his officers and men from landing, but threw open all his ships to the natives of the place, whose multitudes never ceased pouring through those gallant vessels, lost in admiration of their beauty, their resistless force, and the perfect discipline of their crews. With the court his intercourse now began; and the terror of his name, even without his armament, would there have made him supreme. The reluctance to remove was, of course, universal and deep-rooted; nor could any arrangement the expected invader might offer prove less palatable than expatriation and banishment for life across the Atlantic to pampered voluptuaries, the extent of whose excursions had hitherto been the distance between the town and the country palace. But he arranged everything for their voyage; and he was quite ready to compel their embarkation. His plan would have exposed his own person to some danger, but would have required no application of military force, if nothing was attempted against the fleet. It seemed to have been borrowed from the celebrated seizure, by Cortez, of the Emperor Montezuma's person, in his capital of Mexico; and the very few to whom he communicated it, while struck with the boldness of the design, saw that it was as happy as it was bold, and had no doubt whatever of its perfect success.

Although we have noticed his contempt for the artifices of oratory, it is remarkable that some of his most intimate friends were those who chiefly owed their renown to its practice. Among these was Lord Erskine; and he enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Fox and Lord Grey. But he made a great difference between the eloquence of the senate and the bar—a difference not

perhaps marked by his accustomed sagacity and liberal views, yet sufficiently easy to account for. Parliamentary speaking he regarded as mere "talk." He saw the noblest exertions of the orator, and also the speeches of longest duration (a circumstance much fitted to rouse his impatience) end, as he phrased it, in wind. The decision came, which he reckoned the result of the battle, and he could trace no connexion between that and the preceding debate. Hence, he deemed the whole "nonsense," "a farce," "a child's play;" without reflecting that in the long run discussion produces, directly or indirectly, its effect, as he probably would have done had he viewed the scene from what he would call "a safe distance;"—that is, so far off as not to have his early hours interfered with, and his patience assailed by length of speech. The trial of causes he viewed with other eyes. *That* he considered as business—as acting and not talking; and, having the highest admiration for the skill of an advocate, there was no society in which he delighted so much as that of the bar. To hear his acute and even profound remarks upon the conduct of a cause, and the play of adverse counsel, every point of which, to the most minute and technical, he clearly comprehended and highly relished, was one of the things that impressed the listener with the greatest opinion of his extraordinary capacity. He viewed it as a fine operation of attack and defence; and he often said that there was nothing which he ever more regretted than not having been able to attend the proceedings in the Queen's case.

In recounting the triumphs of his military genius, we

have not adverted to the extraordinary promptitude, and powers of combination which he displayed, when he equipped the finest expedition that ever was detached from a fleet, and sent it under Nelson up the Mediterranean. This illustrious hero always acknowledged, with the most affectionate gratitude, how much his victory of the Nile was owing to this grand operation of his chief, for whom he felt and ever testified the most profound veneration. Nor was anything ever more disgustful to his truly noble and generous nature, than the attempts of that tribe, the worst kind of enemies, (*pessimum inimicorum genus, laudatores,*)—the mean parasites who would pay their court to himself by overrating his services at St. Vincent in 1797, and ascribing to him the glory of that memorable day. Their affection became thus grounded upon thorough knowledge of each other's merits, and the admiration which these commanded was mutual; nor did the survivor once omit an opportunity of testifying the love he bore his illustrious friend, and his grief for the blow which took him from his country. On board his flag-ship, on all those great occasions when he entertained his numerous followers, Nelson's *Dirge* was solemnly performed while they yet surrounded the table; and it was not difficult to perceive that the great warrior's usual contempt for displays of feeling here forsook him, and yielded to the impulse of nature and of friendship.

So little effect on exalted spirits have the groveling arts of little souls! He knew all the while, how attempts had been made by Lord Nelson's flatterers to set him up as the true hero of the Fourteenth of February; but never for an instant did the feelings towards Nelson

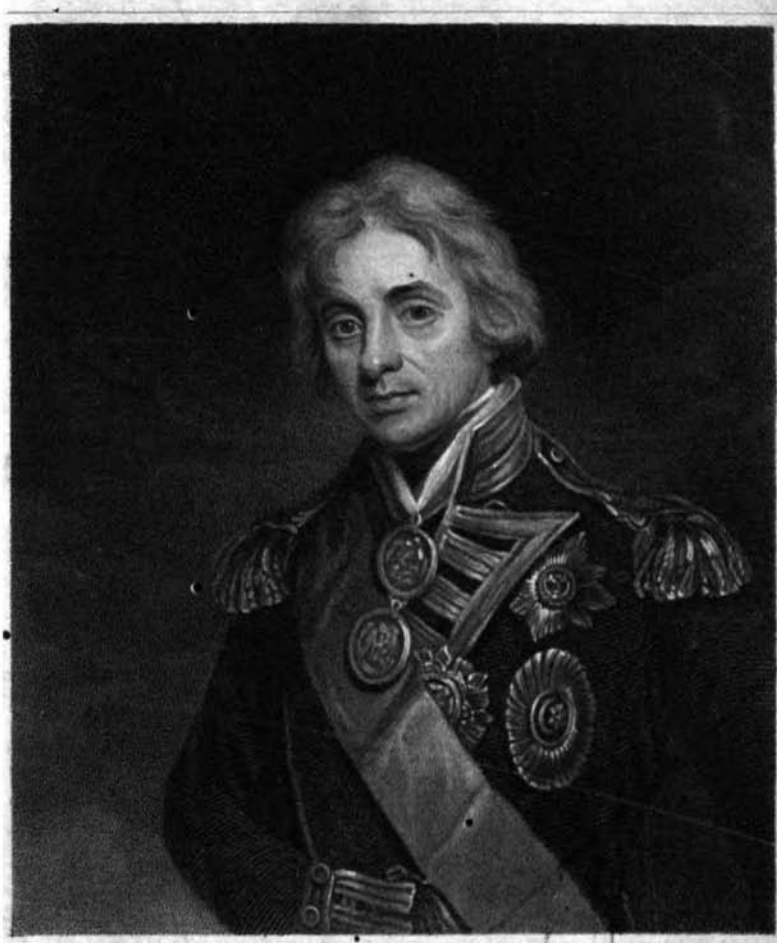
cross his mind, by which inferior natures would have been swayed. In spite of all these invidious arts, he magnanimously sent him to Aboukir; and, by unparalleled exertions, which Jervis alone could make, armed him with the means of eclipsing his own fame. The mind of the historian, weary with recounting the deeds of human baseness, and mortified with contemplating the frailty of illustrious men, gathers a soothing refreshment from such scenes as these; where kindred genius, exciting only mutual admiration and honest rivalry, gives birth to no feeling of jealousy or envy, and the character which stamps real greatness is found in the genuine value and native splendour of the mass, as well as in the outward beauty of the die; the highest talents sustained by the purest virtue; the capacity of the statesman, and the valour of the hero, outshone by the magnanimous heart, which beats only to the measures of generosity and of justice.

Nor let it be deemed any abatement of this praise if the undeniable truth be stated, that no two men in the same professional career, and both of consummate excellence, ever offered more points of marked diversity in all the particulars which distinguish character and signalise the kinds of human genius. Alike in courage, except that the valour of the one was more buoyant, more constitutional—of the other, more the steady result of reflection, and the produce of many great qualities combined, than the mere mode of temperament;—alike without any difference whatever in that far higher quality, moral courage, and political, which is the highest pitch of it; alike in perfect nautical skill, the result of talents matured by ample experience, and of the sound

judgment which never disdains the most trifling details, but holds nothing trivial connected with an important subject;—yet, even in their professional abilities, these great captains differed: for the more stern mind of the one made him a severe disciplinarian, while the amiable nature of the other seduced him into an habitual relaxation of rules whose rigorous enforcement galled, if it did not wound, his kindlier feelings. Not that either Jervis stooped to the fopperies by which some little minds render the service entrusted to their hands as ridiculous as themselves; or that Nelson failed to exact strict compliance with rules, wherever their infraction would be manifestly hurtful: but the habits of the two men upon ordinary occasions were opposite, and might be plainly seen by an inspection of the ships that bore their flags. So, too, Nelson was unequal to the far-seeing preparation and unshaken steadfastness of purpose required to sustain a long-continued operation; and would, therefore, ill have borne the monotony of a blockade, such as that which kept Collingwood for years on shipboard, or that which Jervis maintained off Brest with the Channel fleet. It is also undeniable, that, although nothing could exceed the beauty and perfect fitness of his dispositions for action when the whole operations were reduced to their ultimate point, yet he could not, like Jervis, have formed the plan of a naval campaign; or combined all the operations over a large range of coast and sea, making each part support the other, while all conduced to the main purpose. Thus, too, it may be doubted if St. Vincent would have displayed that sudden, almost intuitive promptitude of decision, the result more of an ardent soul than a penetrating saga-

city, which led Nelson to his marvellous course from the old world to the new in 1805; when he in an instant discovered that the French fleet had sailed to the West Indies, and having crossed the Atlantic in chase of them, again discovered that they had returned; and appeared in Europe almost as soon as the enemy arrived, whom the mere terror of his tremendous name had driven before him from hemisphere to hemisphere. That the movements of his illustrious master would have been as rapid, and his decision as prompt, had the conjecture impressed itself on his mind with the same force, none can doubt; and it may be further admitted, that such a peremptory will as the latter showed—such a fixed resolution to be obeyed,—such an obdurate, inflexible, unteachable ignorance of the word "impossible," when any preparation was to be made,—formed no part of Nelson's character; although he showed his master's profound and crass ignorance of that word—the mother tongue of little souls—when any mighty feat was to be done, such as souls like these cannot rise to comprehend. He who fought the great fight with the *Foudroyant*, would have engaged his Spanish first-rates, had his flag off St. Vincent floated like Nelson's over a seventy-four; but Nelson could not have put to sea in time for intercepting the Spanish fleet, any more than he could have cured or quelled the mutinous contagion which infected and distracted Jervis's crews on the eve of the action.

If, even in a military view, these great warriors thus differed, in all other respects they are rather to be contrasted than compared. While it was hard to tell whether Jervis excelled most in or out of his profession,



Engraved by T. Woodcock

LORD NELSON.

From an original Picture by Hoppner in his Majesty's Collection at St. James's.

Nelson was nothing on shore—nay, had weaknesses, which made the sea air as necessary, if not to his mental condition, at least to his renown, as it is to the bodily health of some invalids. The great mind of the one was the natural ally of pride; the simpler nature of the other became an easy prey to vanity. The latter felt so acutely the delight of being loved and admired by all—for to all he was kind himself,—that he could not either indulge in it with moderation, or conceal it from the world. Severely great, retiring within himself, occupied with his own reflections, the former disregarded the opinion of those whom he felt destined to command; and only descended to gain men's favour that he might avail himself of their co-operation, which he swiftly converted into service. While Nelson thought aloud, Jervis's words were little apt to betray the feelings that ruled, or the meditations that occupied his mind. The one was great only in action; the other combined in a rare, perhaps an unexampled manner, all the noble qualities which make council vigorous and comprehensive, with those which render execution prompt and sure. In the different temper of the men's minds, you could easily tell that the one would be generally popular, from the devotion which the multitude always pay to brilliant valour, and the affection which a gentle, kind, and innocent nature is calculated to win; while the other, with courage as undaunted, though eclipsed by greater and rarer qualities, stood too far removed from the weaknesses of ordinary men to appear in such an amiable light; and by the extent of his capacity and his habits of command, secured the respectful submission of others more than he

won their love. Yet, while of Nelson it was justly said that no serious breach of discipline was ever overlooked by him; of Jervis it was as truly observed, that all good officers—all men employed under him, whether in civil or military service—spoke of him as they felt, with admiration of his genius, approaching to enthusiasm; although the followers of his illustrious friend adored their idol with yet more fervent devotion. In his political opinions, this great commander was liberal and free, ever preferring the humane and enlightened side; and though loyally attached to the constitution of his country, yet careless what offence he might give to existing rulers by the unrestrained openness of his sentiments upon public affairs. Accordingly, he was even less a favourite with George III. and his court, than his great master, whose party was always opposed to that narrow-minded and bigoted prince.

It is truly painful to fling in that shade, without which this comparative sketch would lose all likeness to its original. The conduct of Lord St. Vincent was always high and decorous; and although he had a singular aversion to cant of any kind, nor to any more than that of an overdone and pharisaical morality, he never lowered, in his own person, the standard of private any more than of public virtue; wisely holding all conspicuous men as trustees for the character of the people, and in some sort representatives of the people's virtues. Lord Nelson, in an unhappy moment, suffered himself to fall into the snares laid for his honour by regal craft, and baited with fascinating female charms. But for this, he might have defied all the malice of his enemies, whether at sea or on shore, in the navy or at the court; because nothing is

more true than that great merit is safe from all enemies save one—safe and secure, so its possessor will only not join its foes. Unhappily, he formed this inauspicious junction, and the alliance was fatal to his fame. Seduced by the profligate arts of one woman, and the perilous fascinations of another, he lent himself to a proceeding deformed by the blackest colours of treachery and of murder. A temporary aberration of mind can explain though not excuse this dismal period of his history.

The sacred interests of truth and of virtue forbid us to leave the veil over these afflicting scenes undrawn. But, having once lifted it up, on seeing that it lays bare the failings of Nelson, we may be suffered to let it drop over a picture far too sad to dwell upon, even for a moment!

MR. HORNER—LORD KING—MR. RICARDO.

THE history of George III.'s long and eventful reign presents to us no one domestic event so important in its consequences, both immediate and remote, as the rash and hazardous tampering with the currency, first by Mr. Pitt, under the pressure of the pecuniary embarrassments which his wars had occasioned, and next by the Liverpool ministry and the Whigs in their determination to restore the standard suddenly and without compromise.

In 1797 the Bank of England was found to labour under extreme difficulties, from the export of bullion, the state of trade generally, and the financial demands of a Government which was borrowing millions yearly to fill the devouring gulf of war expenditure, and to subsidize half the continental powers. It was perceived that either the War or the Bank must stop, and the latter alternative was at once chosen. An Order in Council was issued to prohibit it from paying in specie; an Act was passed to sanction this order, and enable country banks to pay in Bank of England paper; and the slaves of the Government, through the press and in Parliament, contended for five long years that this stoppage had no tendency to depreciate Bank notes, and had no tendency to increase their issue! That the over-issue, and consequently the depreciation, was for some years

Engraved by W. Holl.

D. RICARDO.

From an Engraving by Hedgetts after the Picture by T. Phillips R.A.

extremely inconsiderable, is certain; but these talkers, reasoners they cannot be termed, denied even the tendency of the suspension to cause either over-issue or depreciation, and affirmed that both were wholly impossible.

In 1803, Lord King, caring little now for the argument of tendency, demonstrated by the plainest evidence of facts, that the depreciation had actually taken place; indeed the market price of gold having risen above its current price, distinctly proved it; and the only wonder is, that Mr. Thornton and Mr. Horner should not, in discussing the subject the year before, have come to the same conclusion.

It was not in the nature of this depreciation to stop, while its cause continued to operate. Mr. Pitt and his supporters, of course, denied it. He who had refused to believe in the existence of the army assembled at Dijon in 1800, and charged with disaffection a respectable mercantile man for writing to his London correspondent that this force was about to cross the Alps, and who never would listen to any account of it until it had destroyed the power of Austria at Marengo, might well be expected to shut his eyes against all the facts from Change-alley, and all the arguments of Lord King, to show that he had intruded into the country a debased currency, when he banished all gold from its circulation. But the transacters of traffic all over the world were as deaf to the charmer of the senate, as he was blind to the facts before his eyes; and the Bank-note soon fell to the price of 17*s.* and 18*s.* for a pound. Lord Grenville, to his great honour, was the first among the authors of the mischievous policy of 1797 to perceive

its consequences, and through the rest of his life, he was the man who most deeply regretted it.

In 1811 this evil had gone on to such a length, that the market price of gold rose from the Mint price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* to as high as 5*l.* 8*s.*, and at one moment it even reached 5*l.* 11*s.*, amounting to 42 per cent. of rise, and corresponding to an equal depreciation; so that the pound-note was about this time sunk to about 14*s.* value in specie. Accordingly, a regular traffic was carried on in this article; guineas and silver were bought and sold at this premium, and Bank-notes were taken at this discount.

This was the time chosen by the House of Commons for voting, by a great majority, a resolution that the Bank-note was worth twenty shillings, or that a guinea in gold was worth a pound-note and a shilling, and, with admirable consistency, to pass a law making it a misdemeanor to give more or less! There was but one farther step for such a body to take, and that was to declare, that two and two are equal to six, and to imprison any one who reckoned differently.

In spite of this gross and revolting absurdity, without any parallel in the history of deliberative bodies, and only to be matched in the annals of pampered despots mad with the enjoyment of power, the depreciation continued; the gold was wholly excluded from circulation; all that the Mint coined was instantly exported; neither debtors nor creditors knew how to reckon, and no man could tell the value of his property. In truth, the havoc which the depreciation had made with all the dealings of men was incalculable. Those who had lent their money when the currency was at par, were

compelled to receive the depreciated money in payment, and thus to lose 30 or 40 per cent. of their capital. Those who had let land or houses on a lease, must take so much less rent than they had stipulated to receive. Above all, those who had lent their money to the country were obliged to take two-thirds only of the interest for which they had bargained, and were liable to be paid off with two-thirds of the principal. Any considerable fluctuation in the money circulation ever produces habits of gambling and extravagance; and all the mercantile transactions of the community, as well as all its private concerns, assumed this complexion, to which the wicked and absurd policy of the Orders in Council, another consequence of the war, greatly contributed, by destroying the regular and respectable mercantile dealings of the country, and introducing a clandestine, contraband system, with the avowed intention of defeating the enemy's decrees against our trade, but also in order to mitigate underhand the pressure of our own retaliating measures.

At length the attention of Parliament, chiefly through the press, was awakened to the state of our affairs. The labours of the Bullion Committee under Mr. Horner, aided by Mr. Thornton and Sir H. Parnell, had opened all men's eyes to the fact of the depreciation. It was in vain that the incredible resolution of the same year, and, shameful to relate, passed three months after the debate in which Mr. Canning's inimitable speech had demonstrated the whole propositions of the subject, was cited against the over-issue, and its inevitable consequences. The Government at length saw that something must be done to stop the depreciation of the Bank

paper, and to restore the standard; and the only argument for delay was the necessity of continuing the war expenditure—one of the most urgent reasons, certainly, for instantly applying a remedy to the enormous evil.

At length the government of Lord Liverpool, under the influence of Mr. Peel, who was one of its most powerful supporters though not then in office, undertook the settlement of the question; and a committee was appointed, which, after a full investigation of the subject, reported in favour of an unqualified resumption of cash payments. Mr. Ricardo, not yet a Member of Parliament, but who had contributed more than any one, except Lord King and Mr. Horner, to the establishment of the depreciation, by his able writings upon the question, had a great influence upon the decision of the Committee and the plan adopted by it for restoring the standard. Mr. Peel being chairman of the Committee, brought in the Bill, which was warmly supported by the Whigs, they claiming a kind of peculiar property in the question, from the support which they had always given to Lord King and Mr. Horner.

The sudden return to specie had of course this inevitable consequence, that all debts contracted during the depreciation in the depreciated currency were now payable in good money at par, so that if any one had borrowed a thousand pounds during the last ten years, he had now to pay thirteen hundred. And so of all time bargains: tenants had their rents raised in the same proportion, and the country became liable to pay one hundred pounds for every seventy which it had borrowed. The effect produced upon all prices was equally considerable, but was not so pernicious to the country. The

case of landowners was, on the whole, the hardest. They had laid out money in purchases, or in improvements, and had generally borrowed a large portion of the sums thus expended. All prices were now reduced, and they were liable to pay their creditors twenty shillings for every fourteen that they had borrowed. The result was, that a considerable body of these unfortunate men were now left without enough to pay their creditors, and some of the class had even lost their whole income. It is fit to consider these things when so great a dissatisfaction is felt with their opposition to a repeal of the Corn Laws.

There are very many reflecting persons who now deeply lament the course which the Government and the Opposition combined together to pursue in 1819. The argument, that prices were only affected in proportion to the difference between the market and the Mint prices of gold at the period of greatest depreciation, seemed unsatisfactory, because those prices having risen in a greater proportion than the difference during the depreciation, it seemed reasonable to expect that this difference would not be the measure of the fall which the resumption of cash payments might occasion. However, one thing was certain, that no regard was shown in the great and sudden, and somewhat violent, measure of 1819, to the case of all borrowers during the depreciation, including the state itself, and that it was anything rather than a proof of relief being extended, or evidence of justice being done to the borrowers between 1810 and 1820, that the lenders between 1790 and 1800, who had been paid off between 1810 and 1820, had been severe sufferers by the depreciation of the currency

they were paid in. If the two bodies of borrowers and lenders had continued the same all along, the argument would have been unanswerable. In the actual case it was a gross absurdity; for it was assuming that one man might be fairly obliged to pay twenty shillings for every fourteen he had borrowed, because another man had been paid only fourteen shillings for every twenty he had lent.

Any account of George III.'s reign would be most imperfect which did not dwell upon this important part of it; and in order to complete the view of those statesmen who directed the public affairs during the same period, it is necessary that the eminent individuals should be commemorated, who, having borne the principal share in the controversy respecting the depreciation, may be considered as the guides of the sounder policy which led to a restored currency, although the manner of effecting the restoration is liable to much and just observation.

Mr. Horner having entered public life without any advantage of rank or fortune, though of a respectable family, had, in a very short time, raised himself to a high place among the members of the Whig party, (to which he was attached alike from sincere conviction, and from private friendship with its chiefs,) by the effect of a most honourable and virtuous character in private life, a steady adherence to moderate opinions in politics, talents of a high order, and information at once accurate and extensive upon all subjects connected with state affairs. Not that his studies had been confined to these; for his education, chiefly at Edinburgh, had been most liberal, and had put him in possession of far more

knowledge upon the subjects of general philosophy, than falls to the lot of most English statesmen. All the departments of moral science he had cultivated in an especial manner; and he was well grounded in the exacter sciences, although he had not pursued these with the same assiduity, or to any considerable extent. The profession of the law, which he followed, rather disciplined his mind than distracted it from the more attractive and elegant pursuits of literary leisure; and his taste, the guide and control of eloquence, was manly and chaste, erring on the safer side of fastidiousness. Accordingly, when he joined his party in Parliament, his oratory was of a kind which never failed to produce a great effect, and he only did not reach the highest place among debaters, because he was cut off prematurely, while steadily advancing upon the former successes of his career. For although in the House of Commons he had never given the reins to his imagination, and had rather confined himself to powerful argument and luminous statement than indulged in declamation, they who knew him, and had heard him in other debates, were aware of his powers as a declaimer, and expected the day which should see him shining also in the more ornamental parts of oratory.

The great question of the Currency had been thoroughly studied by him at an early period of life, when the writings of Mr. Henry Thornton and Lord King first opened men's eyes to the depreciation which Mr. Pitt's ill-starred policy had occasioned. With the former he had partaken of the doubts by which his work left the question overcast in 1802; the admirable and indeed

decisive demonstration of the latter in the next year, entirely removed those doubts; and Mr. Horner, following up the able paper upon the subject, which he had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* at its first appearance, with a second upon Lord King's work, avowed his conversion, and joined most powerfully with those who asserted that the currency had been depreciated, and the metallic money displaced by the inconvertible Bank paper. In 1810, he moved for that famous Bullion Committee, whose labours left no doubt upon the matter in the minds of any rational person endowed with even a tolerable clearness of understanding; and the two speeches which he made, upon moving his resolutions the year after, may justly be regarded as finished models of eloquence applied to such subjects. The fame which they acquired for him was great, solid, lasting; and though they might be surpassed, they were certainly not eclipsed, by the wonderful resources of close argument, profound knowledge, and brilliant oratory, which Mr. Canning brought to bear upon the question, and of which no one more constantly than Mr. Horner acknowledged the transcendant merits.

When the subject of the Holy Alliance was brought forward by Mr. Brougham, early in the session of 1816, Mr. Horner, who had greatly distinguished himself on all the questions connected with what the Ministers pleasantly called "the final settlement of Europe," during the absence of the former from Parliament, was now found honestly standing by his friend, and almost alone of the regular Whig party declaring his belief in the deep-laid conspiracy, which the hypocritical phrases

and specious pretences of the Allies were spread out to cover. The part he took upon the debate to which the treaties gave rise, showed that there was no portion of the famous arrangements made at Vienna, to which he had not sedulously and successfully directed his attention. His speech on that occasion was admitted to be one of the best ever delivered in Parliament; and it was truly refreshing to hear questions of Foreign Policy, usually discussed with the superficial knowledge, the narrow and confused views to be expected in the productions of ephemeral pens, now treated with a depth of calm reflection, an enlarged perception of complicated relations, and a provident forethought of consequences, only exceeded by the spirit of freedom and justice which animated the whole discourse, and the luminous clearness of statement which made its drift plain to every hearer.

But this able, accomplished, and excellent person was now approaching the term assigned to his useful and honourable course by the mysterious dispensations under which the world is ruled. A complication of extraordinary maladies soon afterwards precluded all further exertion, and, first confining his attention to the care of his health, before a year was over from the date of his last brilliant display, brought him deeply and universally lamented to an untimely grave.

It deserves to be noted, as a marvellous instance of that truly learned conjecture by which the skill of Dr. Baillie was distinguished, that after many other physicians had severally given their opinions on the nature of Mr. Horner's hidden complaints, Dr. Baillie at once decided against all those theories; but, when he came to propose his own, avowed the extreme uncertainty in which so obscure and difficult a case had left him. However, he said that he guessed it was

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent. Nimium vobis Romana propago
Visa potens, Superi, propria hæc si dona fuissent!"

When the new writ was moved, on his decease, for the borough of St. Mawes, which he represented under the liberal and enlightened patronage of the Buckingham family, Lord Morpeth* gave a striking sketch of his character. Mr. Canning, Sir S. Romilly, Mr. W. Elliott, and others, joined in the conversation, and Mr. H. Lascelles† observed, with universal assent, that if the form of the proceeding could have admitted of a question being put upon Mr. Horner's merits, there would not have been heard one dissentient voice.

To Lord King was due the detection and the proof of the effects actually produced by Mr. Pitt's fatal measures, as has already been stated; and the excellent individual who rendered so great a service to his country, was distinguished for qualities of a very high order. To a strong natural understanding, which eminently excelled in clearness of perception and quickness of apprehension, he joined habits of study seldom found in the patrician order, but which, as well as his sound and enlightened principles, might well be expected in one who had the glory of descending from the second of English

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one or the other of two maladies so rare that he had only seen a case or two of the one, and the other never but in a Museum of morbid anatomy. When the body was opened by Vacca at Pisa, where he died, it was found that both those rare diseases existed.

* Now Lord Carlisle.

† Now Lord Harewood.

philosophers; for he was the personal representative of Locke,—his grandfather, the Lord Chancellor King, having been the nephew and ward of that illustrious person. Although he had far too little ambition, too little thirst for power or for literary fame, ever to exert his talents in anything like their full extent, he had passed his life in reading, with little other object than to occupy his time agreeably and to improve his mind. His information, therefore, was extensive and accurate; with most parts of historical, philosophical, and theological controversy, he was familiarly conversant; and he had gathered from all his studies and all his reflections, a firm belief in the title of the people to as large a portion of liberty and of power as they are capable of enjoying with advantage to themselves; a deeply rooted conviction of the sinfulness as well as the folly of intolerance, religious or civil; and an habitual veneration for the pursuit of truth and truth alone, in all inquiries whether practical or speculative. In following this worthy object he was as little to be daunted by perils in action as to be scared by consequences in argument. Difficulties had more influence over him by far than dangers; for though he was of an active turn of mind, and applied himself to his favourite pursuits, whether of agriculture or study, with assiduity; yet as he had no great stimulus from ambition or from vanity, he cared little to struggle with what cost trouble, as long as he could occupy himself as well in easier pursuits. The firmness with which he stood up on all occasions for his principles, the great doctrines of civil and religious liberty, would have done honour to the saints and martyrs of the seventeenth century. The offence which he gave by his warfare

with ecclesiastical establishments never abated his hostility. Superficial men fancied they saw in this course an indication of indifference to religion itself; whereas, one of his chief reasons for objecting to a state endowment, was its tendency to undermine religion, as he thought whether rightly or erroneously, and its liability to be perverted into an engine against the liberties of the country.

With the solid qualities which have been described, he possessed others of a lighter kind, and to the more valuable acquirements of extensive study, he added several of the more trivial but more elegant accomplishments. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous: his taste in composition was pure; his style natural, simple, and clear. Nothing can be more admirably written than his celebrated Tract on the Currency; of which the philosophy, too, is as excellent as the argument and the inferences are practical. He had an excellent taste in gardening and in architecture, down to its most minute details; nor was there a more perfect draughtsman for the more ornamental parts of rooms, upon the pure models which in Italy he had studied, than the political economist who could unravel all the mysteries of currency and exchanges, the philosopher who could throw light on the darker passages of metaphysical science.

This distinguished person was equally delightful in private and respectable in public life. His gaiety was perpetual; natural, lively, playful, no one was more easily interested and amused; few brought more into the stock of entertainment. The difference of ranks was probably less known to him than to any one of the order to which he belonged. Pride of every kind was as

alien to his nature as vanity. He seemed unconscious that the Chancellor King or the philosopher Locke had ever lived; and equally unconscious of his own existence. It should seem, indeed, that the fact of the Lord Chancellor's existence has been also obliterated from the recollection of his surviving family; for the name and title of King has been abolished, and some other one wholly unknown substituted in its stead. If this has been done from a noble desire to illustrate an obscure title by great actions, 'tis well. But in the mean time it may be remarked, that the Government ought to have corrected this apparent want of memory, and peremptorily refused an arrangement by which all traces are expunged from the Peerage of one who was an ornament to the order; one who was elevated to his rank for great public services, whose name was the property of his profession and his country.

THE third of the persons who have been mentioned in connexion with the Currency question, was Mr. Ricardo; a person of good information and great ability, though not overtopping all others in learning, nor entitled to be reckoned a man of genius. The originality of some speculations on political economy, in which he engaged, was, indeed, undeniable; for, although the doctrine of rent now generally received had been broached some years before by Sir Edward West, afterwards Chief Judge at Bombay, he delivered it in an obscure pamphlet, which being published anonymously attracted no attention, and was quite unknown both to Mr. Malthus and Mr.

Ricardo at the time their controversy began. This furnishes an additional proof, however, of the truth so universally observed in all departments of science, that, discoveries being made gradually, and when many men's minds are bent in the same direction, the new light seldom breaks upon one eye alone, and a doubt may almost always be raised who is the person that really made the step.

The habits of this able and excellent person were those of business, and business of a contracted kind, as little likely to fit the mind for abstract and general inquiries as to point the notice towards them. His life had been passed on the Stock Exchange, like that of so many members of the Jewish persuasion to which his family originally belonged. But his leisure hours had been devoted to study, and no man was better acquainted with all the ordinary topics of political information. When the Bullion Question was forced upon the attention of Parliament and the country, by the manifest effects of inconvertible bank-paper having so long been issued by the Bank of England, and still more, perhaps, by the excessive issue of country bank-notes, contrary to all the speculative arguments of the Pitt school, founded upon a fallacious notion that their being made payable in Bank of England paper, imposed an effectual check upon their issue, whereas country people, preferring paper on which names well known to them were seen, never thought of making any such exchange, Mr. Ricardo took a part in the controversy that arose, and published one or two tracts on the depreciation. Lord King had first demonstrated this as early as 1804, the book of Mr. Thornton, and

Mr. Horner's able and learned analysis of it in the "Edinburgh Review," having left this important question altogether undecided. But Mr. Ricardo's arguments and his facts, added to his great practical knowledge of all monetary questions, produced a powerful impression, and greatly aided the proceedings of the first Bullion Committee, that of 1810. As a literary performance the pamphlet had a merit almost equal to that of its argument and its information. The style was simple, clear, and nervous; showing powers, both of reasoning and of explanation, which were of a high order, and disfigured by no deviation whatever from the rules of correct taste.

During the few succeeding years, in the enjoyment of high reputation among political economists, and taking a distinguished place among literary men, he continued his labours as an author, and, consolidating his views in one work, gave to the world his excellent treatise on his favourite science, which, with Mr. Malthus's Essay on the "Principle of Population," divides the claim to a second place, after the "Wealth of Nations," among the books which this country has produced upon the important science of Economics. Meanwhile his controversial discussions with Mr. Malthus and others were conducted in a spirit of candour and genuine unaffected good-humour, joined to first-rate ability and argumentative skill, that makes them a model for all succeeding combatants in the fields of reasoning. The distinguished men who carried on this discussion in public, through the press, betrayed no heat or impatience of temper—no anxiety to take an unfair advantage—no wish to catch at trifling omissions or slips—nothing

of heat or animosity whatever; they were manifestly impressed with one only desire and in pursuit of one object alone—desirous only that the truth should be discovered—the truth, the sole object of their search; and although there was involved in the contest the question of their own fame, it was conducted as calmly as a game at chess or the investigation of a problem in the mathematics.

The Bill which usually goes by Mr. Peel's name had been passed for restoring the currency a short time before Mr. Ricardo came into Parliament; but the Committee (commonly called the Second Bullion Committee), out of whose Report the measure arose, had fully adopted the principle and had clearly followed the plan laid down by Mr. Ricardo. When he took his place in the House of Commons, after the high reputation which had preceded him, he necessarily appeared to some disadvantage under the weight of the great expectations formed of him. But, as far as these were reasonable, however ample, they were fully answered. His speaking, his conduct, his manner, were all unexceptionable, and all suited to the man, his high station among philosophers, his known opinions on political affairs, his kindly nature, and his genuine modesty. There was something about him, chiefly a want of all affectation as well as pretension in everything he said or did, that won the respect of every party. His matter was ever of high value. Whether you agreed or differed with him, you were well pleased to have it brought out and made to bear upon the question, if indeed the pursuit of right and truth was your object. His views were often, indeed, abundantly theoretical, some-

times too refined for his audience, occasionally extravagant from his propensity to follow a right principle into all its consequences, without duly taking into account in practice the condition of things to which he was applying it, as if a mechanician were to construct an engine without taking into consideration the resistance of the air in which it was to work, or the strength and the weight and the friction of the parts of which it was to be made. When he propounded, as the best way of extricating us from our financial embarrassments, that the capital of the country should be taxed 700 or 800 millions, and the debt at once paid off, and defended this scheme upon the twofold ground, that what a debtor owes is always to be deducted from his property and regarded as belonging to his creditors, and that the expense of managing the debt and raising the revenue to pay the interest would be a large saving to the nation, he assumed as true two undeniable facts, but he drew a practical inference not more startling at its first statement than inadmissible when closely examined upon the clearest grounds of both expediency and justice. It may even be doubted whether the only feasible portion of the plan, the diminution of interest from time to time effected by threats of repaying the principal, or rather redeeming the annuities (the only thing to which the public creditor is entitled), be not a step too far in this direction both as to justice and policy. In like manner he always greatly undervalued the amount of the depreciation in the currency upon prices generally, estimating it solely by the difference between the Mint price and the Market price of gold; and so confidently did he believe in this speculative estimate, that his practical plan for restor-

ing the currency was grounded upon it. But while such were his errors, and those of a kind to excite very strong feelings in certain large and important classes in the House of Commons, he was uniformly and universally respected for the sterling qualities of his capacity and his character, which were acknowledged by all.

His speaking was of an admirable description; clear, simple, correct in diction, copious in argument, pregnant with information, but never thrown away. He reserved the share which he took in debate for questions to which his attention had been particularly directed, with which he was familiar, and to which he attached great importance. Hence, even his extreme opinions upon questions connected with the reform of the constitution in Church and State gave no offence; for he appeared not to court the opportunity of delivering them, but as if compelled by a sense of duty to declare his mind, careless or indisposed otherwise to make a speech. Few men have, accordingly, had more weight in Parliament; certainly none who, finding but a very small body of his fellow-members to agree with his leading opinions, might be said generally to speak against the sense of his audience, ever commanded a more patient or even favourable hearing; and, as this was effected without any of the more ordinary powers of oratory or of entertainment possessed by others, it might be regarded as the triumph of reason, intelligence, and integrity over untoward circumstances and alien natures. The regret felt for his loss was in proportion to the high estimation in which he had been held during the three years that he sat in Parliament; and the country, as well as its representatives, justly sorrowed

over a great light extinguished prematurely, which had already proved so useful, and which might have been expected to render so much greater and longer service in illuminating the world.

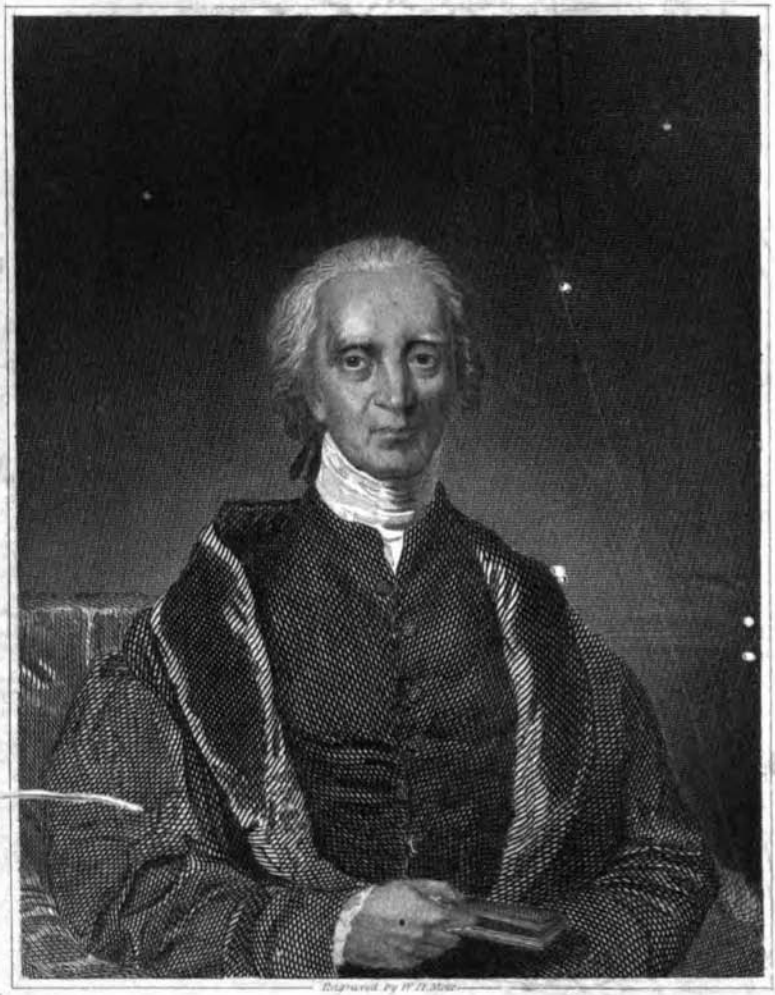
NOTE.—It may seem an omission in a work professing to give the orators as well as the statesmen of the last age, that Curran should not appear among them,—the greatest orator after Grattan and Plunket that Ireland has produced, and in every respect worthy of being placed on a line with the great masters of speech. But there is really an insuperable difficulty in attempting a task which has been so inimitably performed already, and within only a few years. Mr. C. Phillips's sketch of his friend is certainly one of the most extraordinary pieces of biography ever produced. Nothing can be more lively and picturesque than its representation of the famous original. The reader of it can hardly be said not to have personally known Curran and Curran's contemporaries. It has been justly said of this admirable work that it is Boswell *minus* Bozzy. No library should be without such a piece; and instead of hopelessly attempting any addition to it, there will be more use in copying over one of the numerous characteristic descriptions in which it abounds.

"I caught the first glimpse of the little man through the vista of his garden. Thus he was on a third time—afterwards I saw him in a dress which you would imagine he had borrowed from his [illegible] staff; his hands in his sides; his under-lip protruded; his face almost parallel with the horizon—and the important step, and the eternal attitude only varied by the pause during which his eye glanced from his guest to his watch, and from his watch reproachfully to his dining-room;—it was an invariable peculiarity—one second after four o'clock, and he would not wait for the Viceroy. The moment he perceived me, he took me by the hand, said he would not have any one introduce me; and with a manner which I often thought was *charmed*, at once banished every apprehension, and completely familiarised me at the Priory. I had often seen Curran—often heard him—often read him; but no man ever knew anything about him who did not see him at his own table, with the few whom he selected. He was a little convivial deity; he soared in every region, and was at

home in all—he touched everything, and seemed as if he had created it; he mastered the human heart with the same ease that he did his violin. You wept, and you laughed, and you wondered; and the wonderful creature who made you do all at will, never let it appear that he was more than your equal, and was quite willing, if you chose, to become your auditor. It is said of Swift that his rule was to allow a minute's pause after he had concluded, and then, if no person took up the conversation, to recommence himself. Curran had no conversational rule whatever: he spoke from impulse, and he had the art so to draw you into a participation, that, though you felt an inferiority, it was quite a contented one. Indeed nothing could exceed the urbanity of his demeanour. At the time I spoke of he was turned of sixty, yet he was as playful as a child. The extremes of youth and age were met in him: he had the experience of the one, and the simplicity of the other."—(Recollections of Curran and some of his Contemporaries, *p.* 3.)

Let one specimen of Curran's powers be added, and it is one of the most certainly known to be unpremeditated of any in the history of the rhetorical art; for who could ever have supposed a judge capable of sneering at a barrister's poverty by telling him he suspected "his law library was rather contracted?" Yet this was the brutal remark of Judge Robinson, the author of many stupid, slavish, and scurrilous political pamphlets, and by his demerits raised to the eminence which he thus disgraced.

"It is very true, my Lord, that I am poor, and the circumstance has certainly somewhat curtailed my library: my books are not numerous, but they are select, and I hope they have been perused with proper dispositions. I have prepared myself for this high profession rather by the study of a few good works, than by the composition of a great many bad ones. I am not ashamed of my poverty; but I should be ashamed of my wealth, could I have stooped to acquire it by servility and corruption. If I rise not to rank, I shall at least be honest; and should I ever cease to be so, many an example shows me that an ill-gained elevation, by making me the more conspicuous, would only make me the more universally and the more notoriously contemptible!"



Engraved by W.H. Mote

CHARLES CARROLL.

From a Paint by Longacre after an Drawing
by C. Harding

CHARLES CARROL.

[*The following was omitted in its proper place in Vol. I.*]

We do a thing of very pernicious tendency if we confine the records of history to the most eminent personages who bear a part in the events which it commemorates. There are often others whose sacrifices are much greater, whose perils are more extreme, and whose services are nearly as valuable as those of the more prominent actors, and who yet have, from chance or by the modesty of a retiring and unpretending nature, never stood forward to fill the foremost places, or occupy the larger spaces in the eye of the world. To forget such men is as inexpedient for the public service as it is unjust towards the individuals. But the error is far greater of those who, in recording the annals of revolution, confine their ideas of public merit to the feats of leaders against established tyranny, or the triumphs of orators in behalf of freedom. Many a man in the ranks has done more by his zeal and his self-devotion than any chief to break the chains of a nation, and among such men Charles Carrol, the last survivor of the Patriarchs of the American Revolution, is entitled to the first place.

His family was settled in Maryland ever since the reign of James II., and had during that period been possessed of the same ample property, the largest in the Union. It stood, therefore, at the head of the aristocracy of the country; was naturally in alliance with the Government; could gain nothing while it risked every-

thing by a change of dynasty ; and therefore, according to all the rules and the prejudices and the frailties which are commonly found guiding the conduct of men in a crisis of affairs, Charles Carrol might have been expected to take part against the revolt, certainly never to join in promoting it. Such, however, was not this patriotic person. He was among the foremost to sign the celebrated Declaration of Independence. All who did so were believed to have devoted themselves and their families to the Furies. As he set his hand to the instrument, the whisper ran round the Hall of Congress, "There go some millions of property !" And there being many of the same name, when he heard it said, "Nobody will know what Carrol it is," as no one signed more than his name, and one at his elbow addressing him remarked, "You'll get clear—there are several of the name—they will never know which to take." "Not so!" he replied, and instantly added his residence, "of Carrolton."

He was not only a man of firm mind, and steadily-fixed principles ; he was also a person of great accomplishments and excellent abilities. Educated in the study of the civil law at one of the French colleges, he had resided long enough in Europe to perfect his learning in all the ordinary branches of knowledge. On his return to America, he sided with the people against the mother country, and was soon known and esteemed as among the ablest writers of the Independent party. The confidence reposed in him soon after was so great, that he was joined with Franklin in the commission of three sent to obtain the concurrence of the Canadians in the revolt. He was a Member of Congress for the first

two trying years, when that body was only fourteen in number, and might rather be deemed a cabinet council for action than anything like a deliberative senate. He then belonged, during the rest of the war, to the legislature of his native state, Maryland, until 1788, when he was elected one of the United States' Senate, and continued for three years to act in this capacity. The rest of his time, until he retired from public life in 1804, was passed as a senator of Maryland. In all these capacities he has left behind him a high reputation for integrity, eloquence, and judgment.

It is usual with Americans to compare the last thirty years of his life to the Indian summer*—sweet as it is tranquil, and partaking neither of the fierce heats of the earlier, nor the chilling frosts of a later season. His days were both crowned with happiness, and lengthened far beyond the usual period of human existence. He lived to see the people whom he had once known 900,000 in number pass twelve millions ; a handful of dependent colonists become a nation of freemen ; a dependent settlement assume its place among the first-rate powers of the world ; and he had the delight of feeling that to this consummation he had contributed his ample share. As no one had run so large a risk by joining the revolt, so no one had adhered to the standard of freedom more firmly, in all its fortunes, whether waving in triumph or over disaster and defeat. He never had despaired of the commonwealth, nor ever had lent his ear to factious councils ; never had shrunk from any sacri-

* What we call the Michaelmas summer ; the "short summer" of the south of Europe.

fice, nor ever had pressed himself forward to the exclusion of men better fitted to serve the common cause. Thus it happened to him that no man was more universally respected and beloved; none had fewer enemies; and, notwithstanding the ample share in which the gifts of fortune were showered upon his house, no one grudged its prosperity.

It would, however, be a very erroneous view of his merits and of the place which he filled in the eye of his country, which should represent him as only respected for his patriotism and his virtues. He had talents and acquirements which enabled him effectually to help the cause he espoused. His knowledge was various; and his eloquence was of a high order. It was, like his character, mild and pleasing; like his deportment, correct and faultless. Flowing smoothly, and executing far more than it seemed to aim at, every one was charmed by it, and many were persuaded. His taste was peculiarly chaste, for he was a scholar of extraordinary accomplishments; and few, if any, of the speakers in the New World came nearer the model of the more refined oratory practised in the parent state. Nature and ease, want of effort, gentleness united with sufficient strength, are noted as its enviable characteristics; and as it thus approached the tone of conversation, so, long after he ceased to appear in public, his private society is represented as displaying much of his rhetorical powers, and has been compared, not unhappily, by a late writer, to the words of Nestor, which fell like vernal snows as he spake to the people. In commotions, whether of the senate or the multitude, such a speaker, by his calmness and firmness joined, might well hope to

have the weight, and to exert the control and mediatory authority of him, *pietate gravis et meritis*, who

——regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.

In 1825, on the anniversary of the Half Century after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the day was kept over the whole Union as a grand festival, and observed with extraordinary solemnity. As the clock struck the hour when that mighty instrument had been signed, another bell was also heard to toll: it was the passing bell of John Adams, one of the two surviving Presidents who had signed the Declaration. The other was Jefferson; and it was soon after learned that at this same hour he too had expired in a remote quarter of the country.

There now remained only Carrol to survive his fellows; and he had already reached extreme old age; but he lived yet seven years longer, and, in 1832, at the age of 95, the venerable patriarch was gathered to his fathers.*

The Congress went into mourning on his account for three months, as they had done for Washington, and for him alone.

The historian of George III.'s reign, who should confine his attention to the Statesmen of England, would

* His family yet flourishes in America, and three of his granddaughters are allied by marriage to three noble families in England: among them one is now Marchioness Wellesley, the amiable and accomplished consort of that great statesman, whose outset in life was marked by a cordial support of American Independence.

exhibit but a faint picture of the times, and very imperfectly represent even those who administered the affairs of our own country. The eminent men to whose hands the destinies of France were committed during the eventful period of the Revolution, exercised an almost direct influence over the fortunes of every neighbouring nation; and a just view of the course pursued by our statesmen cannot be obtained without considering the French rulers to whom they were opposed, or with whom they negotiated. The order of time, and indeed the relation of events, points first to the name of

NECKAR.

FEW men have ever risen from humble, even obscure beginnings, to a station of vast importance, both for wealth and power, for personal aggrandizement and influence over the fate of the world, with so little of genius as Neckar; and it is a grateful refreshment to the mind of the historian, weary with contemplating successful vice or great resources expended in committing great crimes, to dwell upon one example of more ordinary merits recompensed by all the gifts of fortune, and stern virtue, unsustained by brilliant capacity, conferring upon its possessor supreme power and far-resounding fame.

The clerk in a Paris banking-house, though of a respectable and indeed ancient Genevan family, he became early in life, by the successful pursuit of commerce, one of the richest men in France. The student of letters for his amusement, and without anything like genius in the sciences or the *belles lettres*, he lived to be the centre of all literary society in the most refined capital of Europe, to which he was a stranger by his birth. The trader first, then the envoy of the smallest state in Europe—a state rather known among other powers as the butt of their gibes than the companion of their councils—he rose to be chief minister of the greatest among them; and the young adventurer from Geneva, by his errors, or by his patriotism, as men may

variously view it, lived to be the proximate cause of that mighty event which shook all Europe to its centre, and exercises to this hour an influence universal and unparalleled over the destinies of the world.

Neckar was sent from his father's house at Geneva to learn business in the banking-house of Vernet: he soon acquired the ascendant where he had been only clerk; and, becoming afterwards partner in the house of Thelluson, he at once, by his talents for business, established the splendid fortune of that great firm and became the architect of his own. Retiring at an early age from mercantile pursuits with an ample fortune, he was chosen resident for the republic of Geneva at the court of Versailles, and soon became universally esteemed in the circles of the aristocracy, as he had been in those of commerce, for his amiable manners and his strict integrity. His information was extensive, and it was accurate: he had especially studied finance, and was extremely knowing on all matters connected with it,—a subject of peculiar and universal interest at the time when he came into patrician society. His wealth we may well suppose added greatly to the charms of his society in a luxurious capital like Paris, and was not even without its effect on the courtly circles of Versailles. But his conversation and his manners were calculated to win their way independent of a brilliant fortune; the former—lively, cheerful, elegant, and instructive; the latter—simple, natural, and, if somewhat pedantic, yet honest and manly. Indeed, of that which the great vulgar are so wont to look down upon as pedantry, it may be observed, that its title to our respect is not trifling: for it necessarily implies intellectual qualifica-

tions in at least one department, and so much honesty and openness of character as will not consent, for fashion's sake, to wear a mask. It must be added that our French neighbours have always deemed pedantry and pedantic manners a much lighter offence in the code of social taste than ourselves. In the gayest circles of Paris such a taunt goes but for little—nay, is often found rather a passport to notice, if not to respect; while the less frivolous English, as they deem themselves, turn from it with aversion, or look down upon it with contempt. This difference, probably, arises from the greater zeal with which the Frenchman throws himself into any pursuit he embarks in, careless of his dignity, and fearless of the ridicule attendant upon those who go to extremes. He is, generally, therefore, prone to the very courses which are characteristic of the pedant, the man of a single idea, the enthusiast who, absorbed in a single pursuit, forgets that others sympathise little with him. He has, as it were, habitually and naturally the pedantic diathesis, and hence is either insensible to its effects on others, or easily becomes patient of them himself.

But Neckar had consecrated his leisure to pursuits more important than shining in the society of either the mercantile or the aristocratic community. As early as 1773, his "Eloge de Colbert" carried away the prize of the Academy; and when the anxiety respecting the public sustenance was at its height, he distinguished himself still more by his admirable essay on the corn-laws and trade—"La Legislation et le Commerce des Grains." From this period his accession to the management of the French finances was regarded as

certain; and in 1777, when their derangement pressed the Government most severely, on the eve of its embarking in the American war, he was clothed with the high office of Director-General.

Nothing could be more wise, nor anything more brilliant, than his first operations. He established order where he found confusion to prevail; where darkness and mystery shrouded each branch of the administration, he let in the wholesome light of day; in every department the inflexible enemy of fraud made strict honesty the basis of all his operations, and rigorously exacted from others the same purity of which he furnished himself so bright an example. He began by refusing the whole salary and emoluments attached to his office. Short-sighted men joined with those whose interests were threatened by this course, in considering it as the fruit of a vain-glorious disposition. It was nothing of the kind: it was the wise and well-considered precaution of arming himself with the power to extirpate all abuses, and reduce all useless payments, and even to press hard upon the subsistence of individuals wherever the public good required the sacrifice. How else could he have suppressed six hundred places about Court, and in the Treasury, at one blow—the mighty achievement which signalized his accession to power? But he stopped not there. Some of the most oppressive remnants of the feudal system were abolished; the heaviest of the taxes (the Taille or property-tax) was limited and fixed; the most substantial reforms were introduced into the administration of hospitals and prisons; the foundation of yet more extensive improvements was laid in the establishment of Provincial As-

semblies; and a general system of accounting extended to all the branches of the administration, so as to exact a full pecuniary responsibility from each. It must be added as a set-off against the charges which involve this honest minister in the blame of occasioning the revolution ten years later, that all the reforms of his first administration were prudently devised and framed upon a moderate scale, guided by well-considered views, and effected so gradually, that a second step never was taken until the safety and advantages of the first had been submitted to the only sure test, that of actual experience.

In some departments he had found resistance to his reforms, which his firmness, joined to his suavity of manner, and sustained by his unimpeachable integrity, enabled him to overcome. But Sartine, formerly chief of the police, who had been made minister of marine by the prime minister, Maurepas, reckoning on the support of his patron, refused to adopt the system of accounting which formed the corner-stone of Neckar's whole plan; and Neckar prevailed on the King to supersede him, appointing in his room the Maréchal de Castries, a man of the highest honour and greatest zeal for the public service. Maurepas never forgave this proceeding. Availing himself of the clamour raised by Neckar's famous "Compte Rendû," and by his ordinance for calling together Provincial Assemblies, so odious to the ancient Parliaments, he brought about the vexatious treatment which led to the resignation of the able and honest minister, who in five years had changed a deficit of 35,000,000 of francs into a surplus of 10,000,000, without imposing one single new tax of any

kind, and under all the burdensome war expenses which had been added to the former peace establishment. It must, however, be admitted that, although Maurepas worked for this purpose, Neckar was not justified in resigning his office. The refusal of his demand to have the *entrée du conseil* (a seat in the cabinet) was hardly sufficient, if in all other particulars he had the firm support of the court; and, as nothing could exceed the distress into which his resignation plunged the royal family, so no effort was omitted for his restoration. It is generally believed that, had he been in office at the death of Maurepas, then fourscore years old and upwards, he must have succeded to his place, and that he would certainly have prevented both the financial embarrassments which led to the Revolution, and the assemblage of the States, which, occasioned by the deficit, was its proximate cause.

The courts of Vienna, Naples, and St. Petersburgh all besought him in vain to undertake the direction of their affairs as finance minister: but he preferred literary leisure; and his work on finance, published in 1784, had such success, that 80,000 copies of it were sold in a few days. Calonne, who succeeded him in France, soon threw all into the confusion from which he had extricated the revenue and expenditure of the country; and when Brienne became prime minister, after calling the States General together, and plunging the finances into still worse confusion than before, he was compelled again to send for Neckar, who came to the assistance of the nation, but came far too late; and he said so himself on consenting again to take office—"Why have they not given me the Archbishop's (Brienne's) fifteen months? But now it is too late." He found the public securities

unsaleable in the market, the country threatened with famine, the Parliament in banishment, the Bastille filled with deputies from the provinces, the whole country distracted with factious violence, and an immediate assembling of the States General distinctly promised. His name at once restored public credit—the feelings so strongly excited were calmed—the prison-doors flew open—the exile of the Parliament was ended—and the progress of famine arrested by the arrival of provisions. But he also found two questions standing ripe for decision; on both his firmness failed; and either was sufficient to stay or to accelerate a revolution. The property-qualification of deputies to the States General he referred to the notables, whom he most injudiciously reassembled, and who decided against it. The proportion of the Tiers Etat to the nobles and the clergy in the States General he finally decided should be double of either, or equal to both, and decided, after having at first framed his report against this double proportion, nay, having actually printed that document. A man so wanting in fixed opinions, or so infirm of purpose in pursuing his own views, was wholly unfit to guide the vessel of the state amidst the storms and currents of the revolutionary times. A letter which he wrote on the eve of the States' assembling has been frequently cited and even admired. "Je vois la grande vague s'avancer; est-ce pour m'engloutir?" Had he done all in his power to turn it back, or to protect the country from its fury—nay, had he done nothing to increase its volume and to accelerate its advance—this passage might have been deemed worthy of praise. But in him whose vacillation and incapacity had been such as we have just

seen, a more silly observation, or one indicating more puerile vanity, can hardly be imagined. It even betrayed a selfish absorption in the contemplation of his own fate, wholly unworthy of the man and very unlike his general character. It looked as if his whole efforts had been bestowed upon endeavours to get himself out of his difficulties—as if his own escape or his own destruction alone occupied his thoughts at the moment of the crisis which his imbecile conduct had brought upon his country.

A conduct beginning with decision may often end in irresolution; but it is rare, indeed, that vacillation, marking the earlier scenes of a great action, should become steadied and give place to manly determination. In the great question of votes by chambers or by individuals, which immediately brought on, and, indeed, involved, the decisive measure of Abbé Sieyes (one of his three grand strokes of policy*), the union of the three in one chamber, Neckar's irresolution continued as before; and he is understood to have obtained from the King, by next thing to compulsion, his letter of the 25th of June, sanctioning the union of the three orders. But within a fortnight after he was suddenly dismissed, and ordered to leave the kingdom. This was the signal of the Revolution, which broke out on the 14th of July, and

* The other two were the National Guard and the Departmental Division. Certainly it is rarely that so many and such vast projects have been found to proceed from the same quarter; and this accounts for the respect in which M. Talleyrand, and other French statesmen, not generally lavish of their admiration, always held a person, to all who saw him, at least during the last twenty years of his life, apparently much overvalued.

Neckar's triumphant recall immediately followed the taking of the Bastille.

Now began that series of feeble and inconsistent propositions, yet more feebly and inconsistently supported—of compliances one day with the people, another with the court—of stupefied inaction, alternating with pointless and ill-conducted activity, which composed his second administration, and justly lost him the favour of the people, without for a moment gaining the confidence of the King, or the nobles, or the church. After ten months spent in the outward semblance of power, but without any real authority or even influence whatever, the most degrading position that man can fill, he quietly resigned his office and quitted the country. Nor was contrast more marked ever exhibited in this world than between his former dismissal, which, throwing all France into convulsions, was the immediate occasion of the Revolution, and his voluntary retirement less than a year after, which passed as unheeded as the most insignificant event of the day,—between his return to power on the shoulders of the people in 1789 and his journey towards the Lake of Geneva in 1790, through the same country, where his life was in hourly danger from the violence of the same people, among whose execrations he retreated from France.

As regarded his own tastes and feelings this reverse did not greatly affect him; for, though not void of ambition, and accessible enough to vanity, he had passed the latter portion of his life, particularly the last ten months, in a state which he described to be one of unceasing torture, always in a false position, constantly responsible for proceedings which he could not control,

and apprehensive at each step of the most dreadful evils, which soon overtook the country in a measure yet more fatally abundant than his worst fears had foretold. He now, therefore, felt his retirement from public life, and from France, torn by fierce factions, and the theatre of violent convulsions, as a great relief, instead of a deprivation. In his quiet retirement at Coppet, he could enjoy the society of the early friends whom he loved, and devote himself to those literary pursuits which he had never abandoned. In the bosom of his accomplished family, too, he had resources of learned and social intercourse which are given to few indeed. Of his celebrated daughter, Madame de Staël, the literary fame thus early had spread through Europe; while his wife, beside performing all the duties of her station with exemplary fidelity, was also learned above the standard of ordinary women, and possessed considerable talents. But it was an amiable weakness of Neckar to overrate the capacity of this worthy woman in a degree somewhat ridiculous. She was extremely formal, precise, and pedantic; she was also (if it be any addition to these qualities) exceedingly tiresome, and her society was all but dull, however well informed. But her admiring husband saw and heard all her performances, whether from the press or in conversation, as master-pieces; he cultivated her with the observance of a humble votary; he watched her lips for the lessons of wisdom or the flashes of wit; and so little had the secret of her dulness, which all else knew, ever reached him, even to the extent of the most remote suspicion of that unfortunate and undeniable truth, that he would communicate to his guests before dinner, with the

air of one who announces a pleasure at once exquisite and rare as a treat in store for his company—"Ah, entendez vous, Messieurs; nous allons avoir Madame Neckar à diner aujourd'hui!" Her book upon Divorce is ably written, though heavily, and in a style forced, not natural. One chapter contains eloquent passages; and she espoused the side of the question most unpopular at the time, and looked down upon as that of narrow-minded and bigoted persons. There was, indeed, nothing more exemplary than the courage which this respectable person always showed in proclaiming and defending her opinions, religious and moral, in the society of Paris, where they were not only unpopular, but the objects of general ridicule. Her principles were strongly rooted in her mind, and at all times firmly maintained in her conversation, as well as shown forth in her practice.

This great merit was also that of her husband, who, on all occasions, in season and out of season, was ready to preach what he deemed the truth; careless whom it might offend, or to what attacks it might expose him. His strict notions of both public and private morality were little to the taste of the court when he first appeared at Versailles. As little was his republican simplicity relished in the Finance Minister of the Grand Monarque. Least of all were his principles of economical reform calculated to please any department in the state. But those notions, and habits, and princi-

* This was the Mademoiselle Curchod whom Gibbon describes himself as having fallen in love with while the young lady resided at Lausanne—the daughter of a respectable Swiss Pastor.

ples were never for an instant lost sight of by this honest man, nor ever moderated to suit the prevailing taste, nor ever disguised under any more pleasing exterior than naturally suited his sentiments and appropriately clothed their character. If an honesty and a courage so rare both in statesmen, in courtiers, and in members of patrician society, led to the indulgence of a little self-gratulation, or, perhaps, self-admiration, in him who practised it, instead of smiling at him, as was the custom, for being somewhat vain of his virtue, we ought rather to confess not only that so great a merit is more than sufficient to redeem any such little weakness, but that the being conscious of the contrast which he presented to all others was the inevitable consequence of their defects rather than of his frailty.

This courageous honesty was the greatest distinction of Neckar's public character; and this honesty never failed him, though, during his second administration, his firmness yielded to the numerous and almost inextricable difficulties by which he was surrounded. But, while we are left in unavoidable doubt whether any degree of resolution could have saved the state from the dismal scenes which followed his retirement, at least we can have no hesitation in pronouncing that, when he early saw himself performing the part of a sham minister, without any substantial power, he ought at once to have quitted the stage.

But this courageous honesty was by no means his only, though it was his chief, distinction, when compared with most other ministers. He was greatly their superior in point of information, both of general knowledge and of the science peculiarly belonging to politic

men. His habits of business, too, were transferred from the counting-house to the bureau, while his Genevan education was not forgotten, hardly suspended, in the drawing-rooms of royalty or of fashion. His liberal opinions upon all subjects of government, as well as of economics, formed certainly a third peculiarity in a minister of "the times before the flood of 1789;" probably in a servant even of popular Monarchies. How few have served the limited and constitutional Sovereigns of England, at any period of our history, with such a steady regard to the interests of the people, so fixed and so practical a belief that their happiness is the end of all government, so rooted a determination to protect their rights wherever these could be asserted without danger from their licentiousness! That such a minister, who had played such a part in the earliest crisis of the Revolution, and all whose sentiments wore a republican hue, should be eminently distasteful to Napoleon, ever since he had abandoned all democratic courses, is little to be wondered at. On his march to Marengo, in 1800, he visited him at Coppet; and the First Consul—no longer that Buonaparte who had once crossed the same Alps to subdue the same Italy under the title of "Member of the National Institute *and* General-in-Chief"—now thought proper to designate his venerable host as a "college tutor, very heavy and very turgid" (régent de collége, bien lourd et bien boursouflé). It was the love of liberty, however, that he secretly hated, not the love of letters, which he thus caricatured; and if it be said that he had to reproach the popular minister's former life with much of the violence which broke out in France during his time,

justice should have suggested that, as far as intentions were concerned, Neckar uniformly took part against the people on the instant that he found their zeal for liberty degenerating into licentiousness.

Two faults, however, must be admitted to have alternately marked his scheme of conduct in this important particular, and they are perhaps the greatest and attended with the gravest consequences, both to a statesman's own fame and to the happiness of his country, of any that he can commit. He never made sufficient allowance for the momentum which popular influence acquires, and the fire which popular feelings kindle, when once a great movement is begun; but always seemed to reckon upon having the same power to control excesses after as before the excitement, forgetting that, though his was the same hand which had set the machine in motion, he had no longer to resist and to direct the same force. It was an almost equal error in an opposite direction, that, when he had taken a certain part, and that violence was found to be the result, he got squeamish about trifles, and resisted at a time when it would have been wisdom to yield; wholly forgetting the line which he had chosen, the inevitable excesses to which it led, and the folly of objecting to what inevitably followed from his own election. Hence with all his integrity, which was untainted—his talents for affairs, which were undeniable—his sway over the public mind, which at one time was unbounded, perhaps unparalleled—he has left behind him the memory of a second-rate statesman, whose good intentions are far more than counterbalanced by his bad judgment, and who, having ventured to pilot the vessel of state in a

tempest without the firm hand of a steersman, can neither prevent the shipwreck of his charge nor of his reputation.

In private life Neckar was one of the most amiable of men, beloved by his friends, and in his family adored. His society was sought by those for whom neither his ample fortune nor brilliant station could have any charms; and his literary merits were of a very respectable order. To genius he made no pretensions; and his writings, though clear, argumentative, well informed, are somewhat heavy. But a *jeu d'esprit*, entitled "Le Bonheur des Sots," has been much admired as a lively and ingenious production, the nature of which may easily be guessed from the title; and it is no small glory attending it, that Talleyrand's answer to it, "Le Bonheur des Gens d'Esprit," was a complete failure, the only one recorded either in his writings or his sayings of that greatest of modern wits. Of his other works, the "Dernières Vues de Politique et de Finance" is the best in every respect, though the defence of the celebrated "Compte Rendû," from the accidents of the time, made by far the greatest sensation. But the "Dernières Vues" is both a work of great ability and of extraordinary vigour for an author of threescore years and ten; and it has the writer's usual merit of telling plain truths at a time the least friendly to their reception: for it foretells and unmasks the designs of Buonaparte against the liberties of France long before the Consul's resolution to affect absolute power had been either disclosed by himself or discovered by the bulk of his countrymen.

MADAME DE STAËL.

NECKAR is hardly better known in our day, as the Minister of Louis XVI. than as the father and friend of the most celebrated woman in modern times, perhaps in some particulars the most remarkable of her sex that has appeared in any age. If among statesmen her title to a place should be questioned, no one can deny that her writings and her conduct produced an important influence upon the politics of Europe during many years; and, as the potentates in whose hands the destinies of nations were placed apparently acted towards her, some as benefiting by her support, others as injured by her opposition, nay, as she suffered persecution in consequence of her political influence exerted honestly for her principles and her party, it seems at once fair and natural to regard her title as confessed, and to number her among the political characters of the age.

It was, however, as an illustrious member of the republic of letters that she claimed the highest place, and as such that she has the clearest right to the respect of posterity. She was undeniably a woman of genius; and she had this peculiarity among authors of her sex, that, while many have signalized themselves in the lighter walks of literature, and some in the more rugged field of science; while works of fancy have come from some female pens, and mathematical speculations from others; while an Agnesi has filled the

professor's chair as an analyist in a celebrated university, a Chastelet has commented on Newton, a D'Acier on Homer, a Somerville (excelling them all) on Laplace,—Madame de Staël has written one of the finest romances that ever appeared, one combining entertainment with instruction; has discussed, with all the rigour of argument and all the powers of eloquence, some of the most difficult questions of politics and of morals; and has profoundly investigated the character, and weighed the merits, both of the various systems of philosophy, the different bodies of literature, and the diversified schemes of civil polity, which flourish or which fade in the several countries of Europe. Although it would not be correct to say that her varied works are without great faults, still less to affirm that she has left no room for other performances on the same subjects, yet it is certain, and universally admitted, that as yet they stand at the head of the productions which we possess on those several subjects. Her essay on Rousseau's writings; her "Thoughts on Suicide;" her account of Germany; her "Corinne," or Italy described under the attractive form of a romance, all testify to her extraordinary powers, because each is at this hour the best book in its several kind of which we are possessed. Nor does it follow from this admission, that the first of these tracts may not have overrated the merits of Jean Jacques; that much superficial matter is not to be found in the Allemagne; or that Italy may not hereafter be more philosophically, it can hardly be more strikingly, painted by another hand. But it must ever be a just subject of admiration to think that, in such difficult and various

kinds of composition, a woman should have attained so great excellence, and of astonishment to reflect that the essays on Rousseau and on Suicide were the productions of a girl, one who had hardly attained the age of womanhood.

It is impossible for him who would truly represent the likeness of this extraordinary person, to separate her moral from her intellectual character, so closely did they touch and so powerfully act on each other. Her warmth of feeling not only stimulated her industry, but it sharpened her perspicacity, whetted her attention, invigorated her reason, and inspired her fancy: because she felt with enthusiasm, she penetrated with sagacity; because her heart beat high with zeal, her imagination glowed with fervour; the genuine sentiments of a most kind and compassionate nature kindled the warmth of her pathetic eloquence; her inextinguishable hatred of all that is cruel, or oppressive, or false, or mean, overflowed in a torrent of indignation against the tyrant and the impostor. How entirely she was under the dominion of her feelings when excited was known to her friends who dreaded her impoverishment, because they saw that she was without the hardness which nature has bestowed on others as the means of self-defence. How readily she could forget all other things when her heart was touched, was singularly shown on one occasion when she acted a part in a dramatic performance, and, confounding her natural with her assumed character, bounded forward to the actual relief of a family whose distresses were only the theme of a fictitious representation.

The passions are ever eloquent: left to themselves, their natural expression becomes contagious, and carries

away the spectator when the actor is manifestly, but vehemently, moved. All that can be wanting in this case is the correct taste which restrains extravagant emotions or unbecoming diction: for it requires but a moderate acquaintance with words and idioms to give vent to the feelings which agitate the soul; and the difference is wonderfully little between the effect produced by the greatest mastery over language in an artist of consummate power, and that which follows the mere ebullition of natural passion in the words of an untutored victim. But Madame de Staël was well read in the best authors; at the fountains of the purest French diction she had drank often and deep; her taste was improved by the converse of highly-gifted men; much practice in writing had made the use of her own language easy to her: the intercourse of society had given her the faculty of extemporary speaking; and to the mastery over her own she added a far more familiar acquaintance with foreign tongues than almost any Frenchman ordinarily enjoys. No wonder that with her vehement feelings she became almost immediately one of the most eloquent writers and speakers of the age. Her works bear testimony to this proposition in part; but whoever had only read without hearing her would have formed an imperfect idea of her extraordinary powers.

It must, however, be added, that though the clear expression of her meaning, the flow of her harmonious periods, the absence of monotony, the occasional felicity of illustration, the generally correct statement of an opinion or an argument, the striking and lively and picturesque description, all shine throughout her page, yet

we seldom meet with any imagery of peculiar originality or beauty, scarcely ever with any passage of condensed resistless force, and in the diction we are always reminded of the unpassable gulf which separates all foreigners who write in French, even those who, like the Genevans, have no other mother-tongue, from the Scarrons, the Voltaires, the Mirabeaus, to whom the purest, most idiomatic, and most racy language was familiar, and in whose writings it had an irresistible charm. It is a singular circumstance that, as Rousseau, who, with all his natural eloquence, wrote in inferior French, has left one work unlike all the rest in this respect, so has Madame de Staël given us a piece, and of a like description, which immeasurably excels her other and more important writings in the beauty of its diction. The "Confessions of Rousseau" as far excels the "Nouvelle Heloise" in the excellence of its French as it falls below that production in the dignity of its subject. But it shows a marvellous power of elevating the lowest, vilest, often the grossest objects of contemplation, by the exquisite diction in which their description is clothed, and it is written in a tongue racy and natural as the best portions of Voltaire. The "Dix Ans d'Exile" of Madame de Staël in like manner, though resembling the "Confessions" in no other particular, is yet far superior to her other works in the purity and genuine Gallicism of the composition. It is in the same way that, when Mirabeau, the father, laid aside the pedantries of his sect, and wrote letters on family affairs to his brother, the Bailli, his style became one of the very best and most interesting and most original, instead of nearly the dullest and most

formal and least readable in which a Frenchman's thoughts were ever conveyed.

The assertion so frequently made, that Madame de Staël had no wit, is true and it is false. If made absolutely and so as to comprehend all wit, the choice of witty and pointed expressions, the striking combination of ideas, the unexpected illustration of one thing by reference to another—nothing can be more unfounded. Hardly a page of her writings but refutes it at once. But it is quite as certain that it was rather in witty expressions than in witty ideas that she abounded; and it is undeniable that she had little or no sense of the ludicrous, whether in persons or in things—and was thus without any humour or relish of humour, as well as averse to, or incapable of bringing any powers of ridicule to bear upon an adverse argument. Whoever would deny her powers of ready illustration, or of happy repartee, happy both in force and in delicacy, must have known her only through very bad reporters, persons unfair towards her, or incapable of appreciating her.—Napoleon having, during the hundred days, sent some one to express the want he felt of her to aid in establishing the constitution, received for answer—"Il s'est bien passé de constitution et de moi pendant douze ans; et à present même il ne nous aime guère plus l'une que l'autre."—A man of learning and talents, but of sensitive vanity, having made before her a somewhat intemperate sally—"Avouez donc, monseigneur (said she to a prelate who sat beside her), qu'il n'y a pas de chose si sotte que la vanité ne fasse faire aux gens d'esprit."

In a person so full of warm affections, so fond of the natural in character, and so romantic in many of her

tastes, it was strange to observe so entire an absence of all love for natural scenery. She was a great lover of poetry; of acting she was passionately fond; in music she took the greatest delight, and even excelled in singing, though she cultivated it but little: but for natural scenery she had no taste; could travel through a romantic country without taking her eye off the page she was reading; and lived on the lake of Geneva and within view of the Alps, without ever casting a look at either rugged mountain or blue water. Thoroughly honest, however, and hating affectation in all its forms, she could never pretend to what she did not feel, though at the risk of having a defect in her taste exposed: so, when some one was expatiating with fervour on the pleasure which a tender heart like hers must take among green shades and romantic rivulets, "Ah (she exclaimed), il n'y a pour moi de ruisseau qui vaille celui de la Rue de Bac."

In truth she existed for discussion, for observation of men, for the exciting interest of all national affairs. Society was the element in which she lived and moved and had her being; and the society of Paris was almost alone deemed society in her time. It was here she shone; it was here her influence was felt: it was by her power in this sphere that she could further those principles of liberal but orderly and humane policy to which she was devotedly attached. Her political writings had greatly extended her influence over that important portion of the French nation; and her conversation was singularly calculated to consummate her power. Hereditary in her family, and as well by the mother's as the father's side, was the undaunted spirit which led her

to profess her opinions, whatever odium they might draw upon her from the people, whatever contempt from the aristocracy, whatever persecution from the established authorities of the state. When the scaffold was hourly wet with the blood of the royalists, and the Queen was brought to her trial among the rest, Madame de Staël had the courage to publish her defence of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. When the Consulate was formed which plainly indicated the approaching supremacy of Napoleon, she openly erected the standard of opposition to the aspiring chief, and made her house the centre of the party which attacked him in the Tribunate under the conduct of her intimate friend, Benjamin Constant. Failing in all attempts to gain her over or to silence her, Napoleon soon had recourse to reprisals; and his assumption of arbitrary power was signalised by her banishment from Paris, the greatest punishment he could inflict upon her. In this hostility to the enemy of liberty and of peace she persevered during the remaining ten years of his reign, although the two millions of the debt owing to her from the government were in consequence never paid until the period of the sudden and unexpected restoration. It would not be easy to name the individual who contributed more towards the conservation of that hatred of Napoleon's dynasty, and that zeal for its subversion, which led to the restoration, at a time when so many even of the Bourbon party had in despair joined the party of their adversaries, and followed the apparently resistless fortune of Napoleon. It is not always that exiled kings are ungrateful on their restoration to the friends of their adversity; and Louis XVIII. repaid to the daughter of Neckar the two millions which he had

lent to the state during the disastrous period of his second administration.

That the character of this extraordinary woman had some weaknesses, and that her understanding had some defects, it would be foolish to deny. The former certainly, perhaps also the latter, had their origin in the great warmth of her affections. Her nature was essentially good, kind, loving; and, as her attachments were not slowly formed, so were they not indulged by halves. But, if she gave herself up heartily to their influence, they were not the less firm, steady, and enduring. No one was less fickle in her friendships, and no one was less disposed to quit a subject or a pursuit which had excited her interest, however suddenly that excitement had been produced. Full of enthusiasm, she was yet constant; prone to vehement feelings, she was without violence either of temper or disposition; ardent in her affections and determined in her enmities, her whole composition contained not a particle of spite, or gall, or revenge. All was noble and generous, to her very faults; nothing mean or paltry belonged to her understanding or her heart.

It is however to be observed that this ardent temperament, which was often found subversive of prudence in conduct, proved extremely prejudicial to the success of her intellectual efforts. From hence proceeded a proneness to receive erroneous impressions; to reason from the feelings; to be satisfied with a sentiment, or even a phrase, as if it had been an argument; to hasten over the ground towards a conclusion, from finding it more agreeable to occupy any favourite position than win the way to it by legitimate steps. The Genevan cha-

racter is marked by a disposition to theorise, rather perhaps to coin little theories, small bits of doctrine, petty systems which embrace the easy corners of some subject. That Madame de Staël was wholly exempt from this besetting sin of her country it would be incorrect to affirm; but she redeemed it by the greater extent of her views in general, and by the hardihood of her speculations upon the most interesting questions; and her writings, both in subject and in style, had little indeed of that precision, self-satisfaction, microcosmic feeling, which may be traced in so large a proportion of the works that come from the banks of Leman Lake. The tone of the sentiments was also abundantly more liberal and less ascetic than to satisfy the code of the city of Calvin. Having mentioned her connexion with the great little republic by family, we should add that almost all her patriotic feelings were domiciled in France. Whoever witnessed her chagrin, occasionally approaching to despair, in the spring of 1814, when the consummation so long devoutly prayed for by her and her party had arrived, and, Napoleon being overthrown, the Allies entered Paris, must recollect how uncontroulably the Frenchwoman burst forth and triumphed over the politician and the cosmopolite. When Lord Dudley, half in jest, half seriously, expressed his hope that the Cossacks would reach Paris and nail a horse-shoe on the gates of the Thuileries, her alarm and her indignation knew no bounds, and she could only exclaim, "Quoi donc, cette belle France!" almost suffocated by her feelings. The moderation of the Allies mitigated the acuteness of these during the remaining period of the occupation; but the subject of

the capture was one to which she ever referred with a bitterness of spirit well calculated to read a useful and a solemn lesson. It is true she endeavoured to see in that great event only a new cause of hating Napoleon, to whose tyranny and ambition she ascribed the fall of France; but it is also much more than probable that, had she ever again been called to choose between the worst domestic faction, even the worst domestic thraldom, and its subjugation effected in that of her country, she would have said, "No more foreign armies;" and it is very certain that, if the same option had been presented to her mind before France had ever been overrun, and she had foreseen all she felt on the capture of Paris, she would have rejected this as the worst of all consummations, and withheld all aid to its accomplishment. The inglorious end of Moreau, whose fall many might pity, but whose memory no one respects, adds a striking enforcement to the same patriotic lesson.

The public and the personal character of individuals, always nearly allied, are in women inseparably connected; so that in describing the one both must have been pourtrayed. But one peculiarity remains to be added, and it is entitled to distinguished praise. Those persons who are much more learned than their class or order, the self-taught, the ὀψιμαθεῖς,* and chiefly women well instructed, are somewhat like persons who have risen unexpectedly and quickly to great wealth, letter-proud as these are purse-proud; apt to look down upon others whose resources are more slender, very apt

* Persons late-taught.

to fancy both that their own means are boundless, and that none else possess any at all. Accordingly, beside the love of displaying their stores, it is commonly observed of such scholars that they both believe themselves to know everything, and suppose others to know nothing. But the illustrious woman of whom we are speaking was very far above such a weakness. None less than she made a parade of her acquirements; none more deferred to others, or more eagerly availed herself of all opportunities to increase her information. Indeed in society, though naturally fond of shining, she threw herself far too heartily into the conflict to let her think of exhibiting her knowledge; and, if she delighted in the exercise of her eloquence, (as who that possessed it would not?) she never oppressed her hearers with talk for the mere display of reading, nor ever showed the least indifference to the merits of kindred or superior spirits.

The religious feelings of Madame de Staël were always strong, and in the latter part of her life they gained an extraordinary ascendant over her. The originality of her genius made her occasionally indulge in peculiar views on this as on all other subjects. But, as her belief in revelation was sincere, her habits were devout without superstition, and her faith was strong without the least tincture of bigotry or intolerance. She successfully inculcated the same principles in her children; and her daughter both illustrated the Christian Gospel by her writings, and exemplified its beauties in her life.

The warmth of her affections has been recorded: in her family, it is hardly necessary to add, these found

the greatest scope and were in the most constant play. But the predominant feeling of her soul was filial love. Her father had ever been her most confidential and attached friend, from whom she had no thought or feeling of her heart concealed. Devotion to him through life, and the most religious and tender veneration for his memory when she lost him, seemed to occupy her whole mind. By her own children she was cherished with the same ardent affection become hereditary: they, and in an especial manner the Duchess de Broglie, were well worthy of the love she ever bore them; and if, to celebrate the capacity of women, as well as to prove how gracefully the rarest gifts of the understanding may be combined with the kindliest dispositions of the heart, the moralist will naturally point towards the illustrious mother, he will also name the admirable daughter, if he would present to the love and respect of mankind the purest example of every female virtue, and of all the accomplishments that can adorn the softer sex.

MIRABEAU FAMILY.

FROM dwelling upon one of the most delightful sights which the history of distinguished characters presents to the view, a family groupe of celebrated persons, whose virtues even exceeded their genius, and whose lives were spent in more harmony and more tender affection than are often the inmates of the cottage, we are now to turn our eyes upon a picture as different as can well be conceived, and only in the talents and celebrity of its subjects bearing any resemblance to the former. But the contemplation is full of interest, and by no means devoid of instruction.

The great celebrity of Mirabeau, the brilliant part which he performed in the beginning of the French Revolution, and the influence which he exerted over the early course of that memorable event, have given an interest to his private history, which belongs to that of hardly any other individual who never mounted a throne. Accidental circumstances combined with these considerations at once to excite and to gratify the curiosity of the world respecting him. The domestic quarrels of which he was, if not the cause, certainly the occasion, and the disclosures to which the temper and the indiscretion of the parties led, had made the name and the fortunes of this remarkable person familiar to all Europe, as a son, a husband, and a lover, long before he was known upon the great theatre of state affairs,

or even in the republic of letters. That he has been more admired for his genius than he deserved is a probable, although it can by no means be set down as a clear, proposition. That his moral character has been blackened by prejudice and by party, while it has been misunderstood through ignorance of his circumstances and situation, seems to be a matter of no doubt at all. There is, perhaps, no second instance of an individual whose faults have been committed under such a pressure of ill-treatment to besiege and force his virtue, rather than of temptation to seduce and betray it. Still less does history present any parallel to the injustice which has been done him by the world, even by those who had no prepossession against him—by the public and by individuals—an injustice which has consisted in uniformly listening to all that his enemies, chiefly of his own forming, said against him—never to any of his own statements—nor even to any of the proofs that existed against those enemies. There is this peculiar to the family quarrels of the Mirabeaus, that in all other such controversies it has become a kind of maxim with the world to punish the parties, if not for their private dissensions, at least for their public disclosures, by believing that all of them were more or less to blame; by declining to be very nice in apportioning their several shares of the censure; and by generally considering those shares as nearly equal. In the instance of Mirabeau alone this rule has been excluded; and, the whole blame being cast upon him, his father and his family have escaped all visitation. But the publication, in 1834 and the subsequent year, of his Memoirs, with the correspondence of the family, has

occasioned a much more equal distribution of censure, and has introduced us to an acquaintance which we never before could have with two others of the family,—the father, till then only known by his obscure writings on political economy, and the uncle, never known at all.

The celebrated Marquess de Mirabeau, father of the Count, and head of that noble family, was one of the founders of the sect of Economists in France,—indeed, after Quesnai, its chief patriarch. He was also well known as the author of several important works upon its doctrines, and distinguished for his practical attention to economics as a considerable landowner and a patrician of a most ancient house. But they who had known, or fancied they knew, this distinguished individual the best, find themselves, upon opening the volumes lately published, in the presence of a personage entirely strange to them, and of whose nature, habits, and character they had previously no kind of knowledge. Nothing in truth can be more entirely unlike than the philosopher and the man, the liberal enlightened *Economist* and the haughty aristocratic noble; the friend of Quesnai and the father of Mirabeau; the *Ami des Hommes** and the Père de Famille. But all this is not without example; indeed, such discrepancies between men's public and their domestic characters are far from rare. The difference here is carried unfortunately farther. Justice,—a rigorous love of the strictest justice,—is the characteristic of the Marquess and of his sect; but his treatment of his son offers one perpetual scene

* The title of the Marquess's most famous work.

of all justice grossly outraged. To observe moderation, —to regard the useful end of all things,—to act as if they were born not for themselves but for mankind,— was the very motto of the Economists:—

> Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere,
> Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
> Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

But the Marquess's predominant passion was family pride; moderation neither in this nor in any other feeling was ever for an instant the inmate of his mind, nor the regulator of his thoughts; and he always spoke, and wrote, and acted in private life as one who never for an instant of his days doubted that the world was made for the *order* (not the *sect*) he belonged to, and that his first and highest duty was to keep the Mirabeau family at the head of that favoured class.

To follow the dictates of nature, to devote their lives to the cause of truth, was the residue of the Economist's motto. But the most cruel prepossession against his first-born,—the most refined cruelty of treatment which his ingenuity could devise for that child,—the greatest finesse of every kind employed to ensnare him;—even the expedient of leaving him in wretched circumstances, and restoring him to liberty, in order that he might either terminate his existence in despair, or forfeit his life to the law—accompanied with an adulterous connexion which made his own wife leave his house—such are the traits of private character which these volumes represent as belonging to the lover of nature and truth, and these traits are for the most part represented under the infallible testimony of his own hand.

But under that hand we have proofs of a difference still more marvellous, and of which there is certainly no other example. The author of the most dull, heavy, uninteresting books, in the most tiresome, insipid, almost unbearable style, is the writer of about the very best, the most lively, the most entertaining letters, in a style which, for originality, raciness, force, felicity of diction, has scarcely a rival!

The Marquess was born in 1715, the eldest surviving son of a family esteemed ancient and noble even in Provence, and established there for above five centuries. It was the family of Riqueti, or Arrighetti, originally from the neighbouring territory of Italy, and which has produced several eminent men; although it is said that the relationship of the most famous of them all, Riqueti the engineer and author of the Languedoc canal, was denied by the preposterous and barbarous pride of the clan. He was, like all the elder branches of noble French houses, placed betimes in the army: made a Chevalier de Malte at three years of age; an ensign at fourteen; soon after a captain; served with great credit and even distinction at the siege of Kehl and Phillipsbourg, and at the battles of Dettingen and Clusen; and in 1743, at the age of twenty-eight, received the cross of St. Louis. The death of his father having some years before placed him in a state of independence, he now quitted the army; and, leaving also the order of Malta, he married the Marquise de Saulvebeuf, a widow and a maid; for according to the admirable arrangements of the old *régime* in France (that perfection of patrician wisdom and felicity), she had been married exactly at twelve years old to a gentleman advanced in years, and who, as

frequently happened, accomplished his burial before he consummated his marriage. This second marriage did not prove happy in the end, nor do we see who but the philosophical husband is to blame for it. The lady was young, rich, and noble, but not handsome: her virtue was beyond suspicion, however; and, this not satisfying the Marquess, after she had lived fifteen years in peace and comfort with him and borne him eleven children, he quarrelled with her, took into his house Madame de Pailly, a fascinating young Swiss lady; lived with her openly; turned his wife out of doors; and was for fifteen years engaged in a course of litigation with her, and of cruel as well as treacherous proceedings against her, which made both wretched, both the subject of universal talk, and both the objects of general blame, without profiting any human being, except Madame de Pailly, and his cunning old valet, and the lawyers, and the spiteful gossips of the Paris drawing-rooms.

His chief and noble purpose in quitting the profession of arms was to lead a life of literary retirement, and to improve the condition of his rural dependents. Towards these his conduct was always perfect; it was sensible, just, kind; he was their real father, and they were the only children who uniformly found in him the virtues of the parental character. He first went to his château in Provence; but neither the distance from Paris, nor the state of the country there, suited his spirit or agreed with his taste. The reason he assigns for quitting the residence of his ancestors is abundantly characteristic of the aristocratic temperament which was his master through life, and the source of almost all his own errors and his family's misfortunes.

"On n'y pratiquait plus ce culte de respect attaché à des races antiques, dont la toute puissance est maintenant méconnue; on ne s'y prosternait plus devant les vieilles races et les gros dos de Malte; enfin la province, totalement conquise par *l'écritoire*, contenait plus d'animaux armés de plumes que vingt-deux royaumes bien policés n'en devraient renfermer, espèce la plus vénimeuse et la plus épidémique pour un seigneur."

Accordingly, he purchased the estate of Bignon, fifteen miles from Sens and Nemours, and, soon after, an hotel in Paris. Then and there began the career of philosophy which he ran for half a century, and which only terminated with his life, about the beginning of the French Revolution, when he left the world with a reputation for virtue greatly exaggerated, and for talents much below his due, at the age of seventy-five. No less than twenty-two works claim him for their author; but those which alone are now well known are "L'Ami des Hommes," "Théorie de l'Impôt," "Philosophie Rurale," and "Education Civile d'un Prince." Beside these voluminous writings, he contributed a vast number of papers to the "Journal d'Agriculture" and the "Ephémérides du Citoyen," the former of which reached the bulk of thirty, and the latter of forty volumes.

It may easily be imagined how joyfully such a brother was received into the sect of the Economists, whose zealous supporter he proved, and indeed whose second chief he was acknowledged to be. To their spirit of party, or the more intense attachment which sectaries feel for each other, it is perhaps mainly owing that his faults were so lightly passed over, and his domestic pre-

judices shared so largely by the French public. As for any active virtues that he displayed, they are confined to his industrious propagation of the *Economical* doctrines, and his humane enlightened government of his peasantry. He mingled, as was usual among our neighbours, even for philosophical patricians, in the society of Paris; and, as was quite of course in the happy times of legitimate government, he was sent to prison by a *lettre de cachet*, the offence being his work on taxation, which gave umbrage to the *Fermiers Généraux*, and cost him a short imprisonment in Vincennes fortress, and some weeks' banishment to his estate. The rest of his actions, which brought his name before the public, were his scandalous proceedings against the members of his family, and chiefly his wife and his eldest son.

The next personage in the family group is the Bailli de Mirabeau, the Marquess's brother. A more gallant, honest, amiable, and indeed sensible man, it would be hard to find in any circle or in any situation of life. Partaking of his brother's family pride, but never his follower in suffering it to extinguish the better feelings of his nature; just to a degree of romantic scruple; simple, honest, and open as a child; brave to a fault, so as even to signalise himself in a country, an age, and a profession, where the highest valour was epidemical; kindly in his dispositions, so as to devote his whole time and resources to making others happy; domestic and affectionate in his habits, so as to live for his brother and his nephew, when his vow precluded his having progeny of his own; religious without intolerance; strictly chaste

and pure himself, without austerity towards others; and withal a man of the most masculine understanding, the quickest and even liveliest wit, the best literary taste—the Bailli de Mirabeau presents to our admiration and esteem one of the most interesting characters that ever showed the very rare union of whatever is most attractive with whatever is most respectable. His love and respect for his brother, both for his eminent qualities, and as head of his house, is one of the strongest features in his character; but it is tempered with every feeling of tenderness towards those against whom the Marquess was most bitterly prejudiced; and it leads to constant efforts towards disowning his brother's animosities. His proud independent spirit is shown in the treatment which all who would have encroached upon it were sure to meet at his hands, however exalted their rank or predominant their influence, and without the least thought of any remote effect which his high carriage might produce upon his most important interests. Of this we have an interesting trait in the answer he made to Madame de Pompadour, with whom a good understanding was held essential by the minister Nivernois, before he could place him at the head of the marine department, as he wished to do. He had succeeded to admiration in captivating the royal mistress at the first interview, by exhibiting the graces both of his person and his wit, when she chose to remark what a pity it was that the Mirabeaus were so wrong-headed (*que tous ces Mirabeau soient si mauvaises têtes*). "Madame," (was the answer at once so honourable to his spirit, so creditable to his wit, and so fatal to his views,) "Madame, il est vrai que c'est le titre de légitimité dans cette maison.

Mais les bonnes et froides têtes ont fait tant de sottises, et perdu tant d'états, qu'il ne serait peut-être pas fort imprudent d'essayer des mauvaises. Assurément, du moins, elles ne feraient pas pis."

This excellent man was born in 1717, being about two years younger than his brother. In three years he was received into the Order of Malta, in which he lived and died; served from the age of twelve in the navy; was wounded and taken prisoner by the English; was made *Capitaine de vaisseau* at thirty-four, and governor of Guadaloupe the year after; retired to Europe for his health in 1755; and next year was seriously wounded at the siege of Port Mahon. During the rest of the war he had staff appointments in the marine department, and was in many dangerous battles and bombardments. He then was recompensed for his wounds and his thirty years' service, by the complete neglect of a profligate and ungrateful court, which drove him into retirement; and he went to Malta, where he remained devoted to the affairs of the Order till he obtained a *Commanderie* in 1766, which carried him into France, and he there devoted the rest of his honourable life to literary ease.

Of Madame du Saillant, married into the elder branch of the amiable and revered family of Lasteyrie,* but little is known. She was the eldest and most gifted of the Marquess's daughters. Her sister, Madame de Cabris, though less clever and accomplished, would in any other family have passed for a wonder; but her life and habits were profligate, and the Mirabeau annals

* Count Charles Lasteyrie is a younger brother of this house: he is known, respected, and beloved by all the friends of humanity.

often note the exploits of a certain Briançon, her lover, a person of coarse manners, vulgar cunning, and dishonourable habits, whom nevertheless the Marquess thought fit to employ, partly as a spy and partly as a thief-catcher, to entrap or to seize his son. Nor is there any of those annals more painful, we might almost say disgusting, than that in which this low creature plays his part. Of Madame de Pailly much less appears directly, though her mischief-making hand is perpetually seen in all the history of the family; but the exquisite delicacy of the Bailli, and his prodigious respect and tenderness for his brother, made him shun all mention of her, and all allusion to her, except on one occasion, when he perceived her influence hard at work to produce a new quarrel between the father and the son, as soon as they had been restored to each other's society after a separation of ten years, and immediately after they had seized the opportunity of her absence from the château to become somewhat cordial together. Then it is that the good Bailli indites some letters full of sense, and no less honourable to his heart than to his head.

"Trop de gens se mêlent de tes affaires; tu me comprendras si tu veux; que tout ce qui te paraît obscur soit éclairci par toi-même, et point d'yeux étrangers, surtout des yeux féminins; plus ces yeux-là ont d'esprit et sont aimables, plus il faut s'en méfier, comme de ceux d'une belle Circé, derrière laquelle l'esprit de domination et de jalousie s'établit et s'insinue, de manière que les plus grands hommes en sont les dupes. Tu me dis, pour t'obstiner à m'envoyer ton fils et à me le laisser, le supposant rejoint à *la Cigale ayant chanté tout l'été*, que près de toi *sainte Jalouserie*, comme disait notre mère, se logerait

entre les deux belles-sœurs, si celle d'Aix était chez toi; tu cites pour cela le passé. Tu te méprends à ce qui fut dit alors, et tu adaptes les paroles à l'objet qu'elles n'avaient pas, et point à celui qu'il était tout simple qu'elles eussent; car quelqu'un ne voulait pas qu'il y eût de coiffes dans la maison; mon chapeau même y déplaisait. Les femmes ne savent qu'intriguer, surtout les femmes d'esprit, sorte d'animal le plus dangereux de tous; celle en qui tu as une trop forte confiance est comme les autres; veut être la maîtresse: tout ce qui peut faire obstacle à cet empire, ou le partager, lui est désagréable, et en est haï cordialement. Règle générale et sans exception, toute femme, dans sa position, veut gouverner absolument, et elle comme les autres; je ne saurais me rappeler mille petits traits, même vis-à-vis de moi, qui, comme tu crois bien, ne m'en souciais guère; mais ce qui à moi, homme tout-à-fait libre et indépendant, ne me faisait rien, choque beaucoup les enfans; elle n'a jamais aimé aucun des tiens; bien est-il vrai que, sauf Saillanette, tout le reste ne paraissait pas très-aimable; mais Caroline elle-même, notre douce et paisible Caroline, la femme la plus émoliente qui fut jamais, Caroline, qui n'a des yeux que pour son père, son mari, et ses enfans, et qui t'est si fort attachée, tu te tromperais fort si tu croyais que l'autre l'aimât; compte que, sans me mêler trop dans les choses, je vois à peu près tout, et je laisse aller, parce que je sais qu'on ne peut pas empêcher la rivière de couler."

"J'ai toujours vu, ou à peu près, les défauts des gens que j'aime. Je ne vois même bien que ceux-là; mais, faute d'archanges, il faut aimer des créatures imparfaites. Il ne faut pas même avoir vécu la moitié de mon âge, pour s'être persuadé de cela, sans quoi l'on se prendrait bien en aversion soi-même. Tu as grande raison de dire que les mouches incommodent plus que les éléphans; et, quand nous voulons voir une mouche par le venin, nous en faisons

un éléphant de notre faciende. Je t'assure, par exemple, que la personne dont nous parlions, et sur qui tu décoches des sarcasmes tranchans et affilés par la queue, comme disait Montagne, m'a dit, plus de cinq cents fois peut-être, dans la longue suite de mes secousses, où il s'est trouvé bien des mécomptes et des faussaires; *bien d'honnêtes gens s'intéressent véritablement à vous; le public même s'indignerait de vos malheurs, si vous ne les portiez vous-même; mais vous n'avez vraiment que deux cœurs à vous, le bon Bailli et moi.*"

The Bailli's answer is also admirable:—

"*Le bon Bailli! le bon Bailli!* eh! par saint Polycarpe, monsieur le marquis et mon très-cher frère aîné, avec qui diable veux-tu que mon excellence rabâche, si ce n'est avec toi? *Le bon Bailli!* La personne qui a dit ce mot a fait acte de fausseté; *le bon Bailli* le sait, et le voit depuis longtemps sans le dire; il s'est bien, dès 1750, aperçu que cette personne ne l'aimait pas, et tu l'aurais bien vu, si elle avait cru possible de te détacher de moi; depuis, j'ai cent fois vu qu'on a voué aux deux frères la haine la plus implacable; j'en ai bien ma part; Saillanette et du Saillant aussi Va, crois-moi, une étrangère qui s'introduit dans une maison y fait naître la discorde et fait mettre en mouvement toutes les passions qui suivent la discorde. Du reste, n'en parlons plus."

But let us now come to the most important figure by far in this group. Honoré Gabriel Mirabeau was endowed by nature with a quick and vigorous understanding, a lively imagination, passions more vehement than are almost ever seen in union with such intellectual powers, and a disposition naturally kindly and humane. His temperament led to the early unfolding both of

his bodily and mental faculties; and there are few instances on record of children forming such manly ideas as he seems to have imbibed, even during his infancy. The peculiar circumstances in which he was, from his boyhood upwards, placed by the singular opinions, prejudices, and temper of his father, exercised a most powerful influence upon his whole conduct, and must have deeply affected his character in every material respect. Yet we may appreciate his merits and his faults, even through the artificial covering which was thus thrown over his nature; and, although impetuosity of feelings, and a proportionate disregard of the obstacles which he ought to have respected instead of overleaping, forms a predominant feature of his mind and his habits, we cannot fairly charge him with any of those faults which go mainly to form the vicious disposition. Forced first into estrangement from the society of his family, and afterwards into contempt of the parental authority, it must be admitted that originally he had strong filial affections, and no desire at all to set at defiance a control which he held peculiarly sacred; nor is it to be forgotten that, when his two parents quarrelled, he resisted all attempts of the one to make him side against the other,—even when the restoration of his own liberty might have been the reward of such an offensive alliance against their common oppressor. Nay, the veneration for his father, which he had early imbibed, never was extinguished by any persecution; for we find him to the last feeling an intellectual superiority, which certainly did not exist, and always refraining from retaliating the charges brought against himself for his indecorous life, by any allusion

to the worse life of the Marquess.* The parsimonious treatment to which his comfort and respectability in the world was all his life sacrificed, and which his father chose to reconcile with a family pride almost without a parallel, never made the son forget who and what he was, by descending to any act of meanness or dishonour; and, while pressed by want of the common necessaries of life, and tortured by the far more unbearable sight of those he most loved suffering the same privations, his exertions to relieve himself were always confined to the works of honest, though obscure, industry; nor has any one of his innumerable enemies, domestic, political, or personal, ever charged him with ever using, for the purpose of solicitation, that pen which was his only resource against want. The shifts and contrivances to which needy men, with strong passions, and in high stations, so often resort, and which would seem to justify in their case the uncharitable saying, that integrity and poverty are as hard to reconcile as it is for an empty sack to stand upright,—have never been imputed to Mirabeau, at a time when his whole soul was engrossed by an overpowering passion, or his senses bewitched by a life of pleasure, or his resources brought to an ebb little above those of the menial or the peasant. It would have been well if the influence of disorderly passions had not plunged him into other excesses no less blamable, though not, perhaps, at all dishonest or mercenary. It

* One work alone, which attacked the Marquess, is *said* to be his. But the evidence of authorship is very scanty, and it seems hardly fair, on such grounds, to charge him with so great a departure from his general line of conduct.

is not the connexion he formed with Madame le Monnier to which we refer, because for that, in its commencement, there were many excuses. A girl of eighteen married to a man of seventy-five, and only nominally married to this keeper, alternately confiding and jealous —now tempting her by indulgence and carelessness— now watching and restraining with tormenting and suspicious rigour—first awakened in Mirabeau's bosom the most irresistible of the passions, and all the more dangerous for so often assuming the garb, and even uniting itself with the reality, of virtuous propensities. The elopement which followed, and was caused by a dislike on both their parts to play the hypocrite and live with him whom they were deceiving, proved altogether alien to the habits of French society, and severely outraged the feelings of those refined profligates who, reckoning vice itself nothing, hold indecorum to be the worst of enormities: in other words, prefer the semblance to the reality of virtue, and forgive one offence if another, the worser crime of falsehood, be added to veil it from public view.

Accordingly, there was an outcry raised throughout all society, not in France only, but in Europe, at the unheard-of atrocity. A young woman had left her superannuated husband, whom she had, by the customs of aristocratic society, been compelled to take for her tyrant and tormentor, under the name of a husband, and had left him for one of an age nearer her own, and who sacrificed himself for her deliverance. The lovers had rebelled against those rules which regulated the vicious intercourse of nobles in legitimate France; they had outraged all the finer feelings of patrician nature, by

refusing to lead a life of pretence, and treachery, and secret indulgence; they had even brought into jeopardy the long-established security of illicit intercourse, understood without being avowed; and the veil was thus about to be torn away from all the endearing immoralities that give occupation and interest to noble life, and break the calm monotony of an existence which demands that it never shall be ruffled but by voluntary excitements, nor ever let alone while it can be tickled into enjoyment. Hence all society (that is, all the upper and worthless portion of it) combined "*to a woman*" against the hapless pair; Mirabeau was regarded as a monster; and the conduct of his father, who hunted him over all Europe, and then flung him into a prison for the best years of his life, was excused by all, and blamed by none; while no one ever thought of visiting the other party with the slightest censure—no one ever ventured to "hint a doubt, or hesitate dislike," of that very father turning his wife, the mother of his daughters, out of doors, and installing a mistress in her room.

The darker portion of Mirabeau's conduct relates to *Sophie*—not to Madame le Monnier. When, under that name, he dragged her before the public, and indulged a loose and prurient fancy, in providing for the worst appetites of licentious minds, he became justly the object of aversion, and even of disgust; and ranged himself with the writers of obscene works, but took the precedence of these in profligacy, by making his own amours the theme of his abandoned contemplations.* It

* The writings alluded to were the works of some of his hours of confinement during near four years of solitary imprisonment, and

is the very worst passage in his history; and it is nearly the only one which admits neither defence nor palliation. The other grave charge to which he is exposed, of publishing the Berlin Correspondence, is, though on different grounds, alike without justification. In extenuation of it, it has been observed that the whole object of his existence depended upon the supplies which it furnished. His election in Provence would, without it, have been hopeless. But this is a sorry topic even of palliation.

But if all these and more vices, these and more fatal indiscretions, may be justly charged on Mirabeau, it is fit we ever should bear in mind the treatment which he constantly experienced from a parent whose heart had been alienated, and whose very reason had been perverted, by the arts of an intriguing woman. All the juvenile follies of the fiery young man are exaggerated: his conduct is condemned in the mass; if he does well, he is charged with caprice; if he errs, it is his diabolical nature that accounts for it. He marries; the match proves an unhappy one. He is kept generally without a shilling of allowance, and expected to live like a noble Provençal. He makes love to Madame le Monnier, and elopes with her; he is denounced as a monster; cited before a court of provincial *justice* (as it was termed), and condemned to death in his absence. He flies; he is pursued by his father with inexorable severity, and

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may have been afterwards used from necessity. If that was the cause of giving such shameful effusions publicity, we may well say that the offence of the composition, in such circumstances, disgusting as it was, merits the least grave portion of the blame.

beset with spies, and even bravoes. Nothing can be more terrible than the excesses of parental rage to which family pride and personal prejudice had wrought up the Marquess's feelings. In furious letters the violent passions of the old noble break out. The good Bailli tries long and long to mediate and to soften; but at length even he is forced to bend before the storm; and the correspondence of the brothers presents only letters and answers, almost alike violent and determined against him. At length the Marquess succeeds in seizing his son's person, and he is immured for forty-two months in the fortress of Vincennes; only, after a long interval, allowed books and pen and ink; and never suffered to correspond without his letters being read by the governor, whose affections, as usual, he entirely gained.

On his liberation he had a painful interview with Madame le Monnier—his Sophie—who had been supposed faithless, and he charged her with the offence; she defended her conduct, and recriminated upon her lover, who, it may be presumed, could not so easily repel the accusation. They parted in mutual displeasure, and the estrangement, unhappily, was eternal. She remained in the monastery where she had taken refuge, until her husband's death; and then continued in an adjoining house, having formed an intimate friendship with the sisters of the convent. An attachment grew up between herself and a most deserving man, but who, unhappily, before their intended marriage could take place, was seized with pulmonary consumption, and died in her arms, after her assiduous and affectionate attendance of many months by his sick couch. An

aged and worthy physician and his wife had taken this ill-fated lady under their protection, and vainly endeavoured to console her. She had frequently before contemplated suicide, and always was resolved to seek refuge in it from her family's and her husband's persecutions. Some days before her last misfortune, an accidental death by the fumes of charcoal had happened in the neighbourhood, and drawn her attention to this mode of self-destruction. She had examined the particulars, and made inquiries of the physician as to the experiment and its conditions. With her wonted decision of mind she took her resolution prospectively, and in the contemplation of her betrothed's death. With her wonted firmness of purpose she executed the resolve, and was found dead an hour after his decease, in her chamber, where she had placed a brasier of live charcoal, after closing the windows and the doors. Such are the facts respecting the end of this noble-minded and ill-fated woman; and they are attested by the evidence of the physician's family, of the nuns, and even of the inquiry judicially instituted by the local authorities. The mere date of the death, however, and the known courtship and intended marriage, are enough to convict of the most glaring falsehood those reports which soon after were spread by the implacable enemies of Mirabeau; and which, it is painful to think, found their way into works of great credit. Thus, one of the greatest historians of the Revolution says, that, on his liberation from Vincennes, he deserted Sophie, who put a period to her existence,—leaving it to be inferred that there was no quarrel: but that is comparatively immaterial, for the uncharitable may say he sought the quarrel to cover his

intended desertion—but leaving it also to be inferred, which is absolutely untrue and indeed impossible that her suicide was caused by his conduct.

The history of Mirabeau's private life, and his treatment by his family, forces upon the reader's mind one striking reflection upon the truly wretched state of society under the old *régime*. To the merciless Aristocracy which, under, perhaps we should rather say along with, the Despot, swayed the country, Mirabeau was indebted for the ill-treatment, nay, the persecution, of his father. To the same cause, the Marchioness, his mother, was indebted for her ill-assorted marriage, first with a man old enough to be her father, while she was an infant, and next to a man she never was loved by; and to the same cause she owed the persecution she encountered when his coldness had been turned into aversion. To the same cause, Madame le Monnier owed her forced marriage, when a girl, to a man old enough to be her great-grandfather, and the life of agony, rather than misery, she afterwards led. The powers of the Crown came in aid of Aristocratic pride and Aristocratic fury; and the State prison yawned to receive whatever victim was required by the demon of family pride or domestic tyranny,—aping, almost passing, the tyranny of the Crown. These are the blessings which the Revolution is charged with having torn from unhappy France! These are the glories, and this the felicity, of the old *régime!* These are the goods which the gods of legitimacy provide for their votaries! And to regain these joys it is, that some men would assist the Carlist handful of priests and nobles against the thirty millions of our free and dauntless neighbours

—just as, to perpetuate the like glories of absolute Monarchy and pure Aristocracy elsewhere, the same politicians are knit in the bands of hearty friendship with all that is most bigoted and despotical in countries not yet visited by the irresistible wave of General Reform!

It will complete the view of Mirabeau's character, if we add that he joined to extraordinary talents, and a most brilliant fancy, powers of application rarely found in such association; that his vigorous reasoning, whether from some natural defect of judgment, or from the influence of feeling and passion, often proved an unsafe guide, even in speculation, still oftener in action; that, slave as he too generally proved to the love of indulgence, his courage was ever sustained above all suspicion; that even his share of a virtue far more rare, true fortitude under calamity, surpassed that of most men; and that all the hardships he had undergone, and the torments he had suffered from so many forms of ingenious persecution, never for a moment infused any gall into a disposition originally and throughout benevolent and kind.

Of his genius, the best monuments that remain are his Speeches, and even these were not always his own composition. Both Dumont, Duroveray, and Pellenc, men of distinguished ability, did more than assist him in their production; but some of the finest are known to have been his own; and the greatest passages, those which produced the most magical effects, were the inspiration of the moment. His literary works were too often produced under the pressure of want, to be well digested, or carefully finished. The chief of them,

his "Monarchie Prussienne," is no doubt a vast collection of statistical facts; and, as he had access to the whole of the information which was possessed by the government upon the subject, it is impossible to say that he has not so used his materials as to produce a work of value. Yet the arrangement is not peculiarly felicitous; nor are the proofs on which the statements rest sifted with much care; while the dissertations, that plentifully garnish it, are often very prolix, and founded upon economical principles, which, though generally sound, being, indeed, those of the modern system, are applied, as it were by rote, to any case, and made the ground of decision, without the least regard to the limitations that must practically be introduced into the rules, or the exceptions that occur to their application. As for his intimate friend Major Mauvillon's share in this work, the subject of so many exaggerations, he has himself frankly admitted that it was altogether subordinate, although of great importance, nay essential, to the execution of the plan. The military details, especially, owe to his talents and experience their principal value. The "Essai sur le Despotisme," his earliest political production, is, though severely judged by his own criticism, a work of extraordinary merit; and the "Considérations sur l'Agiotage," and the essay on "Lettres de Cachet," may probably be esteemed his best tracts. But we are here speaking of those writings which partake not of the oratorical character; for, to estimate Mirabeau's genius, we must look at the sudden and occasional productions of his pen, which resemble speeches more than books, and

which, indeed, though never spoken, belong far more to the rhetorical than the literary or scientific class of writings. Among these the celebrated "Réponse aux Protestations des Possédant Fiefs," published in February, 1788, and written, as it were, off-hand, justly deserves the highest place; and it would be difficult to match it in the history of French eloquence.

Before closing these observations upon Mirabeau's merits as an author, it is fit to add that no man ever held the literary character higher, or comported himself more proudly in its investiture. He never but once published anything without his name; he never deemed that literary labour, for the purpose of just and honest gain, was other than a source of honour; he gloried in the name of author; and never was ashamed of his calling, of the labours which it imposed, or the privations which it entailed upon him. He has, in one striking passage of his very voluminous writings, expressed sentiments upon the importance of the Republic of Letters, and the feelings of literary men, so just and so useful for all to whom they apply, that it is proper to transcribe them, and give so wholesome a lesson more general circulation.

"Ah! s'ils se dévouaient loyalement au noble métier d'être utiles! Si leur indomptable amour-propre pouvait composer avec lui-même, et sacrifier la gloriole à la dignité! Si, au lieu de s'avilir, de s'entredéchirer, de détruire réciproquement leur influence, ils réunissaient leurs efforts et leurs travaux pour terrasser l'ambitieux qui usurpe, l'imposteur qui égare, le lâche qui se vend; si, méprisant le vil métier de gladiateurs littéraires, ils se croisaient en véri-

tables frères d'armes contre les préjugés, le mensonge, le charlatanisme, la superstition, la tyrannie, de quelque genre qu'elle soit, en moins d'un siècle la face de la terre serait changée!"

Of the violent and precocious physical temperament of Mirabeau, mention has already been made. A slight notice of his personal appearance may not inappropriately close this imperfect sketch. His ugliness was so great as almost to become proverbial; and features, naturally harsh and even distorted, were rendered still more repulsive by the deep furrows of the confluent small-pox. His natural vanity, almost as exaggerated as his deformity, even drew from its excess the materials of gratification. "Personne" (he used to say), "ne connait la puissance de ma laideur;" and he was wont to speak of its "*sublimity*." The power of his eye, however, was undeniable, and the spirit and expression which his mind threw into all his countenance made it, how plain soever, anything rather than uninteresting or disgusting. The arch reply of M. de Talleyrand is well known, as illustrative alike of Mirabeau's mental and bodily imperfections. He was dilating upon the qualities which must meet in whoever should aspire to govern France under a free constitution, and was enunciating, "Il faut qu'il soit éloquent—fougueux—noble"—and many other qualities notoriously possessed by himself—when the witty and wily statesman added, "Et qu'il soit tracé de la petite vérole, n'est-ce pas?"

We have hitherto been dwelling upon the private history and the personal qualities of this celebrated individual, whose political history is intimately mixed up with the first stage of the French Revolution, and whose pub-

lic character has been sketched by so fine a pen,* that humbler artists may well abandon the task in despair. But, before adding the few remarks required by this subject, one may be offered which the daughter of Neckar could less easily make. We may express the indignation with which every man of good feelings, and indeed of sound principles, must regard his attacks upon that venerable man. That he there suffered personal dislike to guide his pen and direct his conduct cannot be doubted. Nor can any one avoid agreeing with his candid and even favourable commentator, the amiable, and eloquent, and sensible Dumont, in his reprobation of the sudden turn which his course took when policy required a suspension of hostilities; and the quick transition from menaced and even boasted destruction to absolute neutrality—hardly to be exceeded by the scandalous scenes, so disgusting to all honourable minds, in later times enacted before our eyes, by certain politicians of the present day. Nothing can exceed the acrimony of Mirabeau towards Neckar, except the mild and dignified patience, approaching to indifference, of that excellent man, under the attack.

Although it is undeniable that his whole conduct in the scenes which made him and all France a politician, his spirit and his capacity—above all, his readiness, his fertility of resources, and his brilliant eloquence,—constantly appeared, and always produced with certainty their natural effect, of influencing the course of events in

* Madame de Staël, "Sur la Révolution Française."

a marvellous degree; yet it may be fairly questioned if, in all that eventful history so made to try men's souls, one individual appeared whose conduct was more under the interested impulse of merely selfish feelings, and guided by more exclusively personal calculations of interest. Living in times when even the coldest natures were kindled with patriotic zeal, and the most calculating were carried away into a forgetfulness of their own interests, he, whose nature was fiery, and whose conduct had been a tissue of indiscretions, seems to have always practised enthusiasm as a means towards an end, and to have made the speculations for his own benefit—first in power, next in profit—the business of his public life. With all his warmth of eloquence, all his admirably acted passion, all his effective display of ready feeling, as each occasion required, it may be safely affirmed that Robespierre himself showed far more genuine zeal for the propagation of his principles, far more fanaticism in his devotion to popular rights, a far more unquenchable hatred of courts, and of every tyranny but his own.

Mirabeau contributed by his courage and his eloquence to the destruction of the old monarchy more than any one individual, more even than Neckar did by his weakness and his inconsistency. His was the first eloquence that emancipated France ever experienced. Admitted at length to assist in popular assemblies, addressed as the arbiter of the country's fate, called to perform their part by debating and hearing debates, it was by Mirabeau that the people were first made to feel the force of the orator, first taught what it was to hear spoken reason and spoken passion;

and the silence of ages in those halls was first broken by the thunder of his voice echoing through the lofty vaults now covering multitudes of excited men. That his eloquence should in such circumstances pass for more than its value was inevitable; and that its power should be prodigious in proportion to the novelty of the occasion, was quite a matter of course. No one ever ruled assemblies, either of the people or of their representatives, with a more absolute sway; none ever reaped an ampler harvest of popular sympathy and popular applause than he did when he broke up the public mind lying waste in France, and never till then touched or subdued by the Rhetorician's art. But no sooner had he overthrown all the institutions of the monarchy than he entered into treaty with the court, to whose weakness his influence had become necessary as a restorative or a prop. It is possible, no doubt, that he may have felt the perils in which he had involved the country; but it is certain that the price of his assistance in rescuing her was stipulated with all the detail of the most sordid chaffering; and it is as undeniable that, had not death taken him from the stage at the moment of his greatest popularity, he must have stood or sunk before the world in a few weeks, as a traitor to the people, purchased with a price, and that price a large sum and a large income in the current coin of the realm.

Nor was his first embarking in the revolutionary struggle the dictate of democratic principle, the re-

* The shameful contract, signed by both parties, Count d'Artois and Mirabeau himself, is preserved, and is printed in Lafayette's Memoirs.

sult of any dream of equal liberty. A patrician by birth, aristocratic by nature, pampered by luxurious habits, the vortex of popular contention and sweeping levelling change was no element for him to breathe in, nor was republican simplicity the natural hue and pattern of his artificial habits. But he had quarrelled with that order which he alone valued, and whose friendly intercourse alone he could bear: he found the circle of fashion shut against his vices, and, as Madame de Staël has not more wittily than correctly phrased it, he set fire to the edifice of society in order to force open the doors of the Paris drawing-rooms to himself. ("Il fallait mettre le feu à l'édifice social, pour que les portes des salons de Paris lui fussent ouvertes.")

It is another trait of the same master, and as just as the former, that, like all unprincipled men, he saw all along only his own interest in the affairs of his country, and his foresight was bounded by his selfishness. ("Comme tous les hommes sans morale, il vit d'abord son intérêt personnel dans la chose publique, et sa prévoyance fut bornée par son égöisme.") The truth which this reflection discloses is of great account in contrasting the conduct of statesmen, as it is of the last importance in its relation to all public affairs. Nothing can more fetter the powers of the understanding than selfish and profligate principles; nothing more disqualify men for noble enterprise; nothing more obstruct, more contract the current of state affairs. The fatal influence of a bad disposition, of loose principles, of unwörthy feelings, over the intellectual powers, is a topic of frequent use, not with the preacher so much as with the moral philosopher; because it is of a nature too

refined for an ordinary audience. But it is an important chapter in psychology, as well as in ethics; and, unfortunately, the illustrations which it derives from facts are by no means confined to those which the secret manners of courts and the annals of absolute monarchy furnish to the student of history. Popular governments supply even more largely their quota of this contribution; because it is there chiefly that political genius can shine, and it is there that the sinister influence of bad principles interposes to obscure and to eclipse its rays. The habitual love of place; the aversion to serve the people without ruling over them; the repugnance to give up the station once possessed; to tear from the lips the intoxicating cup of power, when honour and duty commands that it shall pass—what dismal havoc has this made in the fairest prospects of usefulness and of fame—but also how mournfully has it marred the noblest features in the aspect of political genius! The visible face of public affairs, the page of parliamentary history in our own country, bears a sad testimony to this melancholy truth. But the mischief stops not here. If we see so many instances of bright prospects clouded over when the gifts of the understanding have been displayed before the malignant influence of selfish interests obscured or perverted them—how many more cases must there be of a similar bias having prevented their ever being disclosed! Who can tell how much heavenly genius may lie buried under the mass of earth-born sordid influence—how often the genial current of the soul may have been frozen by base, calculating, selfish policy—or, in how many hearts pregnant with celestial fire, the spark may have been extinguished ere yet it kindled into flame;

extinguished by the cold and sordid propensity to seek office and to keep it, so epidemic among statesmen in modern times, and among all who aspire to be statesmen? Mirabeau was assuredly not one of these; but his genius had no sooner blazed forth in the first scenes of the Revolution, than it was cramped in all its aspirations by the baser materials which predominated in his extraordinarily mixed nature.

He did not nearly reach the ordinary term of the lives of statesmen, less nearly by six or seven years than Mr. Pitt, for he died at forty-two; but he lived in times when each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend; and he thus lived long enough to show all that he could have attained if his life had been prolonged to the usual period. Had he perished a few weeks earlier, perhaps a few days, some doubt might have existed over the course which awaited him if he had survived; for his purchase by the court was but just completed when he died, and his eagerness to be bought had made him precipitately hurry on the completion of the bargain. Of one thing we cannot doubt, that in a few months, possibly weeks, he would have become hateful to the people whose idol he was at his death; and that his whole influence, his character for patriotism, his reputation for political courage, even the fame of his talents, would have perished in attempting to earn the stipulated price, by vain efforts to stem the revolutionary torrent which he, more than any one, had let loose, and to save the court to whom he had sold himself after accomplishing its destruction. It is probable that he would have emigrated, and lived obscure and penniless abroad. It

is next to certain that, had he remained in France, he would have been among the first victims of the reign of terror; and, the daring profligacy of his conduct offering an almost solitary instance of personal corruption among the errors and the crimes of the day, he would have left behind him a less enviable reputation, unless for cruelty of which he had nothing, than even the worst of the men whose unprincipled but fanatical ambition soon after his decease deluged France in blood and convulsed all Europe in war.

CARNÔT

It is impossible to find a greater contrast than the solid genius and severe virtue of Carnôt presents to all the qualities of that brilliant and worthless person whom we have just been contemplating.* Endowed with the greatest faculties of the understanding—cultivating these with the assiduity which to an ordinary capacity is of absolute necessity, but which an exalted one cannot despise if mighty deeds are to be done—exercising them through a long life upon the worthiest objects—despising all the outward accomplishments that dazzle the vulgar—never even addicting himself to the practice of those arts which enable the natural leaders of mankind to guide the multitude—and seeking only for the influence over other minds which was to be acquired by the actions that his own enabled him to perform—Carnôt offers to the admiration of posterity, as he did to his own times, a rare instance of the triumphs of purely intellectual excellence without one single adventitious aid, whether from station, or from wealth, or from the attraction of superficial or ornamental qualities, or from the happy accidents of fortune. We trace at every step his sterling worth producing its appropriate effect without external aid of any sort; to each succes-

* Mirabeau.

sive eminence which he reached we see him raised by merit alone; in all his conflicts with adversity, with oppression, with difficulties of every sort and magnitude, almost with nature herself in some instances, we observe the struggle of intellectual superiority; and the commanding position which he thus took, he retained by the same means, nor to maintain it ever stooped a hair's breadth from the lofty attitude in which he had always climbed nor ever crawled.

This in any state of affairs is a prodigious merit—in one of change and uncertainty and revolution it is incomparably more rare and more to be admired; but it is not the highest claim to our respect which this great man prefers. His genius was exalted, and it was surpassed by his virtue. An absolute self-denial in all the particulars where human passions bear most sway over ordinary minds; an immoveable fortitude in all those situations in which human weakness is most apt to yield; a courage of every kind, from the highest to the most vulgar, from the courage of the statesman to that of the grenadier; the active valour of braving danger, and the calmness which can command every faculty of the soul in the midst of extreme perils; an entire devotion to the maintenance of his principles at any personal sacrifices and at all hazards; an enthusiastic zeal for the service of his country and his kind; all embellished by a modesty which made the glory of his exertions alone feel cumbrous to him—these rare qualities seemed to revive the old Roman for the admiration, if not for the imitation and improvement, of a degenerate age—but to these was added a tenderness of disposition which the old Roman either strove to

stifle within him, or to which his nature was alien and strange.

The modesty which has just been remarked as a distinguishing feature of his character, and his carelessness about the opinion entertained of his conduct, provided he acted so as to satisfy his own conscience according to his own sense of duty, have conspired to give him a very different place in the estimation of the world at large from that which belongs to him of right—making his genius be undervalued and his moral worth misconceived. Some details become therefore necessary upon both these points.

His aptitude and his taste for military affairs, destined afterwards to perform so important a part in the history of Europe, displayed itself in a singular manner while yet a child. Being taken for the first time to a theatre where some siege or other warlike operation was represented, he astonished the audience by interrupting the piece to complain of the manner in which the general had disposed his men and his guns, crying out to him that his men were in fire, and calling upon him loudly to change his position. In fact the men were so placed as to be commanded by a battery. The mathematical sciences absorbed his whole attention for some years; and his celebrated Theorem on the Measure of Lost Forces, published early in life, shows with what success his studies were pursued. But his reading was general; his feelings were ever alive to the duties of a man and a citizen; his enthusiasm was kindled by nothing so much as by the records of benevolent and patriotic actions. That eloquence, the result of strong feelings and a correct taste, would have been his in no common

measure had he studied words as much as things, we have the strongest proof in the success of his first production, the *Éloge de Vauban*, crowned by the Academy of Dijon, and from which a passage of singular beauty, admirably characteristic of the writer, may be cited:—"C'était un de ces hommes que la nature a donné au monde tout formés à la bienfaisance; doués, comme l'abeille, d'une activité innée pour le bien général; qui ne peuvent séparer leur sort de celui de la république, et qui, membres intimes de la société, vivent, prospèrent, souffrent, et languissent avec elle."

His habitual courage was displayed on this occasion; the panegyric boldly bestowed by him on Montalembert gave inexpressible offence, and caused him to be confined in Vincennes under a lettre de cachet; one of the causes probably of the hatred which he so steadily showed to arbitrary power.

But scenes now approached which were destined to suspend his scientific pursuits, and to rouse his political energies. He saw the earlier portion of the Revolution unmoved; but he was the first military man who joined it, having then the rank of Lieutenant of Engineers; and he was elected as deputy for St. Omer to the Legislative Assembly. He sat in judgment on the King, and voted for his death; but his absence on a military commission prevented him from taking any part in the highly reprehensible proceedings which led to the trial. Of these he loudly disapproved; but when the whole had been fixed, he considered himself as in the position of a judge called upon to determine a question already prepared, brought before him ripe for decision, and in

which he had no choice but to deliver his opinion, whatever that might be.

In April, 1793, was formed the celebrated Committee of Public Safety; that body which has filled the world with the renown of its great actions, the terror of its name, and the infamy of its crimes.* The country was then threatened with invasion from every point; a march upon Paris was the avowed object of the allies; insurrections were plotting, aided by foreigners in every part of France; one great province was in open rebellion; Paris abounded in parties resolved on destroying the revolutionary and restoring the ancient Government—

* It is only justice to observe, that, as the guilty are generally made answerable for more than they have perpetrated, so this body has been incorrectly supposed to have done much that was really the work of others. It never possessed any other function but that of putting persons on their trial; and the Court, it could hardly be called of justice, the Revolutionary Tribunal, was altogether the creation and generally the creature of the Convention. But even that hateful tribunal, far worse than the Committee, acquitted many more than it condemned; and as each cause was defended, so it is well known that no advocate ever suffered for the freedom of his defence. It is far from being the design of this note to lessen the execration justly felt of those crimes which covered the French name with disgrace, which paved the way for the subjugation of the Republic, which facilitated the extinction of public liberty, and indeed ended in the conquest of France. But it was observed by a sagacious and philosophical person, well acquainted with the history of his country, and to whose suggestions this sketch is greatly indebted, that the remarks in the text seemed, if unqualified, to sanction the common opinion entertained in foreign countries, which confounds together the Committee and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and cast upon the former body all that was done by the Convention and the Clubs.

when a general sense of the absolute necessity for a vigorous, concentrated, united executive power to controul disaffection, and apply the national force in defence of the State, both against foreign and domestic enemies, gave birth to the famous Committee, which immediately proceeded to rule with a sceptre of iron, and to war with the sword of millions. Of this Committee, Carnôt, then only a Lieutenant of Engineers, was named a member, after it had existed for two months; and, as it was immediately found wholly impossible to pursue the plan first laid down for its operations, of discussing fully each act to be done and then deciding upon it by a majority of voices, a division was made of the labours, and a distribution of the members in departments, each being alone the ruler of his own province, and alone held responsible for its measures, although a certain number of signatures was required to give the acts of each validity. The whole department of war, as well the organization of the military force as its operations in the field, was assigned to Carnôt. Others, as Robert Lindet, and Prieur de la Coté d'Or, were appointed to superintend the Commissariat and Armament departments; but those whom the world has most heard of, most dreaded, and most justly execrated, were the five to whom was given up the superintendence of the Police —Robespierre, Couthon, Billaud Varrennes, St. Just, and Collot d'Herbois—all of whom, except St. Just, a young man of an enthusiastic temperament, and, until corrupted by absolute power, of a virtuous disposition, were regarded in their own day, and will be loathed by succeeding ages, as among the greatest monsters

that ever disgraced the human name. The annals of ancient tyrants alone present scenes of darker atrocity than the reign of terror; for the massacres by the Bourbons on the Eve of St. Bartholomew, and by the Irish Papists in 1641, though more prodigal of blood, were a momentary ebullition of religious fury, and not, like those of the guillotine, deliberately perpetrated with the mockery of justice, under her outraged form, and in her profaned name.

In these horrid scenes the enemies of Carnôt have, of course, endeavoured to implicate him; and it is not to be denied that many impartial observers have formed an opinion condemnatory of his conduct. That he remained in office with such detestable men as his colleagues; that he was aware of all their proceedings; that he even signed the orders of execution in his turn, complying with the regulation already mentioned; that he thus made himself legally responsible for all those atrocious acts of absolute power cruelly exercised—is not to be questioned, and no one can venture to hold with entire confidence the opinion that this responsibility did not extend much further, and involve him in the actual and enormous guilt of deeds which, at all events, and from whatever motive, he sanctioned by his participation, leaving mankind to infer, from his silence, that they had his approval. Yet his position, and that of his country, must be well considered before we pass so severe a censure upon his conduct. He began to

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Carnôt himself, admitting always Robespierre to have been exceedingly bad, said there were two a good deal worse, Billaud and Collot.

administer the war department, had made some progress in his functions, and had gained brilliant successes, before his colleagues commenced their reign of terror. His defence is, that, had he yielded to the natural feelings of abhorrence, and followed his own inclinations, the country was conquered, possibly partitioned—far worse injury inflicted upon his fellow-citizens—far more blood spilt—far more lasting disgrace incurred by the nation—far more permanent disasters entailed upon all classes of the people—than all that the terrorist executions and confiscations could produce. Had he any right, then, to refuse his aid, thus required for averting such calamities? Was it not enough for him to know that his retirement would certainly not have stayed the proscription, while it most probably would have opened the gates of Paris to the Allies? Was it not sufficient for his conscience that he felt wholly innocent of the crimes perpetrated by his colleagues? And, knowing his character to be above reproach, had he a right to sacrifice his country to a regard for his reputation? This question he could answer in those memorable words of Danton—"*Périsse ma réputation plutôt que ma patrie.*"

But it may be urged that such passages, such elections, are of dangerous example, *decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile;* and also, that the defence assumes the fact, both of his having constantly disapproved of the proceedings of Terror, and of his having adhered to the government of the Terrorists from no sinister motive. To the first objection it would not be easy to return a satisfactory answer, unless by urging the extremity of the case in which he was called upon to make his elec-

tion, and the prodigious magnitude of the evils between which he had to choose. Nor will any one be convinced by such considerations who is inclined to hold that, in questions of blood-guiltiness, we are forbidden to regard any consequences, and bound each to keep his own hands at all events pure. It may, however, be well to reflect, that many persons are parties to crimes, such as the waging of unjust and murderous wars, nay, even to the oppression and ruin of individuals by measures of state, and yet escape censure, upon no other ground than that they confine their exertions to their own department, leaving the whole blame to rest upon the guilty actors; and if it should be said that Carnôt's withdrawing his sanction from the proscriptions might have arrested the course of his bloodthirsty colleagues, it is at the least equally sure that, if all who disapproved of an unjust war refused to play their parts in it—if generals and officers and soldiers withheld their concurrence—no statesman, be he ever so wicked or ever so powerful, could cover the face of the earth with the slaughter and fire and pillage of war.

But the question of fact is easily and satisfactorily answered; for we are possessed of evidence which acquits him of all participation in the crimes of the day, and also of circumstances in his history which serve as a test of his motives in continuing to direct the military operations while Robespierre presided over the internal policy of the state. The arrangement of the Committee in departments to which reference has been made is established in the written protest previously drawn up by Robert Lindet for his own exculpation. Carnôt's name being affixed without any knowledge even of the lists,

and as a mere form, seems proved by the accidental circumstance of his having signed the warrant for the arrest of his confidential secretary, this happening to be issued by Robespierre in the week when it was Carnôt's turn to sign. On some occasions he assisted at the police sittings of the Committee, and then he is represented by the Royalist authors themselves as having "saved more lives than all that his colleagues sacrificed." The hatred of his colleagues and their constant threats of vengeance are well known. It was his keeping aloof from all participation in the bloody orgies of their councils; his openly reprobating their proceedings; his fearlessly blaming the destruction of the Brissotines in particular; that made the fanatical St. Just charge him with Moderantism, and insist upon his being tried for the offence; that made Robespierre, in lamenting the necessity of having him among their number as the consequence of his own ignorance of military affairs, call him, with unspeakable bitterness of spirit, "L'odieux Carnôt." Nay, we have it from Carnôt himself, that Robespierre's answer to the constant requisitions made for his destruction was in these words:—"Dans ce moment l'on ne pourrait pas se passer de lui; mais attendez jusqu'à ce qu'il ne nous soit plus indispensable, ou bien jusque nos armées subissent quelque revers—et alors sa tête tombera; je vous en reponds."*

It is fair, too, that we should regard the rest of his conduct, in order to have a test of the purity of his motives in this greatest exigency. Not only he always set himself against anything like party or the acquisi-

* Robespierre's words, as repeated by General Carnôt himself to the writer of these pages, in 1814.

tion of personal influence; not only did he constantly refuse, and at the daily risk of his life, even to enter the door of the Jacobin or any other Club; but we know that his courage was displayed in nobly doing his duty, utterly careless of consequences, where these could only affect himself. In June 1792 he exposed himself to the furious resentment of the army by declaring in his report the massacre of Dillon and Beaugeand to be the "acts of Cannibals." As often as any matter was referred to his investigation, his reports were made without the least regard to their either displeasing the people, injuring the progress of his principles, or exasperating the Government against him; and when he received orders, though in a subordinate capacity, to do anything of which he strongly disapproved, he fearlessly encountered the risk of his head by a peremptory refusal; as when he refused to arrest an unpopular general, while acting as Deputy with the Army of the North. He who could cite such acts of moral courage, as performed in such times, might well challenge credit for being influenced by no sense of personal danger, or any other unworthy motive, in adhering to the Terrorists while their power was at its height.

It is worthy of remark how entirely those who most condemn Carnôt for the compliances now under discussion have forgotten the conduct of others who have sanctioned as great crimes without any portion of his excuse. No one more loudly blamed him, for example, than Talleyrand, and yet Talleyrand continued the principal minister, not only of Napoleon, during his Spanish, Swiss, and Russian wars,* but of the Exe-

* The comparison of these wars to the judicial murders of Paris

cutive Directory, during the proscription of Fructidor, when sixty-three Deputies and thirteen Journalists were arrested in their beds, carried through the provinces in cages like wild beasts amidst the revilings of the infuriated mob, and crowded into the hold of a convict-ship to perish miserably in the swamps of Guiana.

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may seem unjust towards the former. But, although the glory of war encircles its horrible atrocities with a false glare which deceives us as to its blood-guiltiness, in what does the crime of Napoleon, when he sacrificed thousands of lives to his lust of foreign conquest, differ from that of Robespierre when he sought domestic power by slaying hundreds of his fellow-citizens? In one particular there is more atrocity in the crimes of the latter; they were perpetrated under the name and form of justice, whose sanctity they cruelly profaned; but, on the other hand, far more blood was spilt, far more wide-spreading and lengthened misery occasioned to unoffending provinces, by the invasions of Spain, and Switzerland, and Russia, than by all the acts of the Committee, the Convention, and the Revolutionary Tribunal. Nor will mankind ever be free from the scourge of war until they learn to call things by their proper names, to give crimes the same epithets, whatever outward form they may assume, and to regard with equal abhorrence the conqueror who slakes his thirst of dominion with the blood of his fellow-creatures, and the more vulgar criminal, who is executed for taking the life of a wayfaring man that he may seize upon his purse.

It deserves to be remarked that the virtuous Lafayette, whose memoirs and correspondence have been given to the world by his family, although he often makes mention of Carnôt, and held in more abhorrence than perhaps any other man the whole reign of Terror, his hatred of which was indeed the cause of all his own misfortunes, yet never speaks disparagingly of the great Minister: on the contrary, whenever he can find an opportunity, his tone is apologetic; and in one passage, particularly, he expressly says that the Committee of Public Safety only had the use of his name, not the disposal of his person.—(See tome iv., pp. 334, 355; and v. pp. 110, 217.)

In these reflections no reference has been made to the private character of Carnôt, his unsullied purity in all the relations of private life, and the incorruptible integrity of his public administration, as far as money was concerned. The reason of this omission is obvious. Although the private reputation of some Terrorists was almost as much tarnished as their public conduct, it is certain that others, perhaps the greater number, and among them certainly Robespierre, were of irreproachable lives. As to corruption, it was imputable to few or none of them;* indeed the generally-received phrase was that they had all vices, saving this. The men who had, unwatched, the distribution of the whole revenues of France, distributed among themselves monthly the sum of 360 francs for all their expenses; and when Robespierre was put to death the whole property found in his possession was thirty-six of the last supply thus issued to him.† Carnôt, in like manner, never received a farthing of the public money for his official services; but, in a different respect, his singular disinterestedness was truly striking: it was peculiar to himself, and it proved to demonstration how entirely every selfish feeling was absorbed in his zeal for the public service. Though at the head of all mili-

* Danton was not a member of the Committee of Public Safety. He was known to be sold to the Court. His price was 90,000f., paid, and promises of more. Montmorin (whose execution he caused) had his receipt for the money. Yet did this wretch come to the bar and demand Lafayette's head for the king's escape!

† These simple republicans divided their monthly allowances into rouleaus of 12f., being their daily expenditure; and three of these, unexpended, were found in Robespierre's desk.

tary affairs, he never received his own promotion in the army more rapidly than the most friendless subaltern. He was only a lieutenant when he came into office. He was but a captain while directing the operations of fourteen armies, and bestowing all ranks, all commands, upon his brother officers. It was not till the latter part of his Directorship that he became colonel, and he remained colonel only while king of the country. These passages may well be cited as throwing a strong light upon the purity of his motives, when his conduct is equivocal, and the facts are referable to either good motives or bad. They seem quite enough to prove that when he went wrong the error was one of the judgment and not of the heart.

But, if a considerable difference of opinion exists, and ever will divide men's minds, upon the moral character of Carnôt, upon his genius for affairs there can be none at all. The crisis was truly appalling when he undertook the military administration of the Republic. The remains of Dumourier's army were chased from post to post; Valenciennes, Mentz, Condé, had fallen; two Spanish armies attacked the line of the Pyrenees; another invasion was advancing from Piedmont on that of the Alps; La Vendée was in the hands of the rebels, who threatened the capital itself of the province at the head of 40,000 armed peasantry, of all troops the most formidable in such a country; Marseilles and Lyons had separated themselves by force from the Republican government; and an English fleet rode in the harbour of Toulon. Every one knows how swiftly this scene was reversed, the enemy on all points driven back, offensive operations resumed, the neigh-

bouring countries subjugated, and the terrible Republic installed as the Conqueror of Europe, instead of expecting her fate at the hands of a hundred foes. In less than a year and a half of this unparalleled administration, the brilliant results of the campaign were 27 victories, 8 of them in pitched battles; 120 actions of lesser moment; 116 regular fortresses or great towns taken, 36 of them after regular sieges, and 230 lesser forts carried; 80,000 of the enemy slain, 91,000 made prisoners, 3,800 cannon, 70,000 muskets, and 90 colours captured. These marvels are known to the world, and on these the splendid fame of this great man rests. But it is not so well known that he conducted alone the whole correspondence of fourteen armies; that wherever he could not repose absolute confidence in his General, he gave his detailed instructions from Paris; that from time to time he repaired to the spot and saw that his orders were followed, or informed himself how they should be modified, sometimes making the circuit of five or six armies during one tour of inspection; and that, where the fortune of a battle was that of the nation, as at Wattignies, and his taking the field in person could turn the fate of the day, he put himself, in his civic dress, at the head of the troops, and, after performing prodigies of valour, gained a decisive victory, and saved the Capital itself. In the whole history of war and of administration there is perhaps no second instance of anything like his instructions to Pichegru for the campaign of 1794. Hardly a battle was fought, or a place masked, or a siege formed, or a corps posted, that these orders did not previously designate and arrange; nor does the narrative of that victorious campaign differ from the

previous orders for conducting it, except in the tense of the verbs employed, and in the filling up a few names of the more obscure places, or the less important affairs.

It remains to apply the severest and the surest of all tests to his brilliant career, the value of the men whom he promoted, and by whom he was served. Hoche's merit he at once discovered while a serjeant of foot, from a plan of operations which he had given in. Buonaparte himself was placed by him at the head of the great Army of Italy, while wholly unknown by any achievement, except by the genius which he showed at Paris in his dispositions for fighting the Battle of the Sections. He was then a young man of five-and-twenty, and had never shown any talent in regular war except on a very small scale at the siege of Toulon. Carnôt, without any hesitation, after observing his conduct at Paris, gave him the chief command of the Republic's most important and difficult campaign, against the whole force of Austria and Italy. It might suit the Emperor's views afterwards to forget the obligation which he owed, and to seek a poor justification of his ingratitude in attempting to undervalue his patron, of whose military administration he often spoke slightingly to his courtiers. But a letter now lies before us, dated 10 Floreal, An. 4 (June, 1796), from his head-quarters at Cherasco, after the battles of Lodi and Arcola, in which he tells Carnôt, then Director, and again at the head of the War Department, that the treaty with Sardinia enables him to receive communications through Turin in half the time of the longer route, and adds, "Je pourrais donc recevoir promptement vos ordres et connaître vos intentions pour la direction à donner à l'armée;" and in a former letter to

the Finance Minister he had said " that with the command of the army he had received a plan of offensive war prescribed to him, and the execution of which required prompt measures and extraordinary funds." A despatch of Carnôt's is also before us of a somewhat earlier date, chalking out generally the plan of operations ; generally, no doubt ; for the great Director well knew when to tie down his instruments by special instructions, and when to leave a large latitude to those who deserved and obtained his entire confidence.

It is unnecessary to add that the other generals, at the same time employed to carry the French flag in triumph over Europe, were also men of first-rate military capacity — Massena, Joubert, Lannes, Moreau. Nor ought we to forget that the resources of all other sciences were brought by the War Minister to bear upon the military art ; that by him chemistry, geodesy, mechanics, aërostation itself, were laid under contribution for the benefit of the tactician ; that, above all, the foundations were laid of that magnificent system of Public Education so invaluable for all the departments of the state, the Polytechnic School, one of the most glorious monuments of the spirit of improvement that have survived the changes of both Revolution and Restoration.

When Carnôt quitted the Committee of Public Safety in the latter part of 1794, the confidence of his countrymen was signally manifested towards him. No fewer than fourteen places chose him at once for their representative in the Council of Five Hundred. In 1795 he accepted the place of Director and the Administration of the War Department, at a moment of almost as great public disaster as when he first came into the

executive government two years before. Had any selfish feeling ever found a place in his bosom,—above all, had personal vanity been its inmate,—he would have held aloof at this crisis of affairs, left the new constitution to work its way, and let the world believe that, as disaster had succeeded to victory when he quitted the government, so all the military glory of France was bound up in his ministry. But he scorned all personal feelings; he knew only the motives of a statesman, harboured only the sentiments of a patriot, acknowledged only the claims of his country. At once he obeyed her summons, and in a few weeks victory again resorted to her standard.

So brilliant a career was destined to a premature close. It is believed by most observers, that at every period of the Revolution the great majority of the French people, except in the capital, were adverse to republican principles;* and the elections of 1797, the first that were held under the new constitution, returned a majority of Royalists and moderate Reformers to the councils. The

* The saying of Barrere is well known: "Il y a une république—il n'y a pas de républicains." Soulavie, formerly a member of the Gironde, boasted that his party, on the 10th of August, accomplished what was plainly "against the wishes of the country," *i. e.* the destruction of monarchy, "with 3000 workmen." Petion declared that at that time there were only five republicans in all France. Collot d'Herbois and Merlin de Thionville, in an altercation with him, said, "Nous avons fait le dix d'Août sans vous, et nous allons faire la république contre vous." Nay, as late as 3rd July, 1791, we find Merlin (Douay) himself speaking of the abolition of royalty with horror, as the synonyme of "une guerre civile affreuse," and arguing on the utter impossibility of forming a republic in an extensive country. (*Mem. de Lafayette*, iii. 383. *Lettre de Merlin.*)

first acts of the new representatives showed for what they were prepared. A noted Royalist was elected, in the person of Pichegru, President of the Five Hundred; and counter-revolutionary propositions were openly discussed in that assembly. The majority of the Directory formed their determination with promptitude; and resolved upon an act of violence (*coup d'état*) for which they found a precedent in the history of Oliver Cromwell, who had purged the Parliament of all doubtful members by a military force stationed at the door. To this proposition Carnôt, however he might lament the unfavourable aspect of the new majority, steadily refused his consent. As soon as he was aware of the intentions of his colleagues he might have secured himself and destroyed them by at once denouncing their plot to the councils. But he was far above all acts that even wore the semblance of treachery; and he became the sacrifice to his unchangeable integrity. Proscribed with the party which he most disliked, and proscribed because he would not join in breaking the law to reach them and to destroy them, he narrowly escaped alive, and led the life of an exile from the country he had twice saved, until, after some years of disgrace, distraction, and defeat, the never-failing consequences of his quitting office, he was recalled by the revolution which destroyed the Directoral power and placed Napoleon upon the Consular throne.

In that retirement his favourite science was his constant resource. His mathematical studies, never wholly abandoned, were resumed with all the zeal of his younger years, and the fruit of these worthy occupations was the composition of those works which give him so high a

place among mathematicians. Even in an age when analytical methods have eclipsed the more beautiful, though far less powerful, investigations of geometry, his *Géometrie de la Position* is justly admired for the singular elegance and unexpected generality of the theorems,* as well as the acuteness of many of its general doctrines.† His treatise on the Principles of the different departments of Calculus is a masterly work, alike admirable for its clearness, its profound sagacity, and its happy illustrations. Nor can any writer be named who has so well described and explained the Calculus of Variations as he has done in that work. In these sublime researches this great patriot sought consolation amidst the misfortunes which the incapacity and the profligacy of his former colleagues, Barras and Rewbel, were daily bringing upon France; as far as any occupation that left him the power of reflecting upon passing events could yield him comfort, while he saw the fruits of his labours, the victories which he had gained for his country, torn from her—her independence once more threatened by foreign enemies—her bosom torn with intestine distractions—her territory desolated by the projects of counter-revolution.

From the return of Napoleon he expected the termination of those calamities, and, with all the friends of liberty, he hailed the elevation of the Consul to power with patriotic delight. Under him he resumed his functions as War Minister, but resigned them the moment he perceived that the Consul harboured projects hostile to public liberty. His republican attachments were

* Chap. VI. † Disc. Prélim.

recorded in his votes against the Consulship for Life and the Imperial title. He remained in a private state, devoted to scientific pursuits, until Napoleon's reverses and those of France seemed to call for all the help she could receive from every good citizen; and he then wrote that memorable letter, which, in a few simple words, expressed at once his devotion to his country and his adherence to the principles of freedom. The concluding sentence is remarkable. After making a tender of his military services in modest terms, he adds—"Il est encore tems pour vous, Sire, de conquérir une paix glorieuse et de faire que l'amour du grand peuple vous soit rendu." The offer was at once accepted, and he was sent to defend Antwerp, where his military genius shone conspicuous, but was eclipsed by his tender care of the inhabitants; and they addressed to him, on his departure, a wish, at once simple and affecting, to possess in their great church some memorial of a governor so much respected and so dearly loved.

The last words that Napoleon addressed to him when he left Paris after the battle of Waterloo are remarkable, and they carry a memorable lesson to shortsighted, ambitious, and unprincipled men. "*Carnôt, je vous ai connu trop tard!*" Truly tyrants, and they who would play the tyrant's part, are the last to make acquaintance with the worth of such men as Carnôt. Far sweeter to their ear is the accent of flattery, the soft tone of assent and obeisance, than the stern, grating, hoarse sound of the independent voice, the honest and natural strains that convey wholesome truth, and threaten manly resistance to wicked schemes. Had the virtue of Washington found any place in Napoleon's bosom,

the first man clasped to it would have been the inflexible republican, the indomitable patriot, the untameable lover of freedom, who regarded all his own glories, all his triumphs over the enemy, as *nothing*, unless they subdued the foes of liberty and of France. But he who only valued his victories as a ladder to the throne—who made no account of his laurels unless as they covered the fruit, the forbidden fruit, of arbitrary power—only followed the bent of his evil nature, in driving far from him an eye he durst not meet, a look which reproached him, and an arm whose vengeance conscience told him he deserved to encounter. The stuff of which he would make his courtiers was far different from Carnôt's. His palace-gates flew open to the congenial spirits of the courtly parasites, whom, be it spoken with respect as with shame, the National Institute contained within its body, who, by an unanimous vote,* as disgraceful as ever proceeded from even lite-

* It is fair here to note that there was the colour at least of a law for Carnôt's exclusion; because the Directory had passed a decree, or forced it upon the legislature truncated by the act of violence just committed,—and that decree declared all the persons proscribed to have forfeited their civil rights. Nevertheless, to regard such a mockery of law as binding on the Institute was unpardonable; and, at any rate, no human power could have obliged that body to fill up the vacancy, which it did by an unanimous and an immediate vote. In 1814 an attempt was made once more to exclude Carnôt at the Restoration. M. Arago, then a very young man (only 26 years old), and by much the youngest member of the Institute, declared that he should resist by every means in his power the filling up such a vacancy, and thus prevented the Crown from insisting upon Carnôt's exclusion. When this was, during the *cent jours*, told to Napoleon by the General himself, he was much struck with it, expressed him-

rary servility, erased Carnôt's name from their lists, when he was persecuted for refusing to violate the constitution, and with one voice elected Buonaparte in his stead.

The Restoration, which was only consummated in 1815 after the second occupation of Paris, drove this illustrious statesman and warrior a second time, and for the rest of his days, into exile—an exile far more honourable than any Court favour, because it might have been averted by the suppleness, and the time-serving so dear to Princes, the abandonment of long-cherished principles, the sacrifice of deep-rooted opinions; those compliances, and that apostacy, which are more soothing to the Royal taste, in proportion as they more tarnish the character, and are never so much relished as when the name is the most famous which they dishonour. Yet let it never be forgotten that Princes are nurtured in

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self in terms of great admiration, probably reflected somewhat painfully upon his own very different conduct in consenting to be the successor of his patron 17 years before; but had the magnanimity nevertheless to bestow upon M. Arago the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour.—The excellent and learned Niebuhr has recorded his admiration of Carnôt in striking language:—"He is in some points the greatest man of this century. His virtue is of an exalted kind. When he invents a new system of tactics, hastens to the army, teaches it how to conquer by means of them, and then returns to his government at Paris, he appears great indeed! While engaged in making plans for the operations of five armies, he wrote a mathematical work of the light character, and composed very agreeable little poems. He was a mighty genius! However I may differ from his political views, there is a republican greatness in him which commands respect. My love for him may be an anomaly; yet so it is. Had I nothing left in the wide world but a crust of bread, I would be proud of sharing it with Carnôt."

falsehood by the atmosphere of lies which envelopes their palace; steeled against natural sympathies by the selfish natures of all that surround them; hardened in cruelty, partly indeed by the fears incident to their position, but partly too by the unfeeling creatures, the factitious, the unnatural productions of a Court, whom alone they deal with; trained for tyrants by the prostration which they find in all the minds they come in contact with; encouraged to domineer by the unresisting medium through which all their steps to power and its abuse are made. It is not more true that the vulture is hatched by the parent bird from her egg in her blood-stained nest, than that the parasite Courtier in the palace is the legitimate father of the tyrant.

Let not the page that records such deeds, such virtues, and such sacrifices as Carnôt's, and places in contrast with them the perfidy and the ingratitude which rewarded them, be read only as the amusement of a vacant hour, or to gratify the vulgar curiosity raised by a celebrated name. That page is fitted to convey a great moral lesson both to the potentates who vex mankind, and to the world whose weakness and whose baseness both perverts their nature to mischief, and arms it with the power of doing harm. While the tyrant is justly loathed—while rational men shall never cease to repeat the descriptive words, "non ullum monstrum nec fœdius, nec tetrius, neque dîs hominibusque invisius terra gefluit; qui quamquam formâ hominis, tamen immanitate morum vastissimas vincit belluas"—while no excuse nor any palliation for his crimes can ever be admitted from any consideration of other men's follies or vices—yet is it at the same time just, and it is also use-

ful, to bear perpetually in mind how impracticable would be all the schemes of despots, if the people were not the willing accomplices in their own subjection. Well indeed might Napoleon hope to subjugate France on his return, more easily than he ever hoped to conquer Egypt, when he observed that, before he fared forth upon his adventurous expedition to the East, the greatest men whom science enrolled among her votaries were capable of the baseness which expelled from their Academy one of its most brilliant members, only because to a scientific renown equal with their own he added the imperishable glory of being a martyr to the cause of law and justice! Well might the victorious soldier regard France as a country fated to be ruled with an iron rod, when he saw the whole people quail before three corrupt tyrants, and drive from their soil the illustrious patriot whose genius and whose valour had twice saved it from foreign conquest! Well might the Bourbons, whom Napoleon's mad ambition had replaced on the throne, verify the saying, that the worst of Revolutions is a Restoration, when the French people suffered them without a murmur to proscribe the author of all those victories which had made them famous throughout the world, leaving to die, in poverty and in exile, him whose genius had carried their banners triumphant over all Europe, and whose incorruptible integrity had suffered him to retire penniless from the uncontrouled distribution of millions! It was thus that Marlborough was driven for a season into banishment by the factious violence of the times acting upon a thoughtless and ungrateful people.*

* It must, in justice to the French nation, be borne in mind, that France was then occupied by the foreign armies, and that the article

It is thus that the coarse abuse of Wellington is, in our day, the favourite topic with millions of his countrymen, under the absolute domination of those priests and demagogues whom they suffer to think for them, and whom they follow blindly, without ever exercising any will of their own more than if Providence had not endowed them with reason. But the people of all countries may be well assured that, as long as they become the willing instruments, the effective accomplices* of Royal crimes, or of sordid and unprincipled incendiaries, by remaining the passive spectators of such guilt, they never will be

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of the Convention securing a general amnesty for all political offenders was violated in the person of Carnôt as well as of Ney, little to the credit of any party concerned, whether actively or passively. Let it be recorded to the eternal honour of the Prussian Government, that at Magdeburgh, where the illustrious exile passed his latter days, the soldiers had orders to salute him as often as he appeared in the streets. It is a similar homage to science and letters—to its own natural enemy, the Press—that the Prussian despotism pays in making its soldiers salute the statue of Guttemburg, in the towns of Westphalia.

* A truly disgusting anecdote is recorded in the memoirs of Lafayette published by his family. The Emperor Alexander positively assured the venerable republican that he had done all he could to prevent the extreme counter-revolutionary aspect of the arrangement at the Restoration, and, among other things, to make the King give up his favourite date of the reign from 1793, but that the servility of the Corps Legislatif, who came with addresses of absolute submission, silenced him. The Emperor spoke with as much scorn of their baseness as he did of the incorrigible obstinacy of the Bourbons, whom he declared, with the exception of the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe), as "'incorrigés, et incorrigibles." These vile deputies doubtless had thought to gain the Emperor's favour as much as Louis XVIII. did. It should be a warning to courtiers and apostates from the cause of the people, when they see how little Princes respect or thank them for the meanest compliances. (Mem. vol. v. p 311.

without the curse of despots—at one time crouching beneath the infliction of some hereditary scourge—at another betrayed by some more splendid military usurper—or both betrayed, and sold, and enthralled by a succession of vulgar tyrants.*

The reader of this account of General Carnôt will recognise the service rendered to the author by M. Arago's admirable Eloge of that great man when it shall be published. He has been favoured with the perusal of it by the kindness of his much-esteemed colleague.

LAFAYETTE.

GREATLY inferior in capacity to Carnôt, but of integrity as firm, tempered by milder affections, and of as entire devotion to the principles of liberty, was the eminent and amiable person whose name heads this page; and it is a remarkable circumstance that the predominating gentleness of his nature supplying the want of more hardy qualities, afforded him the power of resisting those with whom he was co-operating, when they left the right path and sullied the republican banner by their excesses,—a power in which the more stern frame of Carnôt's mind was found deficient. For it was the great and the rare praise of Lafayette—a praise hardly shared by him with any other revolutionary chief,—that he both bore a forward part in the scenes of two Revolutions, and refused steadily to move one step farther in either than his principles justified, or his conscientious opinion of the public good allowed.

In another particular he presents a singular and a romantic example of devotion to the cause of liberty when his own country was not concerned, and his station, his interests, nay, his personal safety, were strongly opposed to the sacrifice. A young nobleman, nearly connected with the highest families in Europe, fitted by his rank and by his personal qualities to be the ornament of the greatest court in the world, was seen to

quit the splendid and luxurious circle in which he had just begun to shine, and, smit with an uncontroulable enthusiasm for American freedom, to run the gauntlet of the police and the Bastile of France and the cruisers of England, that he might reach the Transatlantic shores, and share the victories of the popular chiefs, or mingle his blood with theirs. His escape to the theatre of glory was as difficult as if he had been flying from the scene of crimes. He withdrew in secret, travelled under a feigned name, hid himself under various disguises, hired a foreign vessel, escaped with extreme difficulty from the custom-house scrutiny, more than once narrowly missed capture on his passage, and was a proscribed man in his own country, until the chances of politics and of war threw its councils into the same course which he had thus individually anticipated.

The generous zeal which carried him into the New World was not his only recommendation to the affection and gratitude of its inhabitants. His gallantry in the field could only be exceeded by the uniform mildness and modesty of his whole demeanour. Ever ready to serve wherever he could be of most use; utterly regardless of the station in which he rendered his assistance, whether called to convey an order as an aid-de-camp, or to encourage the flagging valour of the troops by his chivalrous example, or to lead a force through multiplied difficulties, or even to signalise himself by the hardest feat in the art of war,—commanding a retreat; never obtruding his counsels or his claims, but frankly tendering his opinion and seconding the pretensions of others rather than his own, with the weight of his merits and his name—he endeared himself to an army

jealous of foreigners, by whom they had been much deceived, to a people remarkable for other qualities than delicacy of sentiment or quickness to acknowledge services rendered, and to a Chief whose great nature, if it had a defect, was somewhat saturnine, and little apt to bestow confidence, especially where disparity of years, as well as military rank, seemed almost to prescribe a more distant demeanour. The entire favour of this illustrious man, which he naturally prized above all other possessions and gloried in above all other honours, he repaid by a devotion which increased his claims to it. When, in the jealousy of party, attempts were made to undermine the General's power, and those who would have sacrificed their country to gratify their personal spleen or envy were seeking to detach the young Frenchman from his leader by the offer of a command separate and independent of Washington, he at once refused to hold it, and declared that he would rather be the aid-de-camp of the General than accept any station which could give him umbrage for an instant.

In order to perceive the extent of the affection which Lafayette had inspired into the American people, we must transport ourselves from the earliest to the latest scenes of his life, and contemplate certainly the most touching spectacle of national feelings, and the most honourable to both parties, which is anywhere to be seen in the varied page of history. Half a century after the cause of Independence had first carried him across the Atlantic, the soldier of liberty in many climes, the martyr to principles that had made him more familiar with the dungeon than with the palace of which he was

born an inmate, now grown grey in the service of mankind, once more crossed the sea to revisit the scenes of his earlier battles, the objects of his youthful ardour, the remains of his ancient friendships. In a country torn with a thousand factions, the voice of party was instantaneously hushed. From twelve millions of people the accents of joy and gratulation at once burst forth, repeated through the countless cities that stud their vast territory, echoed through their unbounded savannahs and eternal forests. It was the gratitude of the whole nation, graven on their hearts in characters that could not be effaced, transmitted with their blood from parent to child, and seeking a vent, impetuous and uncontrolled, wherever its object, the general benefactor and friend, appeared. Nothing but the miracle which should have restored Washington from the grave could have drawn forth such a rapturous and such an universal expression of respect, esteem, and affection, as the reappearance amongst them of his favourite companion in arms, whose earliest years had been generously devoted to their service. The delicacy of their whole proceedings was as remarkable as the unanimity and the ardour which the people displayed. There was neither the doubtful vulgarity of natural coarseness, nor the unquestionable vulgarity of selfish affectation, to offend the most fastidious taste. All was rational and refined. The constituted authorities answered to the people's voice—the Legislature itself received the nation's guest in the bosom of the people's representatives, to which he could not by law have access—he was hailed and thanked as the benefactor and ally of the New World—and her gratitude was tes-

tified in munificent grants of a portion of the territory which he had helped to save. If there be those who can compare this grand manifestation of national feeling, entertained upon reasonable grounds and worthy of rational men, with the exhibitions of loyalty which have occasionally been made in England, and not feel somewhat humiliated by the contrast, they must, indeed, have strange notions of what becomes a manly and reflecting people.

The part which Lafayette bore in the Revolutions of his own country was of far greater importance; and as it was played in circumstances of incomparably greater difficulty, so it will unavoidably give rise to a much greater diversity of opinion among those who judge upon its merits. In America, the only qualities required for gaining him the love and confidence of the people whom he had come to serve, were the gallantry of a chivalrous young man, the ingenuous frankness of his nature and his age, and his modest observance of their great chief. To these he added more than a fair share of talents for military affairs, and never committed a single error, either of judgment or temper, that could ruffle the current of public opinion which set so strongly in towards him, from the admiration of his generous enthusiasm for the independent cause. Above all, no crisis ever arose in American affairs which could make the choice of his course a matter of the least doubt. Washington was his polar star, and to steer by that steady light was to pursue the path of the purest virtue, the most consummate wisdom. In France, the scene was widely different. Far from having a single point in controversy, like the champions of separation in the

New World, the revolutionists of the Old had let loose the whole questions involved in the structure of the social system. Instead of one great tie being torn asunder, that which knit the colony to the parent State, while all other parts of the system were left untouched and unquestioned, in France the whole foundations of government, nay, of society itself, were laid bare, every stone that lay on another shaken, and all the superstructure taken to pieces, that it might be built up anew, on a different plan, if not on a different basis. To do this mighty work, the nation, far from having one leader of prominent authority, split itself into numberless factions, each claiming the preponderancy, and even in every faction there seemed almost as many leaders as partizans. A whole people had broke loose from all restraint; and while the difficulty and embarrassment of these mighty intestine commotions would have been above the reach of any wisdom and the control of any firmness, had they raged alone, it was incalculably aggravated and complicated by the menacing attitude which all Europe assumed towards the new order of things, portending a war from the beginning, and very soon issuing in actual and formidable hostilities. Such was the scene into which Lafayette found himself flung, with the feeble aid of his American experience, about as likely to qualify him for successfully performing his part in it, as the experience of a village schoolmaster or a small land-steward may be fitted to accomplish the ruler of a kingdom. This diversity, however, he was far from perceiving, and it is even doubtful if to the last he had discovered it. Hence his views were often narrow and contracted to an amazing degree: he could

not comprehend how things which had succeeded in the councils of America should fail with the mob of Paris. He seems never to have been aware of the dangers of violence, which are as inseparably connected with all revolution as heat is with fire or motion with explosion. His calculations were made on a system which took no account of the agents that were to work it. His mechanism was formed on a theory that left out all consideration of the materials it was composed of—far more of their friction or of the air's resistance; and when it stuck fast on the first movement, or broke to pieces on the least stroke, he stood aghast, as if the laws of nature had been suspended, when it was only that the artist had never taken the trouble of consulting them. These remarks are peculiarly applicable to his conduct at the two first crises, one of which loosened his connexion with the Revolution, and the other broke it off,—the violent measures of the 20th of June, 1792, when he seems, for the first time, to have conceived it possible that a constitution, six months old, should be violated by the multitudes who had made it in a few weeks—and the events of the famous 10th of August, which astonished him, but no one else, with the spectacle of a monarchy stripped of all substantive strength, overthrown by the tempest in a soil where it had no root, and giving place to a republic, the natural produce of the season and the ground.

Enamoured with that liberty for which he had fought and bled in America, no sooner did the troubles break out in France than Lafayette at once plunged into the revolutionary party, and declared himself for the change. The violences that attended the 14th of July he seemed

to have laid upon the resistance made by the court; and was nothing scared even by the subsequent proceedings, which, though accompanied by no violence, yet inevitably led to the scenes of tumult that ensued. His error—nor is he the only deluded politician, nor his the only times rank with such delusions—his error, his grievous error, was to take no alarm at any measures that could be propounded, so they were adopted in present peace, and to regard all proceedings as harmless which were clothed with the forms of law. The cloud in the horizon he saw not, because it was of the size of a man's hand; but, indeed, he looked not out for it, because it was afar off: so when the tempest roared he was unprepared, and said, "I bargained not for this." To no one more fitly than to him could be administered the rebuke, "Les révolutions ne se font pas à l'eau de rose;" for their necessary connexion with blood seems never to have struck him. Of Mr. Burke's wiser views he entertained a supreme contempt; and it is a truly marvellous thing that the Commander-in-chief of the National Guard, forty thousand strong—held together by no martial law—restrained by no pay—deliberating habitually with arms in their hands—acting one part at clubs or in the streets in the evening when dismissed from the parade, and another when called out—should never have dreamt of the contagious nature of tumultuary feelings and anarchical principles; and even after he had been compelled to resign the command on account of disorders committed by them, and only could be prevailed upon to resume it by their swearing to abstain for the future from such excesses, should have expected such an ano-

malous force to continue tractable as peace-officers, and to maintain the rigorous discipline of practised troops, untainted by the surrounding licence of all classes. There certainly must be admitted to have been more than the share of simplicity (*bonhommie*) with which men who had gone through a revolution on both sides of the Atlantic might be supposed endowed, in a person of mature age, as well as large experience, being altogether confounded at the 20th of June and 10th of August, and abjuring all connexion with a scheme of change which was found capable of producing disorder.

It is one thing to partake of the atrocities which so revolted him, or even to defend them; it is another to be so scared with events very far from being unforeseen, further still from being out of the course of things in time of change, as to abjure the cause which those atrocities deformed foully, obstructed greatly, but could not alter in its essence and nature. It assuredly behoves all men to meditate deeply before they embark in a course which almost inevitably leads to the committing of popular excesses, and which may by no remote probability be attended with the perpetration of the most flagrant crimes, since it may become their duty not to leave the cause which they have espoused, merely because it has been tarnished by much of which they honestly disapprove. Although Lafayette never for a moment joined the enemy; although, even at the last moment of his command upon the frontier, and when he was placing himself in open hostility to the Government of Paris, he continued to take all possible precautions against a surprise by the Austrian army; and although after his flight from France he rather endured

a long and cruel captivity at the constant hazard of his life than lend even the countenance of a single phrase to the cause of the despots leagued against the liberties of his country; yet must it be confessed that his quitting the troops under his orders exposed, and of necessity exposed, the French territory to the most imminent perils, and that his quitting France was a severe blow both to the cause of the Republic and to the national security. True, his devotion was to that cause, and his desertion was in abhorrence of the outrages committed in its name by wicked men. But then it is equally true that he had been placed in his position by his own free consent, not drawn into it with his eyes shut, and that this position made it quite impossible to oppose the wrongs done by pretended republicans and to fly from the scene of offences, without also damaging the cause of republican government and shaking the very existence of France as an independent state.

But if Lafayette's mistake was great, through the whole of the critical times in which he acted so eminent a part, his integrity was unimpeached, his reputation unsullied, his consistency unbroken. Having laid down to himself the rule, so safe for virtue, but which would keep good men at a distance from all revolutionary movements—never to hold any fellowship with crime, even for the salvation of the country—never to do, or to suffer, or so much as to witness, evil that good may come, even the supreme good of the public safety—by that rule he uniformly held from the taking of the Bastile down to the excesses of June 1792, and from thence till he quitted in August the soil tarnished with the overthrow

of the Law and the Constitution. To the Court, when it would encroach upon the rights of the nation—to the people, when they would infringe the prerogative of the Crown—he alike presented a manful and uncompromising resistance. The delusion of the Royal Family prevented them from perceiving his inflexible honesty, and they alone doubted his title to their entire confidence. Blinded by groundless expectations that he would take part against the Revolution; judging his honesty by their own, and fancying his zeal for liberty was affected; flattering themselves, in utter oblivion of his whole previous history, that he was an aristocrat, a royalist, nay an absolutist at heart, and that the patrician volunteer for American freedom would stand by his order when the crisis arrived, their disappointment at finding him more honest than they had believed was truly princely; for nothing is more implacable than a sovereign when he finds his calculations of human baseness frustrated by virtue being unexpectedly found where it was little expected. The ingratitude of the Court was in the proportion of this disappointment. All the great citizen's services to the Royal Family, whose lives he repeatedly had saved at the risk of his own popularity, if not of his personal safety, were forgotten. His resigning the command of sixty battalions of National Guards, because a handful of them had joined in insulting the King, went for nothing. While the corrupt Danton, who had sold himself and given his receipt for the price, was trusted; while the utmost grief was shown at the death of the venal Mirabeau, because he too had been bought; the King and Queen, in their letters to the Count d'Artois, then an emigrant at Cob-

lentz, described Lafayette as a "scélérat et fanatique," whom no one could confide in, simply because no one could bribe him from his duty; and the wise Count expressed his lively satisfaction at finding the reports groundless of his relatives reposing any trust in one over whom "avarice gave no hold, as in Mirabeau's case; one who was a mere madman and enthusiast." Even when Lafayette hurried to Paris from his head-quarters on the frontier, in order to repress the outrages of June 1792, all pointed against the Royal Family, the Queen said, "It was better to perish than owe their safety to Lafayette and the Constitutional party;" and Mr. Windham, with a degree of thoughtlessness only to be explained by the frenzy of his anti-Gallican feelings and his devotion to Mr. Burke, cited the same royal authority as decisive against Lafayette, she having been heard to say, "I will place myself between Barnave and the executioner, but Lafayette I never can forgive." How touching is the admission of this unhappy princess's daughter, the Duchess d'Angoulême, on this subject, and how well does it express the error into which her parents had fallen! "Si ma mère eût pu vaincre ses préventions contre M. de Lafayette, si on lui eût accordé plus de confiance, mes malheureux parens vivraient encore!" This distrust of the General is thus laid, and on the highest authority, on the Queen. But no one can doubt that a principal ground of it in her mind was the conviction that he never would lend himself to her intrigues—to such faithless proceedings as that which was the main cause of Louis's fate and her own, the flight to Varennes and the declaration left behind revoking all the promises pre-

viously made, and affirming that they had been extorted by force.

For this mistrust it is far more than a recompense that it was confined to the Court of Versailles. Men of all parties join in testifying their absolute belief in Lafayette's inflexible integrity ; and men of more than ordinary sagacity and reflection have added that he alone passed unscathed through the revolutionary furnace, alone trod without a fall the slippery path of those changeful scenes.—" La réflexion," says Mr. Fox, in a letter on his release, " que vous êtes presque tout seul en droit de faire d'avoir joué un rôle dans ce qui s'est passé en France sans avoir rien à vous reprocher, doit être bien consolante."—" Tenez, mon cher," said Napoleon to him when exceedingly hurt by his consistent refusal to support his arbitrary government, " une belle conduite, c'est la vôtre ! Mener les affaires de son pays, et en cas de naufrage n'avoir rien de commun avec ses ennemis, voilà ce qu'il faut."

The inextinguishable hatred of despots is however his best panegyric. No sooner had he quitted his command, and passed into the Prussian territory on his way to a neutral country, than he was seized by the allied army ; and, when he refused all offers of joining them against his country, nay, would not open his mouth to give the least information which could aid their schemes of invasion, he and his companions, Latour Maubourg and Bureaux-Pusy, were cast into a noisome dungeon at Wezel, where, for three months, rigorously separated from each other, they had each a sentinel day and night in his cell. Thence they were transferred, for a year, to Magdeburgh, and confined in

damp holes, of five paces long by three broad. The remaining portion of their five years' confinement was spent in a similar dungeon at Olmutz; and to such a pitch of rigour was the imprisonment carried, that, when his sufferings brought Lafayette apparently to his death-bed, and he desired to see one of his companions in misery, the permission to receive his last sigh was peremptorily refused. After five years of solitary confinement, such as felons who had committed the greatest crimes could alone by law be made to undergo, these patriots, who were not even prisoners of war, who were seized and detained in utter violation of the law of nations, whose only offence was their having devoted themselves to the cause of freedom in reforming the institutions of their own country, and having abandoned their coadjutors when these combined outrage with reform, were at length liberated by the influence of the victorious Republic at the courts of the princes whom her arms had subdued. Then there walked forth from the darkness of their noisome dungeons victims of tyranny, grown grey with suffering, not with years, and old before their time, to deplore the loss of so many of the best days of their lives, and to bear about for the residue of their existence the maladies which their maltreatment had engendered. Let such passages as this be borne in mind when men inveigh against the crimes of the people. The summary vengeance that terminates a victim's life is not always more harsh than the infliction of such torments as these; and the cruelty thus for years perpetrated on men, the martyrs of liberty, merely because they would not be sold to their country's enemies, has at least this feature,

more hateful than any that marks the excesses of popular fury: it is cold-blooded, it is deliberate, and never can plead in its justification the uncontroulable force of sudden excitement.

The, perhaps, over-scrupulous nature of Lafayette having led him immediately on his liberation to express his strong disapproval of the *coup d'état* or revolution which expelled Carnôt and Barthelemy from the Directory, he remained abroad until the return of Buonaparte from Egypt, and the establishment of the Consulship. True to his principles, he again was found refusing all fellowship with him whom he already perceived to have the propensities and to be compassing the purposes of a despot. He remained in seclusion, living in the bosom of his family, till the fall of the Imperial dynasty, and then during the first Restoration, with the proceedings of which he was still less satisfied than with the Empire. At length, when the second entry of the allies, after the battle of Waterloo, gave him a voice in public affairs, it was exerted to occasion Napoleon's abdication, with the senseless and extravagant view of proclaiming the King of Rome Emperor, with a Regency, a project which, in the mind of every man endowed with common understanding, meant the second restoration of the Bourbons. This event accordingly instantly followed, and the pedantry of Lafayette must bear much of the blame due to that event, and the final expulsion of Napoleon,—a measure which he would be a bold man who should now defend as the best that could be adopted in the circumstances.

In 1830 we once more find him commanding the National Guards, and commanding too the respect and

esteem of all his fellow-citizens. His well-known partiality for a republic again displayed itself; but, satisfied that no such thing was now possible in France, he declared himself for a "Monarchy surrounded with Republican Institutions." It is, perhaps, almost as certain a truth as can be well stated in political science, that to maintain a Monarchy there must be a circumvallation of Monarchical Institutions. Nor is it easy to conceive how royalty can exist, unless in mere name, with a military force spread over the country having the choice of its own officers; with a Chamber of Peers possessing no substantive right whatever, nominated by the court and stripped of even moderate wealth; and with such a general concurrence of the people in the choice of their representatives as must exist if those are to represent the country in anything but the title they assume.

That the capacity of Lafayette was far less eminent than his virtues, we have already had frequent opportunity to remark. To eloquence he made no pretensions, but his written compositions are of great merit; clear, plain, sensible, often forcible in the expression of just sentiment and natural feeling, always marked with the sincerity so characteristic of the man. His conversation was unavoidably interesting, after all he had seen and had suffered; but his anecdotes of the American War and French Revolution were given with a peculiar liveliness and grace, set off with a modesty and a candour alike attractive to the listener. He was extremely well informed upon most general subjects; had read history with care and discrimination; had treasured up the lessons of his own experience;

was over-scrupulous in his applications of these to practice, somewhat apt to see all things through the medium of American views, generally forgetting the progress that men had made since 1777, and almost always ready to abandon what he was engaged in, if it could not be carried on precisely according to his own conscientious views of what was prudent and right. But in private life he was faultless: kind, warm-hearted, mild, tolerant of all differences civil and religious, venerated in his family, beloved by his friends, and respected even in his manifest errors by all with whom he ever held any intercourse. The appearance of such a personage at any time is of rare occurrence; but by one whose life was spent in courts, in camps, in the turmoil of faction, in the disturbances of civil war, in the extremities of revolutionary violence, it may well be deemed a wonder that such a character should be displayed even for a season, and little short of a miracle that such virtue should walk through such scenes untouched.

Engraved by W. H. Mote

TALLEYRAND.

From a Print by Boucher Desnoyers after a Painting by Gérard

PRINCE TALLEYRAND.

AMONG the eminent men who figured in the eventful history of the French Revolution, there has been more than one occasion for mentioning M. Talleyrand; and whether in that scene, or in any portion of modern annals, we shall in vain look for one who presents a more interesting subject of history. His whole story was marked with strange peculiarities, from the period of infancy to the latest scenes of a life protracted to extreme, but vigorous and undecayed, old age. Born to represent one of the most noble families in France, an accident struck him with incurable lameness; and the cruel habits of their pampered caste made his family add to this infliction the deprivation of his rank as eldest son. He was thus set aside for a brother whose faculties were far more crippled by nature than his own bodily frame had been by mischance; and was condemned to the ecclesiastical state, by way of at once providing for him and getting rid of him. A powerful house, however, could not find in Old France much difficulty in securing promotion in the Church for one of its members, be his disposition towards its duties ever so reluctant, or his capacity for performing them ever so slender. The young Perigord was soon raised over the heads of numberless pious men and profound theologians, and became Bishop of Autun at an age when he had probably had little time for reflection upon his clerical func-

tions, amidst the dissipations of the French capital, into which neither his personal misfortune, nor the domestic deposition occasioned by it, had prevented him from plunging with all the zeal of his strenuous and indomitable nature. His abilities were of the highest order; and the brilliancy with which they soon shone out was well calculated to secure him signal success in Parisian society, where his rank would alone have gained him a high place, but where talents also, even in the humblest station, never failed to rise in the face of the aristocratic "genius of the place," and the habits of a nation of courtiers.

The great event of modern times now converted all Frenchmen into politicians—gave to state affairs the undisturbed monopoly of interest which the pleasures of society had before enjoyed—and armed political talents with the influence which the higher accomplishments of refined taste and elegant manners had hitherto possessed undivided and almost uncontrouled. M. Talleyrand did not long hesitate in choosing his part. He sided with the Revolution party, and continued to act with them; joining those patriotic members of the clerical body who gave up their revenues to the demands of the country, and sacrificed their exclusive privileges to the rights of the community. But when the violence of the Republican leaders, disdaining all bounds of prudence, or of justice, or of humanity, threatened to involve the whole country in anarchy and blood, he quitted the scene; and retired first to this country, where he passed a year or two, and then to America, where he remained until the more regular government of the Executive Directory tempered the violence of the Revolution, and

restored order to the State. Since that period he always filled the highest stations either at home or in the diplomatic service, except during a part of the Restoration Government, when the incurable folly of those Princes who, as he said himself, had come back from their long exile without having either learnt or forgotten anything, deemed it prudent to lay upon the shelf the ablest and most experienced man in the country, that their councils might have the benefit of being swayed by the Polignacs and other imbecile creatures of their legitimate Court.*

But it is from this constant employment of M. Talleyrand that the principal charge against the integrity of his political character has been drawn. The Chief Minister and Councillor of the Directory, he became suddenly the chief adviser of the Consular Government. When Napoleon took the whole power to himself, he continued his Minister. When the independence of Switzerland was rudely invaded, he still presided over the department of Foreign Affairs. When the child and champion of Jacobinism had laid his parent prostrate in the dust, clothed himself with the Imperial purple, maltreated the Pope, and planted the iron crown of Italy on his brow, the republican ex-bishop remained in his service. When he who afterwards so eloquently avowed, that, "General, Consul, Emperor, he owed all to the people," studied to discharge that debt by trampling on every popular right, the advocate of freedom was

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* His resignation in 1815-16 was owing to the praiseworthy cause already stated; but the legitimate Bourbons never sought to draw him afterwards from his retirement.

still to be seen by his side, and holding the pen through which all the Rescripts of despotic power flowed. When the adopted Frenchman, who, with the dying accents of the same powerful and racy eloquence, desired that "his ashes might repose near the stream of the Seine, in the bosom of the people whom he had so much loved," was testifying the warmth of his affection by such tokens as the merciless conscription, and breathing out his tenderness in proclamations of war that wrapped all France and all Europe in flame—the philosophic statesman,—the friend of human improvement,—the philanthropist who had speculated upon the nature of man, and the structure of government in both worlds, and had quitted his original profession because its claims were inimical to the progress of society,—continued inseparably attached to the person of the military ruler, the warrior tyrant; and, although he constantly tendered sounder advice than ever was followed, never scrupled to be the executor of Ordinances which he still most disapproved. The term of boundless, unreflecting, and miscalculating ambition was hastened by its excesses; Napoleon was defeated; foreign powers occupied France; and the Emperor's Minister joined them to restore the Bourbons. With them he acted for some time, nor quitted them until they disclosed the self-destructive bent of their feeble and unprincipled minds,—to rule by tools incapable of any acts but those of sycophancy and prostration, and animated by no spirit but that of blind and furious bigotry. The overthrow of the dynasty once more brought M. Talleyrand upon the scene; and he has ever since been the most trusted, as the most valuable and skilful, of all the new Government's advisers; nor have

the wisdom and the firmness of any counsels, except indeed those of the Monarch himself, contributed so signally to the successful administration of that great Prince, in the unparalleled difficulties of his truly arduous position.

That these well-known passages in M. Talleyrand's life indicate a disposition to be on the successful side, without any very nice regard to its real merits, can hardly be denied; and when facts, so pregnant with evidence, are before the reader, he has not merely materials for judging of the character to which they relate, but may almost be said to have had its lineaments presented to his view, without the aid of the historian's pencil to pourtray them. But the just discrimination of the historian is still wanting to complete the picture; both by filling up the outline, and by correcting it when hastily drawn from imperfect materials. Other passages of the life may be brought forward: explanations may be given of doubtful actions; apparent inconsistencies may be reconciled; and charges, which at first sight seemed correctly gathered from the facts, may be aggravated, extenuated, or repelled, by a more enlarged and a more judicial view of the whole subject. That the inferences fairly deduced from M. Talleyrand's public life can be wholly countervailed by any minuteness of examination, or explained away by any ingenuity of comment, it would be absurd to assert: yet it is only doing justice to comprise in our estimate of his merits some things not usually taken into the account by those who censure his conduct, and who pronounce him—merely upon the view of his having borne part in such opposite systems of policy, and acting with such various combinations of party,

—to have been a person singularly void of public principle, and whose individual interest was always his god.

His conduct towards the caste he belonged to has been remarked upon with severity. But to that caste he owed only cruel and heartless oppression, and all for an accident that befell him in the cradle. He was not only disinherited, but he literally never was allowed to sleep under his father's roof. His demeanour, in respect to sacred matters, unbecoming his profession as a priest, has called down censures of a far graver description. But he was made by force to enter a profession which he abhorred; and upon those who forced him, not upon himself, falls the blame of his conduct having been unsuited to the cloth which they compelled him to wear. It, moreover, is true, but it has been always forgotten in the attacks upon his ecclesiastical character, that he gallantly undertook the defence of his sacred order, at a time when such devotion to a most unpopular body exposed him to destruction; and that he went into exile, leaving his fortune behind and subsisting when abroad upon the sale of his books, rather than be contaminated by any share whatever in the enormities of the first Revolution, is a circumstance equally true and equally kept in the shade by his traducers. When the dissipations of his earlier years are chronicled, no allusion is ever made to the severity of his studies at the Sorbonne, where he was only known as a young man of haughty demeanour and silent habits, who lived buried among his books. Unable to deny his wit, and overcome by the charms of his conversation, envious men have refused him even solid capacity, and the merit of having rendered more important services to society; but they

have only been able to make this denial by forgetting the profound discourse upon Lotteries which laid the foundation of his fame; and the works upon Public Education, upon Weights and Measures, and upon Colonial Policy, which raised the superstructure. No mitigation of the judgment pronounced on his accommodating, or what has perhaps justly been called his time-serving, propensities has ever been effected by viewing the courage which he showed in opposing Napoleon's Spanish war; the still more dangerous energy with which he defended the clerical body in his diocese at a time full of every kind of peril to political integrity; and his exclusion from power by the restored dynasty, whose return to the French throne was mainly the work of his hands, but whose service he quitted rather than concur in a policy humiliating to his country. Nor has any account been taken of the difficult state of affairs, and the imminent risk of hopeless anarchy on the one hand, or complete conquest on the other, to which France was exposed by the fortune of war, and the hazards of revolution;—an alternative presented to him in more than one of those most critical emergencies in which he was called to decide for his country as well as himself. Yet all these circumstances must be weighed together with the mere facts of his successive adhesion to so many governments, if we would avoid doing his memory the grossest injustice, and escape the most manifest error in that fair estimate of his political virtue which it should be our object to form.

But if the integrity of this famous personage be the subject of unavoidable controversy, and if our opinion regarding it must of necessity be clouded with some

doubt, and at best be difficult satisfactorily to fix—upon the talents with which he was gifted, and his successful cultivation of them, there can be no question at all; and our view of them is unclouded and clear. His capacity was most vigorous and enlarged. Few men have ever been endowed with a stronger natural understanding; or have given it a more diligent culture, with a view to the pursuits in which he was to employ it. His singular acuteness could at once penetrate every subject; his clearness of perception at a glance unravelled all complications, and presented each matter distinct and unencumbered; his sound, plain, manly sense, at a blow got rid of all the husk, and pierced immediately to the kernel. A cloud of words was wholly thrown away upon him; he cared nothing for all the declamation in the world; ingenious topics, fine comparisons, cases in point, epigrammatic sentences, all passed innocuous over his head. So the storms of passion blew unheeded past one whose temper nothing could ruffle, and whose path towards his object nothing could obstruct. It was a lesson and a study, as well as a marvel, to see him disconcert, with a look of his keen eye, or a motion of his chin, a whole piece of wordy talk, and far-fetched and fine-spun argument, without condescending to utter, in the deep tones of his most powerful voice, so much as a word or an interjection;—far less to overthrow the flimsy structure with an irresistible remark, or consume it with a withering sarcasm. Whoever conversed with him, or saw him in conversation, at once learnt both how dangerous a thing it was to indulge before him in loose prosing, or in false reasoning, or in frothy declamation; and how fatal an

error he would commit who should take the veteran statesman's good-natured smile for an innocent insensibility to the ludicrous, and his apparently passive want of all effort for permanent indolence of mind. There are many living examples of persons not meanly gifted who, in the calm of his placid society, have been wrecked among such shoals as these.

But his political sagacity was above all his other great qualities; and it was derived from the natural perspicacity to which we have adverted, and that consummate knowledge of mankind—that swift and sure tact of character—into which his long and varied experience had matured the faculties of his manly, yet subtle understanding. If never to be deluded by foolish measures, nor ever to be deceived by cunning men, be among the highest perfections of the practical statesman, where shall we look for any one who preferred stronger claims to this character? But his statesmanship was of no vulgar cast. He despised the silly, the easy, and false old maxims which inculcate universal distrust, whether of unknown men or of novel measures, as much as he did the folly of those whose facility is an advertisement for impostors or for enthusiasts to make dupes of them. His was the skill which knew as well where to give his confidence as to withhold it; and he knew full surely that the whole difficulty of the political art consists in being able to say whether any given person or scheme belongs to the right class or to the wrong. It would be very untrue to affirm that he never wilfully deceived others; but it would probably be still more erroneous to admit that he ever in his life was deceived. So he held in utter scorn the affected wisdom of those who think they prove themselves sound practical men by holding

cheap every proposal to which the world has been little or not at all accustomed, and which relies for its support on principles rarely resorted to. His own plan for maintaining the peace and independence of Belgium may be cited as an example of a policy at once refined and profound. He would have had it made the resort of the fine arts and of letters, with only force enough to preserve its domestic peace, and trusting for its protection to the general abhorrence which all Europe must have, in these times, of any proceeding hostile to such a power.

Although M. Talleyrand never cultivated the art of oratory, yet his brilliant wit, enlivening a constant vein of deep sense and original observation, and his extraordinary mastery over all the resources of the language in which he expressed himself, gave to the efforts of his pen, as well as to his conversation, a relish, a charm, and a grace, that few indeed have ever attained, and certainly none have surpassed. His thorough familiarity with the best writers of his own country was manifest in all his compositions, as well as in his talk; which, however, was too completely modulated to the tone of the most refined society, ever to wear the least appearance of pedantry. To cite examples of the felicitous turns of his expression in writing, would be to take almost any passage at random of the few works which he has left. But the following description of the American Planter may suffice to show how he could paint moral as well as natural scenery. The writers of a less severe school might envy its poetical effect, and might perhaps learn how possible it is to be pointed and epigrammatic without being affected, and sentimental without being mawkish.

"Le bucheron Americain ne s'interesse à rien; toute idée sensible est loin de lui; ces branches si elegamment jettées par la nature, un beau feuillage, une couleur vive qui anime une partie du bois, un verd plus fort qui en assombroit une autre, tout cela n'est rien: il n'a de souvenir à placer nulle part: c'est la quantité de coups de hache qu'il faut qu'il donne pour abattre un arbre, qui est son unique idée. Il n'a point plante; il n'en sait point les plaisirs. L'arbre qu'il planteroit n'est bon à rien pour lui; car jamais il ne le verra assez fort pour qu'il puisse l'abattre: c'est de detruire qui le fait vivre: on detruit par-tout: aussi tout lieu lui est bon; il ne tient pas au champ où il a placé son travail, parce que son travail, n'est que de la fatigue, et qu'aucune idée douce n'y est jointe. Ce qui sort de ses mains ne passe point par toutes les croissances si attachantes peur le cultivateur; il ne suit pas la destinée de ses productions; il ne connoit par le plaisir des nouveaux essais; et si en s'en allant il n'oublie pas sa hache, il ne laisse pas de regrets là où il a vecu des années."

Of his truly inimitable conversation, and the mixture of strong masculine sense, and exquisitely witty turns in which it abounded,—independently of the interest, and the solid value which it derived from a rich fund of anecdote, delivered in the smallest number possible of the most happy and most appropriate words possible,—it would indeed be difficult to convey an adequate idea. His own powers of picturesque, and wonderfully condensed expression would be hardly sufficient to present a portrait of its various and striking beauties. Simple and natural, yet abounding in the most sudden and unexpected turns—full of point, yet evidently the inspiration of the moment, and therefore more absolutely to the purpose than if it had been the laboured effort of a day's reflection, a single word often performing the office of sentences, nay, a tone not unfrequently render-

ing many words superfluous—always the phrase most perfectly suitable selected, and its place most happily chosen—all this is literally correct, and no picture of fancy, but a mere abridgement and transcript of the marvellous original; and yet it all falls very short of conveying its lineaments, and fails still more to render its colouring and its shades. For there was a constant gaiety of manner, which had the mirthful aspect of good humour, even on the eve or on the morrow of some flash in which his witty raillery had wrapt a subject or a person in ridicule, or of some torrent in which his satire had descended instantaneous but destructive—there was an archness of malice, when more than ordinary execution must be done, that defied the pencil of the describer, as it did the attempts of the imitator—there were manners the most perfect in ease, in grace, in flexibility—there was the voice of singular depth and modulation, and the countenance alike fitted to express earnest respect, unostentatious contempt, and bland complacency—and all this must really have been witnessed to be accurately understood. His sayings—his *mots*, as the French have it—are renowned; but these alone convey an imperfect idea of his whole conversation. They show indeed the powers of his wit, and the felicity of his concise diction; and they have a peculiarity of style, such that, if shown without a name, no one could be at a loss to whom he should attribute them. But they are far enough from completing the sketch of his conversation to those who never heard it. A few instances may, however, be given, chiefly to illustrate what has been said of his characteristic conciseness and selection.

Being asked if a certain authoress, whom he had long since known, but who belonged rather to the last age, was not "un peu ennuyeuse," "Du tout;" said he, "elle était *parfaitement* ennuyeuse."—A gentleman in company was one day making a somewhat zealous eulogy of his mother's beauty, dwelling upon the topic at uncalled-for length—he himself having certainly inherited no portion of that kind under the marriage of his parents. "C'était, donc, monsieur votre père qui apparemment n'était pas trop bien," was the remark, which at once released the circle from the subject.—When Madame de Staël published her celebrated novel of *Delphine,* she was supposed to have painted herself in the person of the heroine, and M. Talleyrand in that of an elderly lady, who is one of the principal characters. "On me dit (said he, the first time he met her) que nous sommes tous les deux dans votre roman, déguisés en femme."—Rulhieres, the celebrated author of the work on the Polish Revolution, having said, "Je n'ai fait qu'un mechancetè de ma vie;" "Et quand finira-t-elle?" was M. Talleyrand's reply.—"Genève est ennuyeuse, n'est-ce pas?" asked a friend; "Surtout quand on s'y amuse," was the answer.—"Elle est insupportable" (said he, with marked emphasis, of one well known; but as if he had gone too far, and to take off something of what he had laid on, he added) "Elle n'a que ce defaut-là."—"Ah, je sens les tourmens d'enfer," said a person whose life had been supposed to be somewhat of the loosest. "Déjà?"* was the inquiry

*Certainly it came naturally to him: it is, however, not original. The Cardinal de Retz's physician is said to have made a similar exclamation on a like occasion:—"Déjà, Monseigneur?"

suggested to M. Talleyrand.—Nor ought we to pass over the only *mot* that ever will be recorded of Charles X., uttered on his return to France in 1814, on seeing, like our second Charles at a similar reception, that the adversaries of his family had disappeared, "Il n'y a qu'un Français de plus.' This was the suggestion of M. Talleyrand. He afterwards proposed, in like manner, to Charles's successor, that the foolish freaks of the Duchesse de Berri should be visited with this Rescript to her and her faction—"Madame, il n'y a plus d'espoir pour vous. Vous serez jugé, condamnée, et graciée."

Of his temper and disposition in domestic life, it remains to speak; and nothing could be more perfect than these. If it be true, which is, however, more than questionable, that a life of public business hardens the heart; if this be far more certainly the tendency of a life much chequered with various fortune; if he is almost certain to lose his natural sympathies with mankind, who has in his earliest years tasted the bitter cup of cruel and unnatural treatment, commended to his lips by the hands that should have cherished him; if, above all, a youth of fashionable dissipation and intrigue, such as M. Talleyrand, like most of our own great men, undeniably led, has, in almost every instance, been found to eradicate the softer domestic feelings, and to plant every selfish weed in the cold soil of a neglected bosom—surely it is no small praise of his kindly and generous nature, that we are entitled to record how marked an exception he formed to all these rules. While it would be a foolish and a needless exaggeration to represent him as careless of his own interest, or ambition, or gratification, at any period of his life, it is

nevertheless quite true that his disposition continued to the last gentle and kindly; that he not only entertained throughout the tempest of the revolutionary anarchy the strongest abhorrence of all violent and cruel deeds, but exerted his utmost influence in mitigating the excesses which led to them in others; that his love of peace in all its blessed departments, whether tranquillity at home, or amity and good-will abroad, was the incessant object of his labours; that, in domestic life, he was of a peculiarly placid temper, and full of warm and steady affections. His aversion to all violent courses was, indeed, in some instances, carried to a length which prevented his wonted calmness of judgment, and his constant and characteristic love of justice even when an adversary was concerned, from having their free scope. He never could speak with patience of Carnôt, for having continued, during the Reign of Terror, to serve and to save his country by directing the war which defended her against Europe in arms;—forgetting how much less could be urged for his own conduct under the profligate and tyrannical Directory of 1797 and 1798, under the conscriptions of Napoleon, and under the military occupation of the Allies,—even admitting his predominant desire to prevent anarchy and conquest,—than might most fairly be offered in defence of that illustrious Republican's inflexible and uncompromising, though stern and undaunted virtue.

NAPOLEON—WASHINGTON.

AFTER Lafayette had quitted the armies of the Republic, defaced by the crimes of 1792, and Carnôt himself, long the director of their marvellous achievements, and standing by his country in spite of all the excesses by which she was disfigured, had at length been driven from her side by the evil men that swayed her destinies, victory, long so familiar to the French people, was for a season estranged from them, and the period of their conquests seemed at last to have arrived. A new and yet more triumphant course was then begun, under the genius of Napoleon Buonaparte, certainly the most extraordinary person who has appeared in modern times, and to whom, in some respects, no parallel can be found, if we search the whole annals of the human race. For though the conquests of Alexander were more extensive, and the matchless character of Cæsar was embellished by more various accomplishments, and the invaders of Mexico and Peru worked their purposes of subjugation with far more scanty means, yet the military genius of the Great Captain shines with a lustre peculiarly its own, or which he shares with Hannibal alone, when we reflect that he never had to contend, like those conquerors, with adversaries inferior to himself in civilization or discipline, but won all his triumphs over hosts as well ordered and regularly marshalled and amply provided as his own.

This celebrated man was sprung from a good family in Corsica, and while yet a boy fixed the attention and raised the hopes of all his connexions. In his early youth his military genius shone forth; he soon gained the summit of his profession; he commanded at twenty-five a military operation of a complicated and difficult nature in Paris: being selected for superior command by the genius of Carnôt, he rapidly led the French armies through a series of victories till then unexampled, and to which, even now, his own after achievements can alone afford any parallel, for the suddenness, the vehemence, and the completeness of the operations. That much of his success was derived from the mechanical adherence of his adversaries to the formal rules of ancient tactics cannot be doubted; and our Wellington's campaigns would, in the same circumstances, and had he been opposed to similar antagonists, in all likelihood have been as brilliant and decisive. But he always had to combat the soldiers bred in Napoleon's school; while Napoleon, for the most part, was matched against men whose inveterate propensity to follow the rules of an obsolete science, not even the example of Frederic had been able to subdue; and who were resolved upon being a second time the victims of the same obstinate blindness which had, in Frederic's days, made genius triumph over numbers by breaking through rules repugnant to common sense. It must, however, be confessed, that although this consideration accounts for the achievements of this great warrior, which else had been impossible, nothing is thus detracted from his praise, excepting that what he accomplished ceases to appear miraculous: for it was his glory never to let an error

pass unprofitably to himself; nor ever to give his adversary an advantage which he could not ravish from him, with ample interest, before it was turned to any fatal account.

Nor can it be denied that, when the fortune of war proved adverse, the resources of his mind were only drawn forth in the more ample profusion. After the battle of Asperne he displayed more skill, as well as constancy, than in all his previous campaigns; and the struggle which he made in France, during the dreadful conflict that preceded his downfall, is by many regarded as the masterpiece of his military life. Nor let us forget that the grand error of his whole career, the mighty expedition to Moscow, was a political error only. The vast preparations for that campaign—the combinations by which he collected and marshalled and moved this prodigious and various force like a single corps, or a domestic animal, or a lifeless instrument in his hand—displayed, in the highest degree, the great genius for arrangement and for action with which he was endowed; and his prodigious efforts to regain the ground which the disasters of that campaign rescued from his grasp, were only not successful, because no human power could in a month create an army of cavalry, nor a word of command give recruits the discipline of veterans. In the history of war, it is, assuredly, only Hannibal who can be compared with him; and certainly, when we reflect upon the yet greater difficulties of the Carthaginian's position—the much longer time during which he maintained the unequal contest—still more, when we consider that his enemies have alone recorded his story, while Napoleon has been his

own annalist—justice seems to require that the modern should yield to the ancient commander.

The mighty operation which led to his downfall, and in which all the resources of his vast capacity as well as all the recklessness of his boundless ambition were displayed, has long fixed, as it well might, the regards of mankind, and it has not been too anxiously contemplated. His course of victory had been for twelve years uninterrupted. The resources of France had been poured out without stint at his command. The destruction of her liberties had not relaxed the martial propensities of her people, nor thinned the multitudes that poured out their blood under his banners. The fervour of the revolutionary zeal had cooled, but the discipline which a vigorous despotism secures had succeeded, and, the Conscription worked as great miracles as the Republic. The countless hosts which France thus poured forth, were led by this consummate warrior over all Italy, Spain, Germany; half the ancient thrones of Europe were subverted, the capitals of half her powers occupied in succession; and a monarchy was established which the existence of England and of Russia alone prevented from being universal.

But the vaulting ambition of the great conqueror at last overshot itself. After his most arduous and perhaps most triumphant campaign, undertaken with a profusion of military resources unexampled in the annals of war, the ancient capital of the Russian empire was in his hands; yet, from the refusal of the enemy to make peace, and the sterility of the vast surrounding country, the conquest was bootless to his purpose. He had col-

lected the mightiest army that ever the world saw; from all parts of the Continent he had gathered his forces; every diversity of blood, and complexion, and tongue, and garb, and weapon, shone along his line;—"Exercitus mixtus ex colluvione omnium gentium, quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, alia vestis, alia arma, alii ritûs, alia sacra*"—the resources of whole provinces moved through the kingdoms which his arms held in awe; the artillery of whole citadels traversed the fields; the cattle on a thousand hills were made the food of the myriads whom he poured into the plains of Eastern Europe, where blood flowed in rivers, and the earth was whitened with men's bones: but this gigantic enterprise, uniformly successful, was found to have no object, when it had no longer an enemy to overcome, and the victor in vain sued to the vanquished for peace. The conflagration of Moscow in one night began his discomfiture, which the frost of another night completed! Upon the pomp and circumstance of unnumbered warriors—their cavalry, their guns, their magazines, their equipage—descended slowly, flake by flake, the snow of a northern night;—"Tantaque vis frigoris insecuta est, ut ex illâ miserabili hominum jumentorumque strage quum se quisque attolere ac levare vellet, diu nequiret, quia torpentibus rigore nervis, vix flectere artus poterant.'† The hopes of Napoleon were blighted; the retreat of his armament was cut off; and his doom sealed far more irreversibly than if the conqueror of a hundred fields had been overthrown in battle, and made captive with

* Liv. xxviii. 12. † Liv. xxi. 58.

half his force. All his subsequent efforts to regain the power he had lost never succeeded in countervailing the effects of that Russian night. The fire of his genius burnt, if possible, brighter than ever; in two campaigns his efforts were more than human, his resources more miraculous than before, his valour more worthy of the prize he played for—but all was vain: his weapon was no longer in his hand; his army was gone; and his adversaries, no more quailing under the feeling of his superior nature, had discovered him to be vincible like themselves, and grew bold in their turn, as the Mexicans gathered courage, three centuries ago, from finding that the Spaniards were subject to the accidents of mortality.

Such was this great captain, and such was the fate on which the conqueror rushed.

It is quite certain that the mighty genius of Napoléon was of the highest order; he was one of the greatest masters of the art of war; he is to be ranked among the generals of the highest class, if indeed there be any but Hannibal who can be placed on a level with him. To all the qualities, both in the council and in the field, which combine to form an accomplished commander, he added, what but few indeed have ever shown, an original genius: he was so great an improver on the inventions of others, that he might well lay claim to the honours of discovery. The tactics of Frederick he carried so much farther, and with such important additions, that we might as well deny to Watt the originating of the steam-engine, as to Napoleon the being an inventor in military science. The great step which Frederick made was the connecting together all

the operations of an extensive campaign in various quarters, and especially the moving vast bodies of troops rapidly on a given point, so as to fight his adversaries there at a certain advantage. This required a brave neglect of the established rules of tactics; it required a firm determination to despise formidable obstacles; it required an erasure of the words 'difficult and impossible' from the general's vocabulary. In proportion to all the hardihood of these operations, was the high merit of their author, and also the certainty of their success against the regular mechanical generals of Maria Theresa, to whom he was opposed. So much the rather are we to wonder at the successors of those generals, the produce of the same Germanic school, showing themselves as unprepared for the great extension of the Prussian system, but in the same direction, which Napoleon practised, and being as completely taken unawares by his rapid movements at Ulm, and his feints at Wagram, as their masters had been at Rosbach, at Pirna, and at Prague.

The degree in which he thus extended and improved upon Frederick's tactics was great indeed. No man ever could bring such bodies into the field; none provide by combined operations for their support; none move such masses from various quarters upon one point; none manœuvre at one fight the thousands whom he had assembled, change his operations as the fate of the hour or the moment required, and tell with such absolute certainty the effects of each movement. He had all the knowledge in minute detail which the art of war requires; he had a perfectly accurate appreciation of what men and horses and guns can do; his memory

told him and in an instant where each corps, each regiment, each gun was situated both in peace and war, and in what condition almost each company of his vast force was at any moment. Then he possessed the intuitive knowledge of his enemy's state, and movements, and plans; so nicely could he unravel all conflicting accounts, and decide at once as by intuition which was true. In the field his eye for positions, distances, elevations, numbers, was quick, and it was infallible. All his generals at all times submitted their judgment to his and without the least reluctance or hesitation, not deferring to his authority, but yielding from an absolute conviction of his superior skill; nor ever doubting, because firmly assured he was in the right. His own self-confidence was in the same proportion, and it was unerring.

Lying under some cover in fire, he would remain for an hour or two, receiving reports and issuing his orders, sometimes with a plan before him, sometimes with the face of the ground in his mind only. There he is with his watch in one hand, while the other moves constantly from his pocket, where his snuff-box or rather his snuff lies.—An aid-de-camp arrives, tells of a movement, answers shortly some questions rapidly, perhaps impatiently, put, is dispatched with the order that is to solve the difficulty of some general of division. Another is ordered to attend, and sent off with directions to make some distant corps support an operation. The watch is again consulted; more impatient symptoms; the name of one aide-de-camp is constantly pronounced; question after question is put whether any

one is coming from a certain quarter; an event is expected; it ought to have happened; at length the wished-for messenger arrives.—"Eh bien! Qu'a-t-on fait là-bas?" "La hauteur est gagnée; le maréchal est là." "Qu'il tienne ferme—pas un pas de mouvement." Another aide-de-camp is ordered to bring up the Guard. "Que le maréchal avance vers la tour en defilant par sa gauche—et tout ce qui se trouve à sa droite est prisonnier."—Now the watch is consulted and the snuff is taken no more; the battle is over; the fortune of the day is decided; the great Captain indulges in pleasantry; nor doubts any more of the certainty and of the extent of his victory than if he had already seen its details in the bulletin.

After all, the grand secret of both Frederick and Napoleon's successes, the movement of the masses which were to place their enemy in a disadvantageous position, appears to be, like all great improvements, sufficiently obvious; for it is founded on the very natural principle on which the modern Naval plan of Breaking the Line proceeds. If either at sea or on shore one party can place his enemy between two fires, or on any material part of his battle bring double the force to bear upon the defenders of that point, the success of the operation is certain. In order to execute such a plan on shore, a prodigious combination of military resources is required, and they only who are so amply furnished can venture to attempt it. That Napoleon had this capacity beyond other men is altogether incontestable.

But his genius was not confined to war; he possessed a large capacity also for civil affairs. He saw as

clearly, and as quickly determined on his course, in government as in the field. His public works, and his political reformations, especially his Code of Laws, are monuments of his wisdom and his vigour, more imperishable, as time has already proved, and as himself proudly foretold, than all his victories. His civil courage was more brilliant than his own, or most other men's, valour in the field. How ordinary a bravery it was that blazed forth at Lodi, when he headed his wavering columns across the bridge swept by the field of Austrian artillery, compared with the undaunted and sublime courage that carried him from Cannes to Paris with a handful of men, and fired his bosom with the desire, and sustained it with the confidence, of overthrowing a dynasty, and overwhelming an empire, by the terror of his name!

Nor were his endowments merely those of the statesman and the warrior. If he was not like Cæsar, a consummate orator, he yet knew men so thoroughly, and especially Frenchmen, whom he had most nearly studied, that he possessed the faculty of addressing them in strains of singular eloquence,—an eloquence peculiar to himself. It is not more certain that he is the greatest soldier whom France ever produced, than it is certain that his place is high amongst her greatest writers, as far as composition or diction is concerned. Some of his bulletins are models for the purpose which they were intended to serve; his address to the soldiers of his Old Guard at Fontainebleau is a masterpiece of dignified and pathetic composition; his speech during the Hundred Days, at the Champ de Mars, beginning, "General, Consul, Empereur, je tiens tout du Peuple,"

is to be placed amongst the most perfect pieces of simple and majestic eloquence. These things are not the less true for being seldom or never remarked.

But with these great qualities of the will—the highest courage, the most easy formation of his resolutions, the most steadfast adherence to his purpose, the entire devotion of all his energies to his object—and with the equally shining faculties of the understanding by which that firm will worked—the clearest and quickest apprehension, the power of intense application, the capacity of complete abstraction from all interrupting ideas, the complete and most instantaneous circumspection of all difficulties, whether on one side, or even providently seen in prospect, the intuitive knowledge of men, and the power of mind and of tongue to mould their will to his purpose—with these qualities, which form the character held greatest by vulgar minds, the panegyric of Napoleon must close. HE WAS A CONQUEROR;—HE WAS A TYRANT. To gratify his ambition—to slake his thirst of power—to weary a lust of dominion which no conquest could satiate—he trampled on Liberty when his hand might have raised her to a secure place; and he wrapt the world in flames, which the blood of millions alone could quench. By those passions, a mind not originally unkindly, was perverted and deformed, till human misery ceased to move it, and honesty, and truth, and pity, all sense of the duties we owe to God and to man, had departed from one thus given up to a single and a selfish pursuit. "Tantas animi virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant; inhumana crudelitas;* perfidia plusquam

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The kindliness of his nature will be denied by some; the inhu-

Punica; nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus Deûm metus, nullum jusjurandum, nulla religio."* The death of Enghien, the cruel sufferings of Wright, the mysterious end of Pichegru, the punishment of Palm, the tortures of Toussaint,† have all been dwelt upon as the spots on his fame; because the fortunes of individuals presenting a more definite object to the mind, strike our imaginations, and rouse our feelings more than wretchedness in larger masses, less distinctly perceived. But to the eye of calm reflection, the declaration of an unjustifiable war, or the persisting in it a day longer than is necessary, presents a more grievous object of contemplation, implies a disposition more pernicious to the world, and calls down a reprobation far more severe.

man cruelty by others: but both are correctly true. There is extant a letter which we have seen, full of the tenderest affection towards his favourite brother, to whom it was addressed, when about to be separated from him, long after he had entered on public life. It is in parts blotted with his tears, evidently shed before the ink was dry. As for his cruelty, they only can deny it who think it more cruel for a man to witness torments which he has ordered, or to commit butchery with his own hand, than to give a command which must consign thousands to agony and death. If Napoleon had been called upon to witness, or with his own hand to inflict such misery, he would have paused at first—because physical repugnance would have prevailed over mental callousness. But how many minutes' reflection would it have taken to deaden the pain, and make him execute his own purpose?

* Liv. xxi.

† It is a gross error to charge him with the poisoning of his sick in Egypt; and his massacre of the prisoners at Jaffa is a very controverted matter. But we fear the early anecdote of his ordering an attack, with no other object than to gratify his mistress, when a young officer of artillery, rests upon undeniable authority; and if so, it is to be placed amongst his worst crimes.

How grateful the relief which the friend of mankind, the lover of virtue, experiences when, turning from the contemplation of such a character, his eye rests upon the greatest man of our own or of any age;—the only one upon whom an epithet so thoughtlessly lavished by men, to foster the crimes of their worst enemies, may be innocently and justly bestowed! In Washington we truly behold a marvellous contrast to almost every one of the endowments and the vices which we have been contemplating; and which are so well fitted to excite a mingled admiration, and sorrow, and abhorrence. With none of that brilliant genius which dazzles ordinary minds; with not even any remarkable quickness of apprehension; with knowledge less than almost all persons in the middle ranks, and many well educated of the humbler classes possess; this eminent person is presented to our observation clothed in attributes as modest, as unpretending, as little calculated to strike or to astonish, as if he had passed unknown through some secluded region of private life. But he had a judgment sure and sound; a steadiness of mind which never suffered any passion, or even any feeling to ruffle its calm; a strength of understanding which worked rather than forced its way through all obstacles, —removing or avoiding rather than overleaping them. If profound sagacity, unshaken steadiness of purpose, the entire subjugation of all the passions which carry havoc through ordinary minds, and oftentimes lay waste the fairest prospects of greatness,—nay, the discipline of those feelings which are wont to lull or to seduce genius, and to mar and to cloud over the aspect of virtue herself,—joined with, or rather leading to the

most absolute self-denial, the most habitual and exclusive devotion to principle,—if these things can constitute a great character, without either quickness of apprehension, or resources of information, or inventive powers, or any brilliant quality that might dazzle the vulgar,—then surely Washington was the greatest man that ever lived in this world uninspired by Divine wisdom, and unsustained by supernatural virtue.

Nor could the human fancy create a combination of qualities, even to the very wants and defects of the subject, more perfectly fitted for the scenes in which it was his lot to bear the chief part; whether we regard the war which he conducted, the political constitution over which he afterwards presided, or the tempestuous times through which he had finally to guide the bark himself had launched. Averse as his pure mind and temperate disposition naturally was from the atrocities of the French Revolution, he yet never leant against the cause of liberty, but clung to it even when degraded by the excesses of its savage votaries. Towards France, while he reprobated her aggressions upon other states, and bravely resisted her pretensions to control his own, he yet never ceased to feel the gratitude which her aid to the American cause had planted eternally in every American bosom; and for the freedom of a nation which had followed the noble example of his countrymen in breaking the chains of a thousand years, he united with those countrymen in cherishing a natural sympathy and regard. Towards England, whom he had only known as a tyrant, he never, even in the worst times of French turbulence at home, and injury to foreign states, could unbend from the attitude of distrust and

defiance into which the conduct of her sovereign and his Parliament, not unsupported by her people, had forced him, and in which the war had left him. Nor was there ever among all the complacent self-delusions with which the fond conceits of national vanity are apt to intoxicate us, one more utterly fantastical than the notion wherewith the politicians of the Pitt school were wont to flatter themselves and beguile their followers, —that simply because the Great American would not yield either to the bravadoes of the Republican envoy, or to the fierce democracy of Jefferson, he therefore had become weary of republics, and a friend to monarchy and to England. In truth, his devotion to liberty, and his intimate persuasion that it can only be enjoyed under the republican scheme, constantly gained strength to the end of his truly glorious life; and his steady resolution to hold the balance even between contending extremes at home, as well as to repel any advance from abroad incompatible with perfect independence, was not more dictated by the natural justice of his disposition, and the habitual sobriety of his views, than it sprang from a profound conviction that a commonwealth is most effectually served by the commanding prudence which checks all excesses, and guarantees it against the peril that chiefly besets popular governments.

His courage, whether in battle or in council, was as perfect as might be expected from this pure and steady temper of soul. A perfect just man, with a thoroughly firm resolution never to be misled by others, any more than to be by others overawed; never to be seduced or betrayed, or hurried away by his own weaknesses or self-delusions, any more than by other men's

arts; nor ever to be disheartened by the most complicated difficulties, any more than to be spoilt on the giddy heights of fortune—such was this great man,—great, pre-eminently great, whether we regard him sustaining alone the whole weight of campaigns all but desperate, or gloriously terminating a just warfare by his resources and his courage—presiding over the jarring elements of his political council, alike deaf to the storms of all extremes—or directing the formation of a new government for a great people, the first time that so vast an experiment had ever been tried by man—or finally retiring from the supreme power to which his virtue had raised him over the nation he had created, and whose destinies he had guided as long as his aid was required—retiring with the veneration of all parties, of all nations, of all mankind, in order that the rights of men might be conserved, and that his example never might be appealed to by vulgar tyrants. This is the consummate glory of Washington; a triumphant warrior where the most sanguine had a right to despair; a successful ruler in all the difficulties of a course wholly untried; but a warrior, whose sword only left its sheath when the first law of our nature commanded it to be drawn; and a ruler who, having tasted of supreme power, gently and unostentatiously desired that the cup might pass from him, nor would suffer more to wet his lips than the most solemn and sacred duty to his Country and his God required!

To his latest breath did this great patriot maintain the noble character of a Captain the patron of Peace, and a Statesman the friend of Justice. Dying, he bequeathed to his heirs the sword which he had worn in

the War for Liberty, and charged them "Never to take it from the scabbard but in self-defence, or in defence of their country and her freedom; and commanding them, that when it should thus be drawn, they should never sheath it nor ever give it up, but prefer falling with it in their hands to the relinquishment thereof"—words, the majesty and simple eloquence of which are not surpassed in the oratory of Athens and Rome.

It will be the duty of the Historian and the Sage in all ages to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man; and until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and in virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of WASHINGTON!

FINIS.

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