

16. "Every society, in which the security of rights is not established, nor the separation of powers determined, has no constitution.

17. "Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no man can be deprived of it, unless when evidently exacted by public necessity, legally ascertained, and under the condition of a just and *previous* indemnity."

It would be endless to repeat all that has been said on the subject of this declaration, by the friends and enemies to the measure; it certainly neither deserved the unqualified censure it experienced from one party, nor the indiscriminate commendation it received from the other. That it contained some strong truths and sound maxims, which had been too long neglected or despised, cannot be called in question; but the *objection* which appears to carry most weight with it, is this, that it tended to inflate the people, already too conscious of their own strength; to stimulate those who required to be checked; and to provide a *spur* instead of a *bridle*. The following apostrophe, addressed, on this subject, to the National Assembly, by a contemporary writer, contains much good sense.

"Legislators, founders of a new order of things, you seek to display before you that metaphysical system, which the ancient legislators had always the wisdom to conceal in the foundation of their edifices. Ah! be not more wise than nature! If it be your wish that a great people should enjoy the shade, and be nourished with the fruit, of the tree that you are planting, *do not leave the roots exposed!* Dread, lest men, to whom you have only spoken of their *rights*, and never of their *duties*; lest men, to whom the royal authority is no longer formidable, who understand nothing of the operations of a legislative assembly, and who have conceived exaggerated hopes of it, should pass from that civil equality established by the laws, to the absolute equality of property; from the hatred of rank, to the hatred of power; and lest they should massacre the magistrates as they have massacred the nobles! The people require plain truths, and not abstract propositions; and, on their emancipation from a long servitude, liberty should be presented to them with caution and by degrees, as food is given to a crew who, having consumed their provisions during a long voyage, are reduced to the last extremity. Lastly, do not forget, deputies of France, that if kings effect their own ruin by an exorbitant love of power, legislative assemblies are equally ruined by an inordinate desire of innovation.

"Besides, why reveal to the people truths purely speculative? Those who will not make an ill use of them, are the very persons who are as well acquainted with them as yourselves; and those who have not been able to find them in their own minds, will never comprehend them, and will always make an ill use of them. Far from telling the people that nature has made all men equal, tell them, on the contrary, that she  
" has

“ has made them extremely unequal; that one man is born strong and another weak;  
 “ one sound and another infirm; that all are not equally skilful and vigilant; and that  
 “ the chef-d'œuvre of a well-regulated society is to render those equal by the laws  
 “ whom nature has rendered so unequal in their means. But let them not be taught  
 “ to infer from thence that conditions are equal: you know, you even see what  
 “ calamities result from that false idea, when the people are once prepossessed  
 “ with it <sup>16</sup>.”

It has been well observed, that the declaration of rights, considered as a composition, bears evident marks of haste, and is by no means a regular and homogeneous work. Sometimes it announces rights; again it prescribes restraints: here it anticipates the objects of legislation; and there it directs an attack against despotism, which it could not consistently suppose to exist:—Mirabeau's observation on the subject has, probably, not less truth than wit in it: he said, “It would answer no other purpose than that of a political almanack for the current year.”

During the debates on this declaration, which lasted till the latter end of August, the people of Franche-Comté had formed a resolution to massacre all the nobility, and the festival of Saint Bartholomew—a day already stigmatized by the massacre of the Hugonots—was fixed on for the execution of this horrid design. The discharge of four musquets was the destined signal of assassination; but the man who had been appointed to fire them, being surprized before he had time to discharge the fourth, confessed the plot, and six of the ringleaders, three of whom were soldiers, and three citizens, were seized and executed. At the same period, fire and sword were employed in other provinces, to extort from the nobility a renunciation of their titles: they were asked, whether they were greater noblemen than the king, *who had declared for the Third Estate?* Those who were employed in burning the gentlemen's seats reported that they had received injunctions not to leave one standing, with the single exception of the palace of Versailles <sup>17</sup>.

Through the whole course of its proceedings the Assembly was divided into a number of sections or committees, to each of which was assigned some specified part of the new

<sup>16</sup> Journal Politique, tom. i. p. 96. The same writer, speaking of this declaration, in another part of his work, says—“This dangerous piece includes rights which the citizens will never be able to exercise, even after the complete execution of the decrees of the Assembly. Besides, it contains a vague metaphysical doctrine, which the people found unintelligible and unsubstantial. It became necessary, therefore, in order to satisfy that impatient master, to descend from theory and principles the most abstract, to consequences and applications the most material, of the sovereignty of the people, and of the absolute equality of men.”

<sup>17</sup> Journal Politique, tom. i. p. 133.



constitution, on which it was to give its opinion and advice in a report, which then became a subject of general discussion. But, being resolved, as we before observed, to begin *ab ovo*, after laying the foundation, they proceeded with the superstructure; when a question arose, which served to create a greater division of opinion, and a greater agitation in the minds of men, than any other: it was this—What share of authority the king ought to possess in the new legislature?—This question operated like a touchstone. In other matters, the different orders and parties were constantly divided among themselves; but now every man was under a necessity of avowing and supporting his principles, or of giving them up for ever. What had never happened before, the president now saw, on his righthand and on his left, the whole Assembly arranged in two grand hostile divisions, and these so nearly poised in point of number, that the most experienced eye could not determine on which side the advantage might lie. The conflicts were so hard fought on both sides, so often renewed, and so long continued, and the subject of debate so industriously spread and universally known, that the whole nation became parties in the contest, and the dissention and agitation were not less among the people at large, than it was within the walls of the Assembly.—*Iliacos intrâ muros peccatur et extrâ*.—All the passions which had hitherto been in some degree smothered, now burst forth with greater force from their restraint, and many, sprung from recent causes, appeared in all the ardour of youth. Rabaut acknowledges, that every debate in the Assembly was now a quarrel<sup>18</sup>; and the heat and violence without were still greater.

On the one side were arranged, in the first instance, those who had, at all times, considered the sovereign as the sole and rightful legislator: with these were joined a second description of persons, who, without entering into the abstract principle, were, from habit or opinion, attached to monarchy, and who were stricken with dread and horror at the sudden torrent of republicanism which now so suddenly overspread the land; to these were to be added the smaller band, who felt themselves attached by affection to the person of the king; and that, much more numerous, which, from interested motives, found itself bound at all events to the support of monarchical government. But what constituted the great force on that side was the new accession of the nobility and clergy, who, though reduced in power, were still respectable, if not formidable, from their number, as well as from the portion of influence which they still retained. These, at length become sensible of the baleful effects of their past tergiversation, reflecting, in bitterness of heart, upon the manner in which both orders had been alternately duped by the commons, and led blindly to play their own game into their hands, and clearly perceiving now that nothing less than their final ruin was intended, were fully convinced that nothing could avert that ruin, but the retaining of so much power in the hands of the king,

<sup>18</sup> English translation, p. 111.

as might operate, in a certain degree, as a check to the prevailing system, and enable him to interpose with effect in their preservation.

On the other side, in much closer and firmer array, and much better officered and commanded, was the whole body of republicans throughout the kingdom; who, notwithstanding the innumerable divisions into which they were formed, and the great distances by which the parts were separated, were so intimately connected, and their correspondence and union so perfectly established, that their general movements displayed the facility which might have been expected from those of a single individual. With these were joined no small number of men, who stood in the very singular predicament, that though they joined the republicans in every thing, they were notwithstanding attached to some undefined or unknown species of monarchy, but were unable themselves to decide what that should be; these, having no other principle of union or action than one common fear, that the crown might recover its former preponderance and power, could see no other evil or danger whatever; but that was so strongly impressed on their minds, that it seemed difficult to assign what degree of humiliation or weakness it could be reduced to, which would prove sufficient to remove their apprehensions. Under this impression, although they were directly adverse to republicanism in principle, their conduct produced the same effect as if they had been the warmest and most determined zealots in the cause; nor were they awakened from this delusion till the business was over, when their opinion and action were as useless as their repentance.

But that great power which over-ruled all others in the kingdom, that turbulent metropolis, which contained within its wall a numerous nation of its own, was not only sufficient to turn, but absolutely directed the management of, the scale in all cases as it liked. Paris, therefore, little needed the aid of its provincial assistants, such as Rennes in Brittany, which maintained a close and regular correspondence with the patriotic party at Versailles<sup>12</sup>; Dinant, and several other of the more considerable cities and towns, which, having imbibed the same republican ideas, were, though inferior in strength, scarcely less zealous in the cause.

The question which gave rise to the longest and most violent discussions, both within and without the Assembly, was that relative to the king's *veto* or negative upon the passing of laws. It was soon perceptible, that the difference between the two parties—a difference most industriously promoted and increased by the circulation of pamphlets, in which, as usual, reason was sacrificed to passion—was so wide, that an union or conciliation of sentiment was nearly impossible; for, while one party adduced the most con-

<sup>12</sup> Mémoire de M. de Lally-Tolendal, p. 123.



vincive reasons to prove that this authority in the crown was indispensably necessary to the public interest, in order to preserve a check upon the tumultuary nature of public assemblies, and to prevent their passing, not only without due consideration, but under the influence perhaps of the most sudden and outrageous passions, laws, which, from their absurdity, their iniquity, or impolicy, might draw on national disgrace, public injustice, or even foreign danger; on the other side, the retaining of this power in the hands of the king, would, it was represented, prove the means of overthrowing every thing that had yet been done for the liberty and good of the people; that by this negative, without assigning any reason or motive for his conduct, he might obstruct those measures which were of the highest utility to the people, merely to favour the intrigues of his court, or the machinations of his ministers; that, by thus impeding or arresting the operations of the Assembly, the great work of *regeneration*, which the people now so confidently expected, would be rendered impracticable, and all their hopes frustrated; that if the ill effects of this dangerous power did not immediately take place, they would not be the less certain, when the proper season arrived for their operation; that when the present vigilance of the people and their representatives was relaxed, and means used to lull them into a *fatal security*, then the king might suddenly, at his pleasure, inflict a paralytic stroke upon the legislative body, which would disable and render it totally useless; and that, in fact, this *veto* was a never-failing instrument of tyranny, and the most odious and dangerous relick of ancient despotism which could possibly be retained.

Such were the *general* arguments employed at the outset of the business; but when the different questions on this subject were framed into a regular shape, the debates became more pointed and particular. A considerable number of deputies, however, believing they had no right to establish for their constituents a different constitution from that which those constituents had demanded, desired that those parts of their instructions which related to this subject might be read. But the very same persons who had insisted that their instructions *compelled* them to reject the loan, now maintained that they were totally null in all constitutional questions<sup>20</sup>! Mirabeau, who, on the *seventh* of August, had said, that if the Assembly adopted the project for a loan, *they would gain neither credit nor confidence, because they would act in contradiction to their constituents; because they would violate their mandates*; observed, on the *twenty-ninth*, that such members as thought themselves obliged to agree with their constituents, and to obey their mandates on constitutional questions, might have sent their *cabiers* to the Assembly, instead of coming themselves.

The questions that now remained to be discussed, with regard to the *veto*, were these

<sup>20</sup> Mémoire de M. de Lally-Tolendal, p. 126.

—“ May the king refuse his assent to the acts of the legislative body ? ” — “ In case the king should refuse his assent, shall his refusal be final, or suspensive only ? ”

Messieurs Mounier, Lally-Tolendal, Treillard, d'Entragues, Mirabeau, and the duke de Liancourt, were the most strenuous advocates in favour of an absolute *veto*. Two powers, they observed, were necessary to the existence of the body politic—the power of willing, and the power of acting. By the first, a society established the rules of its own conduct, the end of which was the welfare of the whole. By the second, these rules were carried into execution, and the public force was calculated to ensure the triumph of society over all obstacles which might arise to such execution from the opposition of individuals. Both of these powers, they said, were equally necessary, and equally dear to the nation : if on the one hand the support of public freedom required that the legislative body should be secured from the attacks of the executive power, it was not less necessary, on the other, that the latter should be invariably supplied with the means of protection against the invasions of the former<sup>21</sup> : which means could only exist in the right of the supreme chief of the nation to examine the acts of the legislative power, and to refuse to endow them with the sacred character of laws.

If the whole collective body of the people were capable of expressing their will in direct terms, it would be absurd to suppose that that will should be subjected to a royal sanction ; but in a state where, by the nature of things, they were forced to entrust their powers to representatives, who might be chosen more from circumstances of fortune and situation, than from personal virtue and merit, such a prerogative was absolutely necessary to be vested in the monarch, in order that he might counteract that species of aristocracy, which, incessantly tending to the acquisition of a legal consistency, would become equally hostile to the prince, whom it would endeavour to equal in power, and to the people, whom it would attempt to keep in a state of subjection : hence that natural and necessary alliance against every species of aristocracy between the prince and the people, which was founded on an uniformity of interests and of fears, urging them to the attainment of the same object, and rendering their wills similar and uniform.

If the king were deprived of his *veto* on all the propositions of law that might be submitted to him by the National Assembly, was it not evidently possible, they asked, that, from a fatal error, or a criminal coalition of ambitious or unenlightened representatives, he might be forced to execute a will contrary to the general will, and even to employ the public force against the nation itself ?

<sup>21</sup> “ If the executive power ” — says the president Montesquieu — “ have not a right to stop the enterprizes of the legislative body, the latter will be despotic ; for as in that case it will have the ability to assume all possible authority, it will annihilate all the other powers.” — *Esprit des Loix*, liv. ii, chap. 6,



Again, if the prince had no *veto*, what could prevent the representatives from prolonging, from perpetuating their own authority, and subverting political freedom, as the long parliament formerly did in England? What could prevent them from invading, by degrees, all the functions of the executive power; from uniting in their own persons all the powers of the state; from rendering the royal authority the passive instrument of their caprice; and from re-plunging the people into a state of slavery?

It was urged, that there were only two cases in which the monarch could be supposed to refuse his assent:—First, where he conceives the law in question to be prejudicial to the interests of the nation; or, secondly, where deceived by his ministers, he is induced to resist a law which is injurious to their personal interests.—In the first case, the refusal would certainly be productive of good to the state; in the second, the effect of the law would only be suspended; for it would be impossible that the king should resist the known wishes of the nation; and his *veto*, however absolute, would, in fact, only operate as an appeal from the legislature to the people at large: the legislative body would also have an irresistible check upon the improper use of the prerogative, in their ability to withhold the supplies, or refuse the necessary military establishment for the defence of the state.

The royal *veto* was, therefore, they maintained, sufficiently limited, in point of *fact*, though the most serious consequences would arise, were it equally limited by *law*: to assign a period to the effect of the *veto*, would be to compel the chief of the executive power to contract a solemn engagement to enforce the execution of a law which he disapproved; it would be giving him only a *degraded* authority, forming a glaring contrast with the extensive power with which the public interest imperatively required he should be vested; it would be to engage him to adopt with indifference laws that would be prejudicial to the people alone; it would be to arm him, in defence of his prerogative, against the legislative body, by means of an insurrection, which he would be able to justify by the most plausible pretences, and which would ever find numerous partizans; whereas, if the power to exert an absolute *veto* remained entire, illegal and violent resistance, being useless to the prince, would never be employed, without exciting that disgust and alarm, which would be attended with infinite danger to the ministers, and even to the king himself.

It was observed that the example of America was by no means applicable to the situation of France: that the respective governors of the United States should only have a suspensive *veto*, might be proper; it was a regulation that might be adapted to their particular position; the authority of these governors was temporary; they had, one with the other, about two hundred and thirty thousand persons to govern; their prerogative stood in no need of a vigorous support; since it had as many protectors as there were citizens

citizens who hoped to succeed to the government: but, to infer from thence that the same kind of *veto* was sufficient for an hereditary monarch, for a king who had six-and-twenty millions of subjects to govern, whose prerogative was a perpetual object of envy, and required the most active exercise—it was an inference that could not but excite the greatest astonishment<sup>22</sup>.

It would be possible, they insisted, to prove that to dispute whether the *veto* of the king should be absolute or suspensive, was tantamount to a discussion of this question—whether or not there should be any king in France? but the nation had declared its will, that there should be a king; and the freedom of the nation required a king, required that he should be vested with regal prerogatives, and required that he should have an unlimited sanction.

Mirabeau, after supporting, in one of the best speeches he ever made, the absolute *veto* of the king, with infinite energy, declared—*That it would be better to live at Constantinople than in France, if laws could be made without the royal sanction*<sup>23</sup>.

M. Mounier observed, that the most glorious functions of sovereignty were those of the legislative body; that if the monarch did not constitute an integral part of that body; if he had no influence in the establishment of laws, he would be reduced to the capacity of a mere magistrate, subject to its orders, or of a general of its armies; the government would no longer be a monarchy, but a republic, and the royal authority would no longer be respected by the people, because it would no longer contribute to the promulgation of good and salutary laws: that the laws should invariably be the result of a concurrence between those for whom they are made, and him by whom they are to be executed: that the head of a monarchy should never be separated from a legislation by whose decrees he was to govern: in short, that it was in the nature of things, that the general will of a nation should consist of the will of the king, combined with the will of the national representatives; since, if that will were formed without the concurrence of the first citizen, it would no longer be the *general* will.

The abbé Sieyès remarked, that there was an *identity* between the king and the nation. How then, it was asked, could the king be separated from the nation? Considered as its principal representative, has he not the same claim with the representative body, to a

<sup>22</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, p. 58, et suivantes.

<sup>23</sup> Pièces Justificatives à la fin du Mémoire de M. le Comte de Lally-Tolendal, p. 135, 136.—But it is curious to observe, that at the very time when Mirabeau so ably defended the *veto* of the king, his emissaries in Paris were instructed to persuade the people that he opposed it to the utmost of his power; and, to support the delusion, he took care to quit the Assembly just before the division, that his vote might not appear as a record against it.



right of participating in the formation of laws? If he be also considered as the head of the nation, and *not represented* by any of its delegates, is it not clear, that as he does not exercise his right *mediately* in the Assembly, he ought to exercise it *immediately*?—that is to say, that his particular will ought to be joined to the general will of the other representatives of the nation, in order to render the law complete, without which, what is defined to be the will of all, would not be his, and therefore would not be law.

On the other side, it was contended, that however eminent, however extensive, the royal prerogative ought to be, it was impossible to find any thing in the nature of the king's authority that could make him an integral part of the law: the sovereign, that is to say the people, keep in their own hands all that portion of power which they are able to exercise, and only delegate what they are unable to exercise; they delegate the executive power which is essentially transmissible, and which, in a vast country, containing an immense population, they can only exercise by confiding it, in its utmost plenitude, to the hands of an individual; they reserve to themselves the true power, the legislative power, which they do not delegate, because they can always exercise it, through the medium of their representatives.

It was maintained, that the assertion, that the king was a *continual* representative of the nation, was a false assertion: the union of the two ideas implied a contradiction, for every representative is revocable, and, if he be not revocable, he is no representative; how then could the right of representing the nation be hereditary? By accumulating contradictory titles on the head of the king, it was said, those titles would be weakened, and his lawful authority be endangered; he could not at once be chief and representative, legislator and *executor*; for if he were a representative he was not chief; and if he were a chief he was no representative; if he were legislator he ought not to be executor, because the union of these two powers was incompatible with all principles of government; and if he were executor he could not be a representative, because it was repugnant to common sense, that a *mandatary* should execute the law which he has made.

It was insisted, that the legislative power was essentially *one*, and ought to be exercised wholly by all, or in the name of all: it ought, therefore, always to be republican, even when the executive power, or the government, was monarchical: the only difference which distinguished a chief from a master, and a monarch from a despot, was that the chief and the monarch directed their private will by the general will, whereas the master and the despot wished to subject the will of all to their own will: the chief of the French would be, therefore, converted into their master, and the monarch into a despot, if the intervention of his *personal* will were permitted, in order to stop, annihilate, or even suspend, the will of the nation, as expressed by its representatives.

The same party strenuously urged, that the *right of prevention* was synonymous with the *right of formation*; that it was that alone which constituted the majority of the National Assembly, whose right of formation would not be disputed: when a motion was only supported by the minority, the majority expressed the national will by rejecting it; it exercised its legislative power exempt from all limitation: but the right of prevention, lodged in the hands of the executive power, would be infinitely more arbitrary; for the majority of the legislative body only stop the will of the monarchy, whereas the government would stop the will of the majority itself, that is, the national will, which nothing ought to stop; and the *veto*, in such hands, would become a *Lettre de Cachet* against the supreme will of the nation.

The suspensive *veto*, or appeal to the nation, they said, would be attended with worse consequences than even the absolute *veto*; it would change the very nature of the government, and substitute a pure democracy in the place of a representative government: *France neither was nor could be a democracy*: six-and-twenty millions of men, of whom nine-tenths were destitute of instruction, and reduced by the pressure of want to mere working-machines (*machines de travail*) could not directly concur in the formation of laws; dispersed over a surface of five-and-twenty thousand square leagues, they could not possibly unite in one assembly; it was, therefore, necessary, for the general utility, that they should act by representatives, who were much more capable than themselves of understanding the true interest of the community, and of interpreting their own will on that subject. The appeal to the people would refer the legislative power from the representative body to the nation itself, that is to say, to two or three hundred legislatures, in which, in the present state of things, neither deliberation nor discussion could take place: it would create a breach between the nation and her representatives, her monarch and herself; the proscription of the *royal veto* was, therefore, as essential to the security of the king as to the freedom of the people. But, it was pretended, they observed, that the legislative power might one day encroach upon the executive power; as if it were an easy matter for a power destitute of arms to subvert a power that was constantly armed; as if an assembly of twelve hundred men, always rivals in influence, even when they could not be rivals in ability, and invested, for a very short time, with a portion of the national authority, but without any personal power, could find sufficient means to concert and execute, in a small number of years, plans of invasion against the perpetual and hereditary depository of the public force. Consult history—said they—and you will invariably find the representatives of the people incessantly employed in restraining the executive power, and never in usurping it: the long parliament itself has been unjustly accused of the violences of Fairfax, and the crimes of Cromwell. If it retained its power too long, the reason is that *the constitution of England has never protected nor preserved the constituting power of the people; that the law there gives to the prince the absurd right of dissolving the parliament at his pleasure, and that fatal ROYAL VETO*



*caused the blood of the English to flow in the field of battle, and that of their king to be shed upon the scaffold*<sup>24</sup>.

It is not—pursued these opposers of the royal prerogative—in the desperate resources of disbanding the army, and refusing the supplies, that a barrier should be sought for against the ambition of monarchs: the consequence that would result from these violent measures would prove more fatal to the people than to the king. It is to be found in the constitution itself, in your prudence in arming him only with such a degree of power as is necessary for the support of the laws, and of the public tranquillity. A permanent assembly can never secure us against the effects of a *veto*, which may also be permanent itself. Doubtless a good king will always comply with the wishes of the nation; but a violent and obstinate monarch will expose, if it be necessary, both his crown and his life, in defence of his prerogative.

If you are to look for a check upon the impetuous movements of a very numerous legislative assembly, united in one chamber, you must not expect to find it in the *royal veto*: when the evil is in the Assembly, the remedy must not be sought for out of the Assembly: when a skilful mechanic wishes to give a regular motion to the wheels of his machine, he fixes the regulator in the machine itself. But the *veto* will not be in the legislative assembly, but out of it; it will not temper the violence of debate; and it will despotically annihilate all deliberate decisions, as well as those which are adopted with precipitation.

It is still less to be looked for in insurrections; a frequent repetition of those violent shocks would effect the dissolution of the body politic; but it is in the separation of powers; the frequent change of the members of the National Assembly; in the frequent exercise of the constituting power of the people, that you will be able to fix a rampart that will alike resist the audacity of despots, and the ambitious spirit of representatives who are unworthy of their august functions.

Such were the arguments adduced by Messieurs Garat junior, de Landine, Sales, Beaumetz, and others, in opposition to the royal negative, and in reply to those who defended that prerogative of the crown. There was only one point in which the two parties appeared to agree, and that was, in the rejection of the *suspensive veto*; but though this seemed to preclude all hope of accommodation, the popular party, finding the strength of their

<sup>24</sup> The gross ignorance betrayed by these people, of the true principles of the English constitution, and of their tendency and effects, can only be equalled by their presumption; they seldom, indeed, quote history but to misrepresent or pervert the facts to which they allude; and their general observations, as well as the whole tenour of their arguments, prove them to be alike destitute of political and of historical knowledge.

opponents greater than they had expected, affected to give way, in a certain degree, and, by this semblance of moderation, brought over to their side some of those indecisive characters, who are apt to think themselves at liberty to relax in their principles on political points that involve the welfare of a state, with the same facility as if their own personal interest were only at stake; and thus, in order to promote a temporary and evanescent peace and harmony, lay the basis of permanent discord, and lasting dissensions.

The same persons then who had strenuously opposed the *veto*, whether absolute or suspensive, now acknowledged, that to deprive the supreme depository of the executive power of the latter prerogative would be attended with danger to the state, though to entrust him with the former would be still more dangerous; that the decisions of representatives, who are not infallible, may sometimes be repugnant to the decisions of the nation itself, in which case it was the undoubted right, as it was also the interest, of the latter, to provide such a counterpoise as would prevent the former from profiting by the inactivity or inattention of the people, to attack their rights, or subvert their freedom. They said, it would be dangerous to admit the monarch to a participation of the legislative power; but that the suspension of a law was not the act of a legislator, concurring in its formation; it was only an intervention of the supreme magistrate for retarding the sanction of a decree.

The appeal to the people, said they, is both impolitic and unconstitutional. In a country which is not a democracy, and France can never be one, the people can neither speak nor act but by their representatives: an appeal therefore could only be made from the nation to itself, and not from the representatives to their constituents, since these last can only make themselves heard through the national deputies. All France, by adopting a representative government, has proscribed those mandates, which would change the legislative assembly into a troop of *vote carriers* and *political couriers*<sup>25</sup>. The National Assembly ought, doubtless, to be eternal, but its members should be frequently changed. Supposing then, that the same deputies should be entrusted, for two or three years, with the powers of the nation, what inconvenience could result from the right of the monarch to suspend the promulgation of laws which he should deem hostile to the welfare of the state during a given number of successive legislatures, the period being fixed at which his refusal would cease to operate?

Does not, they pursued, this suspensive *veto*, on the contrary, tend to excite a reciproc-

<sup>25</sup> This is a curious mode of reasoning; for the purpose of annulling those instructions which the members had all sworn to obey, these ingenious logicians make the adoption of a representative government by their constituents destructive of mandates given subsequent to such adoption; for the people had of course chosen their representatives before they gave them their instructions!!!



cal spirit of emulation between the king and the representatives, whence must inevitably result the most signal advantages for the public cause? Will not the deputies of the people become more cautious in presenting for the royal sanction such precipitate laws: the king may refuse to adopt; and, by such refusal, secure the applause of the nation and will the monarch dare to suspend the execution of wise and useful laws, when a period is assigned at which his will must give way to the will of the nation? It is impossible that several successive legislatures should concur in conspiring against the public interest: it is impossible that the prince should have any lawful reason for resisting the general will, so manifested.

And let it not be said that this power of suspension may be dangerous at a time when the nation is employed *in creating a constitution for itself*, for the constitution of a people can never be subjected to the royal sanction; not that it is to be dreaded that the legislative body may invade the authority of the prince, since that authority will be defined by the constitution itself, which will be equally secured against the attacks of legislators and of kings; nor yet let it be said, that such a power would degrade the majesty of the throne; for the majesty of the monarch consists not in the extent of his authority, but in that of his beneficence. It is despotism that degrades the sceptre, while the title of supreme executor of the laws ennobles and consecrates the dignity of the chief of the nation.

The *absolute veto* is incompatible with this fundamental principle of every legislation—the law is the expression of the general will—and might precipitate the nation into the most absurd despotism. The refusal of supplies, and the disbanding of the army, would light up the fire of discord in the heart of the kingdom, would render it incapable of external defence, and would yield it up an easy prey to the arms of its enemies. The appeal to the people would break the main spring of government, and incessantly renew the prevalence of anarchy. The *suspensive veto*, that is to say, an appeal from a present legislature to a future one, can alone secure the rights of the nation and those of its chief, by placing in the centre of the political machine—the National Assembly—the regulator which is to direct all its movements<sup>26</sup>.

Such were the new arguments applied in opposition to the absolute negative of the crown; but it must not be supposed that the discussions on this important question were confined to the Assembly; for though the popular leaders had broached the doctrine, that the people could neither speak nor act but *through their representatives*, the people of Paris, and of various other great towns, speedily convinced them that they both could and would speak and act *for themselves*. The inhabitants of the capital, in particular,

<sup>26</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, tom. iii. p. 75, 76, 77, 78, 79.

began to interfere openly in the question of the *veto*, and in all the other points relative to the constitution, which were then agitated by the Assembly; while the crowds in the streets became every day more insolent and outrageous, drowning the voices of those members, whose opinions were adverse to their own, by hootings and revilings, and endeavouring to over-awe them by insult and menace; while long lists of members who were marked for proscription, were dispersed not only in the capital, but through every part of the kingdom<sup>27</sup>.

The popular fermentation in Paris was rising to the highest pitch. All the old manoeuvres which had produced such extraordinary effect in the preceding months of June and July, were renewed in the gardens of the Palais-Royal, and in the adjacent political coffee-houses. The turbulent Saint Huruge, formerly an officer in the king's service, but noted for the great share he had in all the disturbances of the capital, proposed to march to Versailles, the real object of which expedition was to carry off the king, the queen, and the dauphin; to enslave the National Assembly, and to exterminate such of its members as were so *aristocratical* as to defend *monarchy*<sup>28</sup>. The necessary measures for enforcing these horrid resolutions were adopted, and the insurgents had actually be-

<sup>27</sup> M. Mounier says—"All those who defended the unlimited *veto* in the Assembly, were inscribed on lists of proscription, and calumniated by the news-paper writers and libellists. M. de Mirabeau was the only one whom they spared. In a publication, entitled "*La Lanterne aux Parisiens*," in which Messieurs de Lally-Tolendal, Clermont Tonnerre, Bergasse, Thouret, Treillard, and myself, were denounced, as worthy to be delivered up to the fatal *lantern*, M. de Mirabeau is highly praised. The author has even recourse to an artful manoeuvre, in order to prevent him from losing the popularity he enjoyed. He assures the public, that the report that M. de Mirabeau had defended the *veto* originated with his enemies, and that the accusation was calumnious.

"I am indebted to M. de Mirabeau for a knowledge of the author of this publication, who is likewise the author of another, entitled "*France Libre*." M. de Mirabeau, whom I met, by chance, at the house of a painter, in company with several other persons, held a long conversation with me, on several parts of the monarchical system of government. He did me the honour to observe, that we always agreed upon *principles*, and that we only differed sometimes upon the *means* of enforcing those principles. I did justice to most of his political principles, maintaining, at the same time, that he sometimes deserted them, and acted in contradiction to himself. The author of the *Lanterne aux Parisiens* joined in our conversation, and pompously advanced a doctrine that was void of all sense. He acknowledged that he, and all those who saw things in the same point of view, wished to have no king; but that not daring as yet to declare their sentiments, they were endeavouring, by degrees, to attain THAT SUMMIT OF PERFECTION. M. de Mirabeau confuted the maker of pamphlets with great energy. He informed me, that this man was the author of the *Lanterne aux Parisiens*, and then behaved to him in the most friendly manner. Two Parisians came in, and having enquired after the health of the author, and the motives of his journey to Versailles, he told them, that he had come to pass some days at M. de Mirabeau's. The count and the author of the *Lanterne* then left the room together, preserving that air of familiarity which showed them to be in habits of intimacy.—This curious scene was exhibited at Mr. Bauze's, painter to the king, in his presence, and in that of Messieurs Target and Damade, and of madame Lejal." *Exposé de la Conduite de M. Mounier, dans l'Assemblée Nationale, et des motifs de son retour en Dauphiné*, p. 49, 50. Note 1.

<sup>28</sup> Mémoire de M. de Lally-Tolendal, p. 129.



gun their march<sup>29</sup>, when the vigorous interference of Bailly and La Fayette disconcerted their plans, and checked the tumult for the present, by committing Saint Huruge, Tintot, and some of the most violent insurgents, to prison.

The day after this seditious proceeding, however, two deputies were dispatched to Versailles, from the Palais-Royal, to the count de Lally-Tolendal, whom the insurgents considered as a *good citizen*. "We are the persons,"—said these deputies to the count—"who, by accepting this mission," (the object of which was to communicate to the National Assembly, through the means of the count, the determination of the *Palais Royal* to admit of no royal negative) "have *suspended* the march of twenty thousand armed men, who have consented to wait till they know the decision of the Assembly. *Paris will have no VETO; she regards as traitors all those who wish for a VETO; and she punishes all traitors.* Several of her deputies have already deserved that appellation; they are about to be *recalled*; and as they will then be no longer inviolable, *justice shall be done them.*" To convince the count of the truth of their assertions, they actually named several members who had already been proscribed<sup>30</sup>.

M. de Lally replied, with equal spirit and propriety, that the real traitors were those who, filling the people with alarms alike false and unjust, made them consider as their enemies the very men who were, in fact, their most zealous defenders; that, with regard to himself, whom they had just called a *good citizen*, and who believed that he merited that title, he should think himself fortunate did he possess as much knowledge and virtue as those members whom they had proscribed; that Paris, before she distributed her hatred and her confidence, would do well to consult a little the former actions and whole life of the persons on whom she meant to bestow them; that he considered the royal sanction as one of the first ramparts of national freedom; that he had passed the night in labouring to defend it; and that, if they would attend him to the National Assembly, they should witness his efforts to secure the triumph of that sanction, and the faithful account that he meant to render of their mission.

They accordingly attended him thither, and had the mortification to find that he kept his word with them; he arraigned in proper terms of severity the daring presumption of the Parisians, and called upon the Assembly to stand forth in vindication of their own freedom and dignity; the president of the Assembly, at the same time, observed that he had received two letters written to the minister of Paris, by the president of the commons, containing an account of the same insurrection. At first the indignation was universal; at least, those who did not feel it, observed a profound silence. Great applause was bestowed on M. Mounier, who showed the connection that subsisted between

<sup>29</sup> Mémoire du Comte de Lally-Tolendal, p. 129.

<sup>30</sup> Idem, p. 129, 130.

the troubles in Paris and those which prevailed in other parts of the kingdom, deriving from thence the undeniable inference that systematic plots were in existence; invoking the vengeance of the Assembly on the heads of the conspirators, of whatever rank they might be, who sought to build their own fortune on the ruin of the public; and moving that a reward of five hundred thousand livres should be offered to any person that would give proof of such plots, with a free pardon to any of the parties concerned that would impeach their accomplices.—M. de Clermont-Tonnerre was equally applauded, when he moved, that the mayor of Paris, and the commander in chief of the militia, should be required to attend the Assembly that very day; that if they would not answer for the liberty of the members, the Assembly should be immediately transferred to some other place, in concert with the king; and that the established tribunals should be instructed to proceed, without delay, against the authors of the troubles. Every thing seemed to indicate the instant adoption of measures the most firm and decisive, when those members who were interested in the encouragement of tumults, had recourse to the old manoeuvres, repeating the stale admonition, not to expose the authority of the Assembly to the danger of an attack, and not to *irritate the people*. After filling the minds of the deputies with real terror, they supplied them with the means of concealing it under a display of false courage; they talked of despising seditions which some of them did not dare, and others did not wish, to suppress: and they bestowed the epithet *anonymous* on two letters written to the king's ministers, by the president of the commons, and an address of the Palais-royal, sent to one of their own members, by two deputies from the Palais-royal!!! Yet, at the suggestion of these people, the motion for the order of the day was carried, and the Assembly, by thus neglecting to resent the insult of the Parisians, became liable to the necessary consequence, of being exposed to still greater insults in future.

The leaders of the insurgents, and their secret instigators, in order to fix on the court that degree of odium which they probably deemed necessary to sanction the measures they had resolved to pursue, studiously propagated a report, that a project had been formed to carry off the king and the royal family to Metz. Other reports, equally inflammatory, and equally unfounded, were also circulated by the factious: and, in one respect, they produced the same effect as if the plots had been real, by exciting a great and general ferment throughout the nation. The Parisians, of course, ever prone to credulity and suspicion, were the first to receive and diffuse the alarm. Every thing began to wear a most dangerous appearance in the capital, and all who had witnessed the late violences of its inhabitants had every thing now to apprehend. The royal *veto*, however, was the present ostensible cause of tumult. If that were allowed, the clergy and nobles, they cried, will renew all their power:—We must act, and instantly, too, else, in “three days, France will be enslaved.”—In the height of this ferment, two violent resolutions, transmitted from the towns of Rennes and Dinant, in which those who supported the absolute *veto* were declared *traitors to their country*<sup>31</sup>, produced the most alarming effect.

<sup>31</sup> *Exposé de la Conduite de M. Mounier*, p. 55.



In this state of things the ministers were intimidated, and the king, ever anxious to promote the general harmony at the expence of his own lawful authority, was imprudently prevailed on to express his assent to the suspensive *veto*—a measure certainly injudicious, as, by yielding to the encroaching spirit of the popular party, he only paved the way for new infringements and additional sacrifices. It was, accordingly, determined, by a majority of the Assembly, that the king should have only a suspensive *veto*.

By the adoption of a suspensive and limited *veto*, the Assembly, it has been contended, acted in contradiction to the positive instructions of their constituents ; in contradiction to themselves ; in violation of the dignity of the throne, and even in opposition to the interest of the nation.

The decree was contrary to their instructions ;—for while these admitted a participation and concurrence in the exercise of the legislative power, the suspensive *veto* supposed that exercise to be undivided, and centered exclusively in the Assembly. The instructions gave the king a positive co-operation in the legislation ; whereas the *veto* reduced him to a negative faculty, which faculty was farther reduced to a simple delay. The instructions acknowledged the absolute necessity of a free and voluntary sanction—the limited *veto* confined the necessity to a forced, an extorted sanction.

In the *cabiers* of the Third Estate, it was observed, “ That the legislative power being longed to the nation, ought to be exercised by its representatives, *conjointly* with the king <sup>32</sup> ;—that in future no law should be established but by the States-general, with the *concurrence* and authority of the king, and the consent of the nation <sup>33</sup> :—that nothing should be deemed law in France but what had been proposed by the States-General, and *sanctioned* by the king <sup>34</sup>, &c. &c.

The instructions of the nobility to their representatives were still more precise ;—they said “ That the king should be considered as an *essential part* of the legislative power ; so that no law could have existence without his consent <sup>35</sup> :—that the respect due to his majesty required that the laws should originate with the States-General, to be sanctioned or rejected by the king, who should not be obliged, in any instance whatever, to explain the motives of his rejection <sup>36</sup> :—and, that the king’s consent was necessary to render the laws complete and effective <sup>37</sup>.” &c.

The instructions of the clergy coincided with those of the nobility and Third Estate ;

<sup>32</sup> Instructions of the Commons of Rouen, Art. 10. <sup>33</sup> Of Metz, p. 3. <sup>34</sup> Of Lyons, p. 7.  
<sup>35</sup> Of the nobles of Evreux, p. 5. <sup>36</sup> Of the hundred of Paris, p. 3. <sup>37</sup> Of the city of Paris, p. 7.

they insisted that no national laws should be enacted and proclaimed without the *authority of the king*, and the free consent of the States General<sup>38</sup>."

The decree was contradictory to their own principles: for if the king had, as they acknowledged, a right to *forbid* (*vetare*), that right ought not to have been confined to the power of *suspending for a time*; and if he could only suspend for a time, it was no longer a right, it was but a precarious concession, as easily revoked as limited; it was not a *veto*, it was but an *appeal* to a higher power, who might either confirm or annul it, after a given time. There was a glaring contradiction in the terms, when they first specified an efficacious impediment, and then destroyed it by a limitation destructive of all efficacy.

It violated the dignity of the throne; for no degradation could be greater than that of making the royal sanction the vain demonstration of a will subjected to discussions incompatible with the pre-eminence of a monarch; of allowing him only an impotent opposition, subordinate to the judgment of those who disputed the principle on which it was founded; and of leaving him no other means of preserving his people from the effects of laws, which should appear to him prejudicial to their welfare, than a vain attempt, which, as the count de Mirabeau observed, would only tend to excite a desire of triumphing over it, and to produce an indecent struggle between the throne and the representatives of the people<sup>39</sup>.

It was contrary to the interest of the nation itself—For, as the concurrence of the chief or head of the nation, in the legislative acts passed by its delegates, would reflect an honour on, and tend to consolidate, those acts, so would the want of that concurrence expose the people to be deprived of the benefit of laws, by establishing a discordance between their formation and execution. Besides, nothing could be more fatal to public freedom than the encroachments of the legislative power, when, no longer stopped by any impediment, no longer restrained by any counterpoise, it might make the most daring attempts, and overleap the boundaries prescribed to it.

The embarrassment created by a wish to destroy in reality what in appearance they were forced to maintain, and by being reduced to combat the fundamental maxims of their new constitution with abstract ideas, was most forcibly displayed in many parts of the debate on this important subject, and even in the decrees which followed those debates. The fluctuation of ideas the most discordant; the shock of opinions the most op-

<sup>38</sup> Instructions of the clergy of Lyons, p. 9. and of Auxerre, fol. 20.—All the instructions, either expressly, or by implication, tended to the establishment of the same principle.

<sup>39</sup> De Calonne, de l'Etat de la France, présent et à venir, p. 181.



posite, and those successive involutions which made the enemies of the *veto* lose sight both of the point from whence they set out, and of the end and object of their discussions, inspired every cool and impartial observer with the most serious apprehensions for the fate of the monarchy. This principle was respected by the constitutional committee<sup>40</sup>, and was even confirmed, at a subsequent period, by a constitutional decree—that no act of the legislative body should be considered as law, unless it was sanctioned by the monarch.

To *sanction* a law is to render it obligatory, to give it that quality which renders it sacred and inviolable; and since no act could have existence as law, unless it had the royal sanction, it evidently followed that such sanction should be free and voluntary; otherwise, it would be a mere material form, not inherent in the essence of the act, which, consequently, ought not to have been placed in the list of those conditions which were deemed necessary to the existence of the law<sup>41</sup>.

Those members who adhered to the two inseparable truths—1. That the legislative acts, which ought always to be proposed, discussed, and framed by the National Assembly, could not have the force of laws without the consent of the monarch;—and, 2. That the monarch being free to assent or dissent, was also at liberty to give or refuse his sanction indefinitely;—those who maintained these principles, argued rationally, consistently, and in conformity with the maxims received in all monarchical governments.

But those who, not being able to deny this necessity of the royal sanction, which the Assembly itself had previously acknowledged, were yet anxious to render it effectual, were extremely puzzled to support the hypothesis they advanced. Pressed in different and opposite directions, by the natural consequences of the principle, and by the desire to elude them, they appear to have endeavoured to divert the attention of the Assembly from the principle itself, either by sophistical applications of the uncontested axiom, that all power is derived from the nation, and by blindly reasoning upon the monstrous irregularity of making the will of an individual predominate over the will of the whole; or else, by entering into useless and sterile discussions on the different kinds of *veto*, as if they had nothing to do but to make their choice.

Those who voted for an absolute and indefinite *veto* proved, if it were refused, the nation would be without a king; while those who rejected it exclaimed, that if it were granted, the nation would remain without liberty. But after the opinion of the latter

<sup>40</sup> This committee consisted of seven members, of whom Messieurs de Lally-Tolendal, Clermont-Tonnere, Moirer, and Bergasse—all men of moderate principles, and real friends to their country—constituted the majority.

<sup>41</sup> De Calonne, p. 138.

had prevailed, and it was agreed to adopt a suspensive *veto*, a difficulty occurred as to a legal mode of taking off the suspension: by leaving it unlimited and undefined they would fall into the pretended abuse of the absolute *veto*, and only change the name; by making it depend on the judgment of the *elementary* assemblies, and on the plurality of future mandates, they would reduce it to an appeal to the people, diametrically opposite to the wishes of the Assembly, very dangerous in its effects, and difficult to determine; and, by confining it to any given term, they would at once establish and annul it, lose its utility, yet retain its inconveniences. To remedy this complication of difficulties, some of the members proposed to come to no decision, as to the nature of the *veto*, but to leave it to the nature of things; while others advised the total rejection of a *royal veto*, and, as a substitute, the creation of a chamber of revision, within the Assembly itself, or of several interior sections, for the purpose of purifying and correcting all laws of a doubtful complexion. This last plan was shewn, by M. Mounier, to be a subversion of the principles of the Assembly, by introducing the preponderance of a minority. All these schemes, indeed, were successively confuted by each other; and it was remarked, that each member was invariably right when he attacked the system of others, and invariably wrong when he attempted to support his own. A formal decree, however, was at length adopted, which declared that the king should have the power to suspend a decree, during two legislatures; but that if the third assembly should persist in it, it should then have the force of a law without the royal sanction.

But the introduction of any kind of *veto* against a positive law—that is to say—against that decree to which the legislative power had given the form of a law, would be the greatest abuse that could possibly subsist in a government, and is a monster in politics. The example of the *veto* of the Roman tribunes, or that of the *liberum veto* of the Poles, only tend to confirm this truth; since they have ever been considered as the sources of infinite disorders.

But the Assembly were led astray in their discussions, by arguing upon false premises. They set out with the supposition that the king did not participate in the legislation in the smallest degree; that the nation had not delegated to its chief the right of concurrence in the formation of laws; and that a decree, which had been discussed without him, in the assembly of deputies, was already law, when presented for the royal sanction; from thence they proceeded, very absurdly, to examine what species of *veto* should be granted to the monarch. Those who voted for giving him *no veto*, were the only members who drew just conclusions from such premises; for if, when a law is established, the king could impede its effect, his will would be superior to the laws; and when the will of an individual is superior to the law, the government is despotic.

But the error which misled all the speakers on the *veto*, was that of having taken for law what had not yet become law; of having disavowed the evident necessity of the con-



currence of the chief of the nation, in order to form the will of the nation; of having lost sight of the instructions of their constituents, who had laid it down as a fundamental maxim—a maxim too confirmed by the Assembly—that no legislative act was law in France without the royal sanction, and, consequently, without the free assent of the king.

A strict attention to this constitutional maxim would have solved all their difficulties, and have released them from the embarrassment in which they involved themselves, by a sophistical attempt to reconcile principles that are, in fact, irreconcilable. All great truths are simple in themselves, clear in their import, and easy of conception. The concurrence of the monarch in the legislation throws aside and renders ineffective every kind of *veto* which is repugnant to the law, and destroys its force.

The refusal of the first representative of the nation to confirm a decree discussed by the other national representatives, could be no attack on the law, since the law could not exist without his consent, and that could not be called opposition to the law which was but the absence of one of its elements. The limits which divide the legislative from the executive power would have remained untouched, since it would not have been the executive power that would have co-operated in the formation of the law, but the supreme delegate of the nation for the exercise of that power, in his quality of chief of the nation, a quality perfectly distinct from that of depositary of the executive power to which it was annexed.

It was from having confounded those two qualities, or rather from having only considered the monarch as possessed of the least valuable of the two, that they were led into two suppositions equally inadmissible:—one, that the king would be superior to the law;—the other, that the national deputies would be superior to the king, and, again, into this alternative, that the will of an individual would predominate over the will of the whole, or that his will would alone be excluded from the general will. Whereas both these extremes would have been avoided by acknowledging the king's right, at first to co-operate in the functions of the legislative power, and then his right to the exclusive exercise of the executive power. In the first capacity, he would have participated in the formation of the law; in the second, he would have been subject to the law when formed.

In that case, there is no degradation either of the law or the king. The law governs the monarch equally with all the other members of the body politic; and when it is once possessed of all the elements which constitute its essence, it no longer admits of any *veto*. The monarch obeys the law, but not until he has previously contributed to its formation; and his obedience, preceded by his consent, is but an honourable example which

which he owes to his subjects; whereas, if his obedience were required, without that previous consent, it would be an act of servility that would place him below his subjects; they are only subjected to the law, because it is the expression of their united will; and the king would, in that case, be subject to a will foreign from his own, to a will in which he would have less part than the last of those citizens of which he is the first<sup>42</sup>.

The advocates for this doctrine, which has been most ably and eloquently defended, considered the limitation of the *royal veto* as a mortal blow to the French monarchy. That monarchy, they said, must be inevitably destroyed if the monarch ceased to form an integral part of the legislation; if his sanction were transformed into a vain and insignificant formality. They maintained, therefore, that no Frenchmen, however friendly to the principles of the Revolution, could, in justice or conscience, abide by the decision of the National Assembly in this instance. Three unanswerable reasons, they averred, should deter them from so doing.

The first of these is founded on the instructions of their constituents, in which the nation so formally and imperatively declared that no law could exist in France without the king's consent, that it was not even permitted to advance an hypothesis, in which the continued refusal of that consent would cease to operate as an impediment to its existence.

The second reason is—that the people of France wished to be free; that they ought to remain free; and that the first object of the new constitution should have been the security of freedom; whereas they would now cease to be free, if those to whom they delegated the legislative power could exercise that power, in all possible cases, without any restraint whatever; if there were nothing to prevent them from encroaching on the executive power, and if the royal prerogative had not a means of preserving itself from usurpations which would inevitably tend to its annihilation. *The sanction of the king is the rampart of the public liberty*—said the count d'Entraigues—and the representatives of the people would soon become their tyrants, if the refusal of that sanction should ever cease to be absolute. It is, without doubt, indispensably necessary, for securing the constitution of a state, to restrain the executive power; but it is still more necessary to restrain the legislative. That subversion of the laws which the former can only effect by successive steps, and by a longer or shorter train of enterprizes, the latter does in a moment. As its bare will can give being to the laws; so its bare will can also annihilate them; and the legislative power can change the constitution, as God created the light<sup>43</sup>. In order, therefore, to ensure stability to the constitution of a state, it is absolutely necessary to impose restraints on the legislative power. But that power can-

<sup>42</sup> De Calonne, p. 140. et sequent.

<sup>43</sup> De Lolme, chap. iii. "On the Division of the Legislative Powers."



not be restrained except by the effect of the royal sanction, and that sanction cannot have effect unless it be perfectly free. Its necessity and its freedom then were prescribed by the interest of the nation; the nation, therefore, were right in making it, in their instructions, a constitutional principle, and to intimate it to their delegates, as a condition inseparable from the legislative power which was confided to them. How then could those delegates violate this condition, take advantage of the power they had received to destroy its limits, and render themselves despotic, by removing that barrier which had been erected as an impediment to their attainment of despotism?

The third reason, alledged as a motive for refusing obedience to the decree, is the authority of the Assembly itself, and the submission which it has required to the new constitution. If such of its own decrees, upon which it principally established its constitutional basis, are incompatible with those which declare, that when the king shall refuse his assent to a law, that refusal shall only be suspensive, and which fix the term of that suspension, obedience to the former must certainly be preferred, as well on account of their priority, as of their conformity to the unanimous wish of the people, as expressed in their instructions to their deputies. This *incompatibility* then is striking.

1. It is declared, by the sixth article of the rights of man, *that the law is the expression of the general will; and that all citizens have a right to concur, either personally, or by their representatives, in its formation.*

The king, having no *representative* in the Assembly, ought, according to this article, to have concurred *personally* in the formation of the law: this article, then, had pronounced, before-hand, the nullity of those posterior decrees, by which it was decided that the law might be formed without the king's concurrence, and that he could only suspend its effects for a given time. According to these, the king was the only person excluded from a right belonging to every member of the community, and he was more dependent than any of them; for when a law had passed, even such of the members of the Assembly as opposed it, were supposed to have consented to it: but this legal fiction could not apply to the king, who being out of the Assembly, and having no representative in it, did not implicitly concur in the acts which proceeded from thence. If, then, he refused to give his personal concurrence, he did not concur at all; and his refusal was, according to the terms of the above article of the rights of man, a radical impediment to the formation of the law.

2. By the second article of the constitution, it is declared—*That the French government is monarchical.*

Nothing is more contrary to the proper and distinctive character of a monarchical government, than to withhold from the monarch all share in that by which the people are governed.

governed. In that case the monarchs not the supreme representative of the nation, but the forced agent of other representatives; he is not a king, he is not even a *free man*, when compelled to obey what he has not approved<sup>44</sup>, and obliged to execute what he disapproves.

3. According to the ninth article—*No act of the legislative power shall be considered as law, unless it be sanctioned by the king.*

Yet according to the two subsequent articles, an act of the legislative body might be law, without being sanctioned, since, after a given time, the refusal to sanction was rendered ineffective.

4. According to the tenth article<sup>45</sup>—*The king may refuse his consent to the acts of the legislative body.*

But what particle of this liberty to refuse his consent remained, when it was converted, in the first instance, into a simple suspension, and when, afterwards, that suspension was declared to be without effect at a fixed period?

Did they not betray a contempt of that law which they had sworn to observe, when they decreed, on the one hand, that the royal sanction was indispensably necessary to all legislative acts; and, at the same time, on the other, that this same sanction should be extorted, or that, after a certain delay, they might dispense with it?

From these premises, this conclusion has been drawn—That the Assembly neither possessed the right of acting in contradiction to the will of their constituents, nor the power of destroying what, in conformity to that will, they had already decreed; consequently, that the decrees which reduced the monarch to a suspensive and limited *veto* were doubly null; and, finally, that the oaths of fidelity to the king and constitution, so repeatedly administered by the Assembly, were so many abjurations of an erroneous system, which equally violated the prerogative of the king, the rights of the nation, the liberty,

<sup>44</sup> "If we are free, although subject to the laws,"—says Rousseau,—“it is because the laws are the registers of our will.”—*Contrat Social*, p. 61. A law enforced in spite of the suspensive *veto*, at the expiration of its term, would certainly not have been the register of the king's will. De Calonne, p. 149, note.

<sup>45</sup> These articles of the constitution were decreed, though not formed into a regular code, previous to the final decision on the separate question of the nature of the royal sanction, which did not take place till the fourteenth of September. It was usual with the Assembly, after one question was started, to proceed with the discussion of another, before the first was decided.



of the people, and the laws of the constitution, promulgated and confirmed by the Assembly <sup>46</sup>.

After the deputies had decreed, that the National Assembly should be *permanent*, without fixing the meaning of the term <sup>47</sup>, though it afterwards appeared that they only intended, that one assembly should not be dissolved until the members of the next were ready to take their seats, they proceeded to the discussion of a question of little less importance than that which they had lately determined with regard to the royal negative—this was, “Whether the National Assembly should be composed of one or two chambers?” But, important as it was—for to us it appears that the very existence of the monarchy depended, in a great degree, upon the decision—it was deemed as trifling by the popular party, or, at least, was so settled a point between themselves, that they had the effrontery to put this question—“Whether there were any grounds for deliberation?” It was however decided in the affirmative; but still such disorder prevailed, and the democratical spirit burst forth with such violence, that the friends to the scheme for the establishment of two chambers could with difficulty obtain a hearing; and the president, the bishop of Langres, was so grossly insulted, that he resigned his post, with the indignation of offended virtue <sup>48</sup>.

The committee of the constitution had already given their opinion upon the subject, by recommending a senate, and a house of representatives, each of which should possess a negative upon the proceedings of the other. Something of this kind, bearing some resemblance to the British constitution <sup>49</sup>, was, as we have before shewn, the favourite scheme with Lally-Tolendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, Mounier, and the other leaders of the moderate party, who, equally zealous with the republicans for the establishment of a free government, considered a limited monarchy, with a constitution so formed as that the principal parts should operate as mutual and perpetual checks upon each other, as affording the fairest prospect for the attainment and permanence of that object.

<sup>46</sup> De Calonne, p. 150, 151.—On the division on the question of the royal sanction, every member who voted for an unlimited sanction was grossly insulted by the mob in the gallery, and even threats were *there* employed to extort a compliance with the wishes of the democratic party.—Still, however, near four hundred members voted for the unlimited *veto*. “And it cannot be doubted”—says M. de Lally—“that, but for the manoeuvres of some, and the weakness of others, the royal sanction would have triumphed in its utmost plenitude.” *Memoire*, p. 146.

<sup>47</sup> M. de Lally, p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, p. 139.

<sup>49</sup> The authors of the English history of the Revolution, in their account of this debate, observe—“On the discussion of the subject in the Assembly, the English government was treated with all due respect.” The correctness of this observation is amply demonstrated by the following passage, from the Memorial of the count de Lally-Tolendal, who was present, and even took a distinguished part in the debate—“Par respect pour ma patrie, je tairai les *satyres* que j’ai entendu faire de ce gouvernement, dans lesquelles l’ignorance des faits le disputoit à l’inconsequence des raisonnemens.” P. 136, 137.

But though the influence, public opinion, and patriotic disinterested character of the leaders of this party, by rendering their sanction and countenance highly necessary, in many of the late arrangements, had induced the popular deputies artfully to amuse and lead them along with an idea that their favourite scheme of two chambers, and of mutual checks, was a measure so rational and so necessary that in settling the constitution it must meet with general concurrence; they now found, that they had been dupes to men, who made no scruple to sacrifice truth, decency, and justice, the lawful rights of the crown, and the true freedom of the people, to the accomplishment of their own projects. The popular leaders, exclusively possessed of all power, and ruling the nation at their will, without any responsibility attached to their conduct, were little disposed to submit to the imposition of restraints upon their proceedings.

The arguments with which these last combated the propositions of the committee of constitution, were weak and frivolous in the extreme, and all their assertions on the subject belied by experience. They maintained that the establishment of two chambers would be the means of erecting an asylum for the old aristocracy, and a cradle for a new one still more dangerous, inasmuch as it tended to fix in the National Assembly itself a germ of corruption, a lure for the ambitious, and a nourishment for those fatal prejudices of distinction and pre-eminence, so contrary to the spirit of the new constitution. M. Rabaud de Saint-Etienne had the effrontery to state, with all the confidence and pride of ignorance and presumption, that the establishment of an upper house, in England, the advantages of which had been strongly pointed out by the committee of constitution, had not been originally adopted, either with a view to suspend the precipitate proceedings of the representatives of the people, or to repress the dangerous encroachments of the commons on the royal authority, but was simply a treaty of accommodation; a kind of capitulation between the pride of the great, and the spirit of liberty in the people. "It is"—said he—"a relic of the feudal government; and we have proscribed that system."

The very nature of things, it was urged, was repugnant to every division of the legislative power. The nation which is represented is *one*, the representative body ought therefore to be *one*. The National Assembly is instituted for the purpose of forming, collecting, and proclaiming the general will; that will is *one* and *indivisible*; it is inconsistent, therefore, to divide the legislative body into two sections, in order to pronounce one will<sup>50</sup>.

In short, these metaphysical legislators argued like men in a state of nature, without the advantage of experience for their guide, and totally ignorant of the science of politics. The remarks of Rabaud on the English house of lords, whether applied to its origin or use, were alike destitute of truth, and only served to display, in a strong point

<sup>50</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, tom. iii. p. 116.



of view, his extreme ignorance, with respect to the history of a nation, which it would have been happy for his country, (and for himself too) had she taken it as a model in the formation of her government. But as arrogance is generally found to prevail most where ignorance resides, all the wisdom of past times, all the experience of established governments, all the knowledge of ancient and modern legislators, the authority of Lycurgus and Polybius, of Cicero and Tacitus, of Montesquieu, Gibbon, Blackstone, De Lolme, and other writers of eminence on the science of legislation, tending to demonstrate, that public freedom and tranquillity are the result of a proper association of the three powers in a state, were rejected with disdain by the popular leaders.

One might naturally suppose, that the most superficial politician could have perceived the danger of trusting the whole power of a mighty state in the hands of a single assembly, without any other to check or regulate its conduct, or any power whatever in the government which could, even by the interposition of a negative, attempt to restrain the excesses to which such a body, possessed of such unexampled authority, must almost necessarily be subject. It was evident, that, in such an assemblage, all its power must be subjected to the caprice or design of a majority; that such a majority, once formed, would soon become too much enamoured of its new power not to cohere firmly together in its support; that the dissenting minority, whatever its number, could do nothing more than complain (if they were allowed to do that) and would thereby become entirely useless, while the triumphant majority, by a proper management of the inflamed populace, with the national purse and the sword in their hands, might establish the most complete tyranny, under a republican name or form, and render it unalterable, by boldly perpetuating their own existence.

But obvious as these consequences were, they were overlooked by some, and disregarded, or, perhaps, *courted*, by others. Recourse was had to the usual mode of enforcing the adoption of every popular motion, by inflaming the minds of the people, who had been studiously taught to consider the establishment of two chambers as the restoration of despotism, and as utterly incompatible with every scheme of reform, and every principle and hope of liberty. They accordingly took a decided part in the business; especially those in the galleries of the Assembly, and the inhabitants of the metropolis. Experience had sufficiently demonstrated the ample adequacy of the means possessed by the democratic faction to excite this fermentation. Even in the Assembly, every power distinct from that of the representation of the people at large was branded with the name of *aristocracy*<sup>51</sup>; and senates were rendered odious, by being indiscriminately compared to that of Venice. A schism likewise arose, as was too frequently the case, among those parties, who were bound by every principle of reason and policy to act with one

<sup>51</sup> Such were the pains taken to inspire the populace with a hatred of what the demagogues were pleased to call aristocracy, that a popular preacher of the metropolis, declared from the pulpit—*That they were aristocrats who crucified Jesus-Christ!!!*—*Journal Politique*, &c. tom. i. p. 162. note.

accord; most of the nobility and clergy voting against the measure, because they thought it would entirely preclude the renewal, at any future time, of their old favourite system of sitting in three orders:—The very reason, if it had been valid, why the friends of the new constitution should have supported the measure.

Under all these circumstances, within and without, the question of one or two chambers was finally put to the vote, on the tenth of September, when only eighty-nine members voted for two chambers, against a majority of above nine hundred. Although it is evident that the measure must have been rejected without any external violence, yet it is not incurious to observe the freedom of suffrage which prevailed in this new temple of liberty. Of this, exclusive of lists of proscription and incendiary letters<sup>51</sup>, two specific instances are adduced by Messieurs Lally-Tolendal and Mounier: the former asserts, that several members of the commons said to him individually, “*Would you have me expose my wife and children to be murdered by the mob?*”<sup>52</sup> The latter declares that different members came to him to beg certificates that they had not given unpopular votes, as they had heard that their country-seats were to be burned !!!

By this decree, the democratical part of the constitution acquired such a decided preponderance, that every man who possessed a common degree of political judgment, must have foreseen the downfall of the monarchy. To suppose that the sovereign could long exist, after the abolition of the senate or upper house, was scarcely less absurd, than if an architect were to remove the center or middle part of a pyramid, and to expect that the top of the pile would remain suspended in air:—Remove the center of the political pyramid (the senate), the top (the king) will inevitably fall, and nothing but the base (the commons) remain. The absurd metaphysical nonsense of the nation being *one* and *indivisible*, if it had any meaning, must have applied, with at least equal force, to the abolition of royalty as to the abolition of the senate. But it is mostly the case with inexperienced men, who advance general abstract principles, with a view to apply them to a *particular* purpose; having attained their object, *they* look no farther; but *others* take up the principle, carry it to its utmost extent, and justify all their excesses,

<sup>51</sup> During the discussion of the question of the two chambers, M. Mounier received, in the Assembly, several anonymous letters, in some of which he was threatened to be assassinated, and, in others, to be poisoned. On his return to his lodgings, he received some more, replete with the most gross invectives, and the most atrocious menaces. From that time, till his resignation of his seat, scarcely a day passed without his receiving letters of the same kind. As a proof that the freedom of the press was not much more respected—though so recently and solemnly confirmed by the declaration of rights—than the freedom of suffrage; a printer of Paris, to whom M. Mounier had sent some reflections which he wished to publish in favour of the establishment of two chambers, returned them, with a declaration that he durst not print them, from the dread of incurring the resentment of the people!—*Exposé de la Conduite de M. Mounier, dans l'Assemblée Nationale; et des motifs de son retour en Dauphiné*, p. 52. note.

<sup>52</sup> Mémoire, p. 141.



by the very arguments employed by the men who first established the principle. The puerile legislators of the constituent assembly appear, in the formation of their political system, to have considered simplicity as the test of excellence; but every Tyro in politics would have told them, that of all sciences, the science of government is the most complex; and it is more than probable, that the excellence of a system of government is in proportion to its complexity. In fact, when the object is to controul human passions by human institutions, and to make the interest and freedom of individuals subservient to the interest and freedom of the community, great and extensive power must, of necessity, be vested *somewhere*: to avert the danger that must necessarily accompany the delegation of such power, its *division* is indispensably requisite; hence the balance of powers in a state, and the establishment of those political counterpoises, which tend to the prevention of a monopoly of the most dangerous species. If all power be lodged either in the hands of a single person, or of a single assembly, public liberty cannot long exist: tyranny must ensue; the only difference is this—that, in the first case, the people are oppressed by one despot, in the last, by a thousand.

On this occasion, M. Neckar had the misfortune to see a measure which he had promoted, from the best motives, and which certainly was just, however its *policy* might be questioned, productive of the worst effects:—we mean, the double representation, as it was called, of the Third Estate. Had that measure been accompanied by a decision in favour of the separation of the chambers, agreeably to established rule, which, at the time of its adoption, might have been easily enforced, no inconvenience could have arisen from it. But the extreme and unaccountable supineness of the ministers in neglecting the latter, paved the way for the *amalgamation* of the different orders, by which means the democratic party secured a majority in the legislative body, which they determined at all events to retain; and this could be done by no other means than by perpetuating the establishment of a single chamber.

The next question discussed in the Assembly, was on *the duration of the legislative body*, which, after some debate, it was decreed, should be renewed every two years by election; and this biennial period was to be denominated a legislature. It was soon after formally declared—on the fifteenth of September—that the throne was indivisible; that the crown was hereditary in the males of the reigning family, according to the order of primogeniture, to the perpetual exclusion of females: thus confirming the ancient rule of succession, according to the Salic law; and that *the person of the king is inviolable*.

The duke of Orleans and his party brought on a violent debate upon the subject of the succession, in which Mirabeau took an eager part, and which was productive of expressions and circumstances that served to open the eyes of many, who had not before discerned

discerned the operative motives of many parts of their conduct, and the grand object of their views. They contended, with great warmth, that the Assembly should confirm the renunciations made by Philip the Fifth of Spain, of his right of succession to the French crown, by declaring them to be valid and legal; and of course that the Orleans branch would be the next in succession, after the failure of the present royal line. The Assembly, however, deemed it too imprudent and dangerous a measure, in the present state of affairs, for them to enter at all upon the subject of the Spanish renunciations; and that it would be equally idle and absurd to agitate questions then, upon events which might never take place. Mirabeau, who was the most unguarded of mankind in his expressions, seemed to reckon as nothing all the existing lives, which must, by some means or other, be disposed of, before any dispute could arise upon the ground of succession; he said openly—that such a subject of discussion might arise much sooner than was expected; that the corpulence of the king and of Monsieur afforded little cause for expecting their lives to be lasting; that the dauphin was only a sickly infant; and as to the count d'Artois, and his two sons, he affected scarcely to consider them as existing with respect to that question, representing them not only as fugitives, but nearly as outlaws.

After the decision of this question, the Assembly, on the eighteenth of September, received a letter, written directly in the king's name, containing some observations on the decrees of the fourth of August, which had been sent to him rather to *promulgate* than to *sanction*. After approving the general spirit of their determinations, the king declared, that there were a few articles to which he could give only a conditional assent, promising, however, to modify or renounce his own opinions, if convinced by the representations of the National Assembly.

This letter is declared, by M. de Lally, to have been a monument of the king's wisdom, of his justice, his respect for property, his beneficence towards his people, and his deference to the national will<sup>53</sup>. Of fifteen articles, he gave his sanction, unconditionally, to eight, and the other seven he did not refuse to sanction, he only submitted them to the re-examination of the Assembly. “He laid before us”—says M. de Lally—“political considerations, founded on treaties with foreign powers; objects of navigation and external commerce, or matters of internal administration and public revenue, of most of which we were ignorant. He asked for some indemnity for those persons on whom every sacrifice had been imposed. He required that the suppression of titles might not contribute to encrease the opulence of the wealthy alone; and that it might not tend to augment the poverty of the poor, by establishing the necessity of an impost

<sup>53</sup> Mémoire de M. de Lally-Tolendal, p. 150.



“ for the support of the clergy. He said to us—“ *Let us mutually enlighten each other, and it is impossible we should disagree.*”

The king remarked on the hardship of abolishing, without any compensation to the landlord, those rents which had once, indeed, been paid as a compensation for personal servitude, but which, having been settled between the lords and their vassals ages ago, had since frequently changed hands, had been exchanged, bought and sold for a valuable consideration, without the purchasers observing or thinking of the odious origin of their titles. He also adverted to the danger of offending, and the impropriety of offering wrong and injury to several of the German princes, who had great feudal possessions in Alsace, and some of the neighbouring territories, which were guaranteed to them by the most solemn treaties; but whose estates and property were all indiscriminately involved in the general effect of the decree for the reform of the feudal system.

But notwithstanding the favourable impression which this letter made on one of the most intelligent and enlightened members of the Assembly, it was ill-received, and excited much general discontent. It was maintained, by the popular party, that the Assembly was a National Convention, a constituting body; and that the decrees of the fourth of August, being constitutional articles, did not stand in need of the royal sanction. In vain did many members observe, that, when the king gave his sanction, it should be pure and simple; when he refused it, the majesty of the throne forbade all attempts to ascertain the motives of his refusal; but, before he gave a decisive answer, he had certainly a right to communicate his reflections. In vain did they ask, how it could be imagined, that he who had the power of suspending the execution of a decree, in order to avert its evil effects, had not the privilege of pointing out its inconveniences?—The king of England, it was observed, could communicate his observations to the parliament, through the means of his ministers, who had seats in either house; but as, in France, the proposal of the committee of constitution for establishing conferences between the Assembly and the ministers had been rejected, the most urgent necessity subsisted for examining the observations of the king.

The Assembly, it was remarked, had not always entertained the opinion now advanced, that the king ought to be passive in all constitutional regulations, since; in their address, on the subject of removing the troops from the vicinity of the metropolis, they had expressly told the king, that the members had been deputed to settle *the constitution, in concert with him—to consecrate with him the eminent rights of royalty*:—and, how could it be supposed, that the supreme chief of the nation was the only man in the monarchy, to whom *the free communication of his thoughts, when he considered them as conducive to the happiness of his subjects, was prohibited.*

Again,

ceived of a project for carrying off the king; at another, of a design formed by the Paris militia to fix their quarters at Versailles.

The most atrocious accusations were preferred by each party against the other. The nobles and clergy were every day charged with new conspiracies against the Revolution; and each embellished with appropriate circumstances of alarm and horror. It was seriously asserted, and with such a degree of confidence, as if the writer had himself seen it, that a subscription was secretly opened for the murder of all good citizens; and that priests and nobles were the subscribers to this bloody instrument of proscription. It was farther said, that a resolution had been formed once more to invest Paris and Versailles with an army; to dissolve, sword in hand, the National Assembly; and to kindle, in every part of the empire, the flames of civil war. On the other side, a charge was openly laid, by men of eminence and character, who offered to stand forth in support of it, that the violent republicans were resolved, at the hazard of murder and civil war, to compel the king and the National Assembly to reside within the walls of Paris, and thus render both, and through them the whole nation, subservient to the influence, and instrumental to the caprice, of that turbulent and seditious capital<sup>55</sup>.

The rebellious French guards, who had deserted and fought against their sovereign, and who were now in the actual pay of the city of Paris, under the denomination of center companies, were seized with a most unaccountable fit of ambition (unless their present anxiety may be ascribed to the same motives that influenced their former disloyalty) to have again the honour of attending and guarding the king's person, which they claimed as an undoubted right, and even talked of marching to Versailles to enforce their claim. Saint Huruge, who had been lately released from confinement, was the chief instigator and promoter of this plan. It will be easily conceived, that, exclusive of the apparent danger of entrusting the king's person in such hands, nothing could be more personally odious or mortifying to him, than to be compelled to endure the sight and attendance of men, who had already so shamefully broken their oaths, and violated all the bonds of military subordination, duty as soldiers, and loyalty as subjects.

In this state of anarchy, when every act of atrocity was easy of accomplishment; when the most horrid licentiousness prevailed at the very windows of his palace, and at the doors of the National Assembly<sup>56</sup>; the only protection on which the king could rely,

<sup>55</sup> It is needless to say which party had taken *each* for the basis of its assertions. No attempt was ever made to execute the projects ascribed to the first; while all the machinations imputed to the last have been completely realized.

<sup>56</sup> One atrocious act, of which the annals of history can furnish no example, was committed at Versailles, at this period. A parricide, who had been sentenced to die, was rescued at the scaffold, and carried off in triumph, by the people,



Again, it was urged, that when the right of the king to examine the constitution, and to ask for alterations, had been formerly asserted, no one had attempted to call it in question: besides, none of the decrees of the fourth of August were really constitutional; and all such as bore any *resemblance* to articles of that description, he had expressly approved. But these observations had no effect on the majority, who determined, that the president should immediately wait on the king, and entreat his immediate promulgation of the decrees in question. He was, of course, obliged to comply, without farther observation or comment; and the principle was established or avowed, that so far from suspending, he could not even offer his advice upon, much less criticize, the measures of the present legislature. The Assembly, however, paid so much attention to him as to send word, that in the future discussion of, or carrying into effect, the principles to which he objected, they would consider and pay a proper regard to the opinions he had given<sup>54</sup>.

During these transactions, things were hastening to an unexampled crisis, tending to produce a new and extraordinary aspect of affairs. Notwithstanding the imprisonment of one of the principal insurgents of the Palais-Royal; notwithstanding the proclamations of the town-house, and the activity of La Fayette; the most alarming accounts were frequently transmitted from Paris to Versailles: at one time, intelligence was re-

<sup>54</sup> Mirabeau, in the course of this debate, displayed his usual inconsistency; notwithstanding his boasting declaration of the eighteenth of August, "That no writer, no public man, had a greater right than he to assume to himself the honour due to courageous sentiments, disinterested views, a proud independence, and an *UNIFORMITY of inflexible principles*!!!"

On the fifteenth of June, he maintained, that the royal sanction was indispensably requisite to authorize even the denomination that the Assembly should assume. "*Can the authority of the monarch*"—said he—"slumber for an instant? Must not he concur in your decree, were it only for the purpose of being bound by it? And should it, in violation of every principle, be denied, that his sanction is necessary to render obligatory EVERY EXTERNAL ACT OF THIS ASSEMBLY, would he grant it to those subsequent decrees, the impossibility of dispensing with which is universally allowed, when they shall flow from a species of constitution which he will not acknowledge?"

On the sitting of the sixteenth of July, when disputing with M. Mounier on the subject of the influence which he wished to give to the Assembly in the choice of ministers, he placed the Assembly *above* the king, and invested it with sovereign power. "You forget"—said he—"that it is with the SOVEREIGN you are disputing the controul over ministers; you forget, that we, who are the REPRESENTATIVES of the SOVEREIGN, *we, before whom ALL POWERS are suspended and even those of THE CHIEF of the nation, when he does not accord with us, &c.*" Here, then, he would suffer the *authority of the monarch to slumber*. Yet in the address, drawn up by him, on the removal of the troops, he had said—"You have called us together to fix, in concert with you, the constitution."

On the nineteenth of August he complained, that "*The decrees of the fourth had not paid sufficient respect to property*;"—yet he now asked—"in what instance the decrees of the fourth attacked property?"—On the seventh of August he said—"It will be seen whether I am not acquainted with the extent of the royal prerogative; and I defy the most respectable of my colleagues to carry that religious respect which is due to it farther than I." But in September, he maintained, that the decrees of the fourth of August had no need of the royal sanction. These decrees, however, were certainly EXTERNAL ACTS of the Assembly!

rely, in case of any sudden incursion from Paris, or of any sudden attack from the rabble of Versailles, (who were only second to their brethren in the capital in all acts of violence and cruelty) rested in his *Gardes-du-Corps*, a regiment formed upon the same principles with the ancient English life-guards, being composed entirely of gentlemen; upon which account they were particularly detested by the people. He was likewise attended by the national guards of Versailles, who had placed themselves, for that purpose, under the command of count d'Estaing; but their principles were known to be too deeply infected by those of the community to which they belonged, to warrant the smallest confidence being placed in their protection. D'Estaing had received some letters from La Fayette, apprizing him of some approaching danger; which letters the former communicated to the municipality of Versailles, who had likewise been applied to on the same subject by the minister. The municipality, on this occasion, consulted the military committee of the national guard, who demanded a reinforcement of regular troops, in order to protect the town from any sudden violence; and the municipality accordingly consented to the introduction of a single regiment, on condition that the officers and men should take such an oath as should be prescribed to them, and subject themselves to the orders of the committee of the national guards, or, more properly, the town-militia—*Garde-Bourgeoise*. The regiment of Flanders, was, in consequence, sent for from Douay.

The arrival of these troops, though regarded with pleasure by those members of the National Assembly who were of opinion that public tranquillity was essential to the preservation of the freedom of debate, occasioned as great a ferment at Paris and Versailles, as the arrival of a powerful foreign invading army would have done. The usual baggage, stores, and field-pieces of a regiment, were immediately swelled into magazines of warlike stores, and trains of artillery. All the orators of the Palais-Royal were set to work, and seemed inspired with new vigour in their successful efforts to inflame the minds of the people; assuring them, as a matter of fact of which they had direct knowledge, that the king intended to make his escape under the escort of this regiment; and stating, in dreadful colours, the consequences which must necessarily take place from the accomplishment of this design.

In the sitting of the twenty-first of September, the count de Mirabeau maintained—  
 “ That the executive power had a right to augment the military force wherever and  
 “ whenever the urgency of circumstances seemed to require such an augmentation; but  
 “ that he ought immediately to give information of the fact to the legislative body.”  
 He moved, that the minister's letter, and the requisition of the commander of the guards

[people, who called themselves the NATION, and who, at the same instant, hung up an innocent woman, who stood by as a spectator.—*Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, par M. Mounier, p. 1.—Mémoire de M. le Comte de Lally-Tolendal, p. 157.*



of Versailles should be communicated to the National Assembly; but this motion was feebly supported, and finally rejected.

On the twenty-eighth, it was proposed by a member, to declare *that the legislative power was vested in the hands of the nation*; when Mirabeau, finding this abstract proposition opposed by a great number of persons, exclaimed, with his wonted energy—"That all those were traitors to the state who opposed the declaration."—He was answered, however, by Mounier, who observed, that the declaration of rights had already consecrated this important truth, "That the principle of all sovereignty was vested in the nation;" that, in that sense, not only the legislative power belonged to the nation, but all other powers whatever; the nation, being unable to exercise them, was obliged to delegate them all; that, such delegation being made, it became necessary to declare in whose hands they were vested; and that it was evident the legislative power was vested in the representatives of the nation, conjointly with the monarch. A fact so simple and evident, it was natural to suppose, the most ignorant among them must have been aware of; it was received, however, as a *new* observation, or, rather, as a new *discovery*, which, as such, (for as legislators they seem still to have retained that attachment for *novelty* which had ever distinguished them as *Frenchmen*) was permitted to operate in rejection of the proposition of Bouche; but another proposition, almost equally absurd, and tending, in a certain degree, to answer the same purpose, by obscuring a question that could not be rendered too plain, viz. what was the nature and extent of the authority of the crown? was adopted by *acclamation*: it was this—to, declare *that the legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, by whom it is exercised in the manner hereafter specified.*

The election of Mounier to the president's chair afforded another example of the *freedom* which prevailed in the National Assembly; his nomination was represented, by the popular faction, as the work of the *aristocracy*, though most of the clergy and nobility were not present at the time he was chosen. The same manœuvres which had been exerted with success on the election of Thouret, were now renewed to prevent Mounier from accepting the honour conferred on him; and the factious openly boasted that a *glorious fall* was prepared for him; desiring the last president, M. de Clermont-Tonnerre, not to absent himself, for his presence would very soon be requisite, in order to resume the station he had just quitted. But Mounier possessed too much fortitude to be deterred, by the threats of his enemies, from the discharge of his duty; he accordingly took the chair, and, during a most critical period, conducted himself with equal firmness and propriety.

We have already observed, that the partisans and promoters of anarchy experienced the most lively alarms at the arrival of the regiment of Flanders. Every attempt had been made to prejudice the people against the soldiers, and people openly exclaimed, in the streets

streets of Versailles, that it was a disgrace to the inhabitants to permit the introduction of strangers into the town<sup>57</sup>. Paris even thought that she had a right to complain of this augmentation of the military force.

The day, however, on which the troops arrived, passed without any disturbance: the members of the municipality, many of the Gardes-du-Corps, and the officers of the militia of Versailles, went forth to meet them; they took the oath required of them in presence of an immense crowd of people; yet in different parts of the crowd murmurs of discontent were heard to issue from persons, who were, doubtless, posted there for the purpose of exciting a tumult; and the conduct of the municipality was censured in terms of extreme severity.

Those who disapproved of the arrival of this regiment soon adopted the resolution to employ the same means of promoting a spirit of defection among the men, which had been so successfully exerted with many other regiments. In consequence of this *patriotic* determination, numerous detachments of those zealous and indefatigable supporters of Parisian liberty, the women of pleasure, were dispatched to Versailles, in order to make converts, and establish their influence among the new-comers; one of their principal objects being to embroil the private soldiers and their officers, by continually leading the former into those petty neglects of duty, which, though apparently trivial in themselves, are so totally subversive of all military discipline and order, that no relaxation of them can be admitted in any army. Sums of money were also distributed, by persons unknown, among the men<sup>58</sup>, several of whom began to evince symptoms of disaffection, and to wear the three-coloured cockade, which was for them the signal of insubordination and desertion. All good citizens were seriously alarmed at these proceedings; and the Gardes-du-Corps, in particular, entertained the most lively apprehensions.

The following picture of the state of public affairs, at this critical period, is delineated by Rabaud de Saint Etienne. "Paris"—he says—"was a prey to all the miseries of famine, even in the midst of abundance; bread was dear, and of a bad quality; the inhabitants were knocking at the doors of the bakers, in order to obtain relief; it seemed that measures had been taken to exasperate the people against the new popular powers; and persons, evidently paid for creating disturbances, besieged the shops of the bakers, carried away the bread, threw it into the river, and returned for the purpose of renewing this practice. The provinces, affrighted by a circulated whisper of the approaching flight of the king, and of a counter-revolution; and the party which defied it, already vaunted of it loudly, and with that overweening confidence which it hath shewn upon every new conspiracy. At length, the alarmed capital saw no other

<sup>57</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, par Mounier, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> Idem, p. 7.



“ means of terminating its fears, both for France and for the deputies, than by possessing the National Assembly and the king within her walls, where a hundred thousand arms were ready to *defend* them; where six hundred thousand persons were continually on the watch against conspiracies.”

It is almost superfluous to observe, that the assertions and representations of Rabaut, and, especially, his *inferences*, should always be taken with something more than, *sum GRANO salis*: in the perusal of this account—admitting it to be just and true—one question should never be lost sight of—In whose hands was the government of Paris at that time placed? and, as derived from the same, Who were the persons employed to provide the capital with corn? and, if they did not fulfil their duty,—which they certainly did, as to that point—why were they not removed? One fact is notorious, that the king had, at this period, no more real authority over the city of Paris than over the city of Rome. It might have been supposed, that the rabble, in that season of famine, would have been much more profitably employed along the Seine, in angling for the loaves which, Rabaut tells us, were thrown into the river, than in raising useless riots in the streets, and about the bakers' shops. It will be a matter of surprize to some, that of the six hundred thousand pair of jealous and suspicious eyes, which were ever watching conspiracies in Paris, they should all look so directly one way, as never to take a view of the banks of the river, nor of the passages leading thereto; and that neither chance nor fortune should so far befriend them, as to enable them in a single instance to detect any of that atrocious gang of conspirators, who thus wantonly robbed them of the means of subsistence and life.—But it will presently be seen that Rabaut's account is not *strictly* correct.

The Gardes-du-Corps, daily apprized of fresh threats against the safety of the king and the royal family, obliged to pass almost every night in a state of readiness to mount their horses at the first signal, had adopted the gallant resolution of defending them to the last; they were anxious also to secure to the king some farther defence than what could be derived from their own personal exertions, and they relied on the support of the regiment of Flanders. The Gardes-du-Corps were not enemies to liberty, though artfully represented as such by interested and designing men<sup>59</sup>. They had given proofs of their patriotism, on the day when the king delivered to the Assembly his plan of reform; and they spontaneously offered a guard of honour to the Assembly, when they sent their first deputation to Paris. What more particularly inspired them with an ardent desire to give the king fresh proofs of their zeal, was the reproach cast upon them by many persons, of having profited by the circumstances of the times to apply to his majesty for some changes in their discipline. In the hope of attaching the regiment of Flanders and the

<sup>59</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 7.

militia of Versailles to the person of the king<sup>60</sup>, they gave an entertainment, on the first of October, in the opera-house belonging to the palace, to the officers of either corps. Towards the conclusion of the repast, the grenadiers and part of the chasseurs of the regiment of Flanders entered the room. The glass circulated briskly; and the health of the king, the queen, and the royal family, was drunk<sup>61</sup>.

One of the ladies of the court, who, from a neighbouring apartment, had witnessed the gaiety of the scene, conceiving it might amuse the young dauphin, hastened to the queen, and requested permission to take him to the room. The queen, however, appearing to labour under a depression of spirits, was advised by the attendant to accompany the dauphin herself: she hesitated for some time; but the king, just arriving from the chace, and consenting to her proposition of accompanying her, they all repaired to this scene of festivity<sup>62</sup>.

The extravagance of joy, occasioned by the unexpected appearance of these illustrious visitors, in men, who had, already, in a moment of generous enthusiasm, repeated the

<sup>60</sup> In the account of these transactions, I have, chiefly, followed the authority of M. Mounier, who was at that time president of the National Assembly; whose character was ever irreproachable; whose veracity no one has dared to impeach; and whose opportunities of information will scarcely, it is presumed, be called in question. As far, therefore, as his authority goes, either on matters which came within his own personal cognizance, or on those for the truth of which he pledges himself, I conceive it to be irrefragable.

The entertainment given to the military at Versailles, about which so much has been said, is of itself a circumstance so trivial and insignificant, as scarcely to justify historical notice; but the events for which it was made the pretext has rendered it an object of some consequence, and calls for some remarks on the subject.—By some, it has been said, that it was the usual etiquette in the service, for the officers in garrison to entertain the newcomers upon being joined by strangers. On the other hand, Rabaud has positively and unequivocally said, "Certain it is, that this was the first banquet which the king's guards, as a corps, had ever yet given." (*English translation*, p. 121.) And the "*Deux Amis de la Liberté*," (tom. iii. p. 264) also remark, that it was the first entertainment which the king's guards had ever given at Versailles.—To this assertion, however, I am enabled, from my own personal experience, to give the most direct contradiction; having been present at an entertainment given by the Gardes-du-Corps, as a corps, in the very same place, the opera-house of the palace of Versailles, in the year 1782, on the birth of the eldest son of Lewis the Sixteenth. Whether the Gardes-du-Corps were accustomed to give entertainments to regiments newly arrived, I cannot pretend to say; it was seldom that any troops were to be seen at Versailles except those immediately attached to the king; but the abbé Sabatier assures us they were accustomed to give such entertainments in all places where they were quartered; and certain it is, that it was the general etiquette of the army, observed in all garrison towns, for the regiments previously quartered in a place to entertain the newcomers. But whether the motive of the entertainment was a compliance with established custom, or a desire to attach the guests to the king, so as to obtain for him their defence in the hour of danger, is a matter of very little consequence; the object, in either case, was equally innocent and laudable, and the inference which Rabaud, and other writers of the same party, have thought proper to draw from it, is characteristic of the proceedings of a faction, who were accustomed to make every thing bend, as it were, to their own systems, and to sacrifice decency and truth to the accomplishment of their own views, and to the support of their own arguments.

<sup>61</sup> Mounier p. 7, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, tom. iii. p. 265.



most solemn assurances of devotion and fidelity to the person of their sovereign, may be more easily conceived than described. The whole company appeared to be irresistibly impressed with one general sentiment of loyalty; the bands of the different corps, who were stationed in the room, immediately struck up the loyal, and hitherto popular, air, of "*O Richard! O mon Roi! L'Univers t'abandonne!*" which the company"—says Mounier—"parodied, by going up in a body to the king's box, and accompanying him to his apartment."—"All these acts of military enthusiasm"—pursues the same writer—"doubtless proceeded from a desire to convince the king that they would defend him to the utmost, in case he should be attacked; for what probability was there that five hundred life-guards, and a single regiment, could have conceived the mad project of again subjecting us to the yoke of despotism?"

The banquet was continued during the greater part of the night, and ended, of course, in the intoxication of the company. It is said, on one side, that after repeated libations to the royal family, some popular toast, proposed by an officer of the militia of Versailles, was rejected with contempt. The Gardes-du-Corps having never quitted the old white cockade, some of the military present, who had been persuaded to adopt the tri-coloured cockade of the Parisians, now determined to lay it aside; and the ladies of the court supplied them with white ones, as fast as they could make, or procure them to be made. It was added, by the patriotic party—and the assertion had a prodigious effect in inflaming the populace—that the Parisian cockade had been torn, trampled upon, and treated with every mark of contempt which folly or outrage could inspire. But this was one of those numerous calumnies which were now propagated, on every occasion in which the court were any way concerned; the charge being absolutely refuted by the solemn testimony, on oath, of all or most of the officers who were that night present<sup>63</sup>.

The circumstances attending this entertainment excited great murmurs: many persons condemned them as imprudent, and some attached to the conduct of the guests a degree of criminality which certainly did not belong to it. Such, however, as deemed it reprehensible, might have engaged the National Assembly to request the king to issue orders

<sup>63</sup> M. Mounier says—"It is very true, that, in the hope of bringing back the soldiers to their duty, and of preventing them from adopting a colour which served them as a *signal for desertion*, the officers exclaimed—*Vive la Cocade blanche!*—It is well known that white has always been the colour of the French troops. Ribbands and handkerchiefs were converted into cockades; but, *after the most strict investigation, I am enabled to assert, that the Parisian cockade was not trampled upon, as the people have been industriously taught to believe; and that no imprecation whatever was uttered against the National Assembly.* If some individuals had been rash enough for this, it is certain that it would be impossible to ascribe it to the Gardes-du-Corps, since it would not have taken place in a public company, and since many of the persons who were present would never have suffered it, had it been attempted. It is also impossible not to know that this entertainment had not for its object any *anti-civic* design, (if I may be allowed the expression) since the *city-militia* were invited, and a great number of spectators of all ranks were admitted." (p. 9.)

for preventing a renewal of the scene; and that precaution would certainly have sufficed to avert any evil consequences which the most timid or suspicious might have expected it to produce. But the enemies of the public peace wished to make this transaction, innocent in itself, a pretext for the accomplishment of an iniquitous and deep-laid plan.

During the sessions of the first, second, and third of October, no member of the National Assembly said a single word of the entertainment. On the second, Mounier, as president of the Assembly, went to the palace, and presented the declaration of rights, and such articles of the constitution as had been already passed, for the king's sanction; and his majesty told him, that he would communicate his intentions to the National Assembly with all possible expedition.—It is highly important to remark here, that the king's intentions were not known till the Monday following, the fifth of October, about ten in the morning.

Meantime, the rage of the Parisian populace, at the account of this ill-fated banquet, loaded with all the additional circumstances which malice and invention could supply, exceeded all description. They immediately charged the queen with being at the head of a conspiracy for carrying off the king, and exciting a civil war; and they represented this affair at Versailles as the opening of the plot: they said it was too manifest to admit of a question; and the contempt shewn for the national cockade, with the refusal to drink prosperity to the nation, were to be considered as a declaration of war; that it was time to terminate at once all these inquietudes; and that, as some were desirous of carrying off the king to place him at the head of a party, they had no other course to take, than to be beforehand with them, by securing his person in the capital.

The famine which pressed so sorely upon so vast a multitude, would, in itself, independent of all political considerations, have been sufficient to dispose a much more temperate and better conditioned people to outrage and violence; and of this the *Orleans* faction, by whom the plan of that famine appears, beyond all doubt, to have been contrived and executed, were fully aware. It has been pretended by many, that, in the year 1789, a *real* scarcity prevailed at Paris; but the truth is, that under the reign of Lewis the Sixteenth, that is, until the assassination of the provost of the merchants, Paris had been always amply supplied with provisions: the old government might even have been reproached with its predilection and profusion towards the capital, whose inhabitants always had their bread at a much cheaper rate than it was sold at in the provinces, and always at the expence of the royal treasury<sup>64</sup>. The cries of the Parisians were never treated with contempt; and the ministry only turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the

<sup>64</sup> L'Abbé Sabatier.



*provincials*; for the most hungry mouths are not always the most formidable. And since Paris, transformed into a republic, had taken the reins of government into its own hands, there was no kind of mischief or violence which the patriotism of her officers had not exerted—and successfully too—for procuring an ample stock of provisions.

At this epoch, the emigration of those whom the populace termed *aristocrates*, had been so considerable, that the daily consumption of Paris was suddenly reduced to eleven or twelve hundred sacks<sup>65</sup>, and it has since been demonstrated and acknowledged, that the *Halle*—where the corn and flour were sold—was constantly overstocked. This abundance, it was conceived, might prove fatal to the schemes of the Orleans faction; but gold, which is generally used to procure corn, was, in this instance, employed to make it disappear. Although the supply of Paris did not exceed twelve hundred sacks, the bakers daily distributed from eighteen hundred to two thousand five hundred per day<sup>66</sup>. Yet, notwithstanding this excess, their houses were incessantly besieged from morning to night, by the poorer sort of people, who loudly complained of a famine. At the same time, it was no uncommon thing to meet some of the working-people, who had suddenly quitted their usual occupations, exclaiming, “*Why need we work? Our father d’Orleans provides us with food*”<sup>67</sup>. Thus the gold of this prince produced, at his pleasure, two phenomena of a very different nature—want and plenty; but this double means, powerful as it was, was still less effectual than the conduct of certain ruffians, who cut open the sacks, and scattered the flour in the streets. In short, as if these manœuvres were still too tardy in producing the desired effect, the corn was accused of a vice that it did not possess; and, as a punishment for its abundance, which thwarted the projects of the cabal, and tended to silence the murmurs of the populace, a report was industriously spread, that it was of a bad quality. The consequence of such a report, to procure credit to which every art was exerted, was the assemblage of a mob about the *Halle*, who threw two thousand sacks of flour into the Seine. Persons of irreproachable character and undoubted veracity, who tasted the flour, affirmed that it was of the best quality<sup>68</sup>.

At that time there was such a plenty that bread was publicly sold, in the suburb of Saint Anthony, at *two sous*, and even at *one sol* the pound. The municipal officers at the Hotel-de-Ville were apprized of this fact, and, at the same time, received information that money was distributed (on the fourth of October) both in that quarter, and in the suburb of Saint Marcel. The municipality assembled in tumultuous haste, and after deliberating till four in the morning, decreed that a reinforcement of five hundred men should

<sup>65</sup> Journal Politique National des Etats-Generaux et de la Revolution de 1789, tom. ii. p. 206.  
proved by the registers of the Halle of the eighth of October, 1789.

<sup>68</sup> Journal Politique, tom. ii. p. 207.

<sup>66</sup> This is  
<sup>67</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 207.

be stationed at the town-house that day, to prevent a riot; but at seven in the morning, when the town-house was forced and pillaged by the mob, there were not twenty men assembled there; and yet the national guards, dispersed in the streets, were walking peaceably about, with loaves under their arms, and looked with an air of indifference at the crowd, by which the shops of the bakers were besieged<sup>69</sup>.

On the morning of the fifth of October, the king sent his answer to the National Assembly, on the subject of the decrees which their president had, four days before, presented for his acceptance. He gave his assent to the *constitutional* articles, but on the positive condition, from which, he said, he never would depart, that, by the general result of the deliberations of the Assembly, the executive power should have its entire effect in the hands of the monarch. He observed, at the same time, that he had not found all those articles equally perfect; but he had deemed it praise-worthy in him to pay regard to the present wishes of the deputies of the nation, and to the alarming circumstances which invited him, in the most imperious manner, to promote the speedy re-establishment of peace, order, and confidence. He acknowledged, that the declaration of rights contained some excellent maxims, but that, being susceptible of different interpretations, it would be useless to sanction them with his approbation, before the passing of those laws which were to explain their meaning and fix their application.

The king's answer was highly applauded by one part of the Assembly, while by the other it was considered as a just subject for the most violent indignation. His *accession* to the decrees was termed a *refusal*; his observations an offence. *What does the executive power want?*—said the last—*Does it become him to criticise our work? If he must make observations, let him keep them to himself. If our constitution is not perfect, has not he been the cause of its imperfection, by throwing perpetual obstacles in its way?* One deputy observed, that the king had made some regulation for the execution of one of their preceding decrees, and he was very much astonished that any one should presume to make such regulations while the Assembly were at Versailles. Another exclaimed—*What power is above our own?* At first they said, that the Assembly was superior to the legislative power, which was certainly true; the king and the National Assembly forming collectively the legislative power, were doubtless superior to the king, exercising individually the executive power: but this assertion did not content them; they added, that they were superior to the legislative power, because they were a *constituting power*. In short, this intoxication of authority, joined to the knowledge they possessed of their own strength, was carried to such a height that they were enraged that the king's answer was not counter-signed by a minister who would have been responsible for it; and it was on this occasion, that these memorable words were uttered—THE NATION MUST

<sup>69</sup> Journal Politique, tom. ii. p. 208.



HAVE VICTIMS <sup>70</sup>,—words, which, when coupled with succeeding events, cannot fail to excite the most marked reprobation and horror.

In the midst of these discussions, M. Petion mentioned, for the first time, that military banquet, with regard to which a profound silence had been observed during five sessions, and which had been reserved for that day. The same progression, the same rapidity, was remarked in the imputations. At first, it was only stiled *an orgie, perhaps deserving the epithet indecent*; it then became a positive crime against the country, and against the sovereign; and imprecations—it was affirmed—*had been vomited forth against the National Assembly, and against liberty*<sup>71</sup>. A brave officer, (M. Monspey) obedient to the voice of honour, and anxious to avenge a corps in which he had formerly served, moved that the guilty should be punished, and challenged Petion to sign his denunciation, and lay it on the table<sup>72</sup>. This gave rise to a display of the most violent indignation on the democratic side of the house, and brought up Mirabeau, who, with the utmost fury in his looks and manner, exclaimed—“Declare that the king’s person alone is *sacred*, and I will “bring forward the impeachment myself.” When he sat down, he informed the people near him, that the queen, and the duke de Guiches, colonel of the Gardes-du-Corps, were the objects he had in view. Mirabeau, aware of the approach of the Parisian army, only wished to be urged; the mob in the gallery were numerous and violent, and if the queen had been impeached, the Brigands of the capital, finding, on their arrival, that princess accused by a member of the legislative assembly, would have deemed that assassination justifiable in the eye of the law which hitherto they had only been stimulated to commit by the temptation of a bribe<sup>73</sup>. Fortunately, the well-timed exertions of Mounier, as president, who remarked, that he should neither suffer any interruption of the order of the day, nor the introduction of reflections foreign from the point of discussion then before the Assembly, prevented the agitation of a question, which, most probably, would have led to the massacre of the unfortunate queen, and reduced Mirabeau, at least for that morning, to the necessity of being criminal only in intention.

It was during the interval which occurred between the presentation of the constitutional decrees for the acceptance of the king, and the receipt of his majesty’s answer by

<sup>70</sup> Mémoire du Comte de Lally-Tolendal, p. 159, 160.

<sup>71</sup> It is worthy of remark, that the Gardes-du-Corps, at that very entertainment, which was made the pretext for an attempt to exterminate the royal family and themselves, so far from offering an insult to any one, adopted the laudable resolution of maintaining the poor of Versailles for a week. *Journal Politique*, &c. tom. ii. p. 216.

<sup>72</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 11.—Mémoire de M. de Lally-Tolendal, p. 160, 161.—*Journal Politique*, &c. tom. ii. p. 225.

<sup>73</sup> Mirabeau observed the next day, in the *Journal de Provence*, of which he was the author, *that the person of the highest rank in the kingdom, next to the king, had taken unusual familiarities (familiarités peu communes) with the meanest of the soldiers.* *Journal Politique*, tom. ii. p. 226.

the Assembly, that the Orleans faction were so busily employed in the distribution of money, in the creation of want in the midst of abundance, and in every other preparation for exciting an insurrection in the suburbs of the capital, and in all those places where the populace were most accustomed to assemble<sup>74</sup>. The news of the entertainment at Versailles, accompanied by all the embellishments that were necessary to give it effect, was admirably calculated to operate on the minds of a mob thus previously irritated and inflamed. People were heard to exclaim in the street—"What indecent orgies!—The national cockade trodden under foot!—The Assembly cursed and threatened!—Let us hasten to punish this dreadful blasphemy; let us revenge the nation; and bear off the king from the enemies of the country!"—But these cries and murmurs would, probably, have only produced similar symptoms of discontent in those to whom they were addressed, if the Orleans faction had not collected three or four hundred *Poissardes*<sup>75</sup>, and some of the porters who attend the *Halle* dressed like the *Poissardes*, and mingled with a number of strange-looking figures, wearing long beards and pointed caps, and armed with pikes, loaded bludgeons, and other extraordinary weapons;—a species of savage that was now seen for the first time in the capital, and that disappeared immediately after the business for which they had been summoned was terminated<sup>76</sup>. This motley and ferocious groupe soon contrived to augment their numbers, by *pressing* some into their service, and by courting a junction with all the low prostitutes that infested the Rue Saint Honoré, and the suburbs of Saint Anthony and Saint Marcel—the Saint Giles's and Rag-Fair of Paris. In short all the lanes, allies, cellars, and garrets of these celebrated districts are said to have been completely stripped of their *fair* inhabitants.

The circumstance of a great number of men, disguised in women's cloaths, being interspersed in the ranks of this army, must be considered as a kind of concurrent testimony that this scheme was preconcerted, and that the cabal had more prudence than to trust the business entirely to the conduct of these heroines. It is, indeed, said, that several of the militia of Versailles were distinguished among them<sup>77</sup>. Yet this strange assemblage is described by Rabaud as composed of mothers frantic with despair through the dreadful circumstance of not having bread to give to their famished children!

<sup>74</sup> These efforts were strenuously seconded by the republican party, though they acted on very different grounds.

<sup>75</sup> The women who went from Paris to Versailles, on this occasion, have always been distinguished by the appellation of *Poissardes*, which properly applies only to the women who sell fish and fruit in the streets and *Halls* of the capital. But these last, so far from joining the *false Poissardes*, as they have been termed, in the present instance, who endeavoured to force them to accompany them to Versailles, applied to the Corps-de-Garde at the *Pont Saint Eustache* for military assistance to repel these furies; and, after the king's arrival at the Tuilleries, they sent a deputation thither, on the morning of the seventh of October, to present a request to the king and queen, demanding justice on the authors of the horrid calumny which represented them as accomplices in the violence committed on their majesties, the preceding day. *Journal Politique*, &c. tom. ii. p. 219, 220. Note.

<sup>76</sup> *Journal Politique*, tom. ii. p. 219.

<sup>77</sup> *Idem*, *ibid.* p. 220.



Bread was, at first, indeed, the watch-word and the universal cry of these female ruffians; arms were, however, thought necessary, as affording more effectual means for obtaining it, than mere supplication. They accordingly proceeded to the Hotel de Ville, or town-house, which they forced, at seven o'clock in the morning of the fifth of October, and plundered; they gave an early specimen of their courage in passing thither, by making their way boldly through several battalions of Parisian guards, who were drawn up armed in the open space before that building. Having met, on the stairs of the town-house, an unfortunate ecclesiastic, they, as an essay in the business of death, immediately hung him up by the neck. Some of their male followers, whether it was through mercy, or by way of varying the pastime, cut the priest down before he was quite dead, and then so effectually kicked and tossed his carcase about, that, in a short time, he fully recovered his sensibility, and was, most unexpectedly, permitted to get home as he could. After plundering the Hotel de Ville, seizing the magazine of arms, collecting the artillery together, and forcing open the prisons with tumult indescribable, this *hermaphrodite army*—as it has been aptly termed—set out for Versailles, the cannon being dragged behind as a rear-guard. They had been previously joined by a great number of workmen, and had compelled every woman they met, of whatever rank or age, to accompany them. One Maillard, in the proper garb and character of a man, appeared now as their leader; on whom Rabaud bestows high praise for the *discipline, order, and government* which he established among them; as they passed, however, between the Seine and the terrace of the Tuilleries, they overtook a life-guard on horseback, and called out to him—“*As you are going to Versailles, tell the queen that we shall soon be there to cut off her head*”<sup>78</sup>.

A second army of Amazons was preparing to follow the first, who were, with much difficulty, dispersed by La Fayette, the national guards telling their general, that they could not fire upon, nor use any force against, their fellow citizens, who were asking for bread. At the same time, the rage for going to Versailles, which had been industriously fomented among the people, was now become general, and so strongly infected the national troops, that they *commanded* their officers to lead them thither<sup>79</sup>. Upon this occasion some of the grenadiers told La Fayette without reserve, *that understanding the king was an idiot, there was no doubt but matters would go on much better by the appointment of a council of regency*. As this was not only the peculiar language and doctrine of Mirabeau, and of those other leaders of the cabal who were initiated in its most secret mysteries, but as it was publicly known that the establishment of a council of regency was the

<sup>78</sup> Journal Politique, &c. p. 223.

<sup>79</sup> Nothing better could be expected from troops constituted, and so disciplined. We are told that when La Fayette was at the head of these guards, he always *invited* them to turn to the right, and *suppliated* them to turn to the left, &c.—One day, an officer pressing one of the soldiers to quicken his pace, the latter replied—“*Faith, captain, the last shoes you made for me are too tight!*”—In fact, the captain was a shoemaker.—*Journal Politique*, &c. tom. i. p. 158.

most immediate object of their ambition, none could be at a loss to determine from what source the grenadiers had derived this idea.

La Fayette, who seemed astonished at even the idea of offering any violence to the king's person, or imposing any restraint upon his inclination with respect to residence, endeavoured to allay this fermentation, and temporized with the troops as long as possible; but they becoming every instant more outrageous, and, at length, directing their threats against himself, he and his principal officers, under an immediate apprehension for their lives, submitted to comply with the demands of the soldiery; but, in order to give some semblance of legality to his proceedings, which, indeed, stood in great need of justification, he first required and obtained an order from the mayor and council of Paris, by which *he was enjoined, in compliance with the will of the people, to repair to Versailles*<sup>80</sup>. This being done, he began his march from Paris, at the head of an army of eighteen or twenty thousand men, accompanied by its artillery, and with every display of military pomp and parade, about four o'clock in the afternoon<sup>81</sup>.

Rabaud observes—"No pencil can depict the frantic joy of Paris, on beholding her militia march, with the intention of seeking and bringing away the king. The capital was assured that her distress would, at length, be terminated."—But *another* pen has finished the picture by observing, that "No sooner had the Parisians lost sight of the flying colours, and ceased to hear the sound of the drums, than their acclamations were succeeded by a dismal silence, and the loud bursts of joy gave place to a gloomy sorrow"<sup>82</sup>.

While these transactions passed at Paris, the motley troop of Poissardes and their associates, who had left the capital in the morning, continued their march to Versailles, which was marked by such circumstances of outrage, such brutality, such gross obscenity of language, and such horrid and profane curses, oaths, and imprecations, as were without example in any country that had the smallest pretensions to civilization: it is

<sup>80</sup> La Fayette now found the ill effects of his irresolution or misconduct—whichever it was—in not opposing, with the vigour which became his character and station, the assassination of Foulon and Berthier. Had he exerted himself on that occasion with proper energy, he would either have fallen nobly, in the discharge of his duty, or have imposed a perpetual restraint upon the ferocity of the people. As it was, the populace ascribed his forbearance to weakness; and having once imbibed that idea, nothing could prevent them from acting accordingly.

It has been observed, and not unjustly, that it was La Fayette's duty, instead of asking the council for an order to repair to Versailles, to require them to concert measures for dispersing the mob, (by whom he had been first threatened) which might have been easily done, with the assistance of the soldiers, who were then masters of the square in which the town-house is situated; and, if the army had refused to obey him, he would have had an excellent opportunity for resigning the command of that undisciplined militia.

<sup>81</sup> Journal Politique, &c. &c. tom. ii. p. 223.

<sup>82</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, par Deux Amis de la Liberté, tom. iii. p. 305.



said, nor has the fact ever been contradicted, that they actually put to death, by hanging them, two unfortunate persons whom they met on the road, and had afterwards the audacity to boast of the deed. They reached Versailles about half past three in the afternoon.

At that time, the king, who, as we have seen, had given his answer to the constitutional decrees, and to the declaration of rights, in the morning, was peaceably enjoying the diversion of shooting at Meudon, little thinking, that the marquis de la Fayette was in motion with his patriotic army, for the purpose of carrying him off; that the Poissardes and assassins were already at the gates of his palace; and that the National Assembly were employed in searching for faults in his conduct, and in preparing to load him with insults. Such was the situation of that unfortunate prince, that on the same day, and at the same hour, the patriotic army wished to rob him of his liberty; the Poissardes and Brigands to murder his wife; and the National Assembly to despoil him of his crown<sup>83</sup>.

The Assembly were still engaged in the debate on the subject of the king's answer, in the course of which it was observed, that the king had been advised to suspend his adherence to the declaration of rights, as if the rights of man were not anterior to those of monarchs, and independent of thrones; as if *the right of nature*<sup>84</sup> stood in need of the sanction

<sup>83</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 224.

<sup>84</sup> On the perpetual allusion to the rights of nature, at this time so prevalent in the Assembly, and on the illustration of those and other rights, in their celebrated declaration, a contemporary writer has the following observations:—"They considered themselves in their wooden house, as if placed in a second Noah's ark, whence it appeared to them that the earth belonged to the first occupier, and that they were at liberty to parcel it out among a new race of men. They declared, then, in the face of the universe, that *all men are born and remain free; that one man could not be more than another man*; and a hundred other discoveries of the same kind, which they congratulated themselves upon having been the first to reveal to the world; while they laughed, very philosophically, at the English, for not having had the sense to begin in the same manner, with their Revolution of 1688.

"But the joy of our deputies was of short duration. The inhabitants of other countries of Europe soon began to inquire into the nature of this new mode of conducting people by theories and metaphysical abstractions; of despising all the knowledge that results from practice and experience; of confounding man in an absolute savage state, with man in a state of society; and natural independence with civil liberty. To say that *all men are born and remain free*, is to say, in fact, *that they are born and remain naked*. But men are born naked, and live clothed, as they are born independent, and live subject to laws. Cloaths, 'tis true, restrain, in a certain degree, the movements of the body, but they afford it protection from external accidents; so laws restrain the passions, but they defend honour, life, and fortune. Thus, to have rendered themselves intelligible, they should have distinguished between liberty and independence: liberty consists in obeying the laws alone; but in this definition the word *obey* is included, while independence consists in living in the woods, without obeying laws, and without acknowledging any kind of restraint.

"The conduct, of the Assembly was, therefore, deemed alike strange and dangerous, in adopting the code of the savages, and in collecting maxims favourable to egotism, and to all the passions that are hostile to society. The negroes in our colonies, and the servants in our houses, may, with *the declaration of rights* in their hands, expel

sanction of kings: that he had only been led to give his accession to the constitutional articles, that his ministers might censure them under his name: but how, said the members who advanced these arguments, can the constitution be exposed to the refusal of the executive power, and to the censure of its agents? If that power owes its existence to the constitution, what right can it have to refuse the constitution? Let us, at last, since they force us to it, tear off that mysterious veil, which, from respect for royalty, we suffer to conceal the bounds of its authority, and let us no longer suffer our condescendence to be abused for the purpose of violating the first rights of the people! No, we can no longer dissemble as to the nature and extent of those rights; the interest of the country which prescribed it to us as a duty not openly to assert them, would render us criminal in consenting to sacrifice them<sup>85</sup>.

During the debate, some of the members informed the president that a considerable army had just arrived from Paris. This news being circulated in the Assembly, it was moved, that the president should repair to the palace, and entreat the king to give his pure and unconditional acceptance to the declaration of rights, and the constitutional articles. It was now half past three in the afternoon, and the Assembly was on the point of adjourning, when the troop of Brigands and Poissardes arrived at Versailles.

The king, who had been apprized of the tumults in the capital, immediately quitted his diversion, and hastened back to the palace, which he reached about a quarter of an hour before the arrival of the assassins. The duke of Luxembourg, captain of the guards, asked his majesty if he had any orders to give, meaning with regard to the disposal of the troops; but the king replied, with a smile, "What because the *women* are coming; you are joking, surely?"—Meanwhile the formidable phalanx suddenly appeared in the avenue leading to Paris, attended by five pieces of cannon. It was then deemed prudent to send some dragoons to stop them in the avenue, and prevent them from advancing further; but the factious soldiers disobeyed the commands of their officers, and suffered them all to pass.

After they had surmounted this trifling obstacle, the Poissardes presented themselves at the door of the Assembly, and, insisting on being admitted to the bar, attempted to force

"us from our inheritances. How could an assembly of legislators feign an ignorance of this truth, that *the rights of nature* cannot, for a moment exist by the side of *property*? The very day when a man takes possession of a field by the labour he bestows on it, he ceases to be in a state of pure nature; his existence, like that of his neighbours, becomes marked by industry and dependence. But the National Assembly did not chuse to remember that the body politic is an artificial being which is indebted for nothing to nature; or that men are born unequal, and that the law is the art of levelling natural inequalities."—*L'Abbe Sabatier*.

<sup>85</sup> Histoire de la Révolution de 1789, tom. iii. p. 313, 314.—The *patriotic* party here spoke plainly; they proved that, in their conception, the meeting of the States-General had effected a virtual annihilation of the monarchy, a total dissolution of the social compact; that the monarch was reduced to a non-entity, and that he could not re-exist until called into life and action by the creative power of the Assembly!!!



the guard. The president, however, having communicated their wishes to the Assembly, it was resolved, by a majority, that they should be admitted. A great number of them accordingly entered the hall, and placed themselves, without ceremony, on the seats appropriated to the use of the deputies, with whom they mingled. Maillard, and another man, who acted as his adjutant, were at the head of them. The latter told the Assembly, that, "In the morning they had found no bread at the bakers; that, in a fit of despair, he, who had been a soldier in the French guards, was going to ring the alarm-bell; but that he had been apprehended in the attempt, and was about to be hanged, when the ladies who accompanied him saved his life."—He added—"That they had come to Versailles to ask for bread, and, at the same time, to enforce the punishment of the Gardes-du-Corps, who *had insulted the patriotic cockade*; that they were good patriots; that they had forcibly seized all the black cockades which they had seen at Paris and on the road." He then drew one out of his pocket, saying, that he would have the pleasure of tearing it to pieces in presence of the Assembly, which he immediately did. His companion then said—"We will force every body to wear the patriotic cockade." These expressions having excited some murmurs of discontent, the man exclaimed—"Say what you will, we are all brothers." The president replied, that no member of the Assembly was disposed to deny that all men ought to consider themselves as brothers; that the murmurs were only occasioned by his threats to force people to wear the cockade; that he had no right to force any body; and that he ought to speak with respect to the National Assembly.

The orator of the mob next said—"The aristocrates wish to make us perish with hunger: a note for two hundred livres was sent this very day to a miller to engage him to grind no more corn; on which condition he was promised a weekly remittance to the same amount." A general cry of indignation burst from the Assembly, and every part of the hall resounded with the exclamation of "*Name the man!*" The president also desired that he would discover the criminal; assuring him that the most exemplary punishment should be inflicted on him. The two orators, after some hesitation, told the Assembly, that having met some ladies in a carriage, they obliged them to alight; and that, in order to obtain permission to proceed, the ladies had told them that an ecclesiastic had denounced this crime to the National Assembly<sup>86</sup>. "*They say*"—pursued the orators—"that it was the archbishop of Paris." All the members however hastened to inform him that the archbishop of Paris was incapable of such an act of atrocity<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> In fact, one of the ecclesiastical deputies, in the course of his dissertation on the king's answer, had alluded to the circumstance, but without adducing any proof in support of it, and without even mentioning the name of the person accused.—*M. Mounier*.

<sup>87</sup> *M. Mounier* says—"It is difficult to conceive by what means they (the faction) had succeeded in inspiring the people of Paris with such an inveterate hatred of a prelate so virtuous, so great a friend to the poor, and so ready to make any sacrifice in order to promote peace. It is known that he was the man who, to calm the popular effervescence excited against the ecclesiastics, proposed to consent to the suppression of tithes; he afterwards offered the church plate."

The dialogue between the leaders of the mob and the president of the Assembly was interrupted by the cries of the Poissardes, who, standing up on the benches, all cried out, at the same time, for bread for themselves and for the capital. The president told them, that the Assembly saw with concern the famine which afflicted the capital, and which proceeded from the obstacles created for the purpose of preventing the circulation of grain; that it had done every thing in its power to facilitate, by its decrees, the supply of the city of Paris with provisions; that the king had exerted his utmost efforts to enforce the execution of those decrees; that new measures should be devised for putting a stop to the famine, which their stay at Versailles would certainly not do; that they ought to leave the Assembly to discuss, with freedom, those important points, and peaceably to return without committing any act of violence<sup>88</sup>.

This answer was not capable of satisfying them, and M. Mounier would doubtless have made them another, if he had known the true state of affairs in the capital at that time; if he had known that there had always been plenty of flour at Paris, and that the Poissardes had been followed to Versailles by several carts, loaded with *bread, meat, and brandy*<sup>89</sup>. They all exclaimed—"That's not sufficient;" but entered into no farther explanation, and, soon after, joining in the deliberations of the members, they called out to one, "*Speak, then deputy*;" to another, "*Hold your tongue, deputy*;" while their apostrophes were powerfully seconded by occasional reports of cannon in the avenue, and all the members seemed to dread them, except Mirabeau, who having, of course, some particular grounds of security, ventured to address them in a dictatorial and authoritative stile, asking them what right they had to come and impose laws on the National Assembly<sup>90</sup>.

The Poissardes *smiled* at this mode of interrogation adopted by their *friend*; and the Assembly found itself reduced to a situation replete with difficulties and disgrace; it was aware that the majority of its members were in the secret with regard to the army that was about to arrive; some of the deputies had been heard to say—"We must go to Paris, that's the only place in which we shall be able to do any thing;" others were seen to prompt the Poissardes, and suggest motions to them. It was known, also, that three hundred armed Parisians had privately entered Versailles, the evening before; and that, as the Brigands arrived, the inhabitants called out to them from their windows,—"*Welcome, gentlemen, we expected you*"<sup>91</sup>.

The greater the difficulty attending such a situation, the more courage and magnanimity should the National Assembly have displayed. But fear seems to have predominated, and their cowardice had all the effects of perfidy. They confirmed their decree

<sup>88</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, &c. 14.

<sup>89</sup> Journal Politique, &c, tom. ii. p. 229.

<sup>90</sup> Idem, ibid. p. 230.

<sup>91</sup> Idem, ibid. p. 231, 232.



on the nineteen articles of the constitution, and decided, that their president, attended by a deputation, should instantaneously repair to the palace, and summon the king to accept the nineteen articles without delay; and, in order to add absurdity to pride, they ordered the deputed members to exact of his majesty a sudden plenty for the city of Paris; as if the king, by signing that which reduced him to a nullity, and by an extorted acknowledgment that all men were free, could avert the storm that lowered over his head, and supply Paris with provisions. The constitution had nothing to do with the present proceedings; and the National Assembly knew, too well, that, under a pretence of asking for bread, all the capital wished for was the presence of the king<sup>92</sup>.

The Poissardes no sooner saw the president, and the other members of the deputation, leave the hall, than they surrounded them, and expressed their determination to go with them to the palace. Mounier had great difficulty in obtaining, by dint of entreaty, a promise that only six of them would enter the royal apartments: a great number of them, however, attended him as an escort: he thus describes their march from the hall to the palace.

“ We were on foot, in the mud, and it rained very fast. A considerable number of the inhabitants of Versailles lined, on either side, the avenue that leads to the palace. The Parisian women were collected in various groupes, intermingled with a certain number of men, mostly clothed in rags, with ferocious looks, threatening gestures, and shouting, or rather howling, in a most frightful manner. They were armed with guns, old pikes, axes, loaded sticks, and large poles, with the blades of knives or swords fixed to the end. Small detachments of life-guards acted as patrols, and galloped through the streets, amidst the hisses and execrations of the mob<sup>93</sup>. ”

<sup>92</sup> *Journal Politique*, tom. ii. p. 233.—The count de Lally Tolendal tells us, that he overheard a dialogue between Mounier and Mirabeau, in the Assembly, which while it inspired him with the highest esteem for the former, gave him an idea, that a project had been formed for alarming the royal family, and thereby inducing them to fly from Versailles. As the success of such a project would, in the opinion of Lally, have been attended with the most dreadful consequences, he immediately repaired to the palace, and imparted his apprehensions to the king.—*Memoire*, p. 162.

The author of the *Journal Politique* expressed his astonishment that Mounier should have consented to accompany the deputation to the king. In his opinion Mounier should have said to the Assembly—“ Either the army is marching, with your consent, against the king; or else is marching against you and the king too; and, in either case, it is my duty, either to remain in my place, or give in my dismissal.”—There is no doubt, however, but that Mounier was actuated by the best possible motives, and that he entertained strong hopes of being able to avert the impending storm.

<sup>93</sup> During this time, the pieces of cannon which the Poissardes had brought with them were stationed in the avenue leading to Paris, where all passengers were stopped, and this question was put to them “*Etes-vous de la nation?*” if they answered in the affirmative, which, of course, they were compelled to do, they were stationed to guard the guns.

In order to render this picture more clear, it must be observed, that after as many of the Poissardes and Brigands as the hall could contain had entered the Assembly, the remaining, and by much the greatest, part had formed themselves into a column, and marched directly towards the palace; but they were stopped by a line of life-guards, drawn up in front of the first iron gate, and by a body of Swiss guards, stationed in the Place-d'Armes. The order given to these troops was to prevent the entrance of the mob into the palace, but *not to fire*. The populace of Versailles, apprized of this circumstance, joined the Brigands, the workmen of the suburbs of Saint Anthony and Saint Marcel, and all the rabble who were incessantly arriving from Paris; and continued to press more and more upon the avenues of the castle. The Gardes-du-Corps were loaded with threats and invectives, but hitherto the mob had not fired upon them. They were only employed in defending their posts, and in dispersing the too considerable bodies of Brigands that occasionally collected, and threatened to force the entrance into the palace. The militia of Versailles had hitherto remained spectators of the scene, and occupied different posts, particularly on the side of the barracks formerly allotted to the French guards.

“As we advanced”—pursues Mounier—“we were joined by a part of the men who were armed with pikes, axes, and sticks. The strange and numerous retinue by which we were now followed attracted the attention of the Gardes-du-Corps, who, mistaking us all for one of the popular groupes, rode up to us, and dispersed us in the mud; and it will easily be conceived how great was the rage of our companions, who conceived their right to approach the king and queen was sanctioned and confirmed by our presence. We soon rallied, and advanced in this manner towards the palace. We found the Gardes-du-Corps, a detachment of dragoons, the regiment of Flanders, the Invalids, and the militia of Versailles drawn up in the open place before it. These troops knew us, and received us with honour. We passed their lines, and they had great difficulty in preventing the croud that followed us from introducing themselves into the palace. Instead of six women to whom I had promised admission, I was forced to admit *twelve*.”

It was half past five in the evening when the president of the National Assembly, escorted by fifteen deputies and twelve Poissardes, entered the king's apartment, and represented to his majesty the calamities (*fabricated calamities*) which afflicted the capital, beseeching him to procure all the assistance in his power for the distracted city of Paris. The king deplored the misfortunes of the times, and promised to adopt every possible measure for affording the required relief. The anxiety he displayed affected even the Poissardes, one of whom is said to have fainted in his presence.

Having discharged this part of his duty, the president entreated his majesty to fix an hour, in the course of that day, if it were possible, for receiving another deputation; and the



the king mentioned nine at night. While Lewis was engaged in conversation with one of the members of the council, Mounier embraced the opportunity to communicate to his ministers the decree of the Assembly, by which he was instructed to demand a pure and simple acceptation of the constitutional articles, and of the declaration of rights. He represented, that at such a time as the present, which might, every minute, be productive of fresh alarms, they ought to advise the king to avert the confusion that would result from a second deputation; that being charged, as president, to obtain, without delay, his pure and simple acceptation, it would be impossible for him to defer the demand; that all hesitation must be attended with infinite danger; and that the smallest delay would be considered as a refusal, and might re-kindle the rage of the Parisians, to whom it would infallibly be imparted. He told the ministers, that if the king would give the acceptation required, it should be announced to the people as a great benefit, and might possibly allay their fury.

Meanwhile, the Poissardes who had accompanied Mounier to the palace, had returned as soon as they had heard the king's answer, and seemed pleased with the reception they had experienced; but their numerous companions who were waiting for them, received them very ill, threatened them with the *lanthorn*, and compelled them to go back to the palace, for the purpose of obtaining the king's signature to the promise he had given them. They accordingly went thither, and gained admission, when M. de Saint Priest, minister of Paris, endeavoured to soothe them, by explaining to them all the measures which the king had adopted for supplying the capital with provisions; for the king and his ministers were still dupes to the artificial famines of the metropolis<sup>94</sup>.

No words could describe, if the recital of such a description could even be endured, the extravagance of the scenes which the women exhibited at the National Assembly, after the departure of the president for the palace. In proportion as they became intoxicated, which they were by no means slow in doing, they overwhelmed the members with their vociferation and noise, and, at length, they mounted into and took possession of the president's chair. Amidst a thousand confused voices, those were with difficulty distinguished who called for the suppression of the Gardes-du-Corps, the removal of the regiment of Flanders, and the destruction of the parliaments. The Assembly were proceeding to pass a decree, with regard to the free circulation of grain, but the Poissardes reduced them to silence, and insisted on a great reduction of the price of bread,

<sup>94</sup> It was on this occasion that M. de Saint Priest was reported to have said to the Poissardes—"Formerly you had but one king, and then you never wanted bread; now that you have twelve hundred sovereigns, you must apply to them for bread." But when Mirabeau, two days after, denounced the minister, for this speech, to the Assembly, M. de Saint Priest, whether from dread of the consequences, or whether because the fact was really so, denied having uttered it. *Journal Politique*, &c.

meat, and candles<sup>95</sup>. Such was the scene of confusion, and such the society, in which the most awful and momentous business that perhaps was ever transacted by any body of men, the establishment of a new constitution in a vast country, which went to nothing less than to the total annihilation of the old, and of all its appendant rights, laws, and institutions, which had been confirmed by the sanction of untold ages, was completed and promulgated.

But the tumults that by this time prevailed without were attended with more fatal consequences than the confusion which obtained within the Assembly. The Gardes-du-Corps, the Swiss, and the regiment of Flanders had, as we have before observed, been stationed on the upper side of the Place-d'Armes, where they impeded the progress, and sustained the insults and threats of the Poissardes, and their associates disguised in women's apparel, as well as of the crowd of Parisian workmen who kept pushing against the gate of the first court. The Brigands, armed with pikes, and wearing pointed caps, remained behind as a corps-de-reserve; being destined for an *interior* expedition, they had been cautioned not to expose themselves too much on the Place d'Armes.

The good understanding which prevailed between the town-militia of Versailles and the Brigands, as well as the little reliance to be placed on the soldiers of the regiment of Flanders, soon became evident. It was about six o'clock in the evening, when one of the soldiers of the Paris militia, who had accompanied the Poissardes, endeavoured to break the line of the Gardes-du-Corps, in order to penetrate into the first court. The guards, that they might not be reduced to the necessity of killing him, suffered him to pierce their ranks, well knowing that the gate leading into the court was shut. When he arrived, however, at the gate, he attempted to kill the Swiss centinel, by thrusting his sabre between the bars, because he refused to admit him. The marquis de Savonnières, sub-lieutenant of the Gardes-du-Corps, then rode up to him, and complained of this act of violence; when the soldier struck at him with his sabre, and cut his horses' crupper through. M. de Savonnières returned this unprovoked attack by a few blows *with the flat part of his sabre*; on receiving which the soldier fell, *pretending to be wounded*. A centinel belonging to the *city-militia* of Versailles immediately discharged his piece at the marquis, and broke his arm<sup>96</sup>.

This was the signal of the massacre. The marquis de Savonnières rode into the middle

<sup>95</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 241.—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 21.

<sup>96</sup> Journal Politique, tom. ii. p. 245.—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, par Mounier, p. 17, 18.—The truth of this account of the commencement of hostilities, given by M. Mounier, cannot be called in question. It is almost needless to observe, that a very different account of the same insurrection is given by those shameful promulgators of falsehood, *Les Deux Amis de la Liberté*, and repeated, on their authority, by the authors of the English history of the Revolution.



of his squadron, which, faithful to the orders of their sovereign, preserved their ranks, and never attempted to revenge their wounded companion. A considerable discharge of musquetry was the reward of their moderation; some of the Gardes-du-Corps, and many of their horses, were severely wounded; while the Poissards and Brigands shouted with joy. At the same time, the militia of Versailles, not satisfied with their first cowardly act of unprovoked and unreturned outrage, were seen to point against the Gardes-du-Corps the cannon that were placed before the barracks of the old French guards. The king, apprized of the perilous situation of his brave and faithful defenders, sent them orders to retire to their hotel, in the hope that their retreat might tend to calm the fury of the mob; but the militia of Versailles, encouraged doubtless by the non-resistance they experienced, were dastardly enough to renew their attack, and to pour in their fire at the extremity of the column; many of the Gardes-du-Corps were wounded, and platoons of militia followed them to their stables, continuing to fire all the way<sup>97</sup>. Guns were fired from every street, and the balls whistled on every side: but, nevertheless, the Gardes-du-Corps, several of whom died of their wounds, retired in good order, without ever returning the attack of their cowardly foes.

The king's *mistaken* humanity; his extreme aversion from the effusion of human blood, proved on this, as on too many other occasions, the source of infinite calamities. The order, so frequently repeated, in the course of this disastrous day, to the Gardes-du-Corps, not to fire upon the citizens, and to suffer themselves to be massacred without resistance, is equally calculated to excite astonishment and concern. What! were Poissards and Brigands, extracted from the dregs of the capital, to be considered as *citizens* who ought to be spared, as subjects who deserved all the tenderness of the king whom they came to murder? While six hundred gallant gentlemen, of unspotted honour, and ready to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of that king, were to be regarded as so many automaton whose valour was to be restrained, or whose heads were to be devoted to a shameful and certain death! On an occasion like this, it was the duty of the ministers to restrain the humanity of their sovereign, rather than the courage of his defenders!—The prohibition to fire was, in effect, both inhuman and impolitic<sup>98</sup>. A word would

<sup>97</sup> Journal Politique, tom. II. p. 246.—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> The ministers could not be ignorant, that, for some days past, the Gardes-du-Corps had been rendered objects of public hatred; that their destruction had been sworn; and that they were about to be given up to the rage of their enemies.—Why did not the ministers make a direct application, in their official capacity, to the National Assembly, and urge them to decide whether the mob or the militia of Paris had a right to go to Versailles, and with arms in their hands, dictate laws to their monarch?—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 20.

The following curious fact will tend to demonstrate, in some degree, the project that had been formed for assassinating the Gardes-du-Corps. It had always been usual with that corps to keep a gunsmith of their own, who resided in their hotel, and to whom those gentlemen, every Sunday, on quitting guard, sent their arms, which it was his duty to examine, to put in order, and to re-deliver, *charged*, to their respective owners. This man supplied them with powder and ball. In the night of the sixth, some of the guards, on their arrival at Rambouillet,

would have sufficed: and the six hundred Gardes-du-Corps would have driven back to Paris the whole troop of Brigands, without having recourse to the Swiss or the regiment of Flanders, and in spite of the militia of Versailles. But, in the course of this Revolution, and particularly of this day, no one of the ministers had the courage to advise the adoption of decisive measures: they were afraid, by allowing the guards to stand in their own defence, of irritating the militia of Versailles; they were afraid, too, of exposing the king to greater danger; in short, fear seems to have presided at their councils, and to have marked all their proceedings. If one of them proposed an act of cowardice, a second adopted it with all the avidity of terror, and a third, obedient to the same impulse, recommended it to the king. The most vigorous project on which they ventured to decide was the flight of the royal family; but the king refused to fly; it was then proposed, at least, to remove the queen and the dauphin to some place of greater safety than the present; but the carriages were stopped by the inhabitants of Versailles, who cut the traces, broke the wheels, and exclaimed that the king was going to fly to Metz. This obstacle however it would have been easy to remedy, by providing carriages that were nearer at hand, and concealing them from the people<sup>99</sup>, but the queen, as soon as she heard of the design, put an end to all farther thought of it, by nobly refusing to abandon her husband, declaring, with a magnanimity worthy the daughter of Maria Theresa, that, "She would stay and die at the king's feet."

It has already been observed, that, about seven o'clock, the king hearing the discharge of musquetry, and sensible of the perilous situation of his guards, had ordered them to retire. At half past eight, receiving certain information that the Parisian army was on its march to Versailles, he deemed it necessary to order the Gardes-du-Corps to resume their station near the palace; but a part only received the order, and formed in the Cour Royale. The rest, who were not apprized of his majesty's wishes till a later hour, repaired to the appointed place in small divisions; they were fired at in all the streets through which they passed, and wherever they shewed themselves, they were pursued like wild beasts. Many of them were killed and wounded on this occasion<sup>100</sup>: they were no sooner drawn up before the gate of the Cour Royale, then the king, ever irresolute, and ever unfortunate

wished to discharge their pieces, when they found that the touch-holes of some of them were stopped up by shot having been poured into the barrels before the powder; others had chewed paper rammed down them; and, on examining the cartridges they had received as well for their fusils as for their pistols, they plainly perceived, that it had been determined to render them useless, as the balls were invariably too large for the barrels. Thus the assassins ran no risk, even if an order had not been obtained from the king, which prevented the guards from firing upon them.—*Journal Politique*, &c. tom. iii. p. 91.

<sup>99</sup> *Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection*, p. 18.—Some well-informed persons have pretended, that if the queen had attempted to make her escape, she would certainly have been intercepted by the assassins that were posted for that purpose in all the roads leading to the palace.—*Journal Politique*, tom. ii. p. 251.

<sup>100</sup> *Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection*, p. 19.



in his resolutions, sent them orders to fall back upon the terrace of the orangery; so that, now, the palace they came to defend served as a defence to themselves, by separating them from the Brigands of Paris and the citizens of Versailles. A short time after the king sent them off to Rambouillet, under the conduct of the duke de Guiche, in order to screen them from the rage of the Paris militia, who were coming to massacre them. All that remained at Versailles was the *Garde de Service*; and it was the gentlemen composing that guard who sustained the rage of the rabble on the succeeding days.

Between nine and ten o'clock an aid de camp arrived at Versailles, and announced the approach of La Fayette, at the head of the Paris militia. The uneasiness and commotion in which the ministers were involved, were considerably increased by the reception of this intelligence. They knew that La Fayette had marched, by order of the populace, and that of course he must do whatever that populace wished him to do. The court were far from participating in the happy confidence of a general who was subject to the orders of his men. They knew not what resolution to adopt; their deliberations were marked by indecision, and fear gave counsel to fear. After so many false calculations, and retrograde motions; after so many amnesties, or, to speak more properly, so much encouragement given to revolts of every kind; after the resignation of his prerogative, and the sacrifice of his amusements, the king was at length reduced to tremble for the lives of all that were dear to him, and he had nothing but his terror to oppose to the impending danger.

It is certain that the march of the Parisians to Versailles might have been prevented with great facility; and, as Mounier justly observes, the ministers ought to have foreseen, that men of that description had not been sent to ask for bread, and that they had not come from Paris with the intention of passing a few hours peaceably at Versailles. Every precaution for resisting them ought therefore to have been adopted. Lewis the Fourteenth, in the midst of all his magnificence, had left a paltry wooden bridge over the Seine at Séve, in order, as was supposed, that in any critical conjuncture, that communication between the residence of the sovereign and a turbulent and dangerous capital might be cut off in an instant. But in vain had this bridge been suffered, for a century, to shock the sight both of natives and foreigners who went to view the magnificent beauties of Versailles; now that the moment was come, the members either forgot, or were afraid, to make use of a precaution which fear had imposed on luxury and despotism: an opposition to its own measures, is, in fact, one of the leading characteristics of fear. It is true, the rabble might have marched to Versailles, without crossing the bridge, through the plains of Grenelle, but still, if the bridge had been destroyed, their progress would have been considerably retarded, and the means of opposing them as considerably facilitated. Courts have been invariably represented as the center of dissimulation, Policy, and Machiavelism! But certainly the court of France was intitled to no such *distinction*, at this period; on the contrary it displayed a depth of imbecility, a want of foresight, and a degree

gree of inanity, which were the more extraordinary as the men who figured most in the Revolution, were below mediocrity. "I fear not to assert"—says a contemporary writer—"that, in this boasted Revolution, prince of the blood, military, deputy, philosopher, people, all were pitiful, even the assassins." Such is the difference between corruption and barbarism: the one is more fertile in vice, the other in crimes: corruption so far enervates men, that it is frequently reduced to implore the aid of barbarism for the accomplishment of its designs: La Fayette and all the Parisian heroes had much less reason to congratulate themselves with having served the people, than with having escaped from their fury. The most celebrated members of the faction, such as Chapelier and Mirabeau, entered the States-General, extremely weakened by public contempt, and had just grounds for apprehending that the king would acquire honour to himself by inflicting on them the chastisement they deserved. The philosophers of the Palais-Royal were indeed malefactors, but the hired assassins were *reasoners*, who *distinguished* between the king and the queen.<sup>1</sup>

It was about ten at night, when the king, who must have been sensible that his life was in danger, yielded to the entreaties of Mounier, and signed his pure and simple acceptance of the declaration of rights, and of the constitutional articles which had been presented for his sanction.<sup>2</sup> The deputation immediately returned to the Assembly, when the president was extremely surprized to find that almost all the members had left the hall, which was occupied by a motley and ferocious band of drunken women, and profligate ruffians. He requested the municipal officers of Versailles to call together, by beat of drum, all the deputies that could be found; and while this was doing he announced

<sup>1</sup> On the day of the expedition to Versailles, four assassins, disguised like women, went to a tavern at Séve, and as they were drinking their glass, one of them said to his companions, "Faith, I cannot prevail upon myself to kill him, that would not be just; but as for *us*, most willingly." The one that was sitting next to him replied, "Let them escape that can; we must see what is to be done when we are there." The man who overheard this, repeated it at Paris, but in vain, the committee of researches were too busily occupied in investigating the new-invented crimes of *l'Assemblée nationale*, to attend to such trifling circumstances. *Journal Politique*, &c. tom. 2. p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Lally, who was at the palace at the time the king delivered his acceptance to the president, tells us that a person, who was a stranger to him, went up to him, and said, "You are like those usurpers who promote or select times of trouble for enforcing the reception of their laws under the influence of terror." M. de Lally started, "It is not I"—pursued the stranger—"who say this, I do but repeat verbatim the saying of one of our masters." *The time chosen for an institution is one of the most certain characteristics by which the work of the legislator may be distinguished from that of the tyrant.* The count observed that the king had only extended to the declaration of rights the accession which he had given in the morning to the constitutional articles, and for which application had been made to him several days before. "True"—replied the other—"on the first of October you placed him between the acceptance of your articles and a national bankruptcy." M. de Lally confessed, that he felt too sensibly the justice of the reproach to continue the conversation. *Mémoire de M. Le Comte de Lally-Tollendal*, p. 162, 163.



to the people in the hall, the king's acceptation, which he held in his hand. The mob seemed pleased, and pressed round him in order to obtain copies of it: but so little were they aware of the nature and consequence of this acceptation, that numbers of them asked if it would be very advantageous; while others exclaimed, "*Will that give bread to the poor people of Paris?*"<sup>3</sup> They soon after complained of being hungry, declaring that they had eaten nothing the whole day. M. Mounier was at a loss how to fill so many mouths, without bread and without a miracle, at that late hour of the night; he did not know that the duke of Orleans was a true providence to the Brigands: and he was, therefore, not a little surprized to see meat, wine, and liquors brought in of a sudden at every door of the hall; while the deputies of the nation assisted at the banquet of the PEOPLE-KING.

Between eleven and twelve, an officer of the Paris militia entered the Assembly, and informed the president, that M. La Fayette was at a small distance from Versailles. M. Mounier requested M. Gouvi d'Arcy, one of the members, to go and meet the general, and inform him of the king's acceptation, and request at the same time that he would communicate it to his troops. In the interval that occurred between the arrival of the aid-de-camp and that of the general, the women who surrounded his chair entered into conversation with the president; many of them expressed their regret at his having defended that *naughty veto* (*ce vilain veto*) and admonished him to *beware of the lanthorn*.

La Fayette, aware of the evil intentions of his army, had contrived to exact an oath, (probably from the officers only, who answered for the men) that they would respect the National Assembly and the law, in defiance of which they had marched, and obey the king, whom they came to force from his blood-stained mansion. That general becomes an object of pity, who places himself between stupidity and perfidy, and who cannot obtain indulgence without forfeiting esteem. In fact, if the marquis de la Fayette had not had certain *natural* claims to indulgence, he should have been asked why he did not make his army swear to drive away the Brigands and Poissardes, and to clear the residence of his sovereign and the seat of the National Assembly of the ferocious bands of thieves and ruffians by which they were infested? It was indeed the duty of the Assembly itself, to have declared that general an enemy to his country, who had the presumption to march against the king and the representatives of the people. But it was destined, that rebellion should have its full scope on this disgraceful day, and that the spirit of revolt should meet with no check from the adoption of resolute and decisive measures either by the court or the National Assembly.

It was near midnight when La Fayette entered the hall, and assured the president, that the oaths of fidelity and obedience he had exacted from his troops, who had also sworn

<sup>3</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière Insurrection, p. 21,

neither to commit nor to suffer the commission of any act of violence, were sufficient to remove all the apprehensions which their arrival might tend to excite. M. Mounier very properly, asked him, what was the object of such a visit, and what were the intentions of his army? La Fayette replied, that whatever had been the motives which had induced them to march to Versailles, since they had promised to obey the king and the National Assembly, they would not seek to impose any law; that, nevertheless, in order to calm in some degree the discontent of the people, it would probably be of use to remove the regiment of Flanders, and to make the king say a few words in favour of the *patriotic cockade*<sup>4</sup>!!! To the eternal disgrace of the Assembly they suffered this language to pass not only without displaying any mark of indignation, but without even daring to make the smallest comment thereon. The thundering eloquence of Mirabeau, which had been successfully exerted in reprobating the collection of the troops under Broglie, was not heard on this memorable night, when it had a scope for display so much more ample; all the popular leaders were silent, while a band of *civic ruffians* were advancing to besiege their own hall, and the palace of their sovereign; and this circumstance alone, when contrasted with their conduct on a similar occasion, referred to above, suffices to prove that they were either the actual accomplices of the insurgents, or else hoped to profit by the insurrection, in order to accomplish their own views.

La Fayette, on leaving the Assembly, rejoined his army, which he stationed on the Place d'Armes, at the entrance of the avenues, in the streets, and in short wherever they chose to remain; he then went to the palace, and told the king that he had rather chosen to come and throw himself at his majesty's feet (*attended by twenty thousand men*) than to perish on the Place de Grève. He added, that in other respects Paris was tranquil enough<sup>5</sup>. After this declaration he had a private conference with the king, to whom he assigned so many motives for security, that the president of the National Assembly, attended by several of the members, having, in compliance with the request of his majesty, repaired to the palace, the king said to him—"It was my wish to be surrounded by the representatives of the nation, and to profit by their advice, at the time I was to receive M. de la Fayette; but he has arrived before you, and I have now nothing to say to you, except that it was never my intention to quit the palace, and that I will never separate myself from the National Assembly<sup>6</sup>."

The president and the members returned to the hall about midnight, and continued the business of the Assembly, amidst the populace by whom they were surrounded. As

<sup>4</sup> Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 24, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> The king here alluded to the report that had been industriously circulated, in the course of the evening, that he meant to fly to Metz. Mounier,



they were in fact only waiting for the event, in order to gain time, they entered into a discussion upon the criminal laws. The people however interrupted them every moment, with the cry of "*Bread, bread! not so many long speeches!*" Not that there was a scarcity of bread; for, the moment the troops arrived, they were received with shouts of joy by the Brigands and the militia of Versailles; and immediately joined the dragoons, and that regiment of Flanders which had been the object of so much alarm, and the pretext of this very insurrection. As the night was cold and rainy, the *allied* troops took shelter in the public-houses, stables, coffee-houses, and under the gate-ways, and in the courts of the houses. An immense supply of bread and meat was distributed among them, together with a superabundance of the strongest liquors<sup>7</sup>. La Fayette, who was a witness to the plenty and conviviality which prevailed in his army, far from apprehending any evil consequences from that circumstance, conceived it to be an infallible symptom of their peaceable disposition. Satisfied with the precautions he had taken, to place a few centinels, and to garrison certain posts with his Parisian guards, he went to the king, to whom he communicated the contagion of security. He made himself responsible for the good intentions of the militia, and for the maintenance of order during the remainder of the night. His assurances were so strong as to quiet every apprehension; and, at two in the morning, his majesty was prevailed on to retire to rest. When La Fayette left the king, he said to the crowd who were waiting in the anti-chamber—"I have made him submit to some sacrifices, in order to save him<sup>8</sup>." He, at the same time, mentioned the precautions he had taken, and expressed himself with so much tranquillity and content, that he succeeded in inspiring all those who heard him with the desire of going to bed. Proud of his success, he next conceived the idea of sending the whole National Assembly to bed; he, accordingly, repaired to their hall, and administered to the president the same potent soporifics<sup>9</sup> which he had, so successfully, employed at the palace. But M. Mounier, though overcome with fatigue, having kept his post for eighteen hours, told the marquis, that if he entertained the smallest apprehensions of a tumult, he had but to speak, and he would retain the members in their places till day. La Fayette, however, replied, that he was so certain of the good disposition of the soldiery, and so thoroughly convinced that no interruption of the general tranquillity could possibly occur, that he should himself retire to rest. The Assembly was then adjourned, and all the members retired<sup>10</sup>, except Barnave, Mirabeau, Petion, and some other of the zealous demagogues, who would not quit the crowd that filled the hall and

<sup>7</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 263.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, ibid. p. 264.

<sup>9</sup> La Fayette acquired, on this occasion, the appellation of *General Morphew*.

<sup>10</sup> Mounier, on his return home, found that a score of ruffians had been enquiring after him, and had told the porter, that if they could not have his head then, they should know where to meet with him. He was also informed, that a number of the inhabitants of Versailles had assembled under his window, at the close of day, and said to the men of the suburbs of Saint Marcel and Saint Anthony—"Enter this house, an aristocrate lives here, whose head you must cut off."—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 25. note 2.

all the adjoining apartments. Alone they resisted the soporifics of La Fayette, and refused, like another Ulysses, to sleep on the edge of a rock. They watched all night over *the vessel of the state*; but, as they did not prevent the crimes of the morning, but, on the contrary remained passive spectators thereof, history must condemn their presence at least as much as the absence of their fellow members.

The conduct of La Fayette, on this occasion, is highly extraordinary, and indeed seems to have been the effect of infatuation. He well knew the cruel and bloody disposition of that numerous crew of male and female ruffians, who filled and surrounded the whole city and its environs; and if he thought at all, he could not but expect, knowing so well as he did the motives and objects of their coming, that they would take some fatal advantage of his going to rest. Nor were the National Assembly at all excusable in pursuing his advice, knowing on what feeble grounds it was founded; and as they had so lately made no difficulty in sitting up and watching a night for their own protection, they should not have hesitated in paying a similar attention to the safety of their sovereign at a moment of such imminent danger, when his life, and the lives of his whole family, were evidently at stake. In short, had La Fayette been an actual accomplice of the Brigands, he could not have served their purpose more effectually than he did; so true it is, that in situations of importance, a weak head has often all the effects of a bad heart!

Amidst such perfidiousness of every kind; on that theatre, where fear and cowardice led weakness to its ruin, one illustrious character displayed that dignity and resolution, which became her birth and station. Surrounded by men, who were involved in consternation and alarm, the queen preserved a countenance on which the tranquillity of unshaken firmness was strongly marked; nor did the errors and confusion of her courtiers and attendants prevent her from betraying an extraordinary presence of mind. During the evening of the fifth of October, she was seen to receive a number of persons in her great cabinet, to all of whom she spoke with dignity and force, communicating her assurance to those who were unable to conceal their alarms from her. "*I know*"—said she—"that they are come from Paris to ask for my head: but I have learned from my mother not to fear death, and I shall meet it with firmness". An officer of the Gardes-du-Corps, speaking, with great severity, and unguarded warmth, of this new attempt of the factious and ill-disposed, and of the transactions of the day, the queen turned the conversation, but without appearing to intend it. A moment after, she turned to one of the deputies of the noblesse of Burgundy, and said to him, in a low voice,—"*I changed the conversation, because I perceived a valet-de-chambre of the duke of Orleans in the room: how he came there I don't know.*"—Notwithstanding the horrors of her si-

<sup>21</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 265.



tuation, the hearing her life repeatedly threatened, and her blood howled for, such were her coolness and intrepidity, that she retired to rest at two o'clock, and slept soundly. We shall presently see her, in the hour of danger, display the magnanimity of her mother; and if, with the same courage, she had not the same success, the reason is, that Maria Theresa had to deal with the nobility of Hungary, and the queen of France with the *Bourgeoisie* of Paris.

From three in the morning till half past five, nothing transpired, and every thing seemed buried in the gloomy horror of the night. But yet the observation of men who had leisure and coolness to reflect amidst the confusion of this extraordinary scene could scarcely fail to be attracted, by the situation of the royal family, lulled into the most profound security, and sleeping, without defence, in the midst of a horde of assassins, reinforced with twenty thousand troops, and that, on the word of a general, who himself acknowledged, that he had only been induced to head, or rather follow, his army, through the fear of being hanged on the Place de Grève! This was, probably, the first time that such great fear inspired such great confidence!

There were, however, some persons, during this night, who did not partake of this security, and whom a spirit of precaution prevented from sleeping. One, in particular, impelled by a secret inquietude, left his house, and walked towards the palace. This gentleman, whose veracity cannot be questioned, saw that the posts were occupied by the ancient French guards and the militia of Versailles, but that there was not one sentinel more than usual. He only found, near the marble-court, a little hump-backed man on horseback, who said he was stationed there by the marquis de la Fayette, and who, when the gentleman expressed his fears with regard to the Brigands, added, "that he was responsible for every thing; and that the men with the pikes and pointed caps knew him well." "But"—pursued the gentleman—"since your general is gone to bed, and the palace is left in a defenceless state, what could you do in case the national guards were wanted?"—The other replied—"There can be no danger till morning." This observation filled the gentleman with alarm, but he could find no one to whom he could impart his apprehensions. He traversed the Place d'Armes, the avenue of Paris, and the environs of the National Assembly. He saw large fires blazing, at short distances from each other, surrounded by groupes of Brigands and Poissardes, who were employed in eating and drinking. The hall of the Assembly was crowded with men and women, among whom were to be descried certain members of the popular party. The Paris militia were dispersed in every quarter of the town; and all the stables and publick-houses of every denomination overflowed with them. Such was the situation of Versailles from three in the morning until break of day.

Quid moror? irrumpunt thalamo; comes additur una  
Hortator scelerum AURELIDES.

About

About six o'clock, the different groupes united, and, after a short time employed in previous arrangements, rushed impetuously forward, in a body, towards the hotel of the Gardes-du-Corps, shouting and exclaiming, "*Kill the Gardes-du-Corps! No quarter!*" The hotel was forced in an instant; several of the guards were massacred; the rest, endeavouring to escape, were pursued like wild beasts; fifteen of them were seized and conveyed to the iron-gate of the court before the palace, where part of them were instantly murdered, and the rest only reserved until the ruffians, who were debating on the subject, could agree as to the manner in which they should be put to death. Before this point was settled, the grand body of the Brigands and Poissardes, having completely pillaged the hotel, joined their associates at the iron-gate. They now forced an entrance into all the courts, in presence of the Paris militia, and, wholly unresisted by the centinels stationed by La Fayette, penetrated, some of them by the great stair-case, and others by the side-towards the chapel, into the interior apartments of the palace, and broke open that which was appropriated to the *Cent-Suisses*. They had previously murdered two of the life-guards, Messieurs de Huttes and Varicourt, one of whom was posted at the iron-gate, and the other under the arch-way. Their palpitating bodies were dragged under the windows of the king's apartment, where their heads were cut off by a monster, armed with an axe, and wearing a long beard, and a pointed cap of extraordinary height. This self-constituted executioner, whose name was Nicolas, had taken up the business from liking, and, from the beginning of the troubles, had gloried in mangling and beheading all the suspected royalists that were put into his hands.—It was the heads of these two gentlemen that were afterwards displayed in the streets of Versailles, carried in triumph before the royal carriages, and exhibited to the savage inhabitants of the metropolis.

After the assassins had forced their way into the apartment of the *Cent-Suisses*, and killed a third Garde-du-Corps, at the top of the marble staircase, they called aloud for the head of the queen; the whole palace resounded with the horrid threats and ferocious shouts of this execrable banditti; the Gardes-du-Corps formed a kind of barricade in their own apartment, and fell back towards the antichamber, called the *Oeil de Bœuf*; but their barricade was soon broken down, and they were pursued from room to room. The centinel, M. DE MIOMANDRE, who was stationed at the outward door of the queen's apartments, defended the entrance, with most heroic valour, until he had effectually given the alarm to those within; when he found himself entirely overpowered, he called out, with a loud voice, "Save the queen, her life is aimed at! I stand alone against *two thousand tigers!*" He soon after sunk down covered with wounds, and was left for dead; but recovering the use of his senses he had the good fortune to creep away unobserved through the crowd; and it will afford pleasure to all virtuous minds to know that he was afterwards cured of his wounds.—Brave and generous soldier! who, amidst the growing baseness and defection, preservedst untainted thy honour and fidelity; with grateful pride



pride does history consecrate thy name, and hold thee forth as a model and example to succeeding times, if any such should unhappily occur, when similar circumstances shall call for similar exertions!—The unhappy queen, awakened by the efforts of her gallant protector, flew, in her shift, through a long balcony placed before the windows of the interior apartments, till she came to a private door that opened into the *Oeil de Bœuf*; after waiting five minutes, in a state too horrid to admit of description, she obtained admittance, and ran to the king's apartment. She had no sooner left her own chamber, than it was entered by a band of assassins (two of whom were men disguised in women's cloaths) who, advancing to the side of her bed, drew aside the curtains with their pikes<sup>11</sup>. Rendered furious by the loss of their victim, they hastened back into the gallery, with the intention of forcing an entrance into the king's apartments, when there ~~was~~ little doubt but that the views of the Orleans' faction would have been effectually accomplished, by the murder of the royal family<sup>12</sup>.

The king, awakened by the noise, had fled through a private passage to the queen's apartment, in order to save her life, or to perish along with her. He was met by some of his guards, who escorted him back to his own chamber, where the queen was already arrived, and the children were brought soon after. The guards were in the mean time hunted from place to place, through all the purlieus of the palace, much in the same

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Priestly, in his "Letters to Mr. Burke," has inserted the following note—"I am informed by a gentleman who was at Paris during the whole of these transactions, that there is no truth at all in what Mr. Burke says of the queen's bed-chamber being broke into, or the sentinel killed. Nothing of the kind, he says, was ever heard of till a considerable time after the event, and the report arose from the aristocrats."—If doctor Priestly was in the habit of trusting to such vague information as he seems, in this instance, to have received from his friend at Paris, the frequent errors and misrepresentations which occur in many of his works are easily to be accounted for. His friend must certainly have taken a long nap in a conventicle, or else his auricular nerves must have been so tickled with the delightful sound of "*Tous les Evêques à la Lanterne*," as to have been rendered incapable of receiving any other impression; for the circumstances of an attempt to assassinate the sentinel, and the breaking into the queen's bed-chamber were notorious, at the time, both at Paris and Versailles.—M. Mounier, who retired into Dauphiny, on the tenth of October, only four days after the tumult, takes particular notice of them as facts coming with his own cognizance; M. de Lally-Tolendal, who left Versailles about the same time, also speaks of them in the same manner: and the testimony of these gentlemen, who were themselves principal actors in the scenes they relate, cannot surely be suspected. Besides the facts are fully corroborated by the depositions taken before the *Châtelet*. 'Tis true, that the sentinel was not killed; nor does Mr. Burke positively say that he was: his words are "Instantly he was cut down," which was really true. But it is equally true, that the assassins left him for dead; and Mounier, as well as all those who left Versailles soon after the affair, believed him to have been killed.

Had doctor Priestly possessed the smallest inclination to investigate the truth of the matter in question, he might surely have accomplished his wish, since his publication did not appear till 1791, and both Mounier and Lally had published their accounts of the business in the year 1789. But so that he could induce his readers to question the veracity of his opponent, and impress a belief that the horrid enormities committed in France had been grossly exaggerated, his purpose was answered.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal Politique*, &c. tom. ii. p. 270, 271, 272.—*Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection*, p. 25, 26, 27.

manner as the Hugonots had been after the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. A considerable party of those who had been on duty in the interior part of the palace, had only time to barricade themselves in the rooms adjoining the king's apartment, and being there compleatly enclosed, the ruffians who had been to the queen's chamber, having joined their associates, were in the act of forcing open the doors. At this critical moment, La Fayette and his officers fortunately appeared, and prevented the accomplishment of their diabolical project. That general, awakened by the tumult, had started from his bed, and mounting his horse, rode towards the palace. Deeply affected by the fatal consequences of his credulity and misconduct, he addressed, with impassioned energy, the grenadiers of the French guards incorporated in the Paris militia; represented to them, in strong terms, the danger to which the life of their sovereign was exposed; and offered himself as a victim to gratify the rage of the populace<sup>13</sup>. The grenadiers, feeling a momentary impulse of returning loyalty, repaired to the palace, favoured the retreat of the Gardes-du-Corps to the apartment adjoining the king's chamber, where those gallant men bravely resolved to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of their sovereign, and restrained the fury of the assassins. Those ruffians, however, though detected in the very acts of murder and treason, were respected by the grenadiers<sup>14</sup>. Almost at the same instant, La Fayette perceived the Gardes-du-Corps, who had been first seized and conducted to the iron gate, where the mob were deliberating on the mode of their death—thither the general ran, and, by haranguing the populace, gained time, until a second troop of grenadiers came that way. He immediately called to them—"Grenadiers"—said he—"will you then suffer these brave men to be thus basely murdered? I place them under your protection. Swear to me, on the faith of a grenadier, that you will not suffer them to be assassinated!" The grenadiers took the oath required, and placed the Gardes-du-Corps in the midst of them.

But, at some distance from thence, the populace, who had quitted the palace, enraged at their disappointment, and admirably seconded by the militia of Versailles, had seized another party of the Gardes-du-Corps, and were preparing to massacre them. The desire of rendering their execution more splendid and cruel, by murdering them under the windows of the king's apartment, fortunately proved the means of preserving the lives

<sup>13</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 274.—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> The Parisian guards had already declared that they would not use force against their fellow-citizens, in which description they included all the banditti who were now in and about Versailles; and a few of them had, that very morning, afforded a specimen of the disposition and conduct to be expected from the whole; for being on duty near the spot where Messieurs de Huttes and Varicourt were so barbarously murdered, and in full sight of that inhuman transaction, no principle of generosity or sympathy could induce them to interfere, or make the smallest attempt to save them. And though they were now, by the earnest persuasions of their general, led to the adoption of a different line of conduct, with regard to those brave men, nothing could urge them to inflict on their assassins that punishment which they so richly merited.



of these devoted victims. An officer of the Paris militia rescued eight of them; and among those that remained were some brigadiers, grown grey in the service, who thus addressed the surrounding crowd—"Our lives are in your hands; you may put us to death; but the period of our existence will only experience a trifling abridgment, and we shall not die dishonoured."—This short harangue produced a kind of revolution in the minds of the mob. An officer of the national guard, affected by the dignified expressions and venerable air of these military veterans, threw his arms round the neck of the oldest of them, and exclaimed—"We will never massacre such brave men as you!" His example was followed by some other officers of the Paris militia.

At that instant, the king, who, accompanied and protected by La Fayette, had gone through the palace—his mind being so occupied by the danger of his guards, that it could dwell on no other subject than that of recommending them to the mercy of the crowd, with assurances to all that they were unjustly accused—went to a balcony, and repeated the same intercession to the mob below. The guards who were near his person, anxious to save the lives of their comrades, threw down their belts to the people, and, grounding their arms, exclaimed, "*Vive la nation!*" The condescension of the king, and the conduct of his guards, produced a transitory effect, by flattering the pride, and softening the ferocity of these tigers, who now made the courts of the palace, and the whole extent of the Place d'Armes, resound with repeated cries of "*Vive le roi!*" In a moment the victims, who were on the point of being massacred, were embraced by the mob, and carried, in a kind of triumph, under the windows of the royal apartment; while the guards above were invited to join their comrades. The invitation was accepted; and they were loaded with caresses by that populace, who had so lately been anxious to assassinate them, and who, soon after, took a barbarous pleasure in exposing them to every kind of insult and degradation.

Though the people had condescended to promise that they would murder no more of the Gardes-du-Corps, they did not lose sight of the principal object of their enterprize; but insisted, in the most determined manner, that the king should fix his residence at Paris. La Fayette communicated this demand to his majesty, who, alarmed, solicited, pressed on all sides, at length complied, and promised to depart for the capital at noon. This promise was soon notified to all the parts of the crowd, by papers immediately dispersed for the purpose; and the acclamations of the people were answered by the discharge of cannon and musquetry. His majesty appeared at the balcony to confirm his promise.

On this second appearance, the joy of the Parisians was no longer confined within bounds, but displayed itself under a thousand hideous forms. They seized the Gardes-du Corps, to whom they had so recently granted their lives, tore off their uniform, and made them put on the dress of the national guard; after which they were reserved as prisoners,

prisoners, or hostages, destined to embellish the triumph of the victors. The militia of Paris and that of Versailles continued, for some hours, to congratulate each other in a manner that was peculiarly insulting to their sovereign and his family. The monster, with the pointed cap and long beard, whom we have before noticed, strutted about the place before the palace, ostentatiously exhibiting his face and hands, covered with the blood of the Gardes-du-Corps, and lamenting that he had been brought to Versailles to cut off *only two heads*<sup>25</sup>. But nothing could equal the inhuman delirium of the Poissardes; *three of them were seated on the body of a murdered Garde-du-Corps, eating, or rather devouring, the flesh of his horse, which their companions cut up and prepared for them; while the Parisians were dancing around them*<sup>26</sup>!!! By their transports, their gestures, their inarticulate and barbarous cries, Lewis the Sixteenth, who beheld them from his window, might have fancied himself king of the cannibals, and of all the Anthropophagi of the New World.

Soon after, the mob and the militia, as if anxious to encrease their intoxication by a fresh instance of success, roared out, with the utmost violence and indecency, for the queen. La Fayette, accordingly, went for her. She hesitated a moment, and asked if her presence were necessary to appease the people? He assured her it was.—“Then”—said she—“I would go, even if I were sure that I went to execution.” She accordingly appeared in the balcony, accompanied by the dauphin and his sister; but twenty thousand voices instantaneously exclaimed, “*No children!*” She therefore sent the children away, and remained in the balcony alone. Then her air of dignified majesty in this state of humiliation; and this proof of her courage in an obedience so perilous—for in the depositions given before the Châtelet it is testified, that *muskets were, at that very time, seen levelled in the crowd, which appeared to the deponents to be pointed directly at the queen*—softened, by dint of surprize, the ferocity of the mob; and she was received with universal applause.

<sup>25</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 278.—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> Journal Politique, p. 278, 289.—M. Mounier says—“I shall not enter into the particulars of various scenes of horror, worthy of the most atrocious cannibals, which passed in presence of the *national militia*, who never made the smallest attempt to apprehend or punish the miscreants.”—The inhabitants of the provinces were so far deceived, that numbers of them were convinced that the Paris militia had marched to Versailles for the sole purpose of preventing disorders. They knew not that on the fifth of October there had been an insurrection at Paris; that the town-house had been besieged; that the militia had forced their general to place himself at their head; and that they arrived at Versailles in the middle of the night. It is true, that, at last, they protected the guards, by interceding for them: but they did not attack any one of the Brigands whose crimes they had witnessed. On the contrary, *their presence rather tended to encourage than intimidate the assassins*; and, doubtless, nothing but the fear of displeasing them could have influenced the order for the retreat of the guards stationed on the terrace; or could have induced those who remained at their posts to suffer themselves to be massacred without making any defence.—It would have been such an easy matter to repel the assassins!—Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection, p. 27. note.



After the king and queen had retired to prepare for their removal to the metropolis, a considerable degree of agitation was discernible upon the Place d'Armes, among the factious, who were in despair at having missed their blow; and the demagogues, who were in raptures at this last victory of the people. Lists of proscription were industriously circulated among the mob, on which were inscribed the names of the most virtuous members of the Assembly.

The duke of Orleans, who must be considered as the author of these disturbances, had passed the preceding evening at Passy, in company with madame de Sillery, whither his emissaries and couriers were continually arriving from Versailles, with the news of what was passing at the palace and at the National Assembly<sup>27</sup>. In the morning, between the hours of six and seven, he was himself present in disguise among the mob who were destined to attack the palace, and to whose leaders he was revealed by certain distinguishing marks or signal. The principal service which this illustrious miscreant intended to perform, was, from his intimate knowledge of the interior of the palace, to lead the banditti by the nearest way to the royal apartments; in which case, it has been supposed, and the justice of the supposition cannot reasonably be doubted, that all that part of the royal family would have been instantly sacrificed. Fortunately, however, his heart, according to its usual custom, is said to have failed when he arrived at the scene of action; and he accordingly slunk away from his associates, whose numbers, violence, and ferocity, might possibly tend to encrease his terror. Mirabeau, enraged at what he considered such shameful conduct in his patron, is reported to have made the following sarcastic observation—"That man constantly carries a cocked pistol loaded with mischief in his hand, but his cowardice is so extreme that he never can draw the trigger."—The duke d'Aiguillon, it is also confidently affirmed<sup>28</sup>, was one of the persons who mixed with the mob, disguised in woman's apparel; a circumstance which justifies the suspicions which have been before thrown out, of the purity of those motives which influenced the sacrifices he voluntarily made on the night of the fourth of August.

At eight o'clock in the morning, and before he had given his word to follow the rebels to Paris, the king had expressed, to some of the deputies of the nobility, his earnest

<sup>27</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 243.

<sup>28</sup> The private information we have received, on the subject of this nobleman's conduct, on this too memorable occasion, does not permit us to doubt the truth of the affirmation. Could we conceive ourselves justified, in any case, in departing from the rigid duty of an historian, we might, probably, have been induced to suppress this fact, from the hope that the subsequent emigration of the duke has been influenced by a conviction of the impropriety of his connections and proceedings, at the commencement of the Revolution: but we are too sensible that the strictest regard to veracity constitutes our first duty, not to make it, in all cases whatever, rise paramount to every other consideration.

wish to have all the members of the National Assembly around him, in order that they might assist him with their advice at so alarming a crisis. These deputies hastened to the president's apartments, who had just been awakened by a person that brought him a note from one of the members, couched in these terms—"In the name of God, save my brother, whom the people are about to massacre;" on their way, the deputies requested some of their associates whom they met to repair to the palace; they even went to the hall, where having found a considerable number of members assembled, they communicated to them the king's desire, in the name of the president. Mirabeau observed, "*That the president could not make them go to the palace, without deliberating.*" The galleries, filled with the dregs of the capital, supported their friend Mirabeau, and declared that the members should not quit the hall.

About ten o'clock the president took the chair, and formally announced the king's desire; when Mirabeau said—"That it was *beneath the dignity* of the Assembly to go to the king; that the palace of the sovereign was no place for debate; that their deliberations would be exposed to suspicion; and that it would be sufficient to send a deputation of six-and-thirty members.

This observation was equally marked by folly and hypocrisy. To talk of the *dignity* of the Assembly, after it had been reduced to the lowest possible ebb of degradation; after it had basely submitted to be dictated to, to have laws imposed on it, by the meanest and most profligate miscreants in the kingdom; after it had sustained all those insults which had reduced it almost below contempt, to talk of its dignity was to insult the common sense of mankind! Besides, could it be deemed derogatory to that dignity to wait on the chief of the nation? Or was dignity alone to be consulted at such a time? The king was on the point of being forcibly carried off from his palace, and perhaps massacred; he asked for assistance and advice, and they pretended to dread the influence of his authority, when he was not even sure of his life! The king, too, by imploring the aid of the Assembly, furnished them with an opportunity of proving that they were not in league with the Brigands; and some of the members, whose address was not equal to their evil designs, made them, by refusing to comply with his request, lose that opportunity. The president, M. Mounier, in vain protested against the refusal; in vain did he insist that their dignity consisted in discharging their duty; that they had no duty to fulfil that was more sacred than that of attending the king in the hour of danger; and that if they neglected to fulfil it, they would subject themselves to eternal reproach; they did not attempt to answer his arguments, but contented themselves with dividing the house, when the majority voted for the deputation.

As they were employed in selecting the members who were to compose it, they received information, that his majesty, reduced to the last extremity, had engaged to accompany



company the Brigands and Parisian heroes to the capital. Without enquiring into the circumstances which had induced the king to adopt a resolution so extraordinary, that same Mirabeau who had insisted that six-and-thirty deputies were sufficient for him, in the hour of peril, now proposed that he should have an hundred to witness his captivity; and, though he had refused to be one of the members of the first deputation, which might have been exposed to some danger in assisting the king, he offered himself as one of the second, which was only destined to degrade his majesty, by swelling the train of his conquerors. He, at the same time, moved, though without success, that an address to the provinces should be published by the Assembly, to tell them—*that the vessel of the state was about to rush forward with greater rapidity than ever, towards its regeneration.* Mounier declares, that the joy of Mirabeau, Barnave, and others of the most violent leaders, was so extreme, as to become indecently apparent; whilst the members on the other side, expecting every moment to be surrounded with an armed rabble, trembled for their lives, and dared not utter a word.—To pass away the time, it was decreed, that the National Assembly was inseparable from the king; after which any trifling business that could be thought of was brought forward, to afford some appearance of debating until the business at the palace was entirely over.

It was one o'clock before the king left Versailles, and the mob had, for some time, expressed, in loud murmurs, their discontent at the delay. The procession which now commenced has been justly characterized as one of the most degrading and melancholy of which there is any record in history. The sovereign of one of the greatest, most powerful, and most splendid monarchies in the universe, governing a people long and far renowned for arriving near the summit of civilization, learning, arts and science; a nation, likewise, particularly famed for the valour, generosity, and rare attention to honour, which has distinguished its nobility, through a course of ages; and yet this sovereign, without foreign invasion or war; without any *avowed* domestic competitor for his throne; and even without any acknowledged rebellion of his subjects, was, in the face of day, with his queen and family, dragged from his palace, and led captive, in savage triumph, by bands of the meanest and most contemptible ruffians and profligates, of both sexes, in his dominions !!!

At the head of the procession marched the main body of the Paris militia, *every soldier carrying a loaf fixed to the point of his bayonet*<sup>10</sup>. Then followed those modern furies, the Poissardes, drunk with joy and wine, carrying branches of trees decorated with ribbands; some of them sat astride on the cannon; others were on horseback, having on their heads the hats belonging to the Gardes-du-Corps: a part wore cuirasses, before and behind; and another part were armed with sabres and muskets. They were surrounded

<sup>10</sup> Journal Politique, &c. tom. ii. p. 29.

by the multitude of Brigands and Parisian workmen; and in the midst of them marched two ruffians, with naked arms stained with human blood, bearing long pikes, to the ends of which were fixed the mangled heads of the two life-guards who had been murdered in the morning<sup>20</sup>; and these, it is said, were frequently and designedly exhibited before the windows of the carriage which conveyed the royal captives, whose ears were destined to be shocked, not less than their eyes, by the most obscene, savage, and horrid expressions, used by the beasts of women, in the hearing of the queen.

A number of carts loaded with corn and flour, which the mob had seized at Versailles, formed a convoy, which was followed by the grenadiers, who had taken possession of the Gardes-du-Corps, whose lives the king had redeemed. These gallant men, treated as captives, were disarmed, and marched, one by one, on foot, and with their heads uncovered. Before, behind, and on either side of the royal carriages, were the dragoons, the regiment of Flanders, and the Cent-Suisses. The king was accompanied by the queen, the rest of the royal family, two prelates of the council, and the governess of his children.

As if this procession were not, of itself, a sufficient insult and degradation to fallen majesty, a journey of four leagues was protracted to six hours. Their departure from Versailles was celebrated by the militia of that place and of the capital, by a general discharge of musquetry, "as a mark of triumph after gaining a battle<sup>21</sup>." At certain fixed distances the whole procession stopped, and the discharges were repeated, when the Poissardes, quitting their cannon and their horses, formed themselves into circles around the mangled heads of the Gardes-du-Corps, which they contemplated with ferocious joy, and immediately before the king's carriage, where they danced; uttered the most horrid yells; embraced the military partners of their crimes, and sang licentious songs, the unvaried burden of which was, "*Voici le boulanger, la boulangere, et le petit mitron*"<sup>22</sup>! On the

<sup>20</sup> One of these unhappy victims, the young chevalier de Varicourt, was brother to the marchioness de Villette, so much admired, and so celebrated, by Voltaire.

<sup>21</sup> *Faits relatifs à la dernière insurrection*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> "*Here are the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's little foreman.*"—It would be difficult to find, in any history whatever, a more gross misrepresentation, a more shameful perversion of fact, than the following description of this horrid procession exhibits:—"During the progress all was gaiety and joy among the soldiers and spectators; and such was the respect in which the French nation still held the name and person of their king, that the multitude were superstitiously persuaded that the royal presence would actually put an end to the famine. The popular exclamation was, as they proceeded along, 'We are bringing the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's little journey-man.'"—*History of the Revolution*, tom. i. p. 249.

This is the first time we have seen a brutal insult construed into a mark of respect; or the gentle expression of "all was gaiety and joy" applied to such scenes of abomination, as were exhibited by the ruffians and furies of Paris, during this procession. By the same rule, we suppose, we shall be told that the assassins who discharged their pistols into one of the royal carriages—a fact confirmed by M. Lally on no less irrefragable evidence than ocular demonstration—



the high road, not far from Passy, stood the duke of Orleans<sup>23</sup>, like the great father of sin, contemplating, with malignant joy, the fatal effects of his own infernal machinations!

Such was the manner in which L  wis the Sixteenth, king of France, was forced from the residence of his ancestors by the murderers of his servants, and conveyed, by a rebel army, a captive to his metropolis!

H  c finis Priami factorum, hic exitus.

It was seven o'clock when the procession reached the gates of Paris; the royal family were immediately conducted to the town-house, amidst the shouts and cries of a mad populace, who had been waiting several hours for their prey. The king was harangued by Moreau de Saint Mery, who expostulated at large on the inviolable loyalty and fidelity of the Parisians, of which, it must be confessed, they had just given a notable example. After passing a considerable time at the town-hall, their majesties were conducted to the old palace of the Louvre, which had remained uninhabited since the days of Lewis the Fourteenth, and where not the smallest preparation had been made for their reception. Monsieur and his consort established their residence at the Luxembourg. The city was illuminated, and the remainder of the night was passed by the Parisians in testifying their joy at the victory they had obtained over their sovereign, by indulging in every excess of licentiousness; while the heads of the two Gardes-du-Corps were ostentatiously displayed, in all the streets of the capital<sup>24</sup>.

When all the circumstances of horror and iniquity, preceding and attending the disgraceful transactions of the sixth of October, are considered, it appears almost impossible that men could be found with minds so strangely formed as to contemplate the scene with joy and exultation. Yet doctor Price seems to have regarded it as the laudable effort of a people "indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice: their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects."—This rhapsody, (for what other denomination can it deserve?) is marked by falsehood and misrepresentation. No one feature of liberty is to be discerned in the machinations of the faction that projected, or in the proceedings of the mob that conducted, this abominable triumph.—"Liberty"—says the citizen of Geneva—"must always follow the fate of the laws; it must reign or perish with them." But,

<sup>23</sup> *demonstration*—only meant to give their majesties a proof of their affection; and that the cry of "*Tous les Ev  ques a la Lanterne!*" was a mere effusion of innocent mirth!

<sup>24</sup> *Journal Politique*, &c. tom. ii. p. 291.

<sup>25</sup> *Idem*, *ibid.* p. 291.

in this instance, the laws were disobeyed; all the constituted authorities opposed; and the first principles of that declaration of rights, which the French themselves considered as the pledge and surety of their liberty, violated. We have seen, in the first place, the seat of municipal justice invaded; next, the constitutional commander of the military threatened and controlled; and, lastly, the person of the monarch, so solemnly proclaimed sacred and inviolable, attacked; his residence, and the seat of the National Assembly, forcibly entered; his lawful defenders barbarously murdered, and himself and family dragged, in captivity, to the capital! In short, every part of these proceedings was marked by a spirit of licentiousness absolutely destructive of all rational freedom.—Liberty, heaven-born goddess! eternal object of our veneration! it was not at thy shrine, unstained by the blood of virtue, the base Parisians bowed their guilty heads!—No, the base detractors robbed thee of thy name, and gave it to an hideous idol of their own creation!

The application of the epithet *arbitrary* to the unhappy Lewis, at this period, is an insult to common sense, and could only be used as a necessary sanction to the exultation expressed by the preacher at seeing him *led in triumph*. Despoiled not only of every part of his power which could be employed to the prejudice of the national welfare, but stripped even of many of those prerogatives which were essentially conducive to the real interests of the nation, this unfortunate monarch, so far from being despotic, was himself the victim of despotism!—Strong, indeed, must be the current of prejudice, when even the pulpit is prostituted to the propagation of calumny!

On the evening of that disastrous day, in which the king was torn from his family, the broken remnants of the middle or moderate party in the National Assembly, of whom Mounier was the head, and who had endeavoured to establish what they conceived to be the safest and most permanent system of liberty for the people, under the form of a limited monarchy, to be regulated and kept within proper bounds by a constitution bearing some resemblance to that of England, held a meeting, at which it was stated, that having long, with great peril to themselves, discharged their duty as honest men, in endeavouring to stem the torrent of republicanism; to defeat the unavowed, and therefore more dangerous, designs, of some of the factious leaders; to establish the liberty of the people, and, at the same time, to preserve the proper and necessary rights of the monarchy inviolate; that after this long and virtuous struggle, it was now a matter of grievous reflection to perceive, not only that all their efforts were fruitless, but that a directly contrary and most dangerous state of affairs had taken place. They saw the monarchy overthrown; the king a prisoner, not merely to his own subjects, considered generally as such, but to the rabble of Paris; while his life hung suspended by a hair, which it was in the power of every ruffian to snap or to cut in a moment. They saw that liberty for which they had so much contended now placed in such a train, that, if

causes



causes produced their proper effects, it was likely to be destroyed before it was completely formed. The National Assembly must now remove to Paris, which had, for some time, been the prime wish and chief object in view, with some of the most dangerous of the factious leaders who ruled that body. In Paris, the representatives of the people would become as absolute prisoners as the king; and France would be governed by laws framed by these leaders, and enforced on the Assembly by the terror of their instruments, the cabals and mobs of the capital. As for themselves, the purity of their views and the integrity of their conduct could not preserve them from continual danger, and menace to their lives; indeed, it was, unhappily, shewn too clearly, that these were qualities now so little regarded, that they could procure neither esteem nor safety. The question now for them to consider was, whether, having fulfilled the duty they owed to the public to the utmost of their power, but without effect, and finding affairs now in a state which not only rendered them totally useless for the present, but which cut off all hope of their ever being otherwise under the present system, they should, notwithstanding, persevere in the same fruitless toil, and devote their lives, without a competent object, by placing them in the hands of the Parisians; or whether they should at once secede from the Assembly, and submit their conduct, along with the causes of this procedure, to their constituents, as well as to the public at large?

The greater part of the members present, notwithstanding these reasons, in the veracity of which they all equally agreed, were yet unwilling to abandon their seats. Mounier and Lally-Tolendal were at the head of the seceders<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> M. de Lally-Tolendal, in his second letter to a friend, assigns the following cogent motives for his secession.—  
 “I was no longer able to endure the horror I experienced at the sight of that blood—those heads—that queen nearly  
 “massacred—that king, carried off as a *flame*, entering Paris in the midst of his assassins, and preceded by the heads  
 “of his unfortunate guards: those perfidious Janissaries, those assassins, those female cannibals, that cry of “ALL  
 “THE BISHOPS TO THE LANTHORN!” at the moment that the king was entering his capital, with two prelates of his  
 “council in the carriage with him: a *musket* which I saw fired into one of the queen’s carriages: M. Bailly calling that a  
 “Glorious day!—The Assembly having coolly declared, in the morning, that it was incompatible with its dignity  
 “to go in a body and surround the king: M. Mirabeau observing, with impunity, in that Assembly, that the vessel  
 “of the state, far from being impeded in her course, would rush forward with greater rapidity than ever towards  
 “its regeneration: M. Barnave laughing with him, while streams of blood were flowing around us: the virtuous  
 “Mounier miraculously escaping from twenty assassins, who were anxious to make an additional trophy of his  
 “head.

“This it was that made me swear never more to set foot in that cavern of *Antropophagi* (the National Assembly),  
 “where I had no longer the strength to raise my voice; where, for the last six weeks, I had raised it in vain. I,  
 “Mounier, and all virtuous men, were of opinion that the last effort we had to make for the public welfare was to  
 “leave it. No idea of fear ever entered my head: if it had, I should be ashamed to disown it. I had received on  
 “the road [he was one of the deputation that accompanied the king to Paris] from the people, less criminal  
 “than those who had excited their fury, acclamations and plaudits that would have gratified others, but which  
 “made me shudder. It was to the indignation, the horror, the physical convulsions, I experienced at the mere sight  
 “of blood, that I yielded. A man may brave death once; he may face it many times, when his courage can be of  
 “use to his country; but no power under heaven, no public or private opinion, can condemn me to suffer use-  
 “lessly

But before Mounier had quitted the president's chair, he had the address, with the fervent aid of his friends, to carry a very important resolution, and which there was little reason to expect would have been passed. This was an order for an enquiry into the horrid massacre, intended, and actually commenced, on the sixth of October, and for prosecuting the authors thereof. This was the foundation of all the proceedings which were conducted in the Châtelet upon the subject; and though substantial justice was not obtained, nor probably could be expected, yet it could not fail to produce some good effect, by convincing the perpetrators of wanton and unprovoked murders, that they might not always be safe in the gratification of that horrid propensity; and reminding them, that public enquiries, and public prosecutions, were not pleasant matters to play with. It would have done much honour to the National Assembly, would have prevented much well-founded reproach, which will not wear off while the memory of any of their acts continue, and would have prevented acts which will be an eternal stain to their country, if they had passed, and supported with vigour, many similar resolutions; instead of turning accounts of the most inhuman murders to ridicule, and shamefully joking upon the purity or impurity of the blood thus shed.

Nothing, at the same time, can afford a stronger demonstration of the homage paid to Mounier's character, and of the awful ascendancy which virtue holds even over those who abhor its name, than that he should have been able to carry a resolution so abhorrent to the disposition of all the principal leaders of the factions;—they evidently shrunk before it. He has declared himself, that the reflection of his having carried this measure of humanity and justice was no small solace to him in his subsequent troubles and misfortunes. This was his last public act: and he, who had not long since been one of the most popular men in the kingdom, was, at no distant period, destined to fly from his country, and to retire to Geneva for the preservation of his life. This obligation he owed to Barnave and other of his brother deputies, who, unable to resist or endure his virtue when present, took care to prepossess the minds of the people so effectually against him, as to prevent the possibility of his being ever again troublesome.

Mounier was, with respect to strictness of integrity, purity of principle, love and admiration of virtue, undoubtedly the first man in the Assembly. In talents and abilities he was second to none in that body; but having more substance than show in them, they were by no means calculated *ad captandum vulgus*; so that his popularity must have arisen from the general sense entertained of his virtue. He was an enthusiastic lover of liberty, and as determined a foe to tyranny in every shape and form; but the liberty which

"lessly a thousand deaths a minute; and to perish through despair and rage, in the midst of triumph, and crimes which I have been unable to prevent.—They will proscribe me; they will confiscate my property:—I will cultivate the earth, and see them no more,—Such is my justification.



he adored, and wished to establish, was a rational and regular one, fenced in with insuperable restraints against its degenerating into licentiousness and anarchy, as well as with impassable mounds against the inroads of despotism. His chief faults in political affairs were too great a degree of refinement, too great a partiality for speculative doctrines, and a pertinacity in adhering, sometimes too strongly, to his own opinions.

Mounier declared to a few particular friends, at his departure from Paris, how much he was oppressed by the melancholy reflection, that all his efforts in favour of liberty had only ended in enslaving France to the despotism of faction, instead of the despotism of royalty.

Two factions, with views totally different and incompatible, had contributed in promoting the late disorders and violence. The republican levellers intended, by the removal to Paris, to place the unhappy sovereign so entirely in their own power, and, by the aid of the Parisians, to purge the Assembly so totally of all who opposed them, that neither the king, the nobles, nor the clergy, could find it possible afterwards to defend any of their rights, not only by arms, but even by legal resistance. And they well saw that the bare name of the king, which did not produce the smallest benefit to himself, might be turned to great account by affording some sanction to their proceedings, and thereby become a most useful instrument in the confirmation of their power. Upon these principles, no designs that affected the king's life could originate in this party.

The other faction, of which the duke of Orleans was the real, but Mirabeau the ostensible, head, and the leaders of which were generally called the Cabal, held very different views, though they pursued the same means, and used the same instruments, the mobs of Paris, for their attainment. The first, as we have seen, wished to confine the king, perhaps for life, within the walls of the capital; but the second hoped either to procure his assassination, in the first instance, or to terrify him into a flight, in which case they would have proceeded to deposition; and possibly the circumstances of the flight might have afforded an opportunity for greater and more decisive violence. Though these assumed the character of Republicans, and generally acted along with them, yet so far were they from wishing the overthrow of the sovereignty, that they very reluctantly admitted even the reductions that were made in its authority; they wished it to continue perfect and whole, but wanted to change the hands in which it was placed; so that having set up a phantom of power, which, from its weakness, they knew they could manage as they pleased, a very few of their principal leaders would be enabled afterwards to govern with supreme authority. This party was, from two causes, particularly dangerous;—one was the extreme profligacy, and total want of principle, joined with a considerable portion of talents, of some of the leaders; the other was the profound secrecy with which its obstinate views were kept concealed, so that the real object of its pursuits and conduct was never apparent.

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The republican party were triumphant upon this occasion; and the views of the cabal, if not entirely seen through, were, at least, so far understood, as to excite much mistrust, and draw no small degree of odium upon their leaders.

On the morning after the king's arrival at Paris, all the districts met at an early hour, and orders were given to surround all the avenues of the Tuilleries, which had been only defended, during the night, by a common guard. A thousand troops were immediately ordered on that duty, and all the gates of the palace were secured by a train of artillery, to prevent the possibility of surprize or escape. In the evening, the districts of Paris, by an assumption of power perfectly consistent with their past proceedings, passed a resolution, that the regiment of the Gardes-du-Corps should be broken and never more revived; and that, in future, his majesty should be guarded by *citizens*, instead of soldiers.

The National Assembly had now another glorious opportunity, when the king, after being forced from his habitation by a factious mob, was confined to the precincts of that palace which he had been compelled to accept for his residence, to recover their lost dignity and importance, by a proper exertion of vigour, and the display of a becoming spirit of independence. The shackles imposed by a democratic faction are probably more dangerous, and certainly more disgraceful, than those of a despotic sovereign. Hence it became the Assembly to resist, with determined resolution, the unconstitutional efforts of the Parisians; and boldly to demand the immediate release of their monarch. By the adoption of such a line of conduct, they might still have rendered themselves respectable in the eyes of all Europe, and have proved themselves worthy to be the champions of freedom; but though their courage was sufficient to withstand the opposition of an impotent king, it vanished before the threats of an armed multitude. The insidious designs of some, and the terror experienced by others, influenced the determination to confirm their former decree, which declared them inseparable from the king, and to repair to Paris. Accordingly, after transacting some business of little moment, and preparing an address to their constituents, in which they said—" *This day*" (the sixth of October) "*is a day of triumph, and the monarch is our conquest*," thus representing the Brigands as a victorious army, under the orders of the Assembly, they went thither, and assembled in the great hall of the archbishop's palace, which had been prepared for their reception.

The first step they took, after their arrival in the metropolis, was to send a deputation to the king, headed by the president, who addressed his majesty in a curious speech, in which he told him, that the National Assembly, having voted themselves inseparable from his august person, were now led by their affection to approach him, and offer him



the homage of their immutable love and respect; he observed, that the love of the French people to their monarch had been unbounded (it must be confessed they had recently exhibited a singular proof of their affection!) ever since that day when the public voice hailed him *the Restorer of Liberty*, to which it only remained for him to add the endearing title of *the best friend to the nation*; a title to which his claim was indisputable, as the whole nation had seen his majesty firm and tranquil in the midst of danger, running every risk for the good of the state, and supporting and encouraging a beloved people by his presence and protection. The speech contained many similar declarations equally destitute of sense and meaning.

Though the Revolution was now completed, and no visible obstacle remained which could check the republicans in their future career, yet the idea of shutting themselves up within the walls of the turbulent city of Paris, where a hundred thousand pair of jealous and suspicious eyes were to be an eternal watch upon their conduct and actions; where they were to be subjected to the caprice of a frantic and bloody populace, who had constituted themselves both judges and executioners of the law in all cases of life and death; and where the most zealous patriot was liable to become an instantaneous victim to the falsest report, or the most unfounded suspicion; these considerations, acting conjointly, could not but inspire a great part of the Assembly with the most serious and alarming apprehensions, and thereby tend considerably to diminish that satisfaction and exultation of pride and success, which their signal triumph over the crown, and extreme and abject state of degradation to which it was reduced, might otherwise have afforded.

In order, by every means in their power, to guard against this danger, which, however unavowed, was equally obvious to all, the Assembly immediately passed the strongest resolutions that could be framed, respecting the sacredness and inviolability of their persons. But these being in no degree sufficient to remove the general impression of danger which had taken place, so great a number of members were continually applying for leave of absence, that it seemed, at length, as if the Assembly would be entirely deserted; and it was found necessary, as a remedy for the evil, to pass an order or resolution, that no farther applications for leave should be received.

These apprehensions had not, however, time to wear off, before an event occurred which sufficiently shewed that they were by no means ill-founded. For the Assembly had not been long in Paris, when these loyal and peaceable citizens, being perhaps apprehensive that their rights and authority might, without frequent exertion, become dormant, and lapse into what the lawyers call a state of desuetude, determined to give their new visitants of the Assembly an early specimen of what those rights and that authority were, so as to prevent all future mistakes about their nature and extent, and at the same time to afford a striking instance of their own due qualification, from the ease and facility

lity with which they administered summary justice. There could be no want of an object on which to display their justice and dexterity, while there remained a baker still in existence. The lot accordingly fell upon an unfortunate member of that fraternity, named François, who resided in the vicinity of the National Assembly. Accused of monopoly by a woman who is said to have been influenced solely by personal enmity, the mob forced an entrance into his house, and though the charge was not only proved to be notoriously false, but it was demonstrated that the man had even made uncommon exertions to supply the public with bread, he was dragged to the town-house, and, after a short examination, in which his innocence was completely established, was taken from the magistrates by the populace, and hanged on the Place de Grève, in presence of the national guard, who remained passive spectators of the whole transaction, or, at least, made only that kind of opposition which was calculated rather to encourage than intimidate the assassins.—The conduct of these *citizen-soldiers* is thus curiously accounted for by the “Two Friends to Liberty.”—“The national guards, agitated by the same mistrust by which the major part of the citizens were at that time tormented, and *fearful of dipping their hands in the blood of their brethren*, in whose distress they participated; and of incurring the guilt of homicide in order to save one who was perhaps guilty, opposed but a feeble resistance<sup>27</sup> !!!”—It is easy to perceive that a resistance thus characterized must have amounted to a positive encouragement. The head of the unhappy victim was separated from his body, and being placed on a pike, was exhibited to his wife, then in a state of pregnancy, who, at the horrid sight, fell senseless to the ground.—The king and queen, anxious to soothe this unfortunate woman, sent her two thousand crowns, to enable her to continue the business, and undertook to become sponsors at the baptism of her child.

While the Assembly were at a distance, matters of this sort were passed over without concern or notice; but this tumult taking place under their eyes, and the danger seeming already at their own doors, the alarm and apprehension excited by it were beyond description. This paroxysm of terror, however, produced an excellent effect; it roused the Assembly into a degree of exertion, the want of which had been long and lamentably felt; and its very excess proved the means of inspiring them with courage. They likewise could not but feel how much their authority and dignity were set at naught and degraded; and that public opinion, upon which every thing depended, would be shaken, if so violent an outrage, committed almost in their presence, and as if it had been to shew who were in future to be their masters, had been suffered to pass with impunity. Under these and similar impressions, the Assembly immediately passed a very effective and severe law, founded much upon the principle of the English riot-act, by which the municipal magistrates were obliged to proclaim martial-law whenever the mob

<sup>27</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, et de l'Etablissement d'une Constitution en France, tom. iv. p. 66.



proceeded to outrage; and were, besides, furnished with a red flag, which, upon such occasions, was to be displayed from the town-house, as a formidable emblem of the consequences which would ensue. This regulation, notwithstanding its evident necessity, was most violently opposed by Robespierre, Buzot, and some other violent men, who insisted that the penalties of the law were rather directed against *hunger* than *tumult*. They said, that the people, when in want of bread, could not be blamed for their violence; and that it was impossible tranquillity should ever be restored until the people should see the National Assembly seriously occupied in attempts to nourish and *avenge* them: they urged the necessity of establishing tribunals and appointing judges for the trial of such as had been guilty of *lèse-nation*; and for immediately proceeding with vigour against criminals of that description, that the lives of the citizens might be protected against the resentment of a *multitude driven to extremities by the impunity which the audacity of their enemies excited*<sup>27</sup>. Some of the districts of Paris, actuated by the same spirit, also protested against the decree, and even proposed to oblige all the citizens to throw off the *national dress*, until it were repealed, and to shoot all such as opposed the repeal<sup>28</sup>. Indeed, it is not to be wondered at, that the people of Paris, who had so frequently heard themselves proclaimed the saviours of the state, should be enraged at a law which converted them into rebels, and which tended, hereafter, to render criminal and impracticable those very means which the Assembly themselves had rendered invincible and sacred!—Fortunately for the city, however, the decree was enforced with salutary vigour, and the rabble had the mortification of beholding two of the most notorious of their brethren, who were concerned in the late tumult and murder, publicly hanged. These decisive measures produced an immediate happy effect; and order and quiet were for some time established.

About the same time a kind of inquisitorial tribunal, entitled, a “Committee of Research,” was instituted at Paris, for the purpose of receiving informations and depositions, concerning any plots or conspiracies that might be discovered; of arresting, in case of necessity, the parties accused; of examining them, and of collecting and digesting the proofs to be adduced against them on their trial. Considerable rewards were holden out as a stimulus to the zeal of informers; in some instances, no less than fifty thousand livres were offered. And the king, at the solicitation of the municipality, was induced to promise a free pardon to any person concerned in a plot that should discover his accomplices.—Thus was all the odious rigour of the old police revived, without any of its salutary effects.

These regulations were followed by an event which could not fail to astonish all those who were not admitted deeply into the secrets of affairs. This was the extraordinary measure of sending the duke of Orleans out of the kingdom. To render this transac-

<sup>27</sup> Histoire de la Revolution de 1789, &c. tom. iv. p. 70.

<sup>28</sup> Idem, *ibid.* p. 78.

tion more intelligible, it is necessary to observe, that nothing could exceed the indignation of La Fayette at the disobedience which he experienced from his troops on the fifth of October, though such a circumstance was by no means calculated to excite the surprise of men who reflected on the nature of the national guard, its formation, and discipline. All the mutual ties which should unite a general and his army, and which he knew to be absolutely necessary to the preservation of that force which constitutes the utility of an army, seemed at once dissolved; and, besides the disappointment, and wound to his pride, the personal security of a commander seemed in a very precarious state, whose troops disdained to obey, and who made no scruple of flying in the face of his authority and command. He well knew that their disobedience and mutiny did not originate with themselves, but were produced by the machinations of the Cabal; and he directed all his indignation and resentment to their proper object, the father of that faction. For whatever La Fayette's private political views might have been, there certainly was nothing farther removed from them, or which he abhorred more, even in idea, than that the duke of Orleans, through any convulsion, or change of circumstances, or under any denomination, of Regent or otherwise, should ever be placed at the head of public affairs. He saw that the season was highly favourable to the gratification of his enmity; that the views of the Cabal were thoroughly seen through, and that they had consequently lost all influence, weight, and confidence in the Assembly; that Mirabeau had not been more unfortunate in his views to aggrandize his principal than himself; and that his design of forcing himself into the royal administration had excited disgust and abhorrence.

It is supposed, that the leading party in the Assembly had already derived all the benefits from the duke which they wished, or at any time intended: his pecuniary aid had from the beginning been indispensably necessary to the accomplishment of their schemes; without it their efforts would have been fruitless and unavailing; but now things were totally changed: if his treasures had not even been pretty well exhausted, they were not, however, in that state of necessity which once rendered them indispensable; he had been as long the instrument to their purposes as was necessary; to continue it longer would be folly. Besides, that his services were no longer wanting, his presence was becoming troublesome; and might, under certain circumstances, through his influence with the rabble, possibly prove dangerous.

Whether the opinion that these motives operated upon the Assembly be well-founded or not, it seems evident, that La Fayette must have had a certainty of being well supported when he ventured upon so bold, and, seemingly, so dangerous a measure. He settled the business, like a soldier, with little ceremony, but peremptory effect. In a short and sudden conference with the duke, he informed him, in a few words, that his presence in France was, at this juncture, incompatible with the good of the nation;



that England, where he was well acquainted, was deemed the most proper country for him to retire to; that a passport from the king was ready for him; and that, to conceal the real motive of his absence, he should be apparently sent to execute a private commission from his majesty in that country. The mandate was so peremptory, delivered with such firmness, and accompanied with an air of such decisive authority, that the duke, surprized and subdued, shrunk under its effect, and, every thing being prepared, was dispatched to England.

Mirabeau's rage was unbounded at this cowardly submission, as he termed it, of the duke. It was given in evidence before the Châtelet, that he concluded a torrent of the grossest abuse by exclaiming, "He does not deserve the trouble that has been taken for his sake."

As soon as the new law for restraining the judicial violences of the mob had produced some degree of order and security in Paris, the National Assembly applied itself closely, and without interruption for several months to the adjustment of public business, of which they had still such abundant quantity on their hands, that, viewed as a whole, it seemed to present such an inextricable wilderness of jarring elements, fortuitously jumbled together, as no time or care could be sufficient to reduce to order: for what they had hitherto done was rather to be considered as an outline, containing hasty sketches of what was farther intended, than as any completion of the separate parts of the design. But, independent of the old, which they had already in any degree gone through, they had an infinite quantity of new matter to consider, arrange, and decide upon.

Among the most remarkable of the measures immediately adopted, was the political annihilation, at one blow, of the two first orders, in point of dignity, and the two most ancient and only original orders of the state; while things were now arrived at such a pass, that this degradation of the nobles and clergy, and this total change of the constitution, was effected without a single struggle, by a simple decree, which only announced, *totidem verbis*, "That there was no longer any distinction of orders in France." The Assembly then entered upon the business of elections, which required an entirely new code of laws or regulations, to render it conformable to the present system. No reference to the ancient form of electing representatives for the different orders could of course be admitted or thought of. The regulations went, in the first instance, to the election of deputies in the primary assemblies, who were again (as we have already seen) to proceed to the election of those deputies who were to represent the nation in the Assembly.

Though the right of election in the primary assemblies was extended to the citizens at large, that is, to every Frenchman, by birth or naturalization, (except servants) who had completed

completed his twenty-fifth year, and had resided one year within the district where his vote was to be given, yet a small qualification, with respect to property, was required to entitle them to vote—viz. the payment of taxes, in any part of the kingdom, equal in amount to the produce of three days labour; and this qualification, slender though it was, afforded no small satisfaction to the friends of property and a government by law, who fancied that both would from thence derive some degree of security. It was farther decreed, that the men thus entitled to vote in the primary assemblies, should have their names registered in books kept for the purpose, and should be characterized under the distinctive appellation of *active citizens*.

The qualification of those who were chosen electors was fixed at the payment of a contribution equal in amount to the produce of *ten* days labour; and it was required that every candidate for the office of representative should be assessed at a mark of silver, and be possessed of some property, either real or personal<sup>30</sup>. The paying any, even the smallest, attention to property, was deemed, on one side, a considerable point gained; on the other hand, the most violent of the republican and levelling party were much out of humour and greatly dissatisfied at this decree; for they wanted to throw the elections into the hands of the whole people, without distinction, and no other disqualifications to operate upon votes, than those arising from infancy, idiotism, or absolute infamy of character<sup>30</sup>.

Notwithstanding all that had been said of the alacrity with which the provinces surrendered their peculiar rights and privileges, it now appeared that these accounts required to be received with all the caution and doubt which were so generally necessary with respect to every thing that was given out or published at this period. The case undoubt-

<sup>30</sup> *Histoire de la Revolution de 1789*, tom. iv. p. 111, 112, 113.

<sup>30</sup> The historians we last quoted, condemn all attention to property in this instance, as "contrary to the liberty and equality of citizen;" and as "repugnant to reason and all true principles of government." (tom. iv. p. 114.) "The obvious and simple principle of population" seems likewise to meet the approbation of the authors of the English History of the Revolution;—but can any thing be more obvious or simple than this truth—that where the legislative body is formed on the principle of population, without any attention to property, the poor will generally legislate for the rich, and all property become insecure?—But though we wish always to see property respected, we are by no means desirous of seeing it endued with any other privileges than such as are requisite for its own security, and for the general welfare of the state.—Those who would despoil property of all its privileges, should consider that, by so doing, they would destroy some of the most powerful inducements to that spirit of industry and emulation so essentially conducive to the prosperity of a state, and to the happiness of individuals.

As many of the members had experienced the inconvenience of being restrained, in their operations, by the instructions of their constituents, they now took care to provide a radical remedy for that defect. The Assembly declared, that each member was not to be considered as the representative of his constituents, but as the representative of the nation; and all electors were absolutely forbidden to deliver any instructions (Cahiers) or imperative mandates to their members!—*Histoire de la Revolution*, tom. iv. p. 98.—The number of representatives which were, in future, to constitute the National Assembly, was fixed at seven hundred and forty-five.



edly was, that as the deputies of the privileged provinces were generally among the most forward in framing or adopting all the political novelties of the present time, so they made but little scruple in sacrificing the rights or privileges of their constituents to their own peculiar doctrines or designs; and that this conduct, not being at all approved by great numbers of people in the country, their dissatisfaction occasioned those difficulties which the Assembly now experienced; and which were, indeed, so considerable, that it seemed as if that body had been only commencing the business. That it was deemed really serious appears from the democratical writers, who inform us, that the dissatisfaction upon this subject in the provinces, afforded the only strong ground of hope which the aristocrats now possessed; "For, finding themselves unable to destroy the kingdom, they had, however, the consolation left, that by this means they might be able to distract it."

The division of power was too unequal to admit of any great contest; nor was any particular act, either done, or imputed to, the aristocrats. The Assembly, to render every thing novel, and to destroy all vestiges of whatever passed before their own reign, succeeded in expunging the term "Province" from the French vocabulary. They divided the kingdom into eighty-three geometrical portions, of about three hundred and twenty four square leagues each, which were distinguished by the appellation of Departments; and these were subdivided into other portions, under the name of Districts and Cantons. Thus, by cutting off a few heads under the name of provinces, a new multiplied generation sprang up, like those of the Hydra, which became in due time sufficiently troublesome in their management; and thus the geography of France being totally changed, and rendered as obsolete in an instant as that of Gaul under Julius Cæsar, new maps became necessary, to trace out or distinguish places with which we were the most intimately acquainted.

This measure has been justly termed—"The wild excess of reform, where nothing that is old can be good, but where alteration is synonymous to improvement, and where novelty means excellence<sup>31</sup>." It must, however, be acknowledged, that whatever

<sup>31</sup> Rabaud de Saint Etienne, who was then a member of the "Committee of Constitution," published a book at this period, entitled "*Nouvelles Reflexions sur la nouvelle Division du Royaume*," in which he says "All the existing establishments in France are so many sources of misery to the people! We must renovate that people if we wish to promote its happiness: we must change its ideas—we must change its laws—we must change its manners—we must change men—we must change things—we must change words—we must *destroy every thing*, yes, *destroy every thing*, since every thing is to be created anew."

To this rhapsody, we shall oppose an authority which the Revolutionists have invariably affected to respect—that of J. J. Rousseau, who says—"A people, who have any morals, and, consequently, respect the laws, cannot be too much upon their guard against the specious and dogmatical maxims of PHILOSOPHERS, which, by teaching them to despise the LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THEIR COUNTRY, lead to a general and inevitable corruption of manners." We have lived long enough to see Rabaud's principle of *universal destruction* enforced; and Rousseau's assertion, with regard to the consequences of such *philosophical maxims*, completely verified!