence with the *Democrats* of Avignon. But these events clashed too much with the Assembly's famous and vaunting renunciation of all conquests, and the majority knew not how to contradict themselves so speedily in the face of all Europe. Many arguments were used to convince them that Avignon, left to itself, would be a *focus* of aristocracy and priestly power, which might encourage the mal-contented in other provinces. One honest member replied, that when he heard *convenience* substituted for *justice*, he thought himself in the
the

the council of Louis the XIVth. The debate was postponed, and here the business rested for a little while; but soon after the National Assembly was persuaded to send a regiment to garrison Avignon and protect the French traffic and interest, which was considered as an evident sign that it was soon to become a French city.—But here new difficulties arose.—The representative Assembly of the Comtat Venaissin assembled at Carpentras, were not disposed to follow entirely the example of Avignon; they liked the French Constitution, but they dreaded the French taxes; the Papal Government had hitherto spared their lands, and the National Assembly spared nothing when money was in view.

The Pope, in the mean time, offended at their leaving him little more than nominal sovereignty, and embarrassed with the more important losses that threatened him, gave them no protection, and, indeed, his best exertions could have availed but little. Avignon and Carpentras, therefore, assumed the appearance of two petty rival republics

I i 2

which

which hated each other with *genuine republican ferocity*.*

Accusations of plots and conspiracies to force each other into a government which they hated, flew about continually between the two districts, and all the clubs of the southern provinces who corresponded with the Jacobines, strongly espoused the cause of Avignon. The Constitutional Club of Aix, (the same that instigated the murder of M. Pascalis) distinguished itself by publishing pamphlets against Carpentras, written in the stile of the manifestos of an independent state.

I shall here quote a sentence faithfully translated from the *Mercure de France*, and not unworthy the attention of all neighbouring nations: “ Frenchmen have solemnly sworn protection and assistance, without distinction of *sect* or *country*, to every man oppressed by his neighbour. The sacred coalition of the friends of hu-

* If that is thought too severe, I appeal to ancient history.

“ *manity* will soon put an end to the ex-
 “ cesses of the representative Assembly (of
 “ Carpentras) and sweep from the surface
 “ of the globe those monsters who dis-
 “ grace it.” At this time the inhabitants
 of Carpentras had not committed any actual
 crimes : it is true, indeed, that they have
 not preserved themselves blameless through
 the whole of this wretched business, but the
 first open invasion commenced on the side
 of their enemies.

About the beginning of January 1791,
 the Avignonois seduced a part of the regi-
 ment of Soissonnois garrisoned in their
 town, to *desert from their officers* and accom-
 pany them in an expedition against Cavail-
 lon, which they took and barbarously plun-
 dered. Carpentras was their next object,
 and here the people of Carpentras are ac-
 cused first of murdering M. de Soichande,
 and next of disbanding in a cowardly man-
 ner. The representative Assembly dispersed
 in a panic, after protesting against the vio-
 lence offered to their independence, and the
 townsmen of Carpentras, to protect them-
 selves from their rivals, hung up the arms

of France, and declared themselves French subjects. However, the deserters of Soissonnois and the Avignon *Patriots* made a second attempt to plunder Carpentras, in which they were disappointed, and in their return broke into convents and private houses, and behaved like mere marauders.*

The National Assembly referred the forced submission of Carpentras to its committees, recalled the regiment of Soissonnois, and seem to have been not a little confounded at this fresh proof, that the *Rights of Men*, when left to the interpretation of common soldiers, are soon converted into the *Rights of Banditti!*

The dispersed Assembly of Carpentras, or at least a considerable part of it, met together at a town called St. Cecile, and declared that they would acknowledge no sovereign but the Pope. As crimes are the fruitful parents of crimes, so about this time the Comtadins stained their cause by the murder of M. Lavillasse, mayor of Vaïson,

* See the *Mercures of France* for February 1791.

a violent ringleader of the Avignon party. The enmity between the two districts and the different parties which subdivided them, was now more furious than ever; the army of Avignon prepared for a decisive expedition, and chose for their general an Irish adventurer, who went by his Christian name of Patrice or Patrick. On the 17th of April they defeated the Comtadins near Sarrian, plundered the neighbouring town and behaved with the greatest cruelty. The gentlemen and landed proprietors of the Comtat shut themselves up in Carpentras with their wives, children, and effects; and having nothing before their eyes but rapine, brutal dishonour, and murder, resolved to defend the town to the last extremity. So strong was that terrible, that unnatural heroism inspired by despair, that a lady of the name of Alyssac, more than once headed the sallies of the besieged, and fought on horseback with pistols at her saddle-bows.

In the mean while, the army of Avignon found it was not quite so easy to take a walled town as to plunder a village. They

had exhibited to the besieged two or three carts full of halts attended by their respective hangmen ; but this prospect had not dismayed the city ; they had cannon indeed to batter its walls, but they wanted skill to direct them. Like all undisciplined troops, they grew jealous of one another.

Their General *Patrice* had permitted the escape of one M. de Sainte Croix, a prisoner whom they had resolved to hang, and the fact being discovered, the patriotic army, according to the *unalienable Rights of Men*, hung up their *General*, and elected in his stead one Jourdan, who was not likely to deserve hanging by any unseasonable act of humanity. The story of this man, as related in French journals, is so curious, that it is necessary to explain it in a short digression.

He was a native of the southern provinces of France, and some reports that he had from his youth frequently asserted the *Rights of Man* against those *tyrannical laws* to which neither himself nor his fathers had ever given their assent. His last quar-

rel with that “*Old Beldam Justice*,”* was on account of heading a gang of smugglers in the neighbourhood of Valence; he escaped from the prisons of that town, and coming to Paris, got himself employed in the stables of the Count of Artois, an example of the unfortunate carelessness of the rich and great with regard to the characters of their servants. When a Revolution was in view, he deserted his master, and enrolled himself [under the banners of patriotism; and from that time his history becomes connected with the history of “the most glorious fabric of integrity ever raised by man.”† He declared himself the executioner of the patriot party, allowed his beard to grow, and with a figure as horrid as his language, went about declaring himself ready to mangle, alive or dead, the enemies of the Revolution, and was known by the name of *Jourdan le coupe-tête*. He it was, as formerly hinted, who on the famous, or infamous, 6th of October, severed the heads

* Vide Mr. Sheridan’s School for Scandal.

† Vide Mr. Fox’s speech in the House of Commons.—
Parliamentary Register.

from the yet palpitating bodies of the unfortunate De Huttes and Varicourt; and when the Chatelet attempted to search into that odious business, and ordered him to be taken up (*decreté de Prise de Corps*, is the French expression) he left Paris and entered into the service of Avignon, as most congenial to his natural temper. Here I must stop to observe, that as there was positive evidence against Jourdan, the National Assembly, when they disapproved of the conduct of the Chatelet, and took the business out of their hands, might, at least, have ordered the proceedings to have been carried on against that wretch, and have condemned him for contumacy (according to the French law.) Such a sentence, without really hurting even the wretch himself, would have served to convince the Parisians that *murder was not patriotism*; but the terror he had struck into the Anti-Revolutionists, had made him useful to the Democrates; he was not, therefore, to suffer the slightest disgrace, and we shall find that he had personal friends amongst that party, even to the latest moment of his crimes.

We have left him in the beginning of May at the head of an army more numerous than powerful, and unable to penetrate within the walls of Carpentras. He contented himself, therefore, with laying the neighbouring country under contribution in so barbarous a manner, that his army began to be commonly known by the name of the *Avignon Banditti*; the peasants of Provence and Dauphiny stood in fear of their incursions, and even their friends, the Constitutional Clubs, began to be ashamed of them. And now the never-failing internal subdivision, which always distracts factions, broke out at Avignon, and the same curse attended that devoted city, which, in a more important quarrel, attended the English Presbyterians; they had acquired their army by the promise of a higher pay than their empty coffers would allow them to fulfill.*

Jourdan led back his army to the neighbourhood of Avignon, demanded the stipu-

* Was Mr. Burke so much to blame when he spoke of “the dreadful precedent of gaining soldiers by donatives; or, in other words, an increase of pay?”

lated pay, stormed, threatened, and compelled the magistrates to impose a heavy tax upon the citizens. L'Escuyer, Tournal, and a few other leaders, were firmly leagued with Jourdan; the rest of the new-formed municipality, and the few men of property who remained in the town, heartily hated their military allies, and began to find themselves in the situation of the frogs in the fable, who, on revolting against the peaceful sway of *King Log*, were punished by Jupiter with the tyranny of a devouring stork. Each party looked up with trembling eagerness to the National Assembly as the only power that could decide their fate.

The National Assembly felt the utility of making themselves masters of these little provinces, but still their famous renunciation of all acquisitions stared them in the face, and procured a momentary triumph to the opposition party. On the 4th of May the Committees brought up their expected Report on the business of Avignon, and after a long and violent debate,* it was, contrary to

* I have not mentioned these debates in the first part of this Historical Sketch, because they properly related to the history of Avignon.

general expectation, voted that Avignon and the Comtat formed no part of the French empire. The original words are these: “*Avignon et le Comtat ne sont pas parties integrantes de l'Empire François.*” The patriots were much disappointed, but their usual allies were at hand. M. de Clermont-Tonnerre had distinguished himself by an eloquent speech on the injustice of seizing Avignon; he was insulted and threatened by the mob at the door of the Assembly, they next proceeded to his house and attempted to break it open, but were quickly dispersed by the National Guard. On the ensuing day M. Clermont laid a complaint before the House for what we should call *a breach of privilege*, and we also know how an English House of Commons would have taken up this business. But the French National Assembly thought fit to determine, that they were only concerned in the freedom of debate within their own walls, and passed on to the order of the day. The temper of the populace had visibly influenced the temper of the House: they passed a perplexed sort of vote, which intimated that the preceding decree only referred to the present
state

state of things, and not to any rights which France might hereafter acquire; and the rest of the business was again sent back to their Committees. The populace at the doors shouted for joy, and cried out, *Avignon est à nous!* Avignon is ours! A curious exclamation this from a people whom we are told have given up all thoughts of conquest, and are solely bent on universal peace.

Some of the Republican Party wrote to their friends, Tournal, L'Escuyer, &c. at Avignon, a narration of this affair, and observed, "that the people had given the "Assembly an important lesson." It so happened, that the people of Avignon, impatient to know their fate, flocked to the town-house, and obliged the Magistrates to read aloud every letter they had received. By this means it came to be publicly known, how little regard the French Democrats expressed for the *freedom of debate*, when it did not coincide with their interests. Of all the criminal actions of the Parisians, this, though apparently trivial, is most worthy of the attention of the rest of Europe.

rope. M. de Clermont was not attacked for any opinion contrary to the liberty of France, but for too scrupulous a regard for the observance of justice towards a foreign Power.

The Committees to whom the tedious business of Avignon had so often been referred, at last proposed to send commissaries to conclude a pacification between the districts, and take the votes of the different villages (or *communautés*), as to the proposed re-union with France. The names of the commissaries were, Verminiac, Scene des Maisons, and Mulot, (formerly an Abbé). They set out about the beginning of June, and on the 14th of that month concluded a truce between Avignon, Carpentras, and the army, now called the army of Vaucluse, from the place where it was encamped. Detested on all sides, on account of its exactions, it assumed a right of acting as an independent power, and stipulated safety for itself, and pardon for such of its members as were deserters from the French service.

It was not very easy to perform these articles, for the peasants detested the soldiers to such a degree, that they way-laid and murdered them whenever they found an opportunity. These were crimes, no doubt, and deserved to be punished; but when the commissioners represented them as the most enormous of all crimes, it is impossible not to reflect, that if the German Princes invaded France; every cruelty committed by a peasant * upon a soldier would be considered as an act of patriotism.

The commissioners, no doubt, were bound to grant protection to this army; but they quickly discovered an evident and unwarrantable partiality to their cause. They permitted them to enter triumphantly into Avignon with the inscription of *the brave banditti of Avignon* stuck in their hats; they spoke of them as of the *soldiers of liberty*; they caressed the bloody Jourdan, and put the whole government of Avignon into the

* In a journal carried on by M. Cerutti and M. Mercier, hopes were expressed, that if the Emperor sent General Bender into France, the head of that *ferocious Croatian* would be brought into Paris on a pike.

hands of the triumvirate Jourdan, Tournal, and L'Escuyer. These petty despots immediately put into prison all those who were accused of *Aristocracy*, and, probably, involved in that accusation all those who were their private enemies.

In the mean while, the different communities gave (however reluctantly) their votes for an union with France, convinced that independence would only expose them to scenes of plunder, that would deprive them of the means of traffic * and subsistence, and to scenes of carnage that would equal horrors recorded in history. Each party had been guilty of too many cruelties to trust its rivals, and the authority of a great empire was alone sufficient to prevent them from extirpating one another.

Having collected all their different acts of submission, Verminac and Des Maisons returned to Paris, appeared before the Na-

* This shocking, though petty civil war, may be said to have extended its fury from men down to reptiles, since the very silk-worms were destroyed in the villages through which the soldiers passed.

tional Assembly and made speeches; in which the affairs of Avignon were represented in a manner most conformable to Democratic prejudices. The Abbé Maury made a violent speech, in which he accused them of protecting villains universally detested: but truth itself could not be credited from so unpopular a voice.

The Assembly approved of the Commissioner's conduct, and on the 14th of September, the very day that the King ratified the Constitution, they bestowed on him (as by way of gift) a province to which he had no right; and declared, that Avignon and the Comtat were united to the French empire.

Thus we see that the magic spell of their famous vote against conquest is actually broken, and that France may think it has a right to acquire half the territories in Europe, as soon as it can find a weak enemy and a plausible evasion.

If the National Assembly had immediately sent troops to take possession of Avignon,

hon, they would have, in some degree, atoned for their injustice; but, trusting to their partial Commissioners, who had misled them by their flattering misrepresentations, they left the administration for some weeks longer in the hands of the triumvirate, and thus have charged themselves with all the bloodshed that followed; however, their consciences may now be too insensible to feel remorse.

The Abbé Mulot, who had remained in the neighbourhood of Avignon, had by this time quarrelled with Jourdan and his colleagues, and each side sent reciprocal complaints to the new Legislative Assembly, which, embarrassed with its own affairs, was too dilatory in coming to a decision.

Jourdan, Tournal, and L'Escuyer, were determined not to quit the reins of government without being recompensed for their trouble. They ransacked the churches of their plate, and at last threatened to lay hands on the pledges deposited in the *Mont-

* An institution well known in foreign countries, which lends money to the poor on pledges.

de-Picté. The populace were enraged, they assembled, and cruelly murdered L'Escuyer in a church. Never can murder be justifiable; but it should be remembered, that L'Escuyer had instigated this very populace to murder the Marquis de Rochegude and his unfortunate companions on the 11th of June 1790. The administrators of Avignon were dreadfully alarmed at the dismal catastrophe of their colleague, and had they killed most of the riotous populace on the spot, their revenge might have been excusable: but, on the night between the 16th and 17th of October, they privately sent for the wretched prisoners, who had been confined since the month of August, and therefore could not have been authors of the riot: they murdered them one after another as they were brought from the prison to the Castle, cut their bodies in pieces, (to prevent discovery) threw them into a well, and blocked up its entrance. On the next day they inserted, in their Avignon newspaper, that out of their great humanity, they had suffered the prisoners to escape; but these pretences could not long avail.

The

The Legislative Assembly was roused at length, and new Commissioners arrived at the head of a body of French troops. Soon after their entrance into the town they were surrounded by women and children, who, with tears and cries, demanded their fathers, their brothers, or their husbands. The Commissioners ordered the Castle to be searched, and the horrid pit was too soon traced by the scent of carnage. It was opened, and found almost filled with mangled bodies and severed heads. The number of victims is as yet incorrectly stated, but the lowest computation fixes it at about thirty; the most probable account is threescore.

Patriotic ferocity had now attained its most dreadful pitch, and it was impossible to justify it any longer. The Legislative Assembly, therefore, affected to receive the letter of the Commissioners with the screams of a knot of hysterical women assembled at a tragedy, and the letter dropped from the hands of the secretary who read it. Well might it drop, if he recollected how often it had been loudly asserted in those walls,

that to condemn the Revolution of Avignon was to condemn the Revolution of France; and that they both stood upon the same footing.

Orders were sent to imprison Jourdan and his colleagues, and to have them tried before the National Court. What extenuations or defence they will produce, or what will be their final destiny, remains uncertain at the writing of this narration: but one fact is certain—the ruling party in France have courted and protected a band of villains, in order to acquire a province by their means; and when that purpose was served, have given them up to the detestation of the world, if not to condign punishment. I defy the greatest enemy of Lewis the Fourteenth to produce, from his annals, an example of a conquest attended with such atrocious circumstances.

Two other reflections naturally present themselves; the first is the danger of trusting soldiers, who have once shaken off the habits of military obedience. They may no longer be mercenaries (according to the
fashion-

fashionable term) employed by their King, or their General, but they soon become mercenaries to their own unbridled passions of ambition and avarice,

The next remark is, that those apologists are guilty of misrepresentation, who impute the ferocity of the French populace to the particular gross abuses of their Government. The Avignonois were an indolent, inactive people, placed in a kind of middle state, between the horrors of arbitrary power and the blessings of liberty; yet have they been guilty of more atrocious actions than the French themselves. The truth is, that cruelty always follows the progress of levelling principles; and communicates itself from the party which attacks all superiority to the party which defends it.

For the sake of these important truths I have thus long detained the reader on the affairs of a country hitherto scarcely named in Europe. A country better known, and somewhat more considerable, Switzerland, has been in danger of equal convulsions, and can hardly yet be considered as in a

state of safety. Our Republican writers of the last age used ignorantly to contrast the liberty of Switzerland with the tyranny of some great monarchies; but the superior illumination of modern Republicans has discovered, that at least half of it is enslaved, and ought to be regenerated by the same means as France—not to mention Avignon.

The Swiss mal-contents collected themselves into a club at Paris, under the name of the Friends of Swiss Liberty: they were patronised by the leaders of the constitutional clubs, and particularly by Mirabeau, who employed some of them in revising his works. The first occasion on which they distinguished themselves, was in sending a deputation to the Assembly after the military insurrection at Nancy, to lament the misbehaviour of some Swiss regiments concerned in it, and to slide artfully into their speech some censure of their mother country. The imprudence of the Assembly (similar to all their other imprudences committed towards foreign Powers) in admitting such a deputation as a legal authorised body, disgusted the Cantons, who sent
com-

complaints to the French ministry, and gave rise to the suspicions ever since entertained, that the Swiss magistrates in general were disaffected to the French Revolution.

Letters even before this time had been dispersed amongst the country people of Fribourg, Soleure, and the aristocratical Cantons, to lay before them the grievances they suffered from their magistrates. But the principal efforts of the allied French and Swiss Democrats were directed on the Païs de Vaud, a district conquered above two hundred years ago by the aristocracy of Berne from the Dukes of Savoy; and which all accounts concur in describing as being upon the whole governed with great mildness and equity.

In the summer of 1790, a M. de Perigny was taken up in the Païs de Vaud for dispersing pamphlets amongst the peasants exciting them to insurrection. By the laws of the country he might have been an inmate for years of some Swiss castle, but the courts of justice at Berne did not venture to affront *French Revolution principles*

so far, but contented themselves with *banishing him from Switzerland*, (no very harsh punishment, it must be allowed, to any but the Swiss themselves.)* This man was certainly a Frenchman and not a mal-content Swiss, because Mallet-du-Pan, who is very severe on his conduct, does not charge him with treason, but breach of hospitality. The same man had been accused of inflaming the peasants of the Lower Valais, who at that time had some quarrel with the district of Upper Valais; and the judges of Berne, expressly reserved to that little independent Republic their right of trying this man, but I suppose, the Valaisans thought it much their wisest course to take no notice of him at all.

Whilst the fire in the Pais de Vaud was burning under ashes, at Geneva it was very near bursting into a conflagration. The contests that have long divided that aristocratic Republic are well known in Europe, nor is it forgotten that in the spring of 1789, and at the moment of Necker's

* See the *Mercures of France* for January 1791.

greatest power, the popular party took occasion of a casual riot to oblige the magistrates to repeal the unjust and oppressive laws enacted some years ago after an unsuccessful revolt of the Democrates. But the mal-content Genevois residing at Paris thought that nothing was obtained, because still something was wanting, and the writers who assisted Mirabeau in his *Courier de Provence* upbraided their countrymen with making a compromise with their tyrants. The magistracy still remained in the hands of those who were called aristocratic families; the citizens and burghers did not shew any great disposition to quarrel with their magistrates, but there remained a more dangerous subject of dispute between the citizens and the natives, namely, the descendants of foreigners settled at Geneva. A code of laws was preparing to remove many of the unwarrantable distinctions between those two classes. But the natives went so far as to demand unlimited admission to the general or sovereign Assembly for themselves, for the peasants of the little district of Geneva, in short, for every resident in that small Republic. The reader, if he chooses;

chufes, may fee in the *Mercures* of January and February 1791, the reasons that were urged againft fuch a project; they may be reduced to two; the danger that a fovereign affembly fo numerous and fo full of poor perfons, would fell their independence to fome foreign power, and the impoffibility of eftablifhing *Representative Democracy* amongst a people who in general admired Rouffeau's politics.*

In the beginning of 1791, the fignal of an intended revolt was given, by finging under the magiftrates windows the famous fong of *Cà Ira*, with an emendation fuited to the place. After finging, "All the Ariftocrates to lantern," they added, "*Et tous les bourgeois auffi,*" † and all the burghers alfo! In the month of February, an open

* *Representative Democracy* is a new term and a good one, invented by the French to exprefs the American Conftitutiou and in fome refpects their own. Rouffeau thought fuch a government no better than a difguifed tyranny, and therefore the French representatives acted very wildly in voting a ftatue to him.

† Yet we have a club in London who whilft they drink their toasts beat time to this horrid air, and boast of it in the newfpaper. *Prob Pudor!*

attack

attack was made on the town by the neighbouring peasants, and it was apprehended that a party within the town would open the gates and give up their adversaries to be plundered by the rabble. All the citizens were under arms and continued so for some days, till the insurgents, finding that the French peasants of the Pais de Gex did not join them, as was expected, returned to a state of tranquillity. This attempt was supposed to have been instigated by a man who had once been a democrat of Geneva, was now become a Frenchman, and elected mayor of Gex.

In the days of French despotism it was universally believed that the private resentment and partiality of a clerk in Vergennes's office, had excited Vergennes to the violent part he took in favour of the Aristocrats. But when the tranquillity of a foreign State is disturbed, does it signify whether a mayor chosen by the people, or a clerk chosen by the first minister, is the instrument of mischief.*

* I beg pardon of both these illustrious characters for having forgot their names.

In the mean while, the French journalists, who had repeated with transport the news of every insurrection in every corner of Europe, down to the quarrel between the two districts of the Valais, expressed particular satisfaction at the troubles of Geneva, and assured the French, *that Geneva would soon follow the example of Avignon, and demand to be incorporated with the French empire.*

This last circumstance opened the eyes of the Genevois, who are as proud of their independence as the citizens of any old Grecian Republic. A number of the principal inhabitants signed a paper protesting against all violent proceedings, and declaring that they would abide by the laws and the Constitution. The new code has since been completed and ratified by the sovereign Assembly. All is quiet at present, but there is reason to apprehend, from paragraphs in foreign papers, that one side thinks too much is granted, another side too little, and that the distinction of friend or enemy of the French Revolution is super-added to the party-names of Aristocrate or Democrate.

The senate of Berne, a more powerful body than the magistracy of Geneva, continued anxiously watching the motions of the Democrates in the Pais de Vaud, where the anniversary of the 14th of July was celebrated with much greater pomp and splendor than our Democrates employed on the occasion. Soon after the senate of Berne sent a commission of four magistrates to take informations on the subject of a supposed conspiracy, which was presently followed by a body of the militia of their own canton who were quartered some time at Lausanne; different persons were taken up, and two in particular of the names of Rosslet and Muller, citizens of Lausanne, have been sent to the castle of Chillon, and are to be tried at Berne for treason. The enemies of the senate accuse it of the most arbitrary proceedings, in particular of ordering the prisoners to be tried at Berne contrary to the privileges of Lausanne. Their friends say in their defence, that treason was an excepted case, and that the senate was not provoked by the mere idle feasting of the 14th of July, but by innumerable libels spread about in Berne itself, and by repeated

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infor-

informations, that a conspiracy was forming between their subjects and the Constitutional Clubs in *brotherhood* with the Jacobines, to give up the Païs de Vaud to France in the same manner as Avignon, and that the conspiracy extended to Geneva and to part of Savoy. If the senate of Berne keeps its promise in publishing the trials, the world will be better able to judge of these mutual accusations. But can it be supposed that the senate will not be more tempted to arbitrary proceedings, when they have Avignon and its dreadful pit of slaughter before their eyes, or when they recollect the scene almost as horrid of the 11th of June, when the rabble of Avignon hung up four principal townsmen, and insulting their dying convulsions, cried out, Dance, dance, ye dogs of Aristocrates! Yet this scene was passed slightly over in the National Assembly, as we shall presently shew. May not the rulers of an aristocracy, therefore, say, the friends and pupils of the Jacobine Clubs are not men who would be satisfied with a mixture of democracy if we granted it, but men, who like Renault, in Venice Preserv'd,

Would kill the very name
Of Senator, and bury it in blood!

But the most remarkable part of the business is still behind. On the commencement of the first prosecutions at Lausanne, the Constitutional Society of Dijon wrote to the Bailif of Lausanne in the haughty stile they would have addressed a subject, which letter, according to the wonted vigorous spirit of that canton, was immediately sent to the French Ministry with a heavy complaint, and formed part of the charges which M. Duport laid before the last National Assembly against the French clubs. Very lately, a fugitive from the Pais de Vaud, a M. Constant de Rebecque wrote in a journal called *Le Moniteur Universel*, to invite the French to seize the Pais de Vaud as part of the ancient kingdom of Burgundy, even as Avignon was part of the ancient county of Provence. The great question is not, what right have such or such countries to rebel; but what right have the French to interfere or to profit by it? That they might hope to profit is very certain, as it is well known that the Duc de Choiseul was jealous of

the trade of Geneva, and wanted to draw it into the hands of France; by building a town called Verfoy in its neighbourhood; consequently that rich and trading city itself would have been a still more desirable acquisition. The Pais de Vaud would then be just at hand; it is a country far preferable to the rest of Switzerland, and not unworthy the ambition of any conqueror.*

The fate of Berne or of Avignon is in itself of little consequence to the interest of Great Britain. But——

Mutato nomine, de te Fabula narratur.

Let us suppose that Jersey and Guernsey were discontented, (we know they have internal disputes) and that French emissaries had persuaded them to offer their country to France, as part of the old duchy of Normandy—would not the neighbouring con-

* This inclination to kindle a civil war in Switzerland was observed by Mounier as early as the winter of 1789, and is grievously complained of by Necker in his last work. These little states, says he, till the French Revolutionists sent their emissaries, had *the weakness* to think themselves happy.

stitutional clubs discover that here was another occasion for "the sacred coalition of the friends of humanity to exert itself?"

This loss would, however, be a trifling one. Far more important questions might be put relative to the *British isles*; but prudence and delicacy alike require that they should be left to the imagination of the reader.

There might be a few other hypothetical questions put, of a less delicate nature.

Suppose the French should endeavour, by stirring up civil commotions, to possess themselves of the Flemish provinces? an acquisition it has (ever since the age of Henry the Seventh) been the policy of England to prevent, on account of the command it would give to France of our north-eastern coasts.

Suppose France should once more endeavour to turn out our ally the Stadtholder, whom all their republican writers, and M. Brissot in particular, frankly call the *tyrant*

of *Holland*? And suppose such a Revolution should only be preliminary to the measure of ruining our East-India Company? (according to the intention of M. de Vergennes). The jealousy that the French entertain of our power in the East-Indies appears in their writings, notwithstanding all the pains which they take to conceal it.* It may be answered, that they have no longer a powerful East-India Company influenced by sentiments of *rivalship*; but rich private merchants may grow equally jealous; they may whisper in the ear of powerful demagogues, Join with us to ruin the English, and we will support you in some great political question. We know too well in England, that the patriotism of factions seldom resists such a temptation.

These supposed cases, no doubt, may never happen; and if they should happen, it is not for a single unknown individual to advise what part ought to be taken. But they are not questions that can be answered

* See the calculations that Mr. Brissot makes of the wealth imported into England from India, in the third volume of his *American Travels*.

by mere empty bombast about the *union of nations*, and the *fraternal embraces* of the *friends of liberty*.*

It is not very *Christian*, indeed, to talk of any nation as our *natural enemy*, nor can it be recommended even as a political sentiment. But before we are called upon to renounce the prejudices of ages, it is proper to ask, whether we are sure that the opposite party has also renounced them? and, in the present instance, many reasons incline us to suspect the contrary. Nations, equally eager for riches, have frequently detested one another, without being influenced by any considera-

* The following passage has lately appeared in all our English newspapers, as an extract of a French letter from Pondicherry :

“ By the vigorous manner in which Tippoo defends himself against the united forces of the English empire in India, attacked besides by the Marattas and Nizam, we may reasonably conclude, that the English power in Asia is not so formidable as M. de Conway has induced our ministers to believe, by persuading them that *it was not to be shaken by any effort or alliance.*”

I need not comment on the venom contained in those last words.

tion of liberty or slavery ; and there may be some nations so different in their tempers, that they never can be *natural friends*.

I am far from supposing our own national character to be perfect. It must be confessed, that English as well as French, are too much addicted to egotism ; but the egotism of the English is a quiet, sullen passion, wrapt up in itself ; that of the French is loquacious, restless, and unsatisfied, till it beholds other nations imitate its example. This passion has shewn itself most strongly in the French Revolution, as well as the most mortifying contempt for the usages of other countries ; and we need look no farther for the cause that has irritated many warm tempers against it.

Some circumstances of this kind have been already mentioned in the course of my narrative, such as the preamble to the decree for abolishing nobility, and the letter of the president to the States of Pennsylvania. Many quotations might be made from debates of the Assembly, and Journals of literati, to prove that their politicians, wits, and
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and *witlings*, though a little more indulgent to us than to other nations, had expressed a supreme contempt for all those institutions, which, with us, check the power of clubs and demagogues, long before Mr. Burke's violent book might have provoked retaliation.

But I shall confine myself to such circumstances as indicate the wish of being imitated; because that passion has a strong tendency to promote discord and war.

The mob of Paris was mightily flattered at the very outset of the Revolution, by hearing that the English had revolted, and intended to have but one House of Parliament. Some particular manufacturers near London had, it is said, about that time, apprehended a riot, and some orders had been given for the guards to hold themselves in readiness. These vague stories were transformed at Paris into a counterpart of their own transactions; and it was repeated, with particular satisfaction, that the guards had refused obedience to their officers. It is added, that some of the metaphysical leaders of the Revolution

L 1 4 expres-

expressed their joy that the English were going to abolish that Gothic part of their Constitution, the House of Lords. This anecdote is not certain; but the general fiction I myself certainly saw hinted at in a patriotic pamphlet,* and it was treated with especial ridicule by Mallet in his *Mercure*, who assured the French, that they little knew the egotism of the English character.†

Just before the dissolution of the last Parliament the same tale was revived at Paris under a different shape, and greedily swallowed for a day:—the House of Commons had refused supplies to Mr. Pitt in support of the quarrel with Spain, the King in anger had dissolved the Commons—and then the *favourite burden* concluded the *song*—that the English people had risen and attacked the nobility.

* Called *Histoire des Evenemens remarquables qui se sont passés à Paris*.

† It may be said, that I often quote a partial writer; but here I only quote him for the temper of the day, which, as I said before, pamphleteers must describe truly, or not be read.

I must now insert a quotation, of a much later date, from the literary part of the French *Mercure*, after reminding my readers, that it is carried on by a set of distinguished men of letters, attached to the Revolution, and differs entirely from the political part.

The *Mercure* of the 23d of July, 1791, after giving an account of a book, called, *La Police de Paris dévoilée*, written against the former police of Paris, by one Manuel, (a noted demagogue of that city) concludes the extract in the following manner :

“ We cannot conclude this article without recommending to the curiosity of our readers a passage on the police of London. The author observes several monstrous defects, which it is surprizing to find in a country which has so long been quoted as a model for all enlightened nations.* But
“ what

* The English never considered their police as a model for enlightened nations. They never yet knew how to reconcile a strict police and unbounded liberty. If the French can reconcile those inconsistencies, they will then really deserve applause.

“ what is more astonishing, (and what, in-
 “ deed, requires confirmation) is the excel-
 “ sive misery of an immense portion of the
 “ people. He calculates not fewer than *two*
 “ *hundred thousand* to be the number of per-
 “ sons in the most abject situation of pover-
 “ ty, in quarters of London almost un-
 “ known to foreigners. The detail he en-
 “ ters into makes the reader shudder. If
 “ this picture is faithful, the consequences
 “ may be *dreadful on the eve of those shocks*
 “ *which threaten the Government.*” (*A la*
veille des secousses qui menacent le Gouverne-
ment are the original words.)

“ Let us compare with this picture the
 “ words of the petition made by a nume-
 “ rous and respected society, that of the
 “ friends of the Constitution.”

There is no need of remarks on the exaggerated num-
 ber of the poor. Whatever be the misery of the poor of
 London, it is not for want of a most enormous poor's rate, nor
 are the abuses of that poor's rate imputable to the execu-
 tive Government, which has neither power nor right to
 interfere.

Let

The journalist then proceeds to quote some passages from one of the last advertisements of the Constitutional Society, (not distinguishing between an advertisement and a petition) passages which conclude with saying, “that the time approaches when justice will be demanded in so firm a tone, that it cannot be refused;” and concludes thus:

“In a country where people speak in that stile, and in the bosom of a capital where the immense population presents” (says our author) “the aspect of a misery so hideous, that it is not to be compared even with the quarters of Paris, inhabited by the most indigent class; in such a situation of things, how long can subsist the political abuses in England complained of by the *friends of the Constitution*, the *friends of the French Revolution*? An interesting question, and worthy of occupying the Cabinet of St. James’s.”

The moment in which this declamation was probably written, makes it still very remarkable: though published the 23d of July,

July, it is most natural to suppose, that the authors of a literary journal prepare their articles a few days before-hand. It is certain, that news is sometimes four or five days in its progress from London to Paris. One is driven, therefore, to suspect, that the literati of Paris were waiting for an account of the celebration of the 14th of July, and indulging themselves in the savage expectation, that the rabble of London would treat a Lord-Mayor, or a Secretary of State, as cruelly as Berthier or Foulon were treated.

These men of letters, La Harpe, Chamfort, &c. who commenced their career with writing elegant dramas and tales, and now openly advance their pretensions as authors to govern the State, need not be astonished if an author, however insignificant, presumes to answer, in the name of the people of England, and is not afraid of being disavowed. We know that our Government has some imperfections; but were they a great deal more numerous, we would connive at them, rather than become the tools of foreign ambition. We know that clubs
par-

participate of the worst quality of an aristocracy, that of being *self-elected*; and therefore we never regarded any political clubs with *prodigious* respect; they were with us the appendages of party, not the substance itself. All parties had experience enough of the consequences of letting the rabble of London loose in the affair of Lord George Gordon's riots, and would, probably, unite against a similar misfortune. We marched under the banners of our country-gentlemen to attack James the Second, and we never will follow *the banner of the parish of St. Giles*. If we did, we should deserve the fate of the unhappy, deceived burghers of Avignon,—to be cut to pieces by our rascally army, and flung into a ditch.

I know, that the unfortunate and disgraceful affair which happened at that time, the riots of Birmingham, are misrepresented by our enemies abroad, as the crime of our Government and our Church; but none, who know the character of either as a body, can believe the scandalous imputation. If the Dissenters can fix it upon any individuals of the church or the gentry (which is

more than I believe) let them bring forward the villains into day-light, and expose them to the horror of the world. But even if their assertions were true, is it for the admirers of the French revolutionists to be astonished at such crimes?

Dr. Priestley's letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham is such as might naturally be expected from a man, smarting with a grievous injury; but many passages lead one to exclaim with the dramatic poet,* "How quickly those who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for their own!"

He sets out thus: "By hearing the Disfenters continually railed at, you have been led to consider any injury done to us as a meritorious thing. When the *object* was *right*, you thought the *means* could not be *wrong*."

He has in these words excellently and concisely expressed the objections which

* See the Vth Act of Murphy's Way to Keep Him.

must ever prevent moralists from giving unbounded applause to the French Revolution, which was founded on the principles now reprobated by its friends.

He goes on: "Happily the minds of Englishmen have a horror of murder." —They have, and long may that instinctive horror exist! But it would be difficult to depend on its existence, if the common people admired the French Revolution as much as those societies who instituted festivals to celebrate it. One great support of the French Revolution has been the universal fear of murder, if any enmity was discovered towards its principles. The great leaders of the Jacobine societies, those very societies whom Mess. Price, Priestley, &c. have particularly chosen to correspond with, have more than once hinted, that it was a trifling offence in the people to murder a criminal whom the laws could not reach. I have inserted in the former part of this work some quotations to that purpose, from the speeches of Mirabeau, Lameth, and others, I shall now insert a few similar quotations of a later date.

M. Scene-

M. Scene-des-Maisons, speaking in the National Assembly as a Commissioner sent from the kingdom of France to the independent state of Avignon, speaks in the following *gentle* style of the murders committed in cool blood on the 11th of June 1790, after the immediate tumult was at an end:—"The people (of Avignon) remained the masters, and the pleasure of vengeance followed the desire of self-defence. A great number of nobles had been apprehended; they wanted to sacrifice them all to public security; but the people, unaccustomed to exercise their own vengeance, would have it exercised by the hangman. This happy delay slackened the excess of fury, and four wretched men fell victims to the fury of their own party, victims the more to be pitied, as public opinion gives two of them many virtues, and only supposes them guilty of weakness."

A twelvemonth ago it would, perhaps, have been insisted, that this was a tolerably candid narration: but let the Dissenters suppose, that Mr. Hutton or Mr. Ryland had
been

been murdered at Birmingham, and that Mr. Burke had, in the House of Commons, mentioned the cruel deed in similar terms, would not their leaders have exhausted all the powers of language in reproaching him for his savage indifference ?

M. Guillin, in the end of last June, was killed at his country seat, on suspicion of aristocracy, his body torn to pieces, and his limbs sent round (in triumph) to the neighbouring villages. An orator, pleading before the National Assembly for the inhabitants of that department, said, that these actions “seemed to lose their horror, when “one considers the atrocities of the victim.” I will not dispute whether this M. Guillin might not at that critical period be plotting against the state, but when I read that some of his atrocities were keeping poisoned arrows (Indian curiosities) in his house, and manuring his lands with corpses dug from a church-yard, I cannot help pitying the country where such tales are current, tho’ a hundred metaphysicians should unite in pronouncing it happy.

Whoever will read the debates of the present, as well as the last Assembly, will find, that all who profess to be what we call *flaming* patriots, adopt a tone of ferocity more or less disguised. Of these M. Isnard is one of the principal, who, amongst many similar flourishes, told the Assembly, when they were debating on a law against the emigrants, that “the vengeance of the
“people was like the vengeance of Heaven,
“the terrible supplement of the silence of
“human laws.”

The people of Brest have lately shewn a disposition once more to act upon this humane doctrine; they stopped a naval officer going with his ship to the relief of St. Domingo, cried out, he was an Aristocrate going to restore despotism, and threatened to hang him, because, they said, he would otherwise escape as other criminals had done.

So much for murder; let us now proceed to conflagration and robbery. The Doctor says, “What is the value of life,
“when every thing is done to make it
“wretched?”

“ wretched ? In many cases there would
“ be greater mercy in dispatching the in-
“ habitants than in burning their houses.”

Though I will not compare the case of a man who is plundered by the rabble to the case of a man stripped of what he thinks his property by Act of Parliament, yet even in the latter case the despoiled sufferers may join in the Doctor's pathetic exclamation. The greater number of the French clergy are reduced to want and beggary, and though they are *priests* and *Papists*, they are men like ourselves, and claim compassion from men. But more than this the Doctor and his most devoted adherents are disposed to wish for the destruction of all church establishments throughout the world, Protestant as well as Popish, without compassion for the individuals who would be ruined at that period of confusion. If a Popish priest acts up to his duty, his fall will be single; but the fall of a body of Protestant clergy will injure the families from whom they have taken wives, and the families into which they have married their children. But if Churchmen deserve no

compassion, there is another class of men in France, who say they are driven into emigrations and rebellion by the oppressions they endure; I mean the provincial gentry, whose case is thus represented by an apologist in the *Mercure*:

“ There is no safety for ourselves, our families, or our property; every rascally debtor, every farmer, who robs us of our due, threatens us with firebrands, or with a lantern.”

“ Or if our peasants preserve a little more honesty, every self-important burgher of a town, every vehement member of a club, thinks he has a right to affront us.

“ We are left to bear alone the burden of public taxes; in many places our whole landed estate would not suffice to pay the iniquitous *quota* which our enemies exact from us.”

Instances of individuals almost ruined by late tumults, are given in the widow and family of M. Guillin, whose house, moveables,

ables, and papers, were burnt at the same time that he was murdered; and in a M. Chaponay, (also in the neighbourhood of Lyons) who saved his life with difficulty, and whose house was plundered on the 24th of June. They might pretend it was resentment and suspicion at the King's flight, but the real cause was said to be, that the clubs of Ville Franche and Tre-voux had resolved, that gentlemen should give up their *feudal rents*, without the indemnity ordered by the Assembly, and M. Chaponay had received a message, threatening his life if he would not consent.

I do not assert the truth of all these complaints, but it is not the letters and speeches of M. Pethion and Condorcet, and other heads of the levelling party, that can disprove them.

If the Birmingham Dissenters think that forgery of letters and papers was used against them, the French aristocrats tell the same tale in a hundred instances. If the Dissenters say, that victims enough have not been sacrificed to their wrongs, I shall not

disagree with their opinion, but will remind them, that *not one victim* has yet been sacrificed in France to the wrongs of a person suspected of disaffection.

News have just come, that the murderers of M. Guillin, and other persons accused of murdering aristocrats, are discharged from prison, as included in the general amnesty. I do not dispute the propriety of that wide extension of forgiveness, I only state the simple fact. But what is more, that *sentimental* friend of virtue and humanity, M. Brissot, has, in his Journal called *Le Patriote François*, hinted the propriety of including in the amnesty the petty despots accused of the massacre of Avignon, because their crimes were occasioned by the crimes of aristocracy.* After this, one may expect the St. Barthelemi to be justified.

* M. Brissot, so convinced that it was the right and duty of Avignon to throw off its allegiance to the Pope, is in a rage if the colony of St. Domingo flights the decrees of the Assembly, and accuses them of enormous treason. Does his choler arise because the planters keep slaves? So did our Thirteen Colonies, for whose independence he was so strenuous an advocate.

In one word, if the improbable suspicions entertained by the Dissenters were real, it would only confirm this dreadful truth, that in times when violent revolutions are executing or expected, whatever crimes one party thinks lawful to overturn established government, the opposite party thinks lawful to support it,

To him who considers himself as the great champion, first of Dissenters, and secondly of Revolutionists, to a man of such unquestioned knowledge in languages and history, I should recommend silently in his closet to study * that father of *philosophical history*, Thucydides, particularly the reflections in his third book on the troubles of Corcyra. The nobles and the common people of Corcyra having been long at variance, the dispute was terminated at length by a massacre of the noble families.† The gene-

* Herodotus has been called the *father of history*, but Thucydides was the first who fought for the causes of events, not in marvellous fiction, but in the passions of man.

† That massacre was more extensive, but, in other respects, not unlike the massacre of Avignon.

rality of the Athenians rejoiced, because it obliged Corcyra to seek their alliance ; but the more piercing intellect of Thucydides saw, in the cruelty with which this sedition was carried on, the primary cause of all the crimes and misfortunes which irreparably stained the Grecian name.

He tells you how from that fatal period, “ the partisans of a popular government of nobles, disputing with each other for superiority, boldly attempted the most atrocious actions :” how “ no treaty could reconcile the factions, no oaths hold them in awe :” “ men were induced to attempt crimes, that surpassed what had ever been heard of. Sometimes contriving new stratagems, sometimes unheard-of modes of revenge.” “ *It was held praise-worthy to anticipate the evil which another intended.*” “ Men were ashamed of innocence, and took delight in malice.” And to shew that his enlarged views extended beyond his own age and country, he takes care to observe, that similar misfortunes ever will occur, as long as men shall retain their present nature.

But

But it is not for me to translate or comment upon Thucydides, but only to desire those who are capable of both, to consider whether the unwarrantable excess to which the French Revolution has been carried, may not prove the opening of a similar direful scene all over Europe. Can he, whose universal historical knowledge must enable him to recollect all the various subdivisions of faction, can he think, that when his favourite, his never-to-be-forgotten prophecy is fulfilled, and all the church establishments and all the political governments are overthrown; when calumny, perfidy, rancour, and revenge, have deluged Europe with blood, can he suppose that any human power can charm these restless passions into slumber? Would not the triumphant conquerors quarrel and fight about the meereft trifle; rather than sink into the irksome stupor of listless tranquillity?*

* If the common objection be made, that these arguments might have been used against the Reformation, I shall freely say, that the Reformation in itself was an excellent cause, but was much injured by the intemperate zeal of some reformers, and that the age which followed the Reformation, was a period too dreadful for its return ever to be desired.

Yet

Yet, though I own myself filled with the most fearful apprehensions respecting the consequences of the French Revolution, let no one think that I am recommending either such a universal league against France, as is said to be projected on the Continent, or any severe laws against the friends of France in other countries. It is unjust for one nation to interfere in the domestic quarrels of another, from the apprehensions of remote danger; and *whatever is unjust never can be truly useful*. The distress which the French have brought on their finances, by their American war, is a full proof of this unpalatable maxim, so odious both to crafty demagogues and ambitious Monarchs,

Severity exerted by Government against suspected enemies, only hastens the misfortunes it means to prevent. As to the horrid firebrands of the populace—*accursed be the monster* who can even think of employing them! But every citizen should soberly reflect on the consequences of rashly encouraging principles, that so far from leading to universal benevolence and concord, would create universal confusion and perpetual

petual civil war. Above all, the Dissenters, that class of citizens to whose passions the Revolutionists have most successfully applied, should consider in time, whether they are not making themselves tools to a system of craft and ambition, whose depth has not yet been sounded.

I must, for the last time, repeat, that all the societies with whom Dr. Price or Dr. Priestley corresponded, or who have sent over deputies to assist at our clubs,* are parts of one vast whole, whose designs are apprehended in France even by the sober Revolutionists, whose letters and writings appear to be all dictated by the same spirit, and all proclaim aloud the principle of interference in the domestic quarrels of foreign countries. Why should it appear so wonderfully incredible, that they wished to throw into confusion a country whom they have frequently expected would burn Brest; seize the French colonies; in short, produce some terrible mischief; when they

* M. Pethion may be one of the most respectable of his party, but he is still a Jacobin.

have wantonly disturbed the tranquillity of Switzerland, the old and faithful ally of France, an ally just strong enough to be useful, and too weak to do mischief? This meddling temper is not a reproach invented by Aristocrates, M. Montmorin (who at first was a friend to the Revolution) has openly taxed the French with it, in a report on foreign affairs, read to the National Assembly on the 31st of October 1791.

“ We have seen England and Holland
“ go safely through great revolutions, and
“ make other nations respect the Consti-
“ tution they chose to give themselves, be-
“ cause they respected the Constitutions of
“ those nations. We are accused of endea-
“ vouring to excite every people against
“ their governors; these accusations are un-
“ just if applied to the French Government
“ or the nation at large; but it is too certain
“ that individuals, that societies, have, with
“ that aim, established correspondencies in
“ neighbouring countries.”

I have

I have already given an undeniable proof from the * *Mercure François* in how serious and important a light every petty club of small consequence here, is regarded by the intriguing romancing heads of Frenchmen. If any demagogue at length attained the slippery summit of power, and wished to engage the French in a foreign war to occupy their restlessness; if any knot of republicans urged on a war with the private hopes of distressing the finances, and then throwing the blame on regal power, † whilst they were looking round for an object of quarrel, they would probably cast their eyes on England, and say, here is a society of men who openly prefer the French Government to their own, and are taught by their great leaders “ to look *beyond the welfare of their*

* Men of letters, such as those whose opinions I quote, even under the old system, had weight with ministers, and will have much more weight under the present system with the people.

† This is no uncommon crime, let Republicans say what they will. The patriots in Sweden twice (in 1738 and 1755) engaged the nation in hostilities to mortify the executive power. The Dutch patriots designedly provoked England, because they thought the Stadtholder incapable of conducting a war.

“ coun-

“*country* ;” consequently here is a centre round which our spies and agents may assemble, and shake the kingdom to its very foundations.

Let Dissenters be what they please, Methodists, Presbyterians, Independants, Tories or Whigs, but in the name of all that is dear and sacred, let them never cease to be *Englishmen*. Let them leave the French Revolution to stand or fall by its own merits,* decline all correspondence with any Frenchmen whatsoever, leave off all idle festivities and toasting, and if they will inculcate reformations, inculcate them on motives that are solely *English*.

They ought seriously to consider how small was the majority which once rejected their demands, and how greatly it was increased the moment that Dr. Price had so needlessly canonized the French Revolution. Whatever some of the opposition may pre-

* No doubt in that case, an equal neutrality should be observed by its opponents. If the French emigrants prevailed, it would be highly censurable for any English club to celebrate their victory with rejoicings.

tend, to please their great leader, it is impossible that any country gentleman should admire that Revolution, who intends to leave his estate to his eldest son, or wishes his tenants to pay their rents without chicaning about the *feudal system*.

It is as impossible that Churchmen should concur in the repeal of the Test, whilst the Dissenters choose for their leaders the most furious enemies of *all religious establishments whatsoever*. Had they been ever governed by moderate men, by such characters for instance, as Watts and Chandler, they might long ere now have attained their wishes. Could they not concert amongst themselves, and offer to Parliament some Test rather political than religious, to guard us from the danger that Dissenters, admitted into office, should think themselves authorized to destroy all church establishments, *per fas aut nefas*? But, above all, let them avoid giving dark and latent hints of revolts and civil wars,* and remember how much it is

* Similar to the advertisement quoted from the Constitutional Society.

the known character of every class amongst the British nation,

“ That gentleness may force——

“ Rather than force move us to gentleness.”

No good Christian should wish to see the high-church spirit of Sacheverel's times revived, but the Dissenters have been taking the most effectual means to revive it. Let both parties stop in time, and “ consider “ their ways,” for they are both on the brink of a precipice, and a few more false steps might be irretrievable.

Whatever may be said of a legal public Test, a private Test addressed to each man's heart is not only useful but necessary. Whoever tolerates the infamous means which have promoted the French Revolution, or whoever would extenuate the Birmingham Riots, can neither be a good citizen nor a virtuous man. True virtue is something far superior to that republican virtue praised by Montesquieu, which consists only in public zeal and private frugality,

Virtue, taken in the abstract, is an emanation of the Deity himself, and like him embraces the whole visible creation: she regulates our conduct to foes as well as friends; to those whom we hate ever so justly, as well as to those whom we love ever so tenderly. Let this universal virtue and undefiled religion be our guides, and let us ever hold them more sacred than the party cries of *Church* and *King* on one side, or *Liberty* and the *Rights of Men* on the other.

Dec. 15th, 1791.

A P P E N D I X

TO

P A R T II.

N O T E I.

IT cannot be denied, that on the tidings of the King's flight, a zealous spirit appeared through the French nation for the preservation of its new Constitution; but it does not follow that this zeal implies an unanimous persuasion of its superior excellence.

1st. The class of men who really disliked it, were withheld from shewing that dislike by their apprehensions of the most cruel death from the rage of the multitude excited by the Constitutional clubs of their respective neighbourhoods.

2dly.

2dly. Another class, who have purchased church-estates, are compelled to support the Constitution, because it supports their title to those purchases, in the same manner that Henry the VIIIth engaged our English gentry to support the Reformation by distributing amongst them the possessions of the suppressed convents. The policy, therefore, of both those measures is more defensible than their justice or humanity.

But there is a third and still more numerous class, who do not approve the present Constitution, and yet prefer it to a civil war kindled by those very courtiers, those very Princes of the blood, whom they for years had been taught to regard with aversion.—Such are the irreparable consequences that follow from an early neglect of character in men of high rank.

NOTE 2.

NO historian of the present moment has means to decide on the real nature of M. de Bouillie's project, or on the number of persons

sons concerned in the King's escape. A report has been circulated, that the Princes and their party at Coblentz were not let into the secret, and were displeas'd with Bouillie for attempting to restore the King in his own manner and on his own terms.

It is equally a matter of doubt, whether Bouillie, or, indeed, the Princes themselves, meant to restore the old despotic Government. Such a belief has been greedily swallowed; but at this period of faction and calumny it is hard to ascertain the truth. Calonne's celebrated book, called *L'Etat de la France*, recommends a scheme of Government collected from the majority of instructions to the States; a scheme by which the French King would have been a limited though a powerful monarch. Mallet in his *Mercur* reckons up no less than four parties adverse to the present Constitution. The first party, attached to despotism, was (he says) at the meeting of the States a very small party indeed. But he laments, that ungenerous suspicion, affronts, and ill-usage, have driven too many of the three latter parties into adopting the principles of the first. As

to M. de Bouillie himself, I shall only say, that when absolute power was delegated to him (in the West Indian Islands) he used it liberally and mildly; a test of virtue which many celebrated Democrates would not be able to give.—For the same restless obstinate temper which makes a rebellious subject, would make an arbitrary ruler.

NOTE 3.

THE stories inserted in the text of factions and election-intrigues at Paris, are not meant to prove that the present Government is worse than the ancient despotism, but only to shew that the French, after *turning their empire inside out like a glove*, (to use an expression of Mallet-du-Pan) have not at last finished their work as perfectly as they expected, or contrived a Government free from the evils that commonly accompany liberty. How often was it repeated in French speeches and in English newspapers,

that the rigorous exclusion of Ministers from the Assembly, and of Members from the Ministry, would prevent mere factious opposition, because no demagogue could hope to become a Minister by the ruin of his rival. But in what manner has this expectation been answered? The factions in both the Assemblies have watched the Ministers, not with the generous, candid vigilance of freemen, but with the mean jealousy of a Spanish duenna guarding a youthful beauty whom she hates because she envies.

There are two parties at Paris as well as London, who call one another *ministerial* and *anti-ministerial*; there is full as much intrigue carried on for places, only with that refined, clandestine cunning which suits the genius of the French nation. The leaders of parties are forbidden to accept a place or to ask one for a friend; but they give a hint to the club whom they most favour, that club gives a hint to its agents, and the hint comes round at length to the ears of the Court.

The

The promotions in the spring of 1790, were believed to have been suggested by the club of 1789, and, therefore, the Jacobin party have persecuted and tormented those Ministers in a thousand different ways, till at last they have fairly worried M. du Portail into a resignation, and next to him M. Montmorin, whom they hated on another ground, as being the friend and confident of M. Necker. If the Jacobin Society ever succeeded in naming Ministers, their *élèves* would probably meet with equal opposition from the society of the Feuillans.

NOTE 4.

IT will not seem very wonderful, that the democratic party in France should have imitated the democratic party in England; but it may also be said, that in one instance they have imitated a capital error of the royal party at the time of the Restoration.* The

* Vide the First Part of Bishop Burnet's History.

Presbyterian party were at that time in peaceable possession of a considerable part of the livings in England; they had heartily concurred in the Restoration, and founded great hopes on Charles's declaration from Breda, which yet did not make any *express promise* to dissenters, but ambiguously left every thing to Parliament. The Presbyterians would willingly have conformed to the church if some alterations had been made, but the high church men took up a notion that they would still be concealed enemies, and *that it was better to have a schism without the church than within it.* Thus every alteration suggested by the Presbyterians was refused, and an opportunity of union was lost, which, perhaps, can never be regained. The Presbyterian Ministers were required to subscribe their *full assent and consent* to the book of Common Prayer; the majority made it a point of honour to stand by one another in a refusal; they were all ejected from their livings, reduced to poverty, and became open and bitter enemies to the church and the king. This transaction has left a stain on the memory of Lord Clarendon, who was otherwise a virtuous man and
an

an able Minister. In the same manner the Commons of France drew in the clergy by the kindest and most endearing words, which yet conveyed no absolute promise. When they found that the clergy were disappointed and discontented, they seem to have reasoned exactly like Charles the Second's bishops, that it was better to have a schism without than within. Numbers would have gone on obeying though hating the civil constitution of the clergy, rather than lose their benefices, and as fast as they dropped off, the mode of popular election would have supplied their places with trusty friends. But *an oath* was imposed to support it; their honour was piqued, a spirit of enthusiasm diffused itself through the corps, and like the Presbyterians, a majority resigned. The weight of poverty and misfortune has turned them from peevish murmurers into seditious fanatics, to whom it is equally dangerous to shew severity or indulgence.

I take this occasion to correct an error in in the First Part of this work, where I have said, that according to Roman Catholic principles, schismatic baptism does not put
the

the child in a state of salvation. I have since recollected, that the Romish church allows lay-baptism in case of necessity, and by parity of reason may admit schismatic baptism; yet it will remain certain, that superstitious fears about baptism disturbed the minds of the French common people, since frequent complaints have been made to both the Assemblies, that they refuse to carry their children to be baptized at parish churches.

NOTE 5.

IT may not be unsuitable to insert some passages, literally translated from the preamble to the third book of Machiavel's history of Florence:

“ The weighty and natural hatred which
 “ exists between plebeians and nobles, the
 “ latter wishing to command, and the for-
 “ mer refusing to obey, is the occasion of
 “ all the evils that happen in states; because
 “ all other disturbances in the common-
 “ wealth

“ wealth take their source from this contra-
“ riety of temper.

“ This quarrel disunited Rome; this
“ quarrel (if small things may lawfully be
“ compared to great) has disunited Florence,
“ although it produced different effects in
“ those two cities—The enmities between
“ the nobles and the people in Rome were
“ decided by speeches, in Florence by arms;
“ in Rome they were terminated by some
“ new law, in Florence by exile and death.

“ These different effects proceeded from
“ the different ends proposed by the Roman
“ and the Florentine people. The people of
“ Rome desired to enjoy high offices and
“ honours *jointly* with the nobles; the peo-
“ ple of Florence struggled to enjoy them
“ *alone*, and to exclude the nobles from any
“ share in the government. Now, because
“ the wish of the Roman people was reason-
“ able, the offence appeared supportable to
“ the Roman nobles, inasmuch that they
“ yielded easily, and without taking up
“ arms.

“ On

“ On the other hand, the desire of the
 “ Florentine people was *injurious* and *unjust*,
 “ which made the nobility stand stoutly on
 “ their defence, and occasioned the death and
 “ banishment of many citizens.”

Behold a prodigy ! Machiavel more scrupulous in matters of justice than the French National Assembly.

NOTE 6.

THE Constitution offered to the states of France by their King, was infinitely more favourable to the Commons than the new Constitution of Poland, though the bounds of regal authority were less exactly defined. The Commons were to have a negative on all the other orders of the state, whereas the deputies of the cities in Poland sit confounded with the nobles, in too small a proportion to sway their debates. The form of provincial or internal administration would also have been favourable to the people at large.

large. The small remains of personal vassalage were to have been totally abolished in France. I cannot understand the 4th article of the Polish Constitution as abolishing personal slavery; it only implies, that if a proprietor grants his vassals liberty, such grant shall bind his heirs.

The most serious objection that has ever been made to that unfortunate project, rejected in France without examination, because it was brought forward in an indiscreet manner, is, that it did not recognize the legislative power of the states. But the states were desired to make new laws on finance, police, militia, civil and criminal justice, and were promised, that none of these laws should be altered without the consent of future states; and, besides, the whole power of taxation was left to those future states—consequently the power of legislation was virtually theirs, and would, no doubt, have been expressly recognized in a few years.

I cannot but suspect that the very party, who spread abroad that the King could have resumed his former despotism at pleasure,
knew

knew the fallacy of what they advanced; and a little circumstance, not generally observed, increases my suspicion.

Towards the conclusion of the National Assembly, M. Roederer, a violent Jacobin patriot, proposed that the liberties of the nation should be declared *national property*.

This motion was received with applause, but suffered to fall to the ground.

Perhaps the party recollected that this expression was used in that abhorred declaration of the king. This proposition, however, confirms the opinion advanced in the first part of this Historical Sketch, that the term *national property* had a peculiar sacredness to French ears; and that the King, by using it, gave a strong proof of his sincerity.

It has been said, in a short abstract of the history of this Revolution, inserted in some English newspapers, that all questions respecting a Constitution were reserved to the Three Chambers separately. This is not
strictly

strictly true. The only questions expressly reserved were the ancient rights of the three orders, and the *form of Constitution* to be given to the future States-General, which does not include any great questions relative to the constitutional rights of individuals as opposed to despotism. The King abandoned his own prerogatives to the discretion of a hostile majority; he only stipulated for the rights which two classes of his subjects had enjoyed for near a thousand years.

The vanity of the national French character is equally capable of good as of bad impulses; and therefore it is probable, that if the Commons had soothed and flattered their rivals, instead of provoking them, most of those rights would have been voluntarily abandoned.

The author of the *Ami du Roi* pretends, that a phrase which offended many impartial men, "if you forsake me, I will alone consult for the good of my people," was the production of Necker's pen. It is certain that Necker complains, in his Defence, that when the other ministers altered his de-
clara-

claration, they injudiciously applied some phrases to the whole body of the states, which he had addressed to the clergy and nobles.

As the history written under the name of *l'Ami du Roi* has not been completed, we have not yet an opportunity of seeing how a writer, devoted to the Court, justifies the measures which it pursued immediately previous to the taking of the Bastille.

F I N I S.





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