

1917  
107

107

107  
REVOLUTION  
188-1785

107  
REVOLUTION


32  
75

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*THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*

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THE  
FRENCH REVOLUTION

1789-1795

BY

BERTHA MERITON GARDINER

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*TENTH IMPRESSION*

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## P R E F A C E.



IN writing this handbook on the French Revolution, it has been my endeavour to give a correct and impartial account of the most important events of the revolutionary period, and of the motives by which the leading characters were actuated. Much has necessarily been omitted which finds a place in larger works. Those who wish to pursue the subject further, and have time at their disposal, would do well to study, besides general histories, some of the many books lately published which deal with special branches of the subject, and often enable the reader to form a more independent judgment both of men and events than is possible from the perusal of works of the former class alone. Amongst general histories those of Michelet and Louis Blanc will probably be found most serviceable. No satisfactory account of the relations of France with other countries is to be found in the French tongue, partly because French historians still write with bias, partly, also, because they hitherto either have been unacquainted with, or have ignored the results of German research. Professor Von Sybel's well-known

18462

book, 'Geschichte der Revolutionszeit,' contains the fullest and best account of the relations which existed between the different States of Europe, but it is not an impartial one. Hermann Hüffer's books are valuable contributions to our knowledge of diplomatic relations, and, being written from an opposite point of view, should be studied by all readers of Von Sybel. The history of the foreign policy of England during this period has still to be written. M. Sorel has lately published in the pages of the 'Révue Historique' a full account of the foreign policy pursued by the Committee of Public Safety after Robespierre's fall, and of the negotiations leading to the treaties of peace signed in 1795 between France and Prussia and France and Spain. Much fresh information regarding the internal condition of France during the revolutionary period is to be found scattered in local and special histories of various kinds. Amongst such may be specially mentioned Mortimer Ternaux's 'Histoire de la Terreur,' and 'La Justice Révolutionnaire,' by Berriat St. Prix. M. Taine in his great work has collected a large number of extracts from documents lying in the archives of the departments, but entire absence of classification, and the strong political bias of the writer, makes this work of less value to the student than others of less pretensions. Amongst the best of local histories are the works of M. Francisque Mège, which reveal the course taken by the Revolution in the province of Auvergne. Biographical works are numerous. Mirabeau's character will best be learnt from his correspondence with the Count de la Marck. M. D'Héricault's 'Révolution de

Thermidor' contains a detailed account of the policy pursued by Robespierre after the expulsion of the Girondists. Danton's life and character can best be studied in the works of M. Robinet. Schmidt's 'Pariser Zustände während der Revolutionszeit' contains the best existing account of the economic condition of Paris between 1789 and 1800. As it is improbable that those for whom this book is in the first place intended will have any idea of the amount represented by so many thousand or million livres, I have invariably given the English equivalent of the French money, following the table inserted by Arthur Young in his 'Travels in France.' After the introduction of the revolutionary calendar, I have in giving dates followed the table in 'L'Art de vérifier les Dates.' In consequence of the different system of intercalation pursued in the two calendars, the correspondence of dates varies from year to year, and in consequence of leaving this fact unnoticed even French historians sometimes give the date in the old style wrongly. I have only further to add that the purple lines upon the map of France in provinces represent the frontiers where customs duties were levied under the old Monarchy. They are copied from a map published with Necker's works. It will be seen that Alsace and Lorraine, as well as Bayonne and Dunkirk, were allowed to trade freely with the foreigner. Marseilles enjoyed the same privilege.



# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### FEUDALISM AND THE MONARCHY.

	PAGE
The Monarchy in France . . . . .	1
Social condition of France . . . . .	3
Feudal rights . . . . .	4
Condition of the Church . . . . .	6
Government and administration . . . . .	7
The privileged classes . . . . .	8
Taxation . . . . .	9
Condition of the People . . . . .	11
Interference with trade . . . . .	13
Public opinion in France . . . . .	13
Voltaire and his followers . . . . .	13
The Encyclopædists . . . . .	14
The Church and Christian Theology attacked . . . . .	15
The Economists . . . . .	16
Rousseau . . . . .	16

## CHAPTER II.

### FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XVI., 1774-1789.

The Ministry of Turgot . . . . .	18
Opposition raised to his reforms . . . . .	19
Character of Louis XVI. . . . .	19

	PAGE
Character of Marie Antoinette . . . . .	20
1776. Dismissal of Turgot . . . . .	21
— Movement of Reform extends over Europe . . . . .	21
Condition of England . . . . .	23
Pitt in Office . . . . .	24
Reaction after Turgot's dismissal . . . . .	25
Ministry of Necker . . . . .	25
Necker opposed by the Parliaments . . . . .	25
1781. He resigns office . . . . .	26
— Desire for political liberty . . . . .	26
1776. American Declaration of Independence . . . . .	26
1783. Ministry of Calonne . . . . .	27
1787. The Assembly of Notables . . . . .	27
Ministry of Brienne . . . . .	27
General disaffection . . . . .	28
1788. Second Ministry of Necker, and calling of the States General . . . . .	29
— Pamphlets and Cahiers . . . . .	29
— Siéyès' Pamphlet—What is the Third Estate? . . . . .	30
Double Representation of the Third Estate . . . . .	31

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ASSEMBLY AT VERSAILLES, 1789.

May 5, 1789. Meeting of the States General . . . . .	33
Relation of the King to the Revolution . . . . .	33
Question whether the States were to sit as one or as three chambers left undecided . . . . .	33
Evil consequences of the Royal policy . . . . .	34
Character and policy of Mirabeau . . . . .	35
Title of National Assembly adopted by the Third Estate . . . . .	37
Excitement and disorder in Paris . . . . .	38
Louis takes part with the Upper Orders . . . . .	39
June 20. Tennis Court Oath . . . . .	40
Royal Sitting of June 23 . . . . .	40
The States constituted as one Chamber . . . . .	41
July 14. The fall of the Bastille . . . . .	43

	PAGE
Establishment of a Municipality and of a National Guard in Paris . . . . .	46
Visit of Louis to the Capital . . . . .	47
Risings in the Provinces . . . . .	48
Decrees of August 4 . . . . .	49
Composition of the Assembly . . . . .	51
The Reactionary Right . . . . .	51
The Right Centre . . . . .	52
The Centre and Left . . . . .	52
The Extreme Left . . . . .	53
Causes giving ascendancy to the Left . . . . .	54
Policy of Mirabeau . . . . .	56
Declaration of the Rights of Man . . . . .	58
New Constitution ; Legislature to be formed of one House ; Veto given to the King . . . . .	58
Scarcity of Bread . . . . .	59
Character of the National Guard of Paris . . . . .	60
October 6. The King and Queen brought to Paris . . . . .	60

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSTITUTION, 1789-1791.

Results of the Movement of October 6 . . . . .	63
The Jacobins . . . . .	64
The Constitution ; Administrative Changes ; Establishment of 44,000 Municipalities . . . . .	65
Judicial Reforms . . . . .	66
Increase of the State debt . . . . .	67
Church Property appropriated by the State . . . . .	67
Creation of Assignats . . . . .	68
Civil Constitution of the Clergy . . . . .	69
Feast of the Federation . . . . .	69
Emigration of the nobles . . . . .	70
Embitterment of the Relations between nobles and peasants .	71
Weakness of the Central Government . . . . .	72
Mutinies in the Army . . . . .	73
Imposition of an Oath on the Clergy ; Schism in the Church	74

	PAGE
The Constitution decried by the Ultra-Democrats . . . . .	76
Brissot . . . . .	76
Desmoulins . . . . .	77
Marat . . . . .	78
Sources of influence exercised by the Ultra-Democrats . . . . .	79
—Influence exercised by Jacobin Clubs . . . . .	80
September 1790. Resignation of Necker . . . . .	81
The Commune of Paris ; Composition of its Municipality . . . . .	81
Mirabeau's policy ; his Death, April 2, 1791 . . . . .	84
Position of the Constitutionalists . . . . .	85

## CHAPTER V.

## THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY, 1791-1792.

Unpopularity of Marie Antoinette . . . . .	87
June 20, 1791. Flight of the Royal Family . . . . .	88
Ultra-Democrats seek the Establishment of a Republic . . . . .	91
July 17. Massacre of the Champ de Mars . . . . .	91
Attempt to revise the Constitution . . . . .	93
—The work of the National Assembly ; legal and financial reforms . . . . .	93
Creation of Assignats of small value . . . . .	94
Plans of the Queen . . . . .	94
Policy of territorial aggrandisement pursued by the Great Powers . . . . .	96
Austria and Russia at war with Turkey . . . . .	97
Death of Joseph II. . . . .	97
Treaty of Reichenbach . . . . .	97
Declaration of Pilnitz . . . . .	98
Designs of Catherine II. on Poland . . . . .	98
Leopold II. unwilling to engage in war with France . . . . .	98
The new Legislative Assembly ; its composition . . . . .	99
—Policy of the Girondists . . . . .	100
Ecclesiastical policy of the Legislature . . . . .	101
Emigrants encouraged by Princes of the Empire . . . . .	101
Growth of a warlike spirit in the Assembly . . . . .	102
—The French Revolution is more than a National movement . . . . .	104



	PAGE
Commencement of war with Austria and Prussia . . . . .	105
The Jacobins embody a spirit of suspicion . . . . .	106
Robespierre's character . . . . .	107
Administrative anarchy . . . . .	109
Troubles at Avignon . . . . .	110
The Girondists hope for the best . . . . .	111
Lafayette denounces the Jacobins . . . . .	112
The mob invades the Tuileries on June 20 . . . . .	113
The Country declared in danger ; Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick . . . . .	114
Preparations made for an insurrection . . . . .	115
Insurrection of August 10 ; Suspension of the King . . . . .	117

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS, 1792-1793.

Formation of the new Commune of Paris . . . . .	119
The September massacres . . . . .	121
The defence of the Argonnes . . . . .	123
The meeting of the Convention, and the abolition of Monarchy . . . . .	124
The Girondists and the Mountain . . . . .	125
Weakness of the Centre . . . . .	128
Re-election of the Commune . . . . .	129
Conquest of Savoy, Mainz, and Belgium . . . . .	130
Question of the annexation of Belgium . . . . .	131
The Opening of the Scheldt, and the order to the Generals to proclaim the Sovereignty of the People . . . . .	134
Objects of the Allies . . . . .	135
Pitt's ministry in England . . . . .	136
Views taken of the French Revolution in England . . . . .	137
Trial and Execution of Louis XVI. . . . .	139
War with England ; the French expelled from Belgium . . . . .	141
Establishment of the Revolutionary Court ; Defeat of Neerwinden . . . . .	143
Party strife in the Convention . . . . .	144
Establishment of the Committee of Public Safety . . . . .	145

	PAGE
Deputies in mission . . . . .	146
Laws against Emigrants and Nonjurors . . . . .	147
Policy of the Mountain . . . . .	148
The economical situation . . . . .	149
Popular remedies opposed by the Girondists . . . . .	151
The Commune leads a movement against the Girondists . . . . .	153
Expulsion of the leading Girondists . . . . .	155

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE COMMUNE AND THE TERROR, 1793.

State of public feeling . . . . .	156
Girondist and Royalist movements ; Resistance in Lyons and Toulon . . . . .	157
General submission to the Convention . . . . .	158
War in La Vendée . . . . .	159
Successes of the Vendéans . . . . .	160
Successes of the Allies . . . . .	161
Coolness between Austria and Prussia . . . . .	160
Assassination of Marat . . . . .	163
Sanguinary tendencies of the Government . . . . .	165
Growing strength of the Committee of Public Safety . . . . .	166
Power of the Commune . . . . .	167
Views of Hébert and Chaumette . . . . .	168
Introduction of the conscription . . . . .	170
Maximum laws . . . . .	171
Laws against speculation . . . . .	172
Depression of trade and agriculture . . . . .	173
Law of ' Suspected Persons ' . . . . .	175
Increased activity of the Revolutionary Court . . . . .	176
Execution of the Queen and the Girondists . . . . .	177
Worship of Reason . . . . .	178
Introduction of the Revolutionary calendar . . . . .	180
Surrender of Lyons . . . . .	181
Destruction of the Vendean army . . . . .	182
The Terror in the Departments . . . . .	183
The Terrorists a small minority . . . . .	186

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FALL OF THE HÉBERTISTS AND DANTONISTS, 1793-1794.

	PAGE
Condition of the Army . . . . .	188
Carnot's military reforms . . . . .	189
Campaign in Belgium and the Rhine; Victories of Hond- schoote and Wattignies . . . . .	191
The Allies expelled from Alsace by Hoche and Pichegru . . . . .	192
Legislation of the Convention . . . . .	193
Cambon's financial measures . . . . .	195
Growing feeling against the Commune . . . . .	196
Robespierre attacks the Hébertists . . . . .	197
<i>The Old Cordelier</i> . . . . .	199
The Hébertists attack the Dantonists . . . . .	200
Robespierre's influence over the Jacobins . . . . .	201
Robespierre abandons the Dantonists . . . . .	202
Execution of the Hébertists and Dantonists . . . . .	204

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE, 1794.

Despotism of the Committee of Public Safety . . . . .	204
Aims of Robespierre . . . . .	205
Aims of St. Just . . . . .	206
Financial object of the continuation of the Terror . . . . .	207
The Terror systematised . . . . .	208
Renewal of the War in La Vendée . . . . .	209
Treaty of the Hague between England and Prussia . . . . .	209
Insurrection in Poland . . . . .	210
Differences between England and Prussia . . . . .	211
The Allied Forces driven from Belgium . . . . .	212
Worship of the Supreme Being instituted by Robespierre . . . . .	214
Increased activity of the Revolutionary Court . . . . .	215
Position of Robespierre . . . . .	216
Discords break out within the Committee of Public Safety . . . . .	217
Insurrection of Thermidor . . . . .	219
Execution of the Robespierrists . . . . .	220

## CHAPTER X.

## FALL OF THE MONTAGNARDS, 1794-1795.

PAGE

Reactionary Movement in Paris and in the Departments . . . . .	221
Parties in the Convention . . . . .	222
Readmission of the expelled Girondist Deputies to the Convention . . . . .	223
Repeal of Maximum Laws, and suffering in Paris . . . . .	225
Insurrection of Germinal 12 . . . . .	226
Reaction in Paris, and in the Departments . . . . .	227
The public exercise of all forms of worship permitted by the Convention . . . . .	228
The White Terror . . . . .	229
Insurrection of Prairial 1 . . . . .	230
Proscription of Montagnards . . . . .	231

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE TREATY OF BASEL AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1795.

Conquest of Holland by Pichegru . . . . .	232
Foreign policy of the Convention . . . . .	233
Foreign policy of Thugut . . . . .	235
Foreign policy of Catherine II. ; Alliances between Russia and Austria . . . . .	236
English foreign policy ; Successes at Sea, and conquest of French Colonies . . . . .	237
Prussian foreign policy ; Peace made at Basel between Prussia and France . . . . .	238
Position of Spanish Government ; Treaty of Peace between France and Spain . . . . .	240
War in the West ; Hoche appointed Commander-in-Chief . . . . .	242
Expedition of Emigrants to Quiberon . . . . .	243
Position of the Convention ; its unpopularity . . . . .	245
Death of the Dauphin . . . . .	245
The Convention sanctions the use of Churches for Catholic worship . . . . .	246
Position of the Clergy ; Parties amongst them . . . . .	247
The Convention frames the Constitution of 1795 . . . . .	248

	PAGE
Special Laws passed to maintain the Republican Party in Power . . . . .	249
Insurrection of Vendémiaire 13 suppressed by Napoleon Bonaparte . . . . .	250
Law of Brumaire 3, excluding relations of Emigrants from Office . . . . .	250
The Five Directors ; Position of the New Government . . . . .	251
INDEX . . . . .	255

MAPS.

Europe in 1789 . . . . .	<i>To face title page</i>
Map of France in Provinces . . . . .	" <i>page</i> 9
Revolutionary Paris . . . . .	" " 43
Map of France in Departments . . . . .	" " 65
Map of Belgium . . . . .	<i>on page</i> 132
Map of the Rhine . . . . .	" 190
Map of Quiberon . . . . .	" 241

REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

Vendémiaire . . . . .	Sept.	Oct.
Brumaire . . . . .	Oct.	Nov.
Frimaire . . . . .	Nov.	Dec.
Nivose . . . . .	Dec.	Jan.
Pluviose . . . . .	Jan.	Feb.
Ventose . . . . .	Feb.	March.
Germinal . . . . .	Mar.	April
Floréal . . . . .	April	May
Prairial . . . . .	May	June
Messidor . . . . .	June	July
Thermidor . . . . .	July	Aug.
Fructidor . . . . .	Aug.	Sept.

## LEADING DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

*Dates relating to military or foreign affairs are given in italics,  
in order that the attention of the reader may be drawn to the  
relation between them and the domestic occurrences.*

1774

Accession of Louis XVI.—Ministry of Turgot.

1776

Dismissal of Turgot—Ministry of Necker—*American Declaration  
of Independence.*

1778

*France allies itself with America.*

1781

Resignation of Necker.

1783

Calonne's Ministry.

1787

The Assembly of Notables—Brienne's Ministry.

1788

Necker's Second Ministry.

1789

- May 5. Meeting of the States General.
- June 17. Adoption of the title of National Assembly.
- June 20. The Tennis Court Oath.
- June 23. The King comes to the Assembly to command the  
separation of the Orders.
- July 14. Capture of the Bastille.
- Aug. 4. Abolition of feudal rights.
- Oct. 6. The King brought to Paris.

1790

- July 14. Feast of the Federation  
 Nov. 27. Oath imposed on the Clergy

1791

- April 2. Death of Mirabeau.  
 June 20. The Flight to Varennes.  
 July 17. The Massacre of the Champ de Mars  
 Aug. 27. *Declaration of Pilnitz.*  
 Sept. 30. End of the Constituent Assembly.  
 Oct. 1. Meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

1792

- April 20. *Declaration of War against the King of Hungary and Bohemia, entailing also a War with Prussia.*  
 June 13. Dismissal of the Girondist Ministers.  
 June 20. The King mobbed in the Tuileries.  
 July 26. *The Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto.*  
 Aug. 10. Overthrow of the Monarchy.  
 Aug. 24. *Surrender of Longwy.*  
 Sept. 2-7. The September Massacres.  
 Sept. 20. *The Cannonade of Valmy.*  
 Sept. 21. Meeting of the Convention.  
 Sept. 22. Proclamation of the Republic.  
 Nov. 6. *Victory of Jemmapes, followed by the occupation of Belgium, Savoy, Nice, and Mainz.*  
 Nov. 19. The Convention offers assistance to all Peoples desirous of freedom.  
 Dec. 2. *The French driven out of Frankfort.*  
 Dec. 15. The Convention orders its Generals to revolutionize the Foreign Countries in which they are.

1793

- Jan. 21. Execution of the King.  
 Feb. 1. *Declaration of War against England and Holland.*  
 Mar. 3. *Miranda driven from Maestricht.*  
 Mar. 9. Establishment of the Revolutionary Court.  
 Mar. 18. *Defeat of Neerwinden, followed by the loss of Belgium*  
 April 6. Constitution of the Committee of Public Safety.

March 7-

- June 2. Expulsion of the Girondists.  
 July 3. Assassination of Marat.  
 July 8. *Surrender of Mainz, Condé, and Valenciennes.*  
 Aug. 23. The Levy of all men capable of bearing arms decreed.  
 Sept. 8. *Victory of Hondscote.*  
 Sept. 17. The great Maximum Law and the Law against Sus-  
     pected Persons.  
 Oct. 7. *Capture of Lyons.*  
 Oct. 16. Execution of the Queen.  
 Oct. 16. *Victory of Wattignies.*  
 Oct. 31. Execution of the Girondists.  
 Nov. 10. Worship of Reason at Notre Dame.  
 Dec. 19. *Capture of Toulon.*  
 Dec. 12. *Destruction of the Vendean Army at Mans*

## 1794

- Mar. 24. Execution of the Hébertists.  
 April 5. Execution of the Dantonists.  
     April. *Insurrection in Poland.*  
 April 18. *Victory of Turcoing.*  
 June 1. *Battle of June 1.*  
 June 8. Feast in honour of the Supreme Being.  
 June 26. *Victory of Fleurus, followed by the evacuation of*  
     *Belgium by the Allies.*  
 July 28. Execution of the Robespierrists.  
 Nov. 12. Jacobin Club closed.  
 Dec. 8. Seventy-three Deputies of the Right readmitted into  
     the Convention.  
 Dec. 24. Repeal of Maximum Laws.

## 1795

- Jan. *Invasion of Holland.*  
 Mar. 8. Readmission to the Convention of survivors of Girondist  
     Deputies proscribed on June 2, 1793.  
 April 1. (Germinal 12) Insurrection of Lower Classes against the  
     Convention.  
 Feb. 22. Public exercise of all forms of worship permitted by  
     the Convention.  
 May 20. (Prairial 1) Second insurrection by Lower Classes  
     against the Convention.



- April 5. *Treaty of Peace made at Basel between France and Prussia.*
- June 8. Death of the Dauphin,
- July 12. *Treaty of Peace between France and Spain.*
- July 21. *Defeat of Emigrants at Quiberon.*
- Sept. 23. Proclamation of the Constitution of the Year III. (1795).
- Oct. 5. (Vendémiaire 13) Insurrection of the Middle Classes against the Convention.
- Oct. 25. (Brumaire 4) Meeting of the New Legislature.



# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FEUDALISM AND THE MONARCHY.

LIKE the rest of Western Europe, France, in the Middle Ages, was ruled by a feudal nobility, holding their lands of the king. Nowhere in Western Europe in the tenth century was the power of the king less, or the power of the nobles greater. The weight of their authority, therefore, fell heavily upon the peasants on their estates, and upon the inhabitants of the little towns scattered over the country. A feudal noble, if he were a *seigneur*, answering to our lord of the manor, ruled all dwellers on his estate. Their claims to property were heard in his courts, and they were amenable to his jurisdiction for crimes committed, or alleged to have been committed, by them. The seigneur may not have been a worse tyrant than many kings and princes of whom we read in history; but he was always close at hand, whilst Nero or Ivan the Terrible was far off from the mass of his subjects. He knew all his subjects by sight, had his own passions to gratify amongst them, and his vengeance to wreak upon those whom he personally disliked. To be free from this domination must have been the one thought of thousands of miserable wretches.

The Mon-  
archy in  
France.

To shake off the yoke by their own efforts was an

m

impossibility. The nearest ally on whom they could count was the king. He too was opposed to the domination of the nobles, for as long as they could disregard his orders with impunity, he was king in name alone. He was, in fact, but one nobleman amongst many, with a higher title than the rest.

Dwellers in towns could more readily coalesce and resist the authority of the seigneurs than dwellers in the country. By trade they acquired wealth, and with wealth influence. In the twelfth century they formed themselves into municipal communities, and, bidding defiance to their seigneurs, called upon their king to aid them in achieving independence. From that time to the end of the seventeenth century the power of the Monarchy grew stronger with every succeeding generation. The king was the dispenser of law and order, while the enemies of law and order were the feudal nobles. When Louis XIV. took the government into his own hands, in 1661, his will was law. Justice was administered by parliaments or law courts acting in the name of the king. The affairs of the provinces were administered by *intendants*, acting by his commission. No nobleman, however wealthy or highly placed, dared to resist his authority. With the frank gaiety of their nation the nobles themselves accepted the position, and crowded to his court or confronted death in his armies. He was able to say, without fear of contradiction, 'I am the State.'

Unhappily for his people, he could not say 'I am the Nation.' In him the Monarchy had been victorious over its enemies, but it had not accomplished its task. The nation wanted more work from its kings, wanted simply that they should go on in the path which had been trodden by their ancestors. The national wish was too feebly expressed to reach the ears of Louis. He was thinking of military glory and courtly display, not of the

grievances of his people. He had overthrown the power of the nobility so far as it threatened his own. He did not care to inquire whether there was enough left to produce cruel wrong far off from the splendid palace of Versailles. His great-grandson, the vile, profligate Louis XV., had even less thought for the exercise of the duties of a king, as father of his people. The Monarchy was in its decline, not because it was intentionally tyrannical, but because it had ceased to do its duty. The French people were not Republican. They needed a government, and government in any true sense there was none.

In consequence of the king thus deserting the path trodden by his ancestors, a state of things arose in France such as was found in no other country. Nowhere did the nobility as a class do so little for the service of their countrymen, yet nowhere were they in possession of more social influence or greater privileges. Nowhere were the mercantile and trading classes comparatively more wealthy and intellectual, yet nowhere was the distinction between the noble and the plebeian or bourgeois more rigorously maintained. Finally, in no other country where, as was the case in France, the mass of peasants were free men, did the owners of fiefs retain so many rights over the dwellers on their estates, and yet live in such complete separation from them.

Social condition of France.

After the nobles had lost political power they were cut off from all healthy communication with their fellow subjects. In France all sons and daughters of noblemen were noble, and their families did not blend with those of other classes like the family of an English peer. Nobles contemned the service of the administration as beneath their birth; on the contrary, no one who was not of noble birth could hold the rank of an officer

in the army. The great lords flocked to Paris and Versailles, where they wasted their substance in extravagant living; the lesser nobles, men who in England would have occupied the position of country gentlemen, were often through poverty compelled to reside in their châteaux, where they lived in isolation, having no common interests with their neighbours, while clinging tenaciously to the possession of their rights as proprietors and feudal

lords. These feudal rights varied in every province, but were of three general kinds. (1)

✓ Rights which had their origin when the seigneur was also ruler—as, for instance, the right of administering justice, though this he now almost invariably farmed to the highest bidder; the right of levying tolls at fairs and bridges; and the exclusive right of fishing and hunting.

✓ (2) Peasants in the position of serfs were only to be found in Alsace and Lorraine; but rights still existed all over the country which betrayed a servile origin. Thus, the farmer might not grind his corn but at the seigneur's mill, nor the vine-grower press his grapes but at the seigneur's press; and every man living on the fief must labour for the seigneur without return so many days in the year.

✓ (3) Finally, the courts ruled that wherever land was held by a peasant from the owner of a fief, there was a presumption that the owner retained a claim to enforce cultivation and the payment of annual dues. Land so held was termed a *censive*—resembling an English copyhold. The granting of land on these terms never stopped from the close of the Middle Ages down to the Revolution. The dues retained were often petty. One tenant might pay a small measure of oats; another a couple of chickens. Yet the payments were often sufficiently numerous to form the chief maintenance of many of the nobles. The holders of these *censives* possessed however, all the rights of proprietors. They could not be dispossessed so long

as they paid the dues to which they were liable, and they could sell and devise the land without the consent of the owners of the fief. Properties held on these terms abounded in all parts of France, and though the extent of each *censive* was often no more than a couple of acres, it is probable that before the Revolution at least a fifth of the soil had by these means passed into the possession of the peasantry.

The existence of feudal rights produced three results exceedingly detrimental to the national prosperity. It impeded a good cultivation of the soil ; it prevented the country from being inhabited by men of the middle class, who preferred to reside in towns rather than recognise the social superiority claimed by the seigneur ; and, finally, it was an incessant source of irritation to the whole rural population. By the rights due to a seigneur as ruler, and by those of servile origin, all dwellers upon the fief were affected, whether occupiers of land or not. The cultivator suffered at every turn—in the prohibition to plant what crops he pleased ; in the prohibition to destroy the seigneur's deer and rabbits that roamed at will over his fields and devoured his green corn ; in the toll he paid for leave to guard his crops while growing, and to sell them after they were gathered in ; and in many other ways. Such a system had become in the course of centuries both excessively complicated and wholly unsuited to existing social conditions. Sometimes half-a-dozen different persons claimed dues from the same piece of land. The proprietorship of fiefs and the ownership of feudal rights, or the greater part of them, were constantly separated. Poverty induced the resident seigneur to sell his rights, which, bought by a townsman, passed from hand to hand in the market, like any other property, and were the more sought after because their possession was held a sign of social supe

riority. Non-resident owners farmed them, and middlemen were harsh and exacting in their collection. The peasant, ignorant and poor, but thrifty and cunning, and fondly attached to his plot of ground, disputed claims made upon him to pay dues now to this man, now to that, in virtue of concessions of which, in a vast number of cases, the origin was completely lost. Innumerable lawsuits resulted, which left stored up in the peasant's mind bitter feelings of resentment against both judge and seigneur, one of whom he accused of partiality, the other of rapacity and extortion.

The maintenance of feudal relations between classes, when neither government nor society rested on the same bases as in feudal times, could only be productive of harm. In right of birth privileges and advantages were claimed by nobles without regard to principles of justice or of public utility. On every side, in the army, the navy, the profession of the law, distinction between the nobleman and the bourgeois still prevailed. But no institution suffered in consequence of the privileges of the nobility so great moral detriment as the Church. The Church was a rich, self-governed corporation, in possession of an annual revenue of more than 8,750,000*l.*, providing for about 130,000 persons, including monks and nuns. This great wealth was unfairly distributed, and to a large extent misapplied. As a rule, all higher posts were reserved for portionless daughters and younger sons of noble families. Bishops and abbots, who revelled in wealth, were nobles ; parish priests, who had barely enough for subsistence, were bourgeois and peasants. Thus the Church teemed with abuses, and exerted little moral influence. Her wealth excited the jealousy of the middle classes, whilst the luxurious and profligate lives led by many prelates and holders of sinecures brought disgrace on the ecclesiastical profes-



sion. Of reform there was no hope, since the lower clergy, who had interest in effecting it, were excluded from all part in Church government.

Such abuses called aloud for the hand of a reformer. The material result of social disorder was impoverishment and decay. 'Whenever you stumble on a grand seigneur,' wrote an English traveller, Government and administration. you are sure to find his property a desert. . . .

Go to his residence, wherever it may be, and you will probably find it in the midst of a forest very well peopled with deer, wild boars, and wolves. Oh! if I were the legislator of France for a day, I would make such great lords skip.' The king had acquired power in right of the services he rendered the nation. When he ceased to do good, as had been the case since Louis XIV. plunged the nation into a series of wars of ambition, it was inevitable that he should do harm. The welfare of the masses was dependent on the action of the central government, and the central government sacrificed their welfare for the sake of obtaining favour with the upper classes. Hence administration was in a chaos, and the government, in appearance all powerful, was in reality strong only when it had to deal with the crushed and helpless peasant and artisan. The States-General, which in some sort answered to our English Parliament, had last met in 1614. For the past two centuries the royal council had been engaged in undermining local liberties, and establishing a centralised system of administration. The work in all essentials was so thoroughly done, that no parish business, down to the raising of a rate or the repairing of a church-steeple, could be effected without authorisation from Paris. Absolute and centralised, the government was also excessively arbitrary. On plea of State necessity it repudiated debts, broke contracts, overruled laws, and set aside proprietary rights without

scruple. The issue of warrants, called *lettres de cachet*, sealed letters, ordering the imprisonment of the person designated in some state fortress, was an ordinary mode of inflicting punishment. Yet, however harsh and arbitrary in treatment of individuals, the government sought to avoid collision with the upper classes as a body. On all sides it left standing institutions of the Middle Ages, local functionaries, and municipal assemblies, of which the existence in many instances increased the weight of local charges and impeded attempts to ameliorate the condition of the working classes. In the same way the upper law courts, the Parliaments, were suffered as of old to meddle in administrative matters. Privileges, so far from being assailed, were respected. Whatever special rights provinces, towns, or classes possessed were suffered to remain and were often extended.

The wars of Louis XIV. and the orgies of Louis XV. absorbed more and more money. On the labouring classes, already overtaxed, an increased weight of taxation was always being laid. Hence, of these Privileged classes. classes the king became the oppressor, and the oppression was the greater because the upper classes, who were best able to pay taxes, contributed much less than their fair share of the burden.

The nobles and clergy, styled the two upper orders, stood, in right of their privileges, both pecuniary and honorary, apart from the rest of the nation. Nobles did not pay any direct taxes in the same proportion as their fellow subjects, and in the case of the *taille*, a heavy property tax, their privilege approached very nearly to entire exemption. The clergy, except in a few frontier provinces, paid personally no direct taxes whatever. The bourgeoisie was regarded as an inferior class. Those who were able acquired by purchase the rank and privileges of nobles, and in this way had come into existence a nobility





of office and royal creation, which, although looked down upon by the old nobility of the sword, enjoyed the same pecuniary immunities. Those left on the other side of the line deeply resented the social superiority claimed by the nobility in right of its privileges. The upper section of the bourgeoisie was, however, itself privileged to no inconsiderable extent. By living in towns, merchants, shopkeepers, and professional men were able to avoid serving in the militia and collecting the *taille*, from which in the country nobles alone were exempt. They also purchased of the government petty offices, created in order that they might be sold, to which no serious duties were attached, but the possession of which conferred on the holders partial exemption from payment of the *taille* and of excise duties, and other privileges of like character.

Oppressive as taxation was, owing to its weight alone, and to its unjust distribution between classes, it was rendered yet more so by want of administrative unity, by the nature of some of the taxes and <sup>Taxes.</sup> the method of their assessment and collection. Internal custom-houses and tolls impeded trade, gave rise to smuggling, and raised the price of all articles of food and clothing. It took three and a half months to carry goods from Provence to Normandy, which, but for delays caused by the imposition of duties, might have travelled in three weeks. Customs duties were levied with such strictness that artisans who crossed the Rhône on their way to their work had to pay on the victuals which they carried in their pockets. Excise duties were laid on articles of commonest use and consumption, such as candles, fuel, wine, and even on grain and flour. Some provinces and towns were privileged in relation to certain taxes, and as a rule it was the poorest provinces on which the heaviest burdens lay. One of the most iniquitous of the taxes

was the *gabelle*, or tax on salt. Of this tax, which was farmed, two-thirds of the whole were levied on a third of the kingdom. The price varied so much that the same measure which cost a few shillings in one province cost two or three pounds in another. The farmers of the tax had behind them a small army of officials for the suppression of smuggling, as well as special courts for the punishment of those who disobeyed fiscal regulations. These regulations were minute and vexatious in the extreme. Throughout the north and centre of France, the *gabelle* was in reality a poll tax; the sale of salt was a monopoly in the hands of the farmers; no one might use other salt than that sold by them, and it was obligatory on every person aged above seven years to purchase seven pounds yearly. This salt, however, of which the purchase was obligatory, might only be used for purely cooking purposes. If the farmer wished to salt his pig, or the fisherman his fish, they must buy additional salt and obtain a certificate that such purchase had been made. Thousands of persons, either for inability to pay the tax, or for attempting to evade the laws of the farm, were yearly fined, imprisoned, sent to the galleys, or hanged. The chief of the property taxes, the *taille*, inflicted as much suffering as the *gabelle*, and was also ruinous to agriculture. Over two-thirds of France the *taille* was a tax on land, houses, and industry, reassessed every year not according to any fixed rate, but according to the presumed capacity of the province, the parish, and the individual taxpayers. The consequence was that, on the smallest indication of prosperity, the amount of the tax was raised, and thus parish after parish, and farmer after farmer, were reduced to the same dead level of indigence.

Under the state of things here described, France had retrograded in wealth and population. Intense misery



prevailed amongst the working classes. Artisans were unable to live on their wages ; farmers and small proprietors were constantly being reduced to beggary ; ignorance grew more dense. The government, by its own frequent setting aside of laws, and by its intolerance and cruelty, helped to render the people lawless, superstitious, and ferocious.

Condition  
of the  
people.

Protestants were subjected to persecuting laws. Thousands of them had been driven from the country, or shot down by troops. The penal code was barbarous, and the brutal breaking on the wheel was an ordinary mode of putting criminals to death. It was only by very rough usage that fiscal regulations were maintained, and the taxes gathered in. If the *taille* and the *gabelle* were not paid, the defaulter's goods were sold over his head, and his house dismantled of roof and door. In all cases in which the administration was concerned, whatever justice peasant and artisan received was meted to them by administrative officials who were themselves parties in the cause. Famine was like a disease which counted its victims by hundreds. As a rule, the farmer was a poor and ignorant peasant, living from hand to mouth, miserably housed, clothed, and fed.

An Englishman, Arthur Young, travelling in France in the years 1788-1789, reports how he passed over miles and miles of country once cultivated, but then covered with ling and broom ; and how within a short distance of large towns no signs of wealth or comfort were visible. 'There are no gentle transitions from ease to comfort, from comfort to wealth ; you pass at once from beggary to profusion. The country deserted, or if a gentleman in it, you find him in some wretched hole, to save that money which is lavished with profusion in the luxuries of a capital.' The same traveller tells us how, as he was walking up a hill in Champagne, he was

joined by a poor woman who complained of the hardness of the times. 'She said her husband had but a morsel of land, one cow and a poor little horse, yet he had a franchar (42 lbs.) of wheat and three chickens to pay as a quit rent to one seigneur, and four franchars of oats, one chicken, and one shilling to pay another, besides very heavy *tailles* and other taxes. She had seven children, and the cow's milk helped to make the soup. It was said, at present, that something was to be done by some great folks for such poor ones, but she did not know who nor how, but God send us better, "car les tailles et les droits nous écrasent." This woman, at no great distance, might have been taken for sixty or seventy, her figure was so bent and her face so furrowed and hardened by labour, but she said she was only twenty-eight.'

Since, owing to the weight of taxation, no profits were to be made by farming, it was impossible that there should be a good cultivation of the soil. The amount of capital employed on land in England was at least double that employed in France. Hence, while in England famine was unknown, in France production barely equalled consumption, and scarcities were of incessant occurrence. A single bad season would force the farmer to desert his land, and with his family beg or steal. Whenever bread rose above three halfpence the pound men starved. Bread riots constantly took place in one or another province, and the country swarmed with beggars, brigands, poachers, and smugglers. Thousands of these outcasts were imprisoned, sent to the galleys, or hanged; but no severity could lessen their number, while the causes producing them remained unremoved. Adequate means of providing for the destitute there were none. A few hospitals and other charitable institutions existed. Bishops, great seigneurs, and monasteries often kept alive hundreds in seasons of scarcity. Hospitals,



however, were little better than plague houses, where the sick and infirm were taken in to die, whilst private charity was partial and insufficient. There was no general system of poor relief. With the object of keeping bread at a price within the people's reach, the corn trade was subject to a variety of regulations and restrictions. Occasionally the government made purchases of foreign corn, which was resold under price. Sometimes the prices of corn and other articles of food were fixed. In towns the price of bread was ordinarily regulated according to the price of corn by police officers, a not unnecessary precaution when the baking trade was in the hands of a close corporation. A more vicious mode of relief could hardly have been devised, but to abandon it was no easy matter. The arbitrary means taken to reduce the price of corn often had the effect of raising it, and, when successful, only tended to lessen production and lead to greater scarcities, since cutting down the profit of the already overweighted corn grower was, in reality, casting an additional tax upon him. On the other hand, it was no less true that so long as the existing order continued, a slight rise in the price of the pound of bread meant sheer starvation for the mass of artisans, and for thousands of agricultural labourers and small proprietors who were not corn growers. Accustomed to look to the government to provide them with cheap bread, in every season of scarcity these clamoured for a reduction in price, and unless authorities were complaisant, resorted to riot and pillage.

The misery of the working classes presented in itself reason enough for revolution; but revolution only comes when there are men of ideas to lead the unlettered masses. In France the educated <sup>Voltaire</sup> classes entertained revolutionary ideas, and the men of letters who promulgated those ideas became the leaders of opinion, and exerted enormous influence over them

own and the following generations. First came the Voltairians, led by Voltaire (1694-1778). During the century rapid advance was being made in all branches of study—in history, jurisprudence, mathematical and physical science. The idea of progress was definitely conceived, and knowledge upheld as the chief factor in producing virtue and happiness. For the increase and diffusion of knowledge the recognition of two principles was indispensable—religious toleration and the freedom of the press. Both these principles were, however, in direct antagonism to the principles on which the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was based—unity of faith and worship, the subordination of philosophy and science to theology, the submission of reason to the teaching of tradition. Protestant clergymen were put to death as late as 1762; while in 1765 a lad convicted of sacrilege was hanged, and his body afterwards burned. Such acts of intolerance and cruelty were, however, condemned by public opinion, and, between the Church and the exponents of the new ideas, violent collision inevitably ensued. Voltaire made it the work of his life to destroy belief in revealed religion. In verse and in prose, in historical works, in letters and pamphlets by the dozen, with rude licence or sham respect, he held up the Church to derision, indignation, and contempt, as the great enemy of enlightenment and humanity. ‘The most absurd of empires,’ he wrote, ‘the most humiliating for human nature is that of priests; and of all sacerdotal empires, the most criminal is that of priests of the Christian religion.’

Voltaire himself was a sceptic. Behind him followed men who denied belief in a personal God and the immortality of the soul. Diderot (1713-1784) and D’Alembert (1717-1783), with indefatigable energy published the ‘Encyclopædia,’ or dictionary of universal knowledge, inculcating, at least indirectly,

Encyclopæ-  
dists.

atheistical opinions, and designed, by the destruction of ignorance and superstition, to undermine the whole fabric of Christian theology. Before the end of his long life, in 1778, Voltaire was the most eminent man in France, and sceptical and atheistical opinions were commonly held and openly professed by men and women of the upper and middle classes. The triumph of the new philosophy was not, indeed, due merely to the powers of irony or the reasoning of its advocates. The scandalous abuses within the Church had prepared the way for its reception. The attacked had no efficient weapon with which to repel their assailants. The Church was without reforming energy or proselytising zeal. On the arm of the State she could not rely for support with the same confidence as in former times. The government was incapable of stamping out the new movement, nor was it prepared seriously to make the attempt. The official class, which came out of the middle class, was, like all others, permeated with the new ideas. The occasional arrest of authors and printers, and seizure of types and presses, did but increase the virulence of the attack, and made the forbidden books more eagerly sought after. The clergy were the more open to attack because they were interested in the maintenance of privileges and abuses which inflicted cruel wrongs on the working classes, while the new philosophy aimed at destroying whatever stood in the way of material progress and the happiness of the masses. In opposition to the Church's doctrine of the natural depravity of human nature, its adherents taught that man is born good, and that wrongdoing is the result of ignorance; inculcated the importance of educating all classes, and refused to recognise limits to the improvement of which both individuals and the race are capable. Often accompanied by a sensual view of life, which accorded with the profligacy common

amongst the upper classes at the time, this high opinion of human nature developed a respect for man as man, regardless of social position, race, or creed, and a passionate hatred of inequalities founded on such distinctions. A school of political economists, starting from the theory that all men originally had equal rights, and every man liberty to employ his time, his hands, and his brains according to his own advantage, demonstrated the principles of free trade, and declared entire liberty of agriculture, entire liberty of commerce and industry, entire liberty of the press to be the true foundations of national prosperity. Appealing to abstract principles of justice, humanity and right, Voltairians and Economists joined in opening a fire of scathing criticism on existing laws, customs, and institutions. They exposed the abuses and sufferings incident to the use of torture, serfdom, and the slave trade, to excessive centralisation and interference with trade and agriculture, to close guilds, feudal duties, internal custom-houses, to the *taille* and the *gabelle*, and demanded the carrying out of reforms which should set trade and industry free, destroy class and provincial privileges, introduce unity in the administration, and equality of rights between man and man.

The Voltairians were specially characterised by their attack upon the Church and Christianity; the Economists by the importance which they attached to individual liberty. Neither regarded the ignorant and oppressed masses as able to act for themselves, and both looked to the royal power, enlightened by a free press, as the instrument through which reform must be effected. Rousseau was a writer of a different stamp. Instead of idolising knowledge he declared the untaught peasant and artisan the superiors of the philosopher and man of culture. They alone, he said, had retained that

natural goodness of heart which men had in times long since gone by, when social inequalities along with idleness and luxury were unknown. Rousseau opposed also the atheistic tendencies of the day, declaring belief in a personal God and the immortality of the soul requisite to make life endurable to the oppressed. His indifference to knowledge and culture caused him to regard the masses themselves as alone able to regenerate France, if indeed regeneration were still possible. Society, according to him, was originally based on a contract by which every citizen in return for protection of person and property placed himself under the general will. Laws, therefore, were the expression of the general will; kings were merely the servants of the people, and not they but the people sovereign. Whatever was amiss in France, or in other countries, the fault lay purely with society and government, and should ever idleness and luxury disappear and the people recover their lost sovereignty, then and then only, as in primitive times, would men be happy and virtuous. 'Man is born free,' were the opening words of the 'Social Contract,' the book in which these theories were maintained, 'and everywhere he is in chains.'

## CHAPTER II.

### FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XVI. (1774-1789).

WHEN the necessity of reform had been demonstrated by a band of powerful and brilliant writers, whose works were the popular reading of the day, it was inevitable that desire for change should grow, as the new ideas spread over wider circles, and sufferers from abuses became more and more alive to their wrongs. Undermined by

public opinion, the existing order could not endure for long, and the vital question before France was, by what means change should be accomplished. The Turgot's Ministry. Voltairians called on the King to take the work in hand, and on the death of Louis XV. in 1774, it appeared possible that the young Louis XVI. would endeavour to regain the path that his predecessors had abandoned, and, by relieving the people from their burdens, seek the welfare of the entire nation. Turgot, the new Controller-General, who exercised the functions both of Minister of Finance and Minister of the Interior, represented the party of reform, and was in all his actions inspired by a strong love of knowledge and by a passionate desire to benefit his fellow-men. He was not, like the writers of his time, a mere theorist, but also a practised and successful administrator, who for thirteen years had been Intendant of the poor province of Limousin. Now that he was invested with higher authority, it was Turgot's aim to ameliorate the condition of the people throughout France, by the introduction of reforms based on those principles of equality and individual liberty which Voltairians and Economists proclaimed. His chief reforms were the abolition of restrictions on the internal trade in corn and wine; the abolition of the corvée, or forced unpaid labour of the peasants for repair of roads, for which he substituted a land-tax payable by all proprietors whether privileged or not; and finally, the abolition of guilds, giving liberty to every one, however poor, to exercise what trade he pleased and to raise his condition according to his capacity. Besides these, his most important measures, Turgot carried out many lesser reforms tending to set labour and industry free, to cheapen food and clothing, and to lessen the burdens of the poor by the equalisation of taxation, and by the abolition of the fiscal abuses and sinecure

offices which enriched the monied aristocracy of Paris and the court nobility. The reforms, however, which Turgot accomplished were but a small portion of those which he had in contemplation. He aimed at the remodelling of the whole system of taxation, the removal of all custom-houses to the frontier, the abolition of the *gabelle*, and the substitution for the *taille* of a new tax to be imposed on the land of all proprietors without exception, the gradual abolition of feudal dues, the grant of civil rights to Protestants, and, finally, the decentralisation of administration by the establishment of provincial assemblies, to be elected by all landed proprietors without distinction of rank. His work was no sooner begun than it was prematurely cut short. A violent opposition party was at once formed, which comprised the court nobility, the upper clergy, the nobility of office, farmers of the *gabelle* and other indirect taxes, judges in Parliament, masters of guilds and state officials—in a word, all those who made profit out of existing abuses, and whose special privileges were assailed. 'Everybody fears,' a friend of Turgot wrote to him, 'either for himself, or for his brother, or for his friend.'

Whether Turgot was to stand or fall depended entirely on the resolution of the King. Louis XVI. was well-intentioned, conscientious, and sincerely desirous of ruling for the good of his subjects, but he lacked the qualities which are requisite to a prince called on to govern at a great national crisis. He was without self-confidence, irresolute in action, and incapable of judging the real value of men, or of grasping the real bearing of events and measures. He could not even rule his own court. Simple in his tastes, and shy and reserved by disposition, his happiest hours were spent in the hunting field, or in the company of a blacksmith, mastering the art of making locks. It was



no wonder that such a King should be driven to and fro between conflicting opinions, when those who surrounded his throne, and with whom he came in daily contact, accused his Minister of violence and injustice, and of entertaining projects destructive to monarchical government. 'The King,' said Turgot, 'is above all, for the good of all.' Louis could never rise to this conception of his position. Turgot would have made him ruler of men equal before the law, and in possession of equal rights as citizens. Desirous as Louis was to ease the lower classes of their burdens, he was never able to conceive of the noble as being on the same footing as the common man. The only person in whom he reposed confidence was his wife, Marie Antoinette, a daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, and with fatal weakness he often yielded to her desires in opposition to his own better judgment. She had been married to him while still a child, and left to grow up uninstructed and without guides in the corrupt atmosphere of the court of Versailles. At the age of nineteen, when she became Queen, she was a bright and vivacious, but ignorant and thoughtless woman, whose days were spent in a never ceasing round of formalities and dissipation. She employed her influence over her husband to obtain for her friends pensions and offices, without any sense of what was due to her position as Queen in the midst of a frivolous and intriguing court, or of what she owed to the starving and suffering masses who were deprived of their hard-won earnings for the enrichment of an idle and spendthrift nobility. When ministers sought to put a check on her extravagance, or in any way thwarted her inclinations, they provoked her resentment, dangerous in proportion to the power that she was able to exercise over the King. Her aversion to Turgot was the cause which finally produced his dismissal from office. The Austrian ambassador, Mercy, informing



Maria Theresa of the event, used words of more pregnant meaning than he was himself aware. 'The Controller-General,' he said, 'is of high repute for integrity, and is loved by the people; and it is therefore a misfortune that his dismissal should be in part the Queen's work. Such use of her influence may one day bring upon her the just reproaches both of her husband and of the entire nation.'

Turgot was the greatest statesman that France had seen since Richelieu. He had a clear comprehension of the economical and social evils under which the country suffered, and of the remedies to be applied to them. The best ideas of the age found room in his capacious mind, and all that he attempted to do had ultimately to be accomplished, though by other means than those which he contemplated. Louis had shown his incapacity to see that it was his first duty to make himself the repairer of wrong and injustice, and truly a representative king, who could say, 'I am the nation.' After Turgot's failure, revolution, that is to say change accompanied by violence and convulsion, became inevitable.

The reforming movement, of which in France Turgot was the representative, was not confined to that country, but was, in fact, an European movement, of which the influence was felt, however faintly, even in the most backward States. Kings and statesmen, under the influence of Voltairian ideas, held sceptical opinions, and took interest in the material condition of their subjects. It was perceived that if monopolies enriched individuals they prevented the development of commerce and industry; that if duties were levied between the provinces of the same kingdom, exchange of commodities could only with difficulty be effected; that if nobles did not pay their fair share of taxation, the revenue of the State suffered, and the working classes were overburdened. Jealous eyes were cast

upon the territorial wealth of the Catholic Church, and protests were raised against the multiplication of monasteries, and the idle lives led by their inmates. In many States efforts were made to increase the authority of the king by the destruction of provincial and class privileges. The idea that the sovereign reigned for the good of the nation was accepted, at least in theory, by the most autocratic of European princes. In Russia Catherine II., in Prussia Frederick II., invited to their courts and patronised French philosophers. In Spain Aranda, in Tuscany Manfredini, in Portugal Pombal endeavoured to lessen the privileges of nobles and clergy, and to loosen the bonds in which industry and commerce were held. In Savoy feudal charges were abolished, compensation being given to the proprietors. In Parma, in Brunswick, and in other Italian and German states, similar tendencies were manifested. But although the reforming movement, on the lines laid down by Voltaire and the Economists, was not confined to France, nowhere else was there to be found amongst the people any strong desire for reform. In Germany, in Spain, in Italy, the new views were confined to a few theorists and statesmen, and did not penetrate beneath the surface of society. The cause lay in the difference of social conditions. Outside France, nobles, as a rule, lived at home on their estates, still administering justice to peasants and serfs. The middle class took no interest in matters of government, but devoted its energies to scientific and literary pursuits. The lower classes, being still in dependence on the upper, entertained no lively resentment of their privileges. Hence reforming princes could never accomplish more than a few isolated changes without danger of rousing rebellion. Nobles and clergy, the moment their privileges were threatened, offered opposition; the middle class did not care to render support; the lower classes were more ready to follow the

lead of nobles and clergy than the lead of the government. Of all the princes of his time the Emperor Joseph II. was the boldest innovator. In his hereditary dominions he offended the nobles by the abolition of provincial states, the clergy by closing monasteries and upholding principles of toleration, the people by alterations in their religious services. An insurrection broke out in Belgium under the leadership of nobles and clergy (1789). Both in Galicia and Hungary the nobles threatened to take up arms, and for a time it seemed as if the Austrian dominion would fall to pieces.

In England the same ideas prevailed as on the Continent, but the social and political condition of the country was such as to enable reforms to be accomplished more gradually and with far less violent <sup>England.</sup> change than was possible either in France or Austria. The English people had for centuries formed an united nation. No sharp lines of division divided one class from another. The laws were the same for all: younger sons of noblemen ranked as commoners, and country gentlemen sat in Parliament by the side of merchants and traders. A free press prepared the way for change by allowing the discussion of questions of general interest, and free institutions gave political experience, and taught the governing classes the necessity of yielding in time to public opinion. Parliament, which represented only the landed and commercial interests, legislated selfishly, and was slow to admit or redress wrong done to the unrepresented classes; but gross oppression of the lower orders, such as existed in France, was unknown in England. Country gentlemen looked after the affairs of parish and county. The body of the rural population consisted of agricultural labourers maintained by poor-rates when wages fell short. Charges on land due to the lord of the manor, though far from being extinct, existed

mainly in the form of money payments, affecting only a comparatively small number of persons. Although the same protective principles which prevailed on the Continent prevailed also in England, whatever restraints were laid either on persons in the selection of their calling, or on industry, commerce and agriculture, there was to be found far more liberty than elsewhere. The country was the most flourishing in Europe, and wealth was being rapidly accumulated. Special advance was made in the system of farming by the introduction of the rotation of crops and artificial manures. Wages rose, and bread was cheap, and all classes for a time shared in the general prosperity.

In England a large body of eminent men, philosophers, statesmen, and philanthropists, entertained the new ideas and sought to bring them into practice. In 1776, Adam Smith published the 'Wealth of Nations,' in which the principles of free trade were promulgated. The younger Pitt, who took office in 1783, was his disciple. He proposed to abolish restrictions on the trade of Ireland with England, and intended to lessen the power of the aristocracy by a reform of the electoral system. In 1787 a Treaty of Commerce was concluded between England and France, designed to increase trade between the two countries. The most important measures brought forward by Pitt were not, however, carried through Parliament. This was in part owing to the factious opposition of the Whigs, in part to the strong Conservative instincts of the governing classes, but in part also because little discontent or desire for change existed among the people at large.

If, however, England was slow to move, reforms once made rested on a sure foundation. Such was not the case with those made in the name of absolute princes on the Continent. After Turgot's dismissal, fifty out of

seventy of the guilds which he had abolished were revived, and the peasants were compelled by blows to resume their labours on the roads. Necker, Ministry of Necker. a Genevese banker, was Turgot's successor (October 1776). He was not a statesman, like Turgot, with definite aims in view, but he was an able financier and a humane man, holding the philanthropic sentiments of the day, and eager to relieve the condition of the masses. A war with England increased the difficulties of the government. In 1778 Louis, reluctantly following public opinion, assisted the English colonies in America in their struggle for independence. There were only three means of meeting the expenses of the war: increased taxation, economy, and loans. The first was impossible; the second only possible to a limited extent; and Necker, therefore, was compelled to borrow. The loans that he opened were quickly filled up, because men of the middle class, who were the chief lenders, believed that their interests were safe while he directed the finances. But the public debt was greatly increased, and the prospect of the future, with reforms uneffected in the system of taxation, rendered the more dark. Although Necker did not attempt to introduce radical measures such as had excited opposition against Turgot, his abolition of sinecures and other administrative changes gave offence to the same classes. The Parliament of Paris, whose lead was followed by the twelve provincial Parliaments, formed the chief organ of resistance. These Parliaments or law-courts were, in fact, powerful legal corporations to which many hundred persons were attached. The judges belonged to the nobility of office, and were independent of the government, since they held their offices in right of purchase, and might not be dispossessed without proof of misconduct. They exercised, besides judicial, a certain political function, since edicts of the

King's council did not have the force of law until they had been registered by the Parliaments. This right of registration in the time of Louis XIV. had been a mere form. If the Parliament of Paris hesitated to carry out his wishes, he held a so-called bed of justice when he came to the court in person, and on his command registration was compulsory. But now that the royal authority had fallen into contempt, the Parliaments offered prolonged resistance, and before the Government could obtain registration of its edicts, intimidation and even the use of military force were resorted to. Necker, when he sought to effect reform, necessarily became involved in quarrels with the Parliaments, and, finding that the King gave but a half-hearted support, he resigned office (1781).

Louis could relieve himself from momentary inconvenience by abandoning a Minister of whom he was weary, but had no power to stay the course of events. Those who had lent money to the government deeply resented Necker's fall, because they believed him able to secure regular payment of the interest on the national debt. Desire for social change was accompanied by desire for political change also. Rousseau had said that the people was sovereign, and as the incompetency of the crown to carry out the national will became with each successive ministry more manifest, ideas long since vaguely floating in men's minds gathered strength and consistency. The cause of the American colonies was taken up with immense enthusiasm. The Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776), which, in accordance with the principles laid down in the 'Social Contract,' asserted that all men were created equal and endowed with the natural right of overthrowing an unjust government, was hailed as the enunciation of an universal truth, of which Frenchmen as well as the

Desire for  
political  
liberty.

colonists might reap the benefit. Meanwhile government in France grew yearly more utterly weak and helpless. The war with England ended in 1783, but financial embarrassments increased. Calonne, who became Controller-General the same year, pursued Necker's system of borrowing without his justification, and retained office by abstaining from acts calculated to offend the privileged classes. The demands of the Queen and the Court were complied with, and abuses destroyed by Necker again called into existence. 'If it is possible, madam,' said the obsequious Minister, on an occasion when the Queen pressed him for money, 'it shall be done; if it is impossible, it shall be done.' But such squandering of the revenue could not last for ever. Calonne's credit broke down, and he was driven as a last resource to propose the reform of the entire system of administration and taxation. By publicity he hoped to overcome resistance. He called together an extraordinary council or assembly of notables, nominated by the King (February 1787), and laid his propositions before them, thinking that in the existing state of opinion they would not venture to refuse support. But this assembly, composed almost entirely of privileged persons, proved recalcitrant. The majority were against the reforms proposed, while the few who approved them were determined that they should be made by an assembly representative of the nation.

Calonne gave place (1787) to Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, the candidate of the Queen; but the new Minister had no choice except to take up the plans of his predecessor, and the government became involved in incessant strife with the Parliaments. The Parliaments concealed their aversion to the principle of equality of taxation, by denying the right of the King to impose new taxes without the consent of the nation, and



by demanding the meeting of the States-General. The government, on its side, sought popularity by coupling edicts for raising loans and taxes with reforming measures. But it could obtain no support. The shifting policy which it had so long pursued, the attempts at reform, made, abandoned, and then made again, had destroyed confidence alike in its power and its good-will. Hence, although the Parliaments defended the privileges of nobles and clergy, their resistance was applauded, because it offered the surest means of forcing the King's hand, and leaving him no alternative but to summon the nation to his aid. Along with equality, the word 'liberty' was on every man's lips. The very nobles, who had so long opposed administrative and economical change, had themselves become vehement advocates of political change. More afraid of the crown than of the classes beneath them, and blind to the complete isolation of their own order, they looked forward to being at once leaders of a political revolution and guardians of their own interests. In fact, the privileged orders had no choice but either to submit at discretion to the King, or to join in the popular cry for the meeting of the States-General. Arbitrary attempts made by Brienne to free the crown of dependence on the Parliaments failed, in the face of resistance offered by all classes, and brought the country to the verge of actual insurrection. Disaffection was rife in the army. Peasants and artisans, excited by expectation of better days, were more ready than before to rise in insurrection against local authorities, and were less easily quelled. State bankruptcy impended. There was a deficit in the revenue of more than 2,000,000*l.*, and money was wanting with which to pay the interest of the national debt. Under such circumstances Louis reluctantly yielded to the demand made on every side. He declared his intention of summoning the States-General.



and in order to regain confidence restored to the head of the finances his former and still popular minister, Necker (Aug. 1788).

Necker's return to office was greeted with a burst of applause from one end of France to the other. His financial ability was relied on to stave off bankruptcy, and it was known that he had always <sup>Necker recalled to office.</sup> opposed the court, and that he now desired the meeting of the States-General. But his popularity was due to those causes alone; not to any proof that he had given or could give of his fitness to direct the royal policy. As he failed to comprehend the real causes of the impending revolution, he would be unable to moderate its violence.

The hopes and desires of every class found expression first in pamphlets, and subsequently in the *cahiers* or petitions of grievances drawn up by electoral assemblies to be laid before the States. The importance <sup>Pamphlets and cahiers.</sup> and necessity of reform was generally admitted, except where special interests or class prejudices made men averse to change. Thus nobles combated the conservative tendencies of ecclesiastics, ecclesiastics the conservative tendencies of nobles. Induced by pressure of public opinion the nobles mostly declared their willingness to admit the principle of equality of taxation. But agreement went no further. Between the two privileged orders and the body of the nation a gulf was fixed, of bridging which no hope existed. That which the nobles had in view by the meeting of the States was the establishment of constitutional monarchy, based on aristocratical institutions and insuring political and social predominance to their own order. The aim of the middle and working classes was absolutely to destroy every distinction which gave to nobles and ecclesiastics a position apart in the State. The members of the upper orders were not only to bear their fair

share of taxation, but to submit to the same law, and to stand in all respects on exactly the same level as the mass of their fellow-citizens. A pamphlet written by the Abbé Siéyès, which gave clear articulation to the thought in men's minds, acquired for its author European celebrity. What, he asked, is the Third Estate?—Everything. What hitherto has it been in the State?—Nothing. He then proceeded to argue that the Third Estate, in other words the people of France with the exception of the nobles, formed a complete nation by themselves; that by them all useful work was done; and that the nobility was merely an excrescence, preventing the growth and development of national life. The Third Estate is, he said, a nation fettered and oppressed. What would it be without the nobility?—A free and flourishing nation.

Siéyès' nation was a nation of twenty-five millions. The first two orders numbered together about 1,500,000 persons. That they were a minority was in itself no ground for crushing them. Reason and justice might as well lie on the side of the minority as on that of the majority. But Siéyès' arguments were in existing circumstances perfectly sound and unanswerable. The nobles represented no national interests, and had long ceased to be the organs through which the nation expressed its wants. To the exercise of political powers they had no claim whatever. Their privileges and prejudices had for years stood in the way of the common good. They were without experience in political life, and as a rule without experience even in matters of government and administration. Their position amongst their fellow-citizens was that of an isolated caste; in short, all the bonds of connection were wanting which cause men to place reliance in others, and to accept them as leaders.

The privileges of the clergy and their claims to exercise power as a special order met with as little favour

as those of the nobles. Clergy and laity were to stand on exactly the same footing with regard to civil and political rights. The combined influence of sceptical and liberal ideas made men desire to withdraw from the Church all coercive means of maintaining authority. The press was to be free, worship was also to be free, and nonconformists were to enjoy full civil and political rights. Equality was to prevail within the Church as well as within the State. The government of the Church was to be reorganised on a democratic basis, and the Pope's authority, as head of the Church, to be confined to matters purely spiritual. Although the provincial nobles were jealous of the great lords, and desired to deprive them of whatever advantages they possessed above themselves, yet the nobility as a body still formed a taste, of which all members, except a small minority, were united in asserting rights and claiming privileges in opposition to the rest of the nation. The clergy, on the contrary, though held together by common interests as ecclesiastics, were torn asunder by the same class divisions that prevailed amongst laymen. The upper clergy, who were all of noble birth, proposed to maintain authority in their own hands and to effect ecclesiastical reform from inside; while the curés, who came from the ranks of the people, demanded State interference, as the only means of securing for themselves a full representation in Church councils, and a just share in the distribution of Church property.

The question round which for the time discussion centred was the form to be taken by the States-General, as its solution would decide whether political supremacy should rest with the first two orders or with the Third Estate. Nobles and clergy demanded, in the first place, that they should each be represented by as many deputies as the Third Estate;

Double representation of the Third Estate.

in the second, that the deputies of each order should sit by themselves in a separate chamber, and that each chamber should vote apart. The bourgeoisie, backed by the people, on their side denied the right of the two first orders to a separate representation, and demanded that in any case the deputies of the Third Estate should equal in number the deputies of nobles and clergy combined, and that the three orders should sit together, forming a single chamber. The dispute engendered strong displays of party feeling, leading to riot and bloodshed. The Parliaments, formerly popular for contesting the royal authority, were now hooted and mobbed for supporting the demands of nobles and clergy. If at the present juncture Louis had taken clearly and unreservedly the side of the nation, it might have been possible for the crown to gain immense popularity and influence. The bourgeoisie, however democratic its theories of government, was warmly attached to the monarchy, and thoroughly loyal to the person of the King. But Louis, who had rejected Turgot, was again incapable of making himself the leader of the nation. In summoning the States he had acted, not through policy, but under stress of circumstances which he was unable to control. He expected the deputies of the Third Estate to aid him in subjecting the nobles to taxation, and in carrying out administrative reforms; but he could not understand that they expected him to join with them in destroying every vestige of the old feudal system, and in establishing a completely democratic rule. In relation to the point immediately at issue, the King went so far as it seemed to suit his own purpose, and no further. Accepting Necker's advice, he consented that the deputies of the Third Estate should equal in number the deputies of both clergy and nobles. Whether after meeting the deputies were to sit as three chambers or as one was left undecided.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ASSEMBLY AT VERSAILLES.

THE States-General were opened by the King at Versailles amid a vast concourse on May 5, 1789. There were about 1,200 deputies, of whom about 300 represented the clergy, 300 the nobility, and the other 600 the Third Estate. If the King wished to retain the direction of affairs, it was imperative for him at once to declare for a single chamber.

The King  
and the  
Revolution.

The privileged orders could but involve the crown in their own ruin, whilst behind the deputies of the Third Estate was the nation. Louis, however, was not prepared to accept the change which the formation of a single chamber implied—the abolition of all class distinctions, and the swamping of the nobles in the Third Estate. Necker, though more alive to the necessity of seeking popular support, had as little comprehension of the real situation in which the government stood. He wanted ultimately to establish a constitution with two houses, and regarded as the most pressing work of the moment the restoration of the finances. He did not perceive that civil and political equality was what the deputies of the Third Estate had set their heart upon effecting; and that until they were convinced that the government would be on their side, they would pay no attention to mere financial or administrative reforms. At the opening of the States, after speaking at length on the subject of the finances, Necker advised the deputies to appoint commissioners to settle what questions they would discuss in common session, and what as three separate bodies.

The intention of the Minister probably was that the deputies of the three orders should sit and vote together

only when financial and administrative questions were under discussion. All other subjects were to be debated by the three estates sitting apart ; and in cases in which they failed to come to an agreement, the final decision was to be left to the King.

Experience, indeed, has been in favour of the belief that, in ordinary times, it is expedient that legislative assemblies should be divided into two chambers. But in 1789 the work before the States-General was not one of ordinary legislation. No good could be accomplished until the abolition of the privileged existence of nobles and clergy had been effected ; and as an upper chamber could at that time only be composed of nobles and clergy, such a chamber was certain to thwart the Third Estate in doing that which the nation expected them to do. It was, therefore, the vainest hope that Necker's policy should give satisfaction to the country and enable the King to retain authority. He could only obtain the leadership of the Assembly by declaring unreservedly for a single chamber. But to adopt this course Louis must have been other than he was. Though he wanted to overcome the opposition of the privileged orders to the crown, he regarded their existence as inseparable from the monarchy. He was unable to conceive a monarchy founded on democratic institutions, and strong in proportion to the trust reposed in it. Education, surroundings, habits, his sense of duty itself forbade him to break loose from his past and accept the position of the People's King. Yet all vestiges of the old feudal order were doomed to perish, whatever attitude Louis assumed ; and it would have been well, both for him and France, could he at once have resigned power or been deposed. For if he refused to lead the attack upon the privileged orders, it would be made with all the greater violence, and government, in the true sense of the word, there would be none

Already disorder and riot were rife in many parts of the country. Peasants refused to pay taxes and feudal dues. Educated men cast suspicion on the intentions of the government. Officials were powerless to act with rigour in opposition to the current of public opinion. Intense excitement everywhere prevailed. In every town and hamlet men waited with eagerness for the speedy accomplishment of the desires which had found expression in the *cahiers* drawn up to be laid before the States.

If Louis was unable to forecast the future, so too was the great mass of his subjects. Amongst the throng of deputies who met together at Versailles, there was but one, the Marquis of Mirabeau, who Mirabeau. comprehended the real meaning of the revolution, and foresaw with accuracy the course which events would take. This remarkable man was endowed by nature with enormous energy, mental and physical. While still a youth, he had left his mark for good or for ill wherever he went. He had incurred debts, fought duels, kept order amongst hungry peasants, eating, drinking, and working with them, obtained the goodwill of men prejudiced against him, and won the hearts of women. His father, according to the fashion of the time, supported paternal authority by obtaining *lettres de cachet* from the government, ordering the imprisonment of his son. Mirabeau was imprisoned, now in one fortress, now in another, for months at a time. In early manhood, at the age of twenty-eight, he entered the donjon of Vincennes, a state fortress, where he inhabited a dark, barely-furnished room, and had converse with none but his gaoler. His offences against social order had not been light, for he had deserted his own wife for the wife of another man. But in his vices Mirabeau was but a type of the generation to which he belonged, and the real ground of his imprisonment lay elsewhere. Books and



paper were as a favour allowed him. 'Without books,' he wrote, 'I should be dead or mad.' He read and wrote for fifteen hours out of the twenty-four. After a confinement of more than three years, the quarrel between him and his father was patched up. In 1780 he was released, broken in health, harassed by debts, and blackened in fame, but possessed of a large store of knowledge, a ready pen, a fluent tongue, and a genius for statesmanship which no man in France could rival. Genius was, however, no ground for advancement. A man who had sufficiently powerful interest at court might rise to the highest dignities in Church or State, whatever his incapacity, or whatever the stains on his past life. Mirabeau had no interest at court, while by Louis and his councillors talent was distrusted, and the one statesman that France possessed occupied the position of an unscrupulous adventurer, seeking by whatever means came first to hand to force his way into the ministry. It was no matter of surprise that so signal a victim of arbitrary government should prove an inveterate enemy to the existing order. But Mirabeau did not, through resentment for personal injuries, desire to weaken or degrade the royal authority. He possessed too strong a capacity for the exercise of power. He saw, moreover, too directly into the heart of the situation. (He comprehended what no man but himself comprehended at that time, that the real aim of the French people was the sweeping away of all class distinctions, and that the monarchy might be immensely strong if only the King could be brought to adopt new principles of government, in accordance with the democratic spirit of the age. Had he been at the head of affairs he would at once have summoned the States-General and led the way in opening the attack upon the privileged orders. Excluded from all share in the government, he revenged himself by attacking it on every



side. The proposition was made to him that he should employ his pen to destroy the popularity of the Parliaments. 'I will never,' was his reply, 'make war upon the Parliaments except in presence of the nation.' The hesitating and shuffling policy of the ministers; their vain attempts to effect reform through the royal power alone; their efforts to avoid or defer the meeting of the States; and, finally, their refusal, after being driven to call the nation to their aid, to declare for a single chamber, excited his scorn and indignation. He had not only the clear perception that in order to maintain the monarchy the first thing to be done was to crush the privileged orders; he had also the clear perception that the second thing, if indeed it was not of equal importance, was the organisation of government, and that this was impracticable so long as distrust existed between the crown and the nation. When the elections were held, rejected by his own order, he took his seat as representative of the Third Estate of Aix. At Versailles he was the mark of all observers. The wildness of his youth, his long imprisonment, his quarrels with his father, his lawsuits with his wife, his writings, and his eloquence, had given him notoriety throughout France. With the meeting of the States Mirabeau knew that the opportunity had come of making his power felt. 'At last,' he said, 'we shall have men judged by the value of their brains.'


The inevitable consequence of the King's refusal to declare himself against the privileged orders at once ensued. Disputes arose between the deputies as to the form that the legislature should take. There was a small minority of nobles for union, and a large minority of clergy, composed almost entirely of parish priests, who had to choose between alliance with the Third Estate and dependence on their ecclesiastical superiors. The questions at stake were

Title of  
National  
Assembly  
adopted by  
the Third  
Estate.

too vital for compromise to be possible, and thus, while the people impatiently awaited redress of grievances, the Third Estate refused to proceed to business until they were joined by the other two. Political excitement grew greater amongst the middle classes, irritation and discontent amongst the lower. The winter had been one of the coldest and longest on record. The price of bread was rising, and misery, which sufferers expected to vanish on the first meeting of the Estates, was on the increase. It had always been a difficult matter to prevent rioting at Paris in times of political excitement or of scarcity, and now both causes combined to create disorder. In the Faubourg St. Antoine and other poor quarters of the city existed a population including great numbers of ruffians, beggars, and destitute workmen, of whom many were strangers from the country, largely brought to Paris by hope of finding bread or labour, and whose passions might readily be worked on with dangerous effect; while pamphleteers and street orators, without sense of responsibility, and full of passionate desire to assure the triumph of the Third Estate, did not measure their words in seeking to rouse popular indignation against the upper orders. Deputies distinguished as opponents of union were mobbed and hustled at Versailles, and their names held up to execration in Paris. The attitude of the capital gave strength to the deputies of the Third Estate, who finally cut the knot by adopting the title of National Assembly, inviting nobles and clergy to join them, and declaring their purpose of proceeding to business without those who refused to do so (June 17).

The assumption of this title was held an act of usurpation by the opponents of union. Court nobles and ecclesiastics appealed to the King to maintain the authority of his crown by interfering in support of their rights. The deputies of the Third Estate had, it was

said, grasped at sovereign power to which they had no claim. As yet there had been no direct collision between the Crown and the deputies of the Third Estate. The long inefficiency of the King had, indeed, destroyed belief in the royal power as an instrument of government. Men believed in themselves, and they believed in the nation. They demanded liberty for individuals, and they demanded that the nation should govern itself. Yet, however democratic were the theories that prevailed, the great body of the French people was deeply attached to monarchy as a form of government, and thoroughly loyal to the person of the King. If desire for the establishment of a democratic constitution was intensely strong, there appeared no other means in the first place of destroying the upper orders; in the second, of preventing their resurrection. Had Louis taken the side of the nation, he might, as Mirabeau foresaw, have exercised immense influence over the course of affairs. If he refused, nominal sovereignty would be left to him, but men would be careful that he should have no real power in his hands. Louis was honestly prepared to cede constitutional rights to the country, which should set limits to the royal authority, and secure the persons and properties of his subjects against arbitrary usage. But he would not, so far as he could prevent it, suffer the abolition of class distinctions, or allow the real governing power to pass from himself and his council to the representatives of the nation. Thus, although the deputies of the Third Estate sought to conceal the fact from themselves, they had to contend against the Crown as well as against the nobility. Louis, in alarm for his authority, now thought to maintain it by openly taking the part of nobles and clergy. Marie Antoinette, less patient than her husband, witnessed with extreme resentment and



indignation the conduct of the Third Estate. To excited courtiers it seemed as easy a matter for the King to impose his will on the representatives of the nation as it had been for his predecessors in times past to impose theirs on the Parliament of Paris. It was determined that the King should hold a royal sitting or séance, and declare his intentions to the assembled Estates. Meanwhile the deputies of the Third Estate were excluded from their hall on pretext that preparations had to be made for the reception of the King. Fully expecting a dissolution, they repaired to a neighbouring tennis court, where with one voice and hands raised to the sky they swore an oath never to separate before they had established constitutional government. There was a dense crowd outside. All approaches to the court were blocked, and the one deputy who refused to take the oath was with difficulty saved from outrage (June 20). The cause of the upper orders was now weakened by desertions from their ranks. A large number of curés as well as a few nobles joined the deputies of the Third Estate. This in itself, had Louis been well advised, might have warned him against the course that he proposed to take. On June 23 he came in state to the hall, where the whole body of deputies was by his injunction assembled. There, by the mouths of his ministers, he told them that they were to meet as three separate orders. With his consent first obtained, they might form one assembly for the discussion of matters of common interest ; from which, however, all the burning questions of the day, ecclesiastical, social, and constitutional, were expressly excepted. Neckker, who disapproved the arbitrary form in which the royal will was signified, saved his popularity by refusing to be present on the occasion. Before retiring, Louis ordered all to disperse and assemble next day in their separate

chambers. In case of disobedience he would undertake by himself to secure the happiness of his subjects. 'Seul,' he said, 'je ferai le bien de mes peuples.' After he had gone, most of the nobility and the upper clergy left the hall; but the deputies of the Third Estate as well as many curés kept their seats. The Master of the Ceremonies, De Brézé, asked Bailly, the President, whether he had heard the orders of the King. 'Yes, sir, we have heard the orders put in the King's mouth,' retorted Mirabeau, in words repeated and applauded throughout France, 'and let me inform you that if your business is to turn us out, you had better ask orders to employ force, for we shall only quit our seats at the bayonet's point.' Before dispersing the recalcitrants declared their persons inviolable for all that they said or did as deputies.

After this defiance of the royal authority, the Queen and the court would gladly have obtained the dissolution of the States. Difficulties, however, stood in the way. The financial embarrassments of the Government were still unrelieved. Further, Union of the three orders. it was clearly impossible for the King to cause his commands to be obeyed, unless he was prepared to appeal to military force, and the consequences of so doing were exceedingly doubtful. Class distinctions prevailed in the army as in other institutions of the old system. The officers, who were all noble, lived in luxury, largely on perquisites made at the men's expense. The men, cheated of their pay, badly fed, and subjected to a harsh discipline, bitterly resented their wrongs, and despised and hated their officers. If an attempt were made to use intimidation there was great probability that resistance would be offered, that Paris would rise, and that the troops would refuse to fire on the insurgents. Louis was never willing to take decided action, and, for the time, the deputies of the Third Estate were left in

enjoyment of victory. The King himself requested the nobles and ecclesiastics, who still kept aloof, to abandon further struggle, and thus after a delay of seven weeks the three Estates were finally constituted as one assembly.

The evil consequences of that delay were already but too plainly apparent. Since the meeting of the Estates agitation in Paris had spread from day to day. Excitement in Paris. The Government, unable to use arbitrary and violent means of obtaining order, could no longer effectively perform its duties, because no trust was reposed in it. Political liberty threatened to degenerate rapidly into anarchy. No moral restraints existed amongst a people for centuries unaccustomed to self-government. There was no political organisation, and no standard of political morality. There were no recognised leaders weighted with a sense of responsibility, nor journals with a character to maintain. Appeals were made to the lowest passions, rumours and libels circulated without question of their truth or justice. The fiercer and more bitter his language, the more sure was the orator or journalist to gain a hearing and exert influence.

In the garden, surrounded by book and coffee shops, which was attached to the Palais Royal, a palace belonging to the Duke of Orleans—who, although distantly related to the King, had taken the popular side—agitators, mounted on chairs and tables, discoursed to excited throngs on the sovereignty of the people, and denounced the opponents of a single chamber to popular wrath. Here neither police officers nor supporters of the claims of nobles and clergy could enter except at peril of violent and brutal usage. This licence was the more dangerous because the hard times made the people more ready for the commission of criminal actions. Nevertheless, the tradesmen, merchants, and other persons in the middle

class of life, who under ordinary circumstances are the first to feel the effects of mob violence, regarded the designs of the court as far more dangerous than the oratory of the Palais Royal. For while the court demanded the maintenance of class distinctions, the demagogues of the Palais Royal demanded their abolition, guaranteed by the establishment of a free and democratic constitution.

The government, on the pretext of maintaining order, quartered round and in Paris and Versailles regiments of Swiss and German troops in the service of France. The Queen and the Court desired, if The fall of the Bastille, July 14. not immediately to dissolve the Assembly, to compel its removal to some provincial town, where the deputies might more readily be forced to accept the terms offered by the King on June 23. Necker, supported by a minority of his fellow-councillors, was opposed to any plans for the intimidation of the Assembly; but he had no influence with the King, and was detested by the Queen and the King's brothers, the Counts of Provence and Artois, of whose projects he was left in ignorance. Louis relied on the troops to overawe the capital, but was averse to resort to military force unless in self-defence. Meanwhile, their neighbourhood increased excitement in Paris, and the middle classes found themselves between two fires. On the one side they feared an armed occupation of the town, and the proclamation of martial law; on the other a rising of the populace, which might end in the dissolution of all authority. The elections of deputies of the Third Estate had been by two degrees. Paris had been divided into sixty districts, returning 120 electors, who had elected twenty deputies to sit in the States-General. These electors, wishing to induce the Government to remove the troops, proposed the establishment of a civic guard for the maintenance of order. It was not, however, an easy matter to obtain the sanction



of the Government to a measure that would put an armed force at the disposition of the capital. The National Assembly, agitated by fear lest violence should be exercised against itself, repeatedly besought the King to order the withdrawal of the troops. Louis refused, and at the same time dismissed Necker from office, ordering him to leave the kingdom immediately (July 11). It was on the presence of Necker in the council that the popular party relied as security that force would not be employed against the Assembly or the capital. Accordingly, the news of his dismissal, reported the next morning, set Paris in motion. All believed that troops would immediately advance, and the revolution be suppressed in blood. In the Palais Royal a young man, Camille Desmoulins, leaping on a table, exclaimed, 'Citizens, they have driven Necker from office. They are preparing a St. Bartholomew for patriots. To arms! To arms! For a rallying sign take green cockades, the colour of hope.' The leaves were torn from the surrounding trees to serve as cockades. There was, in fact, but one course which Louis could consistently pursue after he had dismissed Necker from office. He must use force to suppress opposition, taking whatever risk there was. But of decisive action there was no chance. The King had dismissed Necker without making up his mind what he would do afterwards. There was no plan formed, and no understanding between different authorities. A regiment of German cavalry charged, first, into a procession parading the streets with a bust of Necker, and afterwards into the Tuileries gardens, dispersing the throngs which excitement and curiosity had brought together. After blood had thus been shed, and the alarm and rage of the populace had increased, no further attempt was made to suppress the insurrection. Officers of the army were afraid to act without authorisation, and could



not trust their men, many of whom deserted their regiments. The French guards, 3,600 strong, went over in a body to the people. Paving stones were torn up to erect barricades. The cry was raised for arms; pikes were fabricated by thousands; gunsmiths' shops were ransacked, military storehouses broken open, and muskets and powder carried off in triumph.

During the following night and day (July 13) the barriers where the excise was levied were set on fire, the prisons opened, and bakers and wine shops pillaged. There were none in authority, and none who obeyed. The electors, sitting at the Hôtel de Ville, usurped what authority they could, which they exercised surrounded by a raging mob at imminent peril of their lives. At their appeal the bourgeoisie began promptly to raise an organised militia force in each of the sixty districts. Early next morning, July 14, the fury of the people was directed against the Bastille, the great State fortress and prison in the Faubourg St. Antoine, the 'Tower' of Paris, where for centuries past prisoners, often without charge of crime, had wasted their lives away. Its commander, the Marquis de Launay, had long since pulled up his drawbridges and made ready for defence as he watched the insurrection grow. His garrison was small, consisting only of thirty-two Swiss and eighty-two old French soldiers or Invalides. But the massive walls of the fortress and its double moat would effectually guard it against the assault of an undisciplined multitude. Summoned to surrender by a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville, De Launay replied that he would rather set fire to the powder magazine and blow the place to the skies. The population streamed by thousands to the spot, and the fortress was soon surrounded by a surging mob. An old soldier succeeded in cutting the chain which held up the drawbridge of the outer moat. A shout of

triumph was raised. The assailants rushed over the fallen bridge, but only to be confronted by the second moat and unscalable walls of the fortress. The French guards, bringing with them cannon, joined the besiegers, but all efforts to force the passage of the moat were frustrated. For five hours an incessant fire of musketry had been kept up. A hundred of the assailants lay dead, and but one of the garrison, when the Bastille unexpectedly and suddenly succumbed. The Invalides refused longer to resist, and compelled De Launay to surrender. Hulin, an officer leading the French guards, accepted the terms proposed—pardon and immunity for all. But he could not enforce their observance. The mass of human beings behind knew nothing of what those in front did. Enraged and uncontrollable, the mob broke into the fortress, those behind pushing aside those who went before, and striking blows at random. Six of the garrison were killed. De Launay was sent with an escort of French guards to the Hôtel de Ville. On the way the escort was hustled aside and the old man savagely murdered. His head, fixed on a pike, was carried in triumph about the streets. Late at night the news reached Versailles that the Bastille had fallen. ‘But,’ said Louis, ‘that is a revolt.’ ‘Sire,’ replied his informant, the Duke of Liancourt, ‘it is not a revolt, it is a revolution.’

A great revolution had indeed been accomplished. The fall of the Bastille indicated the fall of the old monarchy, in which the King alone represented the nation. Louis had said to the Assembly that, unless he were obeyed, he would secure the happiness of his subjects without its aid, and Paris had replied by rising in support of the Assembly against himself. The falling away of the army had unmistakably revealed his weakness and

Establishment of a Municipality and of a National Guard in Paris.

powerlessness to resist the national will. His brother, the Count of Artois, and other unpopular courtiers, known to be especially hostile to the people's cause, fled the country in disgust and alarm. Louis himself had no choice but to yield all that was demanded of him. He ordered the withdrawal of the troops, and recalled Necker to office. The Assembly sent eighty-eight of its members to announce the good news to Paris. They were received with enthusiasm, and escorted by thousands of national guards to the Hôtel de Ville, where the electors exercised the functions of a provisional municipality. Two deputies were singled out for special honours. A young and popular nobleman, Lafayette, who had fought in America against the English, and since the meeting of the Assembly had supported the cause of the Third Estate, was by acclamation chosen commander-in-chief of the new militia or national guard. Bailly, a mathematician, who had been president of the Third Estate when the oath was taken in the tennis court, was after the same fashion chosen mayor of Paris. To the blue and red, the colours of Paris first worn by the national guard, was subsequently, on Lafayette's suggestion, added white, the colour of France. This new flag would, he magniloquently said, make the round of the world. Thus was instituted the famous tricolour, the emblem to France of the revolution.

It only remained for Louis to recognise these new revolutionary authorities, which made the capital of his kingdom independent of him and of his government. Leaving the Queen weeping at Versailles in alarm for his safety, he drove to Paris, attended merely by some members of the Assembly and a few national guards. At the barrier of Passy, the mayor, Bailly, presented him with the keys of the city, the same which, on an occasion dissimilar to this had been presented to Henri IV., when

Paris had surrendered to him, 'He,' said Bailly to Louis, 'had made conquest of his people. Now the people have made conquest of their King.' Arrived at the Hôtel de Ville, Louis fixed a tricolour cockade on his hat and appeared on a balcony in front of the building. The thousands assembled outside applauded him loudly, and shouts of 'Vive le Roi' mingled with shouts of 'Vive la Nation.' The enthusiasm exhibited in his favour was not unreal. Amongst the multitude present, no stronger desire existed than that of accomplishing the revolution in accordance with the crown.

While political strife was raging at Paris, in the provinces the people, impatient for relief, were taking upon themselves the work of redressing their wrongs. Since the meeting of the States riots had broken out by scores over the face of the country. Taxes were refused, barriers for the collection of custom and excise duties burnt, the collectors driven off, markets pillaged, municipal officers forced at peril of their lives to fix a price for corn and bread. The news of the great insurrection of July 14 gave courage to agitators, and added fuel to the flame. In Paris, street mobs, goaded by hunger, were not easily restrained from hanging objects of suspicion on the nearest lamp-post. Foulon, an officer of the Government, accused truly or falsely of having said that the people if hungry might eat grass, was savagely murdered. His son-in-law, Berthier, suffered a like fate. Many other persons escaped but narrowly with their lives. Nevertheless, owing to the exertions of the new municipality and the national guard, life and property were more secure in the capital than in many provinces. Risings accompanied by pillage and murder took place in Strasbourg, Rouen, Besançon, Lyons, and other provincial towns. In the east, through Alsace, Franche-Comté, Lorraine, Burgundy

Risings in  
the pro-  
vinces.

and Dauphiny, the rural population sought to settle the question of feudal services by burning together the residences and the title-deeds of the seigneurs. In the Maconnais and Beaujolais, bands of peasants sacked and burned seventy-two country-houses in a fortnight. A panic spread through the country on the report that brigands, instigated by the enemies of the revolution, were on the march to destroy the crops. A general cry was raised for arms; the example set by Paris was followed; the middle classes combined to restore order; provisional municipalities were established and national guards instituted. The order obtained, however, was still most precarious. Municipal officers were in constant danger of falling victims to mob violence, while in country districts national guards often made common cause with the rioters.

Thus the result of the insurrection of July 14, and of the risings in the provinces, was the utter disorganisation of all the old machinery of government. Royal officers where they remained could not exercise authority. The army was in mutiny; the people were armed. New popular authorities had, as it were, of themselves sprung up over the face of the country, and the National Assembly, in place of the royal council, became the centre of government, so far as any government existed.

The Assembly was far more disquieted by the risings in the provinces than by the insurrection of July 14. The fall of the Bastille assured political power to the middle classes. This burning of country-<sup>Decrees of August 4.</sup> houses and the refusal to pay taxes and feudal dues struck at all alike, and sapped the base on which the whole framework of society rested. As yet, in the south-west and centre, where feudal dues were less burdensome, riots were isolated and bloodshed rare, but there was every probability that the movement, if unchecked

would spread over the whole country. The injustice of the existing order, by which provinces, towns, and individuals were privileged without regard to public utility, the injury inflicted on agriculture by feudal dues, and the oppressive nature of many rights exercised by seigneurs had been demonstrated over and over again, and were admitted on all sides. In an evening sitting on August 4, the Assembly laid the axe to the root of the old order by adopting decrees based on the principles of unity of State institutions, equality before the law, and individual liberty. There was no province, town, class, or corporation whose special interests these decrees did not touch. They were in part the work of design, in part of the enthusiasm of the moment. No voices were raised in opposition. Nobles, bishops, curés, representatives of towns and provinces, vied with one another in proposing the abolition of privileges and rights which stood in the way of the common good. The decrees declared the feudal order destroyed, deprived seigneurs of the exclusive right of hunting and of keeping rabbits and pigeons, and abolished serfdom and servile dues off-hand; abolished also all special privileges belonging to provinces, towns, and corporations, and laid open to all citizens, without regard to birth, civil, military, and ecclesiastical preferment; and, finally, abolished tithes paid to the Church, and made promise of ecclesiastical reform in the future.

These decrees were not practical laws, but little more than an enunciation of general principles in accordance with which reform was afterwards to be effected. Thus the mass of feudal dues had still to be rendered until compensation had been given to the proprietors; the old taxes were to be paid until a new system of taxation based on principles of equality had been introduced. This hasty legislation could not, therefore, allay discor-

tent, but excited a stronger reluctance on the part of the people to endure burdens, the injustice of which the National Assembly itself publicly proclaimed.

The Assembly, on which rested the task of founding a new order amid the ruins of the old, was without political experience or recognised principles of action. It contained about 290 representatives of the nobility, of whom 140 were provincial noblemen, 20 judges in the upper courts, and 125 belonged to the court aristocracy. The clergy had returned 200 curés and only 100 bishops, abbés, and other dignitaries. A few more than 600 deputies represented the Third Estate, of whom 4 were ecclesiastics and 15 noblemen. The great majority were men independent of the Government. The profession by far the most largely represented was the law. There were 360 judges, barristers, and law officers of various kinds. The chamber was fitted up like a theatre, with a semi-circle of seats facing the president's chair, beneath which was a tribune whence all set speeches were made.

Composi-  
tion of the  
Assembly.

Four main lines of opinion divided the Assembly roughly into four sections. The majority of nobles and the upper clergy sat together on the president's right hand, forming the right side of the Assembly. Their standpoint was reactionary, in favour of the privileged orders. The fusion of the three orders having been accomplished against their will and in defiance of the royal authority, they regarded the Assembly's work as resting on no justifiable foundation, and looked forward to reversing it on the first occasion. Here an officer, Cazalès, eloquently and loyally defended monarchical principles of government; the Abbé Maury, with vehemence and ability, the cause of the upper clergy; and D'Espréménil, a judge in the Parliament of Paris, the institutions of the old order.

The Reac-  
tionary  
Right.



The second section comprised deputies of all three orders. They were defenders of individual liberty and parliamentary control, but were bitterly opposed to the establishment of democratic institutions. They did not believe in the endurance of monarchy without an aristocracy and aristocratical institutions, and aimed at replacing the effete nobility by an aristocracy of wealth. For the exercise of political rights they would have required a high property qualification; and, copying the constitution of the English parliament, would have established a legislature composed of two houses, in both of which the landed interest was to predominate. They detested insurrection as a weapon, and were thoroughly alive to the danger in which since July 14 all authorities stood—of falling beneath the sway of mob violence. The restoration of order was, from their point of view, the matter of first moment, and they accordingly desired that the Assembly, in place of discussing constitutional questions, should at once turn its attention to the reform of the taxes and to other remedial laws, and that at the same time ministers should be empowered to use coercive measures for the punishment of rioters and the maintenance of the public tranquillity. The upholders of these views, who sat next the reactionary right, were but a small minority. Their most able speakers were two deputies of the Third Estate—Mounier and Malouet, and two nobles—Clermont-Tonnerre and Lally-Tollendal.

The third and most numerous section, forming the centre and left of the Assembly, consisted of curés and deputies of the Third Estate, with a sprinkling of nobles and upper clergy. Though considerable differences of opinion prevailed in this body of seven to eight hundred men, two sentiments were common to all—passion for equality and desire for self-government. Hence no schemes calculated to vest



power in the hands of large landed proprietors found favour with them. They were not, however, pure democrats, nor by sentiment republicans. Their real aim was government by the middle classes. To monarchy as a form of government they were not only attached, but regarded its maintenance as necessary to give stability to the constitution they were about to establish. Amongst the most prominent men on this side of the house were Thouret, Merlin of Douai, and other eminent lawyers, the Marquis of Mirabeau, Lafayette, the Abbé Siéyès, two brothers, the Lameths—both of them nobles and officers—and a young and eloquent barrister, Barnave.

The fourth section, sitting on the extreme left—which must be distinguished from the left—was formed of a few deputies, some twenty or thirty in all, who were pure democrats, and whose programme <sup>The Ex-</sup><sub>treme Left.</sub> included manhood suffrage, and the eligibility of all citizens to office without property or other qualifications. A republic was their ideal form of government, which they held alone compatible with free and democratic institutions. At the same time they entertained no thought of establishing such a government in France. The possibility of getting rid of the throne had not yet suggested itself to their minds. In the Assembly their opinions were regarded as exaggerated, and their influence was small. Amongst them sat Pétion and Robespierre, whose names afterwards rose into notoriety.

None of these four groups, except the last, properly speaking formed a party of which the members ordinarily voted in a body. There was no concerted action, no party discipline, no recognised leaders. The galleries were often filled by an excited and noisy audience, which interrupted debates and menaced unpopular speakers. Each deputy voted independently, and was subject to be swayed by whatever influence at the moment predomi-

nated—were it eloquence, enthusiasm, fear, or prejudice. The provincial nobility followed but sullenly in the wake of the court nobility, and on every opportunity made its hostility manifest. Deputies belonging to the centre and left constantly voted on opposite sides. According to the special point at issue, more or less democratic opinions were entertained by the same person. Thus Lafayette, although as a rule he was found in opposition to Malouet, wished like him for the establishment of a legislature composed of two houses, having become strongly convinced of the advantages of that system through his affection to American institutions. The most advanced group of the whole centre and left, headed by Barnave and the Lameths, sat furthest left, next to Buzot and Robespierre, with whom they not seldom voted.

In the chamber thus constituted, a variety of causes often gave ascendancy to the group which followed Barnave and the Lameths. The events of June 23 (p. 39) had destroyed confidence in the King, and though not expressed in words fear always prevailed that Louis would hereafter use whatever powers were given to him to effect a restoration of the old order. The reactionary right also refused to work with the advocates of the system of two chambers, such as Malouet and Mounier, thus alienating the less democratic members of the centre and propelling them towards the left. Nobles and ecclesiastics, who had opposed the union of the three orders, in place of seeking to establish a constitution based on monarchical principles, made it their policy to vitiate the Assembly's work and so increase the elements of disorder as the surest and speediest means of producing reaction. Sometimes they abstained from voting or attending debates; sometimes they interrupted debates; at others

Causes  
giving as-  
cendancy to  
the Left.

they voted with the left against the constitutional right. The ministry was too feeble and too divided to exercise influence over the Assembly. It was without the first requisite for acquiring confidence, a declared and open policy. Necker, whose principles and aims coincided for the most part with those of Malouet and Mounier, always received hearty support from them and their friends. But, proud and irritable, accustomed to command and not to lead, he did not take advantage of the opportunities which he had for forming a ministerial party. While devising expedients for avoiding bankruptcy, he failed even to lay before the Assembly any complete account of the state of the finances. The reactionary right, which never forgave him for recommending the double representation of the Third Estate, and the extreme left, which distrusted him, concurred in attacking him on every opportunity. His popularity rapidly decreased, and his position in the ministry grew weak in proportion as his relations to the Assembly became strained. Mirabeau, the most powerful man in the house, was his enemy. The mass of deputies, without trust in the Government and menaced by the right, looked to the people for support, and through desire of maintaining popularity were the more ready to adopt measures urged on them by the ultra democratic press. Their minds were undisturbed, either by the violent language of Parisian demagogues, or by the existence of riots and bloodshed in many provinces. The one object that they kept steadily in view was the establishment of constitutional government on foundations that should make reaction hopelessly impossible; and compared with this the restoration of order was to them a matter of secondary importance. They had no fear of the people. Following the one-sided philosophy of their day, and leaving out of account the dense ignorance of the lower

classes, the pride and prejudices of the upper, they believed that the establishment of a free constitution, followed by remedial legislation, would bring the revolution to an end within the course of a few months, and render the country law-abiding, prosperous, and contented.

How vain was this dream, entertained by those with whom he sat and voted, Mirabeau was well aware. He saw the people ignorant and credulous, without confidence in the middle class, and ready to follow the guidance of whoever promised them most; the middle class unaccustomed to take part in government and divided into factions, which were united merely by common hatred of aristocratic institutions. Under such conditions Mirabeau gave small credit to his countrymen for political capacity, and had no faith in the endurance of any constitution which cast upon the nation the entire work of administration and government. But, on the other hand, he did not seek, like Malouet, to found a strong monarchy on aristocratic institutions. No real aristocracy existed, and the passion for equality was irresistible, for the very reason that it was justified by the incapacity of those classes which had hitherto claimed to rise above their fellow countrymen. The government which Mirabeau regarded as alone suited to the requirements of the time was constitutional monarchy, based on principles of equality and individual liberty, upheld by the confidence of the middle class, and exercising influence over the direction of public opinion. Local administration was to be under the control of the central government; ministers were to have seats in the legislative body; and the king, in case of difference between himself and the legislature, was to have the right of refusing his consent to bills and of appealing by a dissolution to the constituencies

Mirabeau prophesied that unless the distrust which the Assembly felt towards Louis were dissipated, the throne would be overturned by the Parisian populace. His sense of danger quickened his desire to obtain a place in the council. He had many qualities fitting him to the task to which he aspired of at once domineering over Louis, and obtaining a majority in the Assembly to follow his guidance. He had insight into character, was master of his temper, and able to inspire men with his own belief, and to fascinate those who were prejudiced against him. As an orator he was unrivalled. The effect that he produced on his hearers was so powerful that his very opponents applauded him. But there were many drawbacks in his way. He came to the Assembly with an ill reputation that told heavily against him. His life even now was riotous and profligate, and he was known to be harassed by debts and unscrupulous in action. His fellow deputies, afraid of the crown acquiring influence over the Assembly by corruption, even whilst they were under the spell of his genius, were mistrustful of his political integrity. Lafayette refused to have dealings with a man whom he contemned as a libertine. Barnave and the Lameths were Mirabeau's rivals for popularity, and jealous of the influence that his superior eloquence at times allowed him to exercise. On the side of the Government, which had no chance of surmounting the crisis under any other guidance, he received no encouragement. Necker feared and hated him as a dangerous and unprincipled demagogue, and repelled his overtures; while the aversion of the Queen to all noblemen who took the popular side was intense. 'I trust,' she one day said. 'we shall never be reduced to the painful extremity of seeking aid of Mirabeau.'

Thus circumstanced, Mirabeau did his best to weaken and degrade the Government, expecting that in the course

of a few months the King would be compelled to recognise his claims to office. He never missed an opportunity of undermining Necker's popularity, and while defending with vehemence what he held to be the essential prerogatives of monarchy, maintained sway over the Assembly and the populace by fierce attacks directed against the nobles, the clergy, and the court.

The first legislative work of the Assembly after the decrees of August 4 (p. 50), was a Declaration of the rights of man, which, in general language, stated the aims which the greater part of the Assembly had in view. This manifesto of the principles of the revolution declared that men have natural and imprescriptible rights to liberty, property, and security, and also the right of resisting tyranny; that men are born equal in rights; that all citizens are equal in the eye of the law, and are equally admissible to all offices without other distinctions than those of virtue and talent; that the nation is sovereign, and that laws are the expression of the general will. In accordance with these principles, the Declaration announced the abolition of all orders and corporations, and proclaimed liberty of the press and liberty of worship.

Debates on the form to be given to the new legislature followed the adoption of the Declaration of the rights of man. The proposal that there should be two houses was negatived by 499 against 89 votes. The new legislature was to meet every two years. The question whether the King was to have power to refuse his consent to decrees or exercise a so-called veto upon them was the cause of great excitement both at Versailles and Paris. Ultra-democratic agitators and journalists declared that to allow the King a share in the legislative power was to wrong the sovereignty of the nation. The relation existing between Louis and the

Assembly was thoroughly false. The deputies of the centre and left were eager to avoid coming into collision with him, but were aware that he was only following by compulsion in their wake. On the ground that the nation was entitled to choose its own form of government, they took for granted that Louis must sanction without question or criticism all constitutional decrees. But they dared not trust the King, whom they excluded from any share in the formation of the new constitution, with authority which he might hereafter employ to subvert it. On the question of the veto a compromise was adopted, and the King empowered to refuse to pass the same decree during the sitting of two consecutive legislatures (September 20).

While the Assembly was engaged in discussion on the rights of man, all the causes which had been productive of crime and riot were still at work. The price of bread remained high after the harvest. <sup>Scarcity of bread.</sup> This was due in part to deficiency in the crops, but much more generally to interference with the corn trade. The Assembly, acting in accordance with the free trade theories of the Economists, annulled all regulations impeding the free circulation of corn and flour. But the people, ignorant, distrustful and fierce, used the power that was in their hands to carry out the old system more methodically, threatening municipal officers with personal violence unless they took measures to insure that markets were well supplied. Pillage of corn on transit and purchases made by public bodies stopped ordinary trade, and produced an appearance of scarcity even where corn was plentiful. In every large town bread was sold under cost, the municipalities making good the loss to the bakers. To provision Paris, convoys of flour were brought into the town under military escort ; large purchases of foreign corn were made, the Govern-



ment supplying funds ; and by these means bread was sold at about three halfpence the pound. But bread, if cheap, was scarce. Purchasers stood for hours in long ranks or *queues* at the bakers' doors, and those who came last often left empty-handed. On the municipality and the national guard devolved the task of maintaining order. The national guard formed an organised police force. Most of those who served were volunteers, but 6,000, with whom had been incorporated the French guards, were paid and lodged in barracks. The officers were elected by the men. Lafayette, the commander-in-chief, was a brave and chivalrous soldier, whose enthusiasm for liberty and equality was unmingled with motives of personal aggrandisement. He was very popular with his troops, but his influence over them was confined within narrow limits. The guard, composed principally of the middle and lower middle classes, retained its character of a citizen force, possessing a strong political bias, and capable at any time of taking a course of its own.

During the month of September the idea of going to Versailles and bringing the royal family to Paris fermented in the minds of the poorer inhabitants of the city. There were rumours that the King intended flight. The hungry people believed that their sufferings were solely due to the intrigues of reactionary nobles and ecclesiastics, and that bread would be abundant were the King once securely established in their midst. Whatever was proposed at Paris was known at Versailles. Since the revolution of July, plans of retreat to Metz and other towns had been urged on Louis. It was impossible to adopt this course without contemplating resource to arms. The Queen was willing, but Louis preferred to let events drift on sooner than give occasion to his subjects to throw on him the reproach cast on Charles I., of having roused civil war and caused the

The 6th  
October.



shedding of blood. Meanwhile the policy pursued was of a piece with that which preceded the fall of the Bastille. Paris was defied by bringing an additional force of a thousand foreign troops, the regiment of Flanders, from Arras to Versailles, but no further measures were taken to repel aggression. The officers of the royal body-guard held a banquet in honour of the new comers in the palace theatre before a large audience. The occasion was taken to make a strongly pronounced display of royalist sentiment. Insulting words were spoken against the Assembly; national toasts were left undrunk; the tricolor replaced by white cockades. The King was induced to come to the theatre, and the Queen, with the Dauphin in her arms, went the round of the table, making gracious speeches (October 1). Exaggerated reports of what had taken place spread through Paris. National guards were eager to avenge the insult offered to the tricolour, which, it was said, had been trampled under foot. Early on the morning of October 5 many thousands of hungry women began a march from Paris to Versailles, stopping and forcing all of their own sex whom they met on the way to accompany them. Bands of men soon followed, and the national guards, in place of opposing the movement, compelled Lafayette to march at their head after the mob. There was heavy rain all day, and the women on their arrival at Versailles were weary, fasting, and wet. They surrounded the palace, and broke into the hall of the Assembly, shouting, in reply to the speeches of the deputies, 'Bread, bread, and not so many words!' All through the day new bands continued to arrive, composed of both men and women. The royal body-guard, between whom and the mob shots were exchanged, were withdrawn within the palace gates. A little before midnight Lafayette at last arrived at the head of an orderly force of 20,000 men. He set

watches at the palace gates, and afterwards entered to take a short rest. But at daybreak some of the mob broke into the palace courts, killed two soldiers of the body guard who fired on them, wounded others, and burst into the ante-room of the Queen's bedchamber. Marie Antoinette, roused by her women, fled for her life to the King's apartment. The alarm was given, and national guards arrived on the spot in time to avert more bloodshed, and to drive back the intruders. Louis, who had not been able to decide on flight while he still had opportunity, yielded to the will of the populace. A dense crowd was assembled in front of the palace, shouting, 'The King to Paris!' Louis stepped out on a balcony, in sign of assent. The popular instinct rightly fixed on the Queen as much more hostile to the revolution than the King. As she stepped out after her husband, with her girl and boy by her side, voices from below shouted, 'No children.' Pushing the children back, she bravely advanced without hesitation alone, while Lafayette, afraid for her safety, sought to make her peace with the people by stooping and kissing her hand. All steps were now turned towards Paris. First went a disorderly mob, rejoicing in their capture of the royal family, and shouting that bread would be plentiful, for they were bringing with them the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy. The heads of the slain body-guards, ghastly trophies of their triumph, were carried on pikes. The royal carriages, surrounded by national guards, followed in the wake of the mob. On their arrival in Paris, the King and Queen were conducted to the Tuileries. The Assembly, which after a few days followed the King, was established in a riding-school in the neighbourhood of the palace.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE CONSTITUTION.

THE movement of October 6 was not, like the rising of July 14, unpremeditated. The scarcity of bread had been made use of by agitators to suggest to the populace the idea of bringing the King to Paris. Their object was to place both the King and the Assembly immediately under the influence of the capital. To the Duke of Orleans at the time was ascribed the intention of driving the royal family from Versailles, and obtaining for himself, if not the throne, a regency. The Duke, unprincipled and of mean capacity, was incompetent, if he had the ambition, to play a prominent part in the revolution. The possession of great wealth assured him hangers-on and partisans, but he was generally despised, and no man of any standing ever openly espoused his cause. Deputies of the centre and left, as well as the municipality and Lafayette, regarded the residence of the court at Paris as security against attempts to raise civil war by the removal of the King and the division of the Assembly. From this time the royal family was in fact in the keeping of Lafayette, whose troops composed the palace guard. The court could see nothing in the event but one more act of popular violence, which must before long cause reaction. After the fall of the Bastille, the King's brother, the Count of Artois, had left France. Many court nobles, including deputies of the reactionary right, now took the same course, with full expectation of shortly returning and finding the old order of things restored. Two leaders of the right centre, Mounier and Lally-Tollendal, quitted the capital on the plea that their lives were in danger, and

Results of  
movement of  
October 6.

that the Assembly was not free. It was true that those who took the lead in defending unpopular opinions were subject to menace and insult, but it was not true that deputies sitting on the right were precluded from taking part in the debates or voting according to their pleasure. On the contrary, if the galleries were often noisy and abusive, bishops and nobles found opportunities not only of replying at length to their opponents, but also of obstructing proceedings for hours by mere clamour. The ordinary form of voting, which was simply by rising and sitting, prevented the frequent publication of division lists. Much important work, in which all could take part in safety, was done in private committees, and drafts of laws prepared in them were often adopted by the Assembly with little alteration. The withdrawal of deputies only helped to complete the disorganisation of an already divided minority.

While the right side of the Assembly, in consequence of desertions, disorganisation, and intimidation, became constantly less able to exert influence over the centre, the left acquired new sources of strength. With the object of concerting common action, a few deputies used to meet in a building in the Rue St. Honoré, belonging to some Dominican friars, who were commonly called Jacobins, because the church of St. Jacques had been assigned to them when, in the thirteenth century, they first arrived in Paris. In this building was organised a debating club, entitled by its founders the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, but which acquired celebrity under the name of the Jacobins. All deputies of the left joined it, as well as many persons who were not members of the Assembly, amongst whom were the most radical politicians and journalists of Paris. Whatever questions were debated in the Assembly were at the same time debated in the club, where democratic opinion was more pronounced, and put forward with less







reserve. Barnave was in the club a more popular orator than Mirabeau, and Robespierre, who could hardly obtain a hearing in the Assembly, was listened to with attention and applause. Thus the existence of the Jacobins gave organisation to the more democratic party at a time when organisation was nowhere else to be found.

Under the influences above described, fear of reaction, belief in theory, and desire for popularity, the Assembly completed the constitution and carried reform <sup>The Consti-</sup> into every department of the state. Its work <sup>tution.</sup> was based on principles of uniformity, decentralisation, and the sovereignty of the people, and whatever institutions clashed with these were swept away. The old division of the territory by provinces was abandoned, and France was divided into eighty-three departments, all as nearly as possible of the same extent, and named after geographical features, such as rivers and mountains. The eighty-three departments were subdivided into 374 districts. In every department was an elected administrative body for the management of its affairs; in every district an elected administrative body, subordinate to the administration of the department, for the management of affairs special to the district. These bodies were composed each of a general council and a permanent executive, styled the directory. In every district the former divisions, called communes, were left unaltered. Of these communes there were no less than 44,000 in France, some being large towns, whilst others were mere villages. The local affairs of these communes were placed under the direction of municipalities. The members of these municipalities were elected by all men inhabiting the commune twenty-five years old, and paying yearly in direct taxes, according to a reformed system of taxation, a sum varying from eighteen pence to two shillings, the value of three days' labour. Manhood suffrage would

have given 6,000,000 voters, while this qualification limited their number to about 4,300,000 only. Persons qualified to vote were required to serve in the national guard, and were called active citizens, whilst those disqualified were known as passive citizens. For the election of the administrative bodies of the district and the department, as well as of deputies to the legislature, the system adopted was by two degrees. There were many primary assemblies, consisting of all active citizens in each department, each of which chose a certain number of electors, who in turn elected the administrative bodies of the districts and of the department, as well as the deputies who were to represent the department in the legislature. The qualification for being a member of a municipality, or of any administrative body, was the payment yearly in direct taxes of a sum varying from six to eight shillings. A special and higher qualification was required for sitting in the legislature—the payment in direct taxes of a marc, in value nearly fifty shillings.

The new administrative divisions served as judicial divisions also. The old courts, including the parliaments, were one after another abolished. Each district was divided into cantons, and the primary assemblies in each canton elected judges, called justices of the peace (*juges de paix*), for the trial of petty causes. Every district had a civil, every department a criminal court, of which the judges were respectively elected by the electors of the district and the department. Persons belonging to any branch of the legal profession were eligible as judges, who were elected for six years only. Much directly remedial legislation accompanied this new framework. Procedure was rendered more favourable to the accused. Trial by jury on the English system was adopted in criminal cases, every department having its grand jury. Securities were taken against

Judicial  
reform.



arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and the law was made the same for all, without distinction of persons. A new penal code was drawn up which contrasted most favourably with the criminal law in force in other countries. Heresy and magic were no longer recognised as crimes. Torture was abolished, and the punishment of death confined to four or five offences.

Economical and financial reforms were also effected. Internal custom houses were removed, monopolies and trade restrictions abolished. The Assembly, however, trod here with more cautious steps than when effecting constitutional and administrative reforms. The tariff of export and import duties was modified, but fear of injuring French industries prevented the adoption of free trade principles in regulating the commercial relations between France and other countries. The restoration of the finances in the midst of revolution was not a work to be easily accomplished. The Assembly delayed to abolish the old taxes until a new system of taxation was organised, but meanwhile thousands refused to pay them, and the revenue proportionately decreased. To meet the expenses of government Necker was compelled to borrow, and in the autumn of 1789 the State debt reached about 43,750,000*l.* To prevent its increase and to meet the claims of creditors, the Assembly had resource to Church property. By the abolition of tithes on August 4, a revenue of 5,818,750*l.* passed into the hands of landed proprietors and agriculturists. The Church, however, remained possessed of property valued at a capital of more than 100,000,000*l.*, bringing in a revenue of about 3,500,000*l.* All this property was declared to be at the service of the State, which undertook henceforth to provide for the clergy. Crown lands and Church lands to the value of 17,500,000*l.* were offered for sale, and

Church property appropriated by the State.

state paper money to the same amount issued in the form of notes of the value of 44*l.*, bearing a forced currency and called assignats, which were to be used in payment of state creditors, and were to be received back by the state from purchasers of the land so offered for sale, and thus to be gradually withdrawn from circulation and destroyed.

The upper clergy, supported by the nobles, vehemently opposed these measures, which entirely altered the status of the clergy. The clergy regarded themselves as administrators of property for Church purposes, and as independent of state influence; whereas they would henceforth be brought into close dependence on the state and lose the social position which wealth and independence gave them. The Abbé Maury accused the Assembly of interfering with the rights of property, and of being guilty of an act of spoliation. But the supporters of the new laws formed an overwhelming majority. Sceptics and theists, Jansenists who sought to reform the Church in accordance with the primitive usages of Christianity, lawyers who were merely following the legal traditions of the old monarchy in arguing that the state interest was paramount, informed the bishops that the clergy were not proprietors, but merely administrators of national property, who were justly deprived of a trust which they had executed ill. By the sale of Church lands the Assembly designed not merely to restore the finances, but by motives of self-interest to bind thousands to the work of revolution by indissoluble ties, since every purchaser of Church lands, every holder of assignats, every state creditor, would have a direct interest in the maintenance of the new order.

The laws for the appropriation and sale of Church property were followed by laws for the reform of the Church. Monasteries and nunneries were suppressed,

the existing inmates being pensioned and left at liberty to return to the world or live in such houses as were assigned to them. A special code, entitled the 'Civil Constitution of the Clergy,' undertook to carry out in the Church what had Civil constitution of the clergy. been already done for the state. The old diocesan and parochial divisions were abandoned. Every department was made a bishopric, and the boundaries of the parishes were changed according to convenience. Bishops were to be elected by all the electors of the department, curés by the electors of each district. Bishops were to signify their election to the Pope, but not to seek confirmation of their appointments at his hands. Chapters and ecclesiastical courts were abolished, and in exercising his functions each bishop was to be assisted by an ecclesiastical council, composed of chaplains selected amongst the curés of the diocese. The incomes of bishops were lowered, and those of curés raised. The whole expense of the establishment was estimated at nearly 3,000,000*l.*

It was only by degrees that these changes were carried out. The municipalities and other administrative bodies were elected during the spring of 1790, the new judges not till the autumn, while Federation, July 14, 1790. the Civil Constitution of the Clergy came into force in the summer of the same year. An enormous strain was laid upon the patriotism and intelligence of the country. Active citizens were incessantly called upon to give time and thought to public affairs, by taking part in elections and serving in the national guard; while there were more than a million of unpaid administrative and municipal officers charged with important duties and great responsibility. All the local business of the departments devolved on them, the maintenance of roads and bridges, the police regulations, the care of hospitals, the imposition and collection of taxes, the sale of national

property, and generally the carrying out of the decrees of the Assembly. Nevertheless, the country responded with admirable energy. Men believed that a new era of freedom and prosperity was about to open, and numbers came forward who unsparingly devoted time and money in discharge of civic duties, arduous and often dangerous. During the spring all over France the inhabitants of different villages, towns, and provinces met together to hold federations, or feasts of union, in honour of the new constitution. On July 14, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, a federation for the whole of France, at which the King presided, was held at Paris. Every department sent its deputation of national guards, who came to the number of 15,000 men. An altar was raised in the middle of the Champ de Mars, where Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, said mass, and blessed the banners of the departments. The thousands assembled swore with one voice to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the King. Louis, from his throne, took an oath to maintain the constitution, and the air resounded with shouts of 'Long live the King.' The Parisians entertained the visitors, and the day closed amid general lightheartedness and rejoicing. The Bastille was already razed to the ground, and crowds came to dance on the place where it had stood.

The joy and enthusiasm exhibited at the festival of the federation was a genuine expression of desire for union entertained by the main and best part of the population, but this desire rested on no substantial basis. As the Assembly continued its work divisions multiplied, party spirit increased in violence, and the country, in place of enjoying order and settled government, drifted further in the direction of anarchy. The upper nobility did not conceal its detestation of the work of the revolution, or its expectation that

The nobles  
and the  
revolution.

the whole would be reversed. Most great nobles left the country, and establishing themselves at Coblenz or Turin proscribed all who took part in the revolution, threatened invasion, and called on foreign powers to restore the King to his rights by force. Those who remained in France assumed an attitude of scornful defiance, and by protests and intrigues sought to stir up hatred against the Assembly, and to bring it into contempt with the country. The lower nobles, if in some way losers, would have greatly gained by the revolution if it had proceeded no further; but various causes induced them to declare against it. The Assembly made no efforts to conciliate them, and a decree abolishing titles and armorial bearings had deeply hurt the pride of the whole order (June 9). By many it was held a point of honour to remain true to their caste; and, in fact, those who gave support to the revolutionary laws were placed under a social ban. Many nobles quitted the country with their families, owing to the insecurity of their lives. Those who were arming on the frontiers brought on all who belonged to their order the suspicion of being their accomplices. The peasantry needed no incentive to turn upon the seigneurs. Although the Assembly had abolished the feudal rights of a servile origin, and those which represented sovereignty, it maintained, until compensation was made to the owners, all dues presumed to have had their origin in agreement, and to represent the price paid for the possession of land. The arrangement was just, and, if it had been feasible, would have been of advantage to almost everyone interested. But to effect it a strong government was required, and France was in the midst of revolution. The peasants, in whose minds all feudal rights were inextricably bound up together, refused to recognise legal distinctions between them. The machinery, moreover,

provided by the Assembly for effecting enfranchisement, in place of being speedy and simple, was complicated and in many cases practically inoperative. Hence the relations between peasants and seigneurs, as the revolution advanced, grew more and more embittered. While the owners of the dues threatened suits, their debtors resorted to violence. Scenes similar to those witnessed in the east in 1789 now occurred over a large portion of the country. Again and again, in 1790 and 1791, in the centre, in La Marche and Limousin, further south in Perigord and Rouergue, in the west in Bretagne, as well as in the east in Lyonnais, Alsace, Franche-Comté, and Champagne, peasants and vagabonds went about the country in bands, burning country-houses and title-deeds, and murdering those who attempted resistance.

The central government, whose duty it was to protect life and property, was impotent even to attempt the restoration of order. The Assembly, through fear that the King would use authority for the undoing of its work, had left him without means of enforcing obedience to the laws. His only agents were the administrative bodies, and he had no means of compelling them to perform their duties. The highest authority in reality rested with the administrative bodies which were lowest in the hierarchical scale—namely, with the municipalities. Of these there were no less than 44,000, each acting independently of the other, and though, according to the constitution, bound to carry out the instructions of the directories of districts and departments, able to disregard them with impunity. For the maintenance of order a Riot Act had been passed, but that the King might not take advantage of it for the suppression of constitutional rights, the municipalities alone had been empowered to put it in force. Sometimes municipal officers were unable, sometimes unwilling, to call

Weakness of  
the Central  
Government.

out the national guard for the forcible dispersion of rioters. In towns the bourgeoisie served on the national guard, and there was no want of educated men to hold office. But in rural districts there were no inhabitants except a few nobles and curés and an unlettered peasantry. In hundreds of instances the mayor and his colleagues could neither read nor write, spoke only their own patois, and were incapable even of understanding the laws that they were required to enforce. National guards, in place of protecting the noble and his family from harm, took part with their neighbours in destroying their dwelling, and in maltreating all whom interest or prejudice incited them to regard as conspirators against the revolution.

Though troops of the line could be called out by municipalities to aid in the enforcement of the Riot Act, their presence was in towns but an additional <sup>Mutinies in</sup> cause of disorder. <sup>the army.</sup> Class feeling was strongly pronounced in the army, and the men turned upon their officers, accusing them of extortion and oppression. All over the country, wherever regiments were quartered, troops mutinied, demanding milder discipline and higher pay, forming councils, seizing military chests, and compelling officers to render account of the sums that passed through their hands. These frequent mutinies alarmed men who closed their eyes to outrages committed by peasants. Supported by a large majority in the Assembly, the Marquis of Bouillé suppressed with heavy loss of life a serious mutiny that broke out in a Swiss regiment, Châteaueux, stationed at Nancy (August 31). Reforms were afterwards effected both in army and navy. The pay of the men was raised, and juries composed of both men and officers instituted for the trial of military offences.

The upper clergy, like the nobles, were alienated from



the revolution by the fusion of the three orders in one chamber, and by the appropriation of Church property, and the civil constitution of the clergy, were rendered irreconcilable enemies. They accused the Assembly of seeking to destroy the Catholic religion, and denounced the civil constitution as unlawful interference with the Schism in the Church. matters of Church government and discipline, which, as being matters of faith, were beyond the cognisance of the state. But these attempts to excite hostility against the Assembly had little success. The great body of the nation had its interests far too closely bound up with the revolution to be tempted into a crusade against it. The peasantry had no quarrel with ecclesiastical changes which affected neither eyes nor ears. The civil constitution itself did but reform the Church on the basis laid down in the *cahiers*. It was only in the south where the existence of Protestants excited religious rivalry, and the population was most fanatic and intolerant, that the work of the Assembly met with any serious resistance. At Perpignon, Tarn, Toulouse, and other towns, the election of administrative bodies and the closing of the monasteries gave rise to rioting and loss of life; while at Nimes, where Protestants formed a third of the inhabitants, the streets for three days ran with blood. Amongst the lower clergy there was small disposition to follow the lead of their ecclesiastical superiors. The state, which had appropriated church property, had improved their material condition, and raised their position within the Church. Of the monks, two-thirds elected to abandon monastic life. Nevertheless, the arguments employed against recognition of the civil constitution disturbed the minds of the curés, and the enforcement by the Assembly of an oath as a condition for holding any benefice or office, placed in the hands of the bishops, who had been driven



by the loss of their revenues into unappeasable hostility to the revolution, an arm of which they were not slow to avail themselves, and by which they created a schism within the Church (November 27). This oath engaged the taker to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the King, and to maintain the constitution. The object which the Assembly had in view was to replace bishops who refused to take part in carrying out the new laws by men attached to the revolution. The fact, however, that the oath might be interpreted to imply acknowledgment of the lawfulness of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the provisions of which were inconsistent with the Papal system, was left out of account. The Pope declared that those who had taken it were schismatics, and cut off from communion with the Church. Passive acceptance of the civil constitution was, therefore, no longer possible to the curés. Of 138 bishops and archbishops only four took the oath, and two-thirds of the secular clergy refused it. Many members of the regular orders, however, took it, so that in the end about 60,000 ecclesiastics, or half of the clergy of France, accepted the new arrangements.

By the imposition of this oath discord was aroused in every department. The Assembly granted nonjurors a pension, and allowed them to officiate in parish churches. The result was that in two-thirds of the parishes of France there were two ministers, nominally of the same persuasion, struggling, the one to gain, the other to maintain, influence over the flock. The constitutional priest represented the nonjuror, or former incumbent, as a plotter against the laws and the constitution; the latter represented the intruder as a schismatic, incapable of administering any sacrament, so that persons married or children baptised by him were in reality neither married nor baptised. Here nonjurors

were regarded as enemies to the State ; there the constitutional clergy as enemies to religion ; and whichever side was the stronger proceeded to acts of violence against the other. Generally, in the north of France, the nonjurors had comparatively small influence ; and it was only in certain provinces, where they had the support of the peasantry—in Poitou, Auvergne, Alsace, and parts of Artois, Franche-Comté, Champagne, Languedoc, and Bretagne—that any large portion of the population exhibited zeal in their behalf.

Bold and radical reformers as the makers of the constitution proved themselves, monarchical sentiment and distrust of the political capacity of some million and a half of their countrymen had caused them at times to shrink from carrying out fully Rousseau's theory of the sovereignty of the people. Hence, while their work was on one side attacked by the party of reaction, on the other it was decried by the extreme left, as being in contradiction to the principles which the Assembly had itself proclaimed in the Declaration of Rights. Outside the Assembly these views were even more strongly expressed. One of the most noted journalists of the time,

Brissot, combined with ultra-democratic tendencies a firm belief in the advantages of individual liberty, and was a zealous exponent of opinions subsequently known as Girondist. His ideal form of government, which he aspired to see established in France, was a democratic republic, where no civil or political distinctions existed between man and man ; where habits of local government and obedience to the law allowed, without detriment to public order, the action of the central government to be barely visible ; where principles of free trade, liberty of the press, and religious toleration were carried systematically out ; where education, respect for labour, simple and virtuous habits of

life prevailed amongst all classes. On the ground that vice and corruption readily found footing in large towns, Brissot was averse to the capital exercising political ascendancy over the country. 'Without private morality,' he said, 'no public morality, no public spirit, and no liberty.' The goal here pointed out was truly Utopian as compared with the actual condition of things in France. Nevertheless, Brissot was credulous enough to believe that, owing to the beneficial influences of general education and free institutions, its attainment would be possible in the course of some twenty or thirty years.

In Camille Desmoulins the levelling principles of the revolution found their ablest advocate. He belonged to the lower section of the middle class; and, while speaking in the name of the people, <sup>Desmoulins.</sup> gave expression to the intense jealousy with which men in his position of life regarded claims of property or of birth to political or social distinction. Young, naive, and enthusiastic, Desmoulins was incapable of throwing dust in his own eyes or in the eyes of others, and from the first avowed that even the form of monarchical government was incompatible with the principles that his party held. Since, however, the Assembly ordained that France was to have a king, he expressed his readiness to take off his hat when Louis passed by, but he refused to recognise Marie Antoinette as Queen, and only made mention of her as the King's wife. Desmoulins was no precisian like Brissot, and did not concern himself with the moral disposition of his fellow-countrymen. When attacking men whom he designated as 'reactionaries' and 'aristocrats,' without heed of consequences, he made use of every arm which served his end—irony, calumny, and gross exaggeration. The prevailing state of anarchy he made light of. Rousseau had said that the people were by nature merciful and

forgiving, and his disciples palliated acts of ferocity on the score of ignorance and misery. Was it to be expected, Desmoulins asked, that after centuries of debasement liberty could be obtained without a little blood-letting?

Marat, a writer of a third type—called, after the title of his journal, the ‘People’s Friend’—had no faith in any of the distinctive principles of the time. He did not believe in the goodness of human nature, nor in reason as the main lever by which to reconstitute society and government, nor in the political capacity of his countrymen, and was as ready to throw suspicion on the people’s nominees as Brissot on the integrity of men put in office by the King. He did not regard either commercial or individual liberty as necessarily calculated to increase the happiness and prosperity of the masses. The goal to which he pointed was a shadowy one of a democratic state, where mediocrity ruled, and government provided that the working-classes lacked neither labour nor bread. His means were the re-establishment of absolute power and the use of force. Since officials were corrupt, the upper classes seeking power merely for selfish ends, the people ignorant and easily deceived, Marat proposed to invest a dictator with authority to establish genuine equality by crushing under foot the possessors of wealth and talent. As, however, there appeared no probability of the adoption of this plan, he filled the pages of his journal with incentives to murder and insurrection, advising the people to secure their happiness by rising and killing their enemies in a body. Some thousands of heads laid low, the true era of freedom and prosperity would open.

Besides Brissot, Desmoulins, and Marat, there were a number of other writers who in words declared their loyalty to the constitution, while they excited discontent

against it, called in question the patriotism and good faith of all who did not agree with themselves, and rendered harder the task of maintaining order.

They had different aims and different views of life, but on certain points they were all agreed, and for the time the points of agreement alone came into prominence. With one voice they cast bitter reproaches on the Assembly for dividing Frenchmen into active and passive citizens, denying the suffrage to the latter, and excluding them from the national guard. So, again, they denounced the royal veto on decrees, on the ground that it subjected the will of the sovereign people to the will of the king. They condemned the Riot Act, and attacked the Assembly whenever sanction was given to the employment of military force against rioters. When the mutiny at Nancy was suppressed in blood, a loud cry of indignation was raised against Lafayette and other deputies who on that occasion abandoned the popular side. The ultra-democrats formed undoubtedly but a minority of the population. The majority of Frenchmen were content with the constitution, and had no desire to make more radical changes than those already accomplished. Many causes, however, enabled the ultra-democrats to exercise influence quite out of proportion to their numerical strength. It was not merely that the Government was weak, but also that there was no cohesion between classes, and that there was no class capable of leading the nation by obtaining its entire confidence. Suspicion of the nobles was so strong that they were already nearly in the position of a proscribed class. The bourgeoisie had not the habit even of administering local affairs, and was itself regarded with suspicion by the class beneath it. The people, both ignorant and discontented, regarded those men who were for the time in office as responsible for

Sources of  
influence of  
ultra-democrats.

their misery. If corn and bread were dear, the municipal officer who would not lower their price was denounced as an aristocrat, and his life was threatened. Men of the middle class, engaged in professional and other pursuits, withdrew in large numbers from political life. The ultra-democrats, active, united, and unscrupulous, were therefore able, although a minority, to put themselves forward as representatives of France, and gradually to engross the direction of affairs in their own hands.

In the National Assembly which represented France as it was in 1789, the party did not, as has been seen, number more than from twenty to thirty, but its weakness in the Assembly was fully atoned for by its strength in the Jacobins. This society had developed into

Influence  
exercised by  
Jacobin  
clubs.

a political organ which was none the less powerful because its authority was not recognised by the laws. During 1790 and 1791

Jacobin clubs were established in most provincial towns, and even in mere villages. They were generally affiliated to the head or mother society at Paris, with which they maintained a regular correspondence. Thus, at a time when all other bonds of cohesion had been destroyed or had fallen away, there was rising into existence over France, outside the constitution, a network of authorities, directed from a common centre in Paris. The clubs, in fact, perpetually interfered with the administrative bodies, tendering advice which often assumed the form of dictation or intimidation, and were always able, if they pleased, to get up demonstrations in favour of their own views. They represented that spirit of distrust which was everywhere felt and seemed to pervade the very air men breathed; and if more moderate politicians disapproved the violent language often used in them, and their assumptions of administrative authority, they did not desire their suppression, for the reason that their fear of

danger from this source was less than their fear of the triumph of reactionists and the undoing of the work of the revolution.

In September 1790, the ministry had been dissolved in consequence of attacks made on it by the Jacobins of Paris. Necker, painfully alive to his loss of popularity, left the country unregretted (September), and his colleagues, alarmed at the charges brought against them, shortly afterwards resigned. Louis after this put men in office known to be opposed to the restoration of the old order, but they possessed as little influence on the Assembly as their predecessors. The right refused them support, because they did not belong to the party of reaction; and the left, because their attachment to the existing constitution was called in question.

Besides the Jacobin Club, other machinery existed at Paris by aid of which the ultra-democrats were gradually paving the way for their own advent to power. Commune of Paris. In September 1790, the commune of Paris was reorganised in accordance with a special law, being divided into 48 sections, each of which had its primary assembly, composed of active citizens. Out of a population of 800,000, 84,000 were entitled to vote. Each of the 48 primary assemblies, commonly known as the sections, had a permanent committee, whose business it was to execute the orders of the municipality, and to carry out police regulations within the section. The municipality itself, of which Bailly was re-elected mayor, consisted of a general council of 96 and an executive of 44 members. It did its best to maintain order and support the constitution. Its position, however, was a difficult one. Work was scarce, crime rife, the prisons crowded. Liberty of speech and of the press was on all sides abused. There were no laws by which political agitation, though it took the form of treason to the constitu-



tion, could be legally suppressed. In the sections, owing to the withdrawal into private life of men of moderate views, the ultra-democrats were often able to obtain the upper hand. The permanent committees, in place of obeying the municipality, sometimes disputed authority with it or took an independent course of their own. All the 48 primary assemblies were entitled to meet whenever eight of their number made the demand in legal form. In the poorer sections agitators, by unceasing hostile criticism, undermined amongst the lower classes the popularity of the Assembly, of the municipality, of Lafayette, and of the national guard. Amongst many popular clubs, founded in different parts of Paris, the *Cordeliers* south of the Seine acquired special notoriety. Here presided Danton, an orator distinguished among his fellows by the zeal and energy which he flung into the contest with the municipality.

As the revolution thus ran its course, and the ultra-democratic party, with the populace behind it, threatened by its activity and unscrupulousness in time to make itself entire master of the political arena, the stronger had become Mirabeau's desire to enter the ministry and direct the counsels of the King. From entrance into the council he was, however, for the time hopelessly debarred. To nip his ambition in the bud, Necker and his colleagues, shortly after the King's arrival in Paris, had instigated the Assembly to decree that no deputy should be a minister. In the spring of 1790 the King and Queen were induced to enter into secret communication with the great orator. He tendered them advice in a written form, and the King in return for his services made him monthly payments. But Mirabeau soon experienced that except in trivial matters his advice was never followed. He demanded a far fuller and more generous acceptance of the principles

Mirabeau's  
policy and  
death.



of the revolution than it was possible for Louis to give. He accepted as absolute gain, both for the King and the nation, the fall of the parliaments, the abolition of privileges, the destruction of the orders of nobles and clergy, and the freeing of land and labour. Unceasingly he urged and implored Louis to win the confidence of the nation by turning his back wholly on the past, and separating the cause of the crown from that of the upper orders. 'To accomplish a reaction,' he wrote, 'you must destroy at a blow a whole generation or make blank the memories of twenty-five millions of men.' Mirabeau accepted also as the noblest fruits of the revolution freedom of worship, freedom of the press, and the freedom of the individual from arbitrary treatment in property and person. But while detesting government that was arbitrary, or which went astray through want of means to test public opinion, Mirabeau had little faith in the wisdom of collective bodies of men, or in the political intelligence of the middle and lower classes, of whom he believed that, in the long run, the one would sell political liberty for order, the other for bread. He, therefore, looked to the King to be the guide and leader of the nation. His belief was that if only the existing barriers of distrust were broken down, the middle-class, relieved from fear of reaction in favour of the nobility and the Church, would readily assent to the establishment of a strong executive and the repeal of the decrees making administrative bodies independent of the central government, and excluding ministers from the legislature. He had, moreover, the penetration to see that the abolition of aristocratic institutions, and the parceling out of the country into equal divisions, without historical traditions, were measures destructive of variety and vigour in the national life, and thereby favourable to the exercise of power by the crown. Unless the course

that he advised were followed he predicted the fall of the throne. 'The mob,' he repeatedly said of the King and Queen, 'will trample on their corpses.' In despair of getting the existing Assembly to repeal its decrees, Mirabeau advised the King to quit Paris, and after doing all in his power to win the middle-class to his side to make, if necessary, an appeal to arms. While, however, he was urging such projects on Louis his naturally strong constitution, overtaxed by his exertions, broke down, and he died at the age of forty-two (April 2, 1791). It is wrong to regard Mirabeau as having been false to his principles because he entered into a pecuniary transaction with the King. He was a monarchist before 1789, and he died one in 1791. But the low moral elevation of his character vitiated his judgment, and increased the difficulties in his path. By taking money of the King he was precluded from the possibility of obtaining his confidence. Louis and Marie Antoinette never regarded him otherwise than as a dangerous demagogue bought over. The distrust in which his fellow deputies held him was not without justification. He was quite unscrupulous as to what means he employed to gain his ends, and did not hesitate to speak words in direct opposition to his real opinion, nor to support measures which he deemed injurious, in order to lower the Assembly in the opinion of the country, and increase the possibility of bringing about a reaction in the royal favour. It is difficult to doubt that his intense mortification at being excluded from the ministry made him more ready to countenance the idea of civil war.

Although long before his death ultra-democrats had accused Mirabeau of playing a double game, they could not prove the truth of their words, and to the last the great orator retained his popularity amongst the

people. His remains were interred in the Panthéon a large church lately built on the south side of the Seine, which the Assembly had reserved for the special burial-place of Frenchmen who by their services had won the honour and gratitude of their country. A vast crowd formed his funeral procession. A lady, annoyed by the dust, complained of the municipality for neglecting to water the boulevard. 'Madam,' replied a fishwoman, 'they reckoned on our tears.' Whether true or not, the story bears witness to the feelings of the time.

When Mirabeau died a significant change of temper was drawing over the Assembly. As the framers of the constitution approached its completion the truth began to press home on them that its stability was imperilled by the continuance of disorder. They saw taxes refused, administrative bodies pursuing whatever course was right in their own eyes, peasants pillaging corn, street mobs persecuting non-jurors, soldiers refusing obedience to officers, their own popularity waning, clubs usurping authority, ultra-democratic journals discrediting the constitution, and incessantly urging on the people the duty of insurrection. Now that a free constitution was established, and reform effected in every branch of the public service, justification for this state of things from their point of view vanished. Lafayette, Barnave, the Lameths, and other deputies of the left, who in 1790 had purposely sought to render the executive weak, in 1791 began to fear lest they had overshot their mark. Yet for them to change their course was no easy matter. They still sought for popular support, and clung to the principles on which the constitution of which they had themselves been the authors was based. Fear of reaction, moreover, still weighed heavily on them. The reactionary press, in coarse and violent language condemned the entire work of the

Position of  
Constitution-  
alists.

Assembly, and threatened with the axe or the gallows all who from the opening of the States had at any time given support to revolutionary principles. Such threats were not without meaning at a time when emigrants were collecting in armed bands at Basel and Coblenz, threatening invasion; and the King's brother, the Count of Artois, was calling on foreign powers to restore by force of arms the authority of the throne.

The primary assemblies for the election of the constitutional legislature were already meeting, when an event took place which brought into clearer light the relations existing between all parties.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY.

TO the King and Queen their position had long since become intolerable. They regarded the constitution as a monstrous work, based on principles subversive of all good government. To the laws establishing the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and imposing an oath on beneficed ecclesiastics, Louis had given his official consent with reluctance, but as he was unable to obtain the sanction of the Pope to what he had done, his peace of conscience was gone. The Queen was greatly suspected of using her influence to incite her husband against the revolution. She was intensely unpopular. Up to the middle of the century France had pursued a policy of opposition to Austria. In 1756 jealousy of England, and of England's ally, the rising state of Prussia, had brought about an offensive

Flight of  
the Royal  
Family.

and defensive alliance between France and Austria. The national feeling of hostility had, however, not died out, and the insignificant part that France took in foreign affairs was ascribed not to the decadence of the monarchy, but to the Austrian alliance. To make firm the bond, the partisans of the new system had accomplished, in 1770, a marriage between Louis, then Dauphin, and Marie Antoinette, daughter of the Empress Queen, Maria Theresa. Thus, from her first entrance into the country, Marie Antoinette had been regarded with disfavour, as the pledge of an unpopular alliance. Courtiers and intriguers, opposed to the faction which had brought about her marriage, had accused her of sacrificing French to Austrian interests, and had bruited false and scandalous tales against her name. By the revolutionary journalists she was now held up to execration as the untrue wife and false Queen, the betrayer of France, who was seeking by aid of Austrian troops to put down the revolution in blood. Now that trouble had destroyed her love of dissipation and brought into relief the strong side of her character, Marie Antoinette devoted all the energy of which her mind was capable to the task of recovering for her husband and bequeathing to her son the reins of government. She found her chief pleasure in the fulfilment of her duties as wife and mother, and by her dignified bearing impressed those who came into contact with her with a high idea of her daring and intellect. Less ready, however, than her husband to make concessions, and far more so to practise deceit, she proved an evil councillor to Louis. Both desired that the constitution should fail, and regarded the increase of disorder with indifference, under the idea that suffering would speedily recall their penitent subjects to the foot of the throne. Meanwhile, Louis made repeated and public avowals of his satisfaction with the constitution, intending here-

after to withdraw his words on the plea that he was not at liberty to express his true opinion. Since the winter a plan of flight to the eastern frontier was projected, but its execution was delayed owing to want of money and troops. The Queen relied on her brother, the Emperor Leopold, to place whatever Austrian troops were in Luxemburg at her disposal in case of need. She thought that if the King were once in safety on the frontier, and able to protect his supporters, a large portion of the nation would rally round him, and that it would be possible to make a settlement which, while leaving to the country some form of constitutional government, would set the royal authority above the heads of all subjects. Rumours that the King intended flight had for months been floating about. In April, the national guard, in spite of Lafayette's remonstrances, detained by force the royal carriages when on the point of starting for the Palace of St. Cloud, a short distance outside the city.

The King and Queen had for some time been preparing for flight, though the day of departure had been from various causes delayed. Servants who could not be trusted had to be dismissed, and clothes and other articles forwarded to the frontier ready for use. On the night of June 20 the King, disguised as a valet, his sister, the Princess Elizabeth, the Queen, the two children, and their governess, left the Tuileries unobserved, and were driven in a hackney-carriage a short distance outside Paris. Here they found ready waiting them a large new travelling coach, built for the occasion, and three soldiers of the bodyguard, dressed in yellow liveries, and prepared to act as couriers. The destination of the royal party was Montmédy, close to the Luxemburg frontier; and the Marquis of Bouillé, who commanded in that quarter, had undertaken to station detachments of troops to guard the way at all the chief towns and villages after Chalons. It

was already two o'clock at night when the coach left Paris behind. The driver urged on his horses at a quick pace, some eight miles an hour, and about five o'clock in the afternoon the travellers reached Chalons-sur-Marne. At this point the most dangerous part of the journey seemed over. At the next post-house, Pont Sommevesle, Louis expected to see the first detachment of Bouillé's troops. On his arrival, a little after six, he was, however, disappointed. Bouillé had, indeed, with considerable skill, ordered the passage of troops so that detachments should be present at all the principal places on the road along which the royal party was travelling; but unfortunately at each station those in command lacked either zeal or capacity, or both. Because the coach was three or four hours behind the time expected, the troops had already withdrawn from Pont Sommevesle. At St. Menehould, Louis, who incautiously put his head out of window, was recognised by the master of the post, Drouet, who observed his likeness to the image of the King on the assignats. Though not stopped, the coach was pursued by Drouet and others, whilst the troops present in the town suffered themselves to be disarmed. About midnight the coach safely reached Varennes, a little town divided in two by the river Aire. While the bodyguards were vainly seeking in the darkness a relay of horses, which was waiting on the farther side of the bridge, Drouet and his companions rode into the town, roused the mayor, and with whatever waggons and barrels came first to hand, blocked the road over the bridge. The coach was stopped, and the travellers compelled to alight and enter a house belonging to a grocer, the procureur of the commune. This was close to the bridge, beyond which were sixty hussars in their barracks. Their officers, in place of calling them out on the first alarm, rode off to seek instructions of Bouillé, who was miles away, at Stenay. Fifty or sixty more troops arrived shortly afterwards, and



during the night it was still possible to disperse the opposers with a charge, and force a way through the barricade. The officers, unwilling to do it on their own responsibility, sought commands of Louis, who refused to take any decisive action. The Queen, nearly on her knees, implored the wife of the procureur, Madame Sauce, to let them proceed on their way. The woman expressed sympathy for her, but said that she too had a husband and children to care for. Meanwhile barricades were being strengthened, the alarm-bells were ringing through all the countryside, and by the morning the town was crowded with national guards, with whom the troops were drinking. The return journey was therefore begun, and five days after their departure the fugitives re-entered the Tuileries as prisoners (June 25).

When Louis's flight was first reported, intense alarm prevailed at Paris. It was expected that civil war, already organised, was on the point of breaking out, and that the emigrants were about to cross the frontier. The King's capture brought a sense of relief, but did not tend to lessen the difficulties of the situation. In justification of his departure, Louis had left behind him a document, in which he criticised the constitution from an unfavourable point of view, and called in question all that had been done since October 1789. Thus by act and word he had made known, without disguise, his intention not to rule in accordance with the constitution, and henceforth it was impossible that the country should have confidence in him. Ultra-democrats with one voice wisely pronounced his protest and flight a virtual abdication. Some, slow to take a decided part, amongst whom Robespierre was prominent, or desirous of putting the Duke of Orleans forward, demanded Louis's deposition and a regency; others, as Brissot, Desmoulins, and Danton, more san-

Split between constitutionalists and ultra-democrats.



guine and more outspoken, called for the establishment of a republic. The Cordeliers, under Danton's guidance, covered the walls with placards in favour of a republic. The Jacobins, following Robespierre, stopped short of this, and asked only for the deposition of Louis. Closing their eyes, however, to the undoubted fact of the King's insincerity, the deputies of the left and centre rallied together to support the tottering throne. They were aware that the republican party was but a small minority. Lafayette and Barnave, as well as other deputies, held themselves pledged in honour to Louis to maintain his throne. In case of deposition, there was increased danger of involving France in foreign war. Neither a change of succession nor a regency appeared desirable. The King's brothers were emigrants, the Duke of Orleans a tool in the hands of Parisian demagogues. Above all, there was fear that the deposition of Louis would tend to undermine the constitution itself, and give increased influence to the advocates of pure democracy. Under the influence of such motives, the Assembly determined to restore the executive power to Louis, should he accept the constitution when presented to him as a completed whole. The republican party attempted a demonstration against this decision. On Sunday, July 17, a large gathering of persons assembled in the Champ de Mars, where a petition was signed asking the Assembly to reconsider its decrees. The meeting itself was not illegal, and in character perfectly peaceful. It was possible, however, that within twenty-four hours the petition would be brought before the Assembly supported by an armed and threatening mob. Urged on by the monarchists, the municipal officers, accompanied by Lafayette and the national guard, marched to the place of assemblage. Before the Riot Act was read or dispersion possible, some companies fired, in irritation, into the throng, killing and maim-

ing several persons, men, women, and children. General flight followed, and the petition was no more heard of.

This event, known in the annals of the revolution as the massacre of the Champ de Mars, caused complete severance between the men who were bent on maintaining the constitution and the ultra-democratic party. A schism took place in the Jacobins. The constitutionalists founded a new club, the Feuillants, so called because it met in a convent formerly belonging to monks of that name, while the ultra-democrats remained in undisputed possession of the Jacobins. Amongst the constitutionalists or Feuillants were Lafayette, Barnave, the Lameths, and all the most prominent men of the centre and left. Could they have done their work over again, they would have introduced material changes in the constitution, with the double object of making it more acceptable to the King, and enabling the ministry to exercise control over the administrative bodies. Their main fear was that, after the dissolution of the existing Assembly, new men would come into power who, having had no hand in framing the constitution, would not have the same interest as themselves in sustaining it. According to a constitutional law, those who had been deputies could neither enter the ministry nor hold any government appointment for a certain number of years; while a special law forbade the election of men who had been members of the present constituent Assembly to the ensuing Legislature. Robespierre had proposed this latter law in April 1791, and to obtain its adoption had appealed to the deputies to give proof of disinterestedness. When the constitutional laws were adopted in a body, ready for final presentation to Louis, some few amendments were made, but the attempt of the constitutionalists to obtain the repeal of these important disqualifications failed. The right voted with

Attempt to  
revise the  
Constitu-  
tion.

Robespierre and Pétion, rejoicing over the falling out of their opponents.

Louis, when the constitution was presented to him, undertook to govern in accordance with it, and the deputies then dispersed to give place to their successors (September 30). Called upon to effect in the course of a few months changes which could only be accomplished without convulsions in the course of years, whatever their errors, they had rendered France many and great services. By their legal reforms alone they did away with an untold amount of mental and physical suffering. By their economical and financial reforms they paved the way for a new era in agriculture and industrialism. If, under passion and prejudice, they had on occasions wantonly increased the number and fury of opponents, yet much that they had been called on to do remained still undone, and when they closed the sittings there was small prospect that the tide of revolution would stop at the limit which they had drawn. They had found neither time nor opportunity to establish any general system of poor relief or any national system of education. By their decrees dealing with proprietary rights they had struck at the root of the old law, but the work of promulgating a new code they left to those who came after them. With the fiefs had fallen the law of primogeniture, but liberty of devise had been left in the main unrestricted, though in default of a will all relations equal in blood inherited equally. This principle of equal division was not a speculative invention of the revolution, but as regards land held by certain tenures, it had already existed in some parts of France. The finances of the state had been restored only on paper. All the expenses of government were regulated and the civil list fixed. Four main branches of the revenue, tobacco and salt monopolies,

excise duties, and duties on wine had been abolished. The yearly expenditure, including the expenses of the Established Church, was estimated at 27,900,000*l.*, of which 21,350,000*l.* had to be raised by taxation. In place of the *taille* a tax of 13,125,000*l.*, rated by local boards, was imposed on lands and buildings. Taxes of 2,625,000*l.* were imposed on personal property. The remaining 6,000,000*l.* were to be raised by various forms of indirect taxation, custom duties, stamp taxes, and trade patents. The debt, however, during these two and a half years of revolution had been greatly augmented, and the deficit increased. The holders of the abolished offices had been liberally indemnified, and the reforms effected in all departments cost the nation no less than 61,200,000*l.*, swelling the state debt to more than 87,500,000*l.* Meanwhile the people had refused to pay the old taxes long before their abolition by the Assembly, and it was now only with difficulty that some portion of the new was collected. Not only to pay state creditors, but also to cover the expenses of government, resort had been had to new issues of assignats, and in the spring of 1791 the paper money fell in value about ten per cent. Metal money became scarce, being sent out of the kingdom or kept in reserve. To supply the circulation, assignats of a few shillings value had been created, and thus their fall in value affected all classes. In September 1791 there were in circulation assignats to the value of about 48,125,000*l.*

Marie Antoinette and Louis had no other aim in accepting the constitution than to deceive the nation until foreign powers were ready to act in their  
Plans of the Queen. behalf. After her return from Varennes the Queen repeatedly urged on her brother, the Emperor Leopold, to effect the meeting of a European congress for the settlement of French affairs. This congress was to have at its disposition an army; but the Queen

wished that war should be avoided. Her expectation was that the country, under terror of invasion, would gladly accept the mediation of the King, and consent to a remodelling of the constitution according to his wishes. She sought to separate the cause of the crown alike from the cause of emigrants and of constitutionalists. She recalled with bitterness the opposition of the nobles to the government before 1789, and deeply resented their subsequent flight as a base desertion of the royal cause. Their present conduct stood in the way of the accomplishment of her own plans and heightened her feelings of resentment. They refused to accept as sincere the King's acceptance of the constitution ; they excited the country by threats of invasion and vengeance ; and, by representing themselves as defenders of the monarchy, brought on Louis suspicion of being their accomplice. 'The cowards,' she indignantly wrote, 'first to abandon us, and then to require that we should think only of them and their interests !' To alliance with the constitutionalists Marie Antoinette was as averse as to alliance with the emigrants. Even were they willing and able to make some modifications in the constitution, to rule on their terms was to rule under their tutorship. Accordingly, while pretending to be acting with them, she looked forward with impatience to the day when she might with safety show her hand and prove them her tools and dupes.

There was, however, small probability that a European congress would meet ; still less that the nation would, without resistance, submit to foreign interference. Europe was in a disturbed condition. The great powers had no confidence in one <sup>State of</sup> Europe. another, nor were they desirous of acting in union. The empire of which the Queen's brother was the head was composed of more than 300 states, greatly varying in size.

The Peace of Westphalia, concluded at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648), had assured the princes all the rights of independent and absolute rulers. Imperial institutions were in decay. The military organisation of the empire was very defective and inefficient for its defence. The Diet consisted merely of a few diplomatists, sitting permanently at Ratisbon, who were representatives of the larger states, and whom the smaller entrusted with their votes. Under Frederick the Great (1740-1786) Prussia had developed into a strong power, which acted as a rival to Austria within the empire. On all important occasions the larger states followed the lead either of the Emperor or of the King of Prussia, and between the cabinets of Vienna and Berlin a bitter antagonism existed. Russia was another state which, during the past hundred years, had risen into prominence. The Empress Catherine II. was an able and ambitious woman, who had made use of the rivalry existing between Prussia and Austria to interfere with effect in the affairs of Central Europe. Throughout the century, all the great powers, influenced by ambition and a desire for strengthening their frontiers, had pursued a policy of territorial aggrandisement. Louis XIV. had taken from the empire Alsace and Lorraine; Frederick the Great had torn Silesia from Austria; in 1772, Catherine II., Frederick the Great, and Maria Theresa together had deprived Poland of some of her provinces; more recently the Emperor Joseph II., son of Maria Theresa, had sought to incorporate Bavaria with the Austrian dominions, and had formed an alliance with Catherine for the spoliation of Turkey. In 1783 Catherine obtained the Crimea, thus extending her dominions to the Black Sea. Under this condition of things, the main security of the weaker states was found in the jealousy existing between the more powerful. The principle of the balance

of power required that no large alterations should be made in the map of Europe, and that no one power should make territorial acquisitions unless others obtained an equivalent. Thus the opposition of Frederick the Great had foiled Joseph's project of incorporating Bavaria. It was the traditional policy of France to support Sweden, Poland, and Turkey against aggression, and the readiness with which the first partition of Poland was carried out in 1772 was wholly owing to the decadence into which the French monarchy had fallen under Louis XV.

In 1789, when the States-General met, Joseph and Catherine were engaged in hostilities with Turkey, while England, Holland, and Prussia threatened to take part in the conflict on behalf of the Porte. This war in the east, and the possibility of a European conflict diverted attention from affairs in France.

In February 1790, however, the enterprising and ambitious Joseph II. died; and his brother and successor, Leopold II., a prince of cool and cautious temperament, made it his chief object to restore order within his own dominions, more especially in Hungary and Belgium, which were still in a disturbed state owing to Joseph's reforms. To insure Austria against being attacked by Prussia, he made, in July 1790, a treaty with Frederick William II., nephew of Frederick the Great, at Reichenbach, and, to free his hands more completely, entered into negotiations with Turkey. He had no disposition to attempt the restoration of absolute monarchy in France. It was the belief of continental statesmen that where, as in Poland or in England, a constitutional form of monarchy existed, the executive was necessarily weak and precluded from acting with vigour or decision in foreign affairs. Hence neither Leopold nor his chancellor, Kaunitz, took exception to

Europe and  
the revolution.



the establishment of constitutional monarchy in France, which indeed they regarded as a pure gain to Austria. But after the flight of the royal family to Varennes, and the manifestation of republican opinions in Paris, foreign princes began to look on Louis's cause as the cause of kings, and to dread lest revolutionary principles, spreading beyond France, should render their own thrones insecure. Leopold, desirous to aid his sister, sought the alliance of Frederick William, and made peace with the Porte at Sistova. A meeting was held between the two allied princes at Pilnitz, where they signed a declaration expressing their readiness to undertake armed intervention in French affairs, if other European powers would unite with them (August 27). Practically this declaration was no more than a threat. Neither Leopold nor Frederick William contemplated immediate resource to arms. The English cabinet, directed by Pitt, had already refused to take part in common action. The alliance between Austria and Prussia was as yet but loosely knit and was regarded with distrust by the old school of both Austrian and Prussian statesmen. Affairs in the east, moreover, called for unremitting attention. Poland, situated between three powerful and grasping neighbours, was a prey to perpetual anarchy. The monarchy was elective, and the king was kept in check by the fierce and seditious nobility by whose votes he was placed on the throne. The peasantry were downtrodden serfs, and the middle class without political rights; king and nobles struggling for power invited foreign interference, and Russia and Prussia by turns exercised ascendancy at Warsaw. In May 1791, a patriotic party, eager to secure national independence by the establishment of a strong government, obtained the adoption of a new constitution, curtailing the privileges of the nobles and making the crown hereditary. This measure at once



excited the hostility of Catherine. She gave support to its opponents, and in order that she might carry out her designs in Poland undisturbed made peace with Turkey, and sought to stir up a European war in the west, encouraging the French emigrants, and instigating the German powers to interfere in their behalf. Catherine's zeal, however, rendered Leopold the less willing to involve himself in hostilities, since events on the Vistula were of much more moment to him than the details of the French constitution. When, therefore, in September, Louis agreed to rule in accordance with the constitution, he affected to regard him as a free agent, and in the hope that the constitutional party would maintain the upper hand, turned a deaf ear to his sister's entreaties that he would obtain the meeting of a European congress. The King of Prussia entertained a violent hatred of the principles of the revolution, but Polish affairs and distrust of Austria restrained him from coming forward as a champion of Louis's cause. Thus, while continental princes agreed that the revolutionary tide must be stayed, nothing was settled as to time and means.

In such a state of foreign affairs the new Legislative Assembly met (October 1), the only one which ever came together in accordance with that constitution The new which had cost so much labour to build up. Legislature. It consisted of 740 deputies, who represented exclusively revolutionary France. There were in it no partisans of the old rule, and no reformers with aristocratic tendencies. The right side was now composed of constitutionalists, who held that only by close adherence to the constitution could the country be safely guided between the double perils of reaction and anarchy. Though without confidence in the King, they regarded him as much less powerful for harm than the leaders of the Parisian populace, and sought on all occasions to maintain him

in the unrestrained exercise of his constitutional prerogatives.\* The left of the Assembly, though avowedly constitutionalist, at heart cherished a desire for the establishment of a more democratic government, and the abolition of monarchy. A group of men, remarkable for youth, talent, and eloquence, sat on this side of the house. They were called Girondists, because their chief orators—Vergniaud, Gensonné, Guadet, and others who formerly belonged to the bar of Bordeaux—had been returned by the department of the Gironde. These men were fervent democrats and republicans, and at the same time defenders of the principle of individual liberty. They were also sceptics and theists, inheritors of Voltaire's passionate scorn and hatred of Catholicism. Brissot, who now had a seat in the house, belonged to them, and his journal became the recognised organ of their party. Their policy was mainly dictated by a theoretic aversion to monarchical government, and nervous apprehension of the consequences of Louis's treachery. Alive, however, to the fact that public opinion was in favour of the constitution, they formed no definite plans for its destruction, but endeavoured to obtain the adoption of measures calculated to reveal the King's duplicity, and so to weaken the hold that the throne had upon the affection of the nation. The body of deputies forming the centre of the Assembly sincerely desired the maintenance of the constitution, but had no reliance on the good faith of Louis, and hence oscillated between the right and the left, being desirous of maintaining the throne, and yet being afraid to give to the executive a hearty support or to take strong measures for the suppression of insurrectionary movements.

Important questions pressed upon the Legislature for solution. The ecclesiastical settlement attempted by the constituent Assembly was being daily proved impractic-

able. In many cases the administrative bodies strove hard to preserve the peace and to keep the Churches open, both to the nonjurors and their rivals ; Ecclesiastical policy. but their efforts were hopeless. Without a tical policy. military force always at command it was practically impossible to maintain both parties in their legal rights. In some departments the nonjurors set themselves at the head of insurgent peasants. In others they were subjected to insult and outrage. At Paris they could celebrate mass only under the protection of national guards. During the summer of 1791 many administrative bodies, on the plea that by no other means could order be preserved, prohibited nonjurors from officiating in parish churches, and required them to reside in the chief town of the department, away from their former parishioners. The Legislature had no choice but either to abandon the imposition of the oath or to follow it out to its logical consequences, and to regard those who refused to take it as enemies to the existing order. The last course accorded best with the prejudices of the majority, who accused the nonjurors of being the sole authors of troubles to which the situation itself could not fail to give rise. Some on the left proposed to exile them in a body. The Girondists detested them as the most bigoted of Catholics. The right weakly sought, on the ground of religious liberty, to leave matters as they were ; but the centre here voted with the left, and a decree was passed depriving nonjurors of their pensions, and preventing their officiating in public (November 25). Louis, however, refused his sanction, and the situation remained unchanged.

A second and no less important question before the Assembly was the policy to be pursued in relation to the emigrants and to foreign powers. The Elector Foreign policy. of Treves and other rulers of the small states, lay and ecclesiastical, on the Rhine, gave encouragement

and aid to the emigrants in arming against France. These princes were eager to involve the larger states of the Empire in hostilities. Their territories were amongst the worst governed in Germany, and they feared lest revolutionary principles should prove contagious, and affect their own subjects. Many of them had, besides, a special ground of complaint. In Alsace and Lorraine they possessed rights as seigneurs, secured to them by the Treaty of Westphalia, and of which the decrees of August 4 (p. 50) had deprived them. This matter, however, might easily have been arranged between France and the Empire had there been a disposition on either side to maintain peace.

The principles of foreign policy pursued by the cabinets of Europe, and the theories promulgated by the revolutionists, were in direct opposition to one another. Statesmen took no account of national forces or aspirations, but, intent on territorial acquisitions, were ready to distribute populations of the same race and tongue among different masters as suited diplomatic combinations. On the contrary, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people involved a right to national independence. The constituent Assembly had publicly declared the aversion of the French nation to offensive wars, and had given proof of its pacific tendencies by limiting the army to 150,000 men. But the flight of the King and the drawing together of Austria and Prussia gave rise to great uneasiness as to the intentions of those powers, while the threat of interference in the Declaration of Pilnitz gave deep offence to the national pride. Measures were taken for increasing the army by an additional force of 97,000 volunteers. The Legislative, like the constituent Assembly, repudiated ideas of aggression and conquest, but became rapidly inflamed with warlike zeal. It gave expression to the intense

feelings of hatred existing against the emigrants by a decree condemning to death as traitors all Frenchmen who, after the end of the year, should still be beyond the frontier in arms against their country (November 9). Louis refused to sanction the decree, and thus increased the suspicion resting on him of being the secret accomplice of those against whom it was aimed. The Girondists desired war with Austria. They were aware that there was no immediate danger of attack from the great powers, and that both the emigrants and the princes who abetted them, unless supported by the Emperor, were impotent ; but they believed that, during war, the King's duplicity would be clearly revealed, and judged it the wiser course, in place of waiting for attack, to begin hostilities, while Leopold still sought to avoid them. Enthusiastic confidence in the national spirit to fight to the last extremity in defence of its independence, and the expectation that the principles of the revolution would spread rapidly amongst other nations, and cause them to rise against their rulers, led the Girondists to entertain no doubt of the success of their arms. 'Let us tell Europe,' exclaimed a fiery orator, Isnard, 'that if cabinets engage kings in a war against peoples, we will engage peoples in a war against kings.' Of the constitutionalists few cared to avoid a rupture. The majority looked forward to war as a means of insuring the ascendancy of their own party, and of bringing into existence a powerful army under Lafayette's command. There was no difficulty in finding a ground of quarrel with Leopold either as Emperor or as King of Hungary and Bohemia. The Assembly threatened to attack the empire unless the bands of emigrants on the frontier were dispersed. Afterwards, shifting its ground, it accused Leopold of having broken the treaty of 1756 between France and Austria, and declared that a refusal to renounce all treaties directed

against the independence of the French nation—in other words, his understanding with the King of Prussia—would be held tantamount to a declaration of war (January 25, 1792). This hostile attitude of the Assembly hastened the conclusion of a defensive alliance between Austria and Prussia; after which Leopold, no longer caring to delay hostilities, added fuel to the flame by claiming a right of interference in the internal affairs of France, and by accusing the Assembly of being under the illegal ascendancy of republicans and Jacobins.

The outbreak of war might probably have been postponed, but it could hardly have been definitely averted. The doctrines of social and political equality announced by the French revolutionists were not, as were the arguments from law and precedent which had in the seventeenth century risen to the surface in the English Long Parliament, adapted merely to the country in which they arose. They were applicable to all the states of Western Europe. Hence, they acquired all the force of a religious propaganda. As in the sixteenth century men were not asked whether they were Germans or Frenchmen, but whether they were Catholics or Protestants, so now they would be first asked whether they were on the side of the revolutionary opinions or not. Before that great division of opinions all national antagonisms sank into comparative insignificance. The French revolutionist could not long avoid being carried away by a fierce desire to give effectual aid to his brother revolutionist abroad, and the German or English anti-revolutionist could not long keep his hands out of the fray whilst the classes in France with whom he warmly sympathised were being borne down and oppressed.

The ministry at this important crisis was disunited and without the confidence of the Assembly. While the Assembly desired war, Delessart, minister of foreign

affairs, sought to maintain peace. The minister of war, Narbonne, a friend of Lafayette, flung so much energy and enthusiasm into the work of making preparations for hostilities that he won support from both sides of the Assembly. Bertrand de Molleville, minister of marine, was a reactionary. Louis through aversion to Lafayette dismissed Narbonne from office. Brissot took advantage of the discontent that this step excited amongst constitutionalists to bring a charge of high treason against Delessart for betraying the interests of France to Austria (March 10). This attack led to a break-up of the cabinet, and Louis, whose one object now was to tide with safety over the next few months, till the arrival of the allies at Paris, put in office men who represented the opinions dominant in the Assembly. Roland and Clavière, respectively ministers of the interior and of finance, belonged to the Girondists. Dumouriez, minister of foreign affairs, was an able, self-confident and unscrupulous soldier, eager to obtain distinction and a career. On March 1, Leopold had died: His son and successor, Francis, a young man of four-and-twenty, who was some months later elected Emperor, cared less to avoid a rupture than his father had done. The new French ministry was above all a war ministry, and on the official proposition of the King, the Assembly amid loud applause, declared war against Francis, as King of Hungary and Bohemia (April 20). Wars have often been entered on with as little ground of offence, but rarely with more rashness than when the Assembly thus engaged France in hostilities with Austria, which would necessarily involve a war also with her ally Prussia. The French fortresses were out of repair and the army completely disorganised. Since 1789 hundreds of officers had resigned, deserted, or had been driven away by their men. According to the laws of the constituent Assembly under



officers were elected out of the ranks, and officers generally advanced according to length of service. There were, however, hundreds of vacancies still unfilled, and desertions both in army and navy continued. Of the 150,000 troops of the line, 50,000 had yet to be recruited. The 97,000 volunteers ordered to be raised were for the most part unarmed and untrained.

The peril of the country excited on all sides suspicion and distrust, increasing the bitterness of party strife and threatening to undermine the standing ground alike of constitutionalists and Girondists. Girondists as little as constitutionalists had an interest in making further alterations in the bases of social order. If the Girondists held more democratic notions of life and govern-  
Robespierre  
and the  
Jacobins. ment, yet by equality they understood equality of rights alone, and were to the full as zealous defenders of the principles of internal free trade and individual liberty. They were also political purists and precisians, who, while decrying the aristocracies of birth and wealth, were intent on founding one of talent and virtue. Hence no sooner had they obtained possession of the ministries than they came into sharp collision with whatever members of the ultra-democratic party did not share their genuine devotion to impracticable ideals. A spirit different from theirs was by this time rising into prominence amongst the Jacobins. The saddest result of the long exercise of arbitrary authority is that it renders mutual confidence impossible. The legacy of the old system of government to the new France was distrust. Man distrusted man, and class distrusted class. Thousands of persons who had embarked in the revolution full of sentimental hope and confidence were now rushing into the opposite extreme. They had known so little of their fellow creatures as to imagine that the new equality would be received with enthusiasm, even by those who



had profited the most by the old inequality ; and they now fancied that under every reluctance to accept the fullest results of the revolution was concealed a deep design to betray it. A perfect self-confidence easily leads to the most deep-rooted suspicion ; and those who, after the long seclusion from all participation in practical politics to which most Frenchmen had been condemned for centuries, were inevitably ignorant how complicated modern society is, readily imagined all who differed from them to be traitors to their country. Not only was this suspicion directed against the King and those of the once privileged orders who remained in France, but it fastened upon all superiority of station or of intellect. Many who had been educated in the theories of Rousseau to believe unreasonably in the purity and intelligence of the masses, learned no less unreasonably to distrust every man who in any way rose above the common level, and offered himself with more or less qualification as a rallying point to the disorganised society around him.

The man who most represented this prevailing distrust of all superiority would in the end gain for a time that very superiority which he himself denied to be desirable, but which was required by the very necessities of human nature. Such a man was Maximilien Robespierre. A lawyer from Arras, he had been so far influenced by the teaching of Rousseau as to throw up a lucrative judicial post, lest he should be compelled to condemn a fellow-creature to death. From such feelings of pity for the human race to cruelty towards individuals there is in times of revolution, but a short step. The few who stood in the way of the entrance of the people into the promised land, where liberty, equality, and fraternity were to become the accepted rule of life, soon came to be regarded as monsters of wickedness, whom it was the duty of every good citizen to sweep away from the earth for very

kindness' sake. The time for such a proscription had not yet come. But Robespierre, though he was now excluded from the Legislature, as having been a member of the last Assembly, was always on the alert in the Jacobins, ready in dry and acrid tones to draw attention to every delinquency of those who were struggling to build up authority. The social and political formulas of Rousseau alone had taken root in his mind. He cared for equality, and he cared for democracy. For individual liberty he ceased to care as soon as he found himself in a position to get the better of his adversaries by resorting to the arms of absolute and despotic governments. He was certain to be a dangerous and a cruel opponent. His mind was logical and narrow, he was ambitious and envious of all above himself, cunning and hypocritical, yet earnest in pursuit of his aims, incapable of strong affection, of a generous act or a magnanimous resolution, and wholly devoid of moral sense. Whoever stood in his light he regarded at once as a personal enemy and a traitor to the people's cause. By temperament he was nervous and cautious. He never set himself at the head of popular movements, always guarded his statements so as to mean much or little, according to circumstances; and in case of danger, delayed till the last moment to take a decided part. Robespierre opposed the war because he divined that both constitutionalists and Girondists entered upon it with the aim of obtaining for themselves mastery over France. While the Girondists accused him of making himself the people's idol, he accused them of seeking power for party purposes. In the end he entirely destroyed the popularity originally enjoyed by Brissot, Guadet, and others in the Jacobins. The society had become even more democratic in character since the constitutionalists abandoned it in July 1791.

The galleries were opened to the public, and were ordinarily filled by the most ardent revolutionists belonging to the lower and lower middle classes. Of this audience Robespierre won the entire confidence. He put himself forward as the special representative of the people, whose wisdom and goodness formed his constant theme. He personified the distrust felt by the lower classes towards the possessors of rank, wealth, and talent. He was himself indifferent to the enjoyments that wealth can give, absolutely incorruptible, an orator without brilliant qualities of any kind, but in appearance and language always respectable. Behind Robespierre, frequenters of the Jacobins and joining in the attack on the Girondists, were Desmoulins and others, to whom the preciseness and exclusiveness of Roland and Brissot gave offence, besides adventurers and agitators of the lowest type, whose sole object was to pave the way for their own advent to power and office. Marat, in his journal, openly accused the Girondists as well as the constitutionalists of being sold to the court, and included both in the general proscription which he unceasingly urged on the people of Paris.

The party conflicts waged in the capital were repeated in the departments. The central government was powerless to impose uniform action. Roland, the Administrative minister of the interior, issued circulars, inculcating the duty of obedience to the laws, but words were powerless to restrain the passions which the revolution had let loose. Each administrative body followed its own course, according as it was under the dominion of constitutionalist or Girondist opinions. In the departments round Paris small armies of peasants and brigands, often with municipal officers at their head, went about fixing a maximum price of corn and other articles of food. In Languedoc and Guienne insurgent bands extorted money and pillaged country houses. But nowhere was ad-

ministrative anarchy so great and crime so rife as in the four departments of Gard, Bouches-du-Rhône, Vaucluse, and Lozère, where reactionary and revolutionary elements came into violent collision. In Lozère attempts were being made to excite amongst the peasantry a Catholic reaction, and an armed camp, in communication with the emigrants, was formed at Jalès. On the other hand, the municipality at Marseilles, composed of violent ultra-democrats, raised a force of 4,000 men, and disarmed a Swiss regiment at Aix, and the national guard of Arles. Avignon, under mob rule, witnessed the commission of horrible crimes. The Comtat Venaissin had belonged to the Pope since 1273, and Avignon, its chief town, since 1348. After the meeting of the States-General civil war broke out within this small territory between the supporters and opponents of revolutionary principles and of union with France. The constituent Assembly sent mediators who patched up a peace in January 1791. In September 1791 it at last decreed the union of Avignon and the Comtat to France. But it had been too late to prevent the perpetration of the most atrocious deeds. The force raised by the French party, which had been recruited from the lowest sources, quarrelled with its employers, the municipality of Avignon. A number of persons were imprisoned without regard to age or sex. One of the insurgent officers was in revenge brutally murdered in the streets. His comrades, led by Jourdan, a brigand by profession, retaliated by killing in cold blood sixty and more prisoners—men, women, and children—whose bodies they flung into a dungeon beneath a tower of the Papal palace (October, 1791). The assassins, though they were at first imprisoned, afterwards obtained their release in right of an amnesty, which the constituent Assembly before its dispersion had passed, covering all crimes attaching to the revolution.

The undisguised enmity of Robespierre, the cry raised for a maximum price of corn, the tragedy of Avignon, the illegalities and crimes incessantly committed, alarmed the Girondists, and tended to restrain them from coming to open breach with the constitutionalists; but they continued to regard domestic treason as far more dangerous than mob violence, both to themselves and to France, and fearing to give the executive the least vantage ground whence to facilitate the advance of the Allies, opposed with vehemence the employment of coercive measures, either to suppress political agitation on the part of the clubs, or to restrain administrative bodies from passing beyond their legal functions. They still entertained the belief that the people would be brought to obey the voice of reason, and thought that were Louis's treachery once set in a clear light, the storm of revolution would pass over with the establishment of a republican government, and the country return without effort to paths of law and amity.

Sense of danger made the Assembly the more eager to resort to repressive measures against the emigrants and the nonjurors. The property, real and personal, of the emigrants, was put under charge of the administrative bodies, and their revenues confiscated by the state. A decree, to which, however, the King refused his sanction, authorised the directories of the departments to banish nonjurors who refused to take an oath of fidelity to the nation, the law, and the King (May 27). Sanguine expectations of victory had been rapidly dissipated. In April the Belgian frontier was crossed; but the troops on their first meeting with the enemy fled in disorder, disobeying their officers, whom they accused of treason. Servan, the minister of war, proposed the formation of an armed camp for the protection of Paris. Much opposition was however, raised to the project, and the

Assembly decreed (June 6) that 20,000 volunteers, recruited in the departments, should meet at Paris to take part in the celebration of a federal festival on July 14, the third anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. The real object of those who supported the decree was to have a force at Paris with which to maintain mastery over the city should the Allies penetrate into the interior. Louis left the decree unsanctioned, as he had the one directed against nonjurors. The agitators of the sections sought to get up an armed demonstration against this exercise of the King's constitutional prerogative. Though armed demonstrations were illegal, the municipality offered but a perfunctory and half-hearted resistance. Bailly had resigned office in the autumn of the preceding year. The new mayor, Pétion, was a Girondist. During the winter half of the municipal officers had been re-elected, and of the new members many were ultra-democrats. Lafayette, no longer at the head of the national guard, commanded on the eastern frontier. The officers of the guard were mostly constitutionalists, but there was so little confidence in the King that few were prepared to act with vigour or could answer for the conduct of their men. Louis, irritated at the pressure put on him by Roland, Clavière, and Servan to sanction the two decrees, dismissed the three ministers from office (June 13). Dumouriez, who had quarrelled with his colleagues, supported the King in taking this step, but in face of the hostility of the Assembly himself resigned office (June 15). Three days later a letter from Lafayette was read in the Assembly. The general denounced the Jacobins as the authors of all disorders, called on the Assembly to maintain the prerogatives of the crown, and intimated that his army would not submit to see the constitution violated (June 18). Possibly the dismissal of the ministers and the writing of this letter were measures

concerted between the King and Lafayette. In any case the King's motive was to excite division between the constitutionalists and the Girondists, so as to weaken the national defence. The dismissal of the ministers was, however, regarded by the Girondists as a proof of the truth of their worst suspicions, and no measures were taken to prevent an execution of the project of making an armed, and therefore illegal demonstration against the royal policy. On June 20, thousands of persons, carrying pikes or whatever weapon came to hand, and accompanied by several battalions of the national guard, marched from St. Antoine to the hall of the Assembly. A deputation read an address demanding the recall of the ministers. Afterwards the whole of the procession, men, women, and children, dancing, singing, and carrying emblems, defiled through the chamber. Instigated by their leaders they broke into the Tuileries. The King, who took his stand on a window seat, was mobbed for four hours. To please his unwelcome visitors, he put on his head a red cap, such as was now commonly worn at the Jacobins as an emblem of liberty, in imitation of that which was once worn by the emancipated Roman slave. He declared his intention to observe the constitution, but neither insult nor menace could prevail on him to promise his sanction to the two decrees. The Queen, separated from the King, sat behind a table on which she placed the Dauphin, exposed to the gaze and taunts of the crowds which slowly traversed the palace apartments. At last, but not before night, the mob left the Tuileries without doing further harm, and order was again restored.

This insurrection and the slackness, if not connivance, of the municipal authorities, excited a widespread feeling of indignation amongst constitutionalists. Lafayette came to Paris, and at the bar of the Assembly demanded in



person what he had before demanded by letter (June 28). With him, as with other former members of the constituent Assembly, it was a point of honour to shield the persons of the King and Queen from harm. Various projects for their removal from Paris were formed, but policy and sentiment alike forbade Marie Antoinette to take advantage of them. There was hazard in their execution, and the aims of their authors were not hers. The one gleam of light on the horizon of this unhappy Queen was the advance of the Allies. 'Better die,' she one day bitterly exclaimed, 'than be saved by Lafayette and the constitutionalists !'

There was, no doubt, a possibility of the Allies reaching Paris that summer, but this enormously increased the danger of the internal situation. There were 80,000 Austrians and Prussians collecting on the other side of the Rhine. To oppose their advance there were but 40,000 men stationed at Metz and Sedan, half of whom were recruits who had never seen fire. The new ministers were constitutional monarchists of weak type, who had neither energy nor a decided policy. It was known that the army was not in a fit state to repel the enemy. The Girondist orators unnerved the Assembly by asking whether the King and his ministers desired that it should be in such a state? Both in Paris and in the departments thousands of honest and patriotic men, disgusted with party violence, and not knowing which side to take, withdrew wholly into private life, or went to serve on the frontier. To rouse the nation to a sense of peril the Assembly caused public proclamation to be made in every municipality that the country was in danger. The appeal was responded to with enthusiasm, and within six weeks more than 60,000 volunteers enlisted. The Duke of Brunswick, the commander-in-chief of the allied forces, published a mani-

Country de-  
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festos, drawn up by the emigrants. If the authors of this astounding proclamation had deliberately intended to serve the purpose of those Frenchmen who were bent on kindling zeal for the war, they could not have done anything more likely to serve their purpose. The powers required the country to submit unconditionally to Louis's mercy. All who offered resistance were to be treated as rebels to their King, and Paris was to suffer military execution if any harm befell the royal family.

The Jacobins openly proposed to depose the King. Those who shared their views in the Assembly, however, consisted of but a small body of members, who were called the Mountain, because they occupied the topmost benches on the left. Unhappily the majority refused to take into consideration a question the solution of which in the sense indicated by the Jacobins would have spared much future misery to both King and people. In the house of Roland, the dismissed Girondist minister of the interior, projects were discussed of defending the line of the Loire in case of the Allies reaching the capital. Madame Roland, a talented, enthusiastic woman, who directed the actions of her husband, was the centre of a small, and uncompromising circle, which was ready to abet the destruction <sup>August 10.</sup> of the throne by violence. But the leading Girondists—Vergniaud, Brissot, Guadet, and Gensonné—unwilling that the republic should owe its origin to violence, were prepared to give support to the throne had Louis assented to make the executive dependent on the Legislature, and to restore the late ministers to office. Their overtures to this effect were, however, rejected; and, meanwhile, a second insurrection, which had for its object the King's deposition, was in preparation. The Assembly, after declaring the country in danger, had authorised the sections of Paris, as well as the administrative

authorities throughout France, to meet at any moment. The sections had, in consequence, been able to render themselves entirely independent of the municipality. In each of the sectional or primary assemblies from 700 to 3,000 active citizens had the right to vote, but few cared to attend, and thus it constantly happened that a small active minority spoke and acted in the name of an apathetic constitutional majority. Thousands of volunteers passed through Paris on their way to the frontier, some of whom were purposely retained to take part in the insurrection. The municipality of Marseilles, at the request of Barbaroux, a young friend of the Rolands, sent up a band of 500 men, who first sung in Paris the verses celebrated as the 'Marseillaise.' The danger was the greater since every section had its own cannon and a special body of cannoneers, who nearly to a man were on the side of the revolutionists. The terrified and oscillating Assembly made no attempt to suppress agitation, but acquitted (August 8) Lafayette, by 406 against 280 votes, of a charge of treason made against him by the left, on the ground that he had sought to intimidate the Legislature. This vote was regarded as tantamount to a refusal to pass sentence of deposition on Louis. On the following night the insurrection began. Its centre was in the Faubourg of St. Antoine, and it was organised by but a small number of men. Mandat, the commander-in-chief of the national guard, was an energetic constitutionalist, who had taken well concerted measures for the defence of the Tuileries. But the unscrupulousness of the conspirators was more than a match for his zeal. Soon after midnight commissioners from twenty-eight sections met together at the Hotel de Ville, and forced the Council-General of the Municipality to summon Mandat before it, and to send out orders to the officers of the guard in contradiction to those previously given. Mandat,

unaware of what was passing, obeyed the summons, and on his arrival was arrested and murdered. After this the commissioners dispersed the lawful council and usurped its place. At the Tuileries were about 950 Swiss and more than 4,000 national guards. Early in the morning the first bands of insurgents appeared. On the fidelity of the national guards it was impossible to rely; and the royal family, attended by a small escort, left the palace, and sought refuge with the Assembly. Before their departure orders had been given to the Swiss to repel force by force, and soon the sound of firing spread alarm through Paris. The King sent the Swiss instructions to retire, which they punctually obeyed. One column, passing through the Tuileries gardens, was shot down almost to a man. The rest reached the Assembly in safety, but several were afterwards massacred on their way to prison. For twenty-four hours the most frightful anarchy prevailed. Numerous murders were committed in the streets. The assailants, some hundreds of whom had perished, sacked the palace, and killed all the men whom they found there. Of the 749 deputies only 284 ventured to attend the sitting. The Assembly was flooded by dense crowds calling for the deposition of the King. A decree was passed pronouncing Louis provisionally suspended, and summoning a National Convention to decide on the future form of government. The distinction between active and passive citizens was abolished, and manhood suffrage ordained. Roland, Clavière, and Servan were restored to office, and the candidate of the Mountain, Danton, appointed minister of justice.

The throne which had for so many centuries been the symbol of law and order for the French nation, had fallen in a day before the attack of a disorganised mob. Yet the very ease with which the insurgents succeeded in

their task carries conviction with it that the catastrophe was the result of causes which had been long at work. In truth, the throne of Louis had, since the meeting of the States-General, ceased to be the symbol of law and order. Unable to guide the people whom he had once called his subjects, Louis had become an obstacle in their path. It was but natural that he should feel dissatisfied with the course of events which had reduced him to that nullity for which alone his character fitted him. Even in time of peace his existence in a place of nominal authority would have been irritating alike to himself and to those who still called him King. With the outbreak of war his position became absolutely untenable. He could not but wish well to the invaders, whose advent would free him from degradation and personal constraint. The mere suspicion that such a wish was entertained by him—and such a suspicion would be hard to silence—would arm against him all who most prized the independence of their country, or would make them indifferent to his fall. Even if he did nothing to assist the invaders his continuance on the throne would paralyse the national defence. To remove the cause of that paralysis was the first step to that reorganisation of anarchical France which the invasion had made imperative. Though Louis had been struck down by a violent and unruly mob, the submission of France to the act done in its name was more than the outcome of that helplessness to which Frenchmen had been condemned by centuries of despotic government. It was the silent acknowledgment that Louis was out of place upon the throne.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS.

THE departments accepted passively the results of the insurrection of August 10. Men feared lest by offering opposition they might render easier the advance of the allies. Lafayette, while he prepared to defend the road to Paris, refused to recognise the validity of what had been done. The Assembly declared him a traitor, his soldiers abandoned him, and, in company with three other members of the late constituent Assembly, he fled across the frontier, where all four were arrested and imprisoned by the Austrians. The Assembly itself had lost all control over the course of events. The men who had refused to take the right step of deposing Louis had now to pay the penalty. That which might have been effected without shock by the constituent or legislative Assembly had been done by a violent explosion of popular wrath. The Assembly had failed to take the lead, and after its flagrant subjection to mob dictation, it was without moral energy or force. Yet a mob, however powerful to destroy, is powerless to reconstruct. The one organised force in Paris which could translate the feelings of the populace into action was that of the sixty or seventy commissioners who had dispersed the legal Municipal Council on the night before the insurrection. A few days afterwards they raised their number by fresh elections to 288. From henceforth this irregularly-elected body is known to history as the Commune of Paris. With this new Commune supreme power for the moment practically resided. It was strong because it knew its own mind, and because it fully accepted the work of those of its members who had swept away a king sus-

Submission  
of the  
country.

pected of being in alliance with a foreign enemy. Among the newly-chosen members was Robespierre, the only one who had hitherto been of note. Other names, such as those of Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Hébert and Chaumette now rose first into prominence. Of the mass many were unprincipled adventurers, others timid timeservers. To a few the holding of municipal office was merely a step in their career upwards. The better men resigned office or kept out of sight, the more ruffianly and unscrupulous came to the front. The ministers were thwarted and disobeyed, the Assembly threatened, public property plundered, numbers of arrests made, liberty of speech suppressed. Constitutionalists for the most part kept away from the Assembly, and laws were passed which before the insurrection had been rejected by large majorities. Nonjurors were required to leave the country within fifteen days on pain of ten years' imprisonment; and unbeneficed ecclesiastics, on whom the oath had never been imposed, were subjected to the same fate whenever six citizens of their department joined in demanding their exile. Emigrants' property was confiscated and offered for sale. Administrative bodies and municipalities were authorised to issue warrants of arrest against persons suspected of political crime. This law, which may be likened to a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in England, destroyed at a blow the safeguards against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment which the constituent Assembly had toiled to build up.

Yet, in spite of the terror that reigned, the position of the Commune was insecure. In the departments it had no supporters. In Paris it could only reckon on some hundreds of arms and votes. The artisans of St. Antoine had taken part in the insurrection to destroy the throne, not with the intention of placing power in the hands of

The insur-  
rectionary  
Commune.

the present holders of office, most of whom were men entirely unknown to fame. The Assembly resented their ascendancy, and there was no doubt that one of the first acts of the Convention would be to attempt to establish its own authority over the Commune.

With the object of obtaining political supremacy an atrocious scheme was devised, in the execution of which the advance of the enemy assisted. The allies, marching from Coblenz, arrived before Longwy The September massacres. on August 20. The place surrendered in four days. Verdun was next besieged. Dumouriez, who commanded in Lafayette's place, was at Sedan with 20,000 men; Kellermann with another 20,000 at Metz. Unless these forces should unite before Verdun surrendered, the way to Paris would be open to the enemy. Strenuous exertions were being made by all authorities to send men to the frontier, and Danton devoted to the task unflagging vigour and energy. He dominated in the ministry over his Girondist colleagues, and by his stirring appeals excited the passion and enthusiasm of whatever audience he addressed. 'The bells that ring,' he cried, as recruits hastened to the Champs de Mars, 'are no signal of alarm. They sound the charge upon our country's enemies. To conquer them we need audacity, and again audacity, and ever audacity, and France is saved.' On his proposition the Assembly decreed that commissioners should go from house to house and make an inventory of arms, horses and carts. Of this decree the Commune took advantage for its own purposes. For two days and nights the barriers were closed, and many hundred persons arrested, principally nobles and constitutionalists. Twenty-four hours later, while the church bells were ringing and Danton exciting citizens to enlist, bands of assassins, hired by the Commune, visited the prisons and massacred their inmates. The work was



carried out under the special direction of a committee composed of the municipal officers at the head of the police, to whom Marat and a few other persons, who, like himself, were not members of the Commune, joined themselves. Besides political prisoners, a number of ordinary criminals perished, including women and boys, though in most cases the women were spared. At two of the chief prisons, the Abbey and La Force, some show of judicial forms was observed. At the Abbey a dozen individuals appointed themselves judges with a president at their head. Each prisoner was called in turn before them. He was asked one or two questions, and without further discussion, either acquitted or ordered to be taken to the other prison, La Force, a formula which meant death. As the condemned passed through the prison gates, executioners stationed without rained blows upon his back and head. The street became strewn with corpses and ran with blood.

Similar scenes were enacted at La Force, where Hébert acted as president of the tribunal. The massacres effected in eight prisons went on continuously for five days and nights (September 2-7), during which it is calculated that more than a thousand prisoners were butchered. No action was taken to interfere with the murderers. Ministers and deputies were afraid even to denounce the Commune in vigorous language lest the weapons of the assassins should be turned against themselves. They had no material force on which to rely. Santerre, who commanded the national guard, obeyed the Commune. The inhabitants of Paris remained perfectly passive, the violence of party strife having destroyed enthusiasm for political ideals, and the sense of common duty. In the midst of the butchery the news came that Verdun had fallen, and the uncertainty of their own fate deadened men's sympathy for the fate of those charged



justly or unjustly with being in connivance with the enemy. So far as Paris was concerned the contrivers of the massacres succeeded in their object. The elections to the Convention were held while terror reigned over the city, and twenty-four men, some of whom were partners in the crime, and none of whom were prepared to denounce it, were returned for Paris. An attempt was made to influence, by like means, the elections in the departments. A circular, signed by Marat and his colleagues, was sent out inviting the country to follow the example of the capital and to murder traitors. This incitation to massacre, was, however, attended with small success. In a few towns murders were committed at the instigation of agents of the Commune ; but generally the elections were conducted without disturbance.

When Verdun surrendered Dumouriez was still at Sedan, and Kellermann at Metz. Between the allies and the plain of Champagne was only a natural barrier, the forest of Argonnes, a range of wooded hills. Fortunately for France the allies were dilatory in all their movements. The campaign, instead of being commenced in the spring, had been delayed till autumn, when the season was less favourable and France better prepared to resist. The Duke of Brunswick was a cautious commander, who had acquired his military reputation in the Seven Years' War. With 80,000 men he did not believe it possible to maintain his communications and occupy Paris in safety. His proposal, therefore, had been to capture the fortresses on the Meuse, and to reserve operations against the capital for the ensuing spring. But the King of Prussia, who in person took part in the war, was eager to push on to Paris and to release the royal family. After the fall of Verdun the Duke assented, but advanced slowly and reluctantly. Meanwhile Dumouriez by rapid marches got before him to the forest, and occu-

ped the passes leading through it. Driven from his positions as Brunswick advanced, he rallied his men in the plain and made a stand near St. Menehould, where he was joined by Kellermann. Recruits were incessantly pouring in, so that the united French forces numbered 60,000 men. The allies on their descent into the plain took up a position between the French army and Paris. The weather was very wet, the roads nearly impassable, and the invading army with difficulty supplied with bread. The placing of garrisons in Longwy and Verdun, together with sickness, had reduced the effective force under Brunswick's command to 40,000 men, and he could not push on to Paris leaving Dumouriez' army unbeaten behind him. The King was eager to fight, but Brunswick persuaded him, in place of attempting to storm the French positions, merely to open a cannonade on Kellermann's forces, which were stationed in advance of Dumouriez' men on some heights near the village of Valmy (September 20). This cannonade was the turning point of the campaign. The young French recruits stood fire so well that the allies determined on retreat. The Austrian troops were afterwards called off for the defence of Belgium, and thus Brunswick's plan of holding the line of the Meuse was rendered impracticable. Verdun and Longwy were evacuated, and the Prussians retreated to Coblenz (October).

The Legislative Assembly gave place to the Convention on September 21, the day after the cannonade of Valmy. At once, the abolition of monarchy was decreed, and the following day was henceforth accounted as the first of the French Republic. The new Assembly consisted of 749 members, of whom 186 had belonged to the legislative, 77 to the constituent Assembly, and 486 were new men. The constitutionalists, through intimidation or want of public spirit, had kept

away from the poll, and among all the deputies were none who did not vote for the abolition of monarchy with real or feigned enthusiasm. The Girondists now sat on the right, forming the conservative side of the House. Vergniaud, Brissot, Gensonné, and Guadet were all re-elected, and around them gathered a knot of new comers, amongst whom were Buzot, Pétion, Barbaroux, Louvet, and others who shared their views. The deputation of Paris, together with about thirty deputies from the departments, now formed the Mountain, sitting as in the last Assembly on the topmost benches of the left. Here were Marat and other directors of the massacres, several municipal officers, including Robespierre, Billaud-Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, the Duke of Orleans, who to flatter the mob now called himself Philip Egalité, Desmoulins, and Danton, who resigned the post of minister of justice in order to retain his seat in the Assembly.

From the opening of the Convention irreconcilable hostility was declared between the Girondists and the Mountain. To secure the independence of the Convention and supremacy for their own party, the Girondists sought to bring to justice the contrivers of the massacres, and to destroy the ascendancy of the Commune. They resented the stain cast on the revolution, and were eager to prove to Europe that the massacres were the work of a few hired assassins, and not, as the deputies of Paris strove to represent, of the people of the capital rising spontaneously to take vengeance on traitors. In appearance their position was strong. Through their supporters, who occupied the ministries, they directed the government and foreign relations. They were enthusiastic, brilliant, eloquent; they had right on their side, and both the country and the Convention shared their abhorrence of the crimes committed. Yet the difficulties in their way were not to be

The Girondists and the Mountain.

easily overcome. The Commune ruled the capital and had in its pay bands of thieves and assassins, whose crimes bound them to its support. The departments had taken no part in the insurrection of August 10, yet had accepted without question the result, and the predominance of Paris over them had thus acquired all the strength of uncontested fact. Public spirit, moreover, no longer existed amongst large masses of men. Primary assemblies were nearly deserted, and few of the many thousands whose names were inscribed as national guards rendered active service. Under such circumstances the task of crushing the criminal band which, through the Commune and the sections, ruled the city, was in any case difficult, and for the Girondists especially impracticable. They were unversed in the conduct of affairs and were strong party men, intensely credulous and suspicious in relation to all that was outside their own circle. They stood on very narrow ground. Republican fervour and hatred of Catholicism rendered them harsh and intolerant towards whatever savoured of reaction. Abhorrence of crime and pride in their own cause made them averse to compromise, and to having dealings with men whose hands they believed to be soiled with the blood of the September massacres. They had neither the traditions of office nor the large capacity which creates a government by its power of taking the lead in a distracted nation. Hence they did not attempt to conciliate constitutionalists, nor yet to break the power of the Commune by dividing its leaders, and bribing its followers with money and office. As a party they did not inspire confidence. They were without organisation or union, and being constantly divided in opinion amongst themselves, they often voted on contrary sides. Their chief orator, Vergniaud, possessed talent of a high order, and qualities in which the party, as a body, was notably deficient—

moderation and foresight ; but he was a man of retired habits and unassuming disposition, who had neither taste nor inclination for the position of a party leader. Hence the Girondists never brought forward any series of well-concerted measures for gaining their objects, nor were they ever able to obtain a working majority in the Convention. Impetuous orators vaguely threatened to bring the Commune to justice, made vehement attacks on the whole Paris deputation, and, singling out the two most powerful men belonging to it, Robespierre and Danton, accused them of aspiring, in conjunction with Marat, to form a triumvirate, and Robespierre especially of aiming at a dictatorship. General charges of this character could not be substantiated and were easily repelled. When, asked Robespierre, were the arms and the men by which he could obtain a dictatorship, while he accused the Girondists of seeking to sow disunion by calumniating Paris. It was no easy matter to fix even on him the charge of being an author of the massacres. All members of the Commune were, without doubt, immediately responsible for what had taken place, but to allege mere inaction as proof of guilt was hardly befitting to men who had formed part of the legislature at the time Robespierre had been at the Hôtel de Ville, and had expressed hostility towards the Girondists ; but to this day it is a matter of dispute how deeply he was implicated. Danton, though not a member of the insurrectionary Commune, had been Minister of Justice. He, indeed, had made no effort to stay the assassins' hands, but there is no proof whatever that it was he who gave the signal for the shedding of blood, and officially he was no more responsible than Roland, who was Minister of the Interior. It was, however, Danton whom the Girondists regarded with most suspicion and distrust, whom they were readiest to attack, and most eager to crush. To

them he was vice personified. His language was cynical; he affected to despise scruples of conscience in action; crime could not revolt him; they believed him corrupt and blood-stained, while he despised them as squeamish politicians, who did not comprehend the conditions under which they worked, and who, from being over-scrupulous in their choice of tools, let power slip from their grasp. Nevertheless, he desired reconciliation with them. He recognised the value of their disinterestedness and patriotism, and was aware that the more narrow and criminal the base on which the republic rested, the less would be its power of endurance, and the less room would there be for himself to exert influence. Not easily moved by petty considerations, and devoid of envy and resentment, Danton was the one man on the left, as Vergniaud on the right, whose speeches bore no trace of personal animosity.

The Centre of the Convention, often styled the Plain, consisted mainly of new-comers from the departments, who abhorred Marat and his doctrines, and resented the tyranny exercised by the Commune. But in place of giving undisputed victory to the right, they followed the safer course of a temporising policy between the two parties. They feared to come into violent collision with the unscrupulous Commune, and regarded the exaggerated charges brought against Robespierre and Danton as what in fact they were—the fruits of violent party hate. It was, indeed, no wonder that men who accepted the results of the last insurrection should hesitate to send Danton to the scaffold, or should doubt whether the revolution, having gone on thus far, could sustain itself without him. The services that he had rendered in organising the national defence were undoubted. There was no man so capable, with his stentorian voice, his violent gesticulations, his abrupt vigorous

language, of rousing popular enthusiasm. The Girondists were no mob orators, but Danton was at home alike in the Convention and in the streets.

The contest, incessantly renewed by the Girondists but never ending in victory, resulted in strengthening the position of the Mountain. The galleries of the House were ordinarily occupied by adherents of the Jacobins, who applauded the deputies on the left and hooted those on the right. Petitioners, often accompanied by armed mobs, invaded the Convention, menacing insurrection unless their demands were complied with. A project was brought forward by the Girondists for giving the Convention a paid guard of 4,000 men, drawn in equal proportions from the departments. But it never became law; and in case of a breach with the Commune, the Convention had nothing to rely on except recruits passing through Paris on their way to the frontier. A law was finally carried for the re-election of the Commune. As, however, the inhabitants of the city, through fear or indifference, did not attend the sections, the result of the elections was merely to confirm the existing party in power. Although since August 10 manhood suffrage had prevailed, in many sections there were no more than 150 or 200 voters present out of the many thousands who had the right to take part in the elections. Chaumette and Hébert, as well as other members of the revolutionary Commune, were re-elected. This new Commune was not fully organised until July 1793. In the meantime its Council at the Hôtel de Ville, often reduced to twenty members in place of its full complement of ninety-six, ruled Paris under the guidance of Chaumette and Hébert.

The war increased the difficulties of the internal situation. Success at first attended the French arms. During September French troops occupied Nice and Savoy, part



of the dominions of the King of Sardinia, whose unconcealed hostility had given France a pretext for a declaration of war. At the time when the Austrians and Prussians invaded Lorraine, the French General Custine, with 18,000 men, marched from Alsace against the smaller lay and ecclesiastical states on the Rhine. Nowhere was serious opposition attempted. The petty rulers proclaimed their neutrality, or fled to Coblenz. The important fortress of Mainz surrendered. From this point it was open to Custine to intercept the retreat of the Prussians from Lorraine ; but, eager to push his conquests further, he crossed the Rhine and took Frankfort, whence he commanded the surrounding country (November). After the retreat of the allied army through the Argonnes, Dumouriez hastened to carry out the project of invading Belgium, where the fortresses were out of repair, and little preparation for resistance had been made. A battle was fought near the village of Jemmapes (November 6), in which the Austrians were defeated. They retreated behind the Meuse, leaving the French in undisputed possession of the country.

The victory of Jemmapes, the first pitched battle fought, was greeted with a burst of applause from one end of France to the other. When the Legislative Assembly had declared war on Austria, it had represented France as acting on a purely defensive policy, and had repudiated wars of conquest as contrary to the right of each people to shape its own destinies. Now that France was in possession of conquered territories, the question of the manner in which they were to be dealt with necessarily arose. The idea of making a merely diplomatic use of them, and of restoring them in case of convenience to their former rulers without regard to the wishes of the

Conquest of  
Savoy,  
Mainz, and  
Belgium.

Foreign  
policy of the  
Convention.

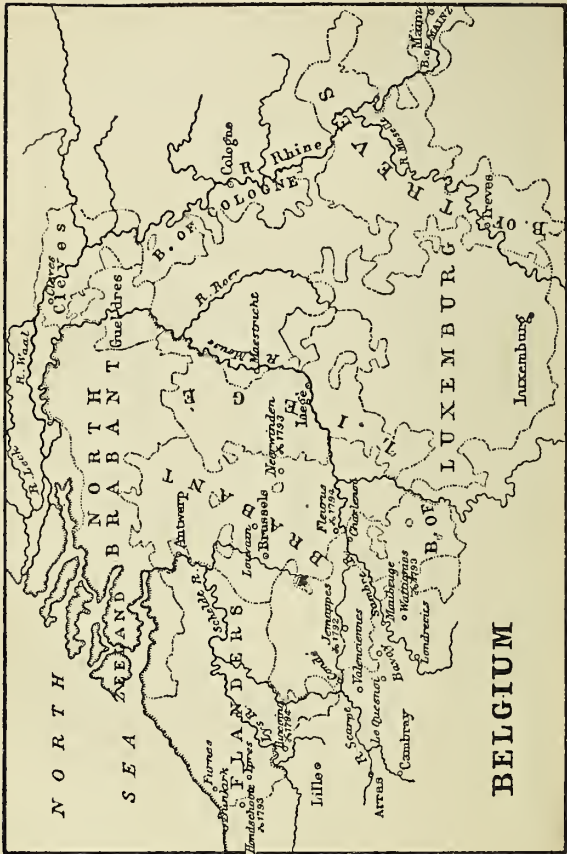


inhabitants, found no supporters. The point at issue was whether the inhabitants were to be left really free to select their own form of government, or whether France should influence their decision.

Since the commencement of the war the Convention had become inflamed with the desire of spreading the principles of the revolution far beyond the frontiers of France. With the advance of French armies it hoped that peoples would rise against their rulers, and that not only the Continental countries in which the old aristocratic institutions were in full play would willingly accept French aid for the constitution of society and government upon a new basis, but that even in constitutional England the people would insist upon the establishment of the French system. Exultant in what they had already achieved, French enthusiasts underestimated the strength of the forces opposed to them, and overlooked the fact that a strong sense of nationality was to be found in England; and that, under circumstances favourable to its development, it might spring into activity even in countries where it seemed most dead, as in Germany and in Italy. Under the influence of such crude impulses the Convention gave wanton offence to governments at peace with France by the issue of a proclamation, proffering assistance to all peoples desirous of obtaining their freedom (November 19).

The wish to spread revolutionary principles operated strongly upon the policy pursued by the Convention in relation to its conquests. The annexation of conquered territories involved carrying out in them the changes already effected in France. For smaller territories the maintenance of political independence was in reality impracticable amidst the clash of the great powers. Hence it came to pass that the Convention rapidly gravitated towards a policy of forced an-

Question of  
annexation  
of Belgium.



A. Waller.

nexation, which they attempted to conceal by accepting the vote of their own partisans as the expression of the popular will. Other motives also existed. The ambition was roused of extending the French frontier to the Alps and the Rhine. In case of annexations, the financial difficulties of the government would be decreased. Church property in the newly-acquired territory would become national property, and the possession of new securities would raise the value of the assignats. In Savoy and in Nice, as also in Liége and the small states near the Rhine, much discontent prevailed, and no small part of the population desired union with France. But in the Austrian Netherlands the case was different. The clergy and feudal aristocracy possessed much influence ; the forms of constitutional government existed, and there was a powerful party which sought to maintain political independence of France while discarding connection with Austria. The Convention accordingly decreed the union of Nice and Savoy with France, but hesitated to annex the Austrian Netherlands. Its hesitation was not due merely to the fact that only a minority of the population desired union. Further consequences had to be taken into consideration. The attempt to unite Belgium was certain to involve France in hostilities with a fresh and formidable enemy. For centuries it had been a cardinal point of English foreign policy that Belgium was to be in possession of a power capable of resisting French aggression, and the extension of the war was deprecated by all deputies who cared for the restoration of internal order and settled government. A war with England would seriously increase the expenses of government, which were already only met by fresh issues of assignats, whilst the rapid rise of prices which had ensued inflicted suffering on the working-classes, and placed means at the command of the Commune of exciting discontent against the Conven-

tion. An alternative plan of creating an independent Belgian republic was desired by Dumouriez and by some members of the Convention. Yet it was unlikely that this plan would succeed in averting war with England. English statesmen were as averse to the establishment of a Belgian republic as to the annexation of the country to France. In fact, the Convention could only maintain peace by abandoning the principles on which it was acting, and by giving a pledge that Belgium should be restored to Austria. There was, moreover, an immediate ground of quarrel. After the French armies were in occupation of Belgium, the Convention had proclaimed the free navigation of the Scheldt, which by an European arrangement, agreeable to England and Holland, but ruinous to the trade of Antwerp, was closed to commerce. This measure gave great offence to England as increasing French influence, and was regarded in itself as sufficient ground for a declaration of war. Though in accordance with the new principles of the rights of nations not recognised by cabinets, but which were no more than the principles of justice itself, the liberation of the Scheldt was in the teeth of treaties to which both England and France had been parties. The decree of November 19 (p. 131), which the French government refused to withdraw, was regarded as a direct incitation to subjects to revolt. The passing of a new decree (December 15), ordering French generals to proclaim wherever they went the sovereignty of the people, the suppression of the existing authorities, and the abolition of feudal rights and privileges, was a second clear intimation to Europe that France was intent on spreading revolutionary principles beyond her own borders.

A portion of the Convention desired, at whatever hazard, to carry out an immediate annexation of Belgium, and afterwards to invade Holland, in accordance with a

plan proposed by Dumouriez. Holland was at peace with France, but there was no doubt whatever that in case of war between England and France, the stadtholder, who was maintained in his seat by English and Prussian influence, would join the coalition. The majority, however, led by the Girondists, hesitated to adopt this course. Although their minds were inflated with the desire of rousing revolutionary movements in other countries, including England itself, they sought, from a sense of internal peril which every day grew stronger, to circumscribe the field of war, and both to maintain peace with England and to withdraw Prussia from the coalition. To attain their ends the ministers were prepared to abandon the project of invading Holland, to suffer the King and his family to quit France, and to defer the final settlement of Belgium till the making of peace. But neither the disposition of the King of Prussia nor of the English people rendered it possible for any understanding to be arrived at on these terms.

The allied princes had not entered into the war out of pure chivalry, and did not intend to withdraw from it until they had obtained what in diplomatic language they called an indemnity—in other words, territorial acquisitions, either at the cost of France or of some neutral state. Shortly before hostilities broke out Catherine II. proposed to Frederick William a second partition of Poland. The King, though bound by two treaties to maintain the integrity of Poland, entered into the agreement. It was, therefore, to Poland that he looked for his indemnity, and his assistance in the war against France was the price he paid for the Emperor's consent to his making acquisitions in the east. Francis, on his side, looked for conquests in France, and also had in his mind the revival of Joseph's project of making over Belgium to the Elector of Bavaria

Austria and Prussia unwilling to make peace.

in exchange for that country. A study of the map of Europe shows clearly what would have been the advantage of the exchange to Austria in consolidating her dominions and giving her increased predominance within the Empire.

While the personal feeling of Frederick William involved his subjects in a war for which they had no enthusiasm, public opinion in England compelled the Government to take a hostile attitude.

England and the revolution.

William Pitt, supported by the King, the country gentlemen, and the commercial middle classes, had fought his way to power in 1783 in a sharp struggle in which the Whig aristocracy was overthrown. As the head of the Tory party he professed a toryism very different from the past toryism of Harley and of St. John, which had battled against dissenters and the mercantile class, and from the future toryism of Eldon, which was to battle against improvement. In one sense he was the Turgot of England. He was pre-eminently a peace minister, and he had taken the lead, sometimes far in advance of the public opinion of his day, in advocating projects of financial and economical reform. Those projects he had viewed from the point of view of the highest statesmanship. He had sought to bind England and Ireland together by a commercial union, which he was unable to carry into effect. He had sought to bind England and France together by a commercial treaty which had increased the communications between the two countries. It was not his fault that even a Parliament in which he counted so many supporters had rejected a scheme of Parliamentary reform, which would have gone far to bind class to class in England itself. Yet, even in his failures, his efforts after good had made his government inapproachably strong. The fallen Whig aristocracy, indeed, was very different from the effete privileged orders of France. It counted amongst its

members and its followers high-spirited and large-minded politicians, such as Fox and Burke. Its traditions were those of men brought up to combat for their ideas in the open light of publicity, and to support their cause by argument before their fellows. Yet there was something in it of the faults which had made the continental nobilities unpopular. It was narrow and exclusive, and was apt to regard office and emolument as the special perquisite of its own members. Against such an aristocracy Pitt stood as the champion of so much of equality as the conditions of English society admitted of. Representing, as he did, the King and the middle classes, he advocated a rational government, founded on the best political science of the day. It was impossible that if war broke out with France he should continue his work of internal reform. Events happening in France were but superficially comprehended in England. At first some of the Whigs, following Fox, extended sympathy to a revolutionary movement which put forward as its object the establishment of constitutional government. As soon as disorder and violence showed themselves in France a large section of the Whigs, including most of the great landowners, joined the Tories in viewing the movement with distrust, though the latter had confidence in Pitt, who sought to maintain friendship between the two governments. Neither party had any clear perception of the fact that the revolution was produced by social as well as political causes, and that its real aim was to complete the destruction of the old feudal order long since in slow process of decay. The special causes of discontent operating in France were left unnoted. The comparative excellence of government in England made Englishmen callous to the past misgovernment of France. The fact was patent that the revolution declared war on established institutions, and



exhibited propagandist tendencies. Public opinion, therefore, soon set strongly against it. Already, in 1790, Burke, breaking loose from Fox, published his 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' in which his eloquent declamations against men who were destroying continuity between the past and the present, helped to ripen the distrust that already existed in the minds of his countrymen into fear and hatred. After the fall of the throne and the September massacres, intense alarm prevailed lest the spread of democratic principles should produce similar convulsions in England. In reality there was no danger. The middle classes were not jealous of the upper; the people were not starving. Societies established for the promotion of French principles obtained but a few hundred supporters, a strong proof of the unmoved disposition of the people at large. The panic, however, if unfounded, was genuine. To secure themselves against danger the governing classes desired to suppress the revolution by force of arms, and loudly demanded the reclosing of the Scheldt and the evacuation of Belgium as the price of peace.

While his supporters clamoured for war, Pitt still strove to avert a breach. In the hope of effecting a European peace he made offers of mediation at Berlin and Vienna. His offers were, however, but coldly received, since both the Emperor and the King expected to gain from the continuance of hostilities. War, therefore, became inevitable. The French ministers went to the full length of their tether when, for the sake of the neutrality of England, they left Holland untouched, and offered to defer the settlement of Belgium till the making of peace. To obtain more of the Convention was not in their power, nor was it their wish. To satisfy the demands of England by reclosing the Scheldt and re-establishing the old order of things in Belgium, appeared



to the mass of deputies, irrespective of party, as a base and cowardly abandonment of principle. As the hostility of England grew more manifest, the party in the Convention for immediate annexation gained strength; and in the meantime an event happened which caused the balance of power hitherto on the side of the Gironde to fall on the side of the Mountain.

Since the fall of the throne the King and his family had been kept under harsh durance in the Temple, an old keep once belonging to the Knights Templars. The Convention, after long and stormy debates, decreed that Louis should be brought to trial before itself. The charge that could justly be made against him was that, having undertaken to govern in accordance with the constitution, he had sought foreign aid to overthrow it. But for this he had been dethroned, and neither the country nor the Convention had ground or right to take vengeance on him for seeking to free himself from the untenable position which the constituent Assembly had required him to accept. The deputies, however, judged Louis's conduct in the light of their own theories. They set the nation in the place of the King, and then accused Louis of treason because he had conspired against the will of the sovereign people. None had any doubt of his guilt; few that its due penalty was death. Many, however, even of those who thought his crime merited death, desired not to shed his blood, but merely to give satisfaction to their pride as republicans by passing sentence against him either of banishment or of captivity till the end of the war. The ministers hoped by suspending the sword over his head to put pressure on Prussia, and to induce her to abandon her alliance with Austria, in return for the liberty of the royal family. The Montagnards, or members of the Mountain, however, sought Louis's life. They were eager

Trial and  
Death of the  
King.

to defy the sovereigns of Europe, and to give proof of their passion for equality by sending Louis to the scaffold. 'Let us,' said Danton, 'cast down before Europe, as the gauntlet of battle, the head of a king.' The Montagnards were determined, moreover, to involve the majority of their fellow deputies in an act that should unite them by an indissoluble bond to themselves. The trial could be but a form; Louis's guilt was a foregone conclusion. The question what sentence should be passed upon him became the object of a fierce party conflict. The Mountain set all the machinery at its command in motion to intimidate the Convention. In the clubs and in the sections a cry was raised for 'the tyrant's blood,' and the ignorant populace was taught to believe that the existing high prices were in some occult manner connected with Louis's existence as a captive. As the trial dragged on, the Girondists became alarmed at the danger of their own situation and the possibility of defeat; but not for the sake of France, much less for the sake of Louis, were they prepared to belie the past acts of their political life by declaring him innocent. For, if Louis had not been in connivance with the enemy, where was the justification for the insurrection of August 10? They, as well as he, had sworn to maintain the constitution. Twice Louis was brought before the Convention, once to hear his accusation read, a second time when his counsel spoke in his defence. He did not dispute the authority of the Convention, but denied the truth of the charges brought against him. The Convention unanimously pronounced him guilty of treason against the nation; 361 deputies voted for the penalty of death; 72 for death, but with a demand for delay of execution or for some other restriction; 288 for imprisonment or banishment, thus leaving only a majority of one for immediate death, though when a final vote was taken

two days later, on a fresh proposal to delay execution, the majority for immediate death was swollen to 60 (January 17). Each deputy voted aloud, and during the whole sitting, which lasted many hours, the galleries and corridors of the house were occupied by armed adherents of the Commune and the Jacobins.

Since his imprisonment Louis's time had been spent in preparation for death. Towards his enemies he entertained no feeling of resentment or hatred, and received intelligence of the sentence passed against him with calmness and resignation. On January 21, while the city maintained a mournful silence, the King was guillotined on the great square, now known as the Place de la Concorde, which since August 10 had borne the name of the Place de la Révolution.

The execution of the King hastened the rupture with England. Pitt sent the French agent in London out of the country. The Convention adopted a decree for effecting the union of Belgium with France, and without a voice being raised in opposition declared war on England and Holland (February 1). About this time Spain and Portugal, the Empire, and most of the Italian states joined the coalition.

The French generals had owed their brilliant successes in part to the speed of their movements, in part also to the defenceless state of the countries invaded. During the winter Frankfort had been stormed by the Prussians (December 2, 1792), and Custine had been driven back to the Rhine.

For the recovery of Belgium and the territory of the Empire on the left bank of the river, Austria and Prussia brought together more than 200,000 men, and these formed two armies. The northern, commanded by an Austrian, Coburg, was to operate against Belgium; the southern, commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, was

War with  
England.

French  
driven from  
Belgium.

to besiege Mainz, and to drive Custine out of the Palatinate.

The French government authorised Dumouriez to invade Holland, though the probabilities of success were now small. Coburg was advancing towards the Meuse, and the Dutch were prepared to defend the passage of their rivers. Dumouriez had only 100,000 men for purposes of defence and invasion. He made a rapid march through the west of Flanders as far as the arm of the sea which forms the mouth of the Meuse, where he was checked by want of means of transport. Meanwhile one of his officers, Miranda, guarded the line of the Meuse and besieged Maestricht. Coburg advanced and relieved the town. The French troops, three-fourths of whom were untrained volunteers, fled in disorder and deserted by thousands. The pursuit, however, was not closely pressed, and Miranda, rallying his scattered forces, took up a strong position near Louvain.

These disasters reacted on the situation in the capital. The hold that the Girondists possessed on the Convention grew feebler every day. They had failed in all they had attempted. Their foreign policy had broken down, and the reproach fell heavily on the ministry Revolution-ary Court. of not having suffered Dumouriez to invade Holland when the proposition was first made. They had failed to save the King's life, so that the whole constitutional party outside the Assembly was as fully estranged from them as from the Mountain. In spite of the fresh municipal elections in Paris, which they had decreed in hope of changing the character of the Commune (p. 128), it was the same criminal band that still exercised authority. To provide for the war expenditure resort was had to new issues of assignats. Prices incessantly rose, and discontent spread rapidly amongst the working population, taught by agitators to regard the right side of the Convention

as the cause alike of the prevailing destitution and of military disaster. The deputies of the centre, in alarm for their own safety, and without confidence in the Girondists as leaders, followed a vacillating course, accordingly as they were actuated by their principles, their fears, or their regard for the necessities of the situation. When Miranda's retreat was known an attempt was made to get up an insurrection directed against the Girondists. It failed, from want of union and support. But the bands at the service of the Jacobins and the Commune gathered round the Convention, filling the galleries and menacing deputies. The Mountain made use of the occasion to obtain the adoption of a law for the creation of an extraordinary criminal court, to judge without appeal conspirators against the state (March 9). The Girondists opposed the measure, but in vain; and thus were Robespierre and Marat provided with a ready weapon with which to strike at the heads of those who had so long menaced their own.

Affairs in Belgium assumed a yet more alarming aspect. Dumouriez, hastening back from Holland, rejoined Miranda near Louvain. He returned resolved to break with the Convention. He had no enthusiasm for democratic or republican ideals, and was excessively irritated because the Convention had not pursued the policy advocated by himself, of <sup>Treason of</sup> Dumouriez, creating Belgium into a separate republic. He resolved to make a stand and to fight the Austrians, expecting after victory to be able to dictate his own terms to the Convention and to mediate between France and the allies. But a long contested battle, which raged fiercely round the village of Neerwinden, ended in the defeat and flight of the French (March 18). Dumouriez, with a remnant of his army, effected a retreat to the frontier, where he sought to make good his position by opening negotiations

with Coburg. He offered to march to Paris and place the Dauphin on the throne if Coburg would undertake to give him moral and, in case of need, material support. As a pledge of good faith he was prepared to admit Austrian troops into Lille and Valenciennes, on condition that the towns were restored to France on the making of peace. It had long been suspected at Paris that Dumouriez was not to be trusted; but neither Girondists nor Montagnards had dared to propose his dismissal, because they had no general of talent to take his place. After the battle of Neerwinden he made no concealment of his hostile intentions; and on the arrival of four deputies sent by the Convention to summon him to Paris, gave them up to Coburg as hostages for the safety of the royal family. In the meantime every effort was made by the agents of the government to secure the fidelity of the army, and with success. The soldiers refused to betray France to Austria, and Dumouriez, to save himself from arrest, took refuge in Coburg's quarters (April 3).

Dumouriez' treachery increased the violence of the party struggle at Paris, where Girondists and Montagnards strove to cast on each other the odium of being the traitor's accomplices. It was against Danton that the Girondists directed their most vehement attacks. They made charges in support of which they had no evidence to bring, and which have never been proved. According to them Danton had been bribed by Louis; he had misapplied public money; in Belgium he had plundered state property. They even accused him of plotting with Dumouriez the restoration of the throne, because he had praised that general's talent in the Convention. Danton turned fiercely on his assailants, threatening irreconcilable war. Counter accusations and menaces were hurled from right to left, from left to right.

Party strife  
at Paris.

Robespierre came forward to represent the entire public life of the Girondists as forming a long series of crimes directed against liberty and the republic, and concluded with a formal proposal to send Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné and Guadet, along with Marie Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans, as Dumouriez' accomplices, before the new criminal court (April 9).

Though the ascendancy which the Girondists once held was lost, their eloquence was still a power, and the first deputy who was sent before the court was a Montagnard, Marat, on the charge of inciting the people to insurrection (April 14). But this isolated party victory served only to irritate without weakening their adversaries. The court, composed of judges and jurymen, both elected in Paris, acquitted the accused, and his partisans restored him in triumph to his seat. The direction of the government, possessed by the Girondists at the opening of the convention, passed into other hands. The ministry had been broken up. Roland had resigned, complaining that he had not the support of the Convention. The Mountain and the Gironde struggled to obtain appointments for their own candidates, and the ministers, fearful of having their acts misinterpreted, refused to take a step on their own responsibility. Hence the wheels of government, when expedition and secrecy were most requisite, threatened to come to a standstill. Under the influence of the alarm excited by the treason of Dumouriez, the Convention established a Committee of Public Safety, composed of nine members, but subsequently enlarged to twelve, who were subject to re-election every month, and were empowered to deliberate in secret, to superintend the action of the ministry, and to take provisionally whatever measures were requisite for the national defence (April 6). The deputies entrusted with these large powers were



Danton and eight others belonging to the Mountain and the Plain. From this time the ministers sank into the position of chief clerks of their respective departments, while the Committee of Public Safety stood at the head of the executive government.

A second committee, which had been created earlier, acquired special importance about the same time. This was a Committee of General Security, which had under its superintendence the measures taken for the detection of political crime. Originally the Girondists possessed a majority in it, but shortly after the King's death it had been reorganised, and was now composed of twelve Montagnards.

Committee  
of General  
Security.

The immediate object of the Convention in instituting the Committee of Public Safety was to have an executive sufficiently strong to bring large armies rapidly into the field. About 200,000 men were now under arms. For the ensuing campaign it was determined to raise the number to 500,000; 300,000 had, therefore, to be found in the course of a few weeks. All national guards between the ages of eighteen and forty were put in requisition. Every department had to furnish a definite contingent; if the voluntary system failed to make up the required number, conscription was resorted to. In most departments the call for soldiers was responded to with enthusiasm, but in a few zeal was wanting, and there was great difficulty everywhere in obtaining money and arms. In order to bring local authorities under the immediate control of the Government, the Convention took direct part in the administration, and sent deputies into every department, authorised to take all measures necessary for hastening the levy of recruits and for providing supplies for the armies. These men established special committees to act as their agents, compelled the sale of corn, horses, and arms, and dis-

Deputies in  
mission.



missed administrative officers whose attachment to the republic was held in question. When they had completed their work they returned to Paris, but the Convention continued to pursue the system of sending its members into the departments, invested with arbitrary and absolute power for carrying out the work entrusted to them. Deputies were always present with the armies, to superintend commissariat arrangements and to keep a watchful eye on the conduct of general officers. They were responsible only to the Convention and to the Committee of Public Safety, under whose immediate direction they acted. Agents of the central government were thus established by the side of the independent local authorities, and the way was prepared for the complete submission of the country to whichever party triumphed at Paris. For the first time since the fall of the old system of the monarchy there was a Government in France.

As the situation grew more perilous, legislation assumed an increasingly harsh and tyrannical character. In March, at the very time when the retreat of Dumouriez from Belgium offered an opportunity to the allies of attempting a march on Paris, a dangerous insurrection, excited by the forced recruitment, broke out amongst the peasants of La Vendée. The Convention, enraged against its adversaries, and frightened at the unexpected danger, struck at random, regardless of the fact that it was crushing the innocent along with the guilty. Those who instigated resistance to the recruitment of the army were punished by death. Priests, subject to banishment, who had remained in the country, were to be transported to French Guiana. Banished priests who returned were to be executed within twenty-four hours. The Legislative Assembly had made it a crime to quit the country, and had confiscated the property of the emigrants. The Convention

Laws against  
emigrants  
and non-  
jurors.

laid a firmer grip on their property by banishing them for ever from the republic, and by forbidding them to return under penalty of death. Although many of the exiles had had no intention of fighting against their country, but had merely quitted France because their lives were in danger, no exceptions were made, and no account taken of sex or circumstance.

In the midst of internal strife and preparation for defence the Convention was engaged on the task of framing a new constitution. When abstract questions were under discussion but little difference of view arose. In fact, the contention between the two parties did not concern principles, but their immediate application. The Girondists were prepared, without heed of circumstances, to carry into action principles of decentralisation, popular election, and free trade, and contended that the republic must rest upon the political virtue and public spirit of the mass of the population. The Montagnards regarded facts only. They recognised that active support to the republic was to be looked for from the mob alone; that attempts to enforce principles of free trade against the will of their own supporters must lead to the overthrow of the Convention; that under the circumstances popular election was a farce, and that amid the strife of parties and factions decentralisation meant, as the experience of the past two years had shown, that France would be without an effective Government at a time when a powerful coalition was formed against her. A far lower motive impelled them in the same direction. The safety of their country appeared to them dependent on the triumph of their own party, and to secure this they were prepared to act in the teeth of their theoretical opinions. They denied liberty to the press. They sacrificed freedom of trade to the clamours of the populace. They not only maintained

Policy of  
the Moun-  
tain.

the right of Paris to act for the whole of France, but, in order the more effectually to secure submission, sought by the agency of clubs and special committees to stamp out all vestiges of public spirit that yet remained in the departments, and were indifferent to the character of their instruments, or to the commission of acts of injustice and cruelty, so long as their own ascendancy was secured.

The Girondists denounced the policy of their adversaries with eloquence and fervent indignation. But the issue of the struggle was dependent, not on their power of speech, but on the support which they could obtain in Paris. Affection for the Convention Economical situation. was nowhere to be found. The middle classes were alienated by the death of the King, the lower classes by the dearness of food, while large numbers were estranged by the indifference manifested by the Convention towards the Catholic faith. The actual hostility of the working classes was excited in consequence of the strenuous opposition made by the Girondists to the economic theories which found favour in the streets. In July 1792, the nominal value of assignats in circulation was about 87,500,000*l.* In May 1793, it had risen, owing to the war expenditure, to about 131,250,000*l.* The Church lands, the security on which the assignats were first issued, were already sold. A new security had been found in the property of emigrants, which was now in course of sale. This was conveniently estimated to be worth the exact amount of the assignats in circulation, 131,250,000*l.* The Government, however, remained no better off. It had no credit on which to borrow, and taxes were only partially paid. All foresaw that, to cover the war expenses, it would be necessary to have recourse to new issues of assignats, and hence in spite of the large security offered the paper money fell rapidly in value. In March 1793, assignats could be exchanged for silver

at about half their nominal value. To supply the deficiency of small change the Legislative Assembly had created notes for very small sums. Hence the depreciation of the paper money inflicted great suffering on men living on wages, who had nothing but these small notes on their hands. Since the autumn of 1791 prices had been rising rapidly all over France, while special causes contributed to produce dearness and scarcity of food in Paris. In proportion as assignats were multiplied all persons disliked to hold them. While purchasers were eager to pay with them, sellers pressed for coin in exchange for their wares. The consequence was that trade deserted Paris, where paper money was most abundant, and where it was more difficult to get payment in gold and silver than in the country. Corn-growers kept their corn in store or sent it elsewhere. Few cattle came to market. Bread, meat, fish, wine, wood—in short, all articles rose in price, some trebling in cost in the course of six months. In the spring of 1793 the drawing off of men to the frontier caused a rapid rise in wages, which before had not advanced in proportion to prices. Nevertheless, real want existed amongst the lower classes, and a not unfounded fear of want even amongst the upper classes. Those who had money laid in stores, thus increasing the scarcity; while wholesale dealers held back supplies, either because they were unwilling to take paper money, or calculated on an increased rise in prices.

Under this condition of things, while there were many sufferers, some made large gains, more especially capitalists, speculators, wholesale dealers, and contractors engaged in large transactions with the Government and foreign countries. The depreciation of the paper money benefited also to a certain extent the taxpayer and the purchaser of State lands. But in proportion as individuals gained the State lost, for while its revenue was

received in assignats at their nominal value, when it made purchases it was compelled to find hard cash or else to pay in assignats at their depreciated value.

How to raise the value of the paper money and to lower prices was the question that pressed hardest on the Convention during the spring of 1793. The people, accustomed under the monarchy to arbitrary interference with trade, were now raising all through France a clamorous cry for compelling farmers to bring corn to market, and for fixing the prices of articles of ordinary use and consumption. In the capital a draconian code was proposed as the best means of keeping assignats at par and ensuring plenty. Persons who exchanged assignats for money, who speculated on variations in price, who held back goods from sale, were to suffer the penalty of death. A special tax was to be imposed for the maintenance of the war, a special rate for supplying Paris with cheap bread. Petition followed petition, from the sections, the clubs, and the Commune, calling on the Convention, under the threat of insurrection, to legislate to such effect.

These demands were in direct contradiction to the free trade principles maintained by a large majority of deputies. Laws for the suppression of speculation and for the regulation of the corn trade were held by the Girondists as an unjustifiable interference with individual liberty, and as calculated to produce the contrary effect to that which their proposers intended. 'Do you wish,' said Vergniaud, 'to decree famine?' They ascribed the scarcity of corn solely to fear of pillage, and had the temerity to denounce the system of supplying Paris with cheap bread as demoralising the inhabitants of the city and as unjust to those of the country, who received lower wages but had to pay the market price of the commodity. To the demand for

Popular  
remedies op-  
posed by  
Girondists.

a maximum price and the punishment of forestallers and speculators, there was added soon the demand for sending the Girondists before the revolutionary court, as standing in the way of the popular remedies becoming law. The Montagnards supported a coercive policy. The large issue of assignats and the consequent breakdown of ordinary commercial relations appeared to some to justify exceptional legislation. But the preponderating motive, leading the Mountain, as a body, to support propositions for maximum laws, was the dread of an insurrection directed against the entire Convention, and the desire of maintaining against the Commune the leadership of the populace. Several members of the centre, under the influence of fear, and regarding as impracticable the policy of the right, seceded to the Mountain. The Girondists had eloquence and courage, but no practical programme able to rally supporters round them. They had no means of protecting the Convention, yet it was impossible to abandon the existing system of supplying cheap bread to Paris without having to face an immediate insurrection. They were unable to set a limit to the issue of assignats, yet it was evident that if the notes went on falling in value, there must before long be famine prices in Paris. Most deputies of the centre, though they still held the same opinions as the Girondists, dared not emulate their courage. The exchange of assignats for silver at less than their nominal value was prohibited, under penalty of six years' imprisonment (April 11). Restrictions upon the corn trade, which had been in force under the monarchy, were revived, and a variable maximum for corn was fixed, to be regulated in each department by the local authorities (May 3). To provide for the war expenses, a forced loan was to be raised of more than forty-three millions (May 20). These concessions, however, failed to satisfy the populace,

while on the point which the leaders of the agitation had most in view, the expulsion of the Girondists, the Convention stood firm, and refused to proscribe its members. Plotting went on openly. The Convention had lately instituted special committees to put in force police laws regarding foreigners residing in France (March 21). There was one in every section of Paris, and ultimately in most municipalities in the country. These committees, which usurped the functions of the ordinary or civil committees of the sections, became agents for the execution of the police laws generally, and soon acquired celebrity under the name of revolutionary committees. Nobles and ecclesiastics were excluded from sitting on them, and they were most often composed of ruffianly and dissolute adventurers. One insurrectionary committee was now formed at Paris of delegates from these revolutionary committees; a second of delegates from the sections. The Commune, under the leadership of its mayor, Pache, and its two law officers, Hébert and Chaumette, set itself at the head of the movement. Some Montagnards, including Robespierre, Marat, Collot d'Herbois, Chabot, Tallien, and Desmoulins gave it undisguised support. But those whose hostility was less, hesitated. For if the Mountain had to call in the aid of the Commune in order to obtain victory over the Girondists, what security was there that after their expulsion it would be able to maintain its own independence? And what influence could Danton hope to exercise over a brow-beaten and intimidated body of men, in fear for their lives? Compromise with the Girondists was, however, impracticable, and the Committee of Public Safety, in place of taking active measures against the conspirators, sought merely to moderate their violence

While their enemies plotted the Girondists made no



efforts to secure the Convention against attack, or to form a party in Paris for its defence. They relied on their eloquence and the goodness of their cause to keep the centre true to them. They made the useless proposition that the primary assemblies should meet and decide which deputies should be ejected, and which keep their seats. They obtained addresses from the departments promising armed intervention in their support, and in case of insurrection threatened Paris with annihilation. 'If ever,' said the unrestrainable Isnard, when President of the Convention, to a deputation from the Commune, 'it should happen that violence were offered to the national representatives, I declare to you, in the name of the whole of France, that Paris would be destroyed, and grass would grow on the banks of the Seine.' Such words were far more hurtful to the Girondists themselves than to those whom they threatened. They sounded in men's ears like an echo of Brunswick's proclamation, and made the inhabitants of Paris fear more the consequences of the success of the Girondists, in case of a collision between the two parties, than those of submission to the one which posed itself as the defender of Paris from violence. Meanwhile the enemies of the Girondists lost no opportunity of turning opinion against them. They accused them, not only of seeking to excite civil war, but also of being Federalists, and of plotting to destroy the unity of the republic by making the departments independent of the capital. Marat and his murderous followers were ready to execute a second massacre, whilst amongst the people propositions were heard for a redistribution of property. Such ideas were not countenanced either by the Jacobins or the Commune. Bloodshed might lead the departments to rise, and it was possible that the middle classes in Paris might move for the defence of the Girondists if they



thought the city was to be given over to assassins and assailants of the rights of property. Meanwhile the Convention, encouraged by some movements in the sections against the tyranny of the Commune, assumed a bolder attitude, and appointed a commission of twelve deputies to investigate the conspiracies (May 18). Hébert and other agitators were arrested. But these acts of vigour hastened the crisis. To quiet the apprehensions of the middle classes the Commune and the Jacobins made public declaration of their respect for property and of their intention to maintain order.

The Convention a few days previously had removed from the Riding School to a spacious hall in the Palace of the Tuileries, capable of holding more than a thousand persons. On May 31 armed bands streamed through the streets to impose their will on the representatives of the nation. The terrorised Convention decreed the suppression of the Commission of Twelve, but refused to proscribe its members. It was not allowed to escape without bending its neck yet more beneath the yoke. On June 2 many thousand insurgents flooded the Chamber, demanding, with threats, the arrest of the leaders of the right. The alarmed and indignant deputies, with the exception of some thirty on the left rose in a body and left the hall. But all issues out of the palace courts and garden were closely guarded, and passage refused with insult. They returned, and while intruders sat on the benches and voted with them, a decree was carried that thirty-one deputies, including Vergniaud, Gensonné, Guadet, Brissot, and other leading Girondists, should be kept under arrest at their own houses.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE COMMUNE AND THE TERROR.

THE fall of the Girondists was the necessary result of their unfitness to govern France in the midst of war and revolution. The constitutionalists had been overthrown, because they refused to recognise that Louis desired the triumph of the invaders. The Girondists were overthrown because they refused to recognise the insurrection of August 10 under its real aspect. After that event it was inevitable that France should for a time be governed by the minority which, aided by the populace, had swept away the throne of the weak and incapable King. Not only had the people of France no attachment to a republican form of government, and therefore no readiness to move forward actively in support of the Girondists against the Mountain; but also the great majority of the population, through dread of reaction in favour of the privileged classes, had no will or policy of their own. The Girondists had been incapable of evolving a policy which could rouse enthusiasm in their cause or give confidence in their guidance. Their ideal republic was fitted for some ideal nation, not for the French people, torn by factions and involved in war with half Europe. Yet it was all they had to offer to France, and hence it happened that when the Commune of Paris rose against them, not an arm had been raised in their behalf.

If, however, the Girondists had failed in solving the problem of giving France a government, their ejection from the Convention was none the less a catastrophe, fraught with most evil consequences. They had put themselves forward as representatives not merely of the departments against Paris, but also of principles of individual

liberty, of justice, and of humanity. The Montagnards used the same words, but meant by them very different things. By the sovereignty of the people they meant the domination of their own party; by justice and humanity the sacrifice of the opponents of their own ideas. 'Others have sought,' Vergniaud had said in one of his finest speeches, 'to complete the revolution by aid of terror; I would have wished to complete it by aid of love.'

Though in the departments there was no popular movement in favour of the Girondists, yet they had more supporters there than in the capital. In Paris all authorities, with the exception of the Con-  
Submission  
of the De-  
partments.

vention, were on the side of the conspirators. In the departments the administrative bodies, which had all been re-elected since the autumn, resembled closely in constitution the Convention itself. As a rule, in these bodies supporters of the Girondists were in a majority, supporters of the Mountain in a minority. In more than sixty departments administrative bodies contested the authority of the Convention, and threatened to resort to arms in favour of the expelled deputies. The chief centres of resistance were, in the north-west, Rennes and Caen; in the south-west, Bordeaux. The danger of a general insurrection seemed greater, owing to the fact that royalists at the same time were raising the standard of revolt. In the important industrial town of Lyons they gained the entire direction of affairs. The leaders of the Jacobins were put to death, and active preparations were taken to resist by force the authority of the Convention. At Toulon like dispositions were manifested and the same course was pursued. In the departments of Ardèche and Lozère royalist conspirators had already been in arms before the expulsion of the Girondists; while in La Vendée and Deux Sèvres the peasants since March were in open rebellion. The task, however, of quelling re-

sistance under these circumstances was, in reality, less formidable than at first sight appeared. There could be no alliance between royalist and Girondist insurgents, and the mere fact that royalists were in arms increased the reluctance of the population to dispute the authority of the mutilated Convention. Hence the opposition raised by the supporters of the Girondists was vacillating and weak. The administrative bodies could not rely on any class for hearty support. Even amongst the proscribed deputies themselves union was wanting. While some fled to Normandy, others remained in Paris, prepared to suffer whatever fate awaited them rather than bring upon themselves the guilt of exciting civil war. On the other side, the party victorious in Paris was for the time thoroughly united, and acted with caution and decision. The Committee of Public Safety, under Danton's guidance, sought to pursue a policy of conciliation, and the supporters of the Commune, aware of the insecurity of their position, held themselves under restraint. The charge of socialism and tyranny made by the Girondists was repudiated by the adoption of a new constitution, based upon individual liberty and democratic principles. There was indeed not the smallest intention of putting this constitution in force, but its promulgation held out promise to the country of a speedy return to normal modes of government. The phrase 'The Republic, one and indivisible,' was adopted by the Montagnards to signify the national cause, while they accused the Girondists of seeking to destroy the possibility of defence against the foreigner by the establishment of a loosely organised federal state, and even of being in alliance with the enemy, and of seeking to betray France to England. In the course of a few weeks the administrative authorities abandoned the attitude of even passive resistance against the Convention. A few hundred men advancing from

Caen to Paris were defeated at Vernon on the Seine. Bordeaux, starved out, surrendered at discretion, and thus before the end of August there were none but royalists who continued to contest the authority of the Convention.

The danger of the situation, nevertheless, remained great. The royalists, both in Lyons and Toulon, held out, and the rebellion in La Vendée became more formidable every day. In this depart-<sup>War in La</sup><sub>Vendée.</sub>ment the destructive tendencies dominant in other parts of France were tempered by strong conservative instincts. No violent feeling of antagonism existed between nobles and peasants. The nobles lived at home and came into personal contact with the tenant-farmers. The country was wholly agricultural; there were few towns and no industries. The peasants, excessively credulous and superstitious, were easily led by their priests, and were ready to hazard the loss of whatever advantages the revolution brought them for the sake of keeping their faith intact. The attempt to deprive them of the priests to whom they were attached first rendered them hostile to the revolution. The attempt to carry out the forced levy of soldiers decreed in March was the immediate cause of insurrection. For the republic they had no sympathy, and refused to leave their homes to fight in its defence. A general rising took place, extending over the whole of La Vendée and part of Deux Sèvres. The Government, compelled to send every available soldier to the frontier, was quite unable to cope with the insurgents. Raw and undisciplined levies, hastily brought together in the neighbouring departments, were no match for them. The character of the country was that of an almost impregnable fortress. The interior, called the Bocage, was hilly, thickly wooded, and intersected by small streams flowing at the bottom of steep ravines. The villages lay

far apart. Roads and lanes, often impassable for wheels, ran a tortuous course up and down-hill, between high hedges and forests of furze and broom. On the sea-coast the country, though flat, was readily defended, being marshy and cut up by wide ditches. A large portion of the population were poachers and smugglers, who were skilled marksmen, and the very men to carry on the guerilla warfare which now arose in every part of a country so inaccessible to the regular soldier. Defeat told heavily on the republicans, who lost stores and ammunition, missed their way in flight, and were cut down one by one by the peasantry. The Vendéans, on the other hand, if the enemy withstood their first onset, disappeared by tracks known only to themselves, and returned to their farms and ploughs, prepared to resume the contest on a more favourable occasion.

In the conduct of a war of this description there was naturally little method. The insurgent bands sought out the nobles and put them at their head. The stream of the Sèvre Nantaise divided the country into two parts, and the leaders on the two sides of the river rarely attempted concerted action. In the lower district Charette, a noble, exercised the chief authority. In the upper, two nobles, De Lescure and Bonchamps, and two peasants, Stofflet and Cathelineau, commanded.

Repeated successes were won by the Vendéans, who fought with all the ardour inspired by religious enthusiasm, and were ready to follow their leaders to the death. Priests, always present with the armies, stimulated their courage, promising to those who fell immediate entrance into Paradise. One after another the towns lying on the edge of the disturbed country fell into the insurgents' possession. In June Saumur was captured, giving them the passage of a bridge across the Loire. Cathelineau crossed to the right bank, entered Angers, and marched

against Nantes ; while Charette, in Lower Vendee, agreed to open an attack on the same place from the south. But the peasants, whose custom it was to disperse after a few days' service, had neither inclination nor heart for an expedition directed against a distant town. Many of those who followed Cathelineau deserted on the way. Nantes was bravely defended, and the assault repelled (June 29). Cathelineau received a mortal wound. Charette, south of the Loire, failed to get possession of the bridge across the river, and the Vendicans on the north bank dispersed, returning by boats to their own country.

While the Vendicans triumphed in the west, in the east the allies were victorious. The armies of Coburg and Brunswick mustered 250,000 men. After the reconquest of Belgium, Coburg laid siege to the French fortresses of Condé and Valenciennes. These surrendered in July. About the same time Mainz was retaken by Brunswick, and had the Objects pursued by the Allies. two generals advanced, the one from the Scheldt, the other from the Rhine, there was every probability of their making themselves masters of the capital, and with the capital, of France. The opportunity, however, was let slip. The powers had their own separate objects in view, and cared more for attaining them than for suppressing the revolution.

England designed to extend her maritime dominion and her trade by the conquest of French colonies and the destruction of the French marine. A body of English and Hanoverian troops was sent under the Duke of York to help the Austrians to capture French border fortresses, and especially to gain possession of the port of Dunkirk, where the existence of a French naval station had always been an object of jealousy to English statesmen. The alliance between Austria and Prussia was fast



breaking down. Austria had given her consent to the acquisition of Polish provinces by Prussia. Prussia, on her side, had undertaken to support the Austrian plan of exchanging Belgium for Bavaria. Neither power, however, acted openly or honourably towards the other. Prussia secretly encouraged opposition to the plan of exchange. Austria urged Russia to cut Prussia's share of Poland down to the smallest possible portion, and to delay her entering into possession of it. This state of tension was increased when the second partition of Poland was actually carried out in March and April. In consequence a change of ministry took place at Vienna. The supporters of the Prussian alliance were dismissed from office, and Baron Thugut was entrusted by the Emperor with the sole direction of foreign affairs. It was the aim of Thugut's ambition to give to Austria a dominant position on the continent. The Prussian alliance he regarded in the light of an impediment to the accomplishment of his schemes, since Prussia was Austria's rival in Germany and jealous of Austrian aggrandisement. For the time he let drop the idea of exchanging Belgium for Bavaria. That plan could not be carried out without the co-operation of Prussia, and the chances of Prussia's co-operation decreased in proportion as she laid firmer hold on her new acquisitions in Poland. England, moreover, was unwilling to see Belgium passing out of the Emperor's possession, and Thugut was eager to secure the friendship of England, in order the more effectually to keep Prussia in check. He held it, therefore, the surer policy to leave the plan in abeyance, and meanwhile to make conquest of French territory, more especially of Alsace and Lorraine, which provinces at the making of peace might be disposed of as appeared most consonant to Austrian interests. The idea of attempting to reach Paris was, accordingly, not entertained with favour



by any of the powers. England and Austria both wished to operate on the French frontier, while Prussia did not care to engage deeply in hostilities in the west while affairs in Poland remained unsettled. It was, besides, the belief both of generals and diplomatists, that the strife of factions within France must result in the collapse of all government, and that in the following year a march to Paris could be effected without difficulty.

But while the allies besieged fortresses in Flanders, and operations lagged on the Rhine, immense exertions were being made within France to increase the size of the armies, and an iron despotism was <sup>Murder of Marat</sup> established which placed all the resources of the country at the disposition of the Government. As the departments one after another submitted, deputies from the Convention were sent into them to bring them the more completely under the control of the party which had secured ascendancy in Paris by the insurrection of June 2 (p. 155). Men who had espoused the cause of the proscribed deputies were excluded from office, and were expelled from the clubs, which from this time were only frequented by ardent supporters of the Mountain. The body of the population watched the establishment of a ruthless tyranny in their midst without attempting resistance. The will and the union requisite for action were both lacking, and the few who dared either by act or word to venture opposition to the emissaries of the Mountain or of the Commune of Paris, paid the penalty by loss of liberty if not of life. Amongst those who had placed faith in the Girondists and their ideals was a young woman of Normandy, Charlotte Corday. Like them, she had dreamed of the establishment of a republic founded on the political virtue and intelligence of the people; and when the mob of Paris rose and drove with insult from the Convention those who in her eyes were the heroic

defenders of the universal principles of truth and justice, she bitterly resented the wrong that had been done not only to the men themselves, but to that France of which she regarded them as the true representatives. Owing to Marat's persistent cry for a dictatorship and for shedding of blood, it was he who, in the departments, was accounted especially responsible both for the expulsion of the Girondists and for the tyranny which now began to weigh as heavily upon the whole country as it had long weighed upon the capital. Incapable as all then were of comprehending the causes which had brought about the fall of the Girondists, Charlotte Corday imagined that by putting an end to this man's life, she could also put an end to the system of government which he advocated. Informing her friends that she wished to visit England, she left Caen and travelled in the diligence to Paris. On her arrival she purchased a knife, and afterwards obtained entrance into Marat's house on the pretext that she brought news which she desired to communicate to him. She knew that he would be eager to obtain intelligence of the movements of the Girondist deputies still in Normandy. Marat was ill at the time, and in a bath when Charlotte Corday was admitted. She gave him the names of the deputies who were at Caen. 'In a few days,' he said, as he wrote them hastily down, 'I will have them all guillotined in Paris.' As she heard these words she plunged the knife into his body and killed him on the spot (July 13). The cry uttered by the murdered man was heard, and Charlotte, who did not attempt to escape, was captured and conveyed to prison amid the murmurs of an angry crowd. It had been from the first her intention to sacrifice her life for the cause of her country, and glorying in her deed, she met death with stoical indifference. 'I killed one man,' she said, when brought before the revolutionary court, 'in order to save the lives of 100,000 others.'

Thus perished by the hands of an assassin the man who, since the revolution began, had persistently maintained that assassination was a justifiable mode for the accomplishment of political ends. His murder brought about contrary results to those which the woman who ignorantly and rashly had flung away her life, hoped by the sacrifice to effect. Marat had not been the creator of the circumstances which enabled him to exert influence, and there was no lack of men equally sanguinary, and equally fanatic, ready to usurp the place left vacant by his death. He was regarded as a martyr by no small portion of the working population of Paris. The influence which he had exerted over them was in reality due, not so much to his exhortations to massacre, as to the fact that amongst the many writers who had put themselves forward as the spokesmen of the lower orders, he alone had truly at heart the destruction of the existing material misery. His murder excited indignation beyond the comparatively narrow circle of those who took an active part in political life, while at the same time it added a new impulse to the growing cry for blood. After the expulsion of the Girondists, power drifted more and more into the hands of those who were most violent in language, and who were prepared to be most violent in act. The more moderate section of the Mountain, composed of Dantonists and seceders from the Plain, rapidly lost influence. They were without means by which to exert control over their colleagues, and were driven to use exaggerated and sanguinary language in order to escape the charge of being themselves bad patriots and secret supporters of royalists and federalists. The deputies forming the right and centre of the Convention kept silence, or ceased to appear in their seats. The nation remained passive, incapable of resistance. Every day the Government displayed a more

Sanguinary  
tendencies  
of the Go-  
vernment.

and more ferocious character. It was cruel, because it was weak in the sense that it had little material force on which it could rely for support, if its authority were once disputed. It was cruel also, because it was resolute and fanatic, determined to maintain itself at whatever cost, and at the same time under the influence of theories and ideas which could not be carried into practice except by resort to despotic means and by the destruction of individual as well as of political liberty.

Despotic as it was, the Government was also exceedingly disorganised, and this cause rendered it the more sanguinary and aggressive. It consisted of a number of separate and independent authorities, each striving for mastery. They were composed in part of the same

Disorganisa-  
tion of Go-  
vernment. men, but in part also of men whose characters, ideas, and aims were often at variance with

each other. The Convention, the Jacobins, the Deputies in mission, the Committees of Public Safety and General Security, now commonly called the two Committees of Government, and finally the Commune of Paris, directed between them the affairs of France. Of all these authorities the Convention, nominally representative of France, was the weakest. It had lost the respect alike of the country and of the populace of Paris, which had so often converted it into its tool. The contempt in which it was held reacted on the position of the Mountain, which after the expulsion of the Girondists was powerless to adopt any measures that gave offence either to the Commune of Paris or to the Committee of Public Safety, and was equally powerless to reject measures which either of these bodies desired that it should adopt. The authority once possessed by the Convention was now transferred to the Committee of Public Safety, which continued to gather strength in proportion as the Mountain grew weaker. At first composed of Dantonists and

seceders from the Plain, it became converted into the organ of the extreme faction which had urged on the insurrection against the Girondists. In July, Robespierre entered it with two adherents—Couthon and St. Just. In September were added Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, who were allied with the leaders of the Commune. On special occasions this Committee consulted in common with the Committee of General Security, which, however, always occupied a position subordinate to it. It was now composed of twelve members, but the five men just named were those who directed the general action of the Government. In the persons of Robespierre and his supporters the Committee represented the Jacobins; in the persons of Billaud and Collot it represented the Commune; and so complete did the subserviency of the Montagnards become, that although the Committee was legally subject to re-election every month, they never dared to avail themselves of this opportunity for naming fresh members in the place of those who had made themselves their masters.

By the side of the Committee of Public Safety, the Commune of Paris occupied an independent position. Although nominally merely the body administering the affairs of the capital, it in reality took the lead in directing the general affairs of France. After it had accomplished the insurrection against the Girondists, it was the strongest power in Paris. It had armed bands of ruffians in its pay; the national guard was under its orders; the revolutionary and civil committees of the sections were its tools; and, for the time, it had the support of the populace, which it supplied with bread. The Committee of Public Safety dared as little as the Mountain risk collision with it. It forced its supporters into the government offices; sent agents into the departments; exerted influence over

The Com-  
mune of  
Paris.

deputies in mission, and compelled the Convention to appoint ministers and generals of its selection, and to make laws in accordance with its wishes.

The action of the Commune had for long been mainly directed by two men, Chaumette and Hébert. They had both been members of the insurrectionary Commune which had driven Louis from the Tuileries in 1792, and after its re-election had been ordered by the Convention in the autumn of the same year, they had reappeared at the Hôtel de Ville, where they filled the influential position of law officers to the new Commune, which was made up in part of the same men, and was animated by the same spirit as its predecessor. Their ascendancy was now signalled by an extraordinary outburst of cruelty and fanaticism. Not content with the abolition of political and civil distinctions between man and man, they sought to destroy all superiorities and to put men socially and intellectually on the same level. The superiority of wealth was a special object of their attack. Capitalists, bankers, speculators, large landowners, were by them and their followers classed along with federalists, Girondists, nobles, priests, and royalists, as enemies to the republic. Intellectual superiority and culture became a crime in their possessors. Equality, in short, was to be produced not by the raising of the lower, but by the degradation of the higher. If Hébert demanded the establishment of a primary school in every village, he was actuated not so much by a regard for the moral and intellectual results of education as by the wish to make the working classes independent of the upper. Higher education, more especially classical education, was decried. Valuable books, statues, and works of art which bore trace of having been produced under the monarchy, were wantonly destroyed. Ignorance and rags were put forward as in themselves giving a claim to

respect, and the term 'sans-culotte,' 'the breechless' (applied to the poor from their wearing trowsers in place of knee-breeches), was held synonymous with that of 'patriot.' The words 'Monsieur' and 'Madame' were replaced by 'citoyen' and 'citoyenne,' and an untidy dress, a rough manner, and rude language were adopted as symbols of a patriotic spirit.

Despite the violence and brutality of which they were guilty, neither the leaders of the Commune, nor yet many of those who followed in their track or spurred them on, were without enlightened ideas. The humane philosophy of the century had left its impression, though it might be but a superficial one, on the hardest and most selfish natures. Thus, while they sought by terror to destroy the existing bases of society, Chaumette and Hébert sought also to figure in the light of philanthropists and guardians of public morality. Acting under their impulse, the Commune brought forward projects for the reform of youthful criminals, and for the alleviation of the sufferings of the sick in hospitals, as well as others of like character, and incessantly urged on the Convention the suppression of state lotteries, by which the poor were led to gamble away their sous. Even at their best, however the members of the Commune were mainly actuated by personal motives. They sought to obtain some moral support to their position, without which it would in the end be impossible for them to retain power for long. Of their philanthropic schemes, moreover, very few were carried out in practice. It was the inevitable result of the conditions under which the Commune had grasped authority, that the better men should be thrust into the background by the more selfish and more unscrupulous. Thus Chaumette by the side of Hébert soon sank into comparative insignificance. For while Chaumette cared for the accomplishment of ideal aims, Hébert cared alone



for the retention of power by himself, and was entirely indifferent as to the means by which he secured this end. He was a coarse and low-minded adventurer. Before the revolution he had been dismissed from an inferior office at a theatre for dishonest practices. After the revolution began, he had sought notoriety by the publication of a paper, *Le Père Duchesne*, written in language coarse even for that time, and advocating atheism. Around him and the Commune now rallied all the worst ruffians and scoundrels in Paris. Assassins were appointed to the command of armed forces, and thieves and rogues were placed on civil and revolutionary committees which had at their disposition the property and liberty of their fellow-citizens. In short, so far as the administration was concerned, the prevailing characteristics of the rule of the Commune under Hébert's leadership were anarchy and licence.

All authorities were equally interested in preserving France from invasion, and all concurred in making exertions to put soldiers in the field, and to provide them with the necessary arms and supplies. The Convention had at once to find forces to besiege the still revolted towns of Lyons and Toulon, to suppress the rebellious Vendéans in the east, to fight the Spaniards in the Pyrenees, the Piedmontese in the Alps, the English and Austrians in the Netherlands, and the Austrians and the Prussians on the Rhine. None of the usual motives which cause men to shrink from adopting extraordinary measures were felt by the existing rulers of France. To recruit the armies, they resorted to a conscription. All citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five were called on to serve in person. Urged on by the Commune, the Convention further decreed a levy of the whole male population capable of bearing arms (August 23). Such a measure was of course impractic-

The Con-  
scription.



able, but it enabled the deputies in mission to bring together large bodies of men to act against Lyons and Toulon, and to hold in check the insurgent Vendéans.

Between July and October laws were passed fixing prices and carrying out the economical system long since demanded in the streets. A small minority, however, alone of those who were willing to adopt them, <sup>Maximum</sup> regarded them as economically good. Their <sup>laws.</sup> framers had in reality ulterior objects in view. The Hébertists desired to ruin the upper commercial classes. The Montagnards, as a body, hoped to avert a State bankruptcy by maintaining the value of the assignats in spite of new issues, and to provide for the armies by putting at the disposition of the Government the entire resources of the country—its revenue, its capital, its stock, and its labour. In the spring a decree had been passed fixing a maximum price for corn, but variable in the different departments (p. 152). A maximum price for corn and meal was now fixed without variation for the whole republic. Neither article might be sold except at fairs and markets, and the trade in both was put under the supervision of the municipal bodies. Nearly all articles of consumption, many manufactured articles, and most raw materials, were also subjected to a maximum price, which was fixed in each department at the price that the article sold at in 1790, with the addition of a third as much again (September 17). In order to prevent wholesale or retail dealers from keeping back goods from sale, they were required to expose over their shop doors a list of all articles that they had in stock, and even private individuals were prohibited from laying in stores. The practice of supplying the army through contractors was entirely abandoned. Corn, cloth, butter, flour, meat, fodder, cattle, carts, horses, vessels, and, in a word, all raw materials, manufactured articles, or live stock imme-

diately or remotely connected with the service of the armies, were put in requisition, which meant that their owners were compelled to sell to the Government at the maximum price, and to take in payment assignats at their nominal value. Exactly the same course was pursued with regard to labour. A maximum was fixed for wages, the most the workman might demand being the wage he received in 1790, with the addition of half as much again. Workmen, like goods, were then put in requisition, and employed by thousands in making of arms, building of ships, repairing of roads, and other services of the same character. In every transaction the State thus gained at the expense of individuals, since the assignats, in which all payments were made, were now worth only 33 per cent. of their nominal value.

Together with the requisition and maximum laws were passed others, which had for their direct object the suppression of speculation on the fluctuation in prices and in the value of the paper money. Capitalists, bankers, merchants engaged in foreign commerce, and speculators of every description, were denounced as aristocrats and enemies of their country, and in order the more effectually to suppress their transactions, the idea was entertained of breaking off commercial and financial relations between France and foreign countries. It was rendered a capital offence to refuse to accept assignats in payment of goods, or to offer or accept a higher price in them than in metal money. Financial and commercial companies were dissolved. The investment of capital in foreign countries was prohibited, the Exchange closed, the export of nearly all articles of French growth and manufacture forbidden, and the mere possession of articles grown or manufactured in Great Britain declared a crime. All the laws here described were enforced by fines, confiscations, the prison, and the

guillotine. They succeeded in their immediate end. Wherever buying and selling went on in public the paper money was taken at par, and the Government was able to go on incessantly increasing the number of notes in circulation without meeting a corresponding rise in prices. But this result was only obtained at the cost of the destruction of private enterprise, the ruin of hundreds of traders and manufacturers, a lavish waste of the capital of the country, and the infliction of an enormous amount of suffering. Little foreign trade remained except what the Government itself carried on, and the only manufactures which flourished were those of arms and war material. Trade and agriculture became the most dangerous occupations in which it was possible to engage.

From a variety of motives all who could be pressed into the service of the State. It was the one means of avoiding the proscription, the surest means of avoiding imprisonment, the surest means of acquiring wealth. The Government offices were flooded with incapable clerks. Municipal officers and administrators, charged with the care and sale of national property, had abundant opportunities of benefiting themselves and their relatives at the expense of the State. The multitude of agents who were employed in making requisitions for the army could, with small danger of exposure, enrich themselves by extortion and by breach of the maximum laws.

The maximum laws prevented prices from rising in the open market, but they could not assure abundance. It was possible to search a tradesman's cellars, and to force him to offer his existing stock of goods for sale at a definite price; but it was impossible to make him continue to carry on his trade at a loss to himself. It was easier for the farmer than for the tradesman to break the law; but this did not

Formation  
of a revolu-  
tionary  
army.

benefit the inhabitants of towns. The farmer would often choose to risk his head by concealing his corn or by sending it out of the country, sooner than send it to Paris or any other large town, where the maximum law was most rigidly enforced, and its breach attended with greatest danger to himself. Since the spring the Commune had been compelled to take upon itself the entire task of providing for the city's consumption of bread. Its agents went into the surrounding departments and purchased all the corn and meal they could obtain, often giving a higher price than that prescribed by the law; but it was nevertheless only with extreme difficulty that the necessary provision was made. In order to maintain popularity with the working classes, the Commune was, however, compelled to provide that the daily supply of bread did not fail. It was compelled also to give satisfaction to that idle and ruffianly portion of the population by aid of which it was enabled to impose its will upon the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. At the demand of the Commune the Convention passed a law declaring that Paris, like the armies, should be supplied by requisitions, and ordering the formation of a special paid force, or so-called 'revolutionary army,' of 7,000 men, which was to go into the departments and compel farmers to part with their corn at the maximum price. By these means the Commune obtained command of a new force, and found means of living for the destitute thieves and beggars with whom the city swarmed. This army was simply a horde of villains, let loose upon the neighbouring departments, who went from village to village, plundering, imprisoning, and torturing the inhabitants. Meanwhile, scarcity increased at Paris to such an extent that to put an end to the crowding at the bakers' doors, the Commune ordered that tickets should be issued by the sections, specifying the number of loaves

that each family in the city was to be suffered to have for its daily consumption.

The maximum laws increased the already large number of those placed by the Mountain, the Jacobins, and the Commune outside the pale of citizenship. The farmer, forced to part with his corn at the maximum price, would henceforth be suspected of ill-will towards the republic, as much as the speculator, the merchant, and the contractor for the armies, who, while freedom of contract had prevailed, had made large profits at the cost either of individuals or of the State. It was, in fact, impossible that the economical system established by the laws described should be accepted except through fear alone. The self-interest of too many thousands operated in the contrary direction. The very artisan, who thought it fair that the farmer should be forced to sell his produce at maximum prices, strove, whenever opportunity occurred, to obtain higher wages than those which the law allotted to him. As the number of their enemies increased, the Hébertists, aware of increased danger to themselves, grew fiercer and more sanguinary in word and act. 'To be safe,' said Hébert, 'you must kill all.' If once nobles, royalists, seigneurs, had been the enemies of France, now Girondists, federalists, speculators, breakers of maximum laws were placed in the same class. Urged on by the Commune, the Convention passed a vaguely-worded law empowering the revolutionary committees throughout France to imprison all nobles, relations of emigrants, federalists, and other persons 'suspected' of ill-will towards the Republic (September 17). To carry out literally Hébert's advice, and kill all such, was impracticable. But it was possible to diffuse terror on every side, by casting into prison every man and woman who, by their conduct or even by their looks, expressed disapproval of the existing order,

Law of 'suspected persons.'

and by taking the lives of all those who bore names in any way representative of the past. At the beginning of September the number of prisoners in Paris was about 1,500 ; by the end of October it had risen to 3,000. Deputies could neither be imprisoned nor be sent before the revolutionary court without the authorisation of the Convention. Their security was, however, slight. Ever since the expulsion of the leading Girondists, the imprisonment, now of one, now of another of their followers had been decreed, so that the right side was gradually being destroyed. The final blow was given when, on the demand of the Committee of General Security, the Convention sent before the revolutionary court twenty-one deputies of the right, and also the man who had once been known as the Duke of Orleans, but who now sat in the ranks of the Mountain and styled himself Philip Egalité. At the same time the Convention ordered the arrest of more than forty other deputies who had signed protests against the proceedings of June 2 (October 3). The judges and jurymen of the revolutionary court, like all authorities elected at Paris, were the tools or accomplices of the Commune and of the Committees of Government. The public prosecutor, Fouquier Tinville, acted under the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety. Hitherto the Court had observed the forms of its institution. Witnesses were called on both sides, and the defence was fully heard. Between March and October the Court had sentenced to death sixty-nine persons and acquitted ninety-two. But from this time forms were less and less regarded, while the number of condemnations rose to more than sixty a month. The guillotine stood permanently on the Place de la Révolution.

The life of the captive Queen had long been sought for by the Hébertists. Since the fall of the throne she had been shut off from all communication with the outer

world. She had seen her husband leave her to die on the scaffold, and her young son had since been torn from her arms, on the pretext that if he were left with her she would bring him up to be a tyrant. Her gaolers, whatever their feelings might be, dared not show her the smallest sign of sympathy. She was informed of the fate that awaited her by her removal from the Temple to the Conciergerie, a prison situated on the island in the Seine, close to the Palais de Justice, where the Revolutionary Court, as well as other Courts of Justice, sat. When brought before the Court she replied with firmness to the accusations made against her, and by her composed and dignified bearing won murmurs of applause from the hostile crowd, which had gathered to witness how the once haughty Queen would endure degradation and ignominy. Like other condemned persons, Marie Antoinette was taken from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Révolution, seated in a common cart with her arms tied behind her. History can have little to say in praise of a Queen whose conduct, during her years of prosperity, had done much to cause that general disorganisation of society and government, in the midst of which she perished amongst so many other victims, of whom many had striven for higher objects, and of whom many were more innocent than herself. But by her brave endurance of adversity, and the noble and resigned manner in which she met death, she, like others, atoned for past errors, and won for her memory respect and sympathy (October 16).

Execution  
of the  
Queen.

Twenty-one deputies of the right soon followed the Queen to the scaffold. Amongst them were nine of those deputies whose arrest had been ordered on June 2, including Vergniaud, Brissot, and Gensonné. Their trial was cut short through fear lest if they were allowed to plead their cause they

Execution  
of the  
Girondists.



would gain the sympathy of the eager and excited audience with which the Court was thronged. On their way from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Révolution they sang together the already famous song, the Marseillaise, beginning,—

Allons, enfants de la patrie,  
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

After their arrival at the scaffold the song was continued, while each in turn received the blow of the fatal knife, and did not cease until the head of the last had fallen.

From this time a number of victims, some distinguished, others obscure, belonging to all parties, went every week to end their lives at the Place de la Révolution. Amongst them were the late King's sister, the gentle and pious Madame Elizabeth; the former Mayor of Paris, the grey-haired Bailly; the youthful Barnave, Mirabeau's rival for popularity in the Constituent Assembly; Philip Egalité, who could not atone for the crime of his birth, although he had voted for the death of Louis; and Madame Roland, the friend and inspirer of the Girondists, condemned for plotting against the unity and indivisibility of the republic. Her husband, the former Minister of the Interior, who had been in hiding at Rouen, was found lying in a field, stabbed to death by his own hand, soon after the news of her condemnation reached him.

Those who were prepared to shed blood like water, and had, in their own words, put terror on the order of the day, recognised no limitations to their power. All, however, were not prepared to adopt the same course of action. The Hébertists, following the atheistic and materialistic doctrines which had been circulated by Diderot and other philosophers of the same school, denied the existence of a personal God and the immortality of the soul. Theists and sceptics, the followers

Worship of  
Reason.



of Rousseau and of Voltaire, regarded the Catholic faith as pernicious and degrading ; but various reasons restrained them from attempting its suppression. They held in theory the principles of religious toleration ; they believed that the Catholic faith would necessarily lose influence as knowledge became more diffused ; they were alive to the danger of exciting the peasantry against the revolution by depriving them of the rites to which they were accustomed. Hébert and Chaumette entertained no such scruples. They were active propagandists, eager to avail themselves of the power of the State in order to impose a new form of worship on Catholic France. Unlike Marat and Robespierre, Hébert from the beginning of the revolution had exhibited equal hostility towards the hard-working and poorly-paid curé, whose parents were peasants, as towards the titled and wealthy bishop who belonged to the caste of the nobility ; and he now exhibited equal hostility towards the constitutional priest who had accepted the work of the revolution, as towards the nonjuror who sought to excite reaction in favour of royalty. Morality and reason as displayed by man were declared alone fit for veneration, and the worship to take the place of the Catholic ritual was to be one which, refusing to recognise a spiritual world beyond the sphere of human knowledge, glorified human nature and material objects. The people, said Chaumette, shall be our God ; we need no other. We want, said Hébert, no other religion than that of nature ; no other temple than that of reason ; no other worship than that of liberty, equality, and fraternity. By the orders of the Commune the suppression of the Catholic worship was begun. Constitutional priests were encouraged to marry and to abdicate their functions, and those who refused were imprisoned. The exercise of the Catholic worship, either in the streets or in the churches, was prohibited. Even burial rites were

changed. Every sign of mourning was abolished, and the black pall was replaced by a tricolour cloth.

These things were done by the Commune on its sole authority, but the Convention offered no opposition. The voices of Catholics were silent through fear. Forty bishops and curés had seats in the House. But of these the bravest had been proscribed with the Girondists. If few deputies professed atheism, those who were theists and sceptics saw not without gratification the suppression of the Catholic worship by other hands than their own. Urged on by the Commune the Assembly adopted a new calendar, which was in reality incompatible with the maintenance of the Catholic Church as a State institution. The year was divided into twelve months of thirty days each and five odd days; each of the months into three weeks of ten days each. The months were named after the seasons, the Frosty, the Rainy, and the like. The year I. began on September 22, 1792, the day of the proclamation of the republic. Hostility towards Catholicism was yet more plainly evinced by the adoption of a new law, which treated the constitutional clergy as enemies of the revolution. Not only were nonjurors to be immediately transported to the West Coast of Africa, and if taken in hiding in France to be put to death, but constitutional priests were made subject to transportation to the same place at the pleasure of the administrative authorities. Willingly or unwillingly the Convention was dragged in the wake of the Commune, and had to give official recognition to the new worship. Gobel, the Archbishop of Paris, attended by his chaplains and curés, was brought before the Assembly to make public resignation of his office. Several bishops and curés, who were deputies, rose and followed his example. One man alone, a Montagnard, Grégoire, the constitutional Bishop of Blois had the courage to protest and to declare his in-

tion of maintaining his post (November 7). From day to day revellers, masquerading in priestly vestments and laden with church plate, visited the Convention, there to deposit their spoils and to denounce as impostors the maintainers of Catholic doctrines. Finally, a festival in honour of Reason was celebrated in the Church of Notre Dame. A mountain of painted wood was erected in the choir, on which was seated a woman representing Reason, dressed in white, with a pike in her hand and a red cap on her head. All the civic authorities attended the ceremony. A procession, carrying this representative of Reason in its midst, marched to the Convention to the sound of music, and upon the demand of the municipal officers it was decreed that the Church of Notre Dame should thenceforth be converted into the Temple of Reason (November 10). From this time the churches of Paris were either closed or used as meeting-places, where disorderly crowds from time to time assembled to hear speeches made and songs sung in honour of Liberty and of Reason.

While these strange scenes were being enacted in Paris, war on the frontiers, and war in the interior of France continued to be waged as fiercely as before. The allies, when they deferred invasion till the next campaign, had made the error of rendering no assistance to the royalist insurgents within France. England sent no aid to the Vendéans; Austria none to Lyons. Accordingly, in October, Lyons surrendered. Toulon, by admitting an English and Spanish fleet into its harbour, was enabled to lengthen out till the end of the year its isolated and hopeless resistance. In La Vendée the war on both sides was conducted with extreme ferocity. The Convention adopted a decree, brought in by the Committee of Public Safety, which ordered the generals to burn the

Destruction  
of the  
Vendean  
army.

forests and insurgent villages, to seize the corn and cattle, and to make prisoners of the women and children (August 1). The intention was to burn and starve the country out. But the undisciplined republican levies were repelled whenever they sought to make their way into the interior. The generals were incompetent and authority divided. The Commune, the Committee of Public Safety, and the Mountain, were severally represented by a number of agents and deputies in mission, who contended with one another for the direction of the war and gave support to different generals. The situation was at last changed by the arrival at Nantes of several thousand troops of the line who had formed the late garrison of Mainz, and who were bound by the terms of their capitulation not to fight against the allies for a year, but were not forbidden to fight against French insurgents. Led by one of their own officers, Kléber, these troops penetrated to the heart of Upper Vendée, driving before them the largest army the Vendéans ever brought together. At the same time forces marched from Saumur and other points to effect a junction with them. The retreating Vendéans were accompanied by a host of non-combatants, old men, women, and children, burnt out of their homes or flying for their lives. Forced back on the Loire, they made a stand at Chollet, but only to experience fresh defeat. A general flight was effected across the river in boats (October 20). By this time most of the chiefs were either dead or dying. La Rochejaquelein, a young noble, and Stofflet, a peasant, took the command. Compelled always to move onwards through scarcity of food, the fugitives made their way to Normandy, in the hope of occupying Granville, a port town, and of receiving aid from England. But they had no siege pieces, and their repeated attempts to storm the fortifications failed. Then despair, long since felt by the chiefs, overtook the whole body. The ranks of the fighting men,

incessantly called on to repel the attacks of the pursuing enemy, were gradually thinned; there was dearth of food, and the sufferings of the wounded were intense. The republicans massacred every man, woman, and child left behind. The peasants forced their officers to lead them back to their own country. Angers was reached, where was a bridge over the Loire. But their attempt to force an entrance into the town failed. A defeat took place outside Le Mans (December 12); the retreat became a flight. Thousands were killed and made prisoners; a few escaped in boats; the rest were hunted down and slaughtered on the banks of the Loire.

While this civil war was continuing in the west, scenes similar to those occurring in Paris occurred simultaneously throughout the country. The will of the Commune was law in most of the departments of France. Some of the deputies in mission joined the Hébertist faction, and their colleagues followed in their train, not daring to venture collision with them.

*The Terror  
in the  
departments*

Men, in fact, adopted the language then in vogue, and acted cruelly, instigated by fear lest if they showed clemency they would offer a handle which their enemies would use to compass the ruin of themselves and their families. The deputies in mission, so long as they found protection in Paris, exercised uncontrolled powers over the properties and lives of their fellow-citizens. They imposed fines and taxes, set aside laws, created criminal offences, and erected criminal courts. Many decrees of the Convention merely extended to the whole country measures already in force in different departments. As instruments the deputies had at their service the municipalities, which were reconstituted over and over again; the clubs, from which they drove all who were not prepared slavishly to applaud their actions; and, finally, the revolutionary committees, to which they delegated the

same arbitrary powers that they themselves exercised. These committees, of which there was one established in every district and every populous commune, were, as a rule, formed of the most fanatic, the most cowardly, and the most worthless men whom the neighbourhood produced. Many thousand persons were at their bidding flung into prison on the merest pretext or without any motive at all being given. One would be imprisoned because he was related to an emigrant, another because he was a fanatic, a third because he was an egotist, a fourth because he had done nothing for the revolution, a fifth because he had 100*l.* or 50*l.* a year. Persons of both sexes, of every age and rank, were involved in the same proscription. Taxes were assessed at random. Those who could not or would not pay the sum demanded were imprisoned and their revenues confiscated. Persons in possession of metal money were made to exchange it for assignats. In every third department at least executions continually took place. There were no less than 178 extraordinary or revolutionary courts of one and another kind. Many observed no forms whatever, and passed several hundred judgments in a single sitting. So small was the control exercised by the central Government, that the Committee of Public Safety was in ignorance of the existence of some of these courts or of the number of persons punished by their decrees. The Catholic religion was proscribed. Before the worship of Reason was established at Paris, Hébertist deputies were confiscating the plate of churches, prohibiting the exercise of Catholic rites, and making bonfires of religious books and relics. Constitutional priests were imprisoned and guillotined by the score. Between one and two thousand married and abjured their faith. The observance of Sunday was prohibited. On the first days of the new weeks of ten days, feasts in honour of Reason, of Equality,

of Liberty, and the like, were held in the churches, from which none remained absent without risk of being classed in the category of suspected persons.

In every department property was confiscated, many persons imprisoned, and lives taken. But the amount of suffering inflicted and blood shed in any one department, nevertheless, depended in some degree on the character of the deputy in mission, and on the part that had been taken by the department after the expulsion of the Girondists. The Government had the support of a small number of men who, if fanatics, were nevertheless honest in believing that, whatever its excesses, it alone could save France from conquest, and who endeavoured to make use of their authority, not for personal or selfish ends, but for the public good, as they understood the term. Such men might be cruel; but if so, it was with a motive, not through cowardice, or the mere pleasure taken by the tyrant in making his power felt. St. Just, in Alsace, took from the citizens of Strasburg their coats, their beds, their boots, or whatever else he wanted to supply the wants of the soldiers. The municipal officers were commanded to provide 10,000 pairs of boots in the course of twenty-four hours. 'Take,' the youthful dictator wrote to them, 'the boots off the feet of the aristocrats.' In Auvergne, Couthon, while he exercised a grinding tyranny, aspired to win the attachment of the population. He obtained State grants for the embellishment of Clermont, his native town, established a manufactory of arms to give employment to destitute workmen, founded a college in the interests of education, and let out of prison a number of peasant farmers. But men of the description of St. Just and Couthon were rare. Far more often deputies in mission sought to enrich themselves, and closed their eyes to the greed and rapacity of their agents. At Bordeaux, under the presidency of the



cowardly Tallien, the rich man who could offer a sufficiently large bribe to his judges escaped with his life : the poor man went to the scaffold. In the departments where the Hébertists ruled most licence and most shedding of blood were invariably to be met with. Following the example set in Paris, they established revolutionary armies, which were charged with collecting taxes and bringing in corn, and which made havoc of the country through which they passed. Men of weak and violent character, suddenly risen to power, developed into tyrants capable of the most atrocious crimes, and with hearts apparently destitute of all feelings of justice and humanity. The prisons at Nantes were crowded with persons dying from disease and starvation, the wrecks of the Vendean army. In place of sending these victims of civil war back to their own country, the deputy Carrier caused them to be placed on rafts, which were afterwards sunk in the Loire, a process of execution twelve times adopted. On the great industrial town of Lyons savage vengeance was taken. Persons of every condition of life—manufacturers, shopkeepers, and artisans—condemned by military commissioners, were shot in batches of two or three hundred at a time. Whole streets and squares were blown up by gunpowder ; an immense amount of property was plundered and destroyed. According to the reckoning of the two deputies on whom the immediate responsibility rested, Collot and Fouché, in five months the population was reduced from 130,000 to 80,000 souls. The punishment inflicted on Toulon, when at last it surrendered in December, was hardly less atrocious.

The men who approved these acts and took part in them formed but an exceedingly small minority in the departments—in some districts so small that they might be counted on the fingers. In parts of Brittany fugitive Vendéans, in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux fugitive Girondists, remained in safe hiding, because there was no



one who cared to betray them. In the Basses Pyrénées, up till the autumn of 1793, revolutionary laws had remained unenforced, and a noble, elected in 1790, was still mayor of Pau. The judges of the ordinary courts, though at peril of their lives, refused to condemn their neighbours to death. The mass of municipal and administrative officers only took part in revolutionary measures under compulsion. A small knot of men, cowards, ruffians, fanatics, and fortune-hunters, gathered round the deputy in mission, directed the action of the clubs, sat in the revolutionary committees, and were judges in the revolutionary courts. Peasants and artisans gave as little active support to the Terror as the nobles or the bourgeoisie. The peasants, having freed themselves from feudal duties, became conservative. The requisitions for the armies and the corn maximum were incessant causes of irritation to them. The maximum of wages irritated artisans. Both classes were alienated by the suppression of the Catholic worship. The Hébertists vainly strove to acquire support by holding up the rich to reprobation, and by undertaking to give provision to the poor, and to provide labour for them. They succeeded in ruining the rich, but failed to benefit the poor. The main object, with a view to which their whole conduct was regulated, was to lay hands on all the wealth which tyranny and brutality could bring within their grasp; and of the spoils the larger part stayed, if not in their own hands, in the hands of their agents—the smaller was spent in the public service, and a bare pittance was left for providing bread and alms for the destitute. Thus, in 133 districts, where 1,400,000*l.* were admittedly raised in revolutionary taxes, a year afterwards only 430,000*l.* were accounted for. Material want was far greater than in the capital. In Lyons, Bordeaux, and many other places the inhabitants were put on rations, and a few ounces of bad bread were daily doled out per head.

Terrorists  
few in  
number.

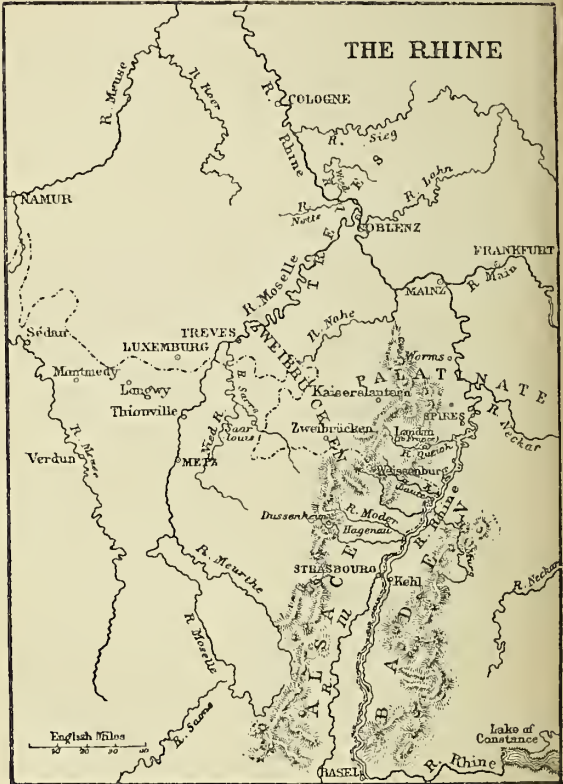
## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE FALL OF THE HÉBERTISTS AND DANTONISTS.

WHILE the internal condition of France was such as has been described, her enemies were being successfully held in check on the frontiers. After the great conscription decreed by the Convention in August had been effected, there were in all some million of men in arms. The nation might hate and despise its fanatic, tyrannical, and cruel Government, but it none the less remained proud of the changes which the revolution had effected, and was ready to endure the heavy yoke laid on it for the sake of defending France against interference from abroad. The nation was in reality far more truly represented by the army than by the Government. The soldiers, like the mass of those who stayed at home, were intensely enthusiastic in defence of their country, but took no part in the strife of internal factions. The Government was fully alive to the fact that it had not, except in a passive sense, the support of the large forces which necessity had compelled it to bring together, and the leaders in Paris lived always with the fear before them that some general would follow the example of Dumouriez, and turn against his employers. The Hébertists sought to weed out of the army all officers who by birth belonged to the old nobility. Such were cashiered by hundreds, and their places given to men from the ranks. Even these new officers, however, became objects of suspicion if they displayed military capacity, and won the affection of their men; and the generals were on the merest pretext condemned of treachery or treason by the revolutionary court, and were sent to the scaffold. Deputies in mission acted as spies on the conduct of all superior officers, reported their words and actions to

the Committee of Public Safety, attended at military councils, and were held by the soldiers in more awe than the commander-in-chief. All the more important movements of the armies were directed from Paris, where the plans of campaigns were laid down by Carnot, one of the members of the Committee of Public Safety. Carnot had been educated as a military engineer, and his considerable abilities were made available by his indefatigable energy and his intense enthusiasm for his work. In the face of the many obstacles which the disorganisation of the Government presented, he devoted himself entirely to the task of organising the armies, and of insuring that the war which extended over so wide a field should be conducted with intelligence and method. The success which the French attained was undoubtedly in great part owing to his unremitting exertions. Hitherto the army had been divided into two bodies, distinguished from one another by pay, uniform, and system of advancement—namely, troops of the line which had formed the army of the monarchy, and new battalions raised since the beginning of the war. In February 1793, the Convention had determined to abolish these distinctions, and to fuse in common regiments the troops of the line and the new recruits, and the operation was actually carried into effect during the following winter. Thus, in place of the old royal army there had come into existence a wholly new army, the creation of the revolution. The troops lacked training and discipline, but were ready to fight continually against superior numbers, had confidence in their officers, and were not easily shaken by reverses. Many officers were unable to read and write, but against this defect was to be set the advantage that military talent rapidly found its way to the front. Two-thirds of the regimental officers were elected by those whom they were to command, one-third was advanced

The French  
Army.



by time of service. The appointment of the generals the Government reserved to itself.

After the surrender of Condé and Valenciennes, the forces of the allies in Flanders separated. The Duke of York, against Coburg's desire, went west to lay siege to Dunkirk, while Coburg himself in-<sup>Campaign in Belgium</sup>vested Le Quesnoi. The Duke's forces were in two divisions. He himself with 20,000 men besieged Dunkirk; 15,000 Hanoverians under Freitag remained a few miles inland to watch the enemy. The commander of the garrison opened the dykes and flooded the country, cutting off communication between the two divisions, and confining the Duke's retreat eastwards to Furnes, along the sea coast. The French General Houchard, bringing together 50,000 men, overpowered Freitag's 15,000 at the village of Hondshoote, and drove them back on Furnes (September 8). The Duke of York, hastily raising the siege, effected by a night march his retreat to Furnes, and afterwards rejoined the Austrians. Houchard, accused of treason and of neglecting to follow up his victory, was guillotined. In his place was appointed General Jourdan, who in 1791 had entered the army as a volunteer. Le Quesnoi surrendered to Coburg, and the allies next laid siege to Maubeuge. Jourdan, bringing together a large force, defeated at Wattignies 18,000 Austrians, stationed south of the river to guard against his advance (October 16). Coburg in consequence raised the siege, and the armies on both sides retired into winter quarters. The allies during the campaign had won three French fortresses—Condé, Valenciennes, and Le Quesnoi.

After the fall of Mainz the war on the Rhine had flagged. The Austrians proposed to turn south and conquer Alsace, the Prussians to lay<sup>Campaign on the Rhine.</sup> siege to Saarlouis. The Austrian plan was adopted, but not vigorously pursued. At Berlin the

final settlement of affairs in Poland was regarded as being of more importance to Prussia than anything that might happen in France; and the advisers of Frederick William were unwilling that Prussian troops should shed their blood in conquering Alsace for the Emperor. The French occupied a strong position behind the Lauter, called the lines of Weissenburg. After many weeks' delay these lines were stormed by a combined attack of the Austrian and Prussian forces (October 11-13). The Austrian general Wurmser then pressed on southwards, eager to reach Strasburg; while Brunswick, who knew that he would give offence at Berlin if he engaged the Prussian troops in a winter campaign in Alsace, blockaded Landau, and began to take up winter quarters in the Vosges. The allied army in this quarter was consequently spread out in a long thin line, extending from Kaiserslautern to Hagenau and Dussenheim. The French forces, divided into two armies, were commanded by two young and talented generals—the Rhine army by Pichegru, the Moselle army by Hoche. Hoche at first made ineffectual efforts to storm Brunswick's positions round Kaiserslautern, while Pichegru attacked the Austrians. Directed by Carnot, Hoche then placed a portion of his army at Pichegru's disposal, after which a fierce and unremitting assault was opened on Wurmser's positions. The Austrian line, broken through and surrounded, gave way on all sides. Wurmser, casting the blame of the disaster on the Prussians, retreated across the Rhine, and Brunswick was compelled to follow him. The siege of Landau was thus raised, and the French reoccupied Spire and Worms (December).

The victory of Wattignies, and still more the expulsion of the allies from Alsace, affected the relations of the factions which were struggling for ascendancy in Paris. The Montagnards resented the subserviency in which they

were held by the Commune and by the two Committees ; and as the danger of invasion decreased, the stronger grew their desire to shake off the oppressive yoke which they had laid upon themselves by the expulsion of the Girondists. Only a very few of their number really entertained the same ideas as the Hébertists ; whilst outside the Committees of Public Safety and General Security, there was scarcely a deputy who did not resent the tyranny exercised by these Committees. Yet the Montagnards could not regain independence. They could not appeal to the deputies of the centre, who crouched in subservience even greater than their own before the Committees and the Commune. They were themselves without courage or union. All sense of political honour was dead, and in order to avoid giving offence, where to do so was dangerous, men were prepared to retract their own words, and to sacrifice their fellows without compunction. Some Montagnards, instigated by fear for their own lives, obtained the adoption of a decree to the effect that the Convention would suffer its members to speak in self-defence when charges were made against them (November 10). A few days afterwards, on the demand of the Committee of Public Safety, the Convention repealed this decree, and ordered the arrest of four deputies, including its proposers, against whom a general charge of conspiring against the Republic was laid by the Committee.

Happily, this tale of crouching submission to tyranny does not fill the whole of the annals of the Convention. Men ordinarily silent in the Convention sought shelter in private committees appointed for the preparation of special laws. In these, Montagnards and deputies of the centre still worked side by side, elaborating legislative projects for the advance of education, the reform of the civil law, the improvement of agriculture, the draining



of marshes, the suppression of mendicity and the relief of the poor, and others of similar character. Although much of their labour produced no results, still a considerable amount of most important legislation was effected, which dated its commencement from the times when the Girondists had been in power, and which was far more truly characteristic of the Convention as a body than the bloody laws which it passed at the dictation of the Committee of Public Safety speaking in the name of the Jacobins and of the Commune.

The work  
of the Con-  
vention.

The Constituent Assembly had retained, until the proprietors could be compensated, feudal duties presumed to be due for a grant of land. The Legislative Assembly, following a theory which had been entertained by many lawyers—that land was originally free—had decreed the abolition of all duties without indemnity, except in cases where the proprietors could prove the original title, showing that the duties were really due for a grant of land. This as a rule was impossible, the duties being due by prescription only. The new law gave rise to suits, and the Convention destroyed the last vestiges of the feudal system by decreeing the abolition without indemnity of all duties which bore a feudal character. Before the ejection of the Girondists entails were abolished, and parents were also prohibited from making wills favouring one child more than another. Parents were now further prohibited from giving more than a tenth of their property to strangers, or more than a sixth to collateral relations. Illegitimate children were put on the same footing as legitimate. The Legislative Assembly had instituted civil marriages, and had permitted divorce, on the mere ground of incompatibility of temper, with the consent of both parties. A new civil code, clear and simple, and in accordance with the legis-



lation of the revolutionary Assemblies, was being prepared to take the place of the chaos of old laws and customs. The work, however, was but in progress, and the new code was not promulgated by the Convention. Negro slavery was abolished, and men of colour in the colonies received the rights of French citizens. A decree was passed for the establishment of primary schools to be maintained by the State. Instruction was to be gratuitous, attendance compulsory, and no religious teaching allowed. Laws were also passed for the institution of three schools of medicine and a school of natural history at Paris. But little was in reality effected for the instruction of any class. Money and power were both wanting. Instigated by its Committee of Public Instruction, the Convention repeatedly ordered the preservation of the valuable monastic libraries. None the less, the books were neglected, plundered, and scattered. Primary schools, if opened, were, in the country, unattended. Of higher education little was to be had. Suspected of reactionary tendencies, all academies and learned societies had been broken up. Most colleges had disappeared; a few dragged on a feeble existence.

By the side of the two committees of Government, the Committee of Finance occupied an important and, to some extent, an independent position. The Committee of Public Safety possessed no member prepared to undertake the direction of the finances, and it was therefore obliged to leave the initiative to others. The deputy Cambon, who sat on the confines of the Mountain, practically occupied the position of Minister of Finance; and several laws introduced by him were adopted, designed to restore equilibrium between expenditure and revenue, and to prevent increase in the number of assignats in circulation. The State possessed a large number of creditors, some lenders

Cambon's  
financial  
measures.

before the revolution, others since; whilst to others compensation was due for abolished offices. All these creditors were put on the same footing. Capital, if due to them, was made irrecoverable, and in all cases five per cent. interest given. The old titles were destroyed and the new entered in a common book, called the Great Book of the Public Debt. The State gained by the operation, more especially in the case of loans contracted before the revolution, often on very onerous terms. A new source of revenue was sought in the imposition of a forced loan, according to the law passed in the spring. The lenders were to be repaid in confiscated lands. This loan was expected to bring in the large sum of 43,750,000*l.*, and assignats to that amount were to be withdrawn from circulation.

Efforts to restore the finances were, however, as fruitless as efforts to advance education. While millions were being squandered in the departments, taxes imposed by the Convention remained unpaid. The forced loan never brought in more than eight millions. Cambon vainly reiterated complaints that but little of the sums irregularly raised in the departments ever reached the treasury. So long as the Commune exercised power, it was impossible for the Convention to take any effectual steps for the enforcement of its decrees.

Thus it came about from a variety of causes that the existing Government gave dissatisfaction to many of those who took part in it. Even the most cruel and unprincipled of the Montagnards resented their subservient position. The institution of the Worship of Reason gave offence to many of them. The wanton waste of property and destruction of life going on in the chief commercial towns of France, in Lyons, Toulon, Bordeaux, and Nantes, excited disgust if not pity. Now that the country was no longer in any immediate danger of

invasion, men, before indifferent as to what was done so long as the enemy was repulsed, awoke to the horror of the scenes that were being enacted round them. The Dantonists sincerely desired to stay the action of the guillotine. Having been pushed aside, since the reconstitution of the Committee of Public Safety in July, by men more fanatic and sanguinary than themselves, they were visited by remorse as they experienced their powerlessness to hold in check passions which they had themselves helped to unloose. 'I cannot forget,' wrote Desmoulins, warmly attached to his own wife and child, 'that the men they are killing by thousands have also wives and children.'

Besides creating discontent in the Mountain, the ascendancy of the Commune gave dissatisfaction to the Committee of Public Safety, and in particular to Robespierre. Robespierre was opposed to the principles of which Hébert had declared himself the special champion. He put himself forward, indeed, as being as well as Hébert the people's friend, but between neither the aims nor the characters of the two men did any real similarity exist. Robespierre had no sympathy for a movement which idolised ignorance, rags, and vice, and made the Republic the prey of bands of rapacious and unscrupulous adventurers. While Hébert, by the adoption of rude manners and coarse language, sought popularity, Robespierre always maintained propriety both in language and in dress, continuing even to wear his hair powdered, as had been the custom of educated men under the monarchy. Further, the atheistic doctrines which Hébert professed were to Robespierre essentially repugnant. Robespierre was a theist of the school of Rousseau, and Rousseau had said that men could not be good citizens who did not believe in a special providence and in a future life, and

The Hébertists attacked by Robespierre.

that atheism was the one doctrine the public profession of which no wise legislator would tolerate.

In the Jacobins Robespierre attacked Hébert and the Commune on the ground of their intolerance. Those, he said, who persecute priests are more fanatic than the priests themselves. Atheism is aristocratic. The idea of a Supreme Being who watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime is wholly popular. If God did not exist, we should have to invent him.

Thus, both by principle and ambition, Robespierre was urged on to seek the destruction of the Hébertists and of the Commune. His colleagues on the two committees, though most of them disliked him personally, and were afraid of his gaining increased ascendancy for himself, shared his desire to break the power of the Commune. As they grew more accustomed to the exercise of authority, they became impatient at having to share it with a body whose will had always to be taken into consideration, and by whose action their own was often thwarted. The Montagnards hated the tyranny of the two committees, but they hated the tyranny of the Commune yet more, and were willing to take part in overthrowing it, neglectful of the probability that by so doing they would yet more securely rivet the chains in which the committees held them. In the Convention the Hébertist generals and agents in La Vendée were incessantly accused of misconduct and incapacity, and of being responsible for whatever reverses had taken place. A law was passed intended to centralise power in the hands of the two committees, and to deprive the Commune of the instruments by means of which it secured ascendancy in the departments. The revolutionary committees of Paris were put under the supervision of the Committee of General Security. The Commune was deprived of the right of sending agents

into the departments. The revolutionary army of Paris was for the time left in existence, through fear lest if an attempt were made to disband it, it might rise against the Convention, but the revolutionary armies in the departments were to be suppressed. No taxes were to be imposed without the sanction of the Convention. The law officers belonging to districts and municipalities, hitherto elected, were made dependent on the central Government, and received the name of national agents (December 4).

About the same time that this law was adopted, Desmoulins, encouraged by Robespierre, began the publication of a paper, the *Old Cordelier*, in which he first confined himself to denouncing the Hébertists, but went on to denounce the Terror itself as a great deception, and to compare the state of things in France to that which prevailed under the worst of the Roman emperors. The law of treason, he said, was extended to words; the inhabitants of towns were killed in masses. Grief, pity, looks of disapprobation, silence itself, constituted State crimes. It was a crime to be rich; a crime to give shelter to a friend. Is it possible, he asked, that the state of things which constituted despotism and the worst of governments when Tacitus wrote, constitutes to-day liberty and the best of possible worlds? You wish to exterminate your enemies by the guillotine. What folly! For every man you kill you make ten new enemies. If we do not understand by liberty the carrying out of principles, never was there an idolatry so stupid as ours, nor one that costs more. Liberty is no operatic singer promenading in a red cap. Liberty is happiness, equality, justice, the Declaration of Rights itself. If I am to recognise her presence, open the prison doors to those 200,000 citizens whom you call 'suspected.'

Struggle  
between  
Dantonists  
and Hé-  
bertists.

Thus was the Commune attacked on three sides at once—by Montagnards, who desired the independence of the Convention; by the Committee of Public Safety, which sought the extension of its own authority; and by Dantonists, who sought to hold in check the Terror. Hébert was afraid to enter into contention with Robespierre. By the atheistic movement he had sought and attained notoriety, but its active supporters were few, and there was no probability that any considerable body of men would rally round him in its defence. Chaumette, at the Commune, made a speech on the folly of attempting to suppress religious opinions by force. Hébert went further, and made a formal denial of atheism at the Jacobins. But while seeking to curry favour with Robespierre, Hébert and his followers opened the more vehement attack on the Dantonists. Here they were surer of their ground, for all who had been actively engaged in the work of destruction dreaded the first step of reaction, lest vengeance should overtake themselves. The Cordeliers erased the names of Danton and Desmoulins from their list of members. Collot, the director of the atrocities committed at Lyons, who had returned to Paris in December, expressed amazement that the first who spoke of clemency had not been sent to the scaffold. Amongst the twelve men who formed the Committee of Public Safety no good understanding existed. Six concerned themselves with special branches of administration, but took no part in directing the general action of the Government. The remaining six were not all of one mind. Couthon and St. Just were devoted adherents of Robespierre. Barère, originally a deputy of the centre, and a temporiser between the Mountain and the Gironde, was indifferent whether Robespierre or Hébert succumbed, so long as he found himself on the winning side. Billaud and Collot, who

acted together, were the two most sanguinary men on the committee. They were connected with the Hébertists. They had no quarrel with the establishment of the Worship of Reason, and dreaded, by the destruction of Hébert, to give Robespierre an opportunity of domineering over themselves. As members of the committee, however, they disliked the rivalry of the Commune, and they were besides afraid both of Robespierre's enmity and of the triumph of the Dantonists. Accordingly, they were prepared to sacrifice Hébert, so long as they could secure themselves against reaction by putting Danton to death as well. On his side, Robespierre was prepared to sacrifice Danton. He could not join the Dantonist reaction against the Terror without imperilling his influence at the Jacobins, and forcing Collot and Billaud to make common cause with Hébert. Moreover, were the Hébertists suppressed by the triumph of the Dantonists, Robespierre would have to face the contingency of the Mountain shaking off the control of the two committees.

The Jacobin club was the field where the battle between Robespierre and Hébert was first fought out. In this society, which was Robespierre's stronghold, Hébert was powerless to contend against him. Many of the frequenters of the club were indeed Hébertists, but their influence was small compared with that of Robespierre and his supporters. All the small tradesmen and artisans who, uninfluenced by sordid motives, still took interest in political affairs, idolised Robespierre. While Hébert had the adherence of the unprincipled and vicious only, who were sure to abandon him in time of peril, Robespierre had the affection of partisans ready to stand by him, and in case of need to die for him. His undoubted integrity, his constant talk of virtue and morality, the reserve of his

Robespierre  
and the  
Jacobins.



manner, the very dryness of his language, made a deep impression upon sincere but narrow and fervent minds. The rough men and women who frequented the galleries of the Jacobins listened to him with rapt attention, and applauded his words with such hearty energy that persons who ventured amongst them without imitating their conduct became objects of remark. The society which Robespierre thus dominated was a real political power, and had for long been the instrument by aid of which he had been able to assume precedence of his colleagues in the Committee of Public Safety. Every resolution the club adopted the Convention had ultimately to adopt; and every individual whom the club proscribed, were he a minister, a general, a deputy, or any other, went in the course of a few days to prison and the guillotine. No man was regarded as a good patriot who was not a Jacobin, and hundreds of persons who never entered the place had, for the sake of security, inscribed their names as members.

Robespierre, as his habit was before he was sure of his path, adopted an undecided attitude between the Hébertists and the Dantonists, blaming the extreme, whether of excess or of moderation. The Hébertists sought to strengthen their position in the club by attacking the Dantonists; and it was only owing to Robespierre's protection that Desmoulins and others who had demanded the adoption of a more clement policy, were able to maintain their footing in the society. Finally, Robespierre secured his end by abandoning the Dantonists as victims to the fanaticism and cruelty of his followers, whilst he openly sought the proscription of the Hébertists. One after another, persons who had either professed atheism or had displayed feelings of humanity, were deprived of membership. The club became the tool of the Committee of Public

Fall of Hébertists and Dantonists.



Safety, and none but the satellites of Robespierre and Collot breathed freely in it. The Dantonists had no support to which to look but the feeble and disunited Mountain. No one trusted his neighbour, and each dreaded to oppose the will of the two committees, lest he should afterwards be abandoned to their vengeance. Although the Hébertists appeared more formidable, the danger of their being able to overpower their adversaries was small. They could no longer rely for support on the forces which had been at their disposal in July and August. After the passing of the maximum laws they had played their last card, and had no means left by which to move the populace to take their side. On the contrary, it had become a constant effort on the part of the Commune to prevent the gathering together of hungry crowds in the streets, which might lead to a perfectly genuine explosion of popular fury directed against itself. Every vestige of free political life had been stamped out. The general assemblies of the sections only met twice a week, and those attending them were paid. Clubs to which many members belonged were viewed with suspicion and discountenanced. The great maximum law of September, fixing prices at a third above what they were in 1790, had ruined so many persons that it was abandoned as untenable. A new law took as a basis the real cost of each article in the place of production, allowed a certain percentage for carriage, ten per cent. for the wholesale, and five per cent. for the retail dealer. The tariff for Paris, which was published in March, excited great discontent. Of the needier supporters of the Commune many had now acquired booty or office, and hesitated to risk their lives by taking up the cause of Hébert against Robespierre. The Committee of Public Safety bid for the support of the idle and hungry by two laws, the one (February 26) ordering the sequestration of

property belonging to the enemies of the revolution, the second (March 3) promising that means should be taken to make provision for destitute patriots out of the sequestered property. An attempt, headed by the Cordeliers, to get up an insurrection against the Convention and the two committees failed. Hébert and eighteen others were arrested and condemned to death by the revolutionary court on the usual absurd charge of seeking to destroy the Convention and to restore monarchy (March 24). A few days after their execution came the turn of the Dantonists. Danton, Desmoulins, and two other deputies were arrested in the night. The Convention abandoned them on the demand of St. Just, without a voice speaking in their defence (March 31). Danton, forewarned, had made no effort to save himself. Can a man, he replied when urged to fly, take his country with him on the soles of his shoes? By the court which he had himself taken part in instituting, he and his friends were condemned as monarchists and traitors to the Republic. No documents were produced, and the accused were not suffered to make their defence. 'On such a day,' said Danton in prison, 'I caused to be erected the revolutionary court. I ask pardon of God and man.' Shortly afterwards a new batch of victims was brought to the scaffold, some Hébertists, others Dantonists. Amongst them was the widow of Hébert and the young widow of Desmoulins, with whom, as well as with her husband, Robespierre had lived on terms of close intimacy.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

THE members of the Committee of Public Safety now concentrated all the powers of government in their own

hands. The Mountain was crushed with Danton, the Commune with Hébert. The deputies in mission, who before had joined the Hébertist party, now sought to guard their heads by pursuing whatever line of action was indicated to them by the committee. The Commune was reconstituted and placed under the direction of two men devoted to Robespierre—its mayor, Fleuriot-Lescot, and its national agent, Payan. The partisans of Hébert on civil and revolutionary committees were replaced. The system of popular election was abandoned even in form, and all reappointments were made either by the committee itself, or by the Convention at its dictation. The ministries were abolished, and the ministerial departments divided between twelve commissions, on which new men were placed.

Dictatorship  
of the Com-  
mittee of  
Public  
Safety.

Reports of the execution of the Hébertists penetrated the prison walls, and aroused hope that the Terror itself was to come to an end. Such hopes rapidly proved delusive. The dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety, founded by terror, rested on terror alone. Collot and Billaud had no other thought than to perpetuate their rule by continuing the system already in force. Robespierre was equally cruel, not, as in their case, from mere disregard of the amount of blood shed, but because he aimed at more, and regarded the guillotine as the most facile instrument for the attainment of his ends. He could not be satisfied with that which satisfied Billaud and Collot. Already the most prominent man on the committee, he sought the first place in the Republic, and to figure before Europe as the maintainer of virtue and the regenerator of his country. He had learned of Rousseau to regard as utterly hateful the state of society in the midst of which he had grown up, with its division of classes and glaring contrasts between

Aims of  
Robespierre.

knowledge and ignorance, indolence and toil, luxury and squalor. Had the power been his, he would have destroyed every vestige of it by fusing all classes into one, abolishing vice and ignorance, with the extremes of wealth and poverty, and giving to all citizens similar interests, habits and pleasures. This ideal, which was Rousseau's, was always present in Robespierre's mind, veiling from him his own ambition ; but it was vague, and he had no definite conception of the manner in which its realisation should be attempted. He was not a thinker or an organiser. Rousseau had suggested education and legislation as possible means of regeneration. To these Robespierre added nothing but the guillotine, the principle of extermination of opponents. All who stood in his light he proscribed one after another, as they appeared before him—the noble, the capitalist, the merchant, the free-trader, the atheist, the fanatic, the merciful, the moderate, the corrupt, the extortionate, and even the neutral man, until at last the people whose praises were constantly on his lips dwindled down in his mind to be no more than the Robespierrists, a few hundred ignorant and credulous but fervent supporters and admirers.

Behind Robespierre was St. Just, a young man a little over twenty, fanatic, self-confident and intolerant. In thought he was more audacious than Robespierre, and his conceptions were more definite. He was probably the most thorough-going disciple of Rousseau in France. Like his master, he based his conceptions of what the government of a great state ought to be on the institutions of the petty republics of antiquity, and of all those republics the one which he selected for imitation was, strangely enough, that of aristocratic Sparta. But it was the despotism of Sparta, not its aristocracy, which he admired. By means of Spartan institutions he

thought to remould the habits and customs of his countrymen. All boys were to be brought up together in common schools. Every man was to marry, and every man to work. Every man was to have friends, and to make every year a public declaration of their names in the temple of the Supreme Being. If he committed a crime, his friends were to be banished from the Republic. In short, by aid of laws and state institutions of this character, St. Just believed it possible to give to the French people simple, frugal, and industrious habits. Circumstances, he said, were of no importance, except to men who fear death. Meanwhile, until the necessary institutions should be established and the habits and beliefs of his countrymen transformed, St. Just, like Robespierre, fell back on the guillotine in order to get rid of those who stood in the way of the accomplishment of his ideal. Until men were virtuous in his sense of the word, the Republic could rest upon terror alone. What, asked this young, fanatical, and unscrupulous theorist, would those have who reject alike as principles of government virtue and terror?

Besides fanaticism and love of power, there existed a material motive for the continuance of the Terror. Resources were secured for the service of the State. As soon as a person was imprisoned his capital was sequestered and his revenue confiscated. When he was condemned to die, the capital itself was confiscated. But the promise held out before the arrest of the Hébertists, that provision should be made for the indigent out of sequestered property, was never carried into effect. Further, purchasers of state lands lost their lives by scores, and thus national property came a second time into the market as security for the paper money. Cynical words ascribed to Barère exactly expressed the satisfaction felt by many at these financial results of the guillotine.

‘We coin money,’ he was reported to have said, ‘on the Place de la Révolution.’

The result of the dictatorship of the committee and of Robespierre’s ascendancy was, therefore, that the Terror was reduced to a system. Those who hoped for a return to a more clement policy were grievously disappointed. The revolutionary army of Paris was disbanded. Special courts in the departments, with the exception of some twenty, were suppressed, and political prisoners sent to Paris for trial. Justice, probity, and virtue were declared to be the order of the day, and the penalties of imprisonment and death were suspended over the heads of those who defrauded the Republic. The bands of villains, which, under the name of revolutionary armies, were still the curse of several departments, were broken up and their leaders sent to the scaffold. Encouragement was promised to trade and agriculture, and the release ordered of artisans and labourers in country districts against whom no definite charges had been brought. The number of executions at Paris rose in proportion as it decreased in the departments, from 60 to 155, and then to 354 a month. In Bordeaux, Arras, and other towns where special courts were retained, executions were recommenced. A new court was established by the committee at Orange, which in forty-two sittings condemned to death 331 persons, imprisoned 98, and acquitted 159. Five Girondist outlaws still hiding in the Gironde were hunted out. Guadet and Barbaroux were executed at Bordeaux, the bodies of Pétion and Buzot were found dead in a field.

In La Vendée a war of extermination was being carried on. After the destruction of the great Vendean army in December, the country was quiet through exhaustion, and by the adoption of a clement policy the insurrection might have been

War in La  
Vendée.

brought to an end. But at the Commune, where Hébert was still in power, the idea had been entertained of annihilating the inhabitants and of confiscating their land. Under the command-in-chief of Turreau, a man as brutal as Collot himself, twelve columns marched into the interior from different points, killing all living things that came in their way, and destroying villages, farms, crops, ovens, and corn-mills. Even towns which they did not occupy were pillaged and burnt, and those inhabitants who had throughout supported the Republic were required to quit the country on pain of being themselves treated as brigands. The war flared up again on all sides. The population of entire villages, taking their goods and stock with them, sought refuge in their forests, whence they carried on an incessant guerilla warfare against the enemy. The isolated republican posts were either stormed or starved out. If the soldiers had corn they had no means of grinding it, because all the mills had been destroyed. Supplies from Saumur and Nantes were cut off on the way. The men fell ill, by thousands, and the reduction of the country appeared less near completion than when Turreau's columns first began their work of destruction.

After the disastrous ending of the Rhine campaign in December 1793, the alliance between Austria and Prussia practically came to an end. Prussia having acquired her so-called compensation in <sup>The Hague</sup> Treaty. Poland, her generals and diplomatists were desirous of bringing the war with France to a speedy termination. The country was poor, and without interest in its continuation. An important consideration, however, restrained the Government from rashly entering on a peace policy. Prussia was bound, for the sake of her headship in North Germany, to protect the northern States against invasion. The King, moreover, had personally



a strong disinclination to desert the coalition before the existing government in France was overthrown. A middle path was found. Prussia declared her readiness to leave her army on the Rhine if the allies would bear the cost of its maintenance. The lesser States of the Empire showed no alacrity in responding to this appeal, while Austria refused to be a party to any arrangement for the payment of a Prussian army. After the experience of the last campaign, Thugut did not credit Prussia with the intention of rendering any material assistance, and foresaw that if Austria held back, England would undertake to bear the burden. The ministers of George III. were making strenuous efforts to hold the coalition together. They were intent on extending the colonial empire of England, and while France was engaged in hostilities with half the continent, it was impossible for her to defend her colonies. Accordingly, a treaty was signed at the Hague between Malmesbury on the English side and Haugwitz on the Prussian, by which England undertook, together with Holland, to supply Prussia with a monthly sum for the maintenance of 62,000 men (April 19).

This treaty was hardly signed when news reached Berlin that the Poles were in arms. The Polish Diet had been forced, at the time of the second Insurrection in Poland. partition, not merely to relinquish provinces to Russia and Prussia, but to sign a treaty which placed in subjection to Russia that portion of the country still left nominally independent. King Stanislaus was the tool of Catherine, and his Government was supported by 40,000 Russians. Discontent permeated the country. The inhabitants of the towns regretted the reformed constitution of May 1791, overthrown by the influence of Catherine (p. 98). The lesser nobility was bitterly hostile to Russian domination; the army, still 30,000 strong



resented its degradation. The standard of revolt was now raised on all sides. At Warsaw the populace, uniting with insurgent Polish regiments, drove out the Russian garrison with heavy loss of life (April 18). Yet, in spite of the enthusiasm with which the insurrection was begun, and the patriotic spirit animating its leaders, Potocki and Kosciusko, there was but little probability of final success. The Poles, torn by internal faction, were unable to present a united front against the common foe. Many of the upper nobility were in Russian pay. Three powerful neighbours—Austria, Prussia, and Russia—did but need a pretext for the accomplishment of a final partition and the effacement of Poland from the map. Frederick William, with 50,000 troops, at once marched into the country, and, joining with the Russians, laid siege to Warsaw (July 13).

These events reacted sensibly on military operations in the West. England and Prussia had had different objects in view when they entered into the treaty of the Hague. The English Government expected that the Prussian army would fight in Belgium; the King of Prussia intended that it should merely secure the Empire against invasion by blocking the passage of the Rhine. The Polish insurrection had heightened the aversion of Prussian generals and ministers to the French war. They refused to allow their army to leave the Rhine, urging the forcible plea that the Empire would be exposed to invasion. They further made the quarrel with England which broke out on this ground an excuse for taking no active steps whatever to attack the enemy. In May, indeed, their army had advanced in the direction of Alsace, and had driven the French from Kaiserslautern and the neighbouring positions. But from that time it remained inactive, and thus the French were able to send large additional forces to combat the allies in Belgium.

The Committee of Public Safety had abetted the insurrection of the Poles, and had sought, though without result, to stir up war on the Danube as well as on the Vistula, by subsidising the Porte to attack Austria. Carnot, aware of the differences existing between Austria and Prussia, arranged the campaign on the supposition that no vigorous enemy would be found on the Rhine. He designed to confine offensive operations to Belgium, where he hoped to overpower the allies by superiority of numbers, and to threaten Holland and England with invasion. The seat of war may be roughly divided into three divisions: first, the country between the rivers Meuse and Sambre; secondly, the country between the Sambre and the Scheldt; and thirdly, Flanders between the Scheldt and the sea. This long line of territory the allies had to defend with 160,000 against 300,000 men. Their generals had no superior talents enabling them to contend with success against such odds as these. The Duke of York, who had again been appointed to command the English troops, because he was the son of George III., had neither military knowledge nor capacity. Coburg followed without reserve the strategy of the day, which was to put an opposing body of men opposite each body of the enemy, and to defend every locality which had once been occupied. The idea of gaining victory by bringing an overpowering force to bear upon a weak point of the enemy's line did not suggest itself to him or his staff, and his plan of operations was confined to maintaining his positions and capturing French fortresses.

The allies were still in occupation of the three fortresses—Valenciennes, Condé, and Le Quesnoi—which they had taken in the preceding year. Between Valenciennes and Bavay was the Austrian centre; their right

wing occupied Flanders, their left guarded the line of the Sambre. Carnot's plan was to make use of his numerical superiority, first to shatter the enemy's wings, and then, attacking his centre both in front and in flank, to drive him out of Belgium. The Austrians began hostilities by laying siege to Landrecies. Pichegru, with 100,000 men, advanced into Flanders, and defeated the allied right wing at Turcoing (April 18). He next laid siege to Ypres, and the allies, after an ineffectual attempt to relieve the town, retreated behind the Scheldt. On the Sambre the allied forces were equal in number to the French, both armies being about 50,000 strong; and here, while Pichegru was conquering Flanders, an effectual stand was made against the repeated efforts of the French generals to get a footing on the north side of the river and to invest Charleroi. But the continued inactivity of the Prussians enabled Carnot to send 50,000 men from the Rhine to the Sambre, so as to outnumber the allies on this side also. Charleroi was invested, and capitulated (June 25). The following day Coburg, who had arrived from the centre with reinforcements and was unaware of the surrender, attacked the French positions at Fleurus and the neighbouring villages (June 26). The battle lasted the whole day, without decided result; and Coburg, on hearing that Charleroi had already surrendered, did not renew the struggle. The evacuation of Belgium followed these disasters. Coburg withdrew behind the Meuse, and the Duke of York, with the English and Dutch troops, retreated into Brabant. The French laid siege to those fortresses in France and Flanders in which the allies had left garrisons.

After the allies had been thus driven from Belgium, all danger of invasion was over, and men would be more ready to call in question the authority of a Government which it might soon be possible to resist without render-

ing France weak in the presence of a dangerous enemy. Robespierre had ever been keenly alive to the possibility of the Government being overthrown by some victorious general, and he followed the successes of the armies with an excessively jealous eye. At this time, although he occupied the first place in the Committee of Public Safety, he was not content with his position, but was seeking to draw the reins of government more closely into his own grasp, and to make himself independent of his colleagues. They had no means of combating him. The Commune and the Jacobins, the two main wheels by which the revolutionary Government was kept in action, were now under his control. He established a special police office, which encroached on the functions of the Committee of General Security. He sent special agents into the departments as spies on the conduct of the deputies in mission, who were to make private reports to himself. Above all, he sought to obtain a basis to his authority wanting to his rivals, by asserting the necessity of laying the foundations of morality and duty in spiritual beliefs. In thus acting, if Robespierre was instigated by personal ambition, he was instigated also by the desire to put into practice, at whatever risk to himself, the principles which he had learned of Rousseau. Under his inspiration the Convention decreed that the French people recognised a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. A new worship was inaugurated by a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, held in the Champ de Mars. The Convention took part in the ceremonies. Robespierre, at the time president, walked first, dressed in a sky-blue coat, and holding in his hand a large bunch of flowers, fruits, and corn. Arrived at the Champ de Mars he set fire to figures representing atheism and egoism. As they burnt, the figure of wisdom rose out

The wor-  
ship of the  
Supreme  
Being.

of the flames. Hymns were sung, and the ground strewn with flowers by children (June 8).

For a moment expectation prevailed that this recognition of a Supreme Being would be followed by a revival of sentiments of humanity. The case proved otherwise. The festival was barely over when the Convention, in accordance with a project drawn up by Robespierre, reorganised the revolutionary court (June 10). The calling of witnesses, hearing of counsel, and other forms long since only partially observed, were formally abolished. The prisoners were brought before the court in batches of twenty, thirty, or fifty at a time. A short vaguely-worded charge was read. The president asked each person his or her name and one or two questions. No evidence on either side was heard. The jury condemned the accused in a body. To make as quick as possible the work of judicial massacre, Robespierre's agents invented a story that the prisoners were conspiring to save themselves by assassinating the members of the Convention, and on this charge persons belonging to every condition of life, brought together from all quarters of France, were sent pell mell to the scaffold. From the time of its institution in March 1793 to the passing of this law on June 10, 1794, the court had condemned to death 1,259 persons; after June 18, in less than seven weeks, it caused the execution of 1,368 persons.

The reorganisation of this court, which Robespierre, by the reappointment of judges and jurymen, endeavoured to convert into his special instrument, spread alarm on every side. At this time, indeed, terror prevailed in official circles to an extent that it would be difficult to exaggerate. There was no opposition to the Government. In the Jacobins, the Commune, the Convention, the Sections, no propositions were made that did not accord

with the views of the two committees. In the Commune, the National agent Payan travestied the language of Robespierre, as Robespierre in the Convention the language of Rousseau. In the departments party strife was suppressed as it was in Paris. The clubs, few of which now numbered more than forty or fifty members, followed without a will of their own the cue given them from Paris. All over the country festivals in honour of the Supreme Being took the place of festivals in honour of Reason. Although Robespierre proclaimed principles of religious toleration, he neither desired nor suffered their observance. It is possible that he would never have ventured, as Hébert had done, to proscribe the Catholic worship, but the work having been done for him, circumstances would not permit him to seek supporters by again allowing the celebration of those rites which still had the affection of the nation. He was at the head of a Government which could not retrace a step without extreme danger of weakening its own authority, and it was only by continuing the system already in force that it was possible for him, as he could not fail to be aware, to carry his social ideas into practice. Hence the feast of the Supreme Being, in place of leading to a revival of principles of humanity, had been followed by a sharpening of the Terror. On the pretext of maintaining public order, the Catholic worship remained prohibited. The tyranny weighed down the oppressors along with the oppressed. Men were imprisoned and sent to the scaffold indifferently for acts of mercy, knavery, or extravagance. The denouncer of to-day was the denounced of to-morrow. Municipalities and administrative bodies trembled before clubs and revolutionary committees; these, in turn, before deputies in mission; deputies in mission before the two committees; and the members

of the committees before one another. However high a man's place in the revolutionary hierarchy, he could not shelter his best friends or nearest relatives without risking his own head.

Violent discords broke out within the Committee of Public Safety. Robespierre's efforts to raise himself excited the indignation of his colleagues; for the more powerful he became, the more insecure was the tenure on which their own lives rested. On the other hand, Robespierre was nervous, envious, and suspicious, and the higher he rose the more eager he became to shed the blood of his enemies, and of those who stood in the way of his rising higher still. The Montagnards hated him. Those who had walked behind him at the feast of the Supreme Being had not been able to restrain themselves from uttering insulting words. 'Formerly he was master,' one was heard to say, 'and now he must be God as well.' Some, aware that they were objects of his special enmity, were plotting obscurely against him. Of the twelve members of the Committee of General Security all but two were his enemies. Supported by Couthon and St. Just, Robespierre proposed in the Committee of Public Safety a proscription of several members of the Mountain and of the Committee of General Security. Billaud and Collot opposed. Consent would have been suicidal, since they were called on to sacrifice their own supporters. The cowardly Barère hesitated which side to join. One member of the Committee of Public Safety had been guillotined with the Dantonists. The remaining five, though it was not their desire to shed blood, were accustomed to give their signatures without questioning on the demand of the governing members, and thus incurred responsibility for all that took place. They had more in common with Robespierre than with Collot, since they too cared for

Insurrection  
of Ther-  
midor 10.



order as well as power; but, while submitting to his ascendancy, they loathed and despised him. Carnot, who was one of these, and whose success at the head of the war administration made Robespierre envious, and who could not conceal his antipathy for Robespierre and St. Just, was marked out for destruction. The threatened members of the Committee of General Security, afraid that Billaud and Collot would sacrifice them sooner than come to an open breach with Robespierre, sought to defend themselves by combining with the threatened Montagnards. Within the Committee of Public Safety efforts were made to come to an understanding, but without success. Robespierre, aware that his enemies were conspiring against him, determined to strike first, and to secure dictatorship for himself by replacing his opponents on the two committees by partisans of his own. There appeared to be little doubt of the result. The Convention had less reason to support Billaud and Collot than himself. They had been fully as sanguinary as he; and when Collot in the Convention had once proposed to send to the scaffold seventy-three deputies of the right who had been imprisoned for signing protests against the ejection of the Girondists, he had opposed and saved their lives. In case of a struggle he had material force at his command, his opponents none. The Jacobins and the Commune were both his; the national guard, now called the armed force, was under the command of Henriot, a partisan of his own. The cannoniers of each section formed a paid force, of which every man had been selected by the Commune. Robespierre opened the attack by a long speech in the Convention, in which he complained of the traitors who spread calumnies against himself (July 26). He threatened many, but named none. It was a fatal mistake, for each man in the Convention fancied it

possible that his name might be on the list of proscription. Despair gave courage to the plotters to struggle for their lives. They belonged to all parties. Some were Hébertists, others Dantonists, others independent Montagnards. Most were inferior in character to the man who attacked them. Amongst them were members of the Committee of General Security, such as the cowardly and ferocious Vadier and Amar, and the most brutal members of the Convention—Fouché, who had slaughtered at Lyons, Tallien at Bordeaux, Fréron at Marseilles, Carrier at Nantes.

When, on the following day, Thermidor 10 (July 27), St. Just ascended the tribune, he was interrupted almost before he opened his lips. Shouts were raised of 'Down, down with the tyrant!' as Robespierre, gesticulating and menacing, strove to make himself heard above the din. The President, a Dantonist, Thuriot, incessantly rang his bell. The struggle went on for hours. 'President of assassins,' cried Robespierre, sinking under exhaustion, 'for the last time I demand the right of speech.' He appealed to the Plain, the members who had been mere tools in the hands of the strongest party, and who had been mute against the Mountain since the ejection of the Girondists. But the Plain, seeing that he was no longer powerful, joined his enemies; and when it was proposed to arrest himself, his brother, Couthon, and St. Just, its members rose in a body to confirm the condemnation of the man before whom they had so long trembled.

All four were conducted to prison. Yet victory so far was merely a parliamentary one. An attempt to arrest Henriot gave warning of danger to Robespierre's partisans outside the Convention. The Municipality summoned the armed force to the Hôtel de Ville, and sent agents into the sections to stir up an insurrection. The two Robespierres, St. Just, and Couthon

were released from prison and taken to the Hôtel de Ville. But excess of tyranny had left isolated those by whom it had been exercised. The Robespierrists were ardent in the defence of their leader; but they were but a mere handful, even amidst the Terrorists. The members of the civil and revolutionary committees, wishing to secure their heads, waited to declare for the Commune until they had assurance that the Commune would win. The Convention outlawed Henriot, Robespierre, and his companions, and sent deputies into the sections to gain their support. The few who still attended the assemblies of the sections were eager to fling off the yoke with which they were oppressed. When they understood that the quarrel was between Robespierre and the Convention, they sent messengers to recall the battalions of national guards already at the Hôtel de Ville. The deputy Barras, appointed by the Convention to command in Henriot's place, invested, about two at night, the nearly-deserted building without encountering opposition. Those within were surprised where they sat. Robespierre, with his jaw painfully fractured by a pistol shot—it is uncertain whether the wound was inflicted by his own or by the hand of another—was taken to the Committee of Public Safety, and left lying upon a table, exposed to the taunts of every gazer. Being already outlawed, Robespierre, his brother, Couthon, and St. Just, with eighteen other persons, were executed as soon as day arrived, without form of trial. During the two following days more than eighty of Robespierre's followers, including a large number of the members of the Commune, were sent to the scaffold.

## CHAPTER X.

## FALL OF THE MONTAGNARDS.

It is calculated that during the fourteen months which had elapsed since the ejection of the Girondists, about 16,000 persons had perished throughout France by the sentence of revolutionary courts. With the proscription of the Robespierrists the Terror as a system of government came to an end. Collot and Billaud, in overthrowing Robespierre, had deprived themselves of the two main engines by which the machinery of the Terror had been kept in motion. After the execution of its members the Commune had been broken up, and the Jacobins were enfeebled. The Mountain at once asserted its independence of the two committees; the Plain, in turn, asserted its independence of the Mountain. From this time the committees were renewed by a fourth every month, and the outgoing members rendered incapable of immediate re-election. Within a few weeks all the men who conducted the Government during the Terror had resigned or had been deprived of office.

The fall of Robespierre and of the committees was felt as much in Paris as it was in the Convention. No sooner did the incessant action of the guillotine cease than the revolutionary authorities fell into contempt, and the revolutionary laws, which the Terror alone had sustained, ceased to be observed. There was again freedom of action, of speech, and of the press. Hundreds and thousands of young men collected in the sections and public places, declaring war on the Jacobins, and demanding the release of friends and relations, the abolition of revolutionary committees, the imprisonment and trial of their late oppressors. They belonged to all ranks of life, but were mostly skilled

artisans, clerks in offices, shopmen, tradesmen, and sons of nobles and capitalists. As in 1789, the agitation had its centre in the Palais Royal, and, as then, found its leaders in young authors and journalists. In the departments the reaction proceeded with equal rapidity. Nowhere was any attempt made to resist the new revolution. The names of Robespierre and Couthon were given over to execration by the same men who a week before had made a show of delight in honouring them. The petty tyrant of yesterday, ejected from office, went to join his victims in prison; and, as in Paris, all classes of the population speedily took advantage of the relaxation of the Terror to slip their necks free of the yoke of the revolutionary laws.

Upon the destruction of the dictatorship of the committees, supreme power reverted to the Convention. That body, however, had as little coherence now as it had had in the first months of its existence. The restitution of its liberty split it into numerous sections. It was torn by violent party spirit, and had no determinate policy or aim, but drifted onwards, following not directing the course of events. All agreed in condemnation of Robespierre, but in that alone. The Montagnards were divided amongst themselves. Only a small minority was prepared to maintain in its entirety the Terror as a system of government—Billaud and Collot and their companions in office, who feared for their own lives. A few, such as Romme and Soubrany, resolutely opposed social and economical changes which would, in the end, lead to the return of the middle-class to power. Others again, as the financier Cambon and the Dantonist Thuriot, struggled to maintain the ascendancy of the Mountain over the Plain, but declared war on Billaud and Collot, who, following in the course of Hébert and Robespierre, sought, by aid of clubs and revolutionary committees,

to tyrannise over the Mountain. The Thermidorians, so-called from the name of the revolutionary month in which the new revolution had been effected, Tallien, Fréron, and others of the men who had conspired to destroy Robespierre, took up a position between the Mountain and the Plain, and for the time possessed the leadership of the Convention; but they had no policy except that of yielding sufficiently to public opinion to maintain ascendancy, and at the same time of holding in check the reaction so as to prevent its reaching themselves. One after another demands made by the anti-Terrorist press and by gatherings in the Palais Royal were complied with. The Jacobin Club, the resort of Collot, Billaud, and their partisans, was closed (November 12). The Revolutionary Committees were reduced in number and shorn of their powers. Thousands of prisoners were released and their property restored to them. Throughout the country new men were placed in office, while members of revolutionary committees and other inferior tools of the Terror were imprisoned by hundreds. A trial going on before the Revolutionary Court at Paris revealed in all their horrible details the massacres committed at Nantes, and raised a cry for vengeance against Carrier. Abandoned by the Thermidorians and almost the entire Mountain, Carrier was sent before the court for trial, and thence in his turn to the scaffold (December). Billaud, Collot, and other marked Terrorists, already denounced in the Convention by Danton's friends, felt that danger was every day drawing nearer to themselves. Their fate was to all appearance sealed by the readmission to the Convention (December 8) of seventy-three deputies of the right, imprisoned in 1793 for signing protests against the expulsion of the Girondists.

By the return of these deputies the complexion of the

Assembly was entirely altered. It was they who had formed the phalanx which had supported the Gironde, and they now sought to undo the work of the Convention since the insurrection by which their party had been overwhelmed. They demanded that confiscated property should be restored to the relatives of persons condemned by the revolutionary courts ; that emigrants who had fled in consequence of Terrorist persecutions should be allowed to return ; that those deputies proscribed on June 2, 1793, who yet survived, should be recalled to their seats. The Mountain, as a body, violently opposed even the discussion of such questions. The Thermidorians split into two divisions. Some in alarm rejoined the Mountain ; while others, headed by Tallien and Fréron, sought their safety by coalescing with the returned members of the right. A committee was appointed to report on accusations brought against Collot, Billaud, Barère, and Vadier (December 27, 1794). In a few weeks the survivors of the proscribed deputies entered the Convention amidst applause (March 8, 1795), and it was clear that, in spite of every effort made by the left to delay a decision, the four accused men would be called upon to account for the tyranny that had been exercised by the two committees unless the Convention were overpowered by force.

There was at this time great misery prevalent in Paris, and imminent peril of insurrection. After Robespierre's fall, maximum prices were no longer observed, and assignats were only accepted in payment of goods at their real value compared with coin. The result was a rapid rise in prices, so that in December prices were double what they had been in July, and were continuing to rise in proportion as assignats decreased in value. The policy pursued by the Convention tended of necessity to hasten the depreciation

The revolt  
of Ger-  
minal 12.



of the paper money. Girondists, Thermidorians, and a portion of the Mountain concurred in denouncing the economic system imposed on the Convention by Hébert and Robespierre. The system of requisitions was gradually abandoned, the armies were again supplied by contract, and the maximum laws, already a dead letter, were repealed (December 24). The abolition of maximum prices and requisitions increased the already lavish expenditure of the Government, which, to meet the deficit in its revenues, had no resource but to create more assignats, and the faster these were issued the faster they fell in value and the higher prices rose. In July 1794, they had been worth 34 per cent. of their nominal value. In December they were worth 22 per cent., and in May 1795, they were worth only 7 per cent. Want of food was the more acutely felt owing to the winter having been one of great severity. The Seine was covered for weeks with ice, and wood and coal were, like other articles, dear and scarce. All persons living on fixed incomes suffered intensely. Even those who lived on wages were seriously affected. Wages had indeed risen, but not in proportion to prices. Starvation prices prevailed. Workmen earned from five to eleven shillings a day in paper money, while a multitude of State officials, pensioners and creditors, received no more than from three to six shillings a day. Yet at this time a pound of bread cost eight shillings, of rice thirteen, of sugar seventeen, and other articles were all proportionately dear. It is literally true that more than half the population of Paris was only kept alive by occasional distributions of meat and other articles at low prices, and the daily distribution of bread at three-halfpence a pound. In February, however, this source of relief threatened to fail. Farmers preferred to send their corn anywhere else than to Paris, where only paper money was to be had. It was only

with extreme difficulty that the Government, which since the annihilation of the Commune had supplied Paris with bread, performed its task. The rations fell from one pound to half a pound, and soon to a few ounces per head. Numerous deaths took place, the result of destitution or actual starvation. An insurrection, however, though constantly threatened, for weeks failed to break out. One cause was that the people had grown hopeless of improving their condition by insurrection; another, that those journalists, clerks, and others, who at the opening of the revolution had incited popular movements, were now, although suffering themselves, found on the other side, and were prepared to fight in defence of the Convention, which they none the less detested, sooner than endure a revival of the Terror. Material suffering offered, however, a ready handle for Terrorist agitators; and as the peril of insurrection increased, so too, within the Convention, did the violence of party strife. The Mountain, threatened with proscription, sought to turn the position of the right and to obtain credit outside, by demanding the immediate end of provisional government and the putting in force of the democratic constitution promulgated by the Convention in 1793, after the ejection of the Girondists. On April 1, or Germinal 12, bread riots, begun by women, broke out in every section. Bands collected and forced their way into the Convention, shouting for bread, but offering no violence to the deputies. Occasionally the demand was made for the release of imprisoned patriots and for the Constitution of 1793. The crowd was already dispersing when forces arrived from the sections and cleared the House. The insurrection was a spontaneous rising for bread, without method or combination. The Terrorists had sought, but vainly, to obtain direction of it. Had they succeeded, the Mountain would have had an opportunity

of proscribing the right. Their failure gave the right the opportunity of proscribing the left. The transportation to Cayenne of Billaud, Collot, Barère, and Vadier was decreed, and the arrest of fifteen other Montagnards, accused without proof, in several cases without probability, of having been accomplices of the insurgents. The Thermidorians showed themselves more vindictive than the Girondists, and it was on the proposition of Tallien that amongst those proscribed were included Thuriot and Cambon, men whose hands, compared with his own, were clear of blood.

The insurrection of Germinal 12 gave increased strength to the party of reaction. The Convention, in dread of the Terrorists, was compelled to look to it for support. The bands of young men who assembled in the Palais Royal, called 'Fréron's army,' often rendered useful service by clearing the Tuileries Gardens of discontented and threatening groups. Already the dress, language, and manners in vogue during the Terror were laid aside. Red caps gave place to hats. The habit of addressing strangers by the familiar 'thou,' and the use of the word 'citizen,' were dropped in drawing-rooms. No Jacobin could set foot in the Palais Royal without experiencing insults and blows. Busts of Marat, which had been set up in every public building, were pulled down and broken, and both theatres and streets became the scene of incessant riots.

In the departments famine, disorder, and crime prevailed, as well as in Paris. In all towns a large portion of the population was kept alive by daily distributions of bread. The country was exhausted by the war burdens laid on it. Requisitions for the armies had drained one department after another of horses, carts, corn, and men. Nevertheless, destitution was not so great in rural districts as in towns. Corn

Reaction in  
the Depart-  
ments.

growers, since the fall of Robespierre, had made large profits, while every peasant sold his wine or other produce at prices as high in proportion as the price of bread. From the first the reaction proceeded in the departments with a more rapid step and in bolder form than in Paris, which was subjected to the restraining influences exercised by the presence of the Convention. Everywhere, except in Paris, municipal bodies had, as early as in January, suffered churches to be reopened and Mass again to be celebrated. Without the Terror it was as impossible to maintain the proscription of the Catholic worship as it was to enforce the observance of maximum laws. A minority in the Convention, composed of Catholics and Liberals, desired to carry into practice those principles of religious toleration which the Convention in theory had always maintained and had publicly announced in opposition to Hébert, but which for so many months it had neglected to put in practice. The majority, whatever their repugnance to a revival of sacerdotal influence, recognised the hopelessness of resisting the popular movement. Since the beginning of the Revolution the idea of the separation of Church and State had gained ground. The constitutional clergy desired to be allowed to reorganise the Church without any interference by the State. The mass of deputies were unwilling to recognise the Catholic as the national religion, lest by so doing they should enable the Church the more readily to regain ascendancy. A compromise was arrived at. The Convention declared that the public exercise of all forms of worship was permissible, but that henceforth the State would provide neither buildings nor funds for any religious body. Small pensions, however, varying from 35*l.* to 52*l.*, which under the Terror had been accorded to bishops and priests who had resigned their offices were granted to the whole body of the Constitutional

clergy. Further, various restrictions were laid on the public exercise of religion. No ceremonies might be performed outside the building set apart for worship, whether in streets, burial grounds, hospitals, or prisons. Ecclesiastics might not wear a special dress out of doors, and even the ringing of bells was prohibited (February 22).

Though their position was far more precarious—for none of the laws against them had been repealed—non-jurors, as well as the Constitutional clergy, re-<sup>The White</sup>sumed their functions. With the connivance of Terror. municipal bodies they had come in numbers out of their hiding-places, or had returned to France from abroad. In the departments of the south-east, where the Royalists had always possessed a strong following, emigrants of all descriptions readily made their way back; and here the opponents of the Republic, instigated by a desire for vengeance or merely by party spirit, commenced a reaction stained by crimes as atrocious as any committed during the course of the revolution. Young men belonging to the upper and middle classes were organised in bands bearing the name of companies of Jesus and companies of the Sun, and first at Lyons, then at Aix, Toulon, Marseilles, and other towns, they broke into the prisons and murdered their inmates without distinction of age or sex. Besides the Terrorist and the Jacobin, neither the Republican nor the purchaser of State lands was safe from their knives; and in the country numerous isolated murders were committed. This lawless and brutal movement, called the White Terror in distinction to the Red Terror preceding Thermidor 9, was suffered for weeks to run its course unchecked, and counted its victims by many hundreds, spreading over the whole of Provence, besides the departments of Rhône, Gard, Loire, Ain, and Jura.

Neither deputies in mission nor administrative officers attempted to arrest the assassins or to bring them to justice. The Convention expressed indignation, but took no active measures for the maintenance of law and order. In fact, men still lived in incessant fear of a revival of the Terror, and hence for the time they regarded with indifference the reaction in the south, in spite of its Royalist tendencies. After the insurrection of Germinal, the condition of the people at Paris remained unchanged. The rations of bread on occasions fell as low as a couple of ounces. Jacobins and other agents of the Terror did their utmost to direct the ever-swelling flood of discontent against the Convention. On May 20, or Prairial 1, a second insurrection broke out, fiercer, more extended, and more persistent than the preceding one. The insurgents, men and women, broke into the Convention clamouring for bread, and insulting and reproaching the deputies without distinction of party. With cries for bread were joined cries for the Constitution of 1793, but the crowd was without leaders, and barely knew its own ends, still less by what means to seek their realisation. On the arrival of battalions of the national guard in support of the Convention, a general combat took place within the Chamber, in which the defenders of the Convention were at first worsted. A deputy, Feraud, who sought to protect the President, Boissy d'Anglas, from insult, was wounded by the populace and dragged outside, his head cut off and paraded on a pike through the streets. Many deputies fled. A few Montagnards, threatened by the mob and urged by the frightened deputies on the right, put to the vote the demands raised by voices in the crowd, such as the release of imprisoned patriots and the reconstitution of the Committees of Government. The insurgents, who were now appeased, began to disperse, when more

national guards arrived and drove away those who still remained. Victory, however, was not secured. The Faubourg St. Antoine remained in insurrection, and the next day directed the mouths of its cannon upon the Tuileries. The Convention only secured its safety by promising to provide bread, and to put in force the Constitution of 1793. In the meantime, however, 4,000 troops of the line were being brought to Paris. These, with a selected force of national guards, surrounded the insurgent faubourg. To a population supported upon rations, there was no choice between yielding or starving. They yielded, giving up arms and cannon (May 23). The Convention made use of its triumph to destroy the Mountain and to secure itself against a repetition of the late scenes. A decree for the disarmament of agents of the Terror furnished a pretext for taking pikes and guns from the hands of the people, and the national guard was reorganised so as to exclude from active service the poorer sections of the population. Many hundred persons were imprisoned. The revolutionary court had already been dissolved. For the sake of summary procedure a military commission was instituted, which sat for more than two months, and condemned to death between thirty and forty persons, and as many more to imprisonment or transportation. The proscription of the Mountain comprised in all more than sixty deputies. Of those who formed the Committees of Government during the Terror, Carnot and one other alone were spared. 'Carnot,' said a voice, when his arrest was proposed, 'has organised victory.' Many of the proscribed effected their escape. A few committed suicide. The remainder suffered transportation or death.



## CHAPTER XI

THE TREATY OF BASEL AND THE CONSTITUTION  
OF 1795.

WHILE internally France was a prey to bankruptcy, hunger, crime, and civil strife, the triumph of her armies continued uninterruptedly. After the evacuation of Belgium by the English and Austrians, in June 1794, the Prussians, in danger of being outnumbered and isolated, abandoned their positions round Kaiserslautern and fell back on the Rhine. The Austrians retreated to the same river, while the English and Hanoverians, under the Duke of York's command, withdrew behind the Lower Meuse. One French army invested the great fortress of Mainz, while Pichegru pressed on into North Brabant. Little defence was made. The Dutch army was small, and there was no probability that the country would rise. Not only had the French numerous and influential partisans amongst the political opponents of the House of Orange, but the peasantry, alienated by the brutal and plundering habits of the allied troops, were eager to be relieved of their presence. The invaders were, however, not above 46,000 strong, and short of clothes, arms, and munition for besieging purposes; so that the English army of 30,000 men, competently led, would have been sufficiently strong to hold them in check. But the Duke was a bad general, and his men were demoralised by their retreat. He remained helplessly on the north side of the Meuse, while the fortresses in North Brabant fell one after another. The French, after effecting the passage of the Meuse by a bridge of boats (October 19), found their further advance barred by the mouths of the Rhine, the broad and rapid rivers Waal

and Leck. Here, however, the inclement winter came to their aid. By the middle of January 1795, the rivers were covered with ice which bore the passage of men, horses, and cannon. The English forces retreated eastwards, leaving the French masters of the country. The Stadtholder fled to England. A revolutionary movement broke out in the principal towns, and the French were everywhere accepted as friends. The fleet, which was frozen up in the harbours of the Texel, was prevailed on to capitulate by an attack of a body of French cavalry advancing on the ice. The English and Hanoverians finally abandoned the country, and the conquerors left the seven united provinces in possession of nominal independence and their federal form of government; but forced them to conclude a treaty of alliance which reduced the country to the position of a satellite of France, and put its resources at her disposition (May 12).

The brilliant achievements of her armies had revived in France the old passion for military glory and conquest which had been distinctive of the reign of Louis XIV. The war, begun with the object of securing France against invasion, was being pursued with the object of extending the frontiers of the Republic. The national triumph over foreign foes became the one point in respect to which there existed a strong bond of sympathy between France and the Convention. Girondists, Thermidorians, and Montagnards, if only for the sake of winning popularity, vied with each other in seeking to gratify the national pride and ambition; and the point of view of the Republican Government was practically identical with that of the Emperor, or of the King of Prussia, namely, that there must be no laying down of arms without acquisition of territory. A small minority of deputies would have restored the conquered Rhine lands to the Empire and constituted Belgium into

Foreign  
policy of the  
Convention.

an independent republic, if they could on such terms have obtained a European peace. But the majority, including all the more prominent men who by turns sat on the Committee of Public Safety and directed foreign affairs, to whatever party they belonged—Boissy d'Anglas, Thibaudeau, Merlin of Thionville, Merlin of Douai, Carnot, Siéyès, Cambacérès, Rewbel, Larevellière-Lepeaux—aspired to incorporate Belgium with France, and on the side of the Empire to extend the frontier, if not to the Rhine, at least to the Meuse.

If, however, the country, proud of its conquests, desired to retain them, its exhaustion made it eager for the conclusion of hostilities, and the necessity of at least confining the field of war to narrower limits was recognised ever by those deputies whose policy was most aggressive and ambitious. As in France, so also in Spain, in Prussia, throughout Italy, the Austrian dominions, and the Empire, a general desire for peace existed. In none of these countries had there been from the first any national enthusiasm for the war, while the large expectations with which governments began hostilities had been blown to the winds. There was no longer any thought of restoring the Bourbon monarchy in France, nor probability of making conquests at her expense; and, in fact, those continental Princes alone cared to continue the struggle who looked forward to effecting, at the cost of third and weaker States, the enlargement of their own dominions.

As yet Austria had, during the course of the war, made no territorial acquisition. In the second division of Poland, Russia and Prussia alone shared. The chancellor, Thugut, the director of Austrian foreign policy, and the one statesman of mark whom Austria possessed, was a continuator of the schemes formerly entertained by Joseph II. for the extension and consolidation of the

Austrian dominions. He possessed the entire confidence of his master, Francis II., but the position which he held was isolated, and his authority limited. Had he attempted to draw upon the resources of the various kingdoms and duchies subject to the Emperor, as the Convention had drawn upon the resources of France, he would have incited disturbance and revolt on every side. The administration, more especially of the war department, was inefficient and lax, and the public service suffered in consequence of the negligence or wilfulness of officials high in place. Thugut was the son of a poor boatbuilder, and the court nobility never forgot his origin, and thwarted him on every opportunity. Thugut, however, proud, despotic, and ambitious, would not be diverted from his course by misfortune in war, by the factious opposition of a court nobility, or by the ill-will and discontent of subject populations. On the retention of Belgium he laid no great stress. Belgium lay far from the seat of government, and though wealthy, its wealth was not at the arbitrary disposition of the Emperor. If, however, he were to resign Belgium, Thugut required an ample equivalent for the loss elsewhere, and before bringing to a close the French war, designed further to acquire an indemnity equal to that which Prussia had obtained by the second partition of Poland. There were three courses by which Thugut saw possible opportunities of making acquisitions. He might make Austrian influence supreme in Germany by the annexation of Bavaria, or he might extend the Austrian dominions in Italy, or, again, he might acquire new possessions in the East, at the expense of Poland and of the Porte. For the time he had no thought of entering into negotiation with the Republic, because he expected best to gain his ends by making common cause with England and Russia, which two Powers were both urgent for the continuation of the war.

The third partition of Poland was at this time at the point of accomplishment. The insurrection which broke out in the Spring of 1794 had been suppressed

Alliances  
between  
Austria and  
Russia.

by Russian troops, under the command of Suwaroff, the famous conqueror of the Crimea.

The Poles had received two crushing defeats.

The national hero, Kosciusko, had been wounded and made prisoner. Warsaw, the capital, had surrendered (November 8) after the storm of its suburb Praga, when, for a long time, no quarter was given, and, as it was said, 10,000 persons, including many non-combatants, were either drowned in the Vistula or perished by the sword. Poland, having thus been obliterated from the list of independent kingdoms, Catherine II. again turned her attention to the destruction of the empire of the Porte. She sought to secure the good-will of Austria, and by insuring the continuance of war in the West, to avert the possibility of interference on the part either of England or of France. The evident reluctance with which the Prussian Government continued to take part in the French war was sufficient cause for Catherine to favour Austria in dividing the remains of Poland. But, on the other hand, she could not exclude Frederick William II. from all share in the partition without incurring risk of driving him to take up arms against herself. A treaty was concluded between Russia and Austria, determining the partition that was to be made between the three Powers, which the Emperor and the Czarina undertook to carry into effect, whether the King of Prussia were content or not with the share allotted to him (January 3, 1795). At the same time they entered into an alliance directed against Turkey, and agreed that in case of war Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia should be converted into a Russian dependency, and that Servia and Bosnia should pass to Austria. The plan of

exchanging Belgium for Bavaria was revived, and Catherine further engaged to support the Emperor in making acquisition of Venetian or other territory.

Between France and England the strong sense of national hostility which existed when the war first broke out had increased in intensity. There was no name so hated in France as the name of Pitt. England's foreign policy. The English statesman, who by his gold sustained the arms of the Coalition, had also, according to popular report, by his bribes and emissaries been the author of the Terror, and was held responsible for all the internal ills under which France suffered. In England, the feeling of hatred was fully reciprocated. The ideas of the Revolution were regarded with abhorrence, the Convention with loathing, and the triumph of the French armies did but excite the stronger determination to go on fighting until both Holland and Belgium were wrested from the grasp of the atheistic and regicide Republic. If England had ignominiously been beaten on the Continent, she had been victorious at sea. Corsica had been occupied, and George III. proclaimed (February, 1794). A naval battle had been fought, commonly called the battle of June 1, when the French fleet, sailing out of Brest, had been defeated by Lord Howe, and driven back shattered to the coast (1794). Tobago, St. Martinique, Guadaloupe, and other French West Indian islands were already in English possession, and St. Domingo, the most important of French colonies, threatened with conquest. If now the Dutch fleet was pressed into the service of France, on the other hand the rich Dutch colonies, possessions coveted by England, such as Ceylon and the Cape, were open to seizure. The Cabinet was indeed intensely eager that the Continental war should continue, and was making every exertion to fan the zeal of Austria, and to draw Russia on to render active assistance. Instead of

subsidising Prussia, England now subsidised Austria. In return for a loan of 4,600,000*l.* the Emperor undertook to put 200,000 men in the field (May 4, 1795). A treaty was, at the same time, entered into between England and Russia, in which Catherine agreed to send 12,000 men to fight against France. Subsequently, in the autumn, a Triple Alliance was concluded between the three Powers, and separate negotiations renounced (September 28).

While thus Austria, Russia, and England were drawing closer together, Prussia was fast backing out of the war. Both military and official circles were thoroughly weary of it. The country had no interests peculiar to itself to defend, and the Government no acquisitions in view, beyond what had already been obtained in Poland. It was, however, but with reluctance that the King, who had lost none of his repugnance to the Revolution, consented to the opening of the negotiations held with Barthélemy, the French Ambassador at Basel. The main difficulty in coming to terms was the disposition of Prussian possessions on the left bank of the Rhine, of which the cession would imply readiness on the King's part to resign to France all the territory of the Empire on that side. The Committee of Public Safety demanded absolutely whatever belonged to Prussia on the left bank. But Frederick William was unwilling formally to abandon the cause of the Empire, and the Committee was too desirous of concluding peace to refuse a compromise which, in reality, yielded to France the point required. In the public articles of the treaty it was merely stated that French troops should remain in occupation of Prussian territory on the left bank until the making of peace between France and the Empire; but in a secret article the King declared his readiness to abandon his territory on the left bank in return for an equivalent on the right, if



France kept the Rhine as her boundary when she made peace with the Empire. A second matter of difficulty was the question whether the Empire was to obtain the benefits of peace. The King could not leave the Northern States to be overrun by French armies without lowering the position of Prussia within the Empire. He accordingly proposed that France should agree to a truce with the Empire, and afterwards accept Prussian mediation. The Committee refused these demands, but consented to a line of demarcation being drawn across Germany, and to regard as neutrals the States lying to the north of it. It was also agreed that the Committee should accept the services of the King in treating with the separate States of the Empire. On these terms peace was concluded at Basel (April 5), and ratified with applause by the Convention. The Empire was henceforth torn in half. The Northern States under the wing of Prussia enjoyed neutrality, while the Southern remained subjected to the miseries of war.

Spain, shortly after Prussia, made her peace with France. Before the revolution the two countries had been united by a treaty, entitled the Family Compact (1761), which placed Spain, ruled by a younger branch of the House of Bourbon, in political dependence on France. Dynastic reasons had therefore had a large share in causing Spain to join the coalition. No desire existed in the country for the triumph of the allies. In possession of a large colonial empire, at the expense of which she lived, Spain was intensely jealous of England's superiority at sea, and feared, in case of the ruin of the French navy, only to retain her colonies at the good-will of her too powerful ally, and to be forced to throw open their trade to English vessels. The war was conducted without vigour. Nearly the whole of the revenue was absorbed in the maintenance of the fleet,

and the army did not consist of 35,000 men. During 1793 the French, however, had not been able to muster at the Pyrenees an equally strong force. The Spaniards had crossed the mountains and had occupied French territory. But in 1794 the tide of success had turned. The French armies were reinforced, and drove the Spaniards back over the frontier (October–November). At Madrid reigned confusion, alarm, and incapacity. The country was taxed to the utmost extent it could bear. The Government had not credit to borrow. Insurrectionary movements were feared in the towns. The peasants of Catalonia, Navarre, and Biscay were warlike, and ready to rise against the invaders ; but the Government dared not give them encouragement, through fear lest they should seize the occasion to demand the re-establishment of provincial rights.

The weak and incapable king, Charles IV., was led by his wife, Marie Louise of Parma, whose favourite, Godoy, was the real ruler of Spain. This man, whose object was whether by war or peace to maintain himself in power, after much vacillation opened negotiations with the French Government. The Committee of Public Safety was eager to bring the war to a close, but still persisted in demanding in return for the evacuation of Spanish territory, the cession of the Spanish part of the island of St. Domingo. The advance of the army of the Western Pyrenees to the Ebro created a panic, which induced Godoy to yield the point, and in July peace between France and Spain was on such terms made at Basel.

Siéyès, Rewbel, and the other members of the Committee of Public Safety, regarded these treaties with Prussia and Spain merely as steps towards the final goal they had in view, namely, the conclusion of a European peace ceding to France the Alps and the

Rhine as her boundaries. After making peace with Prussia and Spain, they hoped to obtain the alliance of Prussia to aid them in crushing Austria in <sup>Expedition</sup> Germany, and the alliance of Spain to aid <sup>to</sup> Quiberon. them in crushing England at sea. For the time, want of resources caused a practical cessation of hostilities on the Upper Rhine. The Austrian armies on the right bank short of money and food, remained on the defensive. The French armies on the left bank lived with difficulty at the cost of the conquered territories, which, having



long been the seat of war, were suffering extreme misery. Meanwhile, the attention of the Government was drawn towards the west, where war still smouldered in La Vendée, and where a new war had broken out north of the Loire. In the large forests and uncultivated tracts in which the provinces of Brittany, Maine, and Anjou abounded, many bands of insurgents appeared, composed of brigands, deserters from the armies, fugitive Vendéans, and returned emigrants. They were called 'Chouans,' after one of their leaders, a smuggler, who had himself

received the nickname—derived from ‘chouette,’ a small owl—either from his surly, morose habits, or from his using the owl’s cry as a signal. Though without organisation, and under the conduct of a number of independent chiefs, the war proved as difficult to suppress as the war in La Vendée. In the autumn of 1794 it spread into Normandy, and threatened to assume the form of a general insurrection. The peasants, who resented the suppression of their religion and the persecution of their priests, when they did not join the marauders were in connivance with them. Raids were made on republican posts, supplies cut off from towns, and many isolated murders committed. In support of the movement, emigrants and priests came from England, bringing with them munitions of war, and money both in coin and forged assignats. So serious did the danger become, that the Committee appointed Hoche, at this time the most distinguished general whom the Republic possessed, to the command-in-chief of the forces north of the Loire. During the Terror, his services to his country had been requited by imprisonment, and but for Robespierre’s sudden destruction, he would have fallen a victim to the guillotine. Besides being an able soldier, Hoche was a sincere and patriotic man in both public and private life, single-minded, straightforward, and pure. The irksome and inglorious task now entrusted to him he carried out with characteristic firmness and moderation, and while taking severe measures for the repression of rebellion, he did all in his power to win the good-will of the inhabitants, by treating them justly and restoring discipline amongst his troops. He allowed the churches to be reopened, and by leaving the clergy unharassed, sought to destroy their enmity towards the Republic. Both the Convention and the insurgents desired a breathing time in which to recruit their forces. Charette.

and other Vendean leaders, made an engagement to lay down arms and recognise the authority of the Republic, on condition that indemnity should be granted to themselves, that liberty of worship should be allowed, and that the national guard should be under their command (February 17). Many Chouan chiefs recognised the Republic on the same terms (April 20). These agreements were merely armed truces. The insurgent leaders retained their authority, and were but waiting the arrival of means from England to resume their arms.

Fortunately for the Republic, its enemies were unready and disunited. The concurrence of a general conflagration in the West, and of the advance of 200,000 men across the Rhine, would have called to mind the hazards run in 1793. Hostilities, however, still flagged on the Rhine, while in the West jealousy and discord destroyed the chances of successful resistance to the Republican armies. Amongst the emigrants no union existed. Those who had fled in 1790 regarded with contempt and aversion those who fled at a later date, and confounded Constitutionalists with Robespierrists and Terrorists under the common name of Jacobins. The leader of the expedition from England, Count Joseph of Puisaye, was in ill-favour with the supporters of the Count of Provence, because in 1789 he had been on the popular side. Hoche, aware of their designs, arrested the Baron of Cornaton, the most able of the Chouan chiefs, and seven other leading conspirators (May 15). The war in consequence was renewed in Brittany, but Charette, who did not care to act as second to Puisaye, remained quiet in La Vendée. The expedition from England disembarked at Carnac, the little town at the head of the peninsula which encloses on one side the Bay of Quiberon. Pitt had forbore to risk the lives of English troops until assured that the emigrants

were able, in accordance with their representations, to acquire a firm footing in the country. The force consisted of about 5,000 emigrants and between 1,000 and 2,000 French prisoners of war. Large bodies of Chouans came to the commander and joined the invaders, and Fort Penthièvre, guarding the connection between the peninsula and the mainland, was besieged and taken. Meanwhile, however, quarrels broke out between the leaders of the expedition and between the emigrants and the Chouans. Hoche, having brought together 12,000 men at Auray, defeated the rebels, and forced them back from their position at Carnac on to the peninsula of Quibéron, where, with women and children, 20,000 persons were collected. By aid of French prisoners of war who deserted, Fort Penthièvre was, at the dead of night, surprised and captured (July 20). The crowded peninsula lay open to the Republican army. Amid scenes of utter confusion and distress an effort to reach the English ships was made. Some succeeded in escaping, but several thousands were left behind and made prisoners. The lives of the Chouans were spared, but there remained more than a thousand emigrants. The Convention refused mercy to emigrants, and all of them were shot in accordance with the law.

In dealing thus harshly with the captured emigrants, the Convention was actuated by fear of danger to itself from the classes by which it had recently been supported. After the insurrection of Prairial, the working classes of Paris, defeated and leaderless, disappeared for the time from the scene of political action. The Convention found itself left face to face with its late ally, the middle classes, which had taken part against the insurgents through dread of a Terrorist reaction, but which now sought to turn the victory to their own account. To the rule of the Convention intense aversion was felt and freely expressed. There were in

Paris concealed Royalists, most of them persons belonging to the old privileged orders, who sought by intrigue and conspiracy to effect a reaction in favour of the emigrant Bourbon Princes. But such were comparatively few in number. The middle classes desired merely complete liberty of worship and return to constitutional forms of government. Though the Republic did not possess their confidence or affection, they did not avow themselves Monarchists nor aim definitely at the re-establishment of monarchy. The formation of a strong united monarchical party was prevented both by the conduct of the emigrants and by the want of a name to which constitutional monarchists could rally. The late King's brothers, the Counts of Provence and Artois, as well as his more distant relations, were emigrants. The young Dauphin, his only son, died at this time in the Temple (June 8). In the summer of 1793 the child had been parted from his mother, and placed under the charge of a shoemaker, Simon, who treated him with roughness, if not brutality. In January 1794 he was confined in a small dark room, of which the door was barred up, and communication between him and his keepers maintained by means of a grating, through which was passed daily a little bread, meat, and water. Here he remained till after the fall of the Robespierrists in July. When again brought into the light he was found covered with dirt, apathetic, and diseased. His material condition was from this time improved, but none of the care necessary to revive his spirits and to save his life was given. The companionship of his sister, imprisoned in the same building, was refused, and it was not until he was visibly dying that resort was had to medical advice. Of the thousands who perished in the course of the revolution none suffered so cruel or so unmerited a fate as this innocent child, separated from every friend, and slowly killed by misusage and neglect



The death of the young Prince was a subject of rejoicing to Republicans, but served as an additional cause of indignation against the Convention. The probability of a Royalist insurrection in Paris was increased by the landing of the emigrants at Quibéron. The Thermidorians became alarmed for their own safety, and denounced as Royalists the same journalists and national guards, whose action they had before the insurrection of Prairial abetted and applauded. But, since the proscription of the Mountain, they had lost the power of controlling the Assembly, and the reaction, though impeded by their resistance, still continued its course.

Accepting what had already been done in many parts of the country, the Convention passed a law sanctioning the provisional use of churches for the exercise of State of the Church. worship, but prohibiting any persons from officiating in them before making a promise of submission to the laws of the Republic (May 30). At Paris twelve, and subsequently fifteen, churches were reopened. The oath imposed by the civil constitution of the clergy was thus abandoned, and, in fact, the civil constitution itself. Within the limits assigned by this law and the law which had been passed in February (p. 227), the Church was left at liberty to effect its own reorganisation. The constitutional Bishops, of whom the majority had not abdicated, headed by Grégoire, Bishop of Blois, made every endeavour to recover for the Church its former influence. The work was accomplished with rapidity. The religious persecution in itself had tended to destroy the sceptical spirit which had prevailed amongst the middle classes in 1789, while the mass of the constitutional clergy were men who had proved themselves worthy of respect by remaining throughout the Terror faithful to their convictions. Within a few months the clergy were again exercising

their former functions without obstruction. Internal divisions, however, remained unhealed. Some of the nonjurors, who had never taken the oath imposed by the civil constitution, made the promise of submission to the laws of the Republic, and officiated in public buildings, but refused to recognise the authority of the former constitutional Bishops. Others of the nonjurors refused even to promise submission to the laws, and officiated in secret in barns and private houses, under constant fear of proscription and death. There were thus three classes of priests, all at enmity with each other : (1) those who had taken the oath required in 1790 ; (2) those who had refused this oath, but had since promised submission to the laws ; (3) the so-called refractory priests, who had not taken the oath required in 1790, and now refused submission to the laws. As a rule the lower and middle classes were attached to the constitutional clergy, while nobles and Royalists followed the nonjurors. It was in the East, the South, and the West that the refractory priests had most influence.

The re-establishment of constitutional government loudly demanded by public opinion, was held by the majority in the Convention itself necessary for the security of the Republic. On one side the Constitution of 1791 was lauded by the Monarchists ; on the other side the Constitution of 1793, framed by the Mountain after the ejection of the Girondists, but never put into force, was demanded by the Jacobins. To the Convention both were unacceptable ; the first because it admitted a king, the second because it appeared impracticable. The Terror had dissipated faith in the political virtue and intelligence of the people, and the same men who in 1791 had been the warmest advocates of decentralization and extreme forms of democratic government, were now opposed to manhood suffrage, or to

giving to local authorities the opportunity of usurping sovereign powers. The appointment of a committee to revise the Constitution of 1793 led to the adoption of what was in reality a new form of government. The Constitution of the year III., or 1795, was based on the liberal principles of 1789. It guaranteed individual liberty, liberty of worship, liberty of the press, and security of property and of person. As in the Constitution of 1791, a low property qualification was required for voting in primary assemblies, a higher one for voting in secondary assemblies. Primary assemblies elected, as hitherto, justices of the peace for the canton and municipal officers; secondary assemblies elected the judges of the higher courts, the upper administrative bodies, and the deputies to the Legislature. The number of administrative and municipal bodies was greatly reduced. The administration of districts was entirely abolished. Only communes with a population of over 5,000 retained separate municipalities. Communes of which the population was below this number, included in any one canton, had a municipality common to all. To every administrative and municipal body was added a commissioner, nominated by the Government, whose duty was to see that the laws were executed. Precaution was taken against the revival of an authority at Paris rival to the Legislature. Communes of over 100,000 inhabitants were divided into districts, each with a municipality of its own. Paris had thus twelve municipalities. The Legislative body was formed of two Houses, a council of five hundred, and a council of 250 Ancients. Both Houses were elected on the same principle, but the Ancients had to be forty years of age. Both were renewed by a third of their number yearly. To the five hundred belonged the introduction of laws; the Ancients had the right of rejecting them. At the

head of the executive was a Directory of five members, selected by the Ancients out of a list drawn up by the five hundred. These Directors appointed the ministers, in number six, and ordered the disposition of the armed forces. They had no veto on legislation, and neither they nor the ministers might sit in either council. One Director had to retire yearly, so that the whole body would be renewed in the course of five years.

This Constitution, put in force as it stood, would have given France a government formed of new men. But the members of the Convention, long accustomed to the exercise of power, were unwilling to resign it, or to hazard the maintenance of the Republic by allowing Royalists and Monarchists an opportunity of obtaining a majority in the new Legislature. It was determined to apply at once the principle of renewing the Legislature by a third of its number every year. A special law bound the secondary assemblies to elect two-thirds of their deputies out of the Convention, so that only a single third in either council would be formed of new men (August 22, Fructidor 5). There were further to be no new elections till the spring of 1797, so that for a year and a half the domination of the republican party was secured. A second law required that if, in consequence of double elections, all the seats reserved for members of its own body were not filled, the Convention should elect the deputies required to make up the number wanting (August 31, Fructidor 13). The new constitution was submitted to the primary assemblies, and accepted by large majorities, but with it were coupled these two accessory laws. At Paris popular indignation was fanned into revolt by the emigrants and royalists. The Convention depended for its safety on 4,000 troops of the line, and a few hundred Jacobins and workmen hastily armed for its defence. On the other side were

20,000 national guards. These, however, were under two great disadvantages. They had no competent general, and they had no artillery, all the sections having been deprived of their cannon after the insurrection of Prairial. The forces of the Convention were commanded by the deputy Barras, who entrusted the organisation of resistance to Napoleon Bonaparte, a young general, who was the ablest man in the service of the Republic, but whose name as yet was hardly known beyond military circles, where his reputation stood high as the officer to whose genius was owing the capture of Toulon in 1793. In all haste a strong force of artillery was brought from a camp at Grenelle, a few miles from Paris, and stationed round the Tuileries, so as to command the approaches from the Rue St. Honoré and the Church of St. Roch, which the insurrectionists occupied. The combat was sharp, but soon decided. Before nightfall the insurgents were on all sides in flight and dispersed (October 5, Vendémiaire 13).

The insurrection, thus quelled, strengthened the Thermidorians and more violent party in the Convention. New laws were passed, designed to keep the defeated party down and to insure that power should remain in the hands of its actual possessors. Deported priests, returned to France, were ordered to quit the country on pain of suffering, in accordance with the laws, death as emigrants. Relations of emigrants, in the first or second degree, such as fathers, brothers, sons, uncles and nephews, were prohibited from holding any office, judicial, legislative, or administrative (October 25). This measure, known as the law of Brumaire 3, was of great political importance. It deprived a very large number of persons of rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, and was calculated to prevent the new Government rising above the character of a purely party Government. Before

the arrival of the new deputies, those of the old members who retained their seats elected to be Directors five men, all bound by interest to support the Republic, since all had voted for the death of Louis XVI.

The new Government was therefore formed only in an insensible degree of new men. The five Directors—Larevellière-Lépeaux, Rewbel, Carnot, Letourneur, and Barras—the six ministers, and the two councils, stood in the place of the Committee of Public Safety and the Convention; but the change was one of name and form, not of system. There was no change, either in the internal or in the foreign policy of the Government.

As the Government remained practically unchanged, it could not, by any possibility, be strong. It had none of that authority which comes from representing the national will. What that will might be, it was at the time hard to say. The nation itself had given up the task of impressing its mind upon its rulers, and contented itself with private disapprobation of their conduct. In Paris, where that disapprobation had been expressed in action, it had been promptly silenced by military intervention, and it was by no means unlikely that the army, which was now the only strong organisation remaining in the country, might hereafter intervene against the Directory as it had lately intervened in its favour.

It was the more likely that this would happen because the army did not owe its strength to its organisation alone. As far as it is possible to judge, it fairly represented, for the time, the popular sentiment of the nation. At the outset of the revolution, zeal for improvement and change had seized upon every variety of mind and upon every class of the community. The higher minds looked forward to liberty of speech and thought, and through them to the raising of mankind in the scale of human progress. The masses looked forward to

material equality, to the removal of the load of outrage and oppression under which they groaned. For some time it seemed as if these objects could be achieved together. It was not long before the attempt to grasp too much at a time brought failure with it. Liberty was trodden down in practice, whilst it was adored in word. Fraternity became but an excuse for fratricide. Equality remained as the one aim to be pursued at all hazards, and the equality which was most in favour was the lower and more material equality which appealed to the masses of unlettered peasants. For one man who cared about moral and spiritual advancement there were at least a hundred who cared only to have a guarantee for their purchases of confiscated property, and an assurance that they should be under no disadvantages because they were not of noble birth. Such feelings, strong in the nation, were strong in the army. The soldier has never much sympathy for the machinery of a free government. It is his duty in life to obey orders, not to impose them on his superiors. But the soldier of revolutionary France was the champion of material equality. He had offered it to the peoples which he had invaded. It had given to him that which he prized most, the right of promotion to the superior ranks of the service, irrespective of birth.

A body which is thoroughly organised, and which represents the dominant ideas of a people, is, in reality, irresistible. For the perfect organisation of the army one thing was wanting—a general who could inspire it with confidence. That general would be found in the young chief who had fought the battle of the Convention against the insurgents of Vendémiaire. Because the nation itself was as yet unprepared to appear upon the scene, the revolutionary epoch was followed not by the Constitutional but by the Napoleonic age.



Yet the striving of the political revolutionists had not been in vain. The time would come when the pursuit of merely material gains would bring ruin and desolation with it, and the old ideals of the thinkers of the eighteenth century would again be welcomed by a generation wearied by military despotism, and which would therefore seek to establish social and political institutions on a safer basis than Mirabeau or Vergniaud had been able to do. Nor do even the wild schemes of Chaumette and St. Just form a mere episode in French history, though wisely to lighten the load which inevitably falls on the shoulders of the poor and unfortunate, and thus to diminish the amount of human suffering, is a work which opens up problems which these men attempted rashly to cut with the axe of the executioner, but which are now understood to be amongst the most complicated subjects of political thought. To trace the fate of the ideas which were thrown up in the course of the French Revolution would require many volumes. It is because these ideas were so many sided and so powerful that the French nation accepts the Revolution, in spite of the errors and crimes of the revolutionists, as the source of its mental as well as of its political life.



# INDEX.

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## AME

**A** MERICA, assisted by France, 25; declaration of Independence by, 26

Army, the French, mutinies in, 73; disorderly condition of, 105; extraordinary measures for the enlistment of, 146; conscription introduced for, 170; treatment of, by the Hébertists, 188; reorganization of, 189

Artois, the Count of, emigrates, 63; appeals to foreign Powers, 86

Assignats, first issue of, 68; fresh issues of, 94; continued issue and depreciation of, 149, 172, 224, 225

Austria, relations of, with Prussia and Turkey, 97, 98; forms a defensive alliance with Prussia, 104; war declared by France against, 105; ill-feeling towards Prussia of, 161; Thugut, minister of, 162

Avignon, n assacre at, 110

**B**AILLY, is chosen mayor of Paris, 47; addresses the King on his visit to Paris, 48; execution of, 178

Barbaroux, asks Marseilles to send men to Paris, 116; execution of, 208

Barère, selfish indifference of, 200; applauds the financial results of the Terror, 207

Barnave, is a leader of the Centre and Left, 53; is a rival of Mirabeau, 57; is popular in the Jacobin Club, 65; supports the King after the flight to Varennes, 90;

## BUR

joins the Feuillants, 92; execution of, 178

Basel, peace of, 238

Bastille, the attack upon, 45; capture of, 46

Belgium, invaded by the French, 111; invaded by Dumouriez, 130; question of the annexation of, 131; its annexation decreed, 141; is reconquered by the allies, 161; is again conquered by the French, 213

Berthier, murder of, 48

Billaud-Varennes, elected to the commune of Paris, 120; is placed on the Committee of Public Safety, 167; sanguinary character of, 200; opposes Robespierre, 217

Bonaparte, Napoleon, suppresses the insurrection of Vendémiaire, 250

Bordeaux, Girondist sentiments of, 157

Bouille, suppresses a mutiny at Nancy, 73; supports the flight to Varennes, 89

Brienne, ministry of, 27

Brissot, political opinions of, 76; calls for a republic, 90; trial and execution of, 177

Brunswick, the Duke of, publishes a manifesto, 114; conducts the invasion, 123; retreats from Valmy, 124; commands one of the armies of the coalition, 141; takes Mainz, 161; is obliged to retreat, 192

Burke, his Reflections on the French Revolution, 138

## CAE

- CAEN, Girondist sentiments prevail at, 157  
 Cahiers, the, 29  
 Calendar, the republican, 180  
 Calonne, ministry of, 27  
 Cambon, financial measures of, 195  
 Carnot, directs the movements of the armies, 189; arranges the campaign of 1794, 212; escapes from prosecution after the insurrection of Prairial, 231  
 Carrier, conduct of, at Nantes, 186; execution of, 223  
 Cathelineau, crosses the Loire, 160; is killed, 161  
 Catherine II., patronises French philosophers, 22; extends her dominions in Poland and the Crimea, 96; proposes a second partition of Poland, 135  
 Cazalès, defends the monarchy, 51  
 Champ de Mars, the, massacre of, 91  
 Charette, commands part of the Vendean army, 160; fails to cross the Loire, 161  
 Chaumette, elected to the commune of Paris, 120; his position in the commune, 169; attacks religion, 179  
 Chollet, defeat of the Vendéans at, 182  
 Chouans, the, insurrection of, 241  
 Church, the French, position of, before the revolution, 6, 15; demands of the Cahiers respecting, 31; its property appropriated by the Constituent Assembly, 67; the civil constitution provokes a schism in, 74; schism continued in, 101; treatment of, by the Hébertists, 179; Robespierre's behaviour towards, 216; improvement in the condition of, 228; condition of, after the Terror, 246  
 Civil constitution of the clergy, the, enacted, 69; position of the Legislative Assembly towards, 101  
 Clavière, minister of Finance, 105; is dismissed, 112; is restored to office, 117  
 Clermont-Tonnerre, 52  
 Coburg, commands one of the armies of the coalition, 141; relieves Maestricht, 142; takes Condé and Valenciennes, 161; evacuates Belgium, 213  
 Collot d'Herbois, elected to the

## CON

- commune of Paris, 120; becomes a member of the Committee of Public Safety, 167; sanguinary character of, 200; opposes Robespierre, 217  
 Committee of General Security instituted, 146  
 Committee of Public Safety, instituted, 145; acquires power over the Convention, 166; does not dare to risk a collision with the Commune, 167; composition of, 200; gains over the mob, 203; dictatorship of, 204; dissatisfaction of Robespierre with, 205; extension of the Terror by, 208; Robespierre's management of, 214; discord in, 217; reorganisation of, after the Terror, 221  
 Commune of Paris, the, first organisation of, 81; dispersion of the municipal council of, 116; reconstruction of, 119; organises the September massacres, 121; re-election of, 129; heads the movement for the proscription of the Girondists, 153; its power independent of the Convention, 167; controls the revolutionary army, 174; is attacked by Robespierre, 198; is reconstituted by Robespierre, 205; is broken up, 221  
 Condé surrenders, 161  
 Conspiration, the, restarted to, 170  
 Constituent Assembly, the, fusion of the orders in, 38; its dissolution desired by the Queen, 43; abolishes feudal services, 49; formation of parties in, 51; wishes to establish constitutional government, 55; constitutional provisions of, 58; annuls regulations impeding the circulation of corn, 59; removes to Paris, 62; completes the constitution, 65; appropriates Church property, 67; enacts the civil constitution of the clergy, 69; increase of party spirit in, 70; abolishes titles of nobility, 71; leaves the King without authority, 72; presents the constitution to the King, and dissolves itself, 93  
 Constitution, of 1791, 65, 9.; of 1793, 158; of 1795, 247  
 Convention, the National, summoned, 117; elected, 123; parties

## COR

in, 124; its galleries occupied by Jacobins, 129; offers to help all peoples desirous of freedom, 131; decrees the union of Nice and Savoy, 133; decrees the opening of the Scheldt, and orders the generals to proclaim the sovereignty of the people, 134; condemns the King, 140; decrees the annexation of Belgium, and declares war against England, 141; institutes the Committee of Public Safety, 145; orders the transportation of priests, 147; forbids the emigrants to return on pain of death, 148; refuses to proscribe the Girondists, 153; is compelled to order the arrest of the Girondists, 155; resistance in the departments to, 157; falls into the hands of the extreme party in the Mountain, 165; its comparative weakness, 166; orders a levy *en masse*, 170; orders requisitions to supply Paris, and institutes a revolutionary army, 174; passes the law of suspected persons, 175; sends twenty-one deputies before the Revolutionary Court, 176; submits to the Commune, 180; accepts the Worship of Reason, 181; Reorganises the army, 189; its legislative work, 193; reorganises the Revolutionary Court, 215; overthrows Robespierre, 219; parties in, after the fall of Robespierre, 222; restoration of Girondist deputies to, 223; reaction in, 224; looks for the support to the party of reaction, 227; foreign policy of, 233; becomes unpopular with the middle classes, 244

Cordeliers, the Club of the, presided over by Danton, 82; demands a republic, 91

Corday, Charlotte, admires the Girondists, 163; assassinates Marat, 164

Couthon, is placed on the Committee of Public Safety, 167; his conduct in Auvergne, 185; supports Robespierre, 200; arrest of, 219; execution of, 220

Custine, takes Frankfort, 130; is driven out of Frankfort, 141

## EMP

D'ALEMBERT, writings of, 14; Danton, presides over the Cordeliers, 82; calls for a republic, 82; becomes Minister of Justice, 117; stirs up resistance against invasion, 121; resigns his ministry, 125; is attacked by the Girondists, 127; advocates the condemnation of the King, 140; breaks with the Girondists, 144; loses authority in the Convention, 165; wishes to stop the Reign of Terror, 197; is executed, 204

Dauphin, the, death of, 245

De Launay, murder of, 46

Delessart, advocates peace, 104; is charged with treason, 105

Departments, France divided into, 65

Desinoulins, Camille, urges the Parisians to take arms, 44; political opinions of, 77; advocates a republic, 90; supports Robespierre, 109; wishes to stop the Reign of Terror, 197; publishes *The Old Cordelier*, 199; execution of, 204

D'Espréménil, defends the old system, 51

Diderot, writings of, 14

Directors, appointment of, 251

Dumouriez, minister of foreign affairs, 105; resigns, 112; commands the army, 121; occupied the Argonnes, 123; gains a victory at Jemmapes, 130; proposes the invasion of Holland, 135; fails in an invasion of Holland, 142; is defeated at Neerwinden, 143; takes refuge with the Austrians, 144

ECONOMISTS, the, 16

Egalité, Philip. *See* Orleans. Duke of

Elizabeth, Madame, execution of, 178

Emigrants, the, begin to leave France, 63; increasing numbers of, 71; are encouraged by the princes on the Rhine, 101; confiscation of the revenues of, 111; are forbidden to return on pain of death, 148

Empire, the defective organisation of, 96; anti-French feeling in, 102; joins the coalition against France, 141

## ENC

Encyclopædia, the, 14  
 England, political condition of, 23; dislikes the annexation of Belgium by France, 133; opposes the opening of the Scheldt, 134; state of political opinion in, 136; war declared by France against, 141  
 Europe, prevalence of Voltairian ideas in, 21

**F**EDERATION, Feasts of the  
 70

Feraud, murder of, 230  
 Feudal nobility, privileges of, under the monarchy, 1-5; abolition of, 49  
 Feuillants, the club of the, foundation of, 92  
 Fleurus, battle of, 213  
 Foulon, murder of, 48  
 Fouquier Tinville, public prosecutor, 176  
 France before the revolution, political condition of, 1; economical condition of, 8; progress of reforming ideas in, 22  
 Francis II., the Emperor, war declared by France against, 105; hopes to make conquests in France, 135  
 Frankfurt, occupied by Custine, 130; stormed by the Prussians, 141  
 Frederick II., patronises French philosophers, 22; extends his territories, 97  
 Frederick William II., concludes the treaty of Reichenbach, 97; is prevented from helping Louis, 99; urges a march to Paris, 123; agrees to the second partition of Poland, 135

**G**ANSONNÉ, sits in the Legislative Assembly, 100; trial and execution of, 177

Germany. *See* Empire, the

Germinal, insurrection of, 226

Girondists, the principles of, 100; ecclesiastical policy of, 101; warlike tendencies of, 102; enter the ministry, 105; opposition aroused against, 106; hope for the establishment of a republic, 111; dismissal of their ministers, 112; make overtures to the King, 115;

## JAC

form the right of the Convention, 125; weakness of, 126; attack Robespierre and Danton, 127; increasing weakness of, 142; break with Danton, 144; attacked by Robespierre, 145; economical doctrines of, 149; movement for the proscription of, 153; arrest of the leaders of, 155; causes of the failure of, 156; feeling in the departments in favour of, 157; suppression of the movement in favour of, 158; trial and execution of the leaders of, 177; restoration of the survivors of, 224  
 Gobel, Archbishop, resigns office 180  
 Grégoire, Bishop, refuses to resign office, 180  
 Guadet, sits in the Legislative Assembly, 100

**H**AGUE, the, the treaty of, 210

Hébert, elected to the Commune of Paris, 120; his position in the Commune, 169; his character and aims, 170; calls for a reign of terror, 175; attacks Christianity, 179; supports the system of terror, 183; is opposed by Robespierre, 197; execution of, 204

Hoche, commands the army on the Moselle, 192; is sent to command in the west, 242; defeats the Chouans at Quiberon, 244

Holland, proposed invasion of, 135; failure of Dumouriez in an attack upon, 142; is conquered by Pichegru, 232

Hondschoote, battle of, 191

Houchard, defeats the enemy and is guillotined, 191

**I**SNARD, desires war with Austria, 103; threatens that Paris shall be destroyed, 154

**J**ACOBINS, the club of, formation of, 64; affiliation of provincial clubs to, 80; asks for the King's deposition after the flight to Varennes 91; opposition to the Girondists in, 106; gives its confidence to Robespierre, 109; pro-

## JAL

poses to dethrone the King, 115 ; takes part against the Girondists, 129 ; Robespierre's influence at, 201 ; closure of, 223  
 Jalès, camp of, 110  
 Jemmapes, battle of, 130  
 Joseph II., the Emperor, reforms attempted by, 23 ; wishes to incorporate Bavaria, 97  
 Jourdan, gains the victory of Watignies, 191  
 June, battle of the first of, 237

**K**AUNITZ, is indifferent to the progress of the revolution, 98  
 Kellermann, commands at Metz, 121  
 Kléber, commands against the Vendéans, 182

**L**AFAVETTE, proposes the adoption of the tricolour, 47 ; is a leader of the Centre and Left, 53 ; supports the system of two chambers, 54 ; refuses to support Mirabeau, 57 ; extent of the influence of, 60 ; arrives at Versailles, 61 ; guards the King, 63 ; supports the King after the flight to Varennes, 91 ; joins the Feuillants, 92 ; commands on the Eastern frontier, and denounces the Jacobins, 112 ; appears at the bar of the Assembly, 113 ; support of, rejected by the Queen, 114 ; is acquitted by the Assembly, 116 ; flies from the country and is imprisoned by the Austrians, 119

Lally-Tollendal, 52, 63

Lameth, the brothers, are amongst the leaders of the Centre and Left, 53 ; distrust Mirabeau, 57 ; join the Feuillants, 92

La Vendée. *See* Vendéans, the

Legislative Assembly, the, composition of, 99 ; ecclesiastical policy of, 101 ; growth of warlike tendencies in, 102 ; declares war against the King of Hungary, 105 ; decrees that Volunteers shall come to Paris, 112 ; proclaims the country to be in danger, 114 ; suspends the King, and summons a National Convention, 117 ; last sitting of, 124

Le Mans, defeat of the Vendéans at, 183

## MAR

Leopold II. the Emperor, is urged by the Queen to intervene in France, 94 ; concludes the treaty of Reichenbach, 97 ; concludes the treaty of Sistova, 98 ; refuses to help Louis, 99 ; seeks to avoid war, 103 ; claims a right of interference in France, 104 ; death of, 105

Levy *en masse*, 170

Longwy, siege of, 121

Louis XIV., monarchy of, 2

Louis XV., misgovernment of, 3

Louis XVI., accession of, 18 ; character of, 19 ; takes part in the American war, 25 ; design of, in summoning the States General, 32 ; opens the States General, 33 ; weakness of his position, 34 ; attempts to hinder the fusion of the orders, 39 ; dismisses Necker, 44 ; visits Paris after the capture of the Bastille, 47 ; idea of retreating to Metz, considered by, 60 ; is brought to Paris, 62 ; swears to maintain the Constitution, 70 ; appoints reactionary ministers, 81 ; refuses to be guided by Mirabeau, 83 ; dislikes the civil constitution of the clergy, 86 ; desires that the constitution may fail, 87 ; attempts flight, 88 ; is stopped at Varennes, 89 ; his deposition proposed and rejected, 90 ; accepts the constitution, 93 ; deception practised by him, 93 ; refuses to sanction a decree against the non-jurors, 111 ; hopes that the allies will reach Paris, 105 ; refuses to sanction a decree for the meeting of Volunteers at Paris, and dismisses the Girondist ministers, 112 ; is visited by the mob, 113 ; is driven from the Tuileries and suspended, 117 ; causes of the fall of, 118 ; trial of, 139

Lyons, royalist insurrection at, 157. surrender of. 181. vengeance taken on, 186

**M**AINZ, surrender to the French, 130 ; is retaken by Brunswick, 161

Malouet, 52

Marat, political opinions of, 78 ; attacks the Girondists, 109 ; takes



## MAR

- part in the September massacres, 122; acquittal of, 145; assassination of, 163
- Marie Antoinette, character of, 20; urges the King to hinder the fusion of the orders, 39; distrusts Mirabeau, 57; appears at a military banquet at Versailles, 61; is brought to Paris, 62; becomes unpopular, 86; effect of her counsels on her husband, 87; urges the King to fly, 88; is arrested at Varennes, 89; urges the Emperor to intervene, 94; refuses the help of the constitutionalists and the emigrants, 95; is threatened by the mob, 113; refuses to be saved by Lafayette, 114; execution of, 177
- Marseillaise, the, 116
- Maury, the Abbé, defends the clergy, 51
- Maximum laws, the, enacted, 171; difficulty of enforcing, 175; re-enacted in a new form, 203; cease to be observed, 224; are repealed, 225
- Merlin of Douai, 53
- Mirabeau, character and policy of, 35; is chosen as a representative of the Third Estate, 37; is a leader of the Centre and Left, 53; opposes Necker, 55; statesmanlike policy of, 56; difficulties in the way of, 57; attacks Necker, 58; close of the career of, 82; death of, 84
- Miranda, fails to take Maestricht, 147
- Molleville, reactionary opinions of, 105
- Monarchy, the French, rise of, 1; centralisation of the government of, 7
- Mounier, 52, 63
- Mountain, the, proposes the deposition of the King, 115; struggles with the Girondists, 125; urges the condemnation of the King, 140; obtains the creation of the Revolutionary Court, 143; obtains the command of the Committee of Public Safety, 146; principles of, 148; supports a coercive economical policy, 152; fills the clubs with its supporters, 162; is held in subserviency by the committees

## PAR

- and the commune, 192; is divided in opinion after Robespierre's fall, 222; asks for the constitution of 1793, 226; transportation of the leaders of, 227
- Municipality of Paris. *See* Commune of Paris

- NANCY, mutiny at, 73
- Narbonne, conduct of, a minister of war, 105
- National Assembly, the title of adopted by the Third Estate, 38
- See* Constituent Assembly
- Necker, first ministry of, 25; second ministry of, 29; gives advice to the States General, 33; weakness of his policy, 34; is opposed to the dissolution of the Assembly, 43; dismissal of, 44; recalled to office, 47; fails to guide the Assembly, 55; finally resigns office, 81
- Neerwinden, battle of, 143
- Nice, occupied by the French, 129; annexed, 133
- Nonjurors, the, refuse to swear to the civil constitution of the clergy, 75; are deprived of their pensions, 101; are threatened with banishment, 111; transportation of, 180
- Notables, the, meeting of, 27

- ORDERS, the privileged, exempted from taxation, 8
- Orleans, Duke of, takes the popular side, 42; is said to have aimed at the throne, 63; sits with the Montagnards, 125; trial of, 176; is executed, 178

- PARIS, anarchy in, 42; assault upon the Bastille in, 45; establishment of a municipality and a national guard in, 47; difficulty of provisioning, 59; the King brought to, 62; organisation of, 81; proposed formation of an armed camp for the defence of, 111; preparations for insurrection in, 116; election of a new commune of, 119; massacres in, 121; predominates over the departments, 126; is ruled by the new commune, 129

## PAR

Parliaments, the, oppose the King, 25, 28  
 Pétion, sits on the extreme left in the Constituent Assembly, 53; becomes Mayor of Paris, 112; death of, 208  
 Pichegru, defeats the allies on the Rhine, 192; conquers Flanders, 213; conquers Holland, 232  
 Pilsnitz, conference at, 98  
 Pitt, internal policy of, 24; refuses to join foreign powers against France, 98; character of the statesmanship of, 136; strives to maintain peace, 138  
 Plain, the, position of, in the convention, 128  
 Poland, first partition of, 96; establishment of a new constitution in, 98; hostility of Catherine II. to, 99; proposed second partition of, 135; insurrection of, 210; second partition of, 211; third partition of, 236  
 Portugal, joins the coalition against France, 141  
 Prairial, insurrection of, 231  
 Privileged orders, the, position of, 8; aim of, 29  
 Provinces, the, insurrections in, 48; anarchy in, 109  
 Prussia, its relations with Austria, 97; forms a defensive alliance with Austria, 104; is drawn into a war with France, 105; its jealousy of Austria, 161; concludes peace with France, 238

**Q**UIBERON, peninsular of Hoche's victory at, 244

**R**EASON, the worship of, 181  
 Reichenbach, treaty of, 97  
 Rennes, Girondist sentiments of, 157  
 Revolutionary army, the formation of, 173  
 Revolutionary Court, the, establishment of, 143; deputies first sent before, 176  
 Rights of Man, declaration of the, 58  
 Robespierre, sits on the extreme Left in the Constituent Assembly, 53; is applauded by the Jacobins, 65; hesitates to decide for the King's deposition, 90; proposes

## PIE

a law forbidding re-election, 92. leads the opposition against the Girondists, 107; opposes the war 108; is elected to the Commune, 120, is attacked by the Girondists, 127; proposes the imprisonment of the leading Girondists, 145; supports the insurrection against the Girondists, 153; becomes a leading member of the Committee of Public Safety, 167; attacks the Hébertists, 197; causes of the influence of, 201; procures the destruction of the Hébertists by abandoning Danton, 202; is dissatisfied with the Committee of Public Safety, 205; reduces the Terror to a system, 208; inaugurates the worship of the Supreme Being, 214; reorganises the Revolutionary Court, 215; comes into collision with the Committee of Public Safety, 217; his imprisonment, 219; execution of, 220  
 Roland, is minister of the interior, 105; attempts in vain to restore order, 109; is dismissed, 112; projects of a retreat to the Loire discussed in the house of, 115; is restored to office, 117; resignation of, 145; death of, 178  
 Roland, Madame, directs the actions of her husband, 115; execution of, 178  
 Rousseau, doctrines of, 16  
**S**T. JUST, is placed on the Committee of Public Safety, 167; makes requisitions at Strasburg, 185; character and aims of, 206; arrest of, 219; execution of, 220  
 Santerre, commands the national guard, 122  
 Sardinia, the King of, war declared against, 130  
 Saumur, is taken by the Vendéans, 160  
 Savoy, occupied by the French, 129; annexed, 133  
 Scheldt, the opening of, 134  
 September massacres, the, 121  
 Servan, is minister of war, 111; is dismissed, 112; is restored to office, 117  
 Siéyès, writes a pamphlet, 30; is a leader of the Centre and Left, 53

## SIS

- Sistova, the treaty of, 98  
 Smith, Adam, publishes the 'Wealth of Nations,' 24  
 Spain, joins the coalition against France, 141; concludes peace with France, 239  
 States-General, the, summoned, 28; discussions on the constitution of, 31; meeting of, 33; fusion of the orders in, 38. *See* Constituent Assembly  
 Supreme Being, the, worship of, 214

- T**ALLIEN conduct of, at Bordeaux, 185; his position after the revolution of Thermidor, 223  
 Taxation, exemption of the privileged orders from, 8; character of, under the monarchy, 9; system of, established by the Constituent Assembly, 94  
 Tennis Court Oath, the, 40  
 Terror, the Reign of, commencement of, 165  
 Thermidor, revolution of, 219  
 Thermidorians, the, party of, 222  
 Third Estate, double representation of, 31; adopts the title of the National Assembly, 38  
 Thouret, 53  
 Thugut, becomes foreign minister of Austria, 162; foreign policy of, 234  
 Tories, the English, 136  
 Toulon, resists the Convention, 157; capture of, 181; vengeance taken on, 186  
 Turcoing, Pichegru's victory at, 213  
 Turgot, ministry of, 18  
 Turreau, devastates La Vendée, 209

## YOU

- V**ALENCIENNES, surrenders 161  
 Valmy, cannonade of, 124  
 Varennes, the flight to, 88  
 Vendéans, the, rise in insurrection, 147; mode of fighting of, 159; first successes of, 160; are driven back into their own country, 161; destruction of the army of, 182; continuance of the war against, 208  
 Vendémiaire, insurrection of, 249  
 Verdun, siege of, 121  
 Vergnaud, sits in the Legislative Assembly, 100; qualities of, 1126; trial and execution of, 177  
 Versailles, arrival of the mob at, 61; the King removed from, 62  
 Veto, given to the King, 58  
 Voltaire, opinions and influence of, 14, 21
- W**ATTIGNIES, Battle of, 191  
 Weissenburg, the lines of, 192  
 Whigs, the English, 136  
 White Terror, the, 229  
 Wurmser, commands the Austrians on the Rhine, 192
- Y**ORK, the Duke of, commands the English Army in the Netherlands, 161; is driven from Dunkirk, 191; commands the English forces in the campaign of 1794, 212; fails to defend Holland, 232  
 Young, Arthur, describes the economical condition of France, 11

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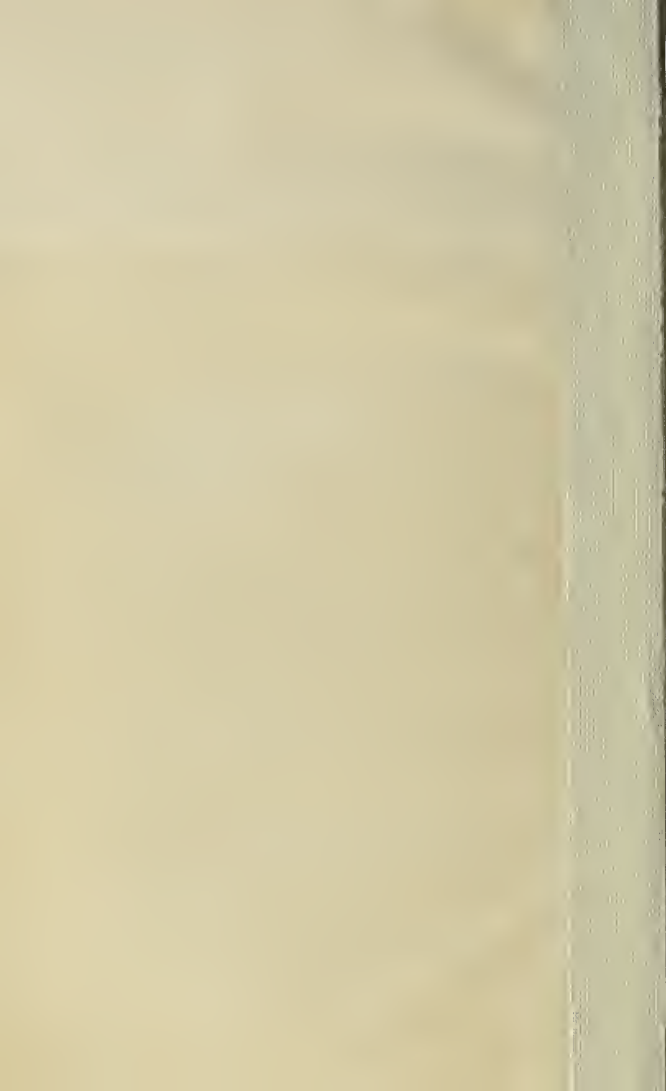
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