

AN  
HISTORICAL AND MORAL VIEW  
OF THE  
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF GRIEVANCES IN FRANCE—  
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DEPUTIES DECLARE THEMSELVES A NATIONAL AS-  
SEMBLY.

BEFORE we enter on the grand business  
produced by the meeting of the states-general,  
it is necessary to take a retrospective glance  
over the oppressions of which frenchmen so  
loudly complained; and, whilst we trace  
their justness, the question will only be, why  
they did not sooner raise their shoulders to  
heave

heave off the mighty load. To ascertain this truth, we need not enter into deep researches, though it may be difficult to collect all the parts of the feudal chain, which linked the despotism of sixty thousand nobles, who not only exercised all the tyranny that the system authorized, but countenanced the still more extensive depredations of their numerous dependents. What, indeed, could equal the slavery of the poor husbandman; not only pillaged by the tythe and game laws, but even obliged to let whole flocks of pigeons devour his grain, without daring to destroy them, because those pigeons belonged to the chateau; and afterwards forced to carry the scanty crop to be tolled at the mill of *mon-seigneur*, which, to follow a frenchman's staff of life through all its stages of taxation, must then be baked at the privileged oven?

It would be captious, perhaps, to dwell on some of the abominable tenures of personal servitude, which, though grown obsolete, were not abrogated; especially as more specious, if not less grinding, not less debasing exactions were in force, to deprave every  
moral

moral feeling of the two divisions of society ; the governing, and governed.

When chased from the country, of which the chief charm is independence, by such worrying restraints, a man wished to pursue any occupation in a town, he must previously purchase a patent of some privileged person, to whom this tax had been sold by a farmer-general, or the parasite of a minister.

All lived by plunder ; and it's universality gave it a sanction, that took off the odium, though nothing could varnish the injustice. Yet, such was the insensibility of the great, the pleasures these extortions procured were not less grateful to the senses, because paid by the sweat of industry.—No ; like Vespasian's obnoxious tax, money was money ; and who cared on what it was levied ? Thus the rich necessarily became robbers, and the poor thieves. Talking of honour, honesty was overlooked ; and, custom giving a soft name to different atrocities, few thought it a duty to investigate disregarded principles ; or to relinquish their share of the plunder, to satisfy a romantic singularity of opinion, which excited ridicule rather than imitation.

The military, a pest in every country, were here also all noble, and leagued with a hundred thousand privileged persons, of different descriptions, to support their prerogative of receiving a revenue, which was a dead weight on agriculture ; whilst they were not obliged, in a direct way, to advance any thing towards defraying the public expenditure.

The gabelle, the corvée, the obligation to supply horses to transport the troops from one part of the kingdom to another, even when most necessary at the farm ; clogs on husbandry, equally unjust and vexatious ; were riveted only on the ankles of labour. Activity then being continually damped by such various restrictions, instead of being braced by encouragement, an invincible impediment was thrown in the way of agricultural improvements ; for each individual, insulated by oppression, lived, strictly speaking, from hand to mouth ; not caring to store up comforts, at the expence of extraordinary toil, when the enjoyment depended on so many casualties. Yet, never beginning to be sensible of the effect, the people were not, probably, aware of the cause ; and only exclaimed against new impositions,

impositions, because they did not think sufficiently deep to detect the old.

Beside which, France maintained two hundred thousand priests, united in the same spirit of licentiousness; who indulged themselves in all the depraved pleasures of cloaked immorality, at the same time they embruted the people by sanctifying the most diabolical prejudices; to whose empire every consideration of justice and political improvement was sacrificed.

Added to evils of this magnitude, there were the canker-worms that lurked behind monastic walls. For sixty thousand persons, who by renouncing the world cut the thread of nature, served as a prop to the priesthood that enjoyed more than a fourth of the produce of all France; independent of the estates it possessed, which were immense. And this body of men, the leeches of the kingdom, the idols of the ignorant, and the palladium of tyranny, contributed not a farthing to the support of the hydra, whom they were anxious to protect, as a guard to themselves. Ostentatiously boasting of their charity, whilst revelling on the spoil of fraud, by a sacrilege the most nefarious, their whole lives were a mockery

mockery of the doctrines, which they taught, and pretended to reverence. Beside these, and other vexations, almost innumerable, one entangled in another ; each petty monopoly contributed to strengthen the massy fabric of despotism, which reared it's head in defiance of time and reason. Much, indeed, depended on the caprice of the individuals of the privileged orders, whom the court could actuate at will, giving them occasionally a fop to silence any peevish growl.

There were also the farmers general, with their army of fifty thousand collectors, who, by their manner of levying and amassing the revenue, gave an additional gripe to an oppression, the most wringing that could be invented, because it's very principles led to the exercise of the vilest peculation ; and impunity was secured by a coalition of robbers, that multitude of men in office, whose families and flatterers all lived, and fattened on the spoil of their continual war with justice. And, whilst the interest of the people was continually sacrificed by the parliaments, the inferior courts of law were still more venal, because composed of those litigious practitioners,

tioners, who thicken like spawn on putrid bodies, when a state is become corrupt.

Such were the grievances!—Such the impositions, ‘that, taken together, levied a tax on the kingdom,’ says Rabaud, ‘which the imagination is afraid to calculate.’ This body of men we may consider as constituting France, till the great bulk of the people, who were slaves and dwarfs, bursting their shackles and rising in stature, suddenly appeared with the dignity and pretensions of human beings : Ycs ; with the same feelings ; or perhaps stronger, because more natural ; and claiming equal rights with those nobles, who, like the giants of old, were only great by the courtesy of the imagination. Who is so callous to the interest of humanity as to say it was not a noble regeneration ? Who is so benumbed by selfish fears, as not to feel a glow of warmth, at seeing the inhabitants of a vast empire exalted from the lowest state of beastly degradation to a summit, where, contemplating the dawn of freedom, they may breathe the invigorating air of independence ; which will give them a new constitution of mind ? Who is so much under the influence of prejudice, as to insist, that frenchmen are a

distinct race, formed by nature, or by habit, to be slaves ; and incapable of ever attaining those noble sentiments, which characterize a free people ? When the dawn of them appeared conspicuously at the elections for the states-general, which were the preparatory struggles to make a change of opinion produce an essential alteration in government.

Six millions of men were now in motion to choose the deputies, and prepare their instructions ; and in these assemblies the commons commenced their political career ; discussing, on new ground, subjects that quickly became the only interesting topics throughout the kingdom.

In some few places, the three orders meeting together seemed to decide the important question respecting the equality of the representatives ; but, in general, the first two chambered themselves to guard tenaciously their trembling prerogatives ; and the third, with a cautious jealousy, to demand the redress of grievances, which they could scarcely expect the others to denominate by so harsh a name.

Great decorum reigned in the chamber of the nobility, though split into various ranks ;

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the lower of which had ill brooked, for a long time, the overbearing insolence of those princes and peers, who haughtily contested every step of honour. Still all agreed, to resign their pecuniary privileges, and joined in vague terms, with the public voice, to demand a constitution.

The same divisions produced more visible effects amongst the clergy : for considerable tumults were the consequence of the struggle of the parish-priests, the commons of this order, to have their due weight in the scale ; and their success seemed a sure prognostic of the turn things were going to take in the nation. In fact, every diocese was become the centre of a petty despotism, more galling than the great, because at each man's elbow ; and the parish-priests, who were not in the high road to preferment, most oppressed, led the van in the new contest for equality ; whilst disrespect for the mitre paved the way to a contempt for the crown.

Indivisible as had hitherto been the clerical body, the indecent pride of the dignitaries of the church, at this juncture, produced the schism, which induced the majority of the clergy to side with the people ; whilst only a

small minority of the nobility deserted the common cause of the party. The parish-priests, in fact, appeared, from the time of their election, a corps in reserve for the third-estate; where they fought for the consequence they were denied in their own chamber, finding themselves more nearly allied by interest, as well as inclination, to this order than to the rich pastors, who, separating the sheep from the goats, bade them stand aloof, as possessing less riches—the holiness of that body, as of all others. The electing of so many of the inferior clergy, in spite of the menaces and intrigues of their numerous superiours, was a striking proof, that the power of the church was in the wane; and that the people were beginning to feel their own strength. The disturbances at this time seemed the rumbling of the approaching tempest; and orators, formed in these provincial assemblies, to figure afterwards in national, were encouraged by applause to persevere.

Having the same mark in view, an uniformity of sentiment breathed throughout the instructions of the third-estate; principally levelled at the privileges of the two other orders: for on these abuses the most popular  
publications

publications had hinged, rivetting conviction in the minds of the suffering people. A celebrated pamphlet, written by the abbé Sieyès, went through sixty editions; and the duke of Orleans, piqued at the royal family, took great pains to spread abroad opinions, which were far from being congenial with his own; thus, with purblind ambition, labouring to overturn a court, the ruins of which have rebounded on his own head.

But the temper of the nation, fore with suffering, and warmed by these discussions, so ran a-head of their judgment, as to lead the electors, with hasty zeal, to instruct their representatives, to demand the immediate suppression of a host of abuses, without guarding against the consequences.—Such, unfortunately, is always the conduct pursued by exasperated passions; for, during the rage to correct abuses, one is, too frequently, only exchanged for another. So difficult is it to impress the salutary lessons of experience on irritated minds!—And so apt are men, in the moment of action, to fly from one extreme to the other, without considering, that the strongest conviction of reason cannot quickly change a habit of body; much less the man-

ners that have been gradually produced by certain modes of thinking and acting.

With one voice, however, the whole nation called for a constitution, to establish equal rights, as the foundation of freedom ; and to guard against the depredations of favourites, whether they attacked person or property. So that the liberty of the press, and the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, were, in general, the articles that followed the positive injunction of confining the right of taxation to the representative body of the nation. The institution of juries was recommended, and the deputies were requested to take into consideration, whether the number of capital punishments could not be lessened, or totally abolished ; remarks were made on the evil tendency of lotteries, and on the vexatious impediments thrown in the way of trade, by barriers and monopolies. In short, against the tyranny and injustice of the court, the nobility, and the clergy, all remonstrated ; unmasking one species of oppression, and dilating on another ; yet, among these numerous animadversions, prayers and praises alone were addressed to the king ; and nothing like a glance at republicanism

publicanism rendered their sincerity doubtful.

To divert the gathering storm from breaking over their heads, the cabal determined to rest all their hopes on the aid of the foreign troops; which they were collecting from different parts of the kingdom, not caring to trust to the french soldiery, who were assuming the character of citizens. Mean while, with the usual chicanery of courtiers, they continued to amuse the deputies, till they could crush them at once; and effectually blast the hopes of the people. The human heart is naturally good, though so often the dupe of passion.—For though it's feelings be sophisticated, or stifled; though the head contrives the blackest machinations; even in the silence of solitude, who will whisper to himself that he is a villain? Will he not rather try, like Milton's devil, to find out a damned plea of necessity, to cover his guilt?—paying homage, in spite of himself, to the eternal justice he violates under the pretext of self-preservation. But, it is not alone the virtues of man, those changing hues, of which the colour is undecided, that proclaim his native dignity. No; his vices have the same stamp of the

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divinity :

divinity: and it is necessary to pervert the understanding, before the heart can be led astray. Men, likewise, indolently adopt the habits of thinking of their day, without weighing them. Thus these very courtiers, who could coolly contemplate the massacre, which must be the consequence of assembling the foreign troops, because it was a continuance of the established course of things, have since started, probably with real horror, from the contemplation of the butcheries, which their very tenacity produced. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart, and so necessary is it to render the head clear to make the principles of action pure.

The deputies, however, who were mostly collected from remote parts of the country, had become in their villages the hale sons of independence. And, though the french mania, of adoring their monarch, extended to every part of the kingdom, it only gave hilarity to the cheering glass at the homely tables of which they were masters; or activity to the dance, that was a real burst of animal spirits. Very different from the lascivious provocations to vice, exhibited at the opera, which, by destroying the social affec-  
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tions that attach men to each other, stifle all public spirit ; for what is patriotism but the expansion of domestic sympathy, rendered permanent by principle ? Besides, the writings that had awakened the spirit of these men had a little inebriated their brain. Such is, for the most part, the baneful effect of eloquence, that, persuading instead of convincing, the glory of the enthusiasm it inspires is sullied by that false magnanimity, which vanity and ignorance continually mistake for real elevation of soul ; though, like the scorching rays of the sun after rain, it dries into sterility the heart, whose emotions are too quickly exhaled.

The courtiers, despising their rusticity, and still considering the people as ciphers, continued to discharge the usual routine of office, by adjusting the ceremonials of reception ; all which tended to insult the third-estate, and show, that the deputies of the privileged orders were to be still treated as if they were a distinct class of beings. The insolence of such proceedings could not fail to provoke the honest indignation, and pique the vanity of those, who had been discussing on a broad scale the rights of man : whilst a little discon-

certed by the ceremony that constrained them, they were obliged, every moment, to recollect, that they were the equals of these courtiers; and blushed even to own to themselves, that they could for an instant have been awed by such childish pomp. Nor were they more astonished at the pageantry of Versailles, than disgusted with the haughtiness of a court, whose magnificence was a proof how much they had impoverished the people, who now demanded emancipation. Full, therefore, of the new notions of independence, which made them spurn at every idea of a distinction of men, they took advantage of the majority accorded them by the council, and began to rally their forces. Perceiving also, as they acted decidedly, that they possessed the confidence of the people, who, forgetting *vive le roi*, exclaimed only *vive le tiers-etat*!—they every day became more firm.

The courtiers immediately fixed on a house of rendezvous, where they were regularly to concert the best measures to crush the rising power of the commons; and these, not without a portion of the mistrust, which characterizes the nation, assembled in different places, till a mutual interest united them in  
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that chosen by the deputies from Brittany. The disrespect, likewise, which the orders relative to their dress announced, prepared them for the contempt they were destined to receive, when separated like the indian casts, amongst whom a man fears to be polluted by the touch of an inferiour: for true to the inveterate prejudice in favour of precedents\*, the nobility were gaudily caparisoned for the show, whilst the commons were stupidly commanded to wear the black mantle, that distinguishes the lawyers. But, the tide of opinion once turned, every thing contributes to accelerate it's course.

Before the meeting of the states-general, the question that was first to agitate the various interests, whether they were to vote by orders or poll, had been so thoroughly discussed, that it made, in many of the instructions, one of the foremost articles. For it was evident to the nation, were the different orders allowed to assemble in their separate chambers, each invested with the old privilege of putting a negative on the decisions of the other

\* 'The code of *étiquette*', says Mirabeau, 'has been hitherto the sacred fire of the court and privileged orders.'

other two, that they should be gulled with promises of reform, whilst the coffers of the court were replenished with a show of legality. It was, in fact, prudent in the court party to maintain this ground, because it appeared to be the only way to render abortive all the plans of reformation that struck at their authority. This then was the prefatory business, by which they were to measure their strength; and, would to God! the vigour manifested on this occasion had always been displayed by the representatives of those misled people.

We have seen the plots of this weak, headstrong cabinet every where defeated, and traced their bloody footsteps; but we shall find them still true to their scent, having recourse again to violence, when fraud was of no avail.

To furnish a pretext to introduce adroitly a considerable military force, at the time of the assembling of the states-general, two or three riots had been excited at Paris, in which many of the thoughtless populace were killed. One in particular, though still involved in the shades of mystery, occasioned great confusion  
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and considerable slaughter, just at the eve of their meeting.

A respectable manufacturer in the suburbs of Paris, with the fairest character, employed a number of poor, whom he paid liberally; yet against this man some idle stories were industriously circulated, well contrived to mislead and exasperate the people, because they touched their vanity, and their most pressing want, the want of bread. The scarcity, real or factitious, of this article, has always been taken advantage of by those who wished to excite tumults in Paris; and at this juncture the duped parisiens rose, at the instigation of the court agents, to destroy themselves. The riot was permitted to get a-head before any serious attempts to quell it were taken, which rendered the interference of a little army, the point aimed at, necessary; and established an opinion, that the turbulent mob required to be awed by the presence of troops, whilst the states-general deliberated.

During this effervescence, or, at least, when it was subsiding, the states-general was opened, the 5th of may, 1789, by a speech from the throne, to which courtiers, in the usual phrasology

phrasology, would naturally tack the epithet—*gracious*. The king commenced with a heartless declaration of his satisfaction at seeing himself surrounded by the representatives of the people ; and then enumerating the heavy debts of the nation, a great part of which had been accumulated during his reign, he added one of those idle falsehoods, which swelled his declamation without throwing dust into any one's eyes, *that it was in an honourable cause* ; when it was notorious, that the cause ought to have been reckoned most dishonourable, if power had not hitherto been the true philosopher's stone, that transmuted the basest actions into sterling honour. He afterwards alluded to the spirit of innovation, that had taken possession of the minds of the people, and the general discontent that agitated the nation : but, in the true cant of courts, dictating whilst complimenting, he assured them, that he depended on their wisdom and moderation ; concluding with the words of course, *the humble servant of kings*, a declaration of his attachment to the public welfare.

The disregarded speech of the keeper of the seals was, like the reply usually made to the king's, in the house of commons in England,

land, merely an echo of his majesty's, recommending moderation in the measures adopted to reform the abuses of government, with the necessary quantum of panegyric on the goodness of the king.

Attention and applause, however, awaited Necker, though followed by weariness and disgust. He spoke for three hours, introducing, with his customary pomp of words, a number of trivial observations; trying thus to escape, in a mist of rhetorical flourishes, from the subject he feared to bring forward, because he was equally apprehensive of offending the court, and desirous of maintaining his reputation with the people. Not a word was uttered relative to the sole right of the states-general to levy taxes, the first demand of the nation. And men who for some time had been talking of nothing but liberty and reform, were astonished, and dissatisfied, that he avoided all mention of a new constitution. Leaning to the side of the privileged orders, he asserted, that the mode of deliberating and voting in separate assemblies was the pillar of the nation—yet, cautiously adding a salvo, to have a pretext to use another language should it be necessary, he remarked,

remarked, that *sometimes* it was better to poll. This ill-timed management naturally displeased both parties, as is always the case, when men of weak, compound characters, who have not the courage to act right, want effrontery to brave the censure, that would follow an open avowal of their undecided opinions; or rather, their determination to keep well with the strongest. Dwelling on the arrangement of the finances, he assured them, that a public bankruptcy might easily be avoided; and that even the *deficit*, which had been exaggerated by France, and Europe, was only fifty-six millions; and would appear of less consequence, when they recollected, that, since *his* administration, the revenue was augmented twenty-five millions. It is true, that, on entering into details, the greater part of this sum was found to be still in perspective; and at the same time was to be raised by taxes, which all good citizens hoped would soon disappear. In short, the french, after applauding with rapture this brilliant bird's-eye view, observed, with the shrug of *sang froid*, 'that these hypothetical resources were merely faith and hope, on condition that they should be charitable.'

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With respect to the abolishing of privileges, that warred with humanity, he made use of some of the same species of jesuitical arguments, which are employed by the opposers of the abolition of the infamous traffic for slaves; that, as these privileges were a kind of property, it was necessary to find out a compensation, an indemnity, before they could be done away—with justice.

Thus has the spirit of justice—it is difficult to keep down indignation when attacking such sophisms—been always outraged by the mock respect of selfishness; for, without parrying off tergiversation, it is sufficient to prove, that certain laws are not just, because no government had a right to make them; and, though they may have received what is termed a legal sanction during the times of ignorance, “the duty lies in the breach and not in the observance.” Besides, these pitiful arguments are an insult to the common sense, and to the distress of a people.—Where, indeed, could the french, or english, find a fund to indemnify the privileged orders or the planters? The abuses then, must continue to the end of time—out of sheer respect to the sacredness of public faith!

Thus spoke the king and Necker ; but these addressees, instead of conciliating, only rendered both parties more obstinate ; so that the smothering dispute respecting the manner of voting broke out immediately, when they met to constitute themselves a legal assembly. For the next day, even the deputies of the third-estate repaired to the common hall, and agreed, that the three orders should proceed to verify their powers together ; clearly perceiving, that, were the orders once allowed to do business separately, an union would be impracticable, and all their efforts to obtain a constitution null, should they attempt to make equality of rights the basis. The nobility and clergy not joining the commons, they resolved to renew their meeting the following morning ; only as an aggregate of individuals, who had no power to act, not having yet a political character. This very contest seemed to call upon them to support their claim to equality, because it emphatically warned them, that all their operations would be rendered perfectly nugatory, should they permit the orders to be a check on each other. The most sensible men of the commons being of opinion, that all expectations of a permanent reform



reform were chimerical, unless the whole representation was formed into an indivisible assembly, encouraged the more undecided to persevere ; though the nobles signified to them, the 13th, that they had ascertained the legality of their election.

The clergy, however, divided in their interest, proceeded with more caution ; and the most discerning of them, perceiving that their order was becoming obnoxious to the people, who now deified the third estate, proposed a committee of conciliation, with a view, as they pretended, to promote a good understanding between all parties. The king also, in his turn, when the nobles rejected the mediation of the clergy, offered a plan of accommodation ; a mighty nothing, that the court brought forth.—But this tub, thrown out to the whale, did not divert the attention of either party from the main object ; though the nobles, many of whom were in the secret of the approach of the army, should things be carried to extremes, pretended to acquiesce ; yet guarding carefully at the same time all their ancient pretensions : and this insincerity drew on them the universal odium they merited, mixed with the contempt which in-

effectual struggles always produce. Conciliatory measures, in fact, were only a solemn farce at this time ; though the clergy, rather insidiously, to ingratiate themselves with the people, lamenting the high price of bread, requested, that deputies from the three orders should meet to deliberate how this grievance might be lessened. The deputies of the commons, with becoming dignity, tempered with prudence, adhered to their point ; and dexterously parrying off the artful stroke levelled at their popularity, they represented to the clergy, that this was another powerful motive, to make them entreat all parties to rally round the same point, to remedy evils, which excited equal sympathy in their bosoms.

The inactivity occasioned by these disputes could not fail to inflame the public mind, especially as fresh publications were daily affording it fuel. For the liberty of the press was now tacitly established, and the freest sentiments uttered, with the heat of superficial knowledge, in defiance of court manifestoes. Still, as a proof that the court merely endured, for a season, what they could not prevent, the journal of the proceedings of the states-general was stopped, by an express order ;

to evade which it was continued in the form of letters from Mirabeau to his constituents.

This prohibition was probably dictated by a desire of keeping the provinces quiet in the stupor of ignorance, in which they had so long dozed ; but it was injudicious to awaken attention by rigorous steps, that, quickly abandoned, had the very contrary effect, exciting, instead of intimidating, the spirit of opposition. In reality, the eyes of all France were at present directed towards the commons. The hopes of the nation rested on their magnanimity ; and the future happiness of millions depended upon their perseverance. It was in this state of things, that they afforded a convincing proof to the whole world, and to posterity, that vigour and precision alone are requisite in the representatives of a people, to give dignity to their proceedings, and to secure them against the machinations of all the combined powers of despotism.

Almost five weeks having elapsed, and the patience of the nation being quite exhausted by the delay, the commons resolved to present an address to the king, written by Mirabeau, explanatory of their motives, and then to proceed

ceed to business. But, previously, they sent a deputation to the other orders, for the last time, to invite them once more to repair to the common-hall, that their powers might be verified together ; adding, that in default of their appearance, they should constitute themselves, and act accordingly. This determination was a deadly blow to the power of the two other chambers, and struck directly at the root of all distinction.

'The nobles, whose inveterate pride and ignorance had prevented them from joining the third-estate at the first assembling of the deputies, now saw with dismay, that their power and influence, like the musty rolls of their pedigree, were mouldering into common dust. The clergy, however, more adroit, or rather a few of the parochial priests, by degrees, attended the summons, and repaired to the hall. There can be little doubt, but that the commons, at the first meeting, and for a long time after, would gladly have coalesced with the nobles ; by which means the latter would have retained many of their privileges, and preserved a weight in the nation, necessary to hinder that preponderance, on the side of the people, which it was easy to

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to foresee would be productive of many excesses. This conclusion continual experience warranted ; because it generally happens, that men, who are not directed by practical knowledge, in whatever business they engage, run precipitately from one extreme to the other. And certainly, from the state of servility in which the french nation was sunk, retaliation was to be expected ; or, at least, dreaded, from unbridled liberty. Like boys dismissed from school, they might wish to ascertain their freedom by acts of mischief ; and by showing a total disregard of the arbitrary commands, that kept down their spirits without exercising their understandings. However, the stupid arrogance of the nobles stript them, before the time reason would have determined, of those idle distinctions of opinion, the symbols of barbarism, which were not completely worn out of esteem.

The minister, still afraid to act independent of the court, blamed this spirited conduct of the commons, as an act of temerity, which the king ought not to sanction. Yet they, firm and resolute, though fearing that the court, like a dying savage, mortally wounded by his enemy, might, during the agonies of

death, aim a desperate stroke at them, took the most prudent precautions, to avoid exasperating the falling foe. But these mild resolutions having been mistaken by the infatuated nobles, who confounded the true fortitude of moderation with cowardice, the die was cast, and the deputies declared themselves a NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Enthusiasm fired every heart, and extended itself like thought from one end of the kingdom to the other. The very novelty of this measure was sufficient to animate a people less volatile than the french; and, perhaps, it is impossible to form a just conception of the transports which this decision excited in every corner of the empire. Europe also heard with astonishment what resounding through France excited the most lively emotions; and posterity must read with wonder the recital of the follies and atrocities committed by the court and nobles at that important crisis.

The Social Contract of Rousseau, and his admirable work on the origin of the inequalities amongst mankind, had been in the hands of all France, and admired by many, who could not enter into the depth of the reasoning,

ing. In short, they were learned by heart, by those whose heads could not comprehend the chain of argument, though they were sufficiently clear to seize the prominent ideas, and act up to their conviction. Perhaps, the great advantage of eloquence is, that, impressing the results of thinking on minds alive only to emotion, it gives wings to the slow foot of reason, and fire to the cold labours of investigation: Yet it is observable, that, in proportion as the understanding is cultivated, the mind grows attached to the exercise of investigation, and the combination of abstract ideas. The nobles of France had also read these writings for amusement; but they left not on their minds traces of conviction sufficiently strong to overcome those prejudices self-interest rendered so dear, that they easily persuaded themselves of their reasonableness. The nobility and clergy, with all their dependents under the influence of the same sentiments, formed a considerable proportion of the nation, on the rest of which they looked down with contempt, considering them as merely the grass of the land, necessary to clothe nature; yet only fit to be trodden under foot. But these despised

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people were beginning to feel their real consequence, and repeated with emphasis the happy comparison of the abbé Seiyès, ‘ that the nobility are like vegetable tumours, which cannot exist without the sap of the plants they exhaust.’ Nevertheless, in treating with the nobles, the angles of pride, which time alone could have smoothed silently away, were, perhaps, too rudely knocked off, for the folly of distinctions was rapidly wearing itself out, and would probably have melted gradually before the rational opinions, that were continually gaining ground, fructifying the soil as they dissolved ; instead of which it was drifted by a hurricane, to spread destruction around as it fell.

Many of the officers, who had served in America during the late war, had beheld the inhabitants of a whole empire living in a state of perfect equality ; and returned, charmed with their simplicity and integrity, the concomitants of a just government, erected on the solid foundation of equal liberty, to scan the rectitude, or policy of a different system. Convinced of their inutility as nobles, these, when fired with the love of freedom, seconded the views of the commons with heart and voice.



voice. But the sycophants of the court, and the greater part of the nobility, who were grossly ignorant of every thing that was not comprised in the art of living in a continual round of pleasure, insensible of the precipice on which they were standing, would not, at first, recede a single step to save themselves ; and this obstinacy was the chief cause that led to the entire new organization of the constitution, framed by the national assembly. The french in reality were arrived, through the vices of their government, at that degree of false refinement, which makes every man, in his own eyes, the centre of the world ; and when this gross selfishness, this complete depravity, prevails in a nation, an absolute change must take place ; because the members of it have lost the cement of humanity, which kept them together. All other vices are, properly speaking, superfluous strength, powers running to waste ; but this morbid spot shows, that there is death in the heart. Whatever, indeed, may be the wisdom or folly of a mixed government of king, lords, and commons, is of no consequence in the present history ; because it appears sufficiently obvious, that the aristocracy of France destroyed

stroyed itself, through the ignorant arrogance of it's members ; who, bewildered in a thick fog of prejudices, could discern neither the true dignity of man, nor the spirit of the times.

It also deserves to be noted, that the regeneration of the french government, at this crisis, depended on the fortitude of the national assembly at the outset of the contest ; for, if the court party had prevailed, the commons would have rested in their usual state of insignificancy, and their whole proceedings proved only a solemn farce. They would have wrapped themselves up in their black mantles, like the herd of undertaker's men at a funeral, merely to follow with servile steps the idle cavalcade to it's resting place ; and the people would only have seen their ancient tyranny revive, tricked out in new habiliments.

## CHAPTER II.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEED TO BUSINESS. OPPOSITION OF THE NOBLES, BISHOPS, AND COURT. A SEANCE ROYALE PROCLAIMED, AND THE HALL OF THE ASSEMBLY SURROUNDED BY SOLDIERS. THE MEMBERS ADJOURN TO THE TENNIS COURT, AND VOW NEVER TO SEPARATE TILL A CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED. THE MAJORITY OF THE CLERGY AND TWO OF THE NOBLES JOIN THE COMMONS. SEANCE ROYALE. THE KING'S SPEECH. SPIRITED BEHAVIOUR OF THE ASSEMBLY. SPEECH OF MIRABEAU. PERSONS OF THE DEPUTIES DECLARED INVIOLEABLE. MINORITY OF THE NOBLES JOIN THE COMMONS. AT THE REQUEST OF THE KING, THE MINORITY OF THE CLERGY DO THE SAME,—AND ARE AT LENGTH FOLLOWED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE NOBLES. CHARACTER OF THE QUEEN OF FRANCE,—OF THE KING,—AND OF THE NOBLES. LECTURES ON LIBERTY AT THE PALAIS ROYAL. PARIS SURROUNDED BY TROOPS. SPIRIT OF LIBERTY INFUSED INTO THE SOLDIERS. ELEVEN OF THE FRENCH GUARDS IMPRISONED BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT FIRE ON THE POPULACE, AND LIBERATED BY THE PEOPLE. REMONSTRANCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE KING PROPOSES TO REMOVE THE ASSEMBLY TO NOYON, OR SOISSONS. NECKER DISMISSED. CITY MILITIA PROPOSED. THE POPULACE ATTACKED IN THE GARDEN OF THE THUILLERIES BY THE PRINCE OF LAMBESC. NOCTURNAL ORGIES AT VERSAILLES.

THE third-estate, having constituted themselves a national assembly, now proceeded to business, with calm prudence, taking into consideration the urgent necessities of the state.

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Closely also attending to their instructions, they first pronounced, that all taxes not enacted by the consent of the representatives of the people were illegal ; and afterwards gave a temporary sanction to the present levies, to avoid dissolving one government before they had framed another. They then turned their attention to the object next in importance, and declared, that, as soon as, in concert with his majesty, they should be able to fix the principles of national regeneration, they would employ themselves to examine and liquidate the national debt ; mean time the creditors of the state were declared to be under the safe-guard of the honour of the french nation. These decrees concluded with a resolve, that the assembly, now become active, should dedicate it's first moments to inquire into the cause of the scarcity that afflicted the kingdom ; and to search for a remedy the most prompt and effectual.

The nobles, bishops, and, in fact, the whole court, now seriously began to rally all their forces ; convinced that it was become necessary, to oppose their united strength against the commons, to prevent their carrying every thing before them.

The chamber of the clergy had been engaged for several days, in discussing the question, where they should verify their powers. A number of them, during this discussion, appear to have advanced, feeling their way; for when they now came to divide, the majority decided to join the national assembly.

Alarmed by the prospect of this junction, one of the members of the chamber, which almost arrogated to itself the prerogative of legislation, that of the nobles, proposed an address to the king, beseeching him to dissolve the states-general; whilst the cause of the people was there vigorously supported by a minority, feeble as to numbers, but powerful in argument, animated by the popularity, which their bold declaration could not fail to produce during the reign of enthusiasm.

This was a moment pregnant with great events. The court still trusted to subterfuge, and, holding the representatives of the people in superlative contempt, affected in some degree to yield to the prayer of the nation; though signifying, that the king was the only fountain of justice, and that he would grant every thing which his faithful subjects could reasonably demand. A trick as palpable as  
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the design was flagrant ; for at the instant they were pretending to see some reason in their requisitions, they were guarding against their obtaining the only thing that could secure their rights, an equal representation ; holding for this purpose mischievous councils, composed of characters most obnoxious in the eyes of the people. In these meetings it was resolved, to amuse the commons, until the army could be assembled ; and then, in case of obstinacy, they would draw on themselves the consequence. Accordingly the 20th of june, the day on which the majority of the clergy was to join the commons, the herald proclaimed a *séance royale* ; and a detachment of guards surrounded the hall of the national assembly, to take care (such was the shallow pretext) that it should be properly prepared for the reception of the king. The deputies came to the door at the usual hour ; but only the president (Baillie) and the secretaries were permitted to enter to take away their papers ; and they saw, that the benches were already removed, and that all the entrances were guarded by a great number of soldiers.

Courage is seldom relaxed by persecution ; and the firm and spirited proceedings of the assembly on this day, gave the decided blow

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to the stratagems of the court. During the first tumult of surprise, it is true, some of the deputies talked of going immediately to Marly, to invite the king to come among them, and in a truly paternal manner to unite his power with their's to promote the public good ; and thus by an energetic appeal to his heart and understanding, to convince him that they spoke the language of truth and reason. But others, more experienced in ministerial wiles, calmly advised to adjourn the sittings to the neighbouring tennis-court. For they knew, that the hearts of courtiers are fortified with icy prejudices ; and that, though a moment of sympathy, a flow of life-blood, may thaw them at the instant, it is only to render them more hard, when the glow of genial heat is passed.

Assembled at the tennis-court, they encouraged each other ; and one mind actuating the whole body, in the presence of an applauding crowd, they joined hands solemnly, and took God to witness, that they would not separate, till a constitution should be completed. The benedictions that dropped from every tongue, and sparkled in tears of joy from every eye, giving fresh vigour to

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the heroism which excited them, produced an overflow of sensibility that kindled into a blaze of patriotism every social feeling. The dungeons of despotism and the bayonets sharpened for massacre, were then equally disregarded even by the most fearful ; till, in one of those instants of disinterested forgetfulness of private pursuits, all devoted themselves to the promotion of public happiness, promising to resist, to the last extremity, all the efforts of such an inveterate tyranny. The absent deputies were sent for ; and one, who happened to be sick, had himself carried to unite his feeble voice with the general cry. The very soldiers also, disobeying their officers, came to be willing sentinels at the entrance of the sanctuary of liberty, eagerly imbibing the sentiments, which they afterwards spread through their garrisons.

This indignity offered to the third-estate could not fail to excite new sensations of disgust at Paris ; and give a fresh spring to the animation of the people at large. Yet, this spirited behaviour of the commons excited only supercilious contempt at court. For the gay circles there were so far sunk in fastidious delicacy, and squeamish respect for polished manners,



manners, that they could not even discover magnanimity in the conduct of a peasant, or a shopkeeper; much less grandeur in an assembly regardless of ceremonials. And not to be deficient themselves in these respects, the *séance royale* was put off another day, in order that the galleries, which had been erected for the accommodation of spectators by the national assembly, might be removed.

This was another injudicious step on the part of the cabinet; because it afforded time for the clergy to unite with the commons, who were in search of a place sufficiently capacious to contain such a body. At length, collected in a church, the clergy, with several bishops at their head, and two nobles of Dauphiné, joined them; and the place, seeming to reflect a sanctity on their union, tended to consolidate, under a nobler concave, the resolution taken in the tennis-court.

The following day, the *séance royale* really took place, with all the exterior splendour usually exhibited at these shows; which hitherto could scarcely be termed empty, because they produced the desired effect. But the public, having their attention turned to

other things, now viewed with contempt, what had formerly inspired almost idolatrous respect. The deputies of the third estate were again ordered to enter by a separate door, and even lost a considerable time standing exposed to a heavy shower. The people, who were totally excluded, formed themselves into groups, making indignant comments on the repeated affronts offered to their representatives, whose minds likewise recoiled at the idle attempt to impress them with an opinion of their insignificance; when the very pains taken to do it proclaimed their growing importance in the state.

The object of the king's speech, on this occasion, was to annul the whole proceedings of the national assembly, and to hold out certain benefits, as lures to submission, which the king meant to grant to the people; as if, observes Mirabeau, 'the rights of the people, were the favours of the king.' A declaration of his sovereign will and pleasure was then read, in which, making an insidious attempt to withdraw from the assembly the confidence of the public, he declared, that, if they abandoned him, he would provide for the happiness of his people; without their as-

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sistance,

fulance, knowing the purport of the instructions given to the deputies. The first article of the king's benevolent *intentions*, was to grant to the states-general the power of furnishing supplies; carefully specifying, however, that it was to consist of the three orders, who were to vote according to the ancient mode. Some other salutary plans of reform were also brought forward; but always with artful modifications, that would enable the old abuses to keep a sure footing. For example, the taxes were to be levied equally; yet a cautious respect for property sanctioned almost every other feudal privilege; and the absolute abolition of *lettres de cachet*,\* though his majesty wished to secure personal freedom, was hinted at as incompatible with public safety, and the preservation of the honour of private families. The liberty of the press was allowed to be necessary; but the states general were requested to point out a mode of rendering it compatible with the respect due

\* Under the reign of Louis XV two hundred and thirty thousand *lettres de cachet* had been issued; and after this, who will assert, that this was not an inveterate evil, which ought to be eradicated; for it is an insult to human reason, to talk of the modification of such abuses, as seem to be experiments to try how far human patience can be stretched.

to religion, to morality, and to the honour of the citizens. The tenour of all the rest of the articles was the same; commencing with a plan of reform, and concluding with the *ifs* and *buts*, that were to render it void.—Then, winding round to the grand object of the meeting, the king terminated his discourse, with saying, forgetful that this was not the period to imagine himself reigning at Constantinople, ‘ I *command* you to separate immediately, and to attend, each of you, to-morrow, at the chamber appropriated for your order, there to resume your sittings; and I have commanded, in consequence, the grand master of the ceremonies to order the halls to be prepared.’

The majority of the nobles, and the minority of the clergy, obeyed this peremptory order, and obsequiously followed the king, like the trained horses of his court. The members of the national assembly, however, remained sitting, preserving a silence, more menacing and terrible, than the *I will*, or *I command*, of the cabinet; when the grand master of the ceremonies entered, and addressing himself to the president, reminded him, in the king’s name, of the order given to separate

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rate immediately. The president answered, ' that the assembly was not constituted to receive orders from any person ;' but Mirabeau, who thought this reply too tame, started up, and addressing the messenger, said : ' yes ; we have heard the intentions which the king has been induced to utter ; and you cannot be his organ in this assembly.—You, who have neither feat, nor right to speak, ought not to remind us of his discourse. However, to avoid all equivocation or delay, I declare to you, that if you are charged to make us go from hence, you should demand orders to employ force ; for only the bayonet can oblige us to quit our places.' It is difficult to conceive the ardour inspired by this prompt eloquence. Its fire flew from breast to breast, whilst a whisper ran round, that what Mirabeau had just uttered, gave a finishing stroke to the revolution.

A warm debate ensued ; and the assembly declaring their adherence to their former decrees, the abbé Siéyes said, in his dry, cogent manner : ' gentlemen, you are to day what you were yesterday.' A motion was then made, by Mirabeau, who suggested, as a prudent precaution against the measures of a des-

perate cabal, that the person of each deputy should be pronounced inviolable; and, after a slight discussion, it was carried unanimously.

From this moment we may consider the nation and court at open war. The court had at their command the whole military force of the empire, amounting, at least, to 200,000 men. The people, on the contrary, had only their bare arms, invigorated, it is true, by the new-born love of freedom, to oppose to the various weapons of tyranny. But the army, partaking of the common misery, were not deaf to the complaints or arguments of their fellow citizens: and they were particularly led to consider them with complacency, because a just apprehension, or prudent foresight, had induced many of the popular assemblies, to insert a clause in their instructions, recommending, that the pay of the soldiers should be augmented. Thus recognized as fellow citizens, this class of men, whom it had been the policy of the despots of Europe to keep at a distance from the other inhabitants, making them a distinct class, to oppress and corrupt the rest, began to feel an interest in the common cause. But the court,  
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who either could not, or would not, combine these important facts, rashly precipitated themselves into the very quicksand, into which they were vainly endeavouring to drive the commons.

As Necker had not attended in his place, at the *séance royale*, it gave colour to the rumour, which had for some time prevailed, that he purposed to retire from the ministry : so that, when the king returned, he was followed by an immense crowd, who could not conceal their discontent. Under the influence also of the same fear, a number of the deputies hastened to Necker, to entreat him not to resign. And the consternation increasing, the queen, who has ever been the first to desert her own plans, when there appeared a shadow of personal danger, sent for him ; and, the better to cover the project of the cabinet, prevailed on him not to quit his post. The object of the cabinet he either had not the penetration to discover ; or he had not sufficient magnanimity to resign a place, that gratified equally his pride and his avarice. This measure tended to tranquillize the minds of the people, though it was undermining their cause ; for trusting to the integrity of this minister,

nister, who promised, ‘ to live or die with ‘ them,’ they did not perceive, that he wanted the energy of soul necessary to enable him to act up to the principles he professed. However, the cause of liberty, as circumstances have proved, did not depend on the talents of one or two men.—It was the fiat of the nation ; and the machinations of the tyrants of Europe have not yet been able to overturn it ; though false patriots have led them, in their ardour for reform, to the commission of actions the most cruel and unjust. Every thing was effected by natural causes ; and we shall find, if we take a cursory view of the progress of knowledge, that it’s advance towards simple principles is invariably in a ratio, which must speedily change the tangled system of european politics.

The *séance royale* produced so little effect, that the assembly, as if their sittings had never been interrupted, met the next day at the old hall ; and the day after, the minority of the nobles. which consisted of forty-seven members, came to incorporate themselves with the commons. All of these, and particularly the duke of Orleans, who led them, acquired by this popular conduct, the love and confidence  
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of the nation. How far they merited it, deceiving the public, or themselves, their future conduct will best explain.

The interesting events, in fact, which almost daily occurred, at the commencement of the revolution, fired the fancies of men of different descriptions; till, forgetting every selfish consideration, the rich and poor saw through the same focus. But, when the former had time to cool, and felt more forcibly than the latter the inconveniences of anarchy, they returned with fresh vigour to their old ground; embracing, with redoubled ardour, the prejudices which passion, not conviction, had chased from the field, during the heat of action. This was a strong reinforcement for the staunch aristocrats; because these were mostly good, but short-sighted people, who really wished, that justice might be established, as the foundation of the new government, though they flinched when their present ease was disturbed; and it was necessary to give more than good wishes.

This minority of nobles must certainly be allowed to have acted more prudently than their peers; and several of them, the most respectable men of that class, both in talents and  
morals,

morals, were probably actuated by half comprehended principles. The great body of the nobles, nevertheless, and the minority of the clergy, continued to meet in different chambers, where their idle deliberations marked their decayed influence. For, shrinking into nothing, their present struggles to regain their power were as fruitless, as their former efforts had been presumptuous. Yet the jealousies and contumely of the nobility continued to agitate the commons; who, animated by a consciousness of the justice of their cause, and feeling, that they possessed the confidence of the public, determined to proceed with the objects of their meeting, without the concurrence of the first order; proving to them, when it was too late to preserve their factitious distinctions, that their power and authority were at an end. In vain were they told, that they were acting contrary to their true interest, and risking the salvation of their privileges. In vain did one of the most moderate of the deputies \* remonstrate with them, on what, most probably, would be the consequence of their obstinacy. No argument could move them; and, blind to the danger

\* Count Lally Tolendal.

with which they were threatened, they persisted to attend their councils, without any determinate rule of action. It is true, the duke of Luxembourg declared, in a private committee held by the king, the 26th of june, that ‘ the division of the orders would controul the exorbitant claims of the people, and preserve those of the monarch ; united,’ added he, ‘ they know no master, divided, they are your subjects :’ and he concluded, with emphatically saying, that ‘ it would save the independence of the crown, and stamp with nullity the proceedings of the national assembly.’ These were manly, though not patriotic sentiments ; and if the court had rallied round them, and defended them to the last extremity, they would at any rate have prevented their disgrace, by avoiding the crooked path of treachery. But abandoning all dignity of conduct, they trusted to the art of manœuvring, which defeated by the people, they were left entirely at their mercy.

With respect to the improvement of society, since the destruction of the roman empire, England seems to have led the way, rendering certain obstinate prejudices almost null, by a gradual change of opinion. This observation,

fervation, which facts will support, may be brought forward, to prove, that just sentiments gain footing only in proportion as the understanding is enlarged by cultivation, and freedom of thought, instead of being cramped by the dread of bastilles and inquisitions. In Italy and France, for example, where the mind dared to exercise itself only to form the taste, the nobility were, in the strictest sense of the word, a cast, keeping aloof from the people; whilst in England they intermingled with the commercial men, whose equal or superiour fortunes made the nobles overlook their inequality of birth: thus giving the first blow to the ignorant pride that retarded the formation of just opinions respecting true dignity of character. This monied interest, from which political improvement first emanates, was not yet formed in France; and the ridiculous pride of her nobles, which led them to believe, that the purity of their families would be sullied, if they agreed to act in the same sphere with the people, was a prevailing motive, that prevented their junction with the commons. But the more licentious part of the clergy, who followed with a truer scent their own interest, thought it expedient to  
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espouse, in time, the cause of the power, from whence their influence derived its greatest force; and from which alone they could hope for support. This schism proved, as it promised, dangerous to the views of the court.

The desertion of the clergy rendered the nobility outrageous, and hastened the crisis when the important contest was to be brought to an issue.—Then it was that the king perceived how contemptible his undecided conduct had been, and exclaiming, it is said confidently, ‘ that he remained ALONE in the ‘ midst of the nation, occupied with the establishment of concord.’ Vain words! and this affectation was particularly reprehensible, because he had already given orders for the assembling of the foreign troops: the object of which was to establish concord with the point of the bayonet.

This total want of character caused him to be flattered by all parties, and trusted by none. Insignificancy had distinguished his manners in his own court. Actions without energy, and professions without sincerity, exhibiting a conduct destitute of steadiness, made the cabinet concert all their measures regardless of his

his opinion, leaving to the queen the task of persuading him to adopt them. The evil did not rest even here; for the different parties following separate views, the flexibility of his temper led him to sanction things the most at variance, and most dangerous to his future honour and safety. For it appears obvious, that whatever party had prevailed, he could only be considered as an instrument; which, becoming useless when the object should be achieved, would be treated with disrespect. Periods of revolution drawing into action the worst as well as the best of men; and as audacity, in general, triumphs over modest merit, when the political horizon is ruffled by tempest; it amounted to a moral certainty, that the line of conduct pursued by the king would lead to his disgrace and ruin.

Seeing, however, that the people were unanimous in their approbation of the conduct of their representatives, and watchful to discover the designs of their enemies; it could not but occur to the cabinet, that the only way to lull attention to sleep, was to affect to submit to necessity. Besides, fearing, if they continued to resort to their different chambers, that their plot would take wind before  
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all the agents were assembled, a fresh instance of dissimulation evinced, that their depravity equalled their stupidity. For the king was now prevailed on to write to the presidents of the nobility, and the minority of the clergy, requesting them, to represent to those two orders the necessity of uniting with the third, to proceed to the discussion of his proposals, made at the *séance royale*.

The clergy immediately acquiesced; but the nobility continued to oppose a junction so humiliating, till the court invented a pretext of honour to save the credit of their mock dignity, by declaring, that the life of the king would be in imminent danger, should the nobles continue to resist the desire of the nation. Pretending to believe this report, for the secret of the cabinet was buzzed amongst them, and appearing to wish to bury all rivalry in royalty, they attended at the common hall, the 27th. Yet even there, the first step they took was to enter a protest, in order to guard against this concession being made a precedent.

A general joy succeeded the terroure which had been engendered in the minds of the people by their contumelious perverseness; and

the parisiens, cherishing the most sanguine expectations, reckoned, that an unity of exertions would secure to them a redress of grievances.

It is perhaps unnecessary to dwell, for a moment, on the insensibility of the court, and the credulity of the people ; as they seem the only clues, that will lead us to a precise discrimination of the causes, which completely annihilated all confidence in the ministers, who have succeeded the directors of those infamous measures, that swept away the whole party ; measures which involved thousands of innocent people in the same ruin, and have produced a clamour against the proceedings of the nation, that has obscured the glory of her labours. It is painful to follow, through all their windings, the crimes and follies produced by want of sagacity, and just principles of action. For instance, the *séance royale* was held on the 23d, when the king, not deigning to advise, commanded the deputies to repair to their different chambers ; and only four days after he implored the nobility and clergy to wave every consideration, and accede to the wish of the people. Acting in this contradictory manner, it is clear, that the cabal

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thought



thought only of rendering sure the decided blow, which was to level with the dust the power, that extorted such humiliating concessions.

But the people, easy of belief, and glad to be light-hearted again; no sooner heard that an union of the orders had taken place, by the desire of the king, than they hurried from all quarters, with good-humoured confidence, called for the king and queen, and testified, in their presence, the grateful joy this acquiescence had inspired. How different was this frankness of the people, from the close hypocritical conduct of the cabal !

The courtly, dignified politeness of the queen, with all those complacent graces which dance round flattered beauty, whose every charm is drawn forth by the consciousness of pleasing, promised all that a sanguine fancy had pourtrayed of future happiness and peace. From her fascinating smiles, indeed, was caught the careless hope, that, expanding the heart, makes the animal spirits vibrate, in every nerve, with pleasure :—yet, she smiled but to deceive ; or, if she felt some touches of sympathy, it was only the unison of the moment.

It is certain, that education, and the atmosphere of manners in which a character is formed, change the natural laws of humanity ; otherwise it would be unaccountable, how the human heart can be so dead to the tender emotions of benevolence, which most forcibly teach us, that real or lasting felicity flows only from a love of virtue, and the practice of sincerity.

The unfortunate queen of France, beside the advantages of birth and station, possessed a very fine person ; and her lovely face, sparkling with vivacity, hid the want of intelligence. Her complexion was dazzlingly clear ; and, when she was pleased, her manners were bewitching ; for she happily mingled the most insinuating voluptuous softness and affability, with an air of grandeur, bordering on pride, that rendered the contrast more striking. Independence also, of whatever kind, always gives a degree of dignity to the mien ; so that monarchs and nobles, with most ignoble souls, from believing themselves superiour to others, have actually acquired a look of superiority.

But her opening faculties were poisoned in the Lull ; for before she came to Paris, she had  
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already been prepared, by a corrupt, supple abbé, for the part she was to play; and, young as she was, became so firmly attached to the aggrandizement of her house, that, though plunged deep in pleasure, she never omitted sending immense sums to her brother, on every occasion. The person of the king, in itself very disgusting, was rendered more so by gluttony, and a total disregard of delicacy, and even decency in his apartments: and, when jealous of the queen, for whom he had a kind of devouring passion, he treated her with great brutality, till she acquired sufficient finessè to subjugate him. Is it then surprizing, that a very desirable woman, with a sanguine constitution, should shrink abhorrent from his embraces; or that an empty mind should be employed only to vary the pleasures, which emasculated her circean court? And, added to this, the histories of the Julias and Messalinas of antiquity, convincingly prove, that there is no end to the vagaries of the imagination, when power is unlimited, and reputation set at defiance.

Lost then in the most luxurious pleasures, or managing court intrigues, the queen became a profound dissembler; and her heart

hardened by sensual enjoyments to such a degree, that when her family and favourites stood on the brink of ruin, her little portion of mind was employed only to preserve herself from danger. As a proof of the justness of this assertion, it is only necessary to observe, that, in the general wreck, not a scrap of her writing has been found to criminate her; neither has she suffered a word to escape her to exasperate the people, even when burning with rage, and contempt. The effect that adversity may have on her choked understanding time will show\*; but during her prosperity, the moments of languor, that glide into the interstices of enjoyment, were passed in the most childish manner; without the appearance of any vigour of mind, to palliate the wanderings of the imagination.—Still she was a woman of uncommon address; and though her conversation was insipid, her compliments were so artfully adapted to flatter the person she wished to please or dupe, and so eloquent is the beauty of a queen, in the eyes even of superiour men, that she seldom failed to carry her point when she endeavoured

\* This was written some months before the death of the queen,

deavoured to gain an ascendancy over the mind of an individual. Over that of the king she acquired unbounded sway, when, managing the disgust she had for his person, she made him pay a kingly price for her favours. A court is the best school in the world for actors ; it was very natural then for her to become a complete actress, and an adept in all the arts of coquetry that debauch the mind, whilst they render the person alluring.

Had the hapless Louis possessed any decision of character, to support his glimmering sense of right, he would from this period have chosen a line of conduct, that might have saved his life by regulating his future politics. For this returning affection of the people alone was sufficient to prove to him, that it was not easy to eradicate their love for royalty ; because, whilst they were contending for their rights with the nobility, they were happy to receive them as acts of beneficence from the king. But the education of the heir apparent of a crown must necessarily destroy the common sagacity and feelings of a man ; and the education of this monarch, like that of Louis XV, only tended to make him a sensual bigot.

Priests have, in general, contrived to become the preceptors of kings ; the more surely to support the church, by leaning it against the throne. Besides ; kings, who without having their understandings enlarged, are set above attending to the forms of morality, which sometimes produce it's spirit, are always particularly fond of those religious systems, which, like a sponge, wipe out the crimes that haunt the terrified imagination of unsound minds.

It has been the policy of the court of France, to throw an odium on the understanding of the king, when it was lavishing praises on the goodness of his heart. Now it is certain, that he possessed a considerable portion of sense, and discernment ; though he wanted that firmness of mind, which constitutes character ; or, in more precise words, the power of acting according to the dictates of a man's own reason. He was a tolerable scholar ; had sufficient patience to learn the english language ; and was an ingenious mechanic. It is also well known, that in the council, when he followed only the light of his own reason, he often fixed on the most sage measures, which he was afterwards persuaded to abandon. But death seems to be the sport  
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of kings, and, like the roman tyrant, whose solitary amusement was transfixing flies, this man, whose milkiness of heart has been perpetually contrasted with the pretended warieness of his head, was extremely fond of seeing those grimaces, made by tortured animals, which rouse to pleasure sluggish, gross sensations. The queen, however, prevailed on him not to attempt to amuse her, or raise a forced laugh, in a polite circle, by throwing a cat down the chimney, or shooting an harmless ass. Taught also to dissemble, from his cradle, he daily practised the despicable shifts of duplicity; though led by his indolence to take, rather than to give the tone to his domineering parasites.

The french nobility, perhaps, the most corrupt and ignorant set of men in the world, except in those objects of taste, which consist in giving variety to amusement, had never lived under the controul of any law, but the authority of the king; and having only to dread the Bastille for a little time, should they commit any enormity, could not patiently brook the restraints, the better government of the whole society required. Haughtily then disregarding the suggestions of humanity, and  
even

even prudence, they determined to subvert every thing, sooner than resign their privileges ; and this tenacity will not appear astonishing, if we call to mind, that they considered the people as beasts of burden, and trod them under foot with the mud. This is not a figure of rhetoric ; but a melancholy truth ! For it is notorious, that, in the narrow streets of Paris, where there are no footways to secure the walkers from danger, they were frequently killed, without slackening, by the least emotion of fellow-feeling, the gallop of the thoughtless being, whose manhood was buried in a factitious character.

I shall not now recapitulate the feudal tyrannies, which the progress of civilization has rendered nugatory ; it is sufficient to observe, that, as neither the life nor property of the citizens was secured by equal laws, both were often wantonly sported with by those who could do it with impunity. Arbitrary decrees have too often assumed the sacred majesty of law ; and when men live in continual fear, and know not what they have to apprehend, they always become cunning and pusillanimous. Thus the abject manners, produced by despotism of any species, seem to justify



tify them, in the eyes of those who only judge of things from their present appearance. This leads, likewise, to an observation, that partly accounts for the want of industry and cleanliness in France; for people are very apt to sport away their time, when they cannot look forward, with some degree of certainty, to the consolidation of a plan of future ease.

Every precaution was taken to divide the nation, and prevent any ties of affection, such as ought always to unite man with man, in all the relationships of life, from bringing the two ranks together with any thing like equality to consolidate them. If, for instance, the son of a nobleman happened so far to forget his rank, as to marry a woman of low birth; what misery have not those unfortunate creatures endured!—confined in prisons, or hunted out of the common nest, as contagious intruders. And if we remember also, that, while treated with contempt, only a twentieth part of the profit of his labour fell to the share of the husbandman, we shall cease to inquire, why the nobles opposed innovations, that must necessarily have overturned the fabric of despotism.

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The inveterate pride of the nobles, the rapacity of the clergy, and the prodigality of the court, were, in short, the secret springs of the plot, now almost ripe, aimed at the embryo of freedom through the heart of the national assembly. But Paris, that city which contains so many different characters—that vortex, which draws every vice into it's centre—that repository of all the materials of voluptuous degeneracy—that den of spies and assassins—contained likewise a number of enlightened men, and was able to raise a very formidable force, to defend it's opinions.

The cabinet saw it's rising spirit with suspicion; and, resorting to their old wiles, produced a scarcity of bread, hoping that, when the people should be disheartened, the approaching army under Broglie would bring the whole affair to a speedy issue. But circumstances seemed favourable to the people; for the electors of Paris, after they had chosen their deputies, the election having been protracted very late, continued to meet at the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, to prepare the instructions, which they had not time to digest before the assembling of the states-general.

At

At this juncture also, a spacious square, equally devoted to business and pleasure, called the *Palais Royal*, became the rendez-vous of the citizens. There the most spirited gave lectures, whilst more modest men read the popular papers and pamphlets, on the benefits of liberty, and the crying oppressions of absolute governments. This was the centre of information; and the whole city flocking thither, to talk or to listen, returned home warmed with the love of freedom, and determined to oppose, at the risk of life, the power that should still labour to enslave them—and when life is put on the cast, do not men generally gain that for which they strive with those, who, wanting their enthusiasm, set more value on the stake?

The turbulence of the metropolis, produced in great measure by the continual arrival of foreign troops, furnished, nevertheless, a plausible pretext for blockading it; and thirty-five thousand men, at least, mostly consisting of hussars and mercenary troops, were drawn from the frontiers, and collected round Versailles. Camps were traced out for still more; and the posts, that commanded the roads leading to Paris, were filled with soldiers.

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The courtiers, then unable to repress their joy, vaunted, that the national assembly would soon be dissolved, and the rebellious deputies silenced by imprisonment, or death. And should even the french soldiers abandon them, among whom there were some symptoms of revolt, the court depended on the foreign troops, to strike terror into the very heart of Paris and Versailles. The gathering army was already a very formidable force ; but the spirit of enthusiasm, and a keen sense of injuries, rendered more sharp by insults, had such an effect on the people, that, instead of being intimidated, they coolly began to prepare for defence.

All had heard, or were now informed, of the efforts made by the americans to maintain their liberty.—All had heard of the glorious firmness of a handful of raw bostonian militia, who, on Bunker's-hill, resisted the british disciplined troops, crimsoning the plains of Charles-town with the blood of the flower of their enemy's army. This lesson for tyrants had resounded through the kingdom ; and it ought to have taught them, that men determined to be free are always superiour

perious to mercenary battalions even of veterans.

The popular leaders had also taken the surest means to ingratiate themselves with the soldiery, by mixing with them, and continually insinuating, that citizens ought not to allow the base ministers of power, to treat them like passive instruments of mischief. Besides, it was natural to expect, that the military, the most idle body of men in the kingdom, should attend to the topics of the day, and profit by the discussions, that disseminated new political principles. And such an influence had the arguments in favour of liberty on their minds, that, so early as the 23d of june, during a slight riot, two companies of the grenadiers refused to fire on the people, whom they were sent to disperse. But these symptoms of refractoriness roused the resentment of the court, instead of putting it on it's guard: consequently several were sent to prison, and the troops were confined to their barracks; yet, regardless of these orders, they came in crowds to the *Palais Royal*, a day or two after, eager to unite their voices with the general shout, *vive la nation*, which spoke the present sentiments of the people.

people. The regiments of french, also, that now arrived, to be stationed with the foreign troops round Paris, were conducted to this hot-bed of patriotism ; and, meeting with the most cordial reception, they listened with interest to the lively representations of the enormities committed by their old government, and of the meanness of those men, who could live on the bread earned by butchering their fellow citizens.

Whilst these opinions were taking root, the people heard, that eleven of the french guards, confined in the abbey, because they would not obey the order to fire on the populace, were to be transferred to the *Bicetre*, the most ignominious of all the prisons. The contest now commenced ; for the people hastened to deliver them, and, forcing their way, emancipated their friends ; and even the hussars, who were called out to quell the disturbance, laid down their arms. Yet, attentive to justice, they sent back to confinement a soldier, who had been previously committed by the police, for some other misdemeanour.

Exasperated as they were, the people, not yet become lawless, guarded the men they had rescued ; whilst they sent a deputation to

the national assembly, to intercede with the king in their behalf. This spirited, yet prudent, behaviour produced the desired effect; and the assembly named a certain number of the deputies, who with scrupulous decorum were to demand this grace of the king: and he accordingly granted their pardon, laying a cautious stress on it's being the first request made by the assembly. But it was still questionable, whether this extorted act of lenity were not done, like the other actions of the court, only to blind the preparations that were making, to humble effectually the soldiery, the metropolis, and the assembly.

During this period of general suspicion, the presence of such a considerable force, as now was encamped on every side of the capital, particularly alarmed the electors, who held their deliberations very constantly to watch over the public peace; and, in order to avert the threatening storm; they proposed raising the city militia. Yet, before they determined, they sent to apprise the national assembly of their intention; wishing the king to be informed, that; if an armed force were necessary to secure the public tranquillity, the citizens themselves were the most proper

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persons to be entrusted with the commission.

The unsettled state of Paris, now suffering from a scarcity of bread, furnished, however, a plausible pretext for the augmentation of the troops, which increased the calamity. 'When it is with the greatest difficulty,' says one of the electors, 'that we can procure provision for the inhabitants, was it necessary to increase the famine and our fears, by calling together a number of soldiers, who were dispersed through all the provinces? These troops,' he adds, 'were destined to guard the frontiers, whilst the representatives of the nation are deliberating on the formation of a constitution. But this constitution, desired by the king, and demanded by all the provinces of France, has to cope with dangerous interior enemies.'

The national assembly, likewise, could not but perceive, that more soldiers were stationed near them, than would have been sufficient to repel a foreign invasion; and Mirabeau, with his usual fervour, animated them to action, by a lively picture of their situation. 'Thirty-five thousand men,' he observed, 'are now distributed between Paris and Versailles ;



' les; and twenty thousand more are ex-  
 ' pected. Trains of artillery follow them;  
 ' and places are already marked out for bat-  
 ' teries. They have made sure of all the  
 ' communications.—All our entrances are in-  
 ' tercepted; our roads, our bridges, and our  
 ' public walks, are changed into military  
 ' posts. The notorious events, the secret  
 ' orders, and precipitate counter-orders—in  
 ' short, preparations for war, strike every  
 ' eye, and fill with indignation every heart.  
 ' Gentlemen, if the question were only the  
 ' insulted dignity of the assembly, it would  
 ' demand the attention of the king himself;  
 ' for should he not take care, that we be  
 ' treated with decency, since we are deputies  
 ' of the nation from which his glory emanates,  
 ' which alone constitutes the splendour of the  
 ' throne?—Yes; of that nation, who will  
 ' render the person of the king honourable in  
 ' proportion as he respects himself? Since his  
 ' wish is to command free men, it is time to  
 ' banish the old odious forms, those insulting  
 ' proceedings, which too easily persuade the  
 ' courtiers, who surround the prince, that  
 ' royal majesty consists in the abasing relation  
 ' of master and slave; that a legitimate and

‘ beloved king ought on all occasions to show  
 ‘ himself with the aspect of an irritated tyrant ;  
 ‘ or, of those usurpers condemned by their  
 ‘ melancholy fate, to mistake the tender and  
 ‘ flattering sentiments of confidence.—And  
 ‘ who will dare to say, that circumstances  
 ‘ have rendered necessary these menacing  
 ‘ measures ? On the contrary, I am going to  
 ‘ demonstrate, that they are equally useless  
 ‘ and dangerous, considered either with respect  
 ‘ to good order, the quieting of the public, or  
 ‘ the safety of the throne : and, far from ap-  
 ‘ pearing the fruit of a sincere attachment to  
 ‘ the person of the monarch, they can only  
 ‘ gratify private passions, and cover perfidious  
 ‘ designs. Undoubtedly I do not know every  
 ‘ pretext, every artifice of the enemies of re-  
 ‘ formation, since I cannot divine with what  
 ‘ plausible reason they have coloured the  
 ‘ pretended want of troops, at a moment,  
 ‘ when not only their inutility, but their  
 ‘ danger strikes every mind.

‘ With what eye will the people, harraſſed  
 ‘ by ſo many calamities, ſee this ſwarm of idle  
 ‘ ſoldiers come to diſpute with them their  
 ‘ morſel of bread ? The conſtrast of the plenty  
 ‘ enjoyed by one, with the indigence of the  
 I other ;

‘ other ; of the security of the soldiers, to  
 ‘ whom the manna falls, without it’s being  
 ‘ necessary for them to think of to-morrow,  
 ‘ with the anguish of the people, who obtain  
 ‘ nothing but by hard labour and painful  
 ‘ sweat ; is sufficient to make every heart sink  
 ‘ with despondency. Added to this, gentle-  
 ‘ men, the presence of the troops heats the  
 ‘ imagination of the populace ; and, by con-  
 ‘ tinually presenting new fears, excites an  
 ‘ universal effervescence, till the citizens are  
 ‘ at their very fire-sides a prey to every kind  
 ‘ of terrour. The people, roused and agitated,  
 ‘ form tumultuous assemblies ; and, giving  
 ‘ way to their impetuosity, precipitate them-  
 ‘ selves into danger—for fear neither calculates  
 ‘ nor reasons !’ He concluded with moving  
 an address to the king, representing, that the  
 people were extremely alarmed by the as-  
 sembling of such a number of troops, and the  
 preparations made to form camps during this  
 season of scarcity ; and to remonstrate respect-  
 ing the conduct of those, who sought to de-  
 stroy the confidence that ought to subsist be-  
 tween the king and the representatives of the  
 people—a confidence, which alone can enable  
 them to fulfil their functions, and establish

the reform expected from their zeal by a suffering nation.

This speech produced the desired effect ; and the motion being carried, Mirabeau was requested to prepare an address for their consideration.

The purport of the address was an abridgement of the above speech ; respectful ; nay, even affectionate ; but spirited and noble.

Yet this remonstrance, so well calculated to preserve the dignity of the monarch, and appease the agitation of the public, produced no other effect than a supercilious answer, that only tended to increase the want of confidence, to which disgust gave a new edge. For, instead of attending to the prayer of the nation, the king asserted, that the tumultuous and scandalous scenes, which had passed at Paris, and at Versailles, under his own eyes, and those of the national assembly, were sufficient to induce him, one of whose principal duties it was to watch over the public safety, to station troops round Paris.—Still, he declared, that, far from intending to interrupt their freedom of debate, he only wished to preserve them even from all apprehension of tumult and violence. If, however,  
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the necessary presence of the troops continue to give umbrage, he was willing, at the request of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to Noyon or Soissons ; and to repair himself to Compiègne, in order to maintain the requisite intercourse with the assembly. This answer signified nothing ; or, rather, it formally announced, that the king would not send away the troops. Obvious as was the meaning, and contemptible as was the dissimulation ; yet, as it came from the sovereign, the fountain of fortune and honours, some of the supple hands of the deputies applauded.—But, Mirabeau was not to be cajoled by such shallow fallacy. ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, impatiently, ‘the goodness of the king’s heart is so well known, that we might tranquilly confide in his virtue, did he always act from himself.—But, the assurances of the king are no guarantee for the conduct of his ministers, who have not ceased to mislead his good disposition.—And have we yet to learn, that the habitual confidence of the french in their king is less a virtue than a vice, if it extend to all parts of the administration ?’

‘ Who amongst us is ignorant, in fact, that  
 ‘ it is our blind, giddy inconsideration, which  
 ‘ has led us from century to century, from  
 ‘ fault to fault, to the crisis that now afflicts  
 ‘ us, and which ought at last to open our  
 ‘ eyes, if we have not resolved to be head-  
 ‘ strong children and slaves, till the end of  
 ‘ time ?

‘ The reply of the king is a pointed refusal.  
 ‘ The ministry would have it regarded only  
 ‘ as a simple form of assurance and goodness ;  
 ‘ and they have affected to think, that we  
 ‘ have made our demand, without attaching  
 ‘ much interest to it’s success, and only to ap-  
 ‘ pear to have made it. It is necessary to  
 ‘ undeceive the ministry—Certainly, my opi-  
 ‘ nion is, not to fail in the confidence and re-  
 ‘ spect which we owe to the virtues of the  
 ‘ king ; but I likewise advise, that we be no  
 ‘ more inconsistent, timid, and wavering in  
 ‘ our measures.—Certainly, there is no need  
 ‘ to deliberate on the removal proposed ; for,  
 ‘ in short, notwithstanding the king’s answer,  
 ‘ we will not go to Noyon, nor to Soissons—  
 ‘ We have not demanded this permission ; nor  
 ‘ will we, because it is scarcely probable, that  
 ‘ we should ever desire to place ourselves be-  
 ‘ tween

‘ tween two or three bodies of troops ; those  
 ‘ which invest Paris, and those which might  
 ‘ fall upon us from Flanders and Alsace. We  
 ‘ have demanded the removal of the troops—  
 ‘ that was the object of our address!—We  
 ‘ have not asked permission to flee before them ;  
 ‘ but only that they should be sent from the  
 ‘ capital. And it is not for ourselves, that we  
 ‘ have made this demand ; for they know  
 ‘ very well, that it was suggested by a concern  
 ‘ for the general interest, not by any senti-  
 ‘ ment of fear. At this moment, the presence  
 ‘ of the troops disturbs the public order, and  
 ‘ may produce the most melancholy events.—  
 ‘ Our removal, far from preventing, would,  
 ‘ on the contrary, only aggravate the evil. It is  
 ‘ necessary, then, to restore peace, in spite of  
 ‘ the friends of disorder ; it is necessary, to be  
 ‘ consistent with ourselves ; and to be so, we  
 ‘ have only to adhere to one line of conduct,  
 ‘ which is to insist, without relaxing, that the  
 ‘ troops be sent away, as the only sure way  
 ‘ to obtain it.’

This speech, delivered on the 11th of  
 july, produced no further decision in the  
 assembly, though it kept the attention of the  
 members fixt to a point.

But

But things were now drawing rapidly to a crisis ; for this very day Necker, who had been retained in place, only to hoodwink the people, was dismissed, with an injunction not to mention his dismissal ; and to leave the kingdom in twenty-four hours. These orders he fervilely obeyed ; and, with all the promptitude of personal fear, said, without the least emotion, to the nobleman, who brought the king's commands, ' we shall meet this evening at the council ; ' and continued to converse, in his usual strain of smoothness, with the company at dinner. Miserable weakness ! This man, who professed himself the friend of the people, and who had so lately promised ' to live or die with them,' had not, when brought to the test, sufficient magnanimity to warn them where danger threatened—For he must have known, that this dismissal was the signal of hostilities : yet, fleeing like a felon, he departed in disguise, keeping the secret with all the caution of cowardice.\*

The next day, the appointment of the new ministry, men particularly obnoxious to the

\* Such is ever the conduct of *soi-disant* patriots.



public, made it known to the people ; who viewed with melancholy horror the awful horizon, where had long been gathering the storm, now ready to burst on their devoted heads. The agitation of the public mind, indeed, resembled a troubled sea ; which, having been put in motion by a raging tornado, gradually swells, until the whole element, wave rolling on wave, exhibits one unbounded commotion. All eyes were now opened, all saw the approaching blast ; the hollow murmurs of which had inspired a confused terror for some time past.

It had been proposed on the 10th, at the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, as a regulation of the *Garde-Bourgeoise*, that twelve hundred men should be raised at a time, to be relieved every week ; and the capital having been divided, at the election, into sixty districts, only twenty would be called out of each. And it was further resolved, that the districts should rest embodied until the entire evacuation of the troops, excepting those who formed the common compliment of the guards. The following day it was decreed ; an address was voted to the national assembly, to request their mediation with the king, to sanction immediately the

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the city militia ; and the sittings of the committee were adjourned till monday, the 13th. But some of the electors, having heard on sunday, that the populace were all repairing to the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, hastened there about six o'clock in the evening, and found the hall indeed crowded with people of all conditions. A thousand confused voices demanded arms, and orders to sound the *tocsin*.

At eight o'clock, the patrol guard was relieved, at the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, and the multitude pressed on the soldiers to disarm them ; redoubling the cry for arms at the moment ; and even threatened to set fire to the hall. But, still observing some respect for subordination, they demanded, a little imperiously, it is true, an order, in virtue of which, the citizens might arm themselves to repulse the danger that menaced the capital—and amidst these clamours, several precipitate reports painted, in the most lively colours, this danger.

One of the crowd said, that, no sooner had the news of the dismissal of Necker reached Paris, than the people hastened to a sculptor's, and, seizing the busts of that minister, and of the duke of Orleans, they were now actually carrying them through the streets :—Another

informed them, that the multitude had rushed into the different theatres, at the hour of opening them, and required, that they should be instantly shut;\* and that in consequence all the spectators had been sent away :—A third announced four cannons, placed at the entrance of the *Champs Elysées*, with their cannoneers ready to light their matches, which were to begin the combat ; and that these four cannons were supported by a regiment of cavalry, which, advancing under the command of the prince de Lambesc to the place of Louis 15th, was stationed by the bridge that leads to the Thuilleries. He added also, that a *cavalier* of this regiment, passing by a soldier of the french guards, had fired his pistol at him ; and, that the prince de Lambesc himself had galloped into the garden, sabre in hand, followed by a detachment, who put to flight the old men, women, and children, that were peaceably taking their customary walk ; nay, that he had actually killed, with his own hand, an old man, who was escaping from the tumult. The reporter, it is true, forgot

\* This is an event much more important at Paris, than it would be in London.

to notice, that the populace had begun to pelt the prince with the stones, that were lying ready, near the buildings which were not finished. Startled, perhaps, by this resistance, and despising the mob, that he expected, only by his presence, to have intimidated, in a delirium, most probably, of terror and astonishment, he wounded an unarmed man, who fled before him. Be that as it may, this wanton outrage excited the indignation necessary to fire every spirit.

The electors being still pressed for arms, and unable to furnish them, at eleven o'clock decreed, that the districts should be immediately convoked; and that they would repair to all the posts of armed citizens, to beg them, in the name of their country, to avoid all species of riot.—But this was not the moment to talk of peace, when all were making ready for battle.—The tumult now became general. To arms! To arms! re-echoed from all quarters—and the whole city was instantly in motion, seeking for weapons of defence. Whilst the women and children rent the air with shrieks and lamentations, the cannons were fired; and the *tocsins* of the different

different parish churches joined by degrees, to excite, and continue, the universal alarm.

Still all their thoughts were turned on defensive measures. Many of the citizens, by ransacking the warehouses of arms, and catching up spits and pokers, appeared with weapons in their hands to second their determinate countenances; and being joined by some of the french guards, more completely accoutred, forced those foreign mercenaries, who had first awakened their fury, to retreat, fleeing like the beasts of the desert, before the bold and generous lion. Though victorious in this midnight fray, because determined to conquer, still they had scarcely any fire arms; and were as inexpert in the use of those they found, as the inhabitants of capitals commonly are—But indignation made each of them, so restless was their courage, seize something to defend himself with: hammers, axes, shovels, pikes, all were fought for, and clenched in hands nerved by heroism; yes, by true heroism, for personal safety was disregarded in the common danger. Wives assisted to beat out pikes for their husbands, and children ran about to pile up stones in readiness for tomorrow. To increase the apprehensions of

the night, one of the barriers was set on fire ; and a band of desperate robbers, taking advantage of the confusion, began to pillage some houses. To arms ! was the cry of danger, and the watch-word of the city—for who could close their eyes ? Whilst the tocsin drowning the murmurs of rage, and distress, made the confusion solemn.

Different sounds excited different emotions at Versailles ; for there the heart, beating high with exultation, gave way to the most intemperate joy.—Already the courtiers imagined, that the whole mischief was crushed, and that they had the assembly at their mercy.

Intoxicated by success, a little too soon reckoned on, the queen, the count d'Artois, and their favourites, visited the haunt of the bribed ruffians, who were lurking in ambush, ready to fall upon their prey ; encouraging them by an engaging affability of behaviour, and more substantial marks of favour, to forget every consideration, but their commands. And so flattered were they by the honied words, and coquetish smiles of the queen, that they promised, as they drained the cup in her honour, not to sheath their swords, till France was compelled to obedience, and the  
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national assembly dispersed. With savage ferocity they danced to the sound of music attuned to slaughter, whilst plans of death and devastation gave the zest to the orgies, that worked up their animal spirits to the highest pitch. After this account, any reflections on the baneful effects of power, or on the unrestrained indulgence of pleasure, that could thus banish tenderness from the female bosom, and harden the human heart, would be an insult to the reader's sensibility.

How silent is now Versailles!—The solitary foot, that mounts the sumptuous stair-case, rests on each landing-place, whilst the eye traverses the void, almost expecting to see the strong images of fancy burst into life.—The train of the Louises, like the posterity of the Banquoes, pass in solemn sadness, pointing at the nothingness of grandeur, fading away on the cold canvases, which covers the nakedness of the spacious walls—whilst the gloominess of the atmosphere gives a deeper shade to the gigantic figures, that seem to be sinking into the embraces of death.

Warily entering the endless apartments, half shut up, the fleeting shadow of the pensive wanderer, reflected in long glasses, that

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vainly gleam in every direction, slacken the nerves, without appalling the heart ; though lascivious pictures, in which grace varnishes voluptuousness, no longer seductive, strike continually home to the bosom the melancholy moral, that anticipates the frozen lesson of experience. The very air is chill, seeming to clog the breath ; and the wasting dampness of destruction appears to be stealing into the vast pile, on every side.

The oppressed heart seeks for relief in the garden ; but even there the same images glide along the wide neglected walks—all is fearfully still ; and, if a little rill creeping through the gathering moss down the cascade, over which it used to rush, bring to mind the description of the grand water works, it is only to excite a languid smile at the futile attempt to equal nature.

Lo ! this was the palace of the great king ! —the abode of magnificence ! Who has broken the charm ?—Why does it now inspire only pity ?—Why ;—because nature, smiling around, presents to the imagination materials to build farms, and hospitable mansions, where, without raising idle admiration, that gladness will reign, which opens the heart to



benevolence, and that industry, which renders innocent pleasure sweet.

Weeping—scarcely conscious that I weep, O France ! over the vestiges of thy former oppression ; which, separating man from man with a fence of iron, sophisticated all, and made many completely wretched ; I tremble, lest I should meet some unfortunate being, fleeing from the despotism of licentious freedom, hearing the snap of the *guillotine* at his heels ; merely because he was once noble, or has afforded an asylum to those, whose only crime is their name—and, if my pen almost bound with eagerness to record the day, that levelled the Bastille with the dust, making the towers of despair tremble to their base ; the recollection, that still the abbey is appropriated to hold the victims of revenge and suspicion, palsies the hand that would fain do justice to the assault, which tumbled into heaps of ruins walls that seemed to mock the resistless force of time.—Down fell the temple of despotism ; but—despotism has not been buried in it's ruins !—Unhappy country !—when will thy children cease to tear thy bosom ?—When will a change of opinion, producing a change of morals, render thee truly free ?—

When will truth give life to real magnanimity, and justice place equality on a stable seat?—When will thy sons trust, because they deserve to be trusted; and private virtue become the guarantee of patriotism? Ah!—when will thy government become the most perfect, because thy citizens are the most virtuous!

## CHAPTER III.

PREPARATIONS OF THE PARISIANS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE CITY. THE GUARDS, AND CITY WATCH, JOIN THE CITIZENS. THE ARMED CITIZENS APPOINT A COMMANDER IN CHIEF. CONDUCT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DURING THE DISTURBANCES AT PARIS. THLY PUBLISH A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS,—AND OFFER THEIR MEDIATION WITH THE CITIZENS,—WHICH IS HAUGHTILY REFUSED BY THE KING. PROCEEDINGS AT PARIS ON THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY. TAKING OF THE BASTILLE. THE MAYOR SHOT. PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT VERSAILLES. APPEARANCE OF THE KING IN THE ASSEMBLY. HIS SPEECH.

EARLY in the morning of the 13th, the electors hastened to the centre of the general alarm, the *hôtel-de-ville*, and, urged by the necessity of the moment, passed the decrees, under deliberation, for the immediate embodying the *garde-bourgeoise*, without waiting for the requested sanction of the national assembly. The greater number then withdrew, to convoke their districts; whilst the few that remained endeavoured to calm the tumult, that was every moment augmenting, by informing the people of this decree; representing at the same time, to the citizens, the cogent motives which should induce them to separate, and each repair to his own district to be

enrolled. But the crowd again called for arms, pretending, that there was a great number concealed in an arsenal, which nobody could point out. To quiet these clamours for a moment, the people were referred to the *prévot des marchands* \*. He accordingly came, and requested, that the multitude would confirm his nomination to the function, which his majesty had confided to him. A general acclamation was the signal of their consent ; and the assembled electors immediately turned their attention to the serious business before them.

They then established a *permanent committee*, to keep up a constant intercourse with the different districts, to which the citizens were again exhorted instantly to return, with all the arms they had collected ; that those arms might be properly distributed amongst the parisian militia. But, it was impossible to pursue these important deliberations, with any degree of order, for a fresh multitude was continually rushing forward, to report fresh intelligence ; often false or exaggerated, and always alarming. The barriers, they were told, were on fire ; a religious house had been

\* The mayor.

pillaged ;

pillaged; and a hostile force was on the road, in full march, to fall upon the citizens. An immense number of coaches, waggons, and other carriages, were actually brought to the door of the hotel; and the demands of the concourse, who had been stopped going out of Paris, mingling with the cries of the multitude, eager to be led towards the troops, whose approach had been announced, were only drowned by the more lively instances of the deputies of the sixty districts, demanding arms and ammunition, to render them active. To appease them, and gain time, the mayor promised, if they would be tranquil till five o'clock in the evening, then to distribute a number of fusils; which were to be furnished by the director of a manufactory.

These assurances produced a degree of calm. Taking advantage of it, the committee determined, that the parisian militia, for the present, should consist of 48,000 citizens; and that the officers should be named by each district. Many subordinate decrees also passed, all tending to prevent the disasters naturally produced by confusion; and to provide for the subsistence of the city. The french guards, who had during the night assisted the citi-

zens, now came to testify their attachment to the common cause ; and to beg to be enrolled with them. The commander of the city watch, a military body, likewise presented himself ; to assure the committee, that the troops under his direction were disposed to obey their orders, and assist in defending the city.

Among the carriages stopped was one of the prince de Lambesc. The people imagined, that they had caught the prince himself ; and, when they were convinced of their mistake, it was impossible to save the coach, though the horses were put into a neighbouring stable ; and the portmanteau, carefully detached, was lodged in the hall. This trivial circumstance is worthy of notice, because it shows the respect then paid to property ; and that the public mind was entirely fixed on those grand objects, which absorb private passions and interests. Stung also to the quick by the insulting disregard of their claims, the people forcibly felt an indignant sense of injustice, which rendered the struggle heroic.

Preparations of a warlike cast were made during the whole course of this day ; and every thing was conducted with a degree of  
prudence

prudence scarcely to have been expected from such impetuosity. Trenches were thrown up, several of the streets unpaved, and barricadoes formed in the suburbs—Defence was the sole object of every person's thoughts, and deriding personal danger, all were preparing to sell their lives at a dear rate, furbishing up old weapons, or forging new. The old men, women, and children, were employed in making pikes; whilst the able bodied men paraded the streets, in an orderly manner, with most resolute looks, yet avoiding every kind of violence: there was, in fact, an inconceivable solemnity in the quick step of a torrent of men, all directing their exertions to one point, which distinguished this rising of the citizens from what is commonly termed a riot.—Equality, indeed, was then first established by an universal sympathy; and men of all ranks joining in the throng, those of the first could not be discriminated by any peculiar decency of demeanour, such public spirited dignity pervaded the whole mass.

A quantity of powder had been carried to the *bôtel-de-ville*, which the populace, for the most unruly always collected round this central spot, would probably have blown up in  
in

in seizing, if a courageous elector\* had not, at the continual risk of his life, insisted on distributing it regularly to the people. This engaged their attention a short time; but in the evening the demand for arms became more pressing than ever, mingled with a hoarse cry of perfidy and treason, levelled against the mayor; which, for a while, was silenced by the arrival of a number of military chests, thought to contain arms, and these were supposed to be those promised by the mayor. Every possible precaution was immediately taken by the electors, to have them speedily conveyed into the cellar, that they might be given to those who knew best how to make use of them; instead of being caught up by the unskilful. The french guards had merited the confidence of the citizens; and four members of the committee, after some deliberation, were appointed to hasten to them, to request that they would come and take charge of the distribution. In short, great preparations were

\* This man, the abbé Lefebure, remained all night, and the greater part of the next day, standing over a barrel of gun-powder, persisting to keep off the people, with undaunted courage, though several of them, to torment him, brought pipes to smoke near it; and one actually fired a pistol close by, that set fire to his hair.



made, previous to the opening of the chests ; but—when the chests were at last opened, in the presence of a concourse of people, and found to contain only pieces of old candlesticks, and such like rubbish, the impatience of the multitude, whose courage and patriotism had been played with all day, instantly changed into indignation and fury ; and the suspicion of treason on the part of the mayor was extended to the whole committee, whom they threatened to blow up in their hall.

One of the electors, the marquis de la Salle, now observed, ‘ that the greatest inconvenience in their present cruel situation ‘ was the want of order, and subordination ; ‘ and that a correspondence of the different ‘ parts of the grand machine, so necessary ‘ to promote expedition and success, could ‘ not subsist without a commander, known ‘ and acknowledged by the public : for ‘ all the citizens, become soldiers, are perpetually,’ he adds, ‘ exposed to spend their ‘ zeal and intrepidity in superfluous efforts ; ‘ sometimes even counteracting their own designs. It is necessary then to name a general of the first abilities and experience ; I am ‘ far from thinking myself worthy of your choice,

‘ choice, though I offer all that I can offer,  
 ‘ my fortune and my life ; and shall willingly  
 ‘ serve in any post.’ This motion produced  
 a new discussion ; and the duke d’Aumont  
 was appointed commander in chief. But,  
 he half declining it, though he tried to pro-  
 crastinate his refusal, the post devolved to the  
 marquis de la Salle, who had been unani-  
 mously named second ; and he entered imme-  
 diately on the discharge of this important  
 trust. And this nomination contributed to  
 support the exertions of the committee ; for  
 in spite of the chaotic shock, which seemed  
 to have thrown into confusion all the parts  
 of this great city, the centre of union formed  
 at the *hôtel-de-ville*, by the assembling of the  
 electors, was in a great measure the salvation  
 of the public. This municipal power, created  
 by circumstances, and tacitly consented to by  
 the citizens, established a great degree of order  
 and obedience, even in the midst of terrour  
 and anarchy. The *garde-bourgeoise* had been  
 assembled in all the districts ; and the patrols  
 relieved with the greatest exactness. The  
 streets were illuminated, to prevent confusion  
 or dismay during the night ; private property  
 was respected, and all the posts carefully super-  
 intended ;

intended ; but, at the barriers, every carriage and every person was stopped, and obliged to go to the *hôtel-de-ville* to give an account of themselves. The public particularly mistrusted the design of those who were going to Versailles, or coming from it. Deputations had been regularly sent, to inform the national assembly of the disturbances, which their danger and the dread of a siege had occasioned in Paris, and of the measures pursued to restrain the headlong fury of the people.

The national assembly, indeed, now appeared with the dignified aspect becoming the fathers of their country ; seeing their own danger, without timidly shrinking from the line of conduct, which had provoked the violence of the court : and the president, an old man, not being thought equal to the present toils of office, a vice-president was appointed.

To fill this post, the marquis la Fayette was chosen : a deputy for several reasons popular. In America, where he voluntarily risked his life and fortune, before the french nation espoused their cause, he had acquired certain just principles of government ; and these he digested to the extent of his understanding,

which was somewhat confined. He possessed great integrity of heart, though he was not without his portion of the national vanity. He had already distinguished himself at the meeting of the notables, by detecting, and exposing the peculation of Calonne, and opposing the arbitrary proceedings of the count d'Artois. Governed by the same motives, he had proposed, likewise, during their sittings, some bold plans of reform, calculated to reduce the public revenue, and lessen the grievances of the nation, at the same stroke.—Amongst these was a motion for the abolition of the Bastille, and other state prisons, throughout the kingdom; and the suppression of *lettres de cachet*. And still having the same objects in view, he, the very day the king's sneering reply was received (the 11th), laid before the assembly a proposal for a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, similar to that of some of the american states. The marquis de Condorcet had published a declaration of this kind, to instruct the deputies, previous to their meeting. La Fayette had transmitted a copy of his declaration of rights to the assembled electors, to be read to the people; and nothing could be better adapted to keep them firm, telling

telling them to what point they ought to adhere, than the short address with which it commenced.—‘ Call to mind the sentiments; that nature has engraven on the heart of every citizen; and which take a new force, when recognized by all.—For a nation to love liberty, it is sufficient that she knows it; and, to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it \*.’

Mirabeau, even whilst supporting tenaciously the dignity of the national assembly, felt a pang of envy, that another should bring forward such an important business, as the sketch of a new constitution; avowedly that the world might know how they had been employed, and what they were contesting for, should they become the victims of their magnanimity.

It was impossible now for the whole assembly not to see in the change of the ministry the danger at hand, the approach of which some had affected to treat as a chimera. Determined, however, to continue their labours, in the very face of such hostile preparations; yet taking every prudent precaution to secure their

\* Lally Tolendal said of La Fayette, at this time, that ‘ he spoke of liberty as he had defended it.’

their safety, they sent to inform the king of the disturbances at Paris; and to point out the evils which menaced the state, if the troops that invested the metropolis were not sent to more distant quarters:—offering, at the same time, to throw themselves between the army and the citizens, to endeavour to ward off the calamities that were likely to ensue. But the king, obstinately bent to support the present measures, or controlled by the cabal, replied, ‘that he was the only judge of the necessity of withdrawing the troops;’ and, treating the offered interposition of the deputies with the most ineffable contempt, told them, ‘that they could be of no use at Paris, and were necessary at Versailles, to pursue those important labours, which he should continue to recommend.’

This answer was no sooner communicated, than La Fayette moved, that the present ministry should be declared responsible for the consequence of their obstinacy: and the assembly further decreed, that Necker and the rest of the ministry, who had just been sent away, carried with them their esteem and regret:—that, alarmed by the apprehensions of danger produced by the reply of the king, they would

would not cease to insist on the removal of the troops, and the establishment of a *garde-bourgeoise*.—They repeated their declaration, that no intermediate power can subsist between the king and the national assembly :—and that the public debt, having been placed under the safe-guard of french honour, the nation not refusing to pay the interest of it, no power had a right to utter the infamous word—bankruptcy.—In short, the assembly declared, that they persisted in their former decrees :—and that the present resolves should be presented to the king, by the president, and printed for the information of the public.

Still the court, despising the courageous remonstrances of the assembly, and untouched by the apprehensions of the people, which seemed to be driving them to the desperation that always conquers, stimulated the king to persist in the prosecution of the measures, which they had prevailed on him to adopt. The assembly, thus rendered vigilant by the various tokens, that the crisis was arrived, which was to determine their personal and political fate, in which that of their country

was involved, thought it prudent to make their sittings permanent. Animated and united by the common danger, they reminded each other, 'that, should they perish, their country ' still surviving would recover it's vigour ; ' and that their plans for the good of the public again warming the hearts of frenchmen, ' a brave and generous people would erect on ' their tomb, as an immortal trophy, a constitution solid as reason, and durable as time :—whilst their martyrdom would serve ' as an example, to prove, that the progress ' of knowledge and civilization is not to be ' stopped by the massacre of a few individuals.'

Whatever might have been the object of the court, respecting the national assembly, which was probably the slaughter or imprisonment necessary to disperse them, and disconcert their theories of reform, it is certain, that their situation wore the most threatening aspect ; and their escape was owing to the courage and resolution of the people ; for the breast of the cabinet was too callous, to feel either respect or repugnance, when emoluments and prerogatives were in question.

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It was a circumstance favourable to the people, and the cause of humanity, that the want of common foresight in the court prevented their guarding against resistance. For so negligent were they, that the citizens, who were early in the morning of the 14th every where scouring about in search of arms, requested of the committee an order to demand those they heard were stored up at the *hôtel des invalides*; and one of the electors was accordingly sent with them, to desire the governor to give up to the nation all the arms and ammunition committed to his care. He replied, that a body of citizens having already been with him, he had sent to Versailles for orders, and entreated them to wait till the return of the courier, whom he expected in the course of an hour or two. This answer at first satisfied the people, who were preparing to wait contentedly, till one of them observing, that this was not a day to lose time, they insisted on entering immediately; and instantly made themselves masters of all the arms they found, to the amount of 30,000 muskets, and six pieces of cannon. A considerable quantity of different sorts of arms

were also carried away from the *garde meuble*, by a less orderly party; and fell into the hands of vagabonds, who always mix in a tumult, merely because it is a tumult. A hundred and fifty persons of this description had been disarmed the preceding night at the *bôtel-de-ville*, where they had dropped asleep on the stairs and benches, stupified by the brandy they had stolen: but, when they awoke, and requested work, not having any money or bread, they were sent to assist in the making of pikes, and the fabricating of other weapons, which required little skill. None of the citizens appeared, in fact, without some weapon, however uncouth, to brandish defiance, whilst sixty thousand men, enrolled and distributed in different companies, were armed in a more orderly, though not in a more warlike manner. The army of liberty now, indeed, assumed a very formidable appearance; yet the cabinet, never doubting of success, neglected in the thoughtlessness of security, the only way left to oblige the roused people to accept of any terms.

Paris, that immense city, second, perhaps, to none in the world, had felt a scarcity of  
bread

bread for some time, and now had not sufficient flour to support the inhabitants four days to come\*.

If, therefore, the marshal Broglio had cut off the supplies, the citizens would have been reduced to the alternative of starving, or marching in confusion to fight his army, before they could have been disciplined for a regular action. But directed only by the depraved sentiments of tyranny, they deemed

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\* The supplying of Paris with provision always depended on a nice arrangement of circumstances, capable of being controlled by the government of the state. It is not like London, and other great cities, the local position of which was previously pointed out by nature, and of which the welfare depends on the great and perpetual movements of commerce, which they themselves regulate. To cut off the provision from London, you must block up the port, and interdict in an open manner an intercourse, on which the wealth of the nation in a great measure depends. Paris, on the contrary, might be furnished in a few days by a secret order of the court. All the people of the place would feel the effect, and no person be able to ascertain the cause. These considerations render it easy to account for the continued scarcity of provision in Paris during the summer of 1789. No person can doubt, but the court viewed the revolution with horror; and that, among the measures which they took to prevent it, they would not overlook so obvious an expedient, as that of cutting off the supplies from the capital; as they supposed the people would lay the blame on the new order of things, and thus be disgusted with the revolution.

assassination the most speedy method of bringing the contest to an end favourable to their designs. Unaccustomed to govern freemen, they dreamt not of the energy of a nation shaking off it's fetters ; or, if their classical reveries had taught them a respect for man, whilst reading the account of that brave handful of spartans, who drove back, at the straits of Thermopylæ, millions of marshalled slaves ; they had no conception, that the cause of liberty was still the same, and that men obeying her impulse will always be able to resist the attacks of all the enervated mercenaries of the globe.

The imaginations of the parisiens, full of plots, created hourly many of the objects of terrour from which they started ; though the troops being in motion around Paris naturally produced many false alarms, that their suspicious temper might have exaggerated sufficiently, without the help of invention. Various accounts of massacres and assassinations were consequently brought to the *hôtel-de-ville*, which inflamed the people, though afterwards they proved to be the idle rumours of fear. Thus much, however, appeared certain ; a squadron of hussars had actually been seen  
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hovering about the entrance of the *fauxbourg Saint-Antoine*, who disappeared when two companies of the french guards approached. The people of the same *fauxbourg* observed also, that the cannons of the Bastille were turned towards their street. On receiving this information, a message was sent from the committee to the governor of the Bastille, to expostulate with him ; and one to each of the districts, desiring them to sound an alarm throughout, to break up the pavement of the streets, dig ditches, and oppose every obstacle, in their power, to the entrance of the troops. But, though the accounts of the hostile demeanour of some of the detachments in the skirts of Paris excited terrou, there was still reason to doubt the real disposition of the soldiery ; for a considerable number, belonging to different regiments, had presented themselves at the barriers with arms and baggage, declaring their decided intention to enter into the service of the nation. They were received by the districts, and conducted to the *hôtel-de-ville* : and the committee distributed them amongst the national troops, with the precaution necessary to guard against the surprise of treason.

The deputation, sent to the Bastille, now returned, to give an account of their mission. They informed the committee, that the people, rendered furious by the menacing position of the cannon, had already surrounded the walls ; but that they had entered without much difficulty, and were conducted to the governor, whom they had requested to change the disposition of his cannons ; and that the reply he gave was not as explicit as they could have wished. They then demanded to pass into the second court, and did not without great difficulty obtain permission. The little drawbridge, they continued, was let down ; but the great one, which led to this court yard was raised, and they entered by an iron gate, opened at the call of the governor. In this court they had seen three cannons ready for action, with two cannoneers, thirty-six swiss, and a dozen of invalids, all under arms ; and the staff officers were also assembled.—They immediately summoned them, in the name of the honour of the nation, and for the sake of their country, to change the direction of the cannons ; and, at the instance even of the governor himself, all the officers and soldiers swore, that the can-

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nons should not be fired, or would they make any use of their arms, unless they were attacked. In short, another deputation from one of the districts had likewise been received with great politeness by the governor; and while they were taking some refreshment, he had actually ordered the cannons to be drawn back; and a moment after they were informed, that the order was obeyed.

To calm the people, these very men descended the stair-case of the *bôtel-de-ville*, to proclaim the assurances they had received of the amicable intentions of the governor; but, whilst the trumpet was sounding to demand silence, the report of a cannon from the quarter of the Bastille was heard; and at the same moment, an immense crowd precipitated themselves into the square, fronting the hotel, with the cry of treason. And to support the charge, they brought with them a citizen, and a soldier of the french guards, both wounded. The rumour was, that fifteen or twenty more, wounded at the same time, were left to be taken care of, in different houses on the way; for that the governor, Delaunay, had let down the first draw-bridge to engage the people to approach, who were

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demanding

demanding arms ; and that they, entering with confidence on this invitation, had immediately received a discharge of all the musketry of the fortrefs. This report, confirmed by the presence of the two wounded men, demonstrated to the committee the perfidy of the troops who guarded the Bastille, and the necessity of sending succour to those, who, without order or sufficient force, had commenced the attack. Mean time the fury of the people was directed against the mayor, who endeavoured by various subterfuges to appease the rage which had been excited by his vain promises of procuring arms. He had, it is true, several times dispersed the multitude by sending them to different places with orders for arms, where he knew they were not to be found ; and now, to silence the suspicions that threatened to break out in some dreadful acts of violence, involving the whole committee in the same destruction, he offered to make one of the third deputation ; the second appearing to be detained, to remonstrate with Delaunay, and try to prevent an effusion of blood. A drum and colours were ordered to attend them, because it was supposed, that the want of some signal had prevented



prevented the others from executing their commission.

Shortly after their departure, however, the second deputation returned, and informed the committee, that, in their way to the Bastille, they had met a wounded citizen, carried by his companions, who informed them, that he had received a shot from a fusil, fired from the Bastille into the street St. Antoine; and that immediately after they had been stopped by a crowd, who were guarding three invalids, taken firing on their fellow citizens. Judging by these events, added they, that the danger was increasing, we hastened our steps, animated by the hope of putting a stop to such an unequal combat. Arrived within a hundred paces of the fortrefs, we perceived the soldiers on the towers firing upon the street St. Antoine, and we heard the report of the guns of the citizens in the court, discharged on the garrison. Drawing nearer, we made several signals to the governor, which were either unobserved, or disregarded. We then approached the gate, and saw the people, almost all without any thing to defend themselves, rushing forward exposed to the brisk fire of artillery, that hailed directly down  
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upon them, making great havoc. We prevailed on those who had arms, to stop firing for a moment, whilst we reiterated our signal of peace; but the garrison, regardless of it, continued their discharges, and we had the grief to see fall, by our sides, several of the people, whose hands we had stopped. The courage of the rest, again inflamed by indignation, pushed them forward,---Our remonstrances, our prayers, had no longer any effect; and they declared, that it was not a deputation they now wished for.---It was the siege of the Bastille---the destruction of that horrible prison---the death of the governor, that they demanded, with loud cries. Repulsed by these brave citizens, we partook their momentary indignation, so fully justified by the abominable act of perfidy, with which they charged the governor.---They then repeated to us the information which has already reached you---that in the morning a crowd having approached the Bastille to demand arms, the governor had allowed a certain number to enter, and then had fired upon them. Thus the treason of the governor had been the first signal of a war, that he himself had begun with his fellow citizens,

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and seemed willing to continue obstinately, since he refused to attend to the deputation. Through all parts it was now resounded.—‘ Let us take the Bastille !’—And five pieces of cannon, conducted by this cry, were hastening to the action.

Some time after, the third deputation also came back, and recounted, that, at the sight of their white flag, one had been hoisted on the top of the Bastille, and the soldiers had grounded their arms ;—that, under the auspices of these ensigns of peace, the deputies had engaged the people, in the name of the permanent committee, to retire to their districts, and take the measures the most proper to re-establish tranquillity—and, that this retreat was actually taking place ; the people all naturally passing through the court where the deputation remained.—When, notwithstanding the white emblem of a pacific disposition, displayed on the tower, the deputies saw a piece of cannon planted directly at the court, and they received a sudden discharge of musketry, which killed three persons at their feet—that this atrocity, at the moment they were calming the people, had thrown them into a transport of rage ; and many of them had even held their bayonets at the breasts of the deputies ;

ties ; saying, ‘ you are also traitors, and have  
 ‘ brought us here that we might be more  
 ‘ easily killed’—and it would have been difficult  
 to calm them, if one of the deputies had not  
 bid them observe, that they shared the same  
 danger. The effervescence then abating, they  
 hastened back and met 300 of the french guards,  
 followed by the cannons taken at the invalids,  
 all marching with a quick step, crying that  
 they were going to take the Bastille. One  
 of the deputies, who had been separated from  
 the rest, further recited ;—that having been  
 obliged to scramble over the dead and dying  
 to escape, the people, who recognized him as  
 an elector, desired him to save himself—for  
 that the treason was manifest. ‘ It is rather  
 ‘ you, my friends, he replied, who ought to  
 ‘ retire ; you who hinder our soldiers and  
 ‘ cannons from entering this encumbered court,  
 ‘ where you are all going to perish, for no  
 ‘ purpose.’ But, that they interrupted him  
 in a transport, exclaiming—‘ No !—No ! our  
 ‘ dead bodies will serve to fill up the trench.’  
 He therefore retired with the balls hissing  
 about his ears. These recitals, and the rumour  
 of the second act of treachery, spreading  
 through

through the city, violently agitated minds already alive to suspicion.

Fresh crowds continually rushed into the *hôtel-de-ville*, and again they threatened to set fire to it, repeating how many times the mayor had deceived them. And, when he attempted to calm them by making plausible excuses, they stopped his mouth by saying, with one voice,—‘ he seeks to gain time by ‘ making us lose our’s.’ Two intercepted billets also having been read aloud, addressed to the principal officers of the Bastille, desiring them to stand out, and promising succour; increased the public fury, principally directed against the governor of the Bastille, the mayor, and even the permanent committee.—Outcry followed outcry, and naked arms were held up denouncing vengeance—when an old man exclaimed, my friends, what do we here with these traitors!—Let us march to the Bastille! at this cry, as at a signal of victory, all the people hastily left the hall, and the committee unexpectedly found themselves alone.

In this moment of solitude and terror, a man entered with affright visible on every feature, saying, that the square trembled with  
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the rage of the people ; and that they had devoted all of them to death.—‘ Depart !’ he exclaimed, running out, ‘ save yourselves while you can—or you are all lost !’ But they remained still ; and were not long permitted in silence to anticipate the approach of danger ; for one party of people following another, brought in a number of their wounded companions :—and those who brought them, described with passion the carnage of the citizens sacrificed under the ramparts of the Bastille. This carnage, the military officers attributed to the disorder of the attack, and to the intrepidity of the assailants still greater than the disorder.

The accounts of the slaughter, nevertheless, were certainly very much exaggerated ; for the fortress appears to have been taken by the force of mind of the multitude, pressing forward regardless of danger. The ardour of the besiegers, rather than their numbers, threw the garrison into confusion ; for the Bastille was justly reckoned the strongest and most terrific prison in Europe, or perhaps in the world. It was always guarded by a considerable number of troops, and the governor had been previously prepared for its defence ; but  
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the unexpected impetuosity of the parisiens was such as nothing could withstand. It is certain, that Delaunay, at first, despised the attempt of the people ; and was more anxious to save from injury or pillage, a small elegant house he had built in the outer court, than to avoid slaughter. Afterwards, however, in the madness of despair, he is said to have rolled down large masses of stone from the platform on the heads of the people, to have endeavoured to blow up the fortrefs, and even to kill himself. The french guards, it is true, who mixed with the multitude, were of essential service in storming the Bastille, by advising them to bring the cannon, and take some other measures, that only military experience could have dictated ; but the enthusiasm of the moment rendered a knowledge of the art of war needless ; and resolution, more powerful than all the engines and batteries in the world, made the draw-bridges fall, and the walls give way.

Whilst then the people were carrying every thing before them, the committee only thought of preventing the further effusion of blood. Another deputation was therefore nominated, more numerous than had hitherto

been sent ; and they were just setting out on this errand of peace, when some voices announced, that the Bastille was taken. Little attention, however, was paid them ; and the news was so improbable, that the impression made by the rumour was not sufficiently strong to stop the outrages of the mob, who still were menacing the mayor and the committee.—When a fresh uproar, heard at first at such a distance that it could not be distinguished, whether it were a cry of victory or of alarm, advancing with the crash and rapidity of a tempest, came to confirm the unlooked for intelligence.—For the Bastille was taken !

At the instant even the great hall was inundated by a crowd of all ranks, carrying arms of every kind.—The tumult was inexpressible—and to increase it, some one called out, that the hotel was giving way, under the mingled shout of victory and treason ! vengeance and liberty !—About thirty invalids and swift soldiers were then dragged into the hall, whose death the multitude imperiously demanded.—Hang them ! Hang them ! was the universal roar.

An officer of the queen's regiment of guards (M. Elie) was brought in on the shoulders of  
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the conquerors of the Bastille, and proclaimed by them, as the first of the citizens, who had just made themselves masters of it. The efforts he used to repress the testimonies of honour, which were lavished on him, were of no avail ; and he was placed, in spite of his modesty, on a table opposite the committee, and surrounded by the prisoners, who seemed to be standing in fearful expectation of their doom. In this situation he was crowned, and trophies of arms awkwardly placed around, to which sentiment and circumstances gave dignity. All the plate taken at the Bastille was brought to him, and his comrades pressed him, in the most earnest manner, to accept it, as the richest spoil of the vanquished enemy. But he refused with firmness, explaining the motives of his refusal so eloquently, he persuaded all who heard him, that the spoil did not belong to them ; and that patriotism, jealous only of glory and honour, would blush at receiving a pecuniary recompense.—And, making a noble use of the ascendancy which he had over the people, he began to recommend moderation and clemency.—But he was soon interrupted by the account of the death of Delaunay ; seized in the court of the Bastille,

and dragged by the furious populace almost to the *hôtel-de-ville*, before he was massacred. ---And soon after the death of three other officers was reported.

The prisoners listened to these tales with the countenances of victims ready to be sacrificed, whilst the exasperated crowd demanded their instant execution. One of the electors spoke in their favour, but was scarcely permitted to go on. The people, indeed, were principally enraged against three of the invalids, whom they accused of being the cannoneers, that had fired so briskly on the citizens. One of them was wounded, and consequently inspired more compassion. The marquis de la Salle placed himself before this poor wretch, and forcing, in some degree, the people to hear him, he insisted on the authority which he ought to have as commander in chief; adding, that he only wished to secure the culprits, that they might be judged with all the rigour of martial law. The people seemed to approve of his reasoning; and taking advantage of this favourable turn, he made the wounded invalid pass into another apartment.—But, whilst he was preserving the life of this unfortunate man, the mob hurried the  
other

other two out of the hall, and immediately hung them on the adjacent lamp-post\*. The effervescence, nevertheless, in spite of this overflowing of fury, still continued, and was not even damped by these cruel acts of retaliation. Two sentiments agitated the public mind—the joy of having conquered, and the desire of vengeance. Confused denunciations of treason resounded on all sides, and each individual was eager to show his sagacity in discovering a plot, or substituted suspicion instead of conviction with equal obstinacy. The mayor, however, had given sufficient proofs of his disposition to support the court, to justify the rage which was breaking out against him; and a general cry having been raised around him, that it was necessary for him to go to the *palais royal*, to be tried by his fellow citizens, he agreed to accompany the people.

Mean time the clamour against the rest of the invalids redoubled. But the french guards, who entered in groups, requested as a recompense for the service which they had rendered to their country the par-

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\* The lamp-posts, which are only to be found in squares, and places where there are not two rows of houses, are much more substantial than in England.

don of their old comrades; and M. Elie joined in the request; adding, that this favour would be more grateful to his heart, than all the gifts and honours which they wished to lavish on him. Touched by his eloquence, some cried out—Pardon! and the same emotion spreading throughout the circle—Pardon! Pardon! succeeded the ferocious demand of vengeance, which had hitherto stifled sympathy. And to assure their safety, M. Elie proposed making the prisoners take an oath of fidelity to the nation and the city of Paris: and this proposition was received with testimonies of general satisfaction. The oath being administered, the french guards surrounded the prisoners and carried them away, in the midst of them, without meeting with any resistance.

The committee now endeavoured to re-establish something like order, for in the tumult the table had been broken down, and destruction menaced on every side—when a man entered to inform them, that an unknown, but, indeed, a merciful hand had shot the mayor, and thus by the only possible mean snatched him from the popular fury. The whole tenour of his conduct, in fact, justified the charge brought against him,

and rendered at least this effect of public indignation excusable.—So excusable, that had not the passions of the people, exasperated by designing men, afterwards been directed to the commission of the most barbarous atrocities, the vengeance of this day could hardly be cited as acts of injustice or inhumanity.

The Bastille was taken about four o'clock in the afternoon ; and after the struggle to save the prisoners, some necessary regulations were proposed, to secure the public safety. The conduct of the men in office had so irritated the people, that the cry against aristocrats was now raised ; and a number of persons of distinction were brought to the *hôtel-de-ville* this evening, by the restless populace, who, roving about the streets, seemed to create some of the adventures, which were necessary to employ their awakened spirit. Breathless with victory, they, for the moment, gave a loose to joy ; but the sounds of exultation dying away with the day, night brought back all their former apprehensions ; and they listened with fresh affright to the report, that a detachment of troops was preparing to enter one of the barriers. Not, therefore, allowing themselves to sleep on

their conquering arms, this was, likewise, a watchful night ; for the taking of the Bastille, though it was a proof of the courage and resolution of the parisiens, by no means secured them against the insidious schemes of the court. They had shown their determination to resist oppression very forcibly ; but the troops that excited their resistance were still apparently waiting for an opportunity to destroy them. Every citizen then hurried to his post, for their very success made them the more alive to fear. The *tocfin* was again rung, and the cannon that had forced the Bastille to surrender dragged hastily to the place of alarm. The pavement of the adjacent streets was torn up, with astonishing quickness, and carried to the tops of the houses ; where the women, who were equally animated, stood prepared to hurl them down on the soldiers. —All Paris, in short, was awake ; and this vigilance either frustrated the designs of the cabal, or intimidated the hostile force, which never appeared to have entered with earnestness into it's measures. For it is probable, that some decisive stroke had been concerted ; but that the officers, who expected by their presence only to have terrified into obedience the

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the citizens, whose courage, on the contrary, they roused, were rendered irresolute by the disaffection of the soldiers. Thus was the nation saved by the almost incredible exertion of an indignant people ; who felt, for the first time, that they were sovereign, and that their power was commensurate to their will. This was certainly a splendid example, to prove, that nothing can resist a people determined to live free ; and then it appeared clear, that the freedom of France did not depend on a few men, whatever might be their virtues or abilities, but alone on the will of the nation.

During this day, while the parisiens were so active for it's safety, the national assembly was employed in forming a committee, to be charged with digesting the plan of a constitution, for the deliberation of the whole body : to secure the rights of the people on the eternal principles of reason and justice ; and thereby to guarantee the national dignity and respectability. Towards the evening, the uncertainty of what was passing at Paris, the mysterious conduct of the cabinet, the presence of the troops at Versailles, the substantiated facts, and the suspected proscriptions,

gave

gave to this sitting the involuntary emotions, that must naturally be produced by the approach of a catastrophe, which was to decide the salvation or destruction of a state. Mirabeau, firm to his point, showed the necessity of insisting on the sending away the troops without delay; and soon after the viscount de Noailles, arriving from Paris, informed them, that the arms had been taken from the *hôtel-des-invalides*; and that the Bastille was actually besieged. The first impulse was for them to go altogether, and endeavour to open the king's eyes; but, after some reflection, a numerous deputation was nominated;—to insist on the removal of the troops; and to speak to his majesty with that energetic frankness, so much more necessary as he was deceived by every person by whom he was surrounded. Whilst they were absent, two persons, sent by the electors of Paris, informed the assembly of the taking of the Bastille, and the other events of the day; which were repeated to them, when they returned with the king's vague answer.

A second deputation was then immediately sent, to inform him of these circumstances:—To which he replied—‘ You more and  
‘ more



‘ more distress my heart, by the recitals you  
 ‘ bring me of the miseries of Paris. But I  
 ‘ cannot believe, that the orders which I have  
 ‘ given to the troops, is the cause of them : I  
 ‘ have, therefore, nothing to add to the  
 ‘ answer that you have already received from  
 ‘ me.’

This reply tended to increase the general alarm ; and they determined again to prolong the sitting all night ; either to be ready to receive the enemy in their sacred function, or to make a last effort near the throne to succour the metropolis. Nothing could surpass the anxious suspense of this situation ; for the most resolute of the deputies were uneasy respecting their fate, because their personal safety was connected with the salvation of France. Their nocturnal conversation naturally turned on the late events that had taken place at Paris ; the commotions in the provinces ; and the horrors of famine, ready to consume those whom a civil war spared. The old men sought for an hour of repose upon the tables and carpets ; the sick rested on the benches.—All saw the sword suspended over them, and over their country—and all feared a morrow still more dreadful.

Impressed

Impressed by their situation, and the danger of the state, one of the deputies (the duke de Liancourt) left his post, and sought a private audience with the king, with whom he warmly expostulated, pointing out the critical situation of the kingdom; and even of the royal family, should his majesty persist to support the present measures. Monsieur, the king's eldest brother, and not only the most honest, but the most sensible of the blood royal, immediately coincided with the duke, silencing the rest of the cabal. They had at first treated with contempt the intelligence received of the Bastille's being taken; and now were so stunned by the confirmation, that, at a loss how to direct the king, they left him to follow the counsel of whoever dared to advise him.—And he, either convinced, or persuaded, determined to extricate himself out of the present difficulties, by yielding to necessity.

On the morning of the 15th, the national assembly, not informed of this circumstance, resolved to send another remonstrance to the king;—and Mirabeau, giving a sketch of the address, drew a rapid and lively picture of the exigencies of the moment. ‘Tell him,’  
said

said he, ‘ that the hordes of foreigners, by  
 ‘ whom we are besieged, have yesterday been  
 ‘ visited by the princes and princesses, their  
 ‘ favourites, and their minions, who, lavishing  
 ‘ on them caresses and presents, exhorted them  
 ‘ to perseverance—tell him, that the whole  
 ‘ night these foreign satellites, gorged with gold  
 ‘ and wine, have, in their impious camp,  
 ‘ predicted the subjugation of France, and,  
 ‘ that they invoked, with brutal vehemence,  
 ‘ the destruction of the national assembly—  
 ‘ tell him, that, even in his own palace, the  
 ‘ courtiers have mingled in the dance to the  
 ‘ sound of this barbarous music—and, tell him,  
 ‘ that such was the scene, which announced  
 ‘ St. Bartholomew.

‘ Tell him, that the Henry, whose memory  
 ‘ the world blesses, the ancestor, whom he  
 ‘ ought to wish to take for a model, allowed  
 ‘ provision to pass into Paris in a state of re-  
 ‘ volt, when he was in person besieging it ;  
 ‘ whilst his ferocious counsellors are turning  
 ‘ back the flour, that the course of commerce  
 ‘ was bringing to his faithful and famished  
 ‘ city.’

The deputation left the hall ; but was  
 stopped by the duke de Liancourt ; who in-  
 formed

formed them, that the king was then coming to restore them to tranquillity and peace. Every heart was relieved by this intelligence ; and a cynic, probably, would have found less dignity in the joy, than the grief of the assembly. A deputy, however, moderated these first emotions, by observing, that those transports formed a shocking contrast with the distresses which the people had already endured. —He added, ‘ that a respectful silence was ‘ the proper reception of a monarch during a ‘ moment of public sorrow : for the silence of ‘ the people is the only lesson of kings.’

Shortly after, the king appeared in the assembly, standing uncovered ; and without any attention to ceremony. He addressed the representatives of the people with artful affection : for as it is impossible to avoid comparing his present affectionate style, with the cold contempt with which he answered their repeated remonstrances the preceding evening, it is not judging harshly to despise the affectation, and to suggest, that it was dictated rather by selfish prudence than by a sense of justice, or a feeling of humanity. He lamented the disorder that reigned in the capital, and requested them to think of some  
method

method to bring back order and tranquillity. He alluded to the report, that the personal safety of the deputies had been menaced ; and, with contemptible duplicity asked, if his well-known character did not give the lie to such a rumour.—Reckoning, then, he concluded, on the love and fidelity of his subjects, he had given orders to the troops to repair to more distant quarters—and he authorized, nay, invited them, to make known his intentions to the metropolis.

This speech was interrupted and followed by the most lively expression of applause ; though the sagacity of a number of the deputies could not possibly have been clouded by their sympathy : and the king returning to the palace on foot, great part of the assembly escorted him, joined by a concourse of people, who rent the air with their benedictions. The declaration of Louis, that, trusting to the representatives of the people, he had ordered the troops to withdraw from Versailles, being spread abroad, every person, feeling relieved from the oppression of fear, and unshackled from the fetters of despotism, threw off care ; and the national assembly immediately appointed eighty-four of it's most respectable

respectable members, to convey to Paris the glad intelligence ; that the harrassed parisiens might participate in the joy they had procured the assembly, by the most noble exertions.

Arrived at Paris, they were received with enthusiasm, as the saviours of their country ; and saw there more than a hundred thousand men in arms, formed into companies ; showing the superiority of a nation rising in it's own defence, compared with the mercenary machines of tyranny. The transports of the people, and the sympathy of the deputies, must have formed a highly interesting scene : success elevating the heart for the moment, and hope gilding the future prospect.—But the imagination would languidly pourtray this dazzling sunshine, depressed by the recollection of the sinister events, that have since clouded the bright beams. Precluded then by melancholy reflections from rejoicing with the happy throng, it is necessary to turn our attention to the circumstances, from which mankind may draw instruction :—and the first that present themselves to our notice are those which disconcerted the flagitious plan of the ministry ;—the regulations that preserved order in the metropolis ;—the astonish-

ing reduction of the Bastille ;—the union of the french guards with the citizens ;—the prompt establishment of a city militia ;—and, in short, the behaviour of the people, who showed neither a thirst for pillage, nor a fondness for tumult.

The court by their criminal enterprises had entirely disordered the political machines, that sustained the old worn out government\* ; which, worm-eaten in all it's pillars, and rotten in all it's joints, fell at the first shock—never to rise again. The destruction of the Bastille—that fortress of tyranny ! which for two centuries had been the shame and terrour of

\* ‘ In August 1778,’ says Lally-Tolendal, ‘ the laws were overturned ; and twenty-five millions of men without justice or judges ;---the public treasury without funds, and without resource ;---the sovereign authority was usurped by the ministers ;---and the people without any other hope than the states-general ;---yet without confidence in the promise of the king.’

And, Mounier also gives a similar sketch. ‘ We have not a fixed or complete form of government---we have not a constitution, because all the powers are confounded---because no boundary is traced out.---The judicial power is not even separated from the legislative.---Authority is dispersed ; it's various parts are always in opposition ; and amidst their perpetual shocks the rights of the lower class of citizens are betrayed.---The laws are openly despised, or rather we are not agreed what ought to be called laws.’

of the metropolis \*, was the sentence of death of the old constitution.

The junction of the three orders in fact securing the power of the national assembly, and making the court appear a cypher, could not fail to prove sorely mortifying to its old minions ; and the success of the people on the 14th of july proclaiming their supremacy, the courtiers, resorting to their old arts, suggested to the king a line of conduct the most plausible and flattering to the inconsiderate partizans of a revolution ; whilst it betrayed to the more discerning a dissimulation as palpable as the motives of the advisers were flagrantly interested. For their views being narrowed by the depravity of their character, they imagined, that his apparent acquiescence, exciting the admiration and affection of the nation, would be the surest mode of procuring him that consequence

\* In the Bastille, it is true, were found but seven prisoners. --Yet, it ought to be remarked, that three of them had lost their reason--that, when the secrets of the prison-house were laid open, men started with horror from the inspection of instruments of torture, that appeared to be almost worn out by the exercise of tyranny--and that citizens were afraid even for a moment to enter the noisome dungeons, in which their fellow-creatures had been confined for years.



sequence in the government, which ultimately might tend to overthrow what they termed an upstart legislature ; and, by the appropriation of chances, reinstate the tyranny of unlimited monarchy.

This serious farce commenced previous to that memorable epocha ; and in marking the prominent features of the events that led to the disasters, which have sullied the glory of the revolution, it is impossible to keep too near in view the arts of the acting parties ; and the credulity and enthusiasm of the people, who, invariably directing their attention to the same point, have always been governed in their sentiments of men by the most popular anarchists. For this is the only way to form a just opinion of the various changes of men, who, supplanting each other, with such astonishing rapidity, have produced the most fatal calamities.

The cabinet, indeed, the better to disguise their secret machinations, made the king declare, the 23d of june, that ‘ he annulled and  
 ‘ dissolved all powers and restrictions, which  
 ‘ by cramping the liberty of the deputies  
 ‘ would hinder them either from adopting the

‘ form of deliberation by orders separately, or  
‘ in common, by the distinct voice of the  
‘ three orders,’ absolutely gave his sanction for  
constituting the national assembly one and indivisible.—And in the same declaration, article the 6th, he says, ‘ that he will not suffer the  
‘ *cahiers*, or mandates, to be regarded as dictatorial ; for they were only to be considered as  
‘ simple instructions, intrusted to the conscience  
‘ and free opinion of the deputies, who have  
‘ been chosen.’ This was giving them unbounded latitude for their actions.—This was not only a tacit consent to their proceedings ; but it was granting them all his authority to frame a constitution.—It was legalizing their actions, even according to the arbitrary rules of the old despotism ; and abrogating in a formal manner that imaginary authority, the sanction of which, at a former period, would have been necessary to their existence as representatives of the people.—But happily that period had passed away ; and those men, who had known no rule of action paramount to the commands of their sovereign, were now sufficiently enlightened, to demand a restitution of their long-estranged rights ;—and a constitution, upon which they could consolidate their liberty and national fraternity.

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This imperious demand was irresistible ; and the cabinet, unable to check the current of opinion, had recourse to those stratagems, which, leading to their ruin, has buried in the wreck all that vain grandeur elevated on the spoil of industry, whilst it's gilding obscured the sad objects of misery that pined under it's shade. Lively sanguine minds, disgusted with the vices and artificial manners produced by the great inequality of conditions in France, naturally hailed the dawn of a new day, when the Bastille was destroyed ; and freedom, like a lion roused from his lair, rose with dignity, and calmly shook herself.---With delight they marked her noble pace, without ever supposing that the tiger, who thirsts for blood, and the whole brutal herd, must necessarily unite against her.---Yet this has been the case ; the dogs of war have been let loose, and corruption has swarmed with noxious life.---But let not the coldly wise exult, that their heads were not led astray by their hearts ; or imagine, that the improvement of the times does not betoken a change of government, gradually taking place to meliorate the fate of man ; for, in spite of the

perverse conduct of beings spoilt by the old system, the preponderancy of truth has rendered principles in some respects triumphant over men ; and instruments of mischief have wondered at the good which they have unwittingly produced.

## CHAPTER IV.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF THE COURT AND KING. INJURIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF THE COMPLICATION OF LAWS. GENERAL DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE. STATE OF CIVILIZATION AMONGST THE ANCIENTS. IT'S PROGRESS. THE CROISADES, AND THE REFORMATION. EARLY FREEDOM OF BRITAIN. THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION. FATE OF LIBERTY IN EUROPE. RUSSIA. DECLINE OF THE ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY. DESCARTES. NEWTON. EDUCATION IMPROVED. GERMANY. FREDERIC II. OF PRUSSIA.

THE effect produced by the duplicity of courts must be very great, when the vicissitudes, which had happened at Versailles, could not teach every person of common sense, that the moment was arrived, when subterfuge and treachery could no longer escape detection and punishment; and that the only possibility of obtaining the durable confidence of the people was by that strict attention to justice, which produces a dignified sincerity of action. For after the unravelling of the plot, contrived to cheat the expectation of the people, it was natural to suppose, that they would entertain the most wakeful suspicion of every person who had been privy to it.

It would have been fortunate for France, and the unhappy Louis, if his counsellors could have profited by experience. But, still pursuing the old track, bounding over the mine, the bursting of which had for a moment disconcerted them, we shall find, that the continual dissimulation of the king, and the stratagems of his advisers, were the principal, though perhaps not the sole cause of his ruin. He appears to have sometimes mistrusted the cabal; yet, with that mixture of facility and obstinacy in his character, the concomitants of indolence of mind, he allowed himself to be governed without attempting to form any principle of action to regulate his conduct. For if he had ever really desired to be useful to his people, and to lighten their accumulated burdens, as has been continually insisted, he was astonishingly defective in judgment not to see, that he was surrounded with sycophants, who fattened on their hearts blood, using his own hand to brand his name with infamy. It may possibly be urged in reply, that this yielding temper was a proof of the king's benign desire to promote the felicity of his subjects, and prevent the horrors of anarchy. To confute such remarks, it is

only necessary to state, that the preparations which had been made to dissolve the national assembly, and to reduce the people to entire subjection, if they were not his immediate contrivance, must have had his sanction, to give them efficiency; and that the tergiversation, which he employed on this occasion, was sufficient to make every other transaction of his reign suspected. And this will be found to be the case in all the steps he afterwards took to conciliate the people, which were little regarded after the evaporation of the lively emotions they excited; whilst the want of morals in the court, and even in the assembly, made a prevailing mistrust produce a capriciousness of conduct throughout the empire. Perhaps, it is vain to expect, that a depraved nation, whatever examples of heroism, and noble instances of disinterested conduct, it may exhibit on sudden emergencies, or at the first statement of an useful reform, will ever pursue with steadiness the great objects of public good, in the direct path of virtuous ambition.

If the calamities, however, which have followed in France the taking of the Bastille, a noble effort, be attributed partly to ignorance,  
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or only to want of morals, the evils are in no degree lessened; neither does it justify the conduct of the virulent opposers of those manly exertions inspired by the voice of reason. The removal of a thousand grinding oppressions had been demanded;—and promised, to delude the public; who finding, at last, that the hopes, which had softened their misery, were likely to be blasted by the intrigues of courtiers, can we wonder, that the worm these courtiers were trying to crush, turned on the foot prepared to stamp it to nothing.

The complication of laws in every country has tended to bewilder the understanding of man in the science of government; and whilst artful politicians have taken advantage of the ignorance or credulity of their fellow citizens, it was impossible to prevent a degeneracy of morals, because impunity will always be a stimulus to the passions. This has been the cause of the insincerity, which has so long disgraced the courts of Europe, and pervading every class of men in their offices or employ, has extended it's poison throughout the higher orders of society; and it will require a simplification of laws, an establishment of equal rights,



rights, and the responsibility of ministers, to secure a just and enlightened policy. But till this be effected, it ought not to surprize us, should we hear the mock patriots of the day declaiming about public reform, merely to answer sinister purposes; or should we chance to discover, that the most extolled characters have ben actuated by a miserable selfishness, or prompted by corroding resentment, to exertions for the public good; whilst historians have ignorantly attributed the political advantages, which have been attained by a gradual improvement of manners, to their resolution, and the virtuous exercise of their talents.

And we ought not to be discouraged from attempting this simplification, because no country has yet been able to do it; since it seems clear, that manners and government have been in a continual and progressive state of improvement, and that the extension of knowledge, a truth capable of demonstration, was never at any period so general as at present.

If at one epocha of civilization we know, that all the improvements which were made in arts and sciences were suddenly overturned, both in Greece and Rome, we need not inquire,

quire, why superficial reasoners have been induced to think, that there is only a certain degree of civilization to which men are capable of attaining, without receding back to a state of barbarism, by the horrid consequences of anarchy; though it may be necessary to observe, that the causes which produced that event can never have the same effect again:—because a degree of knowledge has been diffused through society by the invention of printing, which no inundation of barbarians can eradicate. Besides, the improvement of governments do not now depend on the genius of particular men; but on the impetus given to the whole society by the discovery of useful truths. The opposers then of popular governments may tell us, if they please, that Themistocles had no motive in saving his country, but to gratify his ambition; that Cicero was vain, and Brutus only envious of the growing greatness of Cæsar.—Or, to approach our own times;—that, if the supercilious Wedderburne had not offered an indignity to Franklin, he never would have become an advocate for american independence; and that, if Mirabeau had not suffered in prison, he never would have written against the *lettres*

*tres de cachet*, or espoused the cause of the people.—All of which assertions I am willing to admit, because they exactly prove what I wish to enforce; namely, that—though bad morals, and worse laws, have helped to deprave the passions of men to such a degree, as to make the benefits which society have derived from the talents or exertions of individuals to arise from selfish considerations, still it has been in a state of gradual improvement, and has arrived at such a pitch of comparative perfection, that the most arbitrary governments in Europe, Russia excepted, begin to treat their subjects as human beings, feeling like men, and with some powers of thinking.

The most high degree of civilization amongst the ancients, on the contrary, seems to have consisted in the perfection the arts, including language, attained; whilst the people, only domesticated brutes, were governed and amused by religious shows, that stand on record as the most egregious insult ever offered to the human understanding. Women were in a state of bondage; though the men, who gave way to the most unbridled excesses, even to the outraging of nature, expected that they should be chaste; and took the only  
method

method to render them so in such a depraved state of society, by ruling them with a rod of iron ; making them, excepting the courtezans, merely household, breeding animals.

The state of slavery, likewise, of a large proportion of men, tended probably, more than any other circumstance, to degrade the whole circle of society. For whilst it gave that air of arrogance, which has falsely been called dignity, to one class, the other acquired the servile mien that fear always impresses on the relaxed countenance. It may be delivered, I should imagine, as an aphorism, that when one leading principle of action is founded on injustice, it sophisticates the whole character.

In the systems of government of the ancients, in the perfection of the arts, and in the ingenious conjectures which supplied the place of science, we see, however, all that the human passions can do to give grandeur to the human character ; but we only see the heroism that was the effect of passion, if we except Aristides. For during this youth of the world, the imagination alone was cultivated, and the subordinate understanding merely exercised to regulate the taste, without extending

ing to it's grand employ, the forming of principles.

The laws, made by ambition rather than reason, treated with contempt the sacred equality of man, anxious only to aggrandize, first the state and afterwards individuals: consequently, the civilization never extended beyond polishing the manners, often at the expence of the heart, or morals; for the two modes of expression have, I conceive, precisely the same signification, though the latter may have more extent. To what purpose then do semi-philosophers exultingly show, that the vices of one country are not the vices of another; as if this would prove, that morality has no solid foundation; when all their examples are taken from nations just emerging out of barbarism, regulating society on the narrow scale of opinions suggested by their passions, and the necessity of the moment? What, indeed, do these examples prove? Unless they be allowed to substantiate my observation, that civilization has hitherto been only a perfection of the arts; and a partial melioration of manners, tending more to embellish the superiour rank of society, than to improve the situation of all mankind. Sen-

timents were often noble, sympathies just—yet the life of most men of the first class was made up of a series of unjust acts, because the regulations thought expedient to cement society, did violence to natural justice. Venerable as age has rendered many of these regulations, cold substitutes for moral principles, it would be a kind of sacrilege not to strip them of their gothic vests. And where then will be found the man who will simply say—that a king can do no wrong; and that, committing the vilest crimes to folly his mind, his person still remains sacred?—Who will dare to assert, that the priest, who takes advantage of the dying fears of a vicious man, to cheat his heirs, is not more despicable than a highwayman?—or that obedience to parents should go one jot beyond the deference due to reason, enforced by affection?—And who will coolly maintain, that it is just to deprive a woman, not to insist on her being treated as an outcast of society, of all the rights of a citizen, because her revolting heart turns from the man, whom, a husband only in name, and by the tyrannical power he has over her person and property, she can neither love nor respect, to find comfort in a more congenial

congenial or humane bosom? These are a few of the leading prejudices, in the present constitution of society, that blast the blossoms of hope, and render life wretched and useless—And, when such were tolerated, nay, reckoned sacred, who can find more than doubtful traces of the perfection of man in a system of association pervaded with such abuses? Voluptuousness alone softened the character down to tenderness of heart; and as taste was cultivated, peace was sought, rather because it was convenient, than because it was just. But, when war could not be avoided, men were hired by the rich to secure to them the quiet enjoyment of their luxuries; so that war, become a trade, did not render ferocious all those who directly, or indirectly waged it.

When, therefore, the improvements of civil life consisted almost entirely in polishing the manners, and exercising the transient sympathies of the heart, it is clear, that this partial civilization must have worn itself out by destroying all energy of mind. And the weakened character would then naturally fall back into barbarism, because the highest degree of sensual refinement violates all the

genuine feelings of the soul, making the understanding the abject slave of the imagination. But, when the advances of knowledge shall make morality the 'real basis of social union, and not it's shadow the mask of selfishness, men cannot again lose the ground so surely taken, or forget principles, though they may accomplishments.

And that a civilization founded on reason and morality is, in fact, taking place in the world, will appear clear to all those, who have considered the atrocious vices and gigantic crimes, that sullied the polish of ancient manners. What nobleman, even in the states where they have the power of life and death, after giving an elegant entertainment, would now attract the detestation of his company, by ordering a domestic to be thrown into a pond to fatten the fish.\*—What tyrant would dare, at this time, to poison his brother at his own table; or stab his enemy's mother, not to mention his own, without co-

\* The cruelties of the half civilized romans, combined with their unnatural vices, even when literature and the arts were most cultivated, prove, that humanity is the offspring of the understanding, and that the progress of the sciences alone can make men wiser and happier.



louring over the deed? and do not the exclamations against boxing matches, in England, also prove, that the amphitheatre would not now be tolerated, much less enjoyed? If the punishment of death be not yet abolished, tortures worse than twenty deaths are exploded, merely by the melioration of manners. A human being is not now forced to feed the lamp that consumes him; or allowed vainly to call for death, whilst the flesh is pinched off his quivering limbs. Are not, likewise, many of the vices, that formerly braved the face of day, now obliged to lurk, like beasts of prey, in concealment, till night allows them to roam at large. And the odium which now forces several vices, that then passed as merely the play of the imagination, to hide their heads, may chase them out of society, when justice is common to all, and riches no longer stand in the place of sense and virtue. Granting then to the ancients that savage grandeur of imagination, which, clashing with humanity, does not exclude tenderness of heart, we should guard against paying that homage to sentiment, only due to principles formed by reason.

Their tragedies, this is still but a cultivation of the passions and the taste, have been celebrated and imitated servilely ; yet, touching the heart, they corrupted it ; for many of the fictions, that produced the most striking stage effect, were absolutely immoral. The sublime terrour, with which they fill the mind, may amuse, nay, delight ; but whence comes the improvement ? Besides, uncultivated minds are the most subject to feel astonishment, which is often only another name for sublime sensations. What moral lesson, for example, can be drawn from the story of Oedipus, the favourite subject of such a number of tragedies ?—The gods impel him on, and, led imperiously by blind fate, though perfectly innocent, he is fearfully punished, with all his hapless race, for a crime in which his will had no part.

Formerly kings and great men openly despised the justice they violated ; but, at present, when a degree of reason, at least, regulates governments, men find it necessary to put a gloss of morality on their actions, though it may not be their spring. And even the jargon of crude sentiments, now introduced into conversation, flows to what side

leans vanity, the true thermometer of the times.—An affectation of humanity is the affectation of the day ; and men almost always affect to possess the virtue, or quality, that is rising into estimation.

Formerly a man was safe only in one civilized patch of the globe, and even there his life hung by a thread. Such were the sudden vicissitudes, which, keeping the apprehension on the stretch, warmed the imagination, that clouded the intellect. At present a man may reasonably expect to be allowed tranquilly to follow any scientific pursuit ; and when the understanding is calmly employed, the heart imperceptibly becomes indulgent. It is not the same with the cultivation of the arts. Artists have commonly irritable tempers ; and, inflaming their passions as they warm their fancy, they are, generally speaking, licentious ; acquiring the manners their productions tend to spread abroad, when taste, only the refinement of weakened sensations, stifles manly ardour.

Taste and refined manners, however, were swept away by hordes of uncivilized adventurers ; and in Europe, where some of the seeds remained, the state of society slowly

meliorating itself till the seventeenth century, nature seemed as much despised in the arts, as reason in the sciences. The different professions were much more knavish than at present, under the veil of solemn stupidity. Every kind of learning, as in the savage state, consisted chiefly in the art of tricking the vulgar, by impressing them with an opinion of powers, that did not exist in nature—The priest was to save their souls without morality; the physician to heal their bodies without medicine; and justice was to be administered by the immediate interposition of heaven:—all was to be done by a charm. Nothing, in short, was founded on philosophical principles; and the amusements being barbarous, the manners became formal and ferocious. The cultivation of the mind, indeed, consisted rather in acquiring languages, and loading the memory with facts, than in exercising the judgment; consequently, reason governed neither law, nor legislation; and literature was equally devoid of taste. The people were, strictly speaking, slaves; bound by feudal tenures, and still more oppressive ecclesiastical restraints; the lord of the domain leading them to slaughter, like flocks of sheep; and the ghostly father  
drawing

drawing the bread out of their mouths by the idlest impositions. The croisades, however, freed many of the vassals ; and the reformation, forcing the clergy to take a new stand, and become more moral, and even wiser, produced a change of opinion, that soon appeared in humanizing the manners, though not in improving the different governments.

But whilst all Europe was enslaved, suffering under the caprice or tyranny of despots, whose pride and restless ambition continually disturbed the tranquillity of their neighbours ; the britons, in a great degree, preserved the liberty ~~that they first recovered~~. This singular felicity was not more owing to the insular situation of their country, than to their spirited efforts ; and national prosperity was the reward of their exertions. Whilst, therefore, englishmen were the only free people in existence, they appear to have been not only content, but charmed with their constitution ; though perpetually complaining of the abuses of their government. It was then very natural, in such an elevated situation, for them to contemplate with graceful pride their comparative happiness ; and taking for granted, that it was the model of perfection, they never

seem to have formed an idea of a system more simple, or better calculated to promote and maintain the freedom of mankind.

That system, so ingenious in theory, they thought the most perfect the human mind was capable of conceiving; and their contentions for its support contributed more to persuade them, that they actually possessed an extensive liberty, and the best of all possible governments, than to secure the real possession. However, if it had no specific basis beside magna charta, till the habeas corpus act passed; or before the revolution of 1688, but the temper of men; it is a sufficient demonstration, that it was a government resting on principles emanating from the consent, if not from the sense of the nation.

Whilst liberty had been consumed by the lascivious pleasures of the citizens of Venice and Genoa;—corroded in Switzerland by a mercenary aristocracy;—entombed in the dykes of the covetous Hollanders;—driven out of Sweden by an association of the nobles;—and hunted down in Corsica by the ambition of her neighbours;—France was insensible to her value;—Italy, Spain, and Portugal, cowering under a contemptible bigotry,

try, which sapped the remains of the rude liberty they had enjoyed, formed no political plans;—and all Germany was not only enslaved, and groaning beneath the weight of the most insulting civil tyranny, but it's shackles were riveted by a redoubtable military phalanx.—Despotism, in fact, had existed in that vast empire for a greater length of time than in any other country;—whilst Russia stretched out her arms with mighty grasp, embracing Europe and Asia. Sullen as the amphibious bear of the north; and so chilled by her icy regions, as to be insensible to the charms of social life, she threatened alternate destruction to every state in her vicinity. Huge in her projects of ambition, as her empire is extensive, the despotism of her court seems as insatiable, as the manners of her boors are barbarous.—Arrived at that stage of civilization, when the grandeur and parade of a palace are mistaken for the improvement of manners, and the false glory of desolating provinces for wisdom and magnanimity, the tzarina would sooner have abandoned her favourite plan of imitating the conduct of Peter the great, in labouring to civilize her kingdom, than have allowed freedom to find a firm

firm seat in her dominions to assist her. She has vainly endeavoured, indeed, to make the sweet flowers of liberty grow under the poisonous shade of despotism ; giving the russians a false taste for the luxuries of life before the attainment of it's conveniences. And this hasty attempt to alter the manners of a people has produced the worst effect on their morals : mixing the barbarism of one state of society, deprived of it's sincerity and simplicity, with the voluptuousness of the other, void of elegance and urbanity, the two extremes have prematurely met.

Thus pursued and mistaken, liberty, though still existing in the small island of England, yet continually wounded by the arbitrary proceedings of the british ministry, began to flap her wings, as if preparing for a flight to more auspicious regions—And the anglo-americans having carried with them to their place of refuge the principles of their ancestors, she appeared in the new world with renovated charms, and sober matron graces.

Freedom is, indeed, the natural and inprescriptible right of man ; without the enjoyment of which, it is impossible for him to become either a reasonable or dignified being.

Freedom



Freedom he enjoys in a natural state, in it's full extent : but formed by nature for a more intimate society, to unfold his intellectual powers, it becomes necessary, for carrying into execution the main objects, which induces men to establish communities, that they should surrender a part of their natural privileges, more effectually to guard the most important. But from the ignorance of men, during the infancy of society, it was easy for their leaders, by frequent usurpations, to create a despotism, which choking up the springs that would have invigorated their minds, they seem to have been insensible to the deprivations under which they lived ; and existing like mere animals, the tyrants of the world have continued to treat them only as machines to promote their purposes.

In the progress of knowledge, which however was very tardy in Europe, because the men who studied were content to see nature through the medium of books, without making any actual experiments themselves, the benefits of civil liberty began to be better understood : and in the same proportion we find the chains of despotism becoming lighter. Still the systematizing of pedants, the in-

genious fallacy of priests, and the supercilious meanness of the literary sycophants of courts, who were the distinguished authors of the day, continued to perplex and confound the understandings of unlettered men. And no sooner had the republics of Italy risen from the ashes of the roman jurisprudence, than their principles were attacked by the apostles of Machiavel, and the efforts made for the revival of freedom were undermined by the insidious tenets which he gave to his prince.

The arts, it is true, were now recovering themselves, patronized by the family of the Medicis; but the sciences, that is, whatever claimed the appellation, had still to struggle with aristotelean prejudices; till Descartes ventured to think for himself; and Newton, following his example, explained the laws of motion and gravity, displaying the mechanism of the universe with wonderful perspicacity; for the analysis of ideas, which has since diffused such light through every branch of knowledge, was not before this period applied even to mathematics. The extension of analytical truths, including political, which at first were only viewed as splendid theories, now began to pervade every part of Europe;

steal-

stealing into the very seminaries of learning in Germany, where formerly scholastic, dry theology, laborious compilations of the wanderings of the human understanding, and minute collations of the works of the ancients, had consumed the fervour of youth, and waisted the patience of age. The college and the court are always connected :—and literature beginning to attract the attention of several of the petty sovereigns of the empire, they were induced to patronize those daring men who were persecuted by the public for attacking religious or political prejudices ; and allowing them an asylum at their courts, they acquired a relish for their conversation. The amusements of the chace then yielding to the pleasures of colloquial disquisition on subjects of taste and morals, the ferocity of northern despotism began imperceptible to wear away, and the condition of it's slaves to become more tolerable.

Education, in particular, has been studied ; and the rational modes of instruction in useful knowledge, which are taking place of the exclusive attention formerly paid to the dead languages, promise to render the germans, in the course of half a century, the most enlightened people in Europe. Whilst their simplicity

plicity of manners, and honesty of heart are in a great degree preserved, even as they grow more refined, by the situation of their country ; which prevents that inundation of riches by commercial sources, that destroys the morals of a nation before it's reason arrives at maturity.

Frederic the Ild of Prussia, with the most ardent ambition, was nevertheless as anxious to acquire celebrity as an author, as he was fame as a soldier. By writing an examination of Machiavel's Prince, and the encouragement he gave to literary talents and abilities, he contributed very much to promote the acquirement of knowledge in his dominions ; whilst, by granting his confidence to the philosophical Hertzberg, the administration of his government grew considerably milder.

His splendid reputation as a soldier continued to awe the restless ambition of the princes of the neighbouring states, which afforded an opportunity to the inhabitants of the empire to follow, during the reign of tranquillity, those literary pursuits, which became fashionable even at the half civilized court of Petersbourg. It now, indeed, appeared certain, that Germany would gain in  
future

future important political advantages; for men were beginning to presume to think, and scanned the conduct of the supercilious Joseph with freedom, treating his vanity with contempt.

It is by thus teaching men from their youth to think, that they will be enabled to recover their liberty; and useful learning is already so far advanced, that nothing can stop its progress:—I say peremptorily nothing; for this is not the era hesitatingly to add, short of supernatural events. And though the unjustifiable proceeding of the english courts of justice, or rather of the arbitrary chief judge Mansfield, who established it as a law precedent, that the greater the truth the greater the libel, tended materially to prevent the authors of the american war from being attacked for those tyrannical steps, that ultimately tended to stop the progress of knowledge and the dissemination of political truth; yet the clamour which was raised against that unpopular war is a proof, that, if justice slept, liberty of thought had not forsaken the island.

The overweening presumption, however, of men ignorant of true political science;  
who

who beheld a nation prosperous beyond example, whilst all the neighbouring states were languishing, and knew not how to account for it; foolishly endeavouring to preserve this prosperity, by mad attempts to throw impediments in the way of those very principles, which had raised Great Britain to the elevated rank she has attained in Europe, served only to accelerate their diffusion. And France being the first among the nations on the continent, that had arrived at a civilization of manners, which they have termed the only art of living, we find was the first to throw off the yoke of her old prejudices.

It was at this crisis of things, that the despotism of France was completely overturned, and twenty-five millions of human beings unloosed from the odious bands, which had for centuries benumbed their faculties, and made them crouch under the most ignominious servitude—And it now remains to observe the effect of this important revolution, which may fairly be dated from the taking of the Bastille.