

HELPS FOR STUDENTS OF HISTORY. No. 29

EDITED BY C. JOHNSON, M.A., H. V. V. TEMPERLEY, M.A.,  
AND J. P. WHITNEY, D.D., D.C.L.

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY

G. P. GOOCH

LONDON

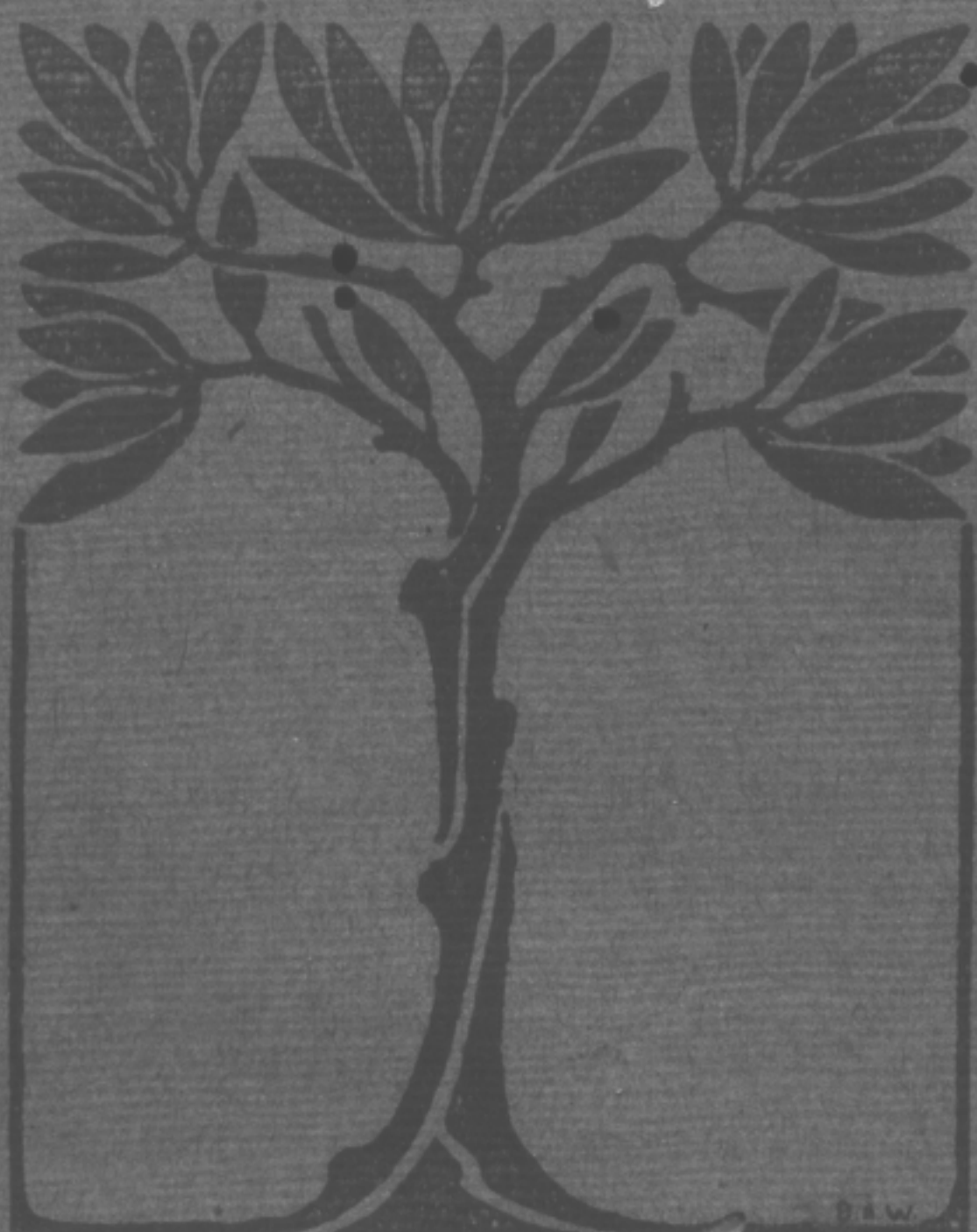
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE  
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

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G. P. GOOCH

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# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE French Revolution is the most important event in the life of modern Europe. Herder compared it to the Reformation and the rise of Christianity; and it deserves to be ranked with those two great movements in history, because, like them, it destroyed the landmarks of the world in which generations of men had passed their lives, because it was a movement towards a completer humanity, and because it too was a religion, with its doctrines, its apostles, and its martyrs. It brought on the stage of human affairs forces which have moulded the actions of men ever since, and have taken a permanent place among the formative influences of civilization. As Christianity taught that man was a spiritual being, and the Reformation proclaimed that no barrier should stand between the soul and God, so the Revolution asserted the equality of men, and declared each one of them, regardless of birth, colour, or religion, to be possessed of inalienable rights.

## 8 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The universal significance of the event was recognized both by those who took part in it and by those who watched it from afar. The orators on the Seine were fully conscious that the eyes of the world were upon them. "Your laws will be the laws of Europe if you are worthy of them," declared Mirabeau to the Constituent Assembly; "the Revolution will make the round of the globe." "When France has a cold," remarked Metternich bitterly, "all Europe sneezes." "Whoever regards this Revolution as exclusively French," echoed Mallet du Pan, "is incapable of pronouncing judgment upon it." "The French Revolution," declared Gentz in 1794, "is one of those events which belong to the whole human race. It is of such dimensions that it is hardly permissible to occupy oneself with any subordinate interest, of such magnitude that posterity will eagerly inquire how contemporaries of every country thought and felt about it, how they argued and how they acted." Friends and foes of the "principles of '89" were at one in emphasizing the power of its appeal; and men like Burke and Tom Paine, Immanuel Kant and Joseph de Maistre, who agreed in nothing else, were convinced that the problems it raised concerned humanity as a whole.

The books in which the causes, events, and results

of the Revolution have been narrated and discussed are beyond computation; but happily the greater number are either worthless or superseded. Brief surveys of the more important contributions to our knowledge are given in the appendix to Lord Acton's *Lectures on the French Revolution*, and in chap. xiii. of *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, by G. P. Gooch.

## I

### BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

TRAVELLERS and publicists of the eighteenth century foresaw the Revolution, and historians of every school sought its roots in the generations and, indeed, the centuries which preceded it. Louis Blanc declared that no man could date its beginning, since all nations had contributed to produce it. "All the revolts of the past unite and lose themselves in it, like rivers in the sea. It is the glory of France to have performed the work of the human race at the price of her own blood." The socialist historian commences his long-winded narrative with Hus; but this is to pile a needless burden on our backs. We must, however, at the outset form a clear conception of the life of the French people and the methods of government under the monarchical system elaborated by Henri IV., Richelieu, and Louis XIV.; and this may be obtained from A. J. Grant, *The French Monarchy*; Kitchin's *History of France*; or from the relevant chapters in the *Cambridge Modern History*, vols. iv. to vi.

The real nature of the Ancien Régime was



revealed to the modern world by Tocqueville's *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, published in 1855. The author described his work as a study, not a history; but it threw more light on the Revolution than any of the histories that had appeared and inaugurated its scientific study. The Revolution itself had exerted such a fascination that it had occurred to no one to ascertain its relation to the régime which it superseded. Realizing the necessity of exploring the provincial archives, Tocqueville made a prolonged stay at Tours, where he found a complete collection of the records and correspondence of the Intendants. He pursued his researches in his native Normandy and in Languedoc, studying the decrees of the Provincial Parlements and the registers of the parishes, and thus gradually acquiring a clear conception of the classes of society and other relations, the nature and extent of feudal rights, the central and local administration. His results were as unexpected as they were irrefutable. "As I advanced I was surprised to find at every moment traits which meet us in France to-day. I discovered a mass of sentiments and habits which I had thought were the offspring of the Revolution." The centralized administration of the nineteenth century proved to be an inheritance from the Ancien Régime. France had been subject to three governments: the King and his ministers, working through the Intendants; the feudal powers and jurisdictions; and finally, the Provincial institutions. Of these the first were

by far the strongest; the feudal powers were weak; and the Provincial institutions were ghosts of their former selves except in Brittany and Languedoc. Feudalism as a political system, aristocracy as a political force, had disappeared; but the feudal privileges that remained appeared all the more odious because the system of which they formed a part was dead. "Some good people have endeavoured to rehabilitate the Ancien Régime. I judge it by the sentiments it inspired in those who lived under it and destroyed it. I see that all through the Revolution, cruel as it was, hatred of the old régime outweighed all other hates, and that during the perilous vicissitudes of the last sixty years the fear of its return has outweighed all other fears. That is enough for me."

Tocqueville, declared Scherer, accomplished for the Revolution what Lyell had done for the history of the globe. He destroyed the cataclysmic theory and substituted the slow action of secular causes. Where men had seen a radical contradiction between the Monarchy and the Revolution, he saw a logical continuation. The Ancien Régime was strongly centralized; the Revolution still further centralized administration. The Ancien Régime had destroyed the greater part of feudalism; the Revolution destroyed the rest. The driving-force of the Revolution was equality of rights; and it was equality before the law which the Monarchy had been striving to establish in its long struggle with feudalism. The fruitful researches of Tocqueville

have inspired two generations of students to reconstruct the administrative machinery and the social life of eighteenth-century France. Of special importance are the writings of Albert Babeau on the province, the town, and the village. Arthur Young's well-known *Travels in France in 1787-1789* reminds us that conditions varied from province to province.

The Revolution was due to the union of concrete grievances, which were actually worse in many parts of the Continent, with an intellectual activity which made the France of Louis XV. and XVI. the leader of European thought. John Morley's five volumes on Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and the Encyclopædists paint a vivid picture of the group of men who taught the French bourgeoisie to think, to criticize, and to rebel. Sorel's little volume on Montesquieu (English translation) and Higgs's study of *The Physiocrats*, the dominant school of economists, are almost equally indispensable. No advanced student should miss the brilliant if somewhat uncritical survey of the life and atmosphere of France in Taine's *Ancien Régime* (English translation). More trustworthy is the long and admirable chapter entitled "Causes of the French Revolution" in the sixth volume of Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*.

The reign of Louis XVI. is best studied in the ninth volume of Lavis's great co-operative *Histoire de la France*. The commanding figure

of Turgot is admirably sketched by John Morley in his *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. The most authoritative account of the attempts to avert a revolution by reform is provided in Ségur's *Au couchant de la monarchie*, one of the classics of French historical literature. The first volume deals with Turgot, whose noble aims during two years' tenure of office are fully recognized, but whose hasty methods are censured. The second portrays the five years' rule of his successor, Necker, who wisely aimed at less sweeping changes but whose sincere endeavours to render France solvent were shipwrecked on the heavy expenses of the American war.

## II

### GENERAL WORKS

THE documentary study of the French Revolution is just half a century old, and only two of the histories written before that time require our notice. Carlyle's immortal work, published in 1837, which should be read in Mr. C. R. Fletcher's or Dr. Holland Rose's edition, revealed the greatest event in modern history to the English-speaking world, and still shapes the judgment of all but historical students. By a supreme effort of creative imagination he succeeded in rendering the vision as real to his readers as to himself. It is the most dramatic work in historical literature. The reader has its great scenes stamped ineffaceably on his mind. The storming of the Bastille, the oath in the Tennis Court, the women's raid on Versailles, the Fête of the Federation, the flight to Varennes, the trial and death of the King, the Girondins and Danton, the brief tragedy of Charlotte Corday, the fall of Robespierre—these pageants we carry with us through life. No writer except Michelet has approached Carlyle in the power of rendering the atmosphere of hope and horror, of tense passion

and animal fury. No less remarkable is his insight into the character of the leading actors. Though misconceiving the Girondins, like all other writers before Biré, he drew portraits of Louis and Marie Antoinette, Mirabeau and Lafayette, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, which require little correction. But the deficiencies of the epic are as conspicuous as its merits. His knowledge of the period was extremely limited. The relations of France with Europe are neglected, and the provinces are forgotten. He conceived the Revolution as purely destructive, a huge bonfire of feudal lumber. That it inherited many principles and tendencies of the Ancien Régime, that constructive work of a permanent character was accomplished, that its two main watchwords, equality and the sovereignty of the people, were to mould the thought and action of the nineteenth century, was unknown to him. His book is less a history than a series of *tableaux vivants*, less an explanation of events than an evocation of the past. The faculty of presenting the Revolution as the story of a logical connection of events, organically related to the periods preceding and following it, which Carlyle utterly lacked, was possessed in an eminent degree by Mignet, whose concise and lucid narrative, though published in 1824, is still well worth reading, and has kept its place in the book market while the longer and more ambitious narratives of Thiers, Michelet, and Louis Blanc are rarely consulted except by special-



ists. The *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution Française*, published in 1834-1838 by Bouchez and Roux, contains material not accessible elsewhere and is useful for reference.

The success of Carlyle frightened British historians off the field; and it was not till half a century later that Morse Stephens summarized for English readers the researches of French scholars. The greatest novelty of his learned and valuable book was that he traced the course of the Revolution in the provinces; but after bringing his story down to 1793 he settled in the United States, and the third volume never appeared. Thus to this day we possess no detailed and complete history written by a single British hand. By far the best guide through the period from 1789 to 1799 is Madelin's *The French Revolution* (English translation), first published in 1911. If the student had time for only a single volume on the great upheaval he would be wise to choose this admirable work, which incorporated the ascertained results of research, and which in successive editions keeps abreast of the march of historical investigation. To study the pages of Madelin after reading or re-reading Carlyle is to measure the sensational advance that has taken place in our knowledge and interpretation of forces and events. Written in a spirit of critical detachment verging on severity, distinguished by the usual French clarity of arrangement, and furnished with full bibliographies, the work is indispensable to

beginners and a valuable companion to the advanced student.

While Madelin provides the most useful summary of details; Lord Acton's *Lectures on the French Revolution*, delivered at Cambridge in 1895-1899 and published in 1910, offers the best philosophic survey of the stupendous movement and of the derivation and significance of the ideas by which it was inspired. The opening lecture on "The Heralds of Revolution" is remarkable for the prominence assigned to Fénelon, "the first man who saw through the majestic hypocrisy of the Court and knew that France was on the road to ruin." The second, on "The Influence of America," is the most novel and valuable in the book. Acton attributes the failure of the moderate reformers mainly to the intrigues of the Court with foreign Powers; for, though the King began as the convinced advocate of reform, he was surrounded by evil advisers, the worst of whom was the Queen. Of the Declaration of the Rights of Man he speaks with the enthusiasm of a Liberal idealist. "It is the triumphant proclamation of the doctrine that human obligations are not all assignable to contract or to interest or to force. This single page of print outweighs libraries and is stronger than all the armies of Napoleon." It had, however, one cardinal fault: it sacrificed liberty to equality, and the absolutism of the King was succeeded by the absolutism of the Assembly. The attack on the Church, represented

by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, was a needless and fatal blunder, and turned the monarch as well as the minor clergy into convinced enemies of the Revolution. The Constituent Assembly was better than the Legislative, and the Legislative was superior to the Convention. The reign of violence began when the danger on the frontier became acute, and ended when it was removed. A despotic executive was inevitable, and the Girondins went down before the Jacobins, who were worse men and cared even less for liberty, but knew how to defend the fatherland. Despite its horrors, however, the Revolution was a great effort towards the emancipation of the common man.

No man, alive or dead, has done so much to discover and to expound the history of the Revolution in all its length and depth and breadth as Aulard, for whom a Chair of the History of the French Revolution was founded in 1886 by the Municipal Council of Paris. His chief narrative work, *The Political History of the French Revolution*, published in 1902 (English translation, 4 vols.) bears the subtitle, "Origins and Development of Democracy and the Republic," and makes no pretence to offer a history of France between 1789 and 1795. He merely glances at the events of the first three years, and has little to say of the Court, finance, economic conditions, diplomacy, and war. His theme is the evolution and application of the two governing principles of the Revo-

lution—equality and the sovereignty of the people. The most striking novelty of the book is the demonstration of the relative conservatism of the men of 1789 and of the late appearance of the republican idea. No one of note except Brissot and Condorcet asked for a republic till the autumn of 1790, and the Legislative Assembly was as monarchical as the Constituent. The Monarchy was overthrown not by convinced republicans but by the blunders and intrigues of its champions. Aulard's second main thesis is that the Terror was due, not to the domination of abstract ideas, but to the necessity of repelling the invading armies and of safeguarding the precious reforms already achieved. The men who believed in the principles of 1789 and were determined to uphold them acted as they might have been expected to act. The Jacobins were the custodians of the Revolution and of the national territory, and against their cruelties must be set the supreme achievement that they saved their country from the return of the Ancien Régime and from conquest and spoliation by foreign armies. "I am a respectful and grateful son of the Revolution which has emancipated humanity and science," writes the historian, who stands for the militant radicalism and anticlericalism characteristic of France under the Third Republic. His hero is Danton, the man of iron will and swift decision; but the real guide of the Revolution was the people itself. After the decisive constitutional victories



of 1789 a rift began between the bourgeoisie and the masses; and it was owing to the latter that the Revolution did not stop short with political changes but undertook the championship of the peasant and the artisan. Aulard's book is written with a mastery of the sources that no historian has ever approached, and he renders the evolution of the drama thoroughly intelligible; but he lacks literary charm, and he is a frank partisan. His hatred of monarchy, feudalism, and the State Church is only equalled by his gratitude to their destroyer, and no other competent writer has come so near justifying the Terror as a patriotic necessity.

Taine detested the Revolution as heartily as Aulard loves it, and his three volumes (English translation) constitute the most resounding attack on it ever delivered. While his volume on the Ancien Régime won general approval for its literary brilliance and its relatively balanced attitude, its successor aroused enthusiasm in royalist and clerical circles and indignation among Radical Republicans. He brushes aside the traditional distinction between the principles of 1789 and the principles of 1793. On being asked when the Terror began, Malouet replied, "On July 14, 1789"; and Taine shared his opinion. The "Golden Dawn" never existed; moderate men were never at the helm; sound principles never prevailed; bloodshed and rapine began at once; it was more than a revolution: it was a dissolution.

The Revolution was in essence, he declares, a transfer of property. "That is its permanent force, its primary motive, its historical meaning." He had discovered a good deal of evidence in the archives on the burning of châteaux in the summer of 1789; but his picture of France rushing headlong into anarchy is a gross exaggeration. The Ancien Régime fell in thousands of villages without bloodshed or disturbance. No less partisan were the second and third volumes, devoted to the Jacobins, whom he depicts as crazy doctrinaires, thirsting for blood and revelling in destruction. Taine's Jacobins are mere figments of his imagination. He charges them with blindness to the facts around them; but he himself is blind to the most important influences which shaped their conduct. He depicts them as the children of Rousseau, learning nothing and forgetting nothing; whereas they had been monarchists in the early years of the Revolution. The émigrés on the Rhine, the ceaseless intrigues of the Court with foreign Powers, the flight to Varennes, the hostile armies massed on the frontier a few days' march from the capital, the savage threats of the Brunswick Manifesto, the rebellion in the Vendée—these tremendous facts, without which the Terror is frankly unintelligible, are left virtually unnoticed. Many of the acts of the Constituent, the Legislative, and the Convention were cruel and unwise; but a definite reason can be assigned for them independently of any



philosophy. We should bear in mind the warning of Acton—"The Revolution will never be intelligibly known to us till we discover its conformity to the common law, and recognize that it is not utterly singular and exceptional, that other scenes have been as horrible as these, and many men as bad." Taine's methods of research have been criticized as sharply as his judgment of men and events. In his *Taine, historien de la Révolution Française* Aulard endeavoured to prove that the book is virtually worthless for the purposes of history; but Cochin, in his *Crise de l'histoire révolutionnaire*, replied to the attack. It may be read with profit by advanced students as an antidote to the hardly less uncritical pæans which the great upheaval continues to inspire, and to the narratives of socialists such as Jaurès (*Histoire socialiste de la France, 1789-1900*, vols. i. to iv.), and Kropotkin (*The Great French Revolution*), who exalt the wisdom and virtue of the masses in contrast not only to the nobility and the clergy but to the bourgeoisie.

Taine wrote his book under the influence of the débâcle of 1870 and the Commune of 1871, and his volumes were missiles in his fight against modern democracy. The work of his friend Albert Sorel, on the other hand, which was produced in the same period, is as dispassionate and objective as any history of controversial events can be. *L'Europe et la Révolution Française* presents a panorama of the conflict between the new France

and the old Europe from 1789 to 1815. The three volumes devoted to Napoleon are of less value than the five which deal with the Revolution. His object was to exhibit the Revolution, which appeared to some as the subversion and to others as the regeneration of the world, as the natural result of the history of France and of Europe. While Tocqueville had found the model of its internal policy in the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., Sorel announced that in their foreign policy the revolutionists were equally the direct heirs of the Monarchy. Sybel had been the first writer to connect the Revolution with the main stream of European history and to elucidate the Polish and other factors which determined the policy of Prussia, Austria, and Russia during its course. But Sorel, writing a generation later, enjoyed the advantage of access to a mass of new material, and his book is the first adequate study of the Revolution in its international bearings. After devoting a preliminary volume to an analysis of the political methods and ideas of the eighteenth century and to describing the decrepitude of France and of feudal Europe, he traces the atmospheric change from the noble principles with which the leaders set out. He does not scoff at the Declaration of the Rights of Man, but he contests its practical value. He is fair to the émigrés, distinguishing the early intransigents, who in their blind hatred endeavoured to arm Europe against their fatherland, from the later victims of persecu-

tion who unwillingly fled for their lives. He comprehends the instinct of the Court, while censuring its policy. Like Sybel he ascribes the more immediate responsibility for the war to the chauvinism of the Girondins, though the explosive forces of the Revolution and the old instinct for "the natural frontiers" of the Rhine and the Alps prepared the way. Yet his sympathies are with his countrymen in the conflict, for the integrity of the national territory and the maintenance of the priceless achievements of the Revolution were at stake. He recognizes the intimate connection between the danger on the frontier and the worst excesses in Paris, but makes no attempt to palliate them. Rejecting Taine's wholesale indictment, he returns to the sensible tradition of supporting the principles of 1789 and condemning the Terror. The lights and shadows are evenly distributed. "Taine," writes Hanotaux, who was the friend of both, "only sees blood dropping from the scaffold; Sorel sees it spread over the battlefield to save the country and to fertilize Europe." Though his pages often throw light on the fate of individuals and the struggles of parties, his subject is France as a Great Power. "Instead of investigating the human interior," writes Acton, "he is on the lookout across the Alps and beyond the Rhine, writing, as it were, from the point of view of the Foreign Office. He is at his best when his pawns are diplomatists. In the process of home politics and the development of political

ideas he does not surpass those who went before him." Even in the vast field of foreign affairs he does not always tread with equal sureness, and his dealings with British policy fall below his high standard.

### III

#### MONOGRAPHS, BIOGRAPHIES, ETC.

MUCH of the best work on the Revolution is stored in a vast array of monographs and biographies, to a few of which attention may be directed. In *La France d'après les cahiers de 1789* Champion briefly and clearly summarizes the astonishingly moderate demands for reform put forward in the first half of 1789 by the people of France. In recent years a lively controversy has arisen as to the derivation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the articles of which, with an elaborate commentary, are printed by Eugène Blum, *La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. The Heidelberg Professor Jellinek argued in his booklet, *Die Erklärung der Menschenrechte* (American translation), that the Declaration would not have been drawn up but for the example of America, and pointed out that many formulas were borrowed from the constitutions of the separate States. Émile Boutmy replied in the pages of *Les Annales de l'École libre des sciences politiques* (reprinted in his *Études politiques*) that the resemblances were mainly external, that the

Declaration arose from the needs and traditions of France and the atmosphere of the European *Aufklärung* or Enlightenment. The subject has been exhaustively discussed, and a verdict given rather to Boutmy than to Jellinek, by Wilhelm Rees, *Die Erklärung der Menschen-und-Bürgerrechte von 1789*. The "ideas of 1789" are analyzed at length by Redslob, *Die Staatstheorien der Französischen Nationalversammlung von 1789*. Champion's *J.-J. Rousseau et la République Française* discusses the relation of his teaching to the different phases of the movement and warmly defends him from the charge of being the spiritual father of the Terrorists.

The two years of the Constituent Assembly should be studied in Morse Stephens's *The Principal Speeches of the Statesmen and Orators of the French Revolution*, 2 vols.; in Aulard, *Les Orateurs de la Constituante*; and in the biographies of its leading men. Willert's *Mirabeau* (Foreign Statesmen Series) gives the best short account of the great orator; but the standard Life is by Alfred Stern, Professor of History at Zurich, of whose work there is a French translation (2 vols.). Clapham's *Life of the Abbé Sieyès* portrays the famous but somewhat cold-blooded theorist who was mainly responsible for the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Lanza de Laborie's *Mounier* narrates the fruitless efforts of the moderate reformers at the very outset to secure the adoption of something like the British Constitution. Miss Bradby's *Life*



of *Barnave*, the most important contribution to the history of the Revolution made by any British scholar for many years, not only revives the attractive figure of the young statesman but describes the growth of parties and analyzes in detail the political, ecclesiastical, and colonial problems they had to face. In his most recent work, *La Révolution Française et le régime féodal*, Aulard describes the feudal régime as it survived under Louis XVI., and traces the successive stages in the abolition of feudal rights. The tragic episode of the flight to Varennes is best studied in Lenotre's monograph, *Le Drame de Varennes* (English translation, *The Flight of Marie Antoinette*).

"It had only one fault left to commit," declared Taine in concluding his account of the Constituent Assembly, "and this it committed by resolving that none of its members should find a place in its successor." The Constitution of 1791, which it had taken the Constituent two years to elaborate, and which Louis XVI. was compelled to accept, retained a shadow king and entrusted the real power to an Assembly of new and untried men. The Legislative Assembly was inferior in ability and character to its predecessor, and it was dominated by the Girondins. The eloquence of Vergniaud, the fascination of Madame Roland, and the tragic fate of the leaders won the sympathy of their contemporaries and captivated the historians of the first half of the nineteenth century. They were depicted as high-souled idealists, who

went down before the assault of the men of blood and iron. But farther study has shattered this alluring portrait. In *La Légende des Girondins* Biré showed that they were for the most part as ready for violent courses as the Jacobins, that they desired a war which Robespierre and other Jacobin leaders were anxious to avoid, and that the majority for the execution of the King was secured by their votes. Sybel and Sorel emphasized their responsibility for the declaration of war in the spring of 1792, and Aulard has argued that nothing but the rigid centralization which they opposed enabled the Jacobins to keep the invaders at bay and to frustrate the counter-revolution. The partisan character of the *Memoirs* of Madame Roland, once so popular, is now fully recognized, and her voluminous correspondence, published in recent years, clearly reveals her faults of mind and temper. She has found recent English biographers in I. A. Taylor and Mrs. Pope-Hennessy. The leader of the party at the height of their power in the Legislative Assembly has recently found a competent American biographer in Ellery's *Brissot de Warville*. Cahen's *Condorcet et la Révolution Française* depicts the boldest thinker of his time in France. A concise and lucid discussion of the origins of the struggle between France and the old Europe is given in Clapham's *Causes of the War of 1792*. Important speeches are given in Aulard's *Les Orateurs de la Législative et de la Convention*.

The Legislative Assembly, like the Constituent, was theoretically monarchical in sentiment; but, during the first half of 1792 republicanism made rapid advances, and Brunswick's invasion and the brutal Manifesto swept away the Monarchy, provoked the September massacres, brought Danton into power, and substituted the radical Convention, elected on a wide franchise, for the timid and rather colourless Legislative. For the next two years domestic politics were dominated by the war, which opened badly for France, took a more favourable turn with the cannonade at Valmy and the retreat of Brunswick, passed through a highly critical phase in 1793, and in 1794 scored victories in Belgium and on the Rhine which removed all fear of invasion or defeat. The story of the titanic efforts of the young Republic to vanquish a world in arms has been told with admirable impartiality in the eleven small volumes of Chuquet's *Guerres de la Révolution*, based on the archives of the War Office; and a brief summary of the campaigns by an expert is given in Belloc's *French Revolution* (in the Home University Library). Danton may be most safely studied in Madelin's recent monograph; and Belloc's eloquent biography helps us to visualize the personality of Robespierre. Lord Morley's sketch of Robespierre in his *Miscellanies*, vol. i., though written over forty years ago, is still worth reading. Methley's *Camille Desmoulins* provides a good popular account of the most powerful of the Jacobin journalists. The second

volume of Moncreux Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine* describes the activities of the only Anglo-Saxon member of the Convention, who owed his election to his book *The Rights of Man*, the most effective of the innumerable replies to Burke. The tragic end of the King and Queen is described with great power in Belloc's *Life of Marie Antoinette*. A flood of light on the whole history of the activity of the Convention in Paris and the provinces and of the fall of Robespierre at the Revolution of Thermidor in 1794 is thrown by the first volume of Madelin's *Fouché*, perhaps the most valuable biography of the revolutionary era. There is no satisfactory *Life of Carnot*; but the story of national defence is well told in Lévy-Schneider's *Jean-Bon Saint-Ancre*. Nesta Webster's *Chevalier de Boufflers* is among the best of the numberless books which describe the life of the upper classes before and during the Revolution.

While only the professional student will read every volume of Aulard's vast *Recueil des actes du Comité du Salut Public*, which has been appearing ever since 1889, it aids us to visualize the methods by which France was governed during the Terror if we open its pages at random, watch its members at work in Paris, and read a few reports from the Representatives on Mission in the provinces. Of smaller bulk but of not less importance are the six volumes, entitled *La Société des Jacobins*, commenced by Aulard simultaneously with the *Recueil*, and covering the five years from the foundation of

the Jacobin Club in 1789 till its existence was terminated soon after Thermidor by Fouché locking the door. With the record of the debates before us we learn that the famous club, so far from being from the first the haunt of wild men, began with a monarchist atmosphere, and reflected rather than caused the change as public opinion drifted towards republicanism. During the Convention the debates in the club were often of greater importance than the debates in the Assembly, as the rival leaders rehearsed their parts and tested their strength before the decisive struggle and the operative vote. A third documentary source of the utmost value is the great collection in seven volumes, *Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution*, edited by Lacrôix, 1894-1898. A brief account of the Commune of Paris is given in Alger's *Paris*, chap. iii. The registers of the wards have been utilized in Mellié's valuable work *Les Sections de Paris pendant la Révolution Française*, and are summarized in Alger's *Paris*, chap. iv. As a result of these publications the historian dare no longer confine himself to the main stream of history in the Assembly, but must follow the tributaries that flow in from the Jacobin Club and the Commune of Paris. It is in such contemporary records, not in the memoirs written in many cases long after the events described, that the history of the Revolution must be sought.

The last year of the Convention, after th

revolution of Thermidor, and the four years of the Directory which succeeded it, have attracted neither the public nor the historian. The fever of the Revolution is over, and the personal interest begins to shift to Bonaparte and his campaigns in Italy and Egypt. It is impossible to make a hero of Barras or Sieyès; and the work of Carnot, the organizer of victory, continued to be done behind the scenes. Neither Barras nor Carnot has found a competent biographer. Sciout's comprehensive work, *Le Directoire* (4 vols.), was never wholly satisfactory and is now in parts out of date. Foreign relations are surveyed in Sorel's fifth volume and more recently in Guyot's massive work, *Le Directoire et la paix de l'Europe*, which supplements and in parts corrects Sorel. A brilliant picture of the political, economic, and social anarchy under the Directory is painted in the first volume of Vandal's classical work, *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*. Bonaparte's early life may be studied in the standard biographies of Holland Rose and Fournier (English translation), and in more detail in Chuquet's three masterly volumes, *La Jeunesse de Napoléon*. Aulard's vast collection of material in five volumes, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire*, is indispensable to the advanced student.

If we are fully to understand the course and character of the Revolution we must extend our vision beyond the field of pure politics. A collec-



tion of essays entitled *L'Œuvre sociale de la Révolution*, edited by Émile Faguet, briefly summarizes the problems of the army, education, the clergy, socialism, and the land. Legislation is surveyed in Sagnac's *La Législation civile de la Révolution Française*, and in Cahen et Guyot, *L'Œuvre législative de la Révolution*. A brief but masterly summary is given by Paul Viollet in chap. xxiv. of vol. viii. of the *Cambridge Modern History*. The vital problem of finance is fully analyzed in Stourm's *Les Finances de l'ancien régime et de la Révolution* (2 vols., 1885), and more recently in Gomel's *Histoire financière de l'Assemblée Constituante*, 2 vols., and *Histoire financière de la Législative et de la Convention*, 2 vols. Religious life during the period of upheaval has attracted authors of different schools. The best summary in English, though published in 1882, is contained in W. H. Jervis's *The Gallican Church and the Revolution*; but much material has subsequently come to light. In his important *Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution Française* Gazier has shown, with the aid of Bishop Grégoire's papers, that the churches were only shut from the end of 1793 to the beginning of 1795, when Notre-Dame was reopened for worship, and the dying Convention recoiled from the extreme anticlericalism of its prime. France was ripe for the Concordat in 1795; but the Directory renewed the persecution. La Gorce, the eminent historian of the Second Empire, has written a somewhat

polemical *Histoire religieuse de la Révolution Française* in three volumes from the standpoint of Catholic royalism. A fourth volume is to carry the narrative from Thermidor to the Concordat. From the opposite pole of political and religious thought Aulard has described *Le Culte de la raison et le culte de l'Être suprême*. His pupil Mathiez has thrown light on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in his *Rome et le clergé français sous la Constituante*, and on the curious movement associated with the name of Larevellière-Lépeaux in his massive monograph, *La Théophilanthropie et le culte décadaire 1796-1801*. The literature of the eighteenth century is described by specialists in vol. vi, of the great co-operative *Histoire littéraire de la France*, edited by Petit de Julleville. A scintillating picture of social life is painted in the two volumes of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Histoire de la société française pendant la Révolution et le Directoire*, which may be supplemented by E. F. Henderson's *Symbol and Satire in the French Revolution*. Alger's *Paris in 1789-1794* adds many traits; and Lenotre's essays, translated under the title of *Romances of the French Revolution*, 2 vols., are as scholarly as they are readable. Approaches to socialism are described in Lichtenberger's *Le Socialisme et la Révolution Française*.

In addition to the larger works of Aulard already mentioned, the Professor has collected his essays and lectures in seven volumes entitled *Études et*



*leçons sur la Révolution Française.* Every article from his pen repays study; but perhaps the most valuable parts of the long and growing series are the numerous studies of Danton, and the survey of the foreign policy of the Convention in the third volume. Many of the *Études et leçons* are reprinted from the review *La Révolution Française*, founded in 1881 and conducted by Aulard and his pupils. The rival periodical, *La Revue de la Révolution*, founded in 1883 to receive the contributions and to spread the views of Catholic royalists, contained a number of valuable articles, but expired in 1889.

The outstanding feature of recent research has been the study of social and economic conditions, the early stages of which were described in Boissonade's booklet, *Les Études relatives à l'histoire économique de la Révolution Française*, published in 1906. An Economic Commission, created by the State in 1903, undertook the publication of the Cahiers, which when complete will form a small library. The six volumes published in the Archives Parlementaires at the end of the Second Empire neglected the documents of the villages, which are more valuable than the ambitious efforts of the three Estates, often drawn up by lawyers and in many cases copied from models with a few local additions. A second task is the collection of data relating to the property of the Church and the émigrés and to the royal domain. A third enterprise is to trace the stages of the abolition

of feudal rights. \*Students who desire to consult the French archives will find the technical guidance which they require in Pierre Caron's *Manuel pratique pour l'étude de la Révolution Française*, 1912.

## IV

### THE REVOLUTION OUTSIDE FRANCE

IN a triple sense the French Revolution belongs to European history. It grew out of conditions which were in large measure common to other countries; its course closely affected and was continuously affected by the policy of almost every State in Europe; and finally its influence on the institutions and ideas of the Old World was far-reaching and enduring. We must therefore occasionally escape from the meridian of Paris and view its repercussions on the life and thought of other members of the European family. It is the merit of Sybel and Sorel to have established the vital connection of the internal and external policy of France with that of the rulers of the great European States. The émigrés, for instance, belong as much to European as to French history, as we may learn in detail from Ernest Daudet's classical *Histoire de l'émigration*, from Lady Blennerhassett's monumental biography of Madame de Staël, and from Bernard Mallet's delightful Life of his great-grandfather Mallet du Pan. The volumes of the *Cambridge Modern History* and of the *Histoire*

*générale* should lie at our elbow. The best brief political survey of the relations of France and Europe is to be found in Morse Stephens's *Revolutionary Europe, 1739-1815*. The reaction of the events and ideas of the Revolution on the mind of Europe is briefly surveyed in vol. viii., chap. xxv., of the *Cambridge Modern History*. The gradual crumbling of feudalism throughout Europe is traced by Doniol, *La Révolution Française et la féodalité*.

The countries most interested in and most affected by the eruption of the French volcano were Great Britain and Germany, in both of which the opening scenes of the drama were welcomed with general enthusiasm. The best introduction to its effects on the former is P. A. Brown's *French Revolution in English History*, which tells the story of the Radical movements and societies in the light of new material. The same theme is fruitfully discussed by Laprade, *England and the French Revolution, 1789-1797*; W. P. Hall, *British Radicalism, 1791-1797*; Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform*; Kent, *The English Radicals*; and Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*. Lecky's *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Litton Falkiner's *Studies in Irish History and Biography*, and Guillon, *La France et l'Irlande pendant la Révolution*, give the Irish side of the drama. John Morley's *Burke* should be followed by the study of the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and the *Letters on a Regicide Peace* in the excellent Clarendon Press edition of E. J. Payne. Lord

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Rosebery's *Pitt* should be mastered before approaching Holland Rose's standard biography. J. L. Hammond's *Charles James Fox: A Political Study* expounds and defends the greatest opponent of the war against France. André Lebon's *L'Angleterre et l'émigration française, 1794-1801* describes our secret negotiations with the émigrés. J. G. Alger's *Englishmen in the French Revolution* follows the footsteps of a number of British enthusiasts to Paris. The profound influence of the Revolution on literature may be studied in Dowden's delightful lectures on *The French Revolution and English Literature*; Cestre's *La Révolution Française et les poètes anglais*; Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*; and Émile Legouis's *The Youth of Wordsworth*.

The effect of the Revolution on the mind and institutions of Germany was far greater than in England. While in the latter the reform movement in its widest sense was thrown back by a generation, in the former the ideas of '89 and the impetuous onset of the French armies swept away the worst abuses of feudalism and overthrew the Holy Roman Empire and its antiquated system—the Diet, the Court of Appeal, the Circles, the Imperial Knights—all but six of the Free Cities, and a multitude of petty principalities, secular and ecclesiastical. A full account of the repercussion of the Revolution on the mind of Germany, on the institutions of the Empire, and the individual German States is given by G. P. Gooch, *Germany*

and the French Revolution. Certain aspects of the same subject are treated by Wenck, *Deutschland vor Hundert Jahren*, 2 vols. The political history of the revolutionary era is related with admirable impartiality in Heigel's classical survey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1786-1806*, 2 vols., which supersedes Häusser's narrative of the same period, and supplements and corrects the work of Sybel. A brief but brilliant sketch of Germany before and during the Revolution is provided in the first half of the first volume of Treitschke's *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century* (English translation). Martin Philippson's *Geschichte des preussischen Staatswesens vom Tode Friedrichs des Grossen*, covering the reign of Frederick William in two volumes, though not impeccable in scholarship, is of value for its new material. Ernst von Meier's two volumes, *Preussen und die französische Revolution*, analyze the influence of French ideas on the reformers of Prussia, denying them in the case of Stein (in opposition to Stein's latest biographer, Max Lehmann) and admitting them in the case of Hardenberg. The decisive influence of the ideas of the Revolution on Prussia is maintained in Cavaignac's two volumes, *La Formation de la Prusse contemporaine*. Rambaud's *Les Français sur le Rhin* and Sagnac's recent volume *Le Rhin français pendant la Révolution et l'Empire* describe the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine and the reforms introduced during the twenty years of French occupation.

The political history of the revolutionary era in Italy is most authoritatively related in Franchetti's *Storia d'Italia, 1789-1799*. Hazard's learned monograph, *La Révolution Française et les lettres italiennes, 1789-1815*, describes the effect on thought. Giglioli's *Naples in 1799* (written in English) tells the fascinating and tragic story of the short-lived Neapolitan Republic, modelled on that of France. For Spain we may consult Baumgarten's *Geschichte Spaniens während der französischen Revolution*; for Belgium, Lanza de Laborie's *La Belgique sous la domination française*; for Holland, Legrand, *La Révolution Française en Hollande*; for Russia, Larivière, *Catherine II. et la Révolution Française*, mainly based on extracts from the correspondence of the Empress, with a valuable Introduction by Rambaud. Hazen's *American Opinion on the French Revolution* sketches the attitude of Jefferson, Gouverneur Morris, the American Minister to France, and Monroe; the brief and fruitless mission of the French Minister Genet in 1793 to drag the United States into war; the democratic societies; and the evidence of contemporary literature. A briefer account of American opinion is provided in book iv. of F. S. Oliver's spirited biography of Alexander Hamilton.

## V

### AFTER THE REVOLUTION

THE influence of the Revolution on the ideas, policy, and institutions of France has moulded the history of the succeeding century. Almost every writer and politician who has attempted to guide his countrymen has been compelled to define his relation to the greatest event in the life of his country. Some typical judgments by distinguished men have been collected in Janet's *La Philosophie de la Révolution Française*. In the early years of the nineteenth century French thought was divided into the schools of the Counter-revolution and the supporters of "the principles of 1789." The most powerful opponent of the Revolution who used the French language was Joseph de Maistre. The Savoyard nobleman, who summoned the survivors from the revolutionary flood to rally round the principle of authority embodied in the Pope, may be studied in John Morley's essay in *Critical Miscellanies*, vol. i., and in Cogordan's excellent volume in the *Grands écrivains français*. The moderate Liberals, who admired the principle of "the separation of powers" enshrined in the British Constitution, were known as the Doctrinaires.



Both schools of thought are included in the first volume of Faguet's incomparable *Politiques et moralistes du dix-neuvième siècle*, which dissects the ideas of de Maistre and de Bonald, Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant, Royer-Collard and Guizot. The most comprehensive and illuminating survey of political thought since the Revolution is to be found in the massive work of Henri Michel, *L'Idée de l'État : essai sur l'histoire des théories sociales et politiques en France depuis la Révolution*. Those who desire to trace the operation of the ideas of the Revolution in the debates and struggle of French politics up to the final expulsion of the Bourbons in 1830 should consult Duvergier de Hauranne's great *Histoire du gouvernement parlementaire en France*, which Acton pronounced to contain more profound ideas and more political science than any other work known to him.

The extension of the principle of equality of rights, which was the gospel of the Revolution and the mainspring of its energies, proceeded in ever-widening circles throughout the nineteenth century, like the effect of a stone thrown into a stagnant pond. The conception of common citizenship rendered it impossible to maintain the disabilities of the Jews. Equally impossible was it to tolerate slavery. Nor was it logical any longer to evade the demand for equal rights and equal opportunities for the sexes. Above all the principle of equality gave an incalculable impetus to socialism.

The nationalization of the land makes frequent appearance in the pamphlets of the revolutionary era; and with the conspiracy of Babeuf in 1797 socialism ceased to be merely a speculative doctrine and became a political programme. The wholesale transfer of land—and the circumstances under which it took place—undermined the idea of the sacredness of property; and when the promised equality of political rights failed to secure the welfare and happiness of the masses the elastic principle of equality was stretched to embrace the economic sphere. The Tiers État having now extracted from the Revolution most of the benefits that it could provide, it is in the socialist movement that the operation of its leading idea is most clearly traceable at the present time.

If equality of rights and of opportunity was the central tenet of the revolutionary faith, the sovereignty of the people was its necessary corollary. When the doctrine of hereditary privilege was abandoned the death-knell of autocracy, enlightened or unenlightened, was sounded, and power could only reside in the mass or the majority of citizens. The third watchword of the Revolution, nationality, was foreign to the cosmopolitan teaching on which its leaders were nourished, nor did it make its appearance till Europe began to threaten interference; but it arose naturally from the conception of popular sovereignty. Before 1792 men had thought of States as districts subject to a certain authority rather than as nations

bound together by ties of blood, religion, language, common traditions and aspirations. The French Revolution astonished Europe by the spectacle of a nation thinking and acting independently of its Government. The conception of nationality was condemned at Vienna; but the idea had taken root, and the arrangements of the Congress in which the principle was violated were precisely those which were most speedily upset. The doctrine of nationality was no more invented by the Revolution than the doctrines of equality and popular sovereignty; but their adoption by France opened a new chapter in the life of humanity, and their proclamation in the strident tones of the revolutionary trumpet carried the gospel of democracy to the uttermost parts of the earth. "France did more than conquer Europe," writes Sorel in an eloquent passage; "she converted her. Victorious even in their defeat, the French won over to their ideas the very nations which revolted from their domination. The princes most eagerly bent on penning in the Revolution saw it, or returning from their crusade, sprouting in the soil of their own estates which had been fertilized by the blood of French soldiers. The French Revolution only ceased to be a source of strife between France and Europe to inaugurate a political and social revolution which in less than half a century had changed the face of the European world."



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