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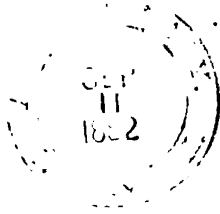
THE
HISTORY OF FRANCE.

BY
EYRE EVANS CROWE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

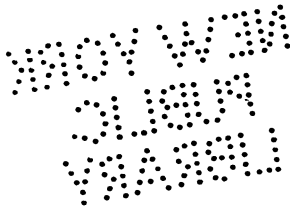
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CONTENTS

OF

THE FOURTH VOLUME.

CHAPTER XXXII.

	Page
Court of Louis the Fourteenth - - - - -	1
Its Splendour and Genius contrasted with the Misery and Ignorance of the Provinces - - - - -	2
Mania for Reglementation - - - - -	3
Morals and Church - . - - - -	4
Jansenism - - - - -	5
Treatment of the Protestants - - - - -	6
Bossuet and Claude - - - - -	8
Forced Conversion - - - - -	9
Louis' series of Mistresses - - - - -	10
Persecution - - - - -	12
The Dragonnades - - - - -	14
Resurrection of the Huguenots - - - - -	16
Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1685 - - - - -	18
Learned Huguenots take refuge in Holland; Bayle - - - - -	20
The King grasps at portions of Germany - - - - -	22
He seizes Strasburg, 1681 - - - - -	24
The Truce of Ratisbon, 1684 - - - - -	26
Algiers and Genoa bombarded - - - - -	27
King seizes Avignon, and tries to make his creature, Fürstenberg, Elector of Cologne - - - - -	29
The War Minister Louvois - - - - -	31
French claim the Left Bank of the Rhine, and go to War for it, 1688 - - - - -	33
Devastation of the Palatinate - - - - -	35
Naval Battle between French and English off Beachy Head - - - - -	37
Battle of Fleurus, 1690 - - - - -	38
Persecution of the Waldenses - - - - -	39
French capture Mons - - - - -	41

	Page
Louvois' Death	42
Battle of La Hogue, 1692	43
Battle of Steinkirk, 1692	44
Battle of Neerwinden, 1693	46
Battle of Marsaglia	48
Distressed Country and Finances	49
Colbert's Administration	51
His Death	55
Pontchartrain, Finance Minister	56
Louis makes Peace with Savoy, 1696	59
Peace of Ryswick, 1697	63
Religion ceases to be the Chief Cause of European War; Territorial or Dynastic Struggles succeed it in the Eighteenth Century, to give place to Constitutional Antagonism in the Nineteenth	65
Strife between Fénelon and Bossuet	66
Quietism	68
Disgrace of Fénelon	69

CHAPTER XXXIII

Extinction of the Austrian Dynasty in Spain	70
Rival claims to the Succession	71
Duke of Portland's Diplomacy	73
Treaty of Partition	74
Death of the Bavarian heir to the Spanish throne, 1699	75
Second Treaty of Partition, 1700	76
King of Spain, by Testament, gives the Succession to a French Prince	78
Louis acknowledges his Grandson, the Duke of Anjou, as King of Spain, November 1700	80
The Triple Alliance against him	83
Death of King William	85
Marlborough captures Liege	86
Defection of Savoy from France, 1703	87
Battle of Blenheim, 1704	90
The Archduke Charles lands in Lisbon	92
The Battle of Ramillies (1706)	95
French driven from Turin	97
Prince Eugene invades Provence	98
Battle of Oudenarde, 1708	100
French lose Lille	101
Battle of Malplaquet, 1709	103
Conferences of Gertruydenberg	105

	Page
Battle of Villa Viciosa - - - -	106
Tories gain favour in England - - - -	108
Death of the Dauphin and Dauphiness, 1712 - - - -	111
Negotiations - - - -	113
Treaty of Utrecht, 1713 - - - -	116
Treaty of Rastadt, 1714 - - - -	119
Ecclesiastical Squabbles - - - -	124
Deaths of the Princes; Orleans accused of causing them - - - -	128
Duc du Maine's Efforts to obtain the Succession - - - -	129
Illness of the King - - - -	131
His Death, 1715 - - - -	132
Character of his Reign - - - -	134

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Competitors for the Regency - - - -	137
The Duke of Orleans overcomes Du Maine - - - -	140
Tolerance of the Regent - - - -	141
Abbé Dubois Minister - - - -	142
Change in Foreign Policy; Rise of Prussia and of Russia - - - -	143
Decline of Poland and Turkey - - - -	144
The Regent adopts the Policy of Peace and the English Alliance - - - -	146
Alberoni - - - -	147
Triple Alliance, 1716 - - - -	148
Intrigues and Ambition of Spanish Court - - - -	150
Alberoni conquers Sardinia, 1717 - - - -	151
And Sicily the following year - - - -	152
Conspiracy of Cellamare - - - -	153
Duc du Maine arrested; France declares war upon Spain, 1719 - - - -	154
Fall of Alberoni - - - -	155
Finances at the Commencement of the Regency - - - -	157
<i>Chambre Ardente</i> ; Spoliation of the National Creditors - - - -	158
Law - - - -	160
His first Bank - - - -	162
Thoughts of English and French turned to Colonial Empire - - - -	164
South Sea Schemes - - - -	166
Dubois Minister of Foreign Policy; Law of Finance - - - -	168
Jobbery, and the Mississippi Shares - - - -	170
Law's Credit shaken - - - -	172
Lord Stair, the English Envoy - - - -	173
England first offers and then declines to cede Gibraltar - - - -	175
Law ejects D'Argenson - - - -	176
Flight of Law, 1720 - - - -	178
Dubois Archbishop of Cambray - - - -	180

	Page
And Cardinal - - - - -	- 181
Louis the Fifteenth betrothed to the Infanta - - -	- 183
Death of Dubois, 1721 - - - - -	- 184
And of the Regent - - - - -	- 185
Duke of Bourbon succeeds to the Regency - - -	- 187
His Intrigues with the Spanish Court - - -	- 190
Ripperda reconciles the Courts of Vienna and Madrid -	- 191
The Infanta sent back, and Louis the Fifteenth married to Marie Lesczinska - - - - -	- 193
Alliance between Austria and Spain met by one between France, England, and Prussia - - - - -	- 194
Duke of Bourbon exiled, 1726 - - - - -	- 195

CHAPTER XXXV.

Cardinal Fleury Prime Minister, 1726 - - -	- 197
Failure of the Alliance between Spain and Austria - - -	- 198
Ripperda's Fall; Treaty of Seville, 1729 - - -	- 199
France supports the claim of Stanislas to the Crown of Poland	202
Austrians defeated by the French at Parma, 1735 - - -	- 204
Don Carlos conquers Naples - - - - -	- 205
Treaty of Vienna, 1738 - - - - -	- 206
Rise of Voltaire - - - - -	- 207
Letters and Manners - - - - -	- 208
The <i>Libertins</i> - - - - -	- 209
Walpole and Fleury; Colonial Rivalry between England and France - - - - -	- 211
Empire claimed for Maria Theresa's husband, 1740 - - -	- 213
Frederick the Great starts up - - - - -	- 215
His first victories, and Treaty with France - - -	- 216
Maria Theresa appeals to the Hungarians, 1741 - - -	- 218
Austria cedes Silesia to Prussia in the Peace of Breslau, 1742 -	- 221
Death of Fleury, 1743 - - - - -	- 223
Louis the Fifteenth's first mistresses - - - - -	- 225
Battle of Dettingen, 1743 - - - - -	- 227
Treaty of Frankfort - - - - -	- 229
King taken ill at Metz - - - - -	- 230
Battle of Fontenoy, 1745 - - - - -	- 232
Battle of Raucoux - - - - -	- 234
Invasion of Provence by the Austrians - - - - -	- 237
Defeat of Belleisle - - - - -	- 238
Battle of Laufeldt, 1747 - - - - -	- 239
War in India - - - - -	- 241
Rise of Madame de Pompadour - - - - -	- 243
Congress and Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748 - - -	- 246

CHAPTER XXXVI.

	Page
Economical state of France - - - -	250
Machault Controller-General - - - -	251
His attempt to tax the Clergy - - - -	252
Maurepas dismissed - - - - -	253
Persecution of the Huguenots revived - - - -	255
The Bull Unigenitus - - - - -	257
Hostilities in Canada - - - - -	258
And in India - - - - -	259
Change of French Policy by an Alliance with Austria -	262
Braddock's Defeat in America, 1755 - - - -	263
French capture Minorca - - - - -	264
England leagues with Prussia, 1756 - - - -	265
Frederick occupies Dresden, 1757 - - - -	266
Damiens stabs the King - - - - -	268
Cardinal Bernis Foreign Minister - - - -	269
Duke of Cumberland capitulates at Kloster-Seven -	270
Battle of Rossbach, 1757 - - - - -	271
Battle of Leuthen - - - - -	272
Expedition of Wolfe to Quebec - - - - -	274
Lally and Sir Eyre Coote - - - - -	276
Choiseul Foreign Minister, 1758 - - - - -	276
Naval Engagement of Lagos - - - - -	277
Battle of Crevelt - - - - -	278
Battle of Minden, 1759 - - - - -	279
The Family Compact - - - - -	283
Negotiations for Peace broken off by Pitt - - - -	284
Lord Bute makes efforts to restore them - - - -	287
Treaties of Paris and of Hubertsburg, 1763 - - - -	288
Frederick the Great - - - - -	289
His anti-religious tendencies and those of the age -	290
Death of Calas on the rack - - - - -	292
Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu - - - - -	293
The Encyclopédie - - - - -	294
King's Licentiousness - - - - -	296
Quarrel between Jansenists and Jesuits; Pascal -	299
Pombal expels the Jesuits - - - - -	300
Their Fall in France, 1764 - - - - -	302
Death of Pompadour, 1764 - - - - -	303
Duke of Choiseul - - - - -	305
His Policy - - - - -	307
Quarrel with Brittany - - - - -	308
Death of the Dauphin, 1765 - - - - -	311
Choiseul's Policy in Poland - - - - -	316

	Page
He acquires Corsica - - - -	- 317
Rise of Madame du Barry - - - -	- 318
Maupeou and Terrai Ministers - - - -	- 319
Marriage of Marie Antoinette with the Dauphin, 1770	- 321
Fall of Choiseul - - - -	- 324
Maupeou dismisses the Parliament - - - -	- 326
Terrai's Taxation - - - -	- 327
Legislation respecting Corn - - - -	- 330
Death of Louis the Fifteenth, 1774 - - - -	- 332

CHAPTER XXXVII.

How far the course of the Revolution is attributable to Fate -	333
Character of Louis the Sixteenth - - - -	- 334
Servitude of the French people - - - -	- 336
Fiscal Hardships - - - -	- 338
Claim of Maurepas to be Minister - - - -	- 342
Turgot Marine Minister - - - -	- 344
Parliaments recalled - - - -	- 345
Turgot's Reforms - - - -	- 346
Met by Riots - - - -	- 347
Malesherbes and St. Germain - - - -	- 348
Necker - - - -	- 350
Turgot's Opinion of the Quarrel between England and its Colonies - - - -	- 352
Dismissal of Turgot, 1776 - - - -	- 353
Necker called to office - - - -	- 354
France leagues with the Americans, and goes to War with England, 1778 - - - -	- 356
Cornwallis' Surrender, 1781 - - - -	- 359
Necker's <i>Compte Rendu</i> - - - -	- 363
Maurepas' Jealousy of Necker - - - -	- 365
Whom he gets dismissed, 1781 - - - -	- 366
Calonne Finance Minister, 1783 - - - -	- 369
His Prodigality - - - -	- 371
German Policy of the French Government - - - -	- 373
Marie Antoinette - - - -	- 375
Affair of the <i>collier</i> , or necklace - - - -	- 377
Disgrace of Cardinal Rohan - - - -	- 380
French Assembly of Notables, January 1787 - - - -	- 383
Calonne's Proposals to it - - - -	- 384
Notables reject them - - - -	- 386
Calonne dismissed - - - -	- 387
Succeeded by Brienne - - - -	- 387

	Page
Parliament demands the States General - - - -	- 390
It is exiled to Troyes - - - -	- 391
But is recalled - - - -	- 392
Prussia invades Holland - - - -	- 393
The Royal Sitting, 1788 - - - -	- 395
Opposition of the Duke of Orleans - - - -	- 396
Quarrel with the Parliament - - - -	- 398
Arrest of Eprésmenil and Goislart - - - -	- 399
Resistance in the Provinces - - - -	- 400
Brienne promises Convocation of States General for the follow- ing year - - - -	- 402
Is dismissed, and Necker re-appointed - - - -	- 403
Severe Winter - - - -	- 404
Second Assembly of Notables - - - -	- 406
Sieyès Question, What is the <i>Tiers État</i> ? - - - -	- 407

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Social Revolution that most aimed at - - - -	- 409
Yet a party for the English Constitution - - - -	- 410
The Army not to be depended on - - - -	- 411
First act of Revolution, Plunder of Reveillon's Factory, April 27, 1789 - - - -	- 412
Opening of the National Assembly, May 5 - - - -	- 413
Pretensions of the <i>Tiers</i> - - - -	- 414
Necker's Plan of Royal Sitting overruled - - - -	- 416
Oath of the Ball-court - - - -	- 417
Royal Sitting - - - -	- 418
Resignation and Resumption of Office by Necker - - - -	- 419
Mutineers of the French Guards - - - -	- 420
Necker dismissed, July 11 - - - -	- 422
People resist the Troops, which are withdrawn - - - -	- 424
Capture of the Bastille, July 14 - - - -	- 426
King visits Paris - - - -	- 428
Murders of Foulon and Berthier - - - -	- 429
Nobles waive all their Privileges and Rights, August 4 - - - -	- 431
Necker returns to Office - - - -	- 432
Attempts of Barnave and Mounier to coalesce - - - -	- 433
Project of Marat on Versailles - - - -	- 434
Banquet of the Gardes du Corps - - - -	- 435
March on Versailles - - - -	- 437
The Palace invaded, and the Queen narrowly escapes - - - -	- 439
Royal Family brought to Paris, October 6 - - - -	- 440
Lafayette's Resistance to the Anarchists - - - -	- 442

	Page
Constitutionalists refuse the Alliance of Mirabeau -	443
Who still strives secretly to support the King -	445
Church Property confiscated -	447
Judicial Functionaries made elective -	448
Civil Constitution of the Clergy -	449
Favras' Plot -	450
Oath to the Constitution taken by the King, July 14, 1790 -	452
Military Revolt at Nancy -	454
Death of Mirabeau -	455
Royal Family prevented from going to St. Cloud, April, 1791	456
Flight to Varennes, June -	459
The <i>Feuillants</i> and the <i>Jacobins</i> -	461
The Cordeliers -	462
Mob fired upon in the Champ de Mars, July -	463
Lafayette resigns, and Pétion elected Mayor instead of Bailly -	464
Secession of the Royalists from the Assembly, which dissolves	465

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Composition of the Legislative Assembly -	467
Its Pique against Louis -	469
Financial and Colonial Questions -	471
Narbonne Minister, December 1791 -	473
Brissot, the War Orator -	475
Robespierre for Peace -	476
League of Austria and Prussia against France, February 1792	477
Bertrand de Moleville -	478
The Minister Delessert sent Prisoner by the Assembly to Orleans	480
Dumouriez and Marie Antoinette -	481
Roland and the Girondists -	483
War declared against Austria, April 1792 ; Rout of the French	484
Popular <i>Fête</i> in favour of the condemned Swiss of Nancy -	485
Servan's Proposal of a Camp of <i>Fédérés</i> near Paris -	487
Dismissal of the Girondists, and Resignation of Dumouriez -	488
Insurrection of the 20th of June -	490
Tuileries surrounded -	492
King humiliated -	494
Lafayette comes to protest at the Bar of the Assembly -	495
But fails to do aught -	496
The <i>Fédérés</i> -	497
Massacres of Avignon -	498
Vergniaud's Accusation of Louis -	499
Reconciliation, or <i>Baiser Lamourette</i> -	500
Anniversary of the Federation -	502

	Page
Girondists turn towards the King - - -	504
Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto - - -	505
Preparation for the Insurrection of the 10th of August -	507
The Sections supersede the Municipality - - -	509
The Commander of the National Guard shot - - -	510
Tuileries attacked - - - - -	512
Louis and his Family fly from the Palace to the Assembly -	513
Slaughter of the Swiss soldiers - - - - -	515
The Women of the Palace saved - - - - -	517
The King suspended - - - - -	518
And confined with his Family in the Temple - - -	520
Indiscriminate Plunder - - - - -	521
Massacres of September - - - - -	524
At the Carmes and the Abbaye - - - - -	526
At the Bicêtre and Salpêtrière - - - - -	528
Massacre of the Prisoners of Orleans brought to Versailles -	530
Lafayette protests; whilst Dumouriez adheres - - -	532
Prussians repulsed at Valmy, September 1792 - - -	533

CHAPTER XL.

Opening of the Convention - - - - -	536
Girondists and Jacobins - - - - -	537
Former attack latter in the Couvention - - -	539
Marat - - - - -	540
Louvet denounces Robespierre - - - - -	541
The latter's Defence - - - - -	542
The Prussian Commander negotiates and retreats - - -	544
Motion for the trial of Louis the Sixteenth - - -	546
Its Commencement, November 1792 - - - - -	547
The Iron Safe - - - - -	548
The King at the Bar of the Convention - - - - -	549
Malesherbes and De Sèze his Counsel - - - - -	551
Girondists strive to obtain the Appeal to the People on the King's fate - - - - -	553
King condemned to Death - - - - -	554
His Execution, January 21, 1793 - - - - -	556
Rapine of the Jacobins in Belgium - - - - -	558
War declared against England, February 1 - - -	559
Dumouriez's Expedition to Holland - - - - -	562
Returns unsuccessful, and fights the Battle of Neerwinden ; French defeated - - - - -	564
Austrians re-occupy Belgium - - - - -	565
Panic in Paris; Convention decrees Revolutionary Tribunal -	567

	Page
First attempt at an insurrection to get rid of the Girondists fails	- 568
Committee of Public Safety appointed, March 30, 1793	- 570
Civil War in the Provinces	- 571
Rising of La Vendée, March	- 572
Gironde attacks Danton	- 573
Marat sent to prison, but is acquitted in triumph	- 575
Doctrine of Robespierre	- 576
The Convention moves to the Tuileries, May 10, 1793	- 578
The Committee of Twelve appointed	- 579
They arrest Hébert	- 580
Committee of Twelve annulled	- 582
And again restored	- 583
Insurrection of the 31st of May against the Girondists	- 584
Insurrection of the 2nd of June	- 586
Girondists expelled	- 588
The Mountain triumphant	- 590
Fugitive Girondists try resistance in Caen	- 593
They are obliged to fly	- 594
Resistance of Bordeaux overcome	- 595
But Lyons refuses to obey the Convention	- 597
Siege of Lyons	- 598
Failure of Vendéans to take Nantes	- 600
Republican garrison of Mayence sent to La Vendée	- 601
Vendéans defeated at Chollet ; cross the Loire	- 602
The Duke of Coburg	- 603
Attempt of Custine and Danton to negotiate with Austria	- 605
The new Constitution	- 607
Charlotte Corday assassinates Marat	- 608
Committee of Public Safety re-elected without Danton	- 609
The <i>Levée en masse</i>	- 610
Bread Riots	- 611
Trial of the Queen	- 613
Her Execution	- 614
Battle of Hondschoote	- 616
Battle of Wattignies	- 617
Trial of the Girondists	- 619
Their Execution, November 1, 1793	- 621
And that of the Duke of Orleans, Madame Roland, and Bailly	- 622
Carrier's <i>Noyades</i>	- 623
Recapture of Toulon by Bonaparte	- 624

CHAPTER XLI.

	Page
Robespierre and St. Just	- 629
Their views, with those of Hébert and Chaumette	- 632
Camille Desmoulins	- 633
Abjuration of Archbishop Gobel	- 634
The goddess Reason in Notre Dame	- 635
Deism of Robespierre	- 636
The Dantonists attack the Hébertists	- 638
Hébertists arrested	- 640
And executed	- 641
Dantonists arrested, March 30, 1794	- 642
Their execution	- 644
Numerous victims; Malesherbes, Lavoisier	- 646
Robespierre's <i>fêtes</i> the Supreme Being	- 647
And prepares to immolate more members of the Convention	- 649
Tallien feels his life in danger	- 650
<i>Émeute</i> in the Assembly of his intended victims against Robespierre	- 653
His Defence	- 654
St. Just's Report	- 655
Tallien denounces Robespierre	- 656
Robespierre and his friends arrested	- 657
Are liberated, and join the Commune	- 658
Barras marches against the Hôtel de Ville; Seizure and Execution of the Terrorists	- 659
Character of Robespierre	- 660
Battle of Fleurus	- 661
Prisons opened	- 662
Terrorism in Provinces put down	- 664
Jacobin Club closed	- 666
Female influence	- 667
More Bread Riots	- 668
Convention once more invaded by the mob, March	- 670
Attempt to rescue Collot and Billaud defeated by Pichegru	- 672
That General's Conquest of Holland	- 673
Expedition to Quiberon	- 674
Anarchy and Famine	- 676
The mob again at the Convention, first day of May, 1795	- 677
Murder of Feraud	- 677
Mob, masters of the Convention, fail in accomplishing a revolution; the Mountainers, who favoured them, arrested and executed	- 679
Faubourg St. Antoine disarmed	- 680

	Page
Large measure for disposing of National Property -	- 682
New Directorial Constitution - - - -	- 684
Death of the Dauphin - - - -	- 685
Royalist Reaction - - - -	- 686
Insurrection of the Sections, October 1795 -	- 687
Put down by Bonaparte - - - -	- 688
Tallien's Protest against Royalism - - - -	- 690
Close of the Convention, October 1795 - -	- 691

HISTORY OF FRANCE

CHAPTER XXXII.

FROM THE PEACE OF NIMEGUEN TO THAT OF RYSWICK.

1678—1697.

SELDOM has arisen a state of society so polished at the surface, so rotten at the core, as that which Louis the Fourteenth fashioned. His court and palace surpassed all others, not only in splendour, but in elegance and taste. The ministers and diplomatists of the early part of his reign were of first-rate ability, and his generals unequalled in the field. His divines were renowned for eloquence. Intellect gushed forth, as the water from his fountains, in every shape and in copious flow. From the serious drama to the infantine fable, genius stamped its mark upon all. And, if the higher regions of philosophy were not as successfully explored, it could not be the fault of the countrymen of Descartes, but of that theological yoke which bade men to grovel and to be blind under the plea, that the Divinity was best worshipped in ignorance.

CHAP. XXXII.

But all this splendour, whether of wealth, of taste,

VOL. IV.

B

176

CHAP.
XXXII.

or of intellect, was confined to the capital and to the court, which, as it grew more gorgeous in display, contrasted with the physical and mental poverty of the country. The provinces were sunk in misery and ignorance,* especially their productive classes, which were crushed, spoliated, reduced to want, or decimated by persecution. Colbert, indeed, was fully aware how peace developed and war dried up the resources of a nation. But the king listened to other counsellors, such as Louvois, who flattered his desire for the fame of a conqueror. And even Colbert himself was ignorant that liberty applied to trade and industry, as well as to action and thought, was so vivifying a principle, as to be able to compensate even for the expenditure and the ravages of war, were it largely granted.

Instead of liberty, reigned the mania of ordering everything, which brought France to resemble those Eastern countries in which the laws of caste prevail. Classes were parked off from each other with a rigidity for which in the East superstition was an excuse, but which in France seemed to spring from the mere itch of relementation. To the gentleman, all modes of gain or livelihood were forbidden, save the military or the priestly, no advancement being possible in either, except by successful servility. Civil functions were handed down in certain families, or transferred amongst them by purchase or by marriage. This kind of property in place had once given independence. But, in time, all came to feel themselves at the king's disposal and mercy, and blind obedience became a necessity of existence. The soul of the functionary, thus bowed down, gave way to the natural temptation of grasping riches at the expense of justice and of duty. The Protestants, systematically excluded from place by Louis, flung themselves into trade, of which they soon monopolised the wealth

* The Mémoires of Noailles attest of the Catholic clergy of the South, the utter ignorance and incapacity and the South was no exception.

and high positions,* when intolerant edicts came to extinguish their industry.† As for the peasant, the weight of the *taille*, which fell upon him exclusively, was so apportioned as to sweep away all his surplus, render economy useless, and, by consequence, capital unknown to agriculture. The cultivators of the soil, always in arrear, found their taxes enforced or remitted, as necessity or caprice arranged. And the French peasant thus resembled the Christian serf of Turkey, who can never aspire to more than the permission to live, and whose only security lies in possessing or in showing nothing to attract the robber or the taxman.‡

This poverty, this stagnation, these social fetters, which bound the arms of all—this impossibility of obeying any impulse, or pursuing any rational course of ambition, or of gain, or of knowledge—corrupted the morals as well as paralysed the energies of the race. The nobles, who could neither move nor marry, choose a calling or entertain an opinion, without the permission of the king, fell, from the lack of any other possible occupation, into those habits of promiscuous gallantry which are the extreme of social debasement. The king set the example of licentiousness, as frivolous as it was criminal, giving that time and interest to the squabbles of wretched women which might have been bestowed on the welfare of his people. Debasement of this kind

* Weiss, *Histoire des Réfugiés Protestants*, t. i. p. 32.

† The 18,000 silk-looms of Lyons were reduced to 4,000 in 1698. *Ibid.* The silk manufacture of Nismes exported to the value of two millions of livres. The Duc de Noailles' Memoirs recount how they were destroyed. Colbert proposed to open to the Protestants the trade to those countries, where, as in Japan, the Jesuits had rendered Catholicism suspected. But the king would not entertain the proposal.

‡ This is most fully exemplified in the book of Arthur Young, who says, that "the *taille* being apportioned to produce, the farmers all affect poverty; hence poor cattle, poor implements, poor everything, even with them that could afford better." See also Rousseau's account in his *Confessions*, of the farmer who hid his wine to escape the *aides*, his wheaten bread to avoid the *taille*, and who would be a lost man if suspected of not dying of hunger.

CHAP.
XXXII.

is a correlative to superstition, one extreme of imbecility naturally producing and leading to the other. The sensual monarch, who made of his court a seraglio, had need of a religion and of religious direction which would allow and compound for such sins. And the priesthood of the day did so, by sanctioning the king's breach of every Christian principle, whether of morality, justice, or mercy, on the condition of his supporting the pride, the monopoly, and authority of the Church.* It was Spinoza who said that Christianity itself contained the germ of every virtue, but when represented and interpreted by men who made a trade and an ambition of it, they introduced all the vices of those interests and passions which they represented.

True as this is of the French Church of that day, nevertheless, amongst its prelates were to be found men of the greatest eloquence, piety, and genius. No Christian saints were purer or more disinterested than Bossuet and Fénelon; Bourdaloue and Massillon, themselves the fruit of a sincere, fervent, religious revival, which, provoked by the Reformation, equalled all that it had produced in spiritual piety. The principle and the tendency of these Roman Catholic regenerations were, however, to revive the past rather than develop the present; and their aim was less to soften, humanise, and christianise society, than to allow it to wallow in crime; whilst there were erected on its borders monastic houses of refuge, to which the invalids of the court and of luxury were enticed, in order to spend the remainder of a life of voluptuousness in the only excitement possible to them, that of monastic devotion.

There was one priestly fraternity which saw plainly the error of seeking to drag back the 17th century to the fanaticism of the 14th. These were the Jesuits,

* "De tous les humains le plus intéressé, le plus orgueilleux, le plus dur, le plus attaché à la terre, un Louis XIV, par exemple, devoit

trouver des prêtres pour lui persuader en dépit de l'Evangile, qu'il étoit chrétien." Ernst Rénan.

who disseminated themselves through all classes and assemblages of men to live the current life, and direct without thwarting it. The laxity of morals, however, which they were thus obliged to permit, acted like a gangrene to corrupt themselves; and even their discipline and their learning resulted often in merely making accomplished assassins and dishonest confessors. Religion demands an atmosphere of pure and honest fervour to breathe in, which is not congenial or compatible with such laxity and dissimulation. The Jesuits, nevertheless, maintained their ground at court, where jealous and worldly statesmen ever dreaded and discouraged the enthusiasts of the opposite school, who proposed resuscitating the monkery of gone ages. The St. Dunstons and St. Bernards were folk that neither Richelieu nor Mazarin desired to see revived. St. Cyran, who promised to become one of those middle-age saints, was sent to prison by Richelieu. But his preaching had left disciples, who erected their cloister within a short distance of the domain wall of Versailles; who revived in their own favour, as Calvin had done, St. Augustine's theory of peculiar grace, and of individual election, and re-proclaimed that monasticity was the only Christianity.

This was Protestantism under another name. It was a reformation, at least of the monastic orders—springing too from a few individuals and an humble cloister, without the necessary stamp of Government initiation or high authority. As soon as the fame and aims of Port Royal became known, the Jesuits, supported by all the old monks and nuns, set up the same scream which the Churchmen had uttered against Luther and against Calvin; and the Arnauds were denounced as heretics, for repudiating the fashionable and indulgent practices of devotion and confession. Could the inmates of Port Royal have kept clear of dogma, it would have been difficult to crush them. But their theory of grace made salvation so

CHAP.
XXXII.

independent of the Church, that it was easy for the Jesuits to alarm it, as well as the Pope, and to obtain the condemnation of the Jansenists.

If Louis the Fourteenth set his face against a few monks and nuns, who merely strove to be more moral and spiritual than the traditional monkery of the time, it may be supposed that he looked upon the Huguenots with a more unfavorable eye. His mother, who showed more of the Spaniard in her later years, made it part of her religion to denounce heretics; and the young king, already jealous of the glory which Richelieu had acquired in crushing them, was quite prepared to emulate his act. But Mazarin had the fear of Cromwell before his eyes. And, in 1652, he caused the young king to issue an Edict confirmatory of that of Nantes. The Protestants committed a great fault in the previous century, that of accepting payment from the State. The first public anxieties of Louis the Fourteenth were for his revenues. When, therefore, the Catholic clergy always assembled to make him grants, and the Protestant clergy to demand and receive them, he could not but give preference to the former. In 1657, Colloquies were forbidden to the Protestants; and, two years later, the king, using the plea of economy, told the assembled pastors that this should be their last synod, and that they should henceforth be contented with provincial ones.*

The defeat and humiliation of the parliament and the princes in the Fronde had left the power of the Roman Catholic clergy paramount. They alone preserved the form of representative government, and of voting taxes; and their assemblies, in fixing the *don gratuit*, or contribution to the king, followed the constitutional habit of tacking to it certain demands. These were prayers that the king would diminish and check what they called the encroachments of the Protestants.

* Haag, France Protestante.

These outstepped, it was alleged, the limits of the Edict of Nantes.* Commissions were appointed to inquire, Huguenot as well as Catholic, but the latter were men of weight and note, whilst the Protestants were obscure individuals. The Council of State was the authority and tribunal with which rested decision, and it seized the opportunity of interdicting numbers of Protestant churches. Every severity that had cover of law was enforced against them. They were expelled from La Rochelle under the terms of the old capitulation,† and they were driven from Privas, where they had dwelt undisturbed for thirty years. At Cabrières, Merindol, and places dear to them from the martyrdom of their ancestors, their temples were destroyed.‡

Soon after, an Edict, borrowed from the Koran, was issued against those who relapsed. A fund having been provided for paying conversions, the unprincipled and the destitute took advantage of it to earn the price of conversion more than once. Exile, confiscation, and exposure after death, were decreed against *relaps*. Orders were given not only to exclude Protestants from all places of emolument, but even to prevent artisans from earning their bread, by denying them access to corporations or trades. If they engaged in trials, their adversaries could always object to them the crime of blasphemy—their very rite being considered such—and thus put them out of court. No Protestant notaries were allowed, and even no Protestant midwives.§ The Catholic clergy and magistrates were empowered to intrude upon the death-bed of any Huguenot, whose children might declare themselves Catholics at the age of fourteen, and claim sustenance without yielding obedience to their parents.

* The Jesuit Meynier (*De l'Exécution de l'Edit*) asserts that the Protestants had 200 more churches in Lower Languedoc and the Cévennes than they had in 1594.

† Ordonnance of Colbert de Terron, Oct. 1661. Bénéit, *Hist. de la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes*.

‡ Ibid.

§ Claude, *Plaintes*.

CHAP.
XXXII.

Later, this licence was extended to children of seven years old! The loose fish of Protestantism were soon caught in these nets. They were frightened, tortured, or purchased into the Catholic fold; and, at one time, it was hoped that all would come over.

Those who frequented the court were, indeed, unable to resist, total disgrace being evidently reserved for their obstinacy. Even Turenne recanted. Bossuet, the chief instrument in these conversions, drew up a statement of the Catholic Faith, certainly the least extreme and least offensive that could be devised. He insisted on the Real Presence, but was far less rigid on other disputed points, defending Purgatory and *Satisfactions* more as "*innocent*" than proven, and admitting the laity to participation in the cup. A celebrated disputation took place between him and Claude, the Protestant pastor, in the presence and at the requirement of Mademoiselle De Duras.* It turned upon the authority of the Church, which Bossuet asserted always to have existed, and to exist as an infallible guide. "No doubt," replied Claude, "as the Synagogue in the days of Christ. That was the visible Church of the time. Which was most right, the Synagogue and Church which condemned Christ, or the one or two individuals present who, from their private judgment, believed on him?" Bossuet admitted that he was posed by the question. Claude, too, objected that the Greek Church was as visible and had as good a tradition as the Roman. But Bossuet based his arguments more on the necessity and expediency of having a Church which might sanction the Scriptures and their interpretation, than upon any direct or absolute proof of its authority. It is evident, that if Mademoiselle De Duras embraced Catholicism in consequence of such a dispute, she was well determined beforehand.

The peculiarity of Bossuet was to consider politics

* There are accounts of it both by Claude and Bossuet.

and religion as one, and to fall into the same error as the English fanatics, in considering Jewish law and history as the great source of both. Never was so uncompromising a holder of Divine Right. The king was appointed by Heaven and inspired by God; to resist him was impious, whilst for him to spare heretics and schismatics was a crime. In these sentiments and tenets, Bossuet, despite his eloquence, was hundreds of years behind his age, whilst Claude and Jurieu were far in advance of theirs. They maintained the liberty of man, his right of free judgment, and the sovereignty of the people. The latter anticipated much of what has turned up as new in our day; that the Christian religion did not come into the world ready made and fully developed, but was framed piecemeal, and fresh truths discovered as the world became sufficiently enlightened to receive them.

But the gentler modes and hopes of conversion were in time abandoned, and the king determined to employ violence, that is, recur to the sword and the executioner to root out the religionists. It forms a traditional state maxim amongst the Turks, to watch and guard against that period of a sultan's life in which the pleasures of the senses begin to pall, when the seraglio becomes irksome to him, and when his highness is obliged to look out for fresh excitement and new passions. It has been observed that, at this critical period, the mighty potentate is apt to fall into excess of devotion, and at the same time to substitute the indulgence of bigotry and cruelty for that of sensual habits. This requires the spilling of blood. The ordaining of torture offers, it seems, the only pastime which can replace the love of women; and the change in the monarch's life and habits is there generally from the sensual to the sanguinary.

The period which we have reached in this history was precisely that which announced in Louis the Fourteenth's life his disgust of womanhood. To the disinterested love

CHAP.
XXXII.

of La Vallière had succeeded the ambitious attachment of Montespan. Without stopping to enumerate several more ephemeral connexions, the young and beautiful Mademoiselle De Fontanges had fascinated Louis in 1679. Her death (in 1681), in consequence of their connexion, filled Louis with compunction and remorse, whilst his years made him begin to view such multiplied sins with disgust. The bishops who filled the monarch's court, and even the confessor, who had the entrance of his closet, never dared to offer any obstruction to the current of the king's passions whilst it rolled impetuous. But when Louis himself showed misgivings, they were adroit enough to take advantage of them. When he wearied of La Vallière, they gratified him by inducing her to abandon the court for the cloister. When Montespan's attractions began to fade, and Louis showed symptoms of weariness, Bossuet was ready to improve the occasion. At one time he was too hasty, and his interference produced a relapse and a renewal of connexion. Bossuet looked on in silence. He had no wish to incur disgrace, or draw upon himself court malevolence. At last Louis himself became weary of beauty and voluptuousness, and sought in a woman the pastime of rational conversation. The grand-daughter of the historian D'Aubigné, and widow of the comic writer Scarron, brought to court, and entrusted with the care and bringing-up of the king's illegitimate children by Montespan, pleased the monarch not only by her entertaining converse, but by the adroit devotion she knew how to mingle with it. Louis found pleasure in the company of Madame de Maintenon, and he subsequently made the courtly and scrupulous dame his wife by a private marriage.

This *conversion* or change in the life of Louis not only rendered him more harsh and cruel, according to the theory of Turkish statesmen, but also opened his ear to the suggestions of wily churchmen and confes-

sors, who declared that the best expiation for the early sins of the voluptuary would be the eradication, at any cost, of heresy and heretics. But whilst it cannot be denied that the king was thus goaded to harshness, an Englishman must not overlook the great provocation to cruelty and intolerance that came from his own country. Its history, unfortunately, shows that intolerance is not the exclusive crime of despots, and that a people may be quite as unjust, as frenzied, and as sanguinary as a tyrant. The year 1678 was marked by the plot and depositions of Titus Oates. Catholic peers were soon excluded from the English parliament, and a Catholic successor from the throne. Catholic priests were sent to the scaffold. An archbishop was murdered, another executed, and a venerable peer of parliament was beheaded on Tower Hill. However mingled this cruel fanaticism was with political motives and troubles—stirred too by the French envoy Barillon and his active corruption—still, Catholicism was mainly the crime that drew down vengeance and persecution in England. The clergy in France but too naturally called for reprisals;* and Louis, alarmed by a course of events which was likely to place England in hostility to him, as well as indignant at the proscription of his religion, was too prone to give full licence to a spirit of vindictiveness so fiercely provoked.

In 1679 a severe edict was issued against *relaps*. The Protestant churches which received them were to be destroyed, and their pastors visited with exile and confiscation. As it was impossible to prevent *relaps*, as they were called, from at times re-entering the Protestant temples, these soon fell under the arbitrary sentence.† The mixed tribunals established by the Nantes Edict

* At the assembly of the clergy in 1680, its orator drew a vivid comparison between the mansuetude of Louis and the fury of Babylon, as styled England. "A people,"

said he, "never levels the throne till it has upset the altar!"

† The Catholic priests often kept the conversion of the Huguenot a secret from his brethren, until he

CHAP.
XXXII.

were abrogated about this time. This, indeed, was a necessary prelude to such acts of spoliation as the confiscation of the funds for Protestant hospitals and poor, or the permission to debtors to defy their creditors by declaring themselves converted. At the same time, the Catholic mob of several towns, particularly those of the Loire, were incited to repeat their old barbarities. They broke open the temples, burnt seats and books, and, under pretext of putting a stop to these disorders, the Protestant pastors were banished by the authorities. But if the churchmen exulted, Colbert deplored the expatriation of the educated and industrious class. The complaints which escaped him were construed as sympathy for heresy, and he was obliged to dismiss the Protestants from all employ in the finances and in seaports, much as he esteemed their probity and talent.*

Colbert made a vain struggle against bigotry; yet, if he failed to stop the persecution of the Protestants, he at least succeeded in dealing a blow to the ultramontane clergy and their pretensions. As the king had nullified the estates and tax-voting independence of the southern provinces, so he also subjected them to the *régale*, from which they had hitherto been exempt. This was the enjoyment by the crown of the revenues and patronage of a see in the interval of its vacancy. The Pope claimed what his predecessors had enjoyed, and he found two French prelates, the Bishops of Pamiers and Aleth, to uphold his right. The king sequestered their revenues, and the Pope menaced to launch once more the thunders of Rome against the King of France. The dispute was embittered by another quarrel, the king's appointing an abess of Charonne, where that superior had hitherto been elected.

appeared in their temple. Of course, these had no cause to exclude him, yet their not doing so was frequently

the pretext for destroying the temple. Claude, *Plaintes des Protestants*.

* Mémoires de Foucault.

The papal pretension to interfere, not only with the king's authority but his revenue, gave Colbert the right and the opportunity to recommend the summoning of an assembly of prelates, which should declare the king's authority independent of the Pope, at least in temporal matters. Bossuet, dreading a schism, bowed to the royal will, and through his obsequiousness obtained the management of the assembly and the drawing-up of its resolutions (1682). These were four in number, and were a declaration of the independence of the Gallican Church. But Bossuet worded them so as to satisfy the king, without altogether breaking with Rome, and thus left the door open for a future reconciliation between the pontiff and the modern Charlemagne.*

Colbert was not so successful in his intervention for the Protestants. Louis admitted the pernicious effects of losing their property with their persons; but, instead of seeking to retain them by justice, he confiscated the estates of those who fled, and punished unsuccessful attempts at flight by the galleys.† Contract and sale at the time of departure were declared null. And whilst, on the one hand, every zeal was shown and means taken to light up the pile in which the Protestants were to be consumed, kindred vigilance and atrocity were employed to prevent them escaping from the *auto-da-fe*.

But persecution was not perfect until it pursued the Huguenots to their homes. This was done, and first tried in Poitou by an invention of Louvois, who ordered regiments of dragoons to be sent, and these soldiers to be quartered by twenties at first, but sometimes by the hundred, upon the houses of the religionists. The instructions to the soldiers were to use every means of intimidation. They entered a Huguenot's house with swords drawn, as if it were just captured

* Journal de l'Abbé le Dieu.

† Anciennes Lois Françaises. Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes.

CHAP.
XXXII.

from an enemy, crying out, "Kill! kill!"* Installed in a house, they soon consumed its provisions and exhausted the resources of the owner. A superior officer levied fifteen francs per day, a lieutenant nine francs, a soldier three francs, and a sutler one and a half.† As soon as money was not forthcoming, the soldiers called in the Catholic inhabitants, and sold to them the furniture of the house at any price. In addition to this destruction and gutting of houses, the dragoons forced the cross, tied on the end of their musquets, into the mouths of their victims, or beat them with it over the head; whilst others were smoked and half-roasted over fires. The females were treated with still more indignity—stripped, flogged, and frequently brutalised by the soldiers; the children were, of course, *converted* and carried off; whilst, if the unfortunate sufferers fled from these persecutions, they were speedily arrested and sent for punishment to the galleys.

These *dragonnades*, as they were called, first applied to Poitou by Louvois and his follower, Marillac, in 1681, produced such a universal flight (Benoit says of 3,000 families), that Colbert represented their atrocity and perniciousness to the king. Orders were issued to check them. The Roman Catholic clergy, however, soon returned to the charge, and, as a kind of counter-balance to the anti-Papal declaration of 1682, they demanded and obtained leave to summon the Protestants to recant and join a Church that showed itself so independent of Rome. "If they did not do so, they should be visited by punishments to which their previous sufferings were a trifle."‡

The promise was kept. Colbert's influence was on the decline, and the following year the great minister expired, in some measure, of disgust at seeing his advice neglected and his policy forsaken. To satisfy

* Claude, *Plaintes des Protestants*.

† *Journal de Jean Migoult*.

‡ *Avertissement Pastoral*.

the demands of the Catholic clergy by a striking act of intolerance and injustice, it was resolved to deprive Montpellier, as the bulwark of Protestantism, of its pastors, and destroy its temples. The 8,000 Huguenot inhabitants might have pleaded not only the Edict of Nantes, but the conditions of their last surrender; but Louis kept no faith with heretics, and the Duc de Noailles had orders to crush them. His Memoirs state how the duke abhorred this severity, but the Catholic clergy of Languedoc were so ignorant, dissolute, and passionate, that these violent modes of conversion or persecution could alone satisfy them.* The church of Montpellier was taken from the Protestants and given to the Catholics in December, 1682.

These violent acts were soon repeated in other provinces. The most celebrated Protestant churches after that of Montpellier, those of Montauban and of Nismes, were threatened in the same way. Government seemed to take it for granted that all spirit was extinct amongst the Huguenots, and that they would suffer any indignity. Their pastors deemed it necessary, in consequence, to undeceive their persecutors, and prove to the world that their faith in their religion was not spent. In the summer of 1683, the pastors met, and the resolve they adopted again recalls the similitude of the burning pile. Everywhere the Protestants had apparently submitted to the destruction of their churches, the silence of their pastors, and the forcible conversion or ruin of so many of their members by the rapacity and cruelty of the soldiers. But just at the moment that their spirits seemed stifled by the flame of persecution, of a sudden there started up in the provinces of the South, where the religion was cherished by the peasant race, numbers of them who rose like spectres from the heap of dead. An agree-

* Even the arch-persecutor obstacle to conversion in Poitou was Foucault declares "that the greatest the scandalous lives of the curés."

CHAP.
XXXII.

ment to this effect passed amongst the faithful; and in one day, after a serious and solemn fast, thousands of Huguenots reappeared amidst the ruins of their demolished churches, or within the precincts of those which had been closed and desecrated, to pour forth the plaintive psalm of their peculiar worship. The concourse was swelled by those who had been forced to abjure, and who now came forward to atone for their weakness in martyrdom.

The people of Dauphiné had already risen, and the Huguenots of Vivarais assembled in arms at Chalencçon. Alarm seized the commanders in the former province, and the offer of an amnesty was made, with fair promises, to disarm the insurrection. The proffer had its effect; and the Vivarais, learning the submission of the Dauphinois, promised to yield on the same terms. The amnesty was extended to them; but counter-orders from the court soon arrived, censuring and forbidding mercy. The terms of the amnesty were withdrawn, and resistance again revived. St. Rhue, one of the most ferocious leaders of the *dragonnades*, called from his cruelty the *nouvel apôtre*, was sent against them. It was only after a hand-to-hand combat that the peasants were beaten and dispersed. Hangings, burnings, destruction of churches and villages, followed. The Vivarais was laid waste, and the Duc de Noailles relates how the "wretches went to execution with the constancy of martyrs, demanding death, and scorning to ask pardon of the king." The pastor, Homel, was broken on the wheel after having been put to the torture. This, indeed, became the fate of all Protestant ecclesiastics captured, even in regions where no insurrection had taken place.*

Whilst such were the atrocities committed under the rule of Noailles and D'Aguesseau, it may be conceived what was the cruelty of others. A ruffian, named Foucault, who has left a memoir of his own deeds, was

* Rulhières.

sent Intendant to Béarn. He revived there the horrors of Louvois' dragonnades, closed all the churches save five, of which he had banished the pastors, and thus depriving the Huguenots of consolation and hope, he drove them to consent to conform *en masse* to the Catholic creed. This example incited the Court to apply it to other provinces; and so it was without mercy. Foucault had himself destroyed the Protestant temple of Montauban, and exiled its pastors. In 1685 this eminently Protestant population recanted, and a great many other towns followed the example, leaving a few records of noble resistance. Some six of the most illustrious nobles of Montauban, summoned to the presence of the Intendant, were laid prostrate by violence, forced absolution given to them, and then, as they persisted in remaining Protestant, they were prosecuted as relapse, and some of their number sent to the galleys.* The Duke of Rohan, the only French subject, since Turenne's recantation, of princely birth, became the especial object of royal torture. He was imprisoned, mulcted, threatened, his children taken from him, police agents placed in his house, nay, in his bedroom, to prevent communication with his wife. An Austrian Emperor of our day has been gibbeted for the mean cruelty of personally superintending the privations and punishments inflicted on his prisoners. He was anticipated by Louis the Fourteenth's treatment of the Duc de Rohan.† The monarch had in his employ a naval hero, Duquesne, who about this time returned victorious from Messina

* Treatment similar to this was the behaviour of the priests sometimes to the nouveaux convertis, attending their sickbed or deathbed, and putting the holy wafer forcibly into their mouths. If the patient spat it out it was sacrilege. Jurieu tells the story of an old

Huguenot who had thus spat out the wafer. He recovered, and was burned for the sacrilege, forced upon him, by the clergy at Nerac. *Lettres Pastorales*.

† Correspondance Administrative sous Louis XIV. t. 4.

CHAP.
XXXII.

after having overcome De Ruyter. Louis pressed his conversion. 'During sixty years of service,' replied the veteran, 'I have given to Cæsar all that Cæsar could require of me. You must allow me to give the rest to God!'

At last, when all the ingenuity of both chicane and cruelty was exhausted, appeared the final edict, in October 1685, formally revoking that of Nantes. The Chancellor Letellier, the enemy of Colbert and the father of Louvois, signed it on his deathbed at Chaville, exclaiming, 'Now let thy servant depart in peace!' Peace indeed, the peace of the executioner, amid the agonies and the blood of his victims. The new edict, revoking that of Nantes, forbade Protestant worship, and ordered its remaining temples to be destroyed; the religionists were forbidden to assemble; whoever opened his house to them suffered confiscation of his property; schools were to be closed; the children of Protestants to be forcibly baptized by Catholic priests; Protestant pastors were to quit the kingdom in fifteen days; Protestant emigrants were allowed to return and recover their property, they and their brethren being permitted by the eleventh article to remain and enjoy it without trouble or hindrance, provided they refrained from public worship.

By Louis's live instruments of torture the edict was received with mortification. Foucault wrote to the minister, that the last clause would suspend terror, and put a stop to all future conversions. Even the Duc de Noailles remonstrated and asked, was it possible that the king forbade to employ dragoons for the future to bend the wills of stubborn heretics? Such remonstrances were more listened to than justice. The edict was dated October 22nd. On November 8th, Louvois wrote to Foucault to torture the stubborn Protestants more

* Marshal Schomberg, to avoid similar menaces, quitted France, and finally took service with the Prince of Orange.

fiercely than ever, by quartering soldiers upon them. Thus, ere the writing of the promise was dry, it was recalled, the dragonnades recommenced, and the religionists had no prospect left but to try to escape with their exiled pastors.

Then took place their great Exodus. Every Protestant that had the means, employed them for that purpose. The flocks followed their ministers as far as they were able; and the Court which had issued the Revocation on the promise of the zealots, that it would accomplish the conversion of the remaining Huguenots, was alarmed to learn their universal flight. Decree after decree was issued to stop it. The certainty of being made a galley slave, if caught, did not deter evasion. Heavy fines and corporal punishment were imposed on those proved to have aided the flight of others. The inhabitants of the seashore district emigrated, almost all, to England or to Holland,—the rich abandoning land and houses, artisans and sailors* bringing away precious experience and skill. The Protestants of the Northern provinces contrived to get across the frontier in large numbers. Women, even the most delicate, started on foot, to make their way by night, and in all disguises, out of the accursed land. Money often made guards and troops relent; but thousands were captured, and, after unspeakable misery, those who did not sink under their sufferings were consigned to the galleys. At Toulon and Marseilles, chained to the benches, without roof, or bed, or even the protection of a cell, were to be found 12,000 Huguenots, many of them of the first rank, suffering a martyrdom worse than death, merely because they took a different view of Christianity

* Vauban calculates the emigration of 9000 sailors and 2000 soldiers, and the capital transported valued at 60 millions of livres. Jurieu's opinion is, that of a mil-

lion of Huguenots, 300,000 escaped in the last fifteen years of the century. Hist. des Refugiés Protestants.

CHAP.
XXXII.

from a dissolute king, and from his bigot and time-serving churchmen.* The iniquity brought its own punishment, the ruin of the industry, and the subtraction of the little capital the country possessed, leaving the provinces incapable of paying their several quota of revenue. The manufacturers of silks, of stuffs, of paper, and of hats, of which in many markets the French had the monopoly, were transferred to other countries, to England or to Prussia.†

The intellectual refugees crowded to Holland, which opened a press in their own language to these formidable exiles. The minister, Claude, there published his eloquent *Plaintes*; Jurieu his terrible *Lettres Pastorales*, in which are depicted all the horrors of the French persecution, and in which Protestantism has perhaps found its most ample and conclusive defence. No where had Catholic cruelty been more fierce than in frontier towns, such as Metz‡ and Sedan. Bayle was professor in the Protestant university of the latter town, and was of course expelled. He was at the same time exasperated by the fate of his brother, a Protestant pastor, who perished of harsh treatment in the prison of Bordeaux, his only crime being his religion. Bayle did not confine his efforts, like Jurieu or Claude, to denunciation of Catholicism. He attacked religion altogether as guilty of its crimes, and on the foundation of Montaigne erected what might be called a church of doubt and infidelity, which took the place of Protestantism as the antagonist of the Papal religion, and which, after a century's combat, succeeded in laying its cruel enemy prostrate.§

It is impossible, indeed, not to connect the great revo-

* Jurieu mentions three nobles of the rank of marquis, at the galleys—Du Bordage, Rochegude and Langé. M. de Lezan was sent there for having attended a *prêche*. See Hist. de l'Edit. Rulhières, &c.

† D'Avaux, Négotiations.

‡ Persécution de l'Eglise de Metz, par Olry.

§ Weiss reminds us that Condillac and Mably were the grandsons of a gentleman of Dauphiné, converted by the soldiers of St. Rue or St. Ives. Hist. des Refugiés Protestants.

lution of 1789, and its sweeping away of the noble and clerical castes, with the catastrophe of a hundred years previous, in which the clergy and noblesse crushed the Protestant middle class of France with far greater cruelty and equal injustice. The same laws, in fact, which had been enacted and enforced in 1685, and the following year, the law of *suspects*, the penalties attached to emigration, with the scaffold and spoliation which awaited those who remained, are common to both epochs. But the anterior reign of terror was the most cruel since the Jacobins at least did not employ torture. They did not break on the wheel or burn alive; nor were the gentry suspected of royalism worse treated in 1793 than the *nouveaux convertis*, or the Protestants, who had submitted to forced conversion, were treated in 1690. Although these unfortunate men consented to attend the Catholic services, they avoided the communion, refused Catholic baptism, or the last rites of the dead. The attempts of the priests, whom the Duc de Noailles denotes as universally ignorant and dissolute, to enforce these rites, led to the most barbarous and revolting cruelties.* The royal officers filled the prisons with them and sent many to the galleys, the scaffold, and the stake. But still the Protestants remained a passive, united, and formidable body,† which it was found impossible to crush or to annihilate, and which, consequently, it was found necessary to conciliate. At one time their property was restored, at others, persecution recommenced. But amidst these alternations of cruelty and clemency, the religionists still abided, so as, after the lapse of now nearly two centuries, to show the same proportion in number to the Roman Catholics which they had done at the commencement of the persecution. Forming about one-twentieth of the population of France towards the end of the 17th century,

* Noailles, Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon.

† Weiss. Coquerel. Eglises du Désert.

CHAP.
XXXII.

they preserve the same proportion now. Of such avail were the intolerance and cruelty of Louis the Fourteenth.*

Whilst wrung with compassion for all this misery, and with resentment against the monarch who ordered it; some compensation is found in the reflection, that Louis the Fourteenth was digging the grave of his own supremacy and glory by his extravagant bigotry. Not only was he flinging away the wealth, the industry, and resources of his kingdom, and exiling its soldiers and its sailors,† but he was compelling the Protestant Powers of the North to re-knit their league against him, his arrogance and greed forcing even Catholic courts to join in a general system of defence. The same contempt for every right, and for the most solemn engagements of his crown, which characterised his persecution of the Protestants, marked also his treatment of Foreign Powers. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the cancelling the only equitable clause of that act fifteen days after it was issued, has been told. His observance of the Treaty of Nimeguen was just the same. To prove this requires merely to adduce the king's own words. "The Peace," writes he, "was scarcely concluded at Nimeguen, when the king issued, on the 23rd of October, 1679, an *arrêt* of the Council of State adjoining to the Parlement of Metz, a royal chamber, called that of *Réunion*, for the purpose of subjecting all vassals in the newly acquired territories to the crown of France. This chamber issued a number of *arrêts* which extended the king's sovereignty, *under pretext* of dependence on the three bishoprics, over a number of towns, lordships, and fiefs in Lorraine, Luxemburg, and the neighbouring provinces of the empire. The duchies of Waldeck and the Deux Ponts were thus claimed, as

* Weiss.

† Louis sent Bonrepaux to London to obtain the extradition of

fugitive Huguenot sailors. But this not even James could grant. Memoirs of Marquis de Sourches.

well as the principalities of Saarbruck and Saarlouis. These reunions," added Louis, "procured for the king more considerable acquisitions than he could have hoped from war."*

CHAP.
XXXII.

In the following year, 1680, the Parlement of Besançon awarded the king the county of Montbéliard, held by the Duke of Wurtemberg; and a court, installed at Brisach, extended to the full the king's hitherto limited authority over the towns of Alsace. This threatened Strasburg, considered an Imperial city, whilst the encroachments of the Metz chamber claimed no less than the province of Luxemburg. At the same time a French division of cavalry occupied the county of Chiny† in Luxemburg, as appertaining to the bishopric of Metz; whilst the king's law officers sent to the Spanish commander their master's claim upon Alost, Grammont, Ninove, Lessines, and what was called the old town of Ghent. Luxemburg was soon blockaded.

Such interminable pretensions provoked the Germans and alarmed the Dutch, reluctant as both were to recommence hostilities with France. A little moderation on his part would indeed have quieted the latter, amongst whom the De Witt party had revived. But Colbert could not refrain from putting restrictions on their trade; he forbade the import of their herrings and the sale of their cloth;‡ and Louis had embarked in his crusade against Protestantism, not sparing even the Dutch residents of Bordeaux and in other ports. These measures enabled the Prince of Orange, as the enemy of France, to recover the chief influence in Holland. The populace was with him already; the commercial class and all sincere Protestants were driven likewise to look to his support. When William told them that the French king took Protestant children of seven years of age from their parents, and would not even permit Pro-

* Œuvres de Louis XIV.

† D'Avaux, Négotiations.

‡ Anciennes Lois Françaises.

CHAP.
XXXII.

testant midwives, the old horror of French intolerance revived. But when they heard that he claimed, and was about to occupy, the county of Chiny, the French party in Holland was obliged to hide itself, and D'Avaux, the able French ambassador, found all his labour to be in vain.

On the first tidings of Louis's pretension to claim so many German cities and districts as dependencies, the Emperor Leopold sent Count Mansfeld to expostulate. As he met with no satisfaction, the German monarch appealed to the Diet, and in May, 1681, demanded the levy of 40,000 men. France met this with the proposal of a congress at Frankfort. It was merely to amuse the Germans; for, whilst the French deferred to negotiate, under one pretext or another, their troops gathered around Strasburg, in September, and proceeded to reduce it. They had already won the chief authorities. The Bishop Furstenberg was in their interest; and 300,000 dollars had been furnished to bribe the principal magistrates. Of these the Protestant were assured of the maintenance of their worship, the others of their immunities and privileges.* On the other hand the town had no means of resistance. It had refused an Imperial garrison, and even dismissed the Swiss, which had defended it during the war. Early in October, 1681, the French made their entrance into the city, and handed the cathedral over to Catholic worship.†

On the same day in which Strasburg fell, the banner of the king floated over Casale, purchased from the Duke of Mantua. The ambition of the French was ubiquitous; equally so was the reaction against him. On learning the capture of Strasburg, William of Orange,

* One of these immunities was exemption from royal taxation. Yet in 1687 the king imposed the tax of 50 *deniers* on the property of all the inhabitants. *Gaz. d'Hollande.*

† See *Recueil des Lettres pour l'Histoire Militaire de Louis XIV.* The close of t. iv. contains the official correspondence relative to the surrender of Strasburg.

the ever vigilant, concluded with Sweden a treaty to enforce the territorial conditions of the Treaty of Westphalia. Sweden had been directly and wantonly aggrieved by Louis's seizure of the duchy of Deux Ponts, which belonged to it. The Emperor and Spain joined the league in January and May of 1682.*

CHAP.
XXXII.

Louis relied upon the Turks and the Hungarians to neutralise the efforts of the Emperor. But as his arrogance had raised against his own ambition a powerful enemy in William, Prince of Orange, it created an equally formidable champion to thwart his views in the East of Europe. This was Sobieski, King of Poland. His queen was a French woman, a Bethune,† and might easily have been won to the French alliance. But Louis scorned the barbarian, whilst Leopold had the address to secure his alliance. And thus, whilst the allies of France, the Mohammedan Grand Vizier and the Protestant Tekeli, menaced Austria with destruction and Vienna with capture, Sobieski came to the rescue, routed their armies, saved Vienna, and enabled the Emperor, not only to drive back the Ottoman, but to contribute to the defence of Germany against the ambitious projects of the French king.

Louis visited his conquests on the Rhine in 1683, and watched from thence the progress of the Turkish arms. Had they succeeded in destroying the power of Austria, the French would, in all probability, have passed the Rhine to take advantage of it, and either partitioned the empire or claimed its crown for the Dauphin.‡ But, on the news of Sobieski's victory, Louis turned his arms against the enemy that could not resist him, taking possession of the Spanish fortresses of Courtray and Dixmunde. He soon after signified his readiness to exchange them for Luxemburg. This ought to have

* D'Avaux.

† Mémoires de St. Simon.

‡ Nouveaux Intérêts des Princes,

with the Answer of Leibnitz. His.
Œuvres, t. 3.

CHAP.
XXXII.

alarmed the Dutch, but, however suspicious of the French, they still dreaded the extreme of war, and loudly censured the Prince of Orange for sending some troops without warrant to the aid of the Spaniards. The Prince's brother, Louis of Nassau, supported the Amsterdammers in their opposition to William, and the French envoy D'Avaux, commanding the votes of Gröningen and Friesland, neutralised all the efforts of the Prince of Orange.* Louis was thus enabled to push hostilities at the commencement of 1684. Oudenarde suffered a bombardment, and in April Luxemburg was invested, and in the first days of June surrendered to the batteries of Vauban. Alarmed at this speedy triumph, the Amsterdammers forced Orange to desist from provocation.† The Emperor, absorbed in another Hungarian campaign, saw nothing for it but peace. And thus, in August, 1684, was concluded the truce for twenty years, called that of Ratisbon, between France, the Emperor, and Spain. The latter surrendered the sovereignty over Luxemburg, Beaumont, Bovines and Chiny, Louis promising to claim or effect no more *réunions* or annexations during the period of the truce.‡

Such a promise, by such a sovereign, was of little worth or duration; and the spring of the following year offered him the opportunity of claiming a portion of the Palatinate on the extinction of its reigning branch. But ere this claim re-awakened the fears of Dutch and Germans, and led to a resuscitation of their defensive alliance against France, a crowd of events occurred. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was one, with all

* The sentiments of the Prince of Orange at this time are recorded in his answers to the Brandenburg envoy, Fuchs, who preached peace, and to the Pensioner Fagel, who confessed fear. To the first he said that Luxemburg was the link between Holland and Northern Germany.

With it the French would get the three ecclesiastic electorates of the Rhine. It was an advance to the lordship of Europe, of which, rather than undergo the thralldom, 'twere better to die in arms. Puffendorf.

† D'Avaux.

‡ Dumont, Corps Dip. t. 7.

the hostility and passion which it caused. The death of Charles the Second and the succession of James was another. They were followed by the attempts of Monmouth and Argyle to dethrone James, and preserve the Protestant succession, of which attempts the failure served to encourage the aims of Louis in extending Catholic and French supremacy. Fortune in these years shed its last gleam upon Louis the Fourteenth, and never was it more gorgeous. The conquest of Luxemburg and Strasburg completed the measure of his influence north and south. England was his vassal; Spain at his feet. It would have been difficult in such a situation to avoid giving proofs of arrogance. Having received offence from Genoa, Louis bombarded the capital, and compelled its Doge to come to Versailles to ask pardon. Algiers with more justice experienced from him similar humiliation. Louis the Fourteenth might flatter himself with the future empire of the sea, and with the extension of his transmarine possessions, as well as with his European supremacy. To his great colony of Canada, the impulse of Colbert had joined that of Louisiana, so that the French king was lord of the two great rivers of North America, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, enclosing the English colonies within their circuit by a chain of fortified posts. In the East, Colbert's company was not so successful. It failed to make anything of Madagascar or Ceylon. Still about this time an embassy from Siam, where a French adventurer had become minister, came with an offer of Bankok and other ports—an offer that proved as illusory as the empire of Madagascar. Strange that French adventure towards the close of the 17th century should have raved and have attempted almost the same acquisitions which attract it now towards the close of the 19th.

Surrounded by so many causes of exultation and of pride, Louis, whilst giving no respite to his ambition, thought it beneath him to conciliate friend or ally; his

CHAP.
XXXII.

arrogance and pretension leading him to disgust and alienate even his most staunch adherents. His claim upon the Palatinate succession, notwithstanding the truce of Ratisbon, had roused the German Powers once more to sign a new defensive league, that of Augsburg (in July, 1686). This time all Germany joined in it; the great Elector of Brandenburg tacitly, notwithstanding his treaties with France. Even the Elector of Bavaria, whose sister had espoused the Dauphin, and to whom Villars, on behalf of Louis, made the most tempting offers, turned against France, and consented to take the command of the army destined to combat it.*

About the same time, the king inflicted an outrage on the Pope. Innocent the Eleventh, Odescalchi, had been mortified by the French king's rudeness and greed, in the affair of the *Regale*, and still more by the vengeance taken of his resistance, by the Declaration, in 1682, of the right and independence of the Gallican Church. Since that epoch he had refused to consecrate any French bishops, leaving the kingdom under a kind of interdict. The Pope's anxieties and interest were awakened almost exclusively in behalf of the Emperor, to whom he sent large sums to aid him in repelling the Turks from Christendom. This was indirect censure of Louis, the ally of the infidel. And when, in 1686, the Pope desired to cleanse Rome of brigands, and for this purpose resolved to annul the right of sanctuary, which existed in the streets round the ambassadorial palaces, the French alone of all the powers resisted. Nay, Louis sent the Marquis de Lavandière to Rome with an armed suite to uphold the old claim, and defy

* The Emperor and the King of Spain did everything to gain the Elector of Bavaria, whose electress was a Spanish princess. The King of Spain, in 1685, offered to them the sovereignty of Flanders, which so angered Louis, that he threatened

forthwith an invasion of Navarre. But what won the Elector of Bavaria was the command which the Emperor gave him of that army which took Belgrade. Memoirs of Souches and of Villars.

his Holiness. He also seized Avignon. When therefore, in the following year, Louis had need of the Pope's favour, he naturally found it bestowed upon his enemies. His claim upon certain portions of the Palatinate* was accompanied and completed by a design to raise his pensioner, Furstenburg,† Bishop of Strasburg, to be Archbishop of Cologne. The prelacy had formed a large principality in the hands of a member of the House of Bavaria, being held in conjunction with those of Liege, Munster, and Hildesheim. To transfer this to one of his dependents, whilst Louis at the same time held Luxemburg by its capital, and Treves by the new fortress of Mont Louis, the French also fortifying Landen, would, as the Prince of Orange feared, make France complete mistress of the Rhine. Hence the eagerness of Louis to secure the prize to Furstenburg. The prelate in possession was in debt some half million of crowns to Louis, who promised to forgive the debt if he would procure the election of Furstenburg as his coadjutor. This was accordingly effected‡ in 1687, and had the Pope's investiture followed, and crowned the election, Furstenburg would have succeeded at once to the prelacy on the death of its occupant in June, 1688.§ The investiture withheld necessitated a new election. This was accompanied by many formalities. A candidate already invested with other church dignities, required two-thirds of the chapter to vote for him, in order to be elected. The Pope might dispense with this, which his Holiness did with respect to Prince Clement, of Bavaria, who had been set up by the German Powers in opposition to the French nominee. It

* The counties of Sponnen, Lautern, Simmer, and Germesheim—the best part of what belonged to the empire beyond the Rhine, says Leibnitz.

† Dangeau, March 1687, says, the King gave the Cardinal of Furs-

tenburg ten years of his pension of 10,000 crowns in order that he might pay his creditors.

‡ Louis's letter of Nov. 1687 to the Archbishop, in his *Œuvres*.

§ Tanarra's Relation in Ranke.

CHAP.
XXXII.

was refused to Furstenburg. The latter thus required 16 votes, and obtained but 13. Clement the Bavarian required 13, and only obtained 9. In case of an election which proved null, as in the present instance, the choice reverted to the Pope. Louis instantly despatched an envoy to Rome, but the pontiff flatly refused even to receive him.

The indignation of Louis was intense. He, who had just cleared France of heresy, and not shrunk from the impoverishment of his kingdom, and the perpetration of wholesale murder and monstrous cruelty, to prove himself the eldest son of the Church, found the Pope not only his enemy, but in league with the Protestant Powers to check his influence on the Rhine, and actually deprive him of an alliance with England. His resentment, rather than his prudence, prompted Louis to secure Cologne and be avenged of the Pope, instead of turning his arms to prevent William's Dutch expedition invading England. Other reasons, which Louvois urged, also prompted him to undertake an expedition eastward rather than northward. James the Second, in reply to proffered succours, refused them, and declared himself able to repel the enemy. On the other hand the Emperor Leopold had driven the Turks from Buda and Belgrade, and threatened to be a more formidable enemy than William. To secure the Rhine seemed more urgent, than to prevent William's sailing, probably to defeat.

The historians, or rather the memoir writers of the epoch, not content with such serious causes for the war, abound in suggesting trivial ones. St. Simon says that Louis having found fault with a newly built window at Trianon, which he considered to be out of the perpendicular, Louvois, who superintended war as well as architecture, vowed that he would give his master something more grave to think of than masonry. A more serious cause, of the same kind, is hinted at by Madame La Fayette. The King had fixed his palace and water-

works at Versailles, the most inconvenient place in the kingdom for water. Its fountains, therefore, could play but by spurts. To give them continual flow, Louis undertook to bring the river Eure from a distance to Versailles. He employed his soldiers in this work, which, being conducted across marshes, caused an epidemic, and carried them off by thousands. The engineering difficulties in the way of the enterprise became at the same time insurmountable. An honourable pretext was found for abandoning the whole design, by draughting off the soldiers to war, and undertaking an immediate campaign upon the Rhine for the recovery of what had been ceded in the truce.

It would be idle to dwell on such secondary causes, whilst the King's own temper and principles impelled to perpetual aggression in his negotiations, a tendency which received a still stronger impulse from his restless minister, the Marquis of Louvois. This statesman could not abide peace, not only from his habits and talents, which were all for the direction and provisions of war, but also because peace reduced him to a nullity, and demanded of him political knowledge and experience which he did not possess. Colbert was the minister of peace, shone in it, and would have achieved great things by its means. Louvois entertained a political and personal hatred towards him; and the Treaty of Nimeguen was scarcely signed ere Louvois meditated and employed the means of rendering it null. He was grand conceiver and director of the *Chambres de Réunion*, the claims upon Germany, and the occupation of Strasbourg.*

In the midst of his aggression, Louvois too looked about for alliance. He first turned to the Dutch, whose separate signature to the peace of Nimeguen showed them severed from their allies. Louvois, however, met

* Rousset, Hist. de Louvois, 2nd part.

CHAP.
XXXII.

with nothing but cold and dubious answers from the Dutch, and he turned his views in another direction.*

On the failure of the reigning dynasty of Spain, an event looked to by every politician, the conquests and position most important for France was in Italy. Could they get possession of the Milanese they might interrupt all communications between Spain and Austria, and prevent arms and succours proceeding from one country to the other. Louvois, therefore, turned his efforts to Savoy, where a French princess was regnant as duchess mother and regent. To get her into his power, make her dependent on France, even for the preservation of her authority in Piedmont, and by this means tear from her the order or promise for French troops to occupy the fortresses of Piedmont—such was the aim for years of Louvois' policy at Turin. A part of this scheme was the possession of Casal, which the French minister obtained. One of the agents of the Duke of Mantua, whom the French bribed to bring about the surrender of Casal, and who betrayed them, was Mattioli, evidently the man with the Iron Mask who died in the Bastille.† Louvois, however, overreached himself. His exigences, instead of winning the duchess as an ally, ruined her as regent, and transferred the government into the hands of the boy prince, her son,—astute and spirited, who, though at first obedient to France, and even espousing one of its princesses (Mademoiselle de Valois, daughter of the Duke of Orleans), soon showed that independence was dearer to him than even the alliance of the Grand Monarque. Meanwhile the King declared war, and avowed in a solemn manifesto‡ his purpose to compel the emperor to abandon his defence of Cologne against the French

* Rousset, Hist. de Louvois. 2nd part.

† For his treachery and capture see C. Rousset. Hist. de Louvois.

‡ Dumont, Corps. Diplom. v. 7. The manifesto was answered by Leibnitz.

nominee, and to acknowledge, not the temporary, but the permanent sovereignty of France to the left bank of the Rhine (September 1688). Were these granted, Louis professed himself ready to give up all towns beyond the river after razing their fortifications. He probably reckoned that the emperor, embarrassed in the Turkish war,* would at once grant these terms. They would not only have secured the French in the possession of the left bank of the Rhine, and definitively severed Germany from Holland,† but would have immediately caused the recall of the ten or twelve thousand North Germans, who formed the chief force of the army with which William was about to invade England.

The first object was to seize and secure a bridge over the Rhine, which would be obtained by the capture of Philipsburg. Possessed of it and the passage, the French army might with safety occupy the Palatinate, live upon the Germans, and levy contributions upon them. For the French king, whilst precipitating himself into war, had neither money nor provisions, nor even troops sufficient to face his enemies. The finance minister, on the first aspect of hostilities, offered his resignation, seeing no mode of raising money save the sale of new and useless offices. The old *arrière ban* and militia were called forth, and a new conscription ordained, to supply the want of men.‡ The French army, such as it was, passed across the Rhine, it being impossible to promise it pay, or subsist its cavalry elsewhere.§

* It was said that Louis gave orders for the expedition on hearing of the capture of Belgrade. But this event took place on the 6th of September, and Louvois wrote to Catinat on the 8th, that he was to be employed in the siege of Philipsburg. *Lettres Militaires*.

† See Sir Wm. Temple's *Memoirs* till his Retirement, for the designs of the French on Flanders.

‡ Isambert, *Lois Françaises*.

§ The consideration which seemed to have most influence on French military tactics was forage. The cavalry was the most efficient force. Sufficient horse, the *Lettres Militaires* acquaint us, could not be kept in the Spanish Low Countries, there being no forage. Germany was richer in this. And yet Vauban writes that the French were quite

CHAP.
XXXII.

Philipsburg surrendered to the Dauphin, or rather to Vauban and Catinat, on the sixth of November. Mayence was seized, and all the towns of the Palatinate, Coblentz and Ehrenbreitstein excepted, fell one after another into the hands of the French. But enemies started up on every side—England, of which the Prince of Orange had become monarch, partly in consequence of Louis having turned his arms towards Germany,* —Holland, now enchained to his car of triumph—as well as all Germany, knit in the bond of the League of Augsburg.

The humility and despair of Louis was almost as great in December as his arrogance had been three months previous. After having tried to tempt the Elector of Bavaria with promises of aggrandisement† in vain, Louis told Villars to offer either the appointment of Prince Clement as coadjutor, or even his acknowledgment as archbishop, provided Furstemburg was allowed to administer the electorate for fifteen or sixteen years.‡ Villars in return told his master that neither Bavaria nor the Emperor would listen to any terms, the latter hoping to be soon master of Constantinople.§ Angered by the firmness of the enemies he had provoked, Louis resolved to take vengeance, not indeed so much on them as on the unfortunate subjects of the Powers who thus defied him. His generals were ordered to disperse their troops over Germany, to levy contributions and spread devastation, not only over Baden and the Rhine country, but over Franconia. This was organised as a regular system of rapine by

safe from German attacks from January to May, owing to the total want of forage to supply the horses of an attacking army. *Lettres Militaires*, t. viii. p. 225.

* D'Avaux describes William's joy on learning that the French had laid siege to Phillipsburg.

† Louis bids Villars offer Bavaria

an "occasion de s'agrandir, qui est le plus digne et le plus agréable occupation des souverains."

‡ King to Villars, Dec. 1688. *Lettres, Œuvres de Louis XIV.*

§ The Emperor believed, on the faith of a soothsayer, that a son of his would reign at Constantinople.

Louvois, who called it the *Extraordinaire des Guerres*. Fifteen millions of livres were found in his *caisse* on Louvois' death.* To this ordained extortion was added the rapine of the officers, who treated the Germans as they had been taught to treat the Huguenots. It was a transference of the *dragonnades* to the other side of the Rhine, where the peasants were driven from their houses and compelled to form in bands, that harassed and attacked their persecutors.†

The German armies could not muster to eject the invaders and ravagers till June of the following year, for want of forage for the cavalry and subsistence for the soldiers. Louis resolved to render this want permanent in the Rhine country. His and Louvois' original purpose had been to fortify a certain number of places, and by this means hold the enemy in check. But time and money were both wanting to complete their defences, and the only way to preserve them was to devastate all around, and render it difficult for the enemy to approach or invest them.‡ They accordingly issued orders for the destruction not only of all food but of every town of the region. The population was driven out, the walls razed, the houses destroyed, and the fugitives were even forbidden to sow the ground, lest there should be food for the ensuing year.§ Such a cold-blooded and inhuman order, issued in the very commencement of a war, which the French king himself had needlessly provoked, is certainly unparalleled in atrocity. The entire population of the Palatinate, rustic and urban, were burned out of their houses, after having been rifled of all the money and provisions they possessed. On the

* Dangeau, August, 1691.

† The Germans were at last driven to such fierce retaliation, that they burned alive in their market places, the French whom they caught setting fire to the farms and granaries. Louvois' Letters, 1690.

‡ Vauban describes five fortresses as but half finished in Sept. 1688 —Huningue, Befort, Fort Louis, Landau and Mont Royal. Rousset, Hist. de Louvois, v. iii. p. 347.

§ Lettres Militaires.

CHAP.
XXXII.

Rhine were the oldest and most venerable cities of the empire,—Spires, the seat of the Diet; Worms, where Luther had appeared; Heidelberg, famous for its beautiful castle. None, nothing was spared. The soldiers were bidden not to fire the cathedrals. But that was found impossible, and the illustrious domes, in which reposed the ashes of the early German Cæsars, were committed to the flames. Even their ruins were blown up. The spite of the French king, whilst he was rearing his own barrack of a palace at Versailles, was especially vented upon the residences of other princes. Those of Mannheim and Heidelberg* were ruthlessly destroyed. Nothing that was beautiful or venerable was safe from the vandalism of Louis the Fourteenth.

One is pleased to find that the court which issued such edicts was visited by retributive vengeance. Its military efforts in 1689 were inglorious. "The campaign was limited in Germany," says Villars, "to our seizing Mayence." He might have added, and to our losing it, its recapture in September being one of the events which most discredited Louvois with his master. The Marshals D'Humières and De Loges, who commanded, were devoid of talent, whilst Marshal de Luxembourg, the only French general possessed of ability, was left unemployed, owing to the dislike and jealousy of the king and his minister. The retribution dealt to the court was, however, not so much in military reverses as in pecuniary straits. An issue of a million and a half of annuities having produced little, the king at the close of 1689 half besought, half commanded, not only his courtiers but his clergy, to send their plate to the melting pot, to make coin more abundant, he

* See in Rousset Tessé's letter, giving an account of his destruction of the castle and 432 houses of Heidelberg. He merely saved a portion of a Descent from the Cross,

which he hoped to send as an acceptable present to Louvois! See also the letters of Duras in *Lettres Militaires*, t. vi.

said; to supply the emptiness of the treasury, he meant. Louis set the example himself by sending all his rich vases, mirrors, and articles of furniture, even to the toilet table of the dauphiness, to be melted of their ornaments. His own silver throne shared the same fate. The chief value of these objects lay in the cost of the modelling, which was fifty times more than the worth of the mere melted metal. Lovers of virtue still deplore the vandalism as not inferior to that of the destruction of the Palatinate. It was, however, retributive justice, and was especially applied to the churches, those triumphant over the exiled, the tortured, and bleeding Protestants, which were obliged to give up their silver tabernacles, their gilded shrines and censers, preserving merely the chalices and plate necessary for diurnal service.*

The few thousand livres proceeding from this momentary plunder of palace, church, and boudoir, went but a small way to pay for four or five armies, besides a great fleet, which Seignelay, the marine minister, son of Colbert, had assembled at Brest. The design was that, whilst James attacked William in Ireland, and detained him there, the French fleet should make itself master of the Channel, and foment insurrections which must be facile, since England was denuded of troops. The French Admiral, Tourville, was indeed master of the Channel, having eighty ships opposed to fifty-eight of English and Dutch united.† A severe engagement, occasioning a great loss on both sides, resulted in the latter returning to the Thames, and the French being driven westward by wind and tide. The loss of the battle of the Boyne soon after by James tended to quiet any plans of insurrection which might have been formed in England.

Louvois was averse to all these schemes of descent on Ireland and on England for the restoration of the

* Clements Pontchartrain.

† Mémoires de Forbin.

CHAP.
XXXII.

Stuarts, but he was overruled, and was obliged to limit his efforts and directions on the Continent to enable the armies to support themselves at the expense of the enemy. Such were the orders he wrote to Noailles in 1690,* and to the army of the Rhine, which, though commanded by the dauphin, played merely the part of the taxman and the commissary. The Maréchal de Luxemburg, in Flanders, was not expected to do more. But King William was in Ireland, and the French maréchal, finding himself, with superior force, opposed to the Prince of Waldeck, who had but twenty-four thousand men, with orders to save, not risk his little army,† crossed the Sambre, and found Waldeck at Fleurus, strongly entrenched in his front. The French commander attacked with his cavalry on both flanks, thus dividing and risking his own army, had his opponent been an active or an able general. The French cavalry drove in that of their opponents. But the infantry of Prince Waldeck, forming a square, resisted all the efforts of the French upon it, and kept up a deadly fire. At the close this infantry retreated, four battalions cutting their way through the enemy, others withdrawing after great loss, but with a firm countenance.‡ “Never infantry, so pressed,” writes Catinat, “showed such firmness.” The military superiority of the French, from Rocroy, where Condé destroyed the Spanish foot, to Fleurus and Neerwinden, where William of Orange succeeded in mustering and arming a powerful infantry, was owing to their cavalry and *corps d’élite*, well born and of reckless bravery. This half century’s superiority of the mounted noble in the field was now about to cease.

Nowhere did the Marquis of Louvois more fully display the insolence and cruelty of his character than in the campaign of 1690 beyond the Alps. The king was

* Mémoires de Noailles.

† Lettres Militaires, t. vi.

‡ Quinci, St. Hilaire.

so occupied with the attack upon England, that he left Italy to his minister's management. Louvois seems to have had a particular dislike to the Duke of Savoy, and a peculiar desire to grasp his dominions for France, in order to open the way once more to Italian conquests.* The Alps were serious obstacles, which even the possession of Pignerol beyond them could not compensate. Precisely along their path and amidst the mountains between Pignerol and France, lived the Waldenses, those stubborn Protestants who abhorred the tyrant persecutor Louvois, and who had so fiercely and successfully resisted the arms of both France and Savoy in 1686. A brief and inadequate description has been given of the horrors which preceded and followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France. But these atrocities were far surpassed by not merely the wholesale massacres, but by the refined cruelties of the French soldiers, we are sorry to add, under Catinat, in the Waldensian valleys. These and the general massacre committed by the French soldiers in these regions, were not more horrible than the wholesale destruction of the captives. Heaped upon one another, in dungeons without air, they perished at Verrue of pestilence and famine. Catinat himself gives the description; whilst Louis the Fourteenth in reply congratulates the Duke of Savoy upon this new mode of getting rid of heretical subjects.† So terrible was the war of extermination—as destructive to their persecutors as to themselves—that an offer was made to allow the Protestants of the valley to emigrate. They accepted it, and towards the close of 1687 some thousands withdrew to Geneva. Their towns were burned, their churches razed, and the lands of the valley sold to new and Catholic colonists. There was to all appearance an end of the Waldenses. But the unfortunate people were not contented in their exile. The banks of the Lemman did

* Mémoires de Feuquières.

† Rousset, t. iii. p. 28.

CHAP.
XXXII.

not give them their mountain valley with Alpine snow on the summit and the grape of Italy in its depths. They longed for their old homes; and, in 1689, prompted by despair, and led by their heroic pastor Arnaud, the Waldenses, to the number of about 800, re-crossed the lake and wended their way through Savoy and the valley of Susa. A French army three times their number barred their way at Salbertrand near Oux, commanding with its artillery a small bridge, over which alone the Waldenses could advance. They did not hesitate, but rushed upon the bridge, and carried it despite of the fire of the French, whom they routed sword in hand. This opened the Alpine passage to their homes, and a Protestant population, now in arms, once more filled the valley of San Martino. Such an exploit was not only galling to the French, but threatened to cut off their communications with Pignerol. Louvois, therefore, insisted upon the extermination of the returned exiles. He despatched Catinat to perform the feat, and summoned the Duke of Savoy to take part in it. To this at first Victor Amadeus was obliged to assent, and the Waldenses had once more to defend their rocks and wilds against the united troops of France and Savoy. But Louvois' violence soon disgusted the duke. The French minister desired to send his army to subsist on the plains of Milan, but durst not do so unless the Duke of Savoy would give up the citadel of Turin and other fortresses as guarantees that he would allow the French to pass, repass, and keep up communication. The duke refused. Louvois replied by threatening to crush and burn, and he did make Catinat burn the duke's and his minister's country villas. But the blood of prince and people rose against the violence of the French king. They armed, and threw up fortifications round Turin, which Catinat then durst not attack. The prince flung off the French alliance, and proclaimed war with the emperor, although Louis had offered to

abate considerably of his harsh demands. In August 1690, the French and Piedmontese armies, the latter reinforced by Spaniards, met at Staffarde. The latter were strongly posted amidst marshes, and protected by *chevaux de frise*. The French infantry waded the river, tore these away, and, charging the enemy sword in hand, routed them, but with such loss to themselves as precluded them from gaining much by the campaign. At its close the French indeed withdrew behind the Alps.*

CHAP.
XXXII.

The failure of all the Jacobite attempts restored to Louvois in 1691 the entire conduct of the war. He concentrated his efforts in striking a great blow in Flanders, for which he made vast though secret preparations during the winter. This was the capture of Mons. It was invested on the twenty-fifth of March, 1691, by 100,000 men. Louis came in person, after having finally rid himself of Madame de Montespan. King William, whose presence was no longer necessary in Ireland, where his generals completely defeated the massacrers of the southern Huguenots, St. Rhue, in the battle of Aghrim, reappeared in Flanders, but was unable to muster an army in Holland of sufficient magnitude to relieve Mons. That fortress capitulated in April. And Louis rewarded the engineering skill which Vauban had shown by sending him 100,000 francs with an invitation to dinner. Dangeau records how much more the great engineer prized the invitation than the money. In Italy Catinat was equally successful in the first months of 1691, capturing Nice, and with it the coast of Piedmont. But as the season advanced the Duke of Savoy, breaking off his secret negotiations with Louis,† received succour from Germany as well as some regiments of French refugees led by a son of Schomberg; and with these he succeeded in

* Mémoires de Catinat and the correspondence accompanying them. Rousset, &c. Also Muston.

† Mémoires du Maréchal de Tessé, c. iii.

CHAP.
XXXII.

baffling an attempt of the French upon Coni, and driving Catinat himself beyond the Alps.

The conduct and spirit of the war suffered a marked change in consequence of the death of Louvois, which took place in July 1691. Louis had not forgiven his minister the rash conduct which had provoked the present war, nor the needless quarrel with Savoy. Madame de Maintenon, the rising influence, felt great sympathy for the exiled Stuarts, whose power of regaining their lost ground in England Louvois altogether mistrusted. In the defeat of James, and in his own successful siege of Mons, Louvois triumphed; and yet he contrived to offend his master by his arrogance at that very time. He met in consequence with numerous rebuffs and contradictions in the royal closet. On one of these occasions he flung down his portfolio before the King and Madame de Maintenon, and the monarch raised his cane. De Maintenon smoothed over the affair, and Louvois at her bidding returned to transact his usual business with Louis. But it was too much for him. Taken ill in the royal presence, he was carried home but to expire.*

The first expression of opinion afterwards indulged in by Louis was an answer to a message of condolence sent by James, whose interests, Louis said, would not suffer by Louvois' death. And although Barbessieux, the marquis's son, was appointed to succeed him in the same office, the King reversed the policy of his late minister, and directed his resources and attention once more to the reinstatement of James upon the throne of England. Both were incited to it by the universal treachery of the English magnates around William, who looked upon the dethronement of their legitimate sovereign as a revolution not more likely to endure than the usurpation of Cromwell. A powerful fleet, with an army of invasion, to be transported by it to

* Memoirs of St. Simon, of Choisy, and Dangeau's Journal.

the English shore, was equipped, part at Brest and part at Toulon.

CHAP.
XXXII.

The success of the meditated invasion depended altogether on these two portions of the French fleet meeting. Fortune, in the shape of the winds and waves, baffled this arrangement; and the English, being double the number of Tourville's squadron, could not but overwhelm it in the narrow sea. The French were completely defeated, some fifteen of their vessels escaping. Three of them were burnt near Cherbourg by the English, who pursued twelve to the bay of La Hogue. They had fled thither, as if the army of invasion encamped there could have succoured or saved them. The army, however, with James at its head, could merely witness the capture of vessel after vessel by boats from the English fleet, which set fire to all, and thus delivered to the flames the last hope of James to recover his lost kingdom.

Whilst these decisive actions took place at sea, the French army had laid siege to Namur, and with its great appliances captured that fortress. As Luxemburg, at a more advanced period of the summer (August), found himself in front of William, the latter discovered a traitor in his camp. This man was compelled to send false intelligence to Luxemburg to put him off his guard. Relying on this, and aided by it, William led his army to surprise the French in their lines of Steinkirk. But for the hedges and other obstacles in the nature of the ground he would have succeeded. But these gave Luxemburg time to collect his forces and meet the advancing foe. William's vanguard was the English foot, who gallantly pressed on. But they were soon encountered by the choice cavalry of the French king's household, who charged them sword in hand. Had the English been supported they might have repelled the enemies' horse. But William had subjected them to a Dutch general, who left the English to perish, glori-

CHAP.
XXXII.

ously indeed, for their resistance and their valour laid prostrate vast numbers of their attackers. The English commanders in retreating were all slain, and William had but to draw off the rest of his army, and leave victory in the hands of Luxemburg. The battle of Steinkirk was a great cause of triumph at the French court, but also of not a little military anxiety.*

How is it, asked the French generals, that the fire of the English and Dutch infantry was so much superior to the French? Some one observed, that the infantry of the French, being young soldiers, were not expert at the use of the muskets which they carried. The enemy made more use of fusils, fired by the flint, whereas the muskets went off by the match, which require skill, time, and arrangement. The great problem was to arm infantry in such a manner, that, by means of rapid fire and a defensive weapon, they could protect themselves against cavalry. The Germans did this by means of *chevaux de frise*, which they carried with them. The French preferred having a certain number of pikemen, but these were only of use when the battalion was actually attacked by horse. And the soldiers who bore pikes were so mortified at their general inutility, that they used to fling away their pike in order to seize the enemies' fusils, when it was possible. Louis the Fourteenth long resisted the fusil as he did every other innovation, and gave his pikemen increased pay, in order to render them contented with the weapon. But his infantry remained thereby comparatively powerless, unfit for attack, when they could only march with their swords, and at the mercy of cavalry, so much so that the general order was never to send on infantry without a corps of cavalry to defend them. The introduction of the bayonet made at first little difference. It was stuck by means of a handle in the bore of the musket, when it then ceased to be a fire-arm, until

* Memoirs of Berwick. Lettres Militaires, t. viii.

Vauban invented the present mode of fixing the bayonet on the musket, without preventing its fire. This not only rendered a body of infantry invulnerable to cavalry, but also gave them that power of attack, which for half a century and more had been considered the exclusive property and duty of horse. At the battle of Steinkirk, we hear of the French throwing the muskets back on their shoulders and rushing to the attack with their swords. At the battles of Neerwinden and Marsaglia in the following year, the infantry advanced with the bayonet. The circumstance not only marks a revolution in the service, but in the fortune of war. As long as cavalry was the only instrument of attack, the French were victors in every field. As soon as the infantry took the first place for attack as well as defence, the superiority of the French declined, and the English under Marlborough began to re-acquire that old renown which they had possessed when their peasant bowmen beat French knights in the fifteenth century.

CHAP.
XXXII.

The campaign of 1693 was destined by Louis the Fourteenth, then his own war minister, to be opened by his usual feat, the capture of a great town. Liège and Brussels were contemplated. William, however, posted himself near Louvain, between the two places, and rendered it difficult to undertake the siege of either without a battle. This Louis was unwilling to risk, however superior in numbers to William. What he had heard of Steinkirk was not inviting. If the king remained, he should have commanded the action, and to this he felt himself unequal. Equally impossible was it to entrust that command to another. To the astonishment of his generals, and the mortification of his army, Louis therefore returned to Versailles, detaching a large portion of the troops to the Rhine, which showed that he did not even intend that Marshal Luxemburg should attempt a general engagement in his absence. The

CHAP.
XXXII.

marshal, however, was not a soldier to let an opportunity escape. He found William entrenched along his front more formidably than Waldeck had been at Fleurus; but knowing the inferior numbers of the enemy, he attacked them, as at Fleurus, on the two wings. The brunt of the battle was at Neerwinden on the right of the Anglo-Dutch army. It was captured and recaptured three or four times in the fight, the French bringing up all their *troupes d'élite* to the charge, and William gradually concentrating there his whole army. The result was that the village was choked with the slain, but that William's lines were so weakened that he could not prevent his more numerous enemies from pouring over the entrenchments. His retreat before them was, however, as had been his resistance in the field, that of a lion. Louis was right: victories like these were fair pretexts for jubilee, but led to no solid advantage, whilst they exhausted the military resources of the monarchy, and deferred its chances of peace.*

Louis had turned his attention to these more than to the prosecution of the war. Whilst Louvois lived, he had spared his master the difficult and disagreeable details of vast military efforts, made with a scanty treasury. He had since entered into all himself, and had conceived a disgust for the impolicy, as well as rashness and cruelty, of his minister. Other voices were heard, both at his council table and his closet, asserting the rights of humanity, the sin of making light of them for the selfish purposes of conquest, of aggression, of domination, and even of glory. The Duc de Beauvilliers, who took place at the council board as chief of the Council of Finance, professed such doctrines of which Madame de Maintenon partook, and which she more

* For the battle of Neerwinden or Landen, see Luxemburg's account published in Dangeau, Barbesieux in the Memoirs of Catinat, besides numerous other accounts.

timidly expressed in private. No party could then exist without a spiritual conductor. One was found in Fénelon, who breathed into it those sentiments of charity and benevolence which break forth so eloquently in all his works. Not content with influencing the monarch's sentiments through his counsellor and friend, Madame de Maintenon, Fénelon is said to have tried the direct effect of his persuasive eloquence, by inditing a letter to the monarch, in which were depicted the curse and horrors of war and ambition, as well as the amount of misery which they had brought upon the population of the kingdom.

Such a personal appeal was too brusque and too bold for the king. But Louis displayed in his acts a certain sense of its justice, and not only called Beauvilliers to the council, but recalled Pomponne to aid Torcy in the management of foreign affairs, after having been set aside during so many years, for the want of that vigour and harshness toward foreign courts, which Louis then required. The double appointment was considered a stigma on the policy of Louvois.* A more marked abandonment of that minister's system was an offer to restore Savoy to its duke, if he would quit the hostile alliance.† Instead of meeting such advances, the duke invaded Dauphiné in 1692.

Catinat took revenge by defeating the army of Piémont, at Marsaglia, in the following year. He had remained for a long time inactive at Fenestrelles, watching the Savoyards engaged in the siege of Pignerol. In October he collected his forces, descended suddenly, Catinat having especial orders from King Louis to burn the Veneria, the Duke of Savoy's country house; orders which showed that the vandal spirit attributed exclusively to Louvois, and exemplified in his destruction

* Pietro Venier, *Relazioni de* 26, 1691. *Mémoires de Catinat*,
Francia, apud Ranke. t. ii., and those of Tessé.

† King's letter and others, Oct.

CHAP.
XXXII.

of Heidelberg and Mannheim, still survived in the mind of Louis himself. Catinat found himself, on the 2nd October, in presence of the Piedmontese army at Marsaglia. Prince Eugene, who commanded the infantry of Savoy, counselled the duke to take possession of the heights of Piosaque on his left. The latter neglected the advice, and the French seizing it, were enabled to force the Piedmontese left wing. The centre under Prince Eugene, consisting of Spanish and German troops, as well as of Protestant refugees, was charged by the French with bayonets on their guns, and completely routed. The French gave no quarter.

In addition to these victories in Flanders and Piedmont, the Duke de Noailles captured Rosas and Gerona in Spain. But the want of funds and the impossibility of troops subsisting on Spanish resources compelled him to retreat. The war had become a struggle against poverty, as well as against the enemy; the weight with which its burden was felt being greatly aggravated by a terrible famine, which visited France and decimated it during the years 1693 and 1694. The king commenced and kept up negotiations with the Dutch, sending Callière and Harlay for this purpose to Flanders. In 1695, the capture of Namur by William, in the presence of a large French army under Villeroy, proved Louis no longer invincible in pressing or in raising a siege. The Dutch had found in Cohorn an engineer fully capable of competing with Vauban. Luxemburg was no more. Military skill and fortune seemed to pass to the enemies of France.

Of the causes which now inclined the French King to peace, none pressed upon him more than the total disorganisation of his finances. Had Louis the Fourteenth taken for his task the complete ruin of the public revenue, he could scarcely have adopted other measures than he did; whilst these came in aggravation of a system, than which nothing could be more impoverishing

or detestable. It is the great boast of political writers, that serfage was got rid of, and the peasant made free, in the countries of Western Europe. It is much to be doubted that the peasant gained aught by the advance, at least in France, when in exchange for his freedom the whole weight of taxation was flung upon him. In England the taxes upon land and movables fell upon classes intelligent and powerful enough to feel and express their feelings of injustice or oppression. In France they were made to fall upon the unintelligent classes, deprived of the right of associating their members or expressing their opinions. English freedom and equality, at least in bearing the burdens of the state, were secured by self and local administration. In France the despotic and personal tyranny of the king was represented and exaggerated in the provinces by the power of the intendant. Several of these functionaries have left accounts of their gestion. And Boisguilbert has fully depicted the pernicious administration which the arbitrary nature of the national taxes left to their caprice or their vengeance. The intendants had in their hand the repartition of the *taille*, and their habit was to ingratiate themselves with the powerful landed proprietor by exempting his district, whilst the whole of the burden was flung upon the poorer and more industrious population.*

The consequence was that all the peasantry or people who could do so, or possessed the means, removed from the heavy taxed district to others that were exempt. The fisc followed them there, successive ordonnances during the half of the century diminishing the amount of *taille*, and increasing still more that of *aides*, or duties on consumption. The peasant class which paid the *taille* was moreover vexed and ransomed by the passing of soldiers, and by a host of military and feudal, as well as royal, exactions. As the war advanced, and regular

* Boisguilbert, *Détail de la France*.

CHAP.
XXXII.

troops were insufficient, the peasantry were drafted for the militia, and sent to perish in campaigns or on the battlefield.* Numerous writers testify the great diminution of the population in the last half of the century: Tours lost one-half of its numbers, the towns of the sea coast and land frontier more, emigration being facile. The rents paid for farms were reduced one-half; so was the number of cattle in the fields. Consumption was not one-fourth of what it had been. "One-tenth of the population is mendicant," writes Vauban; "four more tenths have but sufficient to keep life in them." The north especially, and Normandy still more so, were amongst the most wretched and distressed portion of the kingdom. The provinces which had Estates kept some show of comfort and prosperity, whilst those under regal jurisdiction were absolutely eaten up. Amidst the general ruin, the church rose like an oasis, surrounded by want and misery; its revenues were flourishing, and its members exorbitant. But whilst a few preachers made their classic orations before the court, the clergy of the provinces were sunk in ignorance and in utter incapacity of either instructing, enlightening, or influencing.†

It would have been vain for the greatest financial genius to have struggled against a system of tyranny, intolerance, prodigal luxury, and exhausting war. "Faites de la bonne politique," says a modern French statesman, "et je vous ferai de la bonne finance." How could Colbert, the genius of peace, strive against Louvois, the spirit of war, but struggle in vain, and perish of despair and despoise? The French loudly vaunt Colbert. They should but lament his hard fate and celebrate him in elegy, not panegyric. He was merely able in the first few years of peace, which marked his reign, to

* The colonel of the militia regiment of the Bourbonnais was killed at Marsaglia. See Rousset, Hist. de Louvois, part ii. for orga-

nisation of militia.

† Vauban, Dime Royale. Barbier.

show what economy and activity could have done, had he, like his prototype Sully, had a Henry the Fourth to his sovereign. And no greater minister than Colbert could have been provided, if we take for inevitable the possession of an absolute power in the monarch, and the corresponding helplessness and inanity which is entailed on the people by such a regimen. Vain was, as we have before observed, his striving to introduce into such a body politic the action and the life which animated the Dutch. The association of capital, the direction of it, the enterprise, the commercial activity, naval ardour, all the common produce of freedom, could not be gathered, nor even the seed sown, in France. All that Colbert could do was to substitute royal patronage, ministerial initiation and protection, for social enterprise. He was able, indeed, to set them going, but to keep continued life in them was impossible. He founded manufactures with one hand, but the revocation of the Edict of Nantes cut them down with the other. Colbert was for protection and high duties. He was for manufactures, but manufactures could not become perfected or great unless they were exported and brought into competition with those of other countries. This could not be done without trade, reciprocal trade. But the minister would not permit this. He would take no manufactured commodities from Holland or from England. And the little that could be exported under such a rule was still further prevented by export duties. The west coast could not ship its salt or its corn, and the population was obliged to emigrate in order to live, as they were compelled to do the same in order to pray. Nor in his internal regulation of finance was Colbert more advanced; instead of destroying monopolies and corporations, he was their favourer and founder. In 1673, finding a great number of merchants and traders not included in any corporation, he compelled them to form

CHAP.
XXXII.

one, and levied 300,000 livres on the occasion as the price. The monopoly of tobacco, in addition to salt, was Colbert's; and most of the restrictions and narrow nature of the French excise, as well as customs, may be traced to him. With respect to his prohibitive system, however, we must record the same excuse which we did for Louis the Fourteenth: Spain and England set the example. Spain, after the Treaty of Vervins, though forbidden by one of its clauses to raise its tariff, did so; France but retaliated. Our Navigation Act of 1651 was the point from which statesmen started in their policy of preventing foreigners from rivalling or underselling them. The half-livre the ton duty on foreign shipping, imposed in 1659, was but an imitation of it. Colbert's Whale Fishing Company and attempt to found colonial trade with colonial empire was a portion of this policy. His tariff of 1667 subjected foreign cloths to a duty of eighty livres the piece of twenty-five ells, and was followed by his cloth establishment of Lodeve for the supply of the Levant. It would be unfair to say that Colbert was wrong in all these schemes, which the intolerance and prodigality of Louis subsequently defeated. But, whilst it may be unjust for the free-trader of the nineteenth century to cast contumely on the prohibitionist of early days, when political economy was in its infancy, it is exaggerated panegyric on the part of the French to fall down in admiration of such ministers as Colbert for ordaining those often futile attempts at trade, colonial empire, and manufacturing enterprise, all of which French industry was perfectly capable of initiating and carrying further itself if it had been endowed or knew how to grasp the commonest principles of commercial freedom, of publicity, and self-government.*

Colbert would gladly have removed the fiscal barriers

* Clements Colbert, and Joubleau.

between province and province. But this was so much beyond his power that even his famous tariff was applicable to only one-half of France, the *Pays d'États*, Brittany, Guyenne, Languedoc, and Provence, being exempt. Of course, this necessitated a new customs-line across France itself, and augmented the isolation which condemned each province to consume its own commodities.* The wines of the south could with difficulty reach the north, whilst on their export a duty of twenty-eight livres on what was often worth but twenty was levied. An impost of sixty-six livres the *muid* on the export of corn stopped the sowing of it in the west. The restrictions in the way of all trade, indeed, as much forced the population of the west coast to emigrate as the intolerant edicts of the king and the clergy.†

But however mistaken were Colbert's views of taxation applied to the founding or regulation of manufactures and trade, there can be no question of his greatly advanced ideas in purely fiscal matters. Gladly would he have introduced equality in the *taille*, and made all land pay without distinguishing the merit or privileges of its possessor. In addition to this, he would have levied a *taille* upon the revenue of all movable property. He made an inefficient trial of such a scheme in the south. But the age was not ripe for it. Compelled to leave the old system of taxation unchanged, he set himself to work to alleviate the general burdens without diminishing the royal receipts. And this he effected, as Sully had done, by vigilance, firmness, and honesty. He, no doubt, infringed the principles of the latter in his dealings with the State creditors; but, in the public letting of the great

* "There were twelve hundred leagues of internal customs-lines. There were 50,000 revenue officers upon the Loire. From Nantes to Saint Lambert there then were

28 paying places upon boats." De Nervo, *Finances Françaises*, t. i. p. 447.

† Fénelon's letter to Seignelay, 1686.

CHAP.
XXXII.

financial *fermes*, and his diminishing the enormous expenses of levying these and other taxes, he added fairly and largely to the revenue of the State. All, however, went to encourage Louis in his project of subduing Holland. Colbert, like certain ministers of our day, could not believe that war could be a permanent or a normal state. When it came, therefore, he was for meeting its expenditure by temporary expedients. He disliked adding to the permanent debt, he preferred enforcing a number of small taxes. These were enumerated by the spokesman of the popular insurrection which burst forth at Bordeaux during 1763, who declared that "the people would no longer stand the increased salt-tax, nor the stamp on pewter vessels, nor the tobacco monopoly, nor stamped paper, nor the duties on land processes, nor five sous the barrel of corn." The Bretons rose for the same cause; and Bretons and Bordelais were treated in the way which had so well succeeded with the Huguenots. An amnesty was proclaimed first, and then the authorities proceeded to hang the chiefs as they submitted.

Colbert's other resource was to sell terminable annuities. The usual way of effecting this was to create offices. He at first caused a list to be made of civil officers, and found that there existed forty-six thousand of them, who drew eight millions and a half salary from the State, paying one quarter for the right of selling or transferring their places. But it was calculated that they gained twice as much more from injustice and rapine. Yet this system Colbert could not change. It was the only way in which loans could be procured from that class in France which exclusively possessed wealth.

The expenditure of 1672, previous to the war, was seventy-two millions of livres, of which two-thirds were for military purposes. Another third was instantly demanded by Louis, and Colbert had to meet it, which

he did, as we have described. And it is to be noted that such bursal edicts no longer went before the Parliament. The royal signature was their only sanction. At the close of the war, 1679, the expenditure was one hundred millions, some thirty millions more than the revenue. And it was necessary to reduce this, owing to the general distress. Colbert expostulated with the monarch on his building and other expenses. He received small satisfaction. Still he laboured hard, and in three years succeeded in buying out the useless officers created during the war, as well as the mortgages on the royal domains, and reducing the public debt to eight millions of yearly payment. The monarch was but too ungrateful for such exertions. Louvois abhorred his colleague, whose economy curtailed his extravagance. Influenced by his suggestions, Louis went so far as to reproach Colbert with the cost of the iron railing which protected the great court of Versailles, and bade the prime minister compare it with the small cost of the fortifications in Flanders. One would think the reproach was ironical, but it was meant to be sincere. Colbert, at least, found it so. He soon after fell ill; and when the king wrote to console and encourage him, he refused to open the royal letter. "Do not talk to me of the king; let me die in peace." Such were the last words of the statesman.

The death of Colbert, under such circumstances, was naturally followed by the appointment of a finance minister who shared the ideas and enjoyed the patronage of Louvois. Yet when Lepelletier's name was mentioned for the office, the chancellor observed that he was not sufficiently hard-hearted. Louis was shocked at the remark, and the truth of the observation might be doubted. Lepelletier's first act was to increase the *taille* on the peasant, which Colbert had diminished. But, on the other hand, the new finance minister was soft-hearted towards the functionary class, whose emolu-

CHAP.
XXXII.

ments he increased. He soon plunged himself into loans, and, without the excuse of war, added three or four millions to the annual charge of the debt. The expenses of Marly, of Versailles, and of the famous aqueduct of Maintenon, amounted to almost the half of the outlay of the war. This, too, came in 1688, and, on its first rumour, Lepelletier withdrew in affright, and left the task of meeting the expenses to Pontchartrain.

This superintendant of finance entered upon his office in 1689. His first mode of meeting expenses was to raise a considerable sum by selling one million and a half of life annuities, called Tontines, after the name of the inventor. He followed it by the delusive economy of making king, courtiers, ladies, and Church sacrifice their jewellery, ornaments, and plate. A recoinage was his next expedient, under pretence of restoring its value, but with the real purpose of reducing that value by one-twelfth. But whatever was gained upon the sum brought to the mint was more than lost in the diminished value of the payments made to the Treasury. What were the fifty millions of livres, even if gained, to meet the expenses of an army of 450,000 men and 100,000 horse. More than eight millions of livres went out of the kingdom yearly to the purpose of mounting this cavalry. Necessity and the prevailing system by which the rich and privileged classes were exempt from taxation drove Pontchartrain at last to a scheme which would reach them, and which assumed the name of a capitation. The example was taken from the emperor, who had levied a similar tax to support the war against the Turks. The capitation was graduated according to categories or classes, and brought in twenty-five millions. At first it fell principally on those it was intended to reach, the noblesse. But in time and with management on the part of those possessed of influence, the chief portion of the capitation was paid by the taillable, that is, the peasant, at the rate of a marc the inscribed livre

of the *taille*. But even the capitation tax could not float the financial bark of Pontchartrain. He sold all kinds of offices, and gloried therein, boasting that, "as often as His Majesty created an employ, there sprang up a fool to buy it." Whilst the kingdom was exhausted, the peasant ruined, and the commerce interrupted, from the weight and unfruitfulness of French taxation, Boisguilbert asks, how was it that little England, with not one-fourth of the population of France, could give William, during four successive years, a revenue equal to that of Louis? *

In addition to the military and financial reasons which inclined Louis to peace, came the sinking health of the Spanish king, with the intrigues which convulsed his court, and disputed his sick chamber. The race of the Austrian kings of Spain terminating in him, it became important to decide whom he should choose and appoint as his successor. Austria and Bavaria, as allies, had full opportunities of pressing their claims, which France, as an enemy, could not have. Peace could alone enable French envoys to reside at Madrid, French arguments and influence to be felt in the Escorial or at Madrid. This, no doubt, was one of the motives with the French king to say so early, that he accepted the mediation of Sweden, and in 1693 to declare through D'Avaux, that he was prepared to cede all his conquests beyond the Rhine and in Savoy, Bavaria being especially conciliated by the offer to sanction the transfer of the Netherlands to a prince of its house.

This offer satisfied neither the emperor nor King William, who considered "it rather as an artifice to gain the election, and render the emperor jealous, than as a security for Holland and England." † Hostilities

* William's revenue was about four millions sterling in 1696. He borrowed nearly as much more.

† William to Heinsius. Mackintosh MSS.

CHAP.
XXXII.

therefore continued, although in the midst of them the good burghers of Amsterdam showed such anxiety for peace as compelled William to listen to new overtures. The difficulty was about Strasburg and Luxemburg, William wanting Condé, Ypres, Mons, and Maubeuge as equivalent for the latter, and France requiring more than Ypres.*

The French court turned its efforts to quieting the Italian powers and detaching Savoy from the hostile alliance. Already, in 1693, Louis the Fourteenth had abated of the severity and pride which he had so long displayed towards the pope, his attachment to Madame de Maintenon, and his abandonment of pleasure for devotion prompting him to become reconciled to the Holy See. The profession of the independence of the Gallican Church, drawn up by Bossuet in 1683, and subscribed by the French clergy, had subsisted as a standing cause of alienation from Rome, which not only favoured the Imperial policy, but refused its sanction to the nomination of French bishops. The king, for himself at least, retracted the threatened independence of the Gallican Church, and declared his will to be, that such principles should neither be taught nor acted upon.† The pope in consequence issued bulls, confirming the French bishops, and did not cease afterwards to labour for peace.

The Duke of Savoy had naturally been much mollified by the declaration of the French king through D'Avaux, offering to surrender all his recent conquests on both sides of the Alps. The duke could not, indeed, run the risk of separating himself from his allies and accept peace for himself. But military operations were no longer carried on with purpose or with spirit.

* Mackintosh MSS.

† Pontchartrain writes to Harlay, Sept. 1, 1693: "Vous prenez parfaitement les intentions du roi sur

l'exécution de la déclaration de 1682. S. M. ne veut pas qu'on exécute aucune des nouveautés, qu'elle trouva pour lors à propos d'établir."

The duke, able and crafty, took advantage of the French monarch's desire for peace, and offered it subsequently at the price of receiving not merely the recent conquests of Nice, Casal, and Montmeillan, but, in addition, the old conquests of Richelieu, by which entrance into Italy was always open to the French. These were Pignerol and the valley of Perosa. Louis, under the influence of De Maintenon and her friends, was prepared to abandon Louvois' policy of Italian conquests, and to adopt in its stead a secure family alliance with Piedmont. Perhaps, also, he thought little of solitary valleys and single towns, when his ambition looked to acquire whole kingdoms on the break-up of the Spanish monarchy. So he consented to give up Pignerol, as well as Nice and Savoy, thus withdrawing the *fleur-de-lis* not only behind the Alps but behind the frontiers of Savoy. In vain did the English king exert himself to prevent the defection of the Duke of Savoy from defeating the project of neutrality in Italy.* The duke concluded the treaty with France in 1696, sealing it by the marriage of the dauphin's son, the Duke of Burgundy, with his eldest daughter. It was followed by an agreement at Vigevano, in which Spain and the emperor consented to a total suspension of hostilities in Italy.†

Even before the defection of Savoy, the Dutch had grown weary of the sacrifices and small progress of the war. Their German allies were jealous of the negotiations with the French agents.‡ And it was found necessary to make known to them the state of these. The emperor, too, no sooner learned that Savoy was likely

* See William's letter to the duke and to Lord Galway in the *Militairische Correspondenz* of Prince Eugene.

† *Mémoires de Tessé. Actes et Mémoires des Négotiations du Traité de Ryswick.*

‡ In November, 1793, William

presses Dykweldt to conclude peace, fearing that, "were it not concluded, the French would publish the conditions offered to them by William, whose friends thereby would be much cooled towards him." William to Heinsius. Mackintosh MSS.

CHAP.
XXXII.

to make peace, and that the French army of the Alps might be brought to operate on the Rhine, than he besought the German princes of the six circles to aid him more effectually. These replied by recommending the emperor to accept the Swedish mediation for peace. The maritime powers pressed him to this resolve. Leopold felt it advisable to accede, Spain at the same time consenting also. And the Castle of Ryswick in Holland being fixed as the place of meeting, a congress for the negotiation of peace opened there early in 1697.

The Swedish mediators then made known the preliminary articles, which France conceded, and which were to be the basis of negotiation. These were that Louis accepted the conditions of Westphalia and Nimeguen to start from. He offered to restore Strasburg and Luxemburg, Mons and Charleroi, the towns of Catalonia, to give up the *réunions*, and acknowledge William. To these preliminaries both the emperor and Spain demurred. The former insisted on the cession of Lorraine, the latter of all it had lost since the meeting of the Pyrenees. On the other hand, Louis's agent disclosed that the cession of Strasburg and Luxemburg meant either these towns or an equivalent. To this William's envoys assented, provided the equivalent for Strasburg was to be at the option of the emperor, and that for Luxemburg at the option of Spain.*

Could the allies have held together, Louis would have ceded both towns, and freely he offered to give up Strasburg with its fortifications rased. But the emperor could never come to a decision, nor Spain reconcile itself to a cession, both leaving England and Holland to continue the war. The least objection of Austria required a courier to go and return to and from Vienna, which required six weeks, with the endless expenditure of armies and suspension of trade. William was indignant. He saw Louis's desire of peace, and

* Actes et Mémoires, &c., de Ryswick.

felt his own partly from the same causes. For if the French were exhausted by the war, the English were weary of it. And the Dutch, to whom Louis's agents promised a favourable treaty of commerce, were still more so.

William therefore proposed a secret conference. It took place between the Duke of Portland on his part and Marshal Boufflers acting for Louis, and then commanding in the Low Countries. Lord Macaulay is unlimited in his praise of William as a diplomatist, whilst as a general, and even as a politician, he does not assign him fair rank. Such a judgment might perhaps be modified. William has not been surpassed as a general politician, whereas as a diplomatist he had great faults. His opening private negotiations with Louis, whilst the Congress of Ryswick was sitting, was alone a hazardous and scarcely a warrantable act. It became more objectionable when Portland betrayed that the aims of his master were to obtain not only William's recognition, but the withdrawal by Louis of all aid and countenance to James, and the removal of that prince from Paris to Rome or Avignon. In return for such concessions, Bentinck offered not only the services of the King of England to force his German and Spanish allies to peace, but hinted that hereafter Louis might find an especial and faithful ally in the English.* The effect of this indiscreet forwardness on the part of the Dutch negotiator was to make the French withdraw the offer they had made of restoring Luxemburg and Strasburg, and to replace it (July 20) with the proposal to give Friburg and Brisach as the equivalent of Strasburg, and to adopt a similar substitution with respect to Luxemburg.

An outburst of choler might have been expected from William on his receipt and perusal of these new demands. Far from it. In a letter written immediately

* Boufflers to Louis the Fourteenth, July 9, 1697.

CHAP.
XXXII.

after to Heinsius,* William calmly expresses a hope that Spain would accept an equivalent in lieu of Luxemburg, and the emperor be induced to follow the example with respect to Strasburg. However just might be the complaint of England and its king against the tardiness and inefficiency of their German and Spanish allies, this total and sudden abandonment of their interests by William can certainly not be defended either in policy or honour.

The Germans, especially the Protestants of the north, as well as the princes of the circles, were very wroth at the idea of abandoning Strasburg, an imperial city, to France. The Emperor pretended to share their indignation, whilst the Catholic party and minister at Vienna preferred seeing Strasburg catholicised by France to retaining it as a Protestant city of the empire. Leopold himself preferred the equivalent which Louis offered, it being Friburg and Brisach, as they had both especially belonged to him. And thus Strasburg became French. But the house of Austria thought it too much to give up both Strasburg and Luxemburg, and such a stand was made to retain the other that Louis abandoned it and accepted an equivalent.†

By the treaty of Ryswick France obtained full sovereignty of Alsace, with its capital Strasburg, giving up everything on the German bank of the Rhine. Louis also ceded the country on the left bank of the Rhine north of the frontier of Alsace. He gave up Treves, Deux-Ponts, and the forts he had built on the Moselle and the Neckar, abandoning the claim of Furstemberg to Cologne, and with it his own pretensions to dominate

* Grimblot, v. i. p. 60.

† It was a miracle that the French did not keep Luxemburg. William was for giving it to them, preferring the equivalent. Spain, frightened by Vendome's capture of Barcelona, had sent orders to sign the peace

without insisting on it. (P. Venier.) The German princes alone resisted, and owing, says St. Simon, to the weakness of Harlay, one of the French negotiators, the important fortress was given up by Louis.

in the ecclesiastical electorates. Saarlouis and Landau remained the French frontier fortresses in that direction. The Flemish frontier, by the treaty, remained much as it is at present, the French giving up Courtray, Ath, Mons, Charleroi, the country of Namur, and Dinant.

One of the most brilliant feats of the war had been the capture of Barcelona by the Duke of Vendome in July. Never had France a fairer opportunity for crushing Spain by its arms. But the policy of Louis looked to succession, not conquest, and Barcelona, with the rest of Catalonia, was restored with Luxemburg in apparent respect to the declining monarch.

The Dutch, who had been the first to negotiate with Louis, were well treated in what they had most at heart. Colbert's severe tariff was reduced to a kind of medium between that of 1664 and that of 1667. The Dutch gave back Pondicherry. France and England signed a mutual restoration of conquests in North America. The name and title of William the Third, King of England, was appended at the head of the Treaty, and Louis engaged not to sanction or favour any Jacobite attempts against him in England.

The most remarkable feature of the Treaty of Ryswick was that France, after successive efforts and experiments, was driven back to the frontier assigned to it at Nimeguen, on the north. Its only gain was Strasburg and Alsace, which, although it lopped off from Germany a German-spoken province, still allowed the two countries to touch, with a deep and definite barrier between them, the Rhine. With the exception of Lorraine, which was now restored to its dukes on tolerable conditions of independence, France had attained the limits which it had been destined to keep, and which have been re-established in our day, so that we may consider them the natural frontier of France. The king, indeed, put forward large preten-

CHAP.
XXXII.

sions for his family as legitimate heir to all, or part, of the Spanish monarchy, and to uphold his right by arms. But this was a dynastic and a family quarrel, rather than a national one. The struggle of France itself for conquest and extension ceased with the close of the 17th century, to be only awakened by the marvellous events which marked the close of the 18th.

A circumstance that should not be passed over in silence was that towards the close of this negotiation, which the French professed to conduct on the basis of the Treaty of Westphalia, they made a demand, and carried it, which was a complete breach of the letter and spirit of these treaties. Louis had introduced into the Palatinate and other parts of Germany which he had occupied, the Catholic religion, in despite of the Protestant tendencies of the population. He insisted at Ryswick that this compulsory Catholicism should be maintained, thus pushing northwards the line of demarcation between the religions. But, on the other hand, the Protestantism of Northern Europe received considerable accession of strength, first from its conquest of England and the manifest check given to the military power of France, then to the creation of a new electorate in favour of Hanover.

A greater advantage than even these to the Protestant cause was the circumstance of the Catholic house of Austria, both in Germany and in Spain, being compelled to have recourse to the aid of Protestant powers to save it from being crushed by France. In future wars this necessity was more felt, and Protestant aid even more and more efficient. The consequence was compulsory tolerance, and the elimination of religious grudges and difference from amongst those political motives which formed the mainspring of European policy. The extension or prevalence of certain religious opinions, which animated the policy of the 17th century, gave way at its close to a purely territorial and

dynastic struggle. This again, in our day, has either given way or been deeply modified by that antagonism between absolute and free principles of government which were almost unknown at the period of which we treat.

Between the religious struggle of the 17th century and the constitutional one of the 19th, the 18th century intervened as a period of national and military antagonism, in which there was little or no intermingling of either religious or governmental systems.

Distressing as war was for his people, and little glorious as its results were becoming for himself, one ceases to wonder at Louis being greedy of great excitement on marking the collapse which took place at each interval of peace. From the game of winning and losing provinces and empires the court of Versailles descended to the most trivial occupations, the most puerile and empty quarrels. Every aim and every cognizance of domestic policy had expired with Colbert. To set order in the finances or administration was deemed impossible. In peace the only business of the king seemed to be to live commodiously, keep the court brilliant and orthodox, and leave the rest of his subjects to be fleeced by his Intendants. When one has contemplated the habitual life of the monarch, of his family, and of Versailles, in the pages of Dangeau and St. Simon, one is struck by the difficulty with which these personages, so apparently endowed with all life's pleasures and advantages, contrived to get through the day. The heir to the throne, the dauphin, passed the idlest of lives, his time divided between sport and play. Bossuet had been his preceptor, and Bossuet's lessons bade him imitate his father in his absolutism. But this, whilst his father lived, condemned the dauphin to nonentity, and to this he perfectly, and, as it proved, for life, resigned himself. The dauphin's eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, had been educated by

CHAP.
XXXII.

Fénelon, who placed before the young prince's eyes another model, as the Telemachus testifies. He was a virtuous but timid prince. The legitimate offspring of the king were not so prominent at Versailles, or such favourites with the king, as his numerous illegitimate sons and daughters, who rivalled with the princes and princesses of the blood, the families of Orleans and Condé. Between these, as well as between dukes and marshals, etiquette was the great subject of dispute, as also was the prey of office, the numerous vacant abbeys, governments, posts, or regiments of which the king had the disposal. The principal dispute, however, was for precedence and etiquette. A chair in the royal presence was something too high to be ever obtained; but the honour of having a stool was vehemently struggled for by the ladies, whilst the nobles were equally zealous for the liberty of entering the king's bedchamber, or standing behind him when at mass. St. Simon chronicles all these disputes with the gravity of a Homer. And it is astonishing to see all the acuteness of intellectual sentiment break forth from the livery of the lacquey.

The affair which chiefly occupied the court during those years of peace which closed the century was not a woman's quarrel. The king's passions were hushed in the quiet haven of Madame de Maintenon's apartment. Nor was it ministerial struggles; there was no more a Louvois nor a Colbert; their places were filled by Barbessieux and Pontchartrain, into whose nostrils the king alone breathed life. The parties which strove in the court arena were the two prelates Fénelon and Bossuet. The former was a divine of genius and sentiment, the latter of authority and rule. Bossuet resembled not a little the high-priest of that people whom he pre-eminently worshipped, the Jews, amongst whom he would have been the rigid Pharisee. Forms and traditions were all in all with him, and he had as

great horror of innovation or enthusiasm as one of the Sanhedrim. The king participated in Bossuet's view of religion. He considered that his people ought to believe and to pray as they were ordered, and enter the church as soldiers went to parade, to go through certain exercises with precision. His own devotion was of this kind, and his father confessor a kind of sergeant. Madame de Maintenon sought to infuse some sentiment into their joint prayers, but could not prevail over the cold nature of the monarch. Père la Chaise, the monarch's confessor, approved of this. Monarch or minister, according to the Jesuit, were good for nothing, if devotees. Louis the Fourteenth, he thought, had quite enough of Philip the Second in him, without making bigotry and asceticism the mainspring of his government. Louis therefore continued to live gaily, and even to pardon in others that dissipation which he no longer indulged in himself. He resisted Madame de Maintenon's tastes for claustral life and living; and it was only in his later years, when Letellier had succeeded La Chaise, that the court of Louis assumed that gloomy aspect which indeed but too well suited its prospects and fortunes.

Debonair in his pleasures, and kind to his courtiers, Louis could tolerate no question of his authority in matters of either state or religion. Even in the latter his own opinion was his law and guide. In all quarrels with Jansenism and with Jesuitism he was obliged to use considerable pressure with the pope, the court of Rome being actuated by far less zeal than that of France, and often desiring to be moderate when such men as Bossuet were furious. The mistake of the day was the extravagant aiming at perfection of a few in religion, whilst the many were left to ignorance or indifference. Devotion was almost worthless, unless it amounted to reclusion and penitence at La Trappe or Val de Grâce, Port Royal or St. Cyr. And the great

CHAP.
XXXII.

dread of the king was, lest these renowned retreats of piety should set themselves above the Church, or abstract themselves from it. This was the case of Port Royal, as it had been the case of the Protestants, viz., to attempt to be religious and virtuous without the pious teaching and precepts of the Church. Yet in the very precincts of the court, nay, in its very heart, grew up a little sect which revived the idea of a religion of the heart independent of forms.

The little coterie, rather than sect or party, which raised itself at Versailles on the fall of Louvois, and succeeded in partially persuading Louis to be more humane, honest, and humble in his policy, has been alluded to. Its influence, supported by the attractions of De Maintenon, would have been more durable and more useful, had the leading personage of its councils been more worldly and more adroit. But Fénelon had the weakness of a recluse and the errments of a visionary, and this led to an indulgence in superstition, of which the practical spirit of Bossuet was incapable. A certain Madame Guyon broached a system of sentimental devotion, which she called a "pure love of God;" and which consisted in wrapt contemplation, rather than in the performance of the many mute duties of the Church. Her eloquence and unction won upon Madame de Maintenon, upon the Dukes of Noailles and Chevreuse, upon Fénelon himself, then tutor to the king's grandson. It was a harmless shape for party to assume, and certainly capable of suiting but few persons. Quietism, as it was called, invaded the school of St. Cyr, by the permission of Madame de Maintenon. The confessor of the establishment, Godot, was horrified that it set at nought his precepts, and superseded him in his functions. He complained, and Bossuet was indignant at what rendered the acts of the priesthood superfluous. This was the crime of which Protestantism had been guilty. The memoirs of the time do not clearly

indicate what most probably was the case,—that the mild, humane, and tolerant party was carefully watched in all its actions by the more fierce, authoritative, and intolerant faction to which Louvois had and to which Bossuet still belonged. These instantly pounced upon the heresy of Madame Guyon and the weakness of Fénelon, and swelled an amiable foible into a fierce crime, which Godot first denounced, exaggerated, and anathematised. The prudent Maintenon drew back in affright, the entrance to St. Cyr was forbidden to Madame Guyon, and the fair enthusiast was soon sent to the Bastille. Fénelon, who knew her sincerity, and felt her genius, thought it base to abandon her. He published, in refutation of Bossuet, a work consisting of fragments and opinions of the Lives of the Saints, in which he showed how many of the canonised demigods had gained Christian apotheosis by doing no more than Madame Guyon had done. The king, however, would not hear of sanctification. In his reign St. François de Sales would have gone to the Bastille, and Ste. Thérèse been immured in a cell. Fénelon was dismissed from his functions at court, and exiled to his diocese at Cambrai. Bossuet and rigid orthodoxy reigned at Versailles. Jesuitism was forbidden as much as Jansenism. And the only opposition to the Church which was allowed was that of utter disbelief. The *libertins*, as infidels were politely called, soon replaced Protestantism, Jansenism, or Jesuitism, as antagonists of the sacerdotal influence which reigned at court. Their standard, however, was not raised at Versailles. But in Paris, at the Palais Royal, at Anet, the residences of the heirs of the house of Orleans and of Vendome, that reaction against religion commenced which soon found an apostle in Voltaire, and a result in the Great Revolution.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM THE TREATY OF RYSWICK TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS
THE FOURTEENTH.

1697—1715.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

NEVER was more fully shown the absurdity of the principle which governed succession in European monarchies, that of their being the exclusive property of certain families, and descending to their heirs like other estates, than on the failure of the race which for so many centuries had ruled in Spain. The enormity was indeed sufficiently manifest in the fact of one prince being in possession of territories extending in a circle from Antwerp to Gibraltar, passing up the Rhine and over the Alps into Italy, from whence the sea was to be crossed to the capital of the empire. The causes of the decadence of Spain are various; yet the one impossible task of seeking to subdue and to administer provinces and peoples so remote, and so estranged in language, interests, and habits, is quite sufficient to account for the government of Madrid having sunk under it. When, in addition, the reigning house became extinct, or threatened to be so, and when such rights as it bequeathed were represented by the offspring of female descendants, there came a perfect chaos of conflicting claims, at a period when the people themselves, with the sole exception of England, were accounted or considered to have no voice in so momentous a matter.

The decadence, and promised disappearance, of the Austrian royal family of Spain were indeed at the bottom

of all Louis the Fourteenth's schemes of ambition. It prompted his first war, arising out of his doctrine of evolution, and terminating by a secret treaty with Austria for the partition of the Spanish monarchy. Had Louis adhered to the terms of this treaty, which gave him Belgium as well as Naples, leaving Spain to the Imperial family, he would probably have realised the darling wish of his nation—the frontier of the Rhine. Had he accepted the offers of the Dutch in his early successes during the war of 1672, he might have attained the same aim. The extravagant Louvois, who seemed to love war for war's sake, without fixing his view upon any definite end, drove Louis not only to refuse the Dutch offer in 1672, but to rush into hostilities against Germany and Italy in 1688; thus rendering the war universal, and at the same time bootless, because it soon became necessarily defensive, or only offensive for maraud. The result of Louvois' rashness proved too perilous not to impress the monarch with a dislike of his policy. Louis foresaw troublous times, and wars, as likely to arise from the Spanish succession; and he was resolved at least to secure one ally, and preclude the revival of a European coalition against him.

The power which France now regarded as its chief antagonist was the Emperor, who claimed to succeed to the Spanish monarchy, as representative and continuer of the old house of Austria. Louis the Fourteenth pretended to the same heritage by right of his wife, daughter of Philip the Fourth. She had, indeed, formally renounced all such right on her marriage, but her dowry had remained unpaid, which, the French said, cancelled the renunciation. Another daughter of Philip the Fourth, the first wife of the Emperor Leopold, had left an only child, a daughter, married to the Elector of Bavaria. Their son, if it were desirable to have one empire distinct from another, ought to have been proclaimed the heir of the Spanish monarchy by the laws of

CHAP.
XXXIII.

common sense. The Emperor Leopold would, however, neither listen to French nor to Bavarian pretensions. He was himself born of a sister of Philip the Fourth. But his true claim was, as has been said, that he represented the house of Austria, which had created, in a manner, the great empire of Spain and of the Indies.

The Emperor Leopold was the most impracticable of sovereigns, one who could never resign himself to peace, nor exert himself in war.* He took it for granted that the Spanish court must be true to its Austrian origin. But there was one sentiment which prevailed in every Spanish mind over dynastic rights or ties, and that was Spanish pride, which demanded the future as well as past union of the vast monarchy, which so enshrined the national name. But though all entertained the same desire, each proposed different ways of attaining it. The queen regnant was for the Austrian succession, the queen mother for the Bavarian; whilst several of the grandees came to entertain the belief that no prince could maintain intact the extent of the monarchy save one of the house of Bourbon. The adroit French ambassador, Harcourt, fanned and flattered this idea in the minds of the Spaniards; but the head of the house of Bourbon, Louis the Fourteenth, himself was not sanguine of at least immediate success. The more just and pacific of his counsellors were of opinion that to secure a portion, and even not the chief portion, of the Spanish monarchy was better than to rush into war for the whole.†

There was then no potentate in Europe whose good sense, constancy, and power could be relied upon in an alliance save William the Third. With him the French king opened negotiations, for which indeed William himself gave the opportunity. In 1798 he despatched the Duke of Portland to Paris, to awe down the exiled James by his magnificence, and by the respect which

* Meuzel, *Neuere Geschichte*.

† Mignet, *Succession d'Espagne*.

his rival commanded.* So far Portland was successful, though he could not persuade Louis to dismiss the Stuarts from St. Germain. The French king, however, showed his want of William, and his trust in him, by pressing for a prospective arrangement of the Spanish succession. Here again, in the negotiation which ensued, we feel inclined to dissent from Lord Macaulay's estimate of William as a diplomatist. For whilst Portland remained firm and fixed in the declaration, that in no case would England ever consent to see the crown of Spain worn by a French prince, William was weak enough to accept that contingency, provided it were accompanied by territorial gain to England of ports in the Mediterranean and islands in the West Indies. Portland said that the policy of England with regard to the States of Southern Europe was directed to the preservation of its own trade, and that the junction of the French naval force with Spanish pretensions would imperil the English commercial interest both in the Mediterranean and in America; whereas the emperor, or his son, succeeding to the throne of Spain, would bring to it no accession of naval power.†

The French court, finding Portland too rigid in this view, transferred the negotiation to London, whither Count Tallard was sent as ambassador. He pressed William, who at first hesitated much, and insisted on almost the whole heritage going to the Elector of Bavaria. "What," exclaimed Tallard, "give Spain and the Indies, Italy and the Netherlands, to the Elector of Bavaria! Why should my master enter into such engagements?" William perceived his demands to be untenable, and offered to give Spain and the Indies to the dauphin's son,‡ Italy to Austria, and merely the

* The Journal of Portland's embassy in the State Paper Office gives a detailed account of the serious

quarrels and difficulties arising out of etiquette.

† Grimblot, vol. i. p. 300.

‡ Ibid., p. 369.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Netherlands to Bavaria. Louis had the option between this offer and that of his grandson getting but Naples and Sicily, the Bavarian prince obtaining Spain and Flanders, and the Archduke Milan. Strange to say, the King of France chose the latter alternative, gave up Spain and Flanders to the elector's son, and contented himself with Southern Italy for his grandson. He indeed also demanded Luxemburg and Guipuscoa, but this was refused, and he concluded the agreement by which the Bavarian prince was to inherit all the Spanish possessions except those in Italy.

We must confess that, after perusing every account, and weighing every consideration, we are at some loss to comprehend the reason for Louis's decision, or to understand the policy which made him sign this treaty of partition. Macaulay's idea of Louis preferring to sell the Spanish crown dear to buying it cheap does not sufficiently explain the motive. The French king's views must have been to make an arrangement that was merely to be temporary, which would secure him peace as long as his kingdom required it, and afford him all the facilities afterwards for wresting Flanders and Spain from a weak prince, who had no hold on the Spanish people, and who must greatly offend them, as well as the house of Austria, by his accession. In this position, the Bavarian monarch of Spain and Flanders must at any time have fallen an easy prey to France; whilst, to facilitate both conquests, Louis strove to get Luxemburg in the north, and succeeded in getting Guipuscoa, which opened to him the heart of Spain, in addition to Sicily and Naples.

There was another reason for Louis not accepting Spain, even for his grandson, apart from Italy and Flanders. This was, that his consent to such a partition would completely alienate from him the people and the influential personages of Spain. The mere fact of either the electoral prince or the archduke accepting the

isolated sovereignty of the Peninsula would, he knew, ruin both with the Spaniards. And this, no doubt, was the great secret of Louis's acceptance of the two successive treaties of partition.

Such calculations did not indeed prove just on the news of the first treaty of partition reaching Madrid. However indignant the Spanish court, it could not fling censure on the infant prince of Bavaria. But to defeat the scheme of his limited succession, the king was induced to draw up a testament, bequeathing the whole of the monarchy undivided to the electoral prince. Louis protested, and no more.* The electoral prince, he knew, could not possess himself of the whole empire against the combination of France, Austria, and the maritime powers, a reflection which indeed the Spaniards themselves did not fail to make. But all such consideration was cut short by the small-pox which carried off the seven years old electoral prince in February 1699.

In the very letter by which the French king conveyed the intelligence to Tallard, he directed that envoy to enter into negotiations with England for a second treaty of partition. The former pact had parcelled the empire between three; it had now to be divided between two. William did not take this view; his object was to find a prince who could fill the place and position of him just deceased. He thought on the King of Portugal, on the Duke of Savoy, but afterwards, taking advantage of a secret article of the late treaty, which declared the Elector of Bavaria successor to his son, should the latter die heirless on the Spanish throne, he proposed giving Spain to this prince. When Louis himself, however, offered to cede Spain and the Indies to the archduke, second son of the Emperor

* Louis said, he would take the measures necessary to prevent war, and the injustice that it was intended

to do him. Harcourt's protest. State Papers, France, 317.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Leopold, William could not but accept that arrangement. Louis at the same time proposed annexing Piedmont and Savoy to France, Victor Amadeus and his dynasty being transferred to Naples. Milan was to be given to the Duke of Lorraine, which province France was also to obtain. In negotiating the two treaties of partition, the possession of Italy, and the exclusion of the house of Austria from it, seemed the chief aim of the French king. Thus completely separating Madrid and Vienna, he could prevent one from lending in extremities its aid to the other. Louis offered at the same time the junction of the Spanish Low Countries with Holland in one republic, or, if there were objections, to cede them to the Elector of Bavaria.

These proposals occupied the courts of London and Versailles all through the summer of 1699. The efforts of William were directed to obtain the adherence of the Emperor to the new treaty of partition. With Spain and the Indies for the archduke one might have reckoned on his assent. But as the dilatory and interminable scruples of the court of Vienna could not be removed, England and Holland signed with France the second treaty of partition in March 1700. The archduke by this agreement was to have Spain, the Indies and Flanders. France was to have Naples, the towns on the Tuscan coast, Guipuscoa, and Lorraine; the Duke of Lorraine to become Duke of Milan. If Austria rejected this plan of partition, the Duke of Savoy was to be substituted for the archduke. The latter was forbidden to proceed to Spain in case the emperor should reject the treaty.*

Thus every one was disposing of the King of Spain's dominions, save those who had voice and right in the matter. Still it must be recorded to the credit of the Spaniards of influence that they gave it as their

* Grimblot, vol. ii. p. 406.

opinion from the first that the Cortes should be assembled and consulted on so weighty a matter; but the imbecile prince, blind in absolutism as in orthodoxy, could not be brought to sanction this only way of attaining the end he had in view.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

The power of bequest still remained to him, but it became daily more evident that the testament of the monarch in the present state of his empire would remain of no effect, unless the bequest was in favour of one able to enforce its validity. This conviction came soon to prevail even over national resentment. Great was the explosion of anger at Madrid when the second treaty of partition became known. The emperor hoped by rejecting the treaty to become the favourite of the Spanish court, and its chosen heir. But the most influential counsellors had abandoned the Austrian cause. The queen and her favourite had discredited it by their rapine, and the imperial ambassador by his arrogance. The Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, who commanded the few German soldiers of the guard in Madrid, gave a most disagreeable foretaste of what might be expected from a German king. Yet when troops were required to defend Ceuta, the Austrians could send none, whilst the French were ready with their aid. The Cardinal Porto Carrero, the most influential personage of the court, came, or was brought, round to favour the succession of a French prince. During a famine the popular animosity had been adroitly directed against those of the counsellors of the State who were in the Austrian interest, and these, such as Oropeza, were exiled. Still attachment to his family continued to influence the mind of the sinking monarch, and forbade him to disinherit them. He was advised to consult the pope. Innocent the Twelfth on the verge of the grave referred the important subject to a council of cardinals, which recommended King Charles to make the best provision for the maintenance

CHAP.
XXXIII.

in its integrity and power of the Catholic monarchy of Spain.

A secret council of grandees was also held at Madrid. The most aged of these, the Marquis of Manzera, gave very sensible advice. He said that, had the Cortes been assembled at the first prospect of the failure of the royal line, and had a national and wise administration governed the country since, it would have found resources within itself, an army, a navy, a treasury, with able ministers and generals to make the choice of the king effectual, whatever prince might have been selected for his successor. But then Spain was powerless, without troops or money, the monarchy unsupported by any of its old institutions. The only mode left for preserving the integrity of the country was to call to it a prince who could bring all that Spain wanted. And the house of Bourbon could alone do that.* The declining king could not resist this decision of Rome and of his own grandees. And he consented to execute, without the knowledge of the queen, a testament in favour of a grandson of Louis the Fourteenth. That king was sounded on the subject. And when the testament was actually drawn up and signed early in November, Louis was not long ignorant of its contents. †

The French king had indeed ample time between his knowledge of the testament and the death of Charles the Second of Spain to make up his mind as to the course he should pursue. He communed with those most in his confidence, with Madame de Maintenon, with Torcy, and with Pontchartrain. All were opposed to his acceptance of the testament, especially Madame de

* Manzera's speech is given in the Memoirs of the Marquis of Louville.

† Dangeau, Louville, and even William's letters in Grimblot, show

how fully and universally was known the nature of the King of Spain's testament, leaving the monarchy to the Duke of Anjou.

Maintenon, who had seen what both Louis and the country had suffered towards the end of the last war, and who dreaded a renewal of such struggles. The arguments, however, both in policy and in justice, for the acceptance of the testament, were many and forcible.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

When France in the last treaty of partition consented to give Spain to the archduke, it looked, of course, to the emperor's acceptance of such an arrangement. His doing so would have secured to the French peaceable possession of the portion allotted to them in Italy. But since the emperor rejected and denounced this treaty, and was prepared to oppose its provisions, what security or probability was there for either the Duke of Lorraine getting possession of Milan, or the French being acknowledged masters of Sicily and Naples? * William himself seemed to acknowledge the difficulty, which he hoped to surmount by giving Savoy and Piedmont to France in lieu of Naples, the Duke of Savoy being transferred thither. The French would thus have been more easily installed in their allotted territories, and public opinion in England, indifferent to the annexation of Savoy and Piedmont to France, would have been gratified, whilst it had the strongest repugnance to the ports and countries of Sicily or of Southern and Central Italy being in their possession. † The Duke of Savoy's refusal defeated that scheme. And thus France, by adhering to the treaty of partition, would have found itself at war with Germany and the States, which supported Austria, whilst there was little aid to be hoped from the maritime powers, England being disarmed, and Holland most reluctant to re-assume the burden of war expenses. Louis, too,

* "It must be owned," writes the Duke of Manchester, William's envoy in Paris, "that the emperor's not signing the treaty of partition gives them a plausible pretext for

breaking it." Manchester to Halifax. Court and Society.

† See the correspondence in Grimblot.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

could not forget that William, in his past negotiations, had admitted the contingency of the dauphin's son succeeding to the Spanish crown, so that he might consider his future acquiescence not impossible. Nor could the French king be expected to foresee the energy of the English people, so augmented by its conquest of constitutional liberty, as to be able to send forth heroic armies, and produce a general to lead them of first-rate ability, before whom the once invincible monarchy of France shrunk in decrepitude, the fruit of its utter negation and dereliction of freedom.

On the 9th of November arrived at Versailles news of the death of the King of Spain, and an extract from his testament which nominated the Duke of Anjou, second son of the dauphin, king of the great inheritance. In case of his refusal that empire was to pass forthwith to the archduke, and in his default to the Duke of Savoy. Louis, therefore, had before him the alternative of either possessing the Spanish territory entire, or seeing it at once pass to the great rival country and rival house. A council was immediately summoned and followed by others, in which Torcy and Pontchartrain, who had once opposed the acceptance of the testament, showed themselves converted as well as Madame de Maintenon to the opinion of the king.* The Duke of Beauvilliers alone opposed. The dauphin declared he would never assent to his son and family waiving the rights accruing from their birth and confirmed by the testament.

In a week after the receipt of the testament, Louis the Fourteenth called the Spanish envoy into his closet, and bade him do homage to the Duke of Anjou as his sovereign. The folding doors were then thrown open, and the court invited to perform the same ceremony. Louis declared his decision to be the will of

* Torcy was for at once sending the Duke of Anjou privately to Harcourt. Louville.

God and of his people. He bade his grandson be at once a good Spaniard and a good Frenchman. The political union of the two kingdoms would confer upon both happiness and upon Europe peace. It was difficult to have uttered aught either as a wish or a prediction that should turn out so egregiously false. Europe turned its back upon peace; whilst France and Spain under the Bourbon dynasties experienced little save misery and decadence.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

The reader may be spared the pomps and ceremonies of the occasion, the latter more strictly registered and chronicled than matters of policy and administration. Young Anjou, a stripling weak of body as of mind, was instructed in the manners and habits of dignity upon state occasions. From such solemn etiquette, which he nevertheless enjoyed, Philip was wont to escape to rabbit shooting and boyish amusements. His chief prospect of happiness as king was that it liberated him from the magisterial tyranny of his grandfather's court. Louis and Philip shed mutual tears as they parted at Sceaux. However grave the future consequences to both, the first results of their bold decision gave them no cause of regret. Philip was received in Spain with all the loyalty and submission that a son of Charles might have commanded.* Not only Spain, but the Italian provinces, both people and governors, showed equal submission. The emperor indeed was irate, and prepared to claim the heritage of his house by arms. Yet though freed from the Turkish war, which the intervention of England had chiefly terminated, † and assured of the support of the North German powers by the erection of Prussia into a kingdom, and Hanover into an electorate, still the motions of the emperor were slow, and his hopes unpromising.

Nor was William himself prepared for vindicating

* Mémoires de Noailles.
VOL. IV.

† In the peace of Carlowitz.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

the independence of Europe. The inveterate favoritism shown by the English monarch to his Dutch friends and followers had made formidable enemies of the most eminent of the English political leaders, who so hampered his administration as altogether to neutralise his power.* The second treaty of partition, giving Naples and Savoy to France, was the object of severe disapprobation by the united parties. So much so that Matthew Prior congratulates the English ambassador in Paris on Louis preferring the testament to the treaty, "all the English being so peevishly opposed to the latter."† The English king, therefore, as well as the Dutch, would gladly have compounded with the French grasping Spain for their young prince, had Italy been transferred to the archduke, advantages secured to the trade in the Mediterranean and the West Indies,‡ and the barrier of fortified towns erected in Flanders against French aggression, been respected, and left under even nominal Spanish rule. But Louis was too much elated by the universal burst of success to adopt even the tone of conciliation. And he evaded the demands of the Dutch, for the preservation of a barrier in Flanders, by saying that he was merely ready to abide by the Treaty of Ryswick.§ The Dutch, in consequence, began to raise money and to arm troops.|| They had garrisons in the Spanish towns of Luxemburg, Namur, Mons, Charleroi, and Venloo, as security for six millions lent to Spain. Louis lost no time in informing the Dutch that he would repay them.¶ By the connivance of the Elector of Bavaria, who commanded in the Netherlands, but whom Spain did not pay, the French surprised the towns and

* Vernon Correspondence, *passim*.

† Prior to Manchester, Dec. 1700.
Duke of Manchester's Court and Society from Elizabeth to James.

‡ Marlborough's letter to Godolphin, in Coxe.

§ William's speech to Parliament.

|| Lamberti, tom. ii.

¶ Middleton's letters, in Macpherson.

their garrisons in February, 1701, dismissing the soldiers and keeping the fortresses.* This bold appropriation of the barrier † by the French, whilst it compelled the Dutch, as well as William, to recognise Philip as King of Spain, alarmed the British Parliament, and silenced the partisans of peace. The Commons besought the king ‡ to renew the triple alliance. And he did conclude a treaty with Denmark in July, stipulating military aid. The basis of a larger treaty was at the same time laid, which was to include the emperor and the Palatine. And this treaty itself was signed later, that is, in September, at Loo. It stipulated no less than that the allies were to conquer Flanders for Holland, Italy for the emperor, whilst the Dutch and English were to appropriate what they could of the Spanish Indies.

When it is recollected that this most hostile treaty was actually signed on the 7th of September, and mooted long before, one may question the assumption that Louis, in recognising, about a fortnight after, the young Prince of Wales as King of England immediately upon his father's death, was actuated purely by sentimental motives. William the Third was the soul and centre of the warlike league now formed against French pretensions, and in challenging his right to the throne of England, Louis committed an act of retaliation rather than of provocation.

Meantime the war actually broke forth in Italy, the chief prize for which the houses of Austria and Bourbon contended. The French had gained the alliance of the Duke of Savoy, the guardian of the Alps, by large sums and promises, and by the betrothal of his daughter to the new monarch of Spain. Catinat, so often opposed

* Pelet. *Mém. Militaires*.

† The Dutch recognised Philip as King of Spain to prevent the seizure of their goods and shipping in the ports of that country. William addressed Philip as king on his ac-

cession to keep in accord with the Dutch, because, hampered by a Tory ministry, he was not prepared for war.

‡ *Parliamentary Debates*.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

to the duke, and naturally mistrustful of him, was joined in the command, which thus became an essentially divided one.

These generals, on behalf of the French, occupied not only the Milanese but the Venetian territory to the Adige. The emperor had the good fortune to find a commander more than equal to any that the French king could oppose to him. This was Prince Eugene of Savoy, to whom Louis had once denied, what he refused to no one, the purchase of a regiment, and who in consequence entered the service of Austria, and had recently won the famous battle of Zenta, over the Turks. Eugene, at the head of an overwhelming army, soon baffled the arrangements of the Duke of Savoy and Catinat for the defence of the Venetian territory, passed the Adige in their despite, and drove them behind the Adda.

The French court, annoyed at the discomfiture, replaced Catinat by Villeroy, a vapouring commander, whom Madame de Maintenon protected. He sought to redeem the character of the army by attacking the Prince Eugene at Chiari, but he was defeated with the loss of several thousand men, and the supremacy of the Imperialists in the only field where they fought in 1701 was established.

The French king made great efforts to meet in the field the formidable league of enemies which threatened him. He had replaced Pontchartrain in the administration of finance by Chamillard, whom Madame de Maintenon recommended, and of whom Louis himself augured well from the skill which he displayed at billiards.

The new minister was recommended to the king and his mistress by his obsequiousness, whilst what was wanting was a minister as keen to perceive where lay deficiencies, as bold to speak them to the monarch. The capitation tax, so odious to the noblesse, had been re-

pealed, and in 1700, a year of peace, Chamillard had found a revenue of 69,000,000, to meet an expenditure of 116,000,000. He began by wringing 24,000,000 from the State money lenders. He taxed what he thought most flourishing in manufactures, the woollen and the linen fabrics, and put an extinguisher on both. The war then came upon the finance minister, who had recourse to an old operation, the debasement of the coin, an experiment which he repeated five times in the eight years of his administration. If the peace expenditure had been 116,000,000, that of war was double. It reached 220,000,000 in 1706, the last year of Chamillard's administration, by which time he had reduced the revenue to 75,000,000, the debt being above *two milliards*. To meet such demands, Chamillard taxed everything, and especially all articles of consumption. One example will suffice. The tax on wine was so great that it became useless to cultivate the grape, or to press it; a great number of vineyards being in consequence abandoned.

Nevertheless, although the people were thus gradually exhausted, the king was enabled to keep large armies in the field. In the winter of 1701-2 were raised one hundred new regiments, amongst which, by the bye, were enrolled some thousands of *forçats* from Toulon.* This gave the opportunity of promoting no less than 150 new generals. Numbers, however, did not guarantee skill. Indeed the future fortunes of the belligerents might be marked by the names of the commanders. When the dauphin was generalissimo in Flanders, and Villeroy in Italy, the leaders opposed to them were Marlborough and Prince Eugene. King William had been withdrawn from politics and life in March 1702. No better panegyric can be passed upon him than to point out how steadfastly and ably he had organised the prosecution of that war against France which he

* Correspondence. State Papers, France, 318.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

found it so difficult and almost so impossible to begin. The transference of the crown of England to Anne in no wise disturbed the policy which William had traced out. By entrusting Marlborough with command, he had secured the allegiance of that fickle politician to the Protestant and constitutional interests, for in his allegiance was included that of the duchess. The Emperor was also full of zeal, and the allies published their declaration of war in the spring of 1702. Eugene opened the campaign by surprising and capturing Villeroy in Cremona. The marshal was replaced by the Duke of Vendome, a brave but reckless commander. As the campaign in Italy was considered the most important of military operations, Philip the Fifth of Spain hastened thither to animate it by his presence. This, however, led to a contrary result, the king choosing to mortify the Duke of Savoy in some stupid matter of etiquette. The Duke of Marlborough, at the same time, showed himself superior to those opposed to him in Flanders. He found the French in possession of Cleves, and under the walls of Nimeguen, from which advanced position he drove them back into Brabant. Marshal Boufflers, who commanded under the dauphin, succeeded, indeed, in baffling Marlborough's attempt to bring him to action. But the duke captured Venloo, Ruremonde, and finally the citadel and convent of Liege, a blow that was deeply felt by the French court.*

A conviction now began to prevail with both belligerents that nothing decisive was to be achieved in the old and beaten fields of conquest. The English turned their efforts to an invasion of Spain through Portugal, the king of which country had joined their alliance. The French war office conceived a more gigantic scheme, that of the junction of the French army with the forces of the Elector of Bavaria, and the co-operation of the

* Correspondence for Peace in State Papers, France, 318.

Duke of Vendome in Lombardy with both, so as to facilitate a march upon Vienna, and crush the emperor in his capital. The Hungarian insurrection then raging favoured this enterprise, for which, however, sufficient forces were wanting. Marshal Villars indeed advanced into Bavaria, and gained a victory over a portion of the Imperial army, under Count Styrum, upon the field of Hochstedt, destined in the ensuing year for a far more sanguinary and decisive battle. But the Bavarians could not reduce the strongholds of the Tyrol, nor would they effectually co-operate with Villars.

The defection of the Duke of Savoy was, however, the most serious of the French misfortunes. He had naturally looked to profit by the break-up of the Spanish monarchy. But the French, scarcely able to hold their ground in Italy even with his aid, could give him small hopes of permanent aggrandisement, and Catinat had never ceased to complain of the duke's want of zeal. As the French began early to suspect an understanding between him and his relative, Prince Eugene, who commanded the Imperialists, they withdrew all confidence from him. Philip the Fifth came from Spain to protect in the field those interests for which his father-in-law, the Duke of Savoy, seemed little zealous. Louis demanded of the latter but half the number of troops stipulated. The mistrust was patent.* The French, therefore, could have been little surprised at learning Savoy's open defection towards the close of 1703. Still it was most untoward, for the Huguenots of the Cevennes were in arms, defying an army of 20,000 soldiers under Montrevel to put them down, headed, as they were, by able leaders. The Duke of Savoy had but to give his hand to them by

* The French declaration of war against Savoy states that Philip had come to Italy in 1702 from suspicion of the duke's steadfastness.

Prince Eugene, in a letter of Sept. 1702, speaks of the secret negotiations with the duke. See his Correspondenz, tom. i. p. 472.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

the occupation of Dauphiny, and the French were not only threatened with the loss of Italy but with that of their own south-eastern provinces.

If France was unable to make use of the Piedmontese alliance, England profited almost as little by the Dutch. Their generals hampered Marlborough in every design. He had begun the campaign of 1703 by the capture of Bonn. But their fears had recalled him to Flanders, where he formed with them a plan for reducing Antwerp and Ostend. But one Dutch general, Opdam, allowed himself to be surprised and routed, whilst Cohorn, their engineer, showed none of the single-minded zeal of Vauban. It was even said at Amsterdam that, if Marlborough had no better success in the following year, the Dutch would abandon the active alliance.*

The war was, however, about to change its character altogether. The nature of the Low Countries, and their many fortified towns, had reduced a campaign to a succession of sieges, with attempts more or less successful for the relief of the beleaguered places. Lombardy had come to partake of the nature of Flanders in this respect. In Germany the French commanders seldom ventured far from the vicinity of their strongholds on the Rhine. Political circumstances, however, and especially the alliance between France and Bavaria, led to larger strategic movements, and to the march of numerous armies over a wide expanse of territory, naturally producing those great and decisive battles in the field which change the features of politics and war.†

* The Tories and some of his own colleagues were against prosecuting the war in Flanders. The duke remonstrated that in that case they would alienate and lose the Dutch. The report of the latter abandoning it is from correspondence

amongst the State Papers. 1703.

† Leibnitz writes to Schulemberg in 1702 that nothing would humble the House of Bourbon but a change in the ordinary course of military operations by new inventions in the field.

The transference of war to the Danube first led to this. Bavaria's detachment from the empire produced the change. One of the last political efforts of King William was to engage the emperor to secure the Bavarian elector by the promise of Naples.* The advice was slighted, and, as we have seen, the French and Bavarians threatened Vienna. This attempt, which had failed in 1703, might be renewed in the ensuing year, and embarrassed as the emperor was with the Hungarians, it became necessary that he should be succoured. This Marlborough resolved to do, in despite of the manifest obstructions to be overcome. The chief one was the reluctance of the Dutch to allow their army to be diverted from their own defence by a march so remote as that to the Danube. Marlborough by his personal solicitation prevailed, and in the month of May he had crossed the Rhine at Coblenz. Towards the close of June he was upon the Danube, contingents from almost every German power, save Bavaria, joining his standard. The duke's first object was to secure a permanent passage over the Danube into Bavaria, or from it in case of need. The foe held a strong fort on the height of Schellenberg near Donauwerth for this same purpose. And on the 2nd of July Marlborough attacked them there with 7,000 or 8,000 men. The Franco-Bavarians made a gallant resistance of an hour and a half, but were driven from Schellenberg at last, the Dutch and the Austrians each losing their commanders, and the English having suffered considerably. The victory was a good earnest of success. After it the duke marched into Bavaria, crossed the Lech, and proposed reducing Munich unless the Bavarians submitted. They were inclined to do so until the news arrived that Marshal Tallard was marching to join them with 35,000 fresh troops. The elector in consequence determined

* Hedges to Stepney. Kemble, State Papers, p. 315.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

to prolong resistance, whilst Marlborough proceeded to a general devastation of the electorate, and prepared for a permanent occupation of it by investing Ingolstadt. To prevent this, and transfer the war to the north of the Danube, the elector, as soon as he was joined by Tallard, crossed that river, for the purpose of placing their united armies between Marlborough and his chief depôt, which was at Nördlingen.* They thus threatened Prince Eugene, who was encamped at Schellenberg. Marlborough lost no time in crossing to Eugene's support, and on the 11th of August both armies were concentrated on the Danube bank. The French and Bavarians numbered about 60,000 men, the Anglo-Dutch and German nearly equal numbers, except that the French were much superior in infantry, and their foes in cavalry. Of the sixty-six battalions under Marlborough, but fourteen were English, fourteen Dutch, the rest Danes and Germans.

The French under Tallard posted and barricaded themselves at Blenheim on the river, the Bavarians and French mingled held Lutzingen amidst woods and ditches. Between their positions ran a stream or streams twelve feet wide, with marshy bushes on either side, which the French commanders deemed to be scarcely passable. Lest, however, it should be so, the French cavalry were placed at a certain distance behind with orders to charge and defeat any attempt of the enemy to cross or at least form after crossing.

Marlborough and Eugene advanced to the attack early on the morning of the 13th of August. Eugene was to carry Lutzingen. Marlborough awaited till the prince was in a condition to begin, which on account of the ground was not till one o'clock. Then the cannonade gave way for assault. The first was not successful. The English were repulsed from Blenheim,

* Marsin to Chamillard.

the Imperialists from Lutzingen. Hearing that the elector was pressed in the latter post, Tallard rode thither. In his absence Marlborough directed the English troops to pass the marsh and the stream; the operation was long, destructive, and hard-fought, the first comers being more than once cruelly repulsed. But by degrees they gained footing, drew up, and leisurely formed four lines, one behind the other, without advancing, though under a heavy fire. The French say that, had their horse charged altogether, and not by fits and brigades, they would have routed the Anglo-Dutch. That was not done. And about five o'clock in the afternoon Marlborough ordered the advance of the five lines, which "in a slow and close march," says the most graphic French account, drove back French cavalry and infantry and routed all before it. Eugene did not carry the fortress of Lutzingen till seven in the evening, after the centre had been broken. The French infantry retreated into Blenheim, which, after the defeat of the cavalry, became surrounded. Their horse was borne along and forced into the Danube, where many squadrons utterly perished. After a long defence, the French infantry in Blenheim, to the number of 10,000, seeing no hope of resistance and no chance of escape, surrendered, and made the victory complete.

The result of Blenheim, besides its 14,000 captives and 40,000 enemies destroyed, and the number of guns and abandoned cities, was the liberation of Austria, the subjugation of Bavaria, and its occupation by Imperial troops, the unfortunate elector betaking himself to a French command in the Netherlands. But the greatest gain of all was the colossal reputation which it created for the British commander, displaying him as a leader before whose genius and fortune the star and the hitherto military pre-eminence of France paled and shrunk. The illustration of Marlborough came most timely, not only for Austria and for England, but for himself. Without

CHAP.
XXXIII.

victory his political influence would have been lost,* and the cause which he continued to uphold, that of stubborn resistance to the French king, would have been trodden down by factions both in England and in Holland.

After Blenheim, Marlborough withdrew his Dutch and English troops westward of the Rhine. The German princes, especially their general, Prince Louis of Baden, were not a little jealous of Marlborough's achievements, so that no zealous co-operation was to be had from them either that year or the next. The efforts and hopes of the English were directed to another quarter. Some of the most successful naval exploits in British history had been against the Spaniards. An attempt to repeat them was always popular. A naval expedition against Cadiz in 1702 had indeed been attended with signal failure; but this was redeemed by the capture of the Spanish treasure fleet in the harbour of Vigo, much to the impoverishment and disgrace of both the Bourbon monarchies. Later, the King of Portugal had joined the alliance against France, and in 1704, whilst Marlborough was marching to the Danube, the Austrian Archduke Charles, assuming the title of King of Spain, landed in Lisbon, 12,000 English and Dutch troops under Schomberg soon joining him. A war soon commenced upon the Tagus, similar in some respects to that which Wellington opened in the same region a century later. Schomberg, however, was as incapable as his opponent, the Duke of Berwick, was skilful and active. On the side of Portugal, therefore, nothing

* "Lord Marlborough," wrote Prince Eugene to the emperor a fortnight before the battle, "is a man of great talent, courage, and good intentions, most desirous of achieving something, and necessarily so, for he is lost if he return to England after having achieved nothing. He at the

same time knows and mistrusts himself, being well aware that a soldier does not become a general in a day." Eugene's Correspondenz. It would be impossible to enumerate the many accounts of the battle of Blenheim.

was achieved. A drawn battle at sea, off Malaga, and the failure of an attempt on Barcelona were somewhat compensated by the English capture of Gibraltar.

The year 1705 was not marked by any signal exploit of Marlborough. He first tried to penetrate into France by what he considered its weakest point, the Moselle. He was baffled, however, by the ability and activity of Marshal Villars. The fears of the Dutch then compelled the duke to march to their succour in Brabant, where Marlborough forced the French lines, and added to his military renown, without, however, depriving the enemy of any of his principal conquests. In Spain an important blow was struck. Lord Peterborough, at the head of an expedition of some 5,000 soldiers, touched at Lisbon, and carried off from thence the Archduke Charles, who had been unable to penetrate into Spain from that quarter. His real mission, that which Marlborough himself most urged, was to succour the Duke of Savoy. But the archduke insisted on expending every effort to capture Barcelona. The scheme would have failed, as so many similar ones had done, if Lord Peterborough, bold and inventive to rashness, had not conceived the project of surprising the garrison of the citadel, Mont Juich, which overlooked and commanded the town, September 13th, 1705. It remains one of the most daring exploits in the annals of British heroism, and was completely successful, Lord Peterborough not only capturing the castle and reducing the city, but saving the lives of the governor and many of the principal inhabitants. Charles of Austria was thus enabled to assume the crown of Spain in the capital of Catalonia, and take his stand there, a formidable rival to Philip at Madrid.

Another year was Marlborough condemned to what he considered plodding in Flanders. His own nature spurred him to far adventure. He had saved Austria by a march to the Danube, and he now proposed to save

CHAP.
XXXIII.

the Duke of Savoy, and to liberate Italy from the French, by conducting an army beyond the Alps. The French king, after vainly endeavouring to suppress the revolt of the Huguenots in the Cevennes by arms, had recurred to the meaner but more successful artifice of buying off their chiefs. The reduction of the Camisards, as these fanatic and stubborn religionists were called, left the Duke of Savoy still more at the mercy of the French, and in 1705 the Duke of Vendome captured his chief fortresses, and reduced his territories in Piedmont to that of the capital and its citadel.

Unable to overcome the difficulties in the way of his own march to the Duke of Savoy's relief, Marlborough at least secured the despatch of 8,000 Prussians to join his army. From one capital of Germany he hurried to another, upon the same quest, and expostulated with the Hungarians for paralysing the emperor's power, and by their insurrection leaving him exposed to the encroachments of the French. Instead, however, of operating, as he wished, with an army upon the plains of Piedmont and of Lombardy to fight Vendome, Marlborough found himself in the spring of 1706, near Tirlemont, at the head of 60,000 men, having an understanding with certain citizens of Namur, who promised to make him master of that fortress. Marshal Villeroy was at the head of a French army of no less force, with which he marched to protect Namur. Foreseeing a conflict, both commanders hastened to seize what each considered an advantageous position between the rivers of Ghette and Mehaigne. The French anticipated Marlborough in reaching this spot. Villeroy had his right on the Mehaigne behind the village of Tavier, his left, at a distance of five quarters of a league, at Anderkirk. In front and in advance of his centre was the village of Ramillies, in which he posted ten battalions (only five according to Pelet). The strength of the position was that Anderkirk was protected by a stream called the

Janz, and the space between the right and Ramillies by a marsh considered to be impassable. The armies were drawn up in presence of each other all the morning of Whitsunday, the 23rd of May. The battle did not begin till three in the afternoon. Marlborough ordered, or seemed to despatch, the greater part of his force to attack the French left at Anderkirk. Villeroy at once weakened his centre to reinforce what he considered the threatened point; whilst, as he did so, Marlborough ordered the rear of his attacking force, consisting chiefly of cavalry, to wheel to the left under cover of a rising ground, and join in the assault which was then about to be made upon Tavers and the French right. The noise and smoke of a simultaneous attack upon Ramillies prevented Villeroy from descrying the manœuvre, and the first tidings that the marshal had from his right wing was that it had been driven in, and that Marlborough's troops were drawn up in position about to fall upon the flank of the French infantry in the centre. Ere he could even seek to remedy it, the infantry in Ramillies, seeing they were outflanked, suffered themselves to be beaten out of the village. There was nothing left but to make an orderly retreat, and this was observed for a time. But some wagons being upset and choking a defile, their cavalry, irritated at the obstruction, broke through it, and threw the infantry into confusion. The retreat then became a flight, Marlborough taking advantage of it to order a vigorous pursuit, during which the fugitives abandoned arms and all else, not more than six cannon being saved by them out of sixty. The loss in killed and wounded was less to the French than at Blenheim, but the result showed the greatness of the panic which followed the defeat. The Elector of Bavaria and Villeroy, who first took refuge behind the walls of Louvain, soon quitted it for Brussels, but found it necessary to evacuate that capital. Flanders declared against them, with its chief towns of Ghent

CHAP.
XXXIII.

and Bruges. The French flag was only to be seen floating upon Mons, Lille, and Antwerp. The conquests with which Louis had inaugurated the war were stricken out of his hands.*

The fortunes of war have been, strange to say, very similar in all ages to the French in their attempts either to appropriate Flanders, and push their frontier to the Rhine, or to overstep the barrier of the Alps and extend their occupation over Italy. In both enterprises they have more than once succeeded, and inaugurated their wars with what appeared decisive victories. But notwithstanding their efforts to render the result of such victories permanent, by erecting fortresses and exhausting the artifices of defensive war, the French have, towards the end of such wars, been driven from the plains of North Italy as well as Flanders. Ramillies accomplished the latter.

Prince Eugene at Turin accomplished the former in the autumn of the same fatal year of 1706. For four months the French had held Turin closely besieged. The citadel was almost the last stronghold that held for the Duke of Savoy, and that maintained or typified his power. Situated in a level plain, as the ruins of its mounds still attest, its sole strength lay in art, without any aid from nature. And the French generals were pretty certain of overcoming these in a given time. Still the defence was obstinate. On the last day of August the Duke of Orleans had led a storming party which penetrated amongst the fortifications, but which was repulsed with great loss. The citadel could not have withstood a repetition of such attacks. Prince Eugene and the Duke of Savoy were able to survey from the heights of the Superga the entire position of the besieger's operations, and on the morning of the 7th they ordered a general attack from the right

* Pelet. Villeroy's letter to the king. Chamillard to Villeroy.

along the line of the Doria. The Duke of Saxe-Gotha and the Count de Bonneval were amongst the principal leaders, with the Prince of Wurtemberg and the Prussians under the Prince of Anhalt. It was the Prussians who most distinguished themselves in the attack, forcing their way across the French entrenchments, and the army of the Prince succeeded in driving the enemies from their position and camp between the Doria and the Stura. On this the French found it impossible to continue the siege. Marshal Marsin himself, being wounded, lay in a small cabin, where he was stifled by an explosion in an adjoining room. The French fled or withdrew into Pignerol, leaving behind them nearly 200 pieces of cannon. The battle of Turin and Prince Eugene won for Piedmont what Ramillies and Marlborough achieved for the Low Countries, the complete overthrow of French dominion in these regions.

Had the great English commander been endowed with as much political sagacity as he possessed military genius, he would have taken advantage of the depressed state of the fortunes and of the spirit of the French monarch to accept the large concessions which Louis the Fourteenth, at the close of 1706, was prepared to make. Philip having been driven out of Spain, the French court would have consented to his ceding that monarchy altogether, and with it the Indies, if allowed to retain the dominion of Naples and Sicily. Marlborough, however, would not hear of a Bourbon prince reigning over Sicily and Naples.* And the Dutch, who would have gladly listened to such a distribution of the old Spanish monarchy, were silenced, and compelled to go on with the war.

Louis was thus left no choice but to stand gallantly on his defence. The spirit and the resources of his great country did not fail him. The capitation tax was resuscitated. Duties were laid upon deaths, bap-

* His correspondence in Coxe's Marlborough.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

tism, and marriage, which made many dispense with the latter ceremony. The cross of St. Louis was put up for public sale. And whilst such were the financial enactments of Chamillard, the work in which Vauban proposed a *dîme royal*, or ten per cent. income tax, was condemned to the mortar.* Yet 70,000 militia were raised, and in the ensuing campaign 100,000 French soldiers stood as usual behind their lines in Flanders. The tide of military success began, if not to turn in that year, at least to stop and show a hesitating current. Lord Peterborough, like Lord Wellington in later years, was superseded by an elder general, Lord Galway, who was obliged to undertake a hasty retreat across the enemy's country. Towards its close he was attacked by the French and Spaniards, superior in numbers certainly, under the Duke of Berwick, and the result was the total defeat of the archduke's army and hopes in the battle of Almanza, April 1707.

Prince Eugene was not more successful than Galway in a repetition of the bold attempt of Charles the Fifth to invade Provence and capture Toulon. The Imperialist and Piedmontese armies crossed the Var on the 11th of July, appeared before Toulon on the 25th, and succeeded at first in capturing two important positions, that especially of St. Catherine. The French, however, made a gallant resistance, and by the 16th of August had retaken their positions; on which Eugene, with great precipitancy, beat a retreat.

Whilst these military events, so unfavourable to the allies, took place in the south, in the north the ardour of war was cooled by diplomatic intrigues and negotiations. France sought to drag Charles the Twelfth of Sweden into the quarrel, first as arbiter. Marlborough's personal address defeated the design. But he did not equally succeed with the Dutch, or induce them to fight another Ramillies, or with the Austrians, to support the

* Vauban died of it.

war with vigour. Amsterdam and Vienna always inclined to accommodation. More ominous still, the apparently solid foundation of the Queen's favour, which had supported Marlborough and his policy through so many years, began to waver. A vulgar but more com-
plaisant favourite than the duchess had won the affections of the queen. As the discarded peeress stormed and insulted, the remarks and the comments which such conduct excited in the royal closet turned upon the haughtiness, the avarice, the unbending policy of the Whigs. Harley, the Tory, whom Marlborough had patronised, acted serpent on the occasion, and whispered his venom to Abigail Hill or Masham, and at their suggestion the queen began to offer resistance to her ministers, with respect merely to patronage and appointments at first, but pointing, no doubt, to a change of policy as well as men at no distant period. Such an oscillation of the needle would have been at once perceived at the French court, but in England the influence of Marlborough and Godolphin still survived for two or three years, and was successful in causing the rejection of every overture for peace.

Louis did not cease to press them. His finance minister, Chamillard, had spent for five years in advance the revenue of the country, and could procure but twenty millions of livres to meet the expenses of a campaign that required two hundred and twenty. Desmarets, a disciple and relative of Colbert, succeeded him. He mortgaged the capitation tax, doubled every transit duty, and thus provided food for the armies for 1708. That year, however, did not maintain the slight return of prosperity which had marked 1707. The Duke of Orleans was unable to reduce Catalonia. The English conquered Sardinia and Minorca, whilst the Duke of Savoy expelled the French from their strongholds of Fenestrelle and Exilles, which had secured them always a free passage into Italy from Dauphiny. In Flanders

CHAP.
XXXIII.

the French had profited by the discontent of the citizens with Dutch rule,* and surprised, in the month of July, the important towns of Ghent and Bruges. Marlborough and Eugene hastened to the rescue, and crossed the Scheldt close to Oudenarde, which the French had failed to take. The Dukes of Burgundy and Vendome commanded, and displayed little harmony between them. General Cadogan, who first passed the Scheldt with 12,000 men, attacked the French battalions at Huyse, and drove them in. His cavalry advanced further, and there ensued an engagement of horse, in which the Electoral Prince of Hanover distinguished himself, and which also terminated to the disadvantage of the French. It was evening of the same day ere the main bodies of the two armies met, on such broken ground as allowed little play for either cavalry or cannon. It was therefore an obstinate infantry fight, in which Marlborough first defeated and put to the rout the French right. Vendome was for advancing the other wing to take part in the conflict, but the Duke of Burgundy would not sanction it. Vendome, in consequence, flinging all the blame of the defeat upon the royal duke, ordered the retreat to Ghent, which soon became a rout. The French were reported to have lost 4,000 slain, 2,000 wounded, and 7,000 prisoners, amongst them several general officers. The allies lost 5,000 men, of which 2,000 were slain.†

The result of the victory of Oudenarde was the investment of Lille by Eugene on the 12th of August, 1708. Numerous were the plans and divers the efforts made to succour and save so important a fortress, on which Vauban had exhausted the art of defence. It was the key of the conquests of Louis the Fourteenth. But the French were unable by wiles or by force to

* They had refused to leave the government of Flanders to Marlbo-

rough, to whom the emperor offered to entrust it.

† Mem. of P. Eugene. St. Hilaire.

circumvent Marlborough, or turn either him or Eugene from their purpose. The town of Lille capitulated at the end of October. And the citadel itself was surrendered on the 10th of December by its gallant commander Boufflers.*

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Close upon the severe disaster of the capture of the great military bulwark of the north by the enemy followed the most rigorous winter that had been known for many years. Snow began to fall on the 5th of January, 1709. Copious rains ensued, causing a general inundation, followed by frost and intense cold, which attained 22 degrees below freezing point, and lasted till the middle of March. Seed crops, vines, fruit-trees, all perished. And the misery of the lower orders, already extreme, was aggravated and laid bare by these disasters. The people, even in the most remote districts, as well as under the windows of Versailles, threw the chief blame upon the king, and covered his statues and his ensigns with ordure—sad forerunner of that fatal burst of discontent which exploded eighty years later. This was no time to increase the *taille*, or the consumption duty, or levy money in advance. Desmarets ordained an income tax of one-tenth of every man's revenue. It did not produce more than twenty-five millions, and served but scantily to keep alive the soldiers of Villars, who suffered with the rest of the population.†

In the midst of such distress Louis again tried to induce the Dutch to shake off the rigid influence of their allies. He again offered that his grandson, abandoning Spain and the Indies, should be contented with Naples, whilst he himself would repeal the duties which Colbert had heaped upon Dutch trade. Many of the influential people at Amsterdam were inclined to listen to these overtures. But Marlborough kept them

* *Mém. de Berwick.*

do without shirts or coats." *Mémoires de Villars.*

† "Give us bread," said the officers of a garrison to Villars, "we will

CHAP.
XXXIII.

firm to the policy and continuance of the war by promising them the possession of such a barrier in the Netherlands as France could not consent to. They demanded Lille, Ypres, Tournay, Menin, Condé, Valenciennes, and Maubeuge. The French king sent his confidential minister, Torcy, to Holland to obtain more favourable terms, but at almost all disadvantages to conclude a treaty. De Torcy tried the Dutch. But England having promised them the sovereignty, nay, more than the sovereignty, of the Spanish Low Countries, of which, although the emperor was to remain nominal sovereign, the Dutch were to garrison the towns, and even levy on the country payment for their troops, Torcy, unable to make any impression on the Dutch thus prepossessed, tried Marlborough, and offered a large bribe, rejected by him with a smile of cold indifference. Still the concessions made by Torcy were so large that even the duke began to contemplate peace as possible.* Unfortunately he did not negotiate so as to render it so. The French king resigned himself to give up everything, Naples and all Italy, as well as Spain, Strasburg too, and Lille, Newfoundland to England, and the demolition of Dunkirk. There was fatuity in not accepting such offers. And if they were refused and rendered null, it was more from pedantry than a determination to break off. Pushing their rigour to the utmost, the Dutch demanded to gain not only the towns of the future barrier, but to have Cambray, Valenciennes, and St. Omer delivered over to them by the French, as guarantees of the execution of the treaty. After such preliminaries, the French were told that, if Philip had not delivered up Spain within two months, the treaty should be void, and the war recommence. "Why not have asked for Peronne, as well as St. Omer?" observed Torcy to the Dutch. It was demanding of Louis almost an unconditional surrender,

* Their letters in Coxe. Mémoires de Torcy.

which he could not but refuse, and which in refusing, and making known the terms, he must rally to his side all that remained in France of spirit and of strength. Torcy left Holland at the end of May, and the campaign of 1709 commenced.

The allies first laid siege to Tournay early in July, having judged the position of Marshal Villars, between Douai and the Lis, too strong to be attacked. Tournay surrendered at the close of the month, and its citadel by the end of August. The siege of Mons being the next purpose of the allies, Villars, to prevent it, quitted his strong camp. But he was fortunate enough to seize a position almost as strong in the neighbourhood. Between two woods was an opening leading to the plain or heath of Malplaquet. On this Villars posted his horse, threw up entrenchments and *abattis* of trees before the opening, placing his infantry and guns in the woods and behind these entrenchments. The allies at first hesitated to attack Villars in this fortified position, but there was no other way of reducing Mons.

On the 11th of September was fought the battle of Malplaquet, with about 100,000 men on either side. The allies were commanded by Marlborough and Eugene, the French by Marshals Villars and Boufflers, the latter declaring he had come to serve as volunteer under his friend. The attack commenced simultaneously, by the duke upon the French right, by the English on their left, both endeavouring to pass the entrenchments and carry the woods before them. The Count of Nassau, at the head of the Hollanders, the Duke of Argyle, leading a charge of English horse, distinguished themselves, with partial but not complete success. The French wings, at first repulsed and driven through the woods, were enabled to resist by reinforcements from the centre, which the allied generals perceived, and directed all their available force against the entrenchments that covered the opening. They were

CHAP.
XXXIII.

carried after a struggle, in which Marshal Villars was wounded and carried off the field. When the English had passed the entrenchments, the French horse were led by Boufflers to the rescue to repel and restore the battle. The effort was vain. The infantry and cavalry of the allies, supporting each other, not only emerged from the opening in the woods but cleared the plain behind them of the French, who retreated upon Quevrain and Valenciennes. There were few battles marked by greater slaughter, or fewer prisoners. The victors lost 20,000 men, the vanquished could boast of a less considerable loss.*

The victory of Malplaquet was followed immediately, not by any negotiation with France, but by the conclusion of a new treaty between England and Holland, which became afterwards the weak point of the Marlborough administration, and the target against which its enemies directed their missiles. The victory was in one sensible respect more galling than glorious to the Dutch; their infantry was almost destroyed upon the field. As if to compensate and encourage them, Marlborough concluded with them a treaty, stipulating that there should be no peace till the French gave up every portion of the Spanish monarchy; at this price it made over to the Dutch all the frontier towns of Flanders, such as Ghent, Lille, Tournay, Valenciennes, to hold garrisons therein, for the payment of which they were to levy 400,000 crowns a year on the territory of Spanish Flanders, nominally belonging to the Emperor, but thus really in the hands of the Dutch. So complete indeed did the latter consider it their own that they levied additional duties upon English merchandise.†

Such large concessions to the Dutch were requisite to keep them from listening to the proffers of the

* Villars, St. Hilaire, Pelet, Coxe.

† Swift's remarks on the Barrier Treaty, and his pamphlet "On the Conduct of the Allies."

French king, who in the conference opened at Gertruydenberg had certainly gone all lengths save taking the engagement himself to dethrone his grandson. But he was willing to give up three or four important fortresses to the Dutch, to be held by them until Philip should resign the crown of Spain, or be driven from that country. Louis proposed to tempt him to make this resignation by the offer of Sicily or Sardinia. And in case of his refusal the French king offered, not indeed to make war upon his grandson, but to furnish contributions in money, one million a month, to enable the allies to make war upon him. When the Dutch still hesitated, Louis's plenipotentiaries offered to cede Alsace and Valenciennes. In these last efforts of France to obtain peace by large and humble concessions, Marlborough's biographers declare that it was not this general or his Dutch allies who were inexorable, but that the chief obstructions and objections came from the Emperor and from the Duke of Savoy. There are proofs, indeed, that Marlborough on this occasion had shown stronger hopes of peace, but the allies remained obstinate in rejecting the French offers, unless the king, after surrendering his fortresses, should reduce his grandson to abandon all and every portion of the Spanish monarchy within two months. The conferences of Gertruydenberg thus broke off in July 1710.*

Whilst these negotiations were in progress, military events were of a nature to contribute to their being fruitless. Marlborough and Eugene captured Douai, and subsequently Bethune, Villars being unable to prevent them. The struggle in Spain was expected to cease in consequence of the order given by Louis to the French troops to withdraw. And the immediate result seemed to warrant the belief that it would do so, the partisans of Philip being defeated at Almenara by Stanhope and the British horse, and again by them at

* Torcy.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Saragossa, which expelled them from Arragon in August.

No amount of victories in Spain can, however, avail against the dogged resolution of the Spanish people once they have taken it. They preferred the Bourbon to the Austrian, the French to the German. And neither fear nor interest could induce the Spaniards to welcome the archduke, or abandon Philip. The latter was accordingly soon master of Madrid again, and Vendome, whom Louis had sent with some French troops once more, soon found himself at the head of 20,000 men. The ill will of the population and the consequent difficulty of supplies soon compelled the allies, that is, the English and Imperialists, to abandon the centre of Spain, and retreat from the southern provinces to Arragon. The same cause, the difficulty of finding provisions, compelled the different divisions to march separate, the English, about 5,000, under Stanhope proceeding to Brihuega, the rest of the army to Cifuentes, distant five hours' march. The consequence was that Stanhope was surprised and surrounded by an immensely superior force under Vendome at Brihuega, on the 9th. Stanhope resisted gallantly till the evening, when, his ammunition being exhausted, and no succour appearing from Cifuentes, he surrendered. Vendome * the next day fell upon Staremberg and the Imperialists, who were too tardily marching to the rescue of Stanhope. Though far inferior in numbers, the Imperialists made a gallant resistance, and were victorious on one wing, if defeated on the other. But numbers, the previous day's loss, and the ardour of the Spanish soldiers for Philip, told at last against Staremberg and his cause, both of which succumbed on the field of Villa Viciosa. †

* See Stanhope's account in the Marlborough Despatches, vol. v. p. 155.

† Lord Mahon's War of Succession. Philip's letter, &c.

Such events gave augmented strength and spirit to the partisans of Toryism and peace in the royal closet of Whitehall. Their investigations had aroused in the mind of the queen singular scruples as to the justice of her excluding the Pretender and his family from the throne of England to the profit of the house of Hanover. They preached the rights of legitimacy as something sacred; and divines were found to echo the cry. When one of these, Sacheverel, was prosecuted, and the merits of his case discussed in Parliament, the queen was induced to attend the debates, and she imbibed from them a disgust of the Whig principles of her ministers, which placed the welfare and will of the nation above the rights of the crown. Henceforth Tory bishops were alone appointed; and at last, in August 1710, Harley became secretary of state. A dissolution of Parliament followed, with the appointment of a complete Tory ministry; and the landed interest, weary of Marlborough's long reign, of heavy taxation, of tolerance and war, prevailed for a time over the moneyed, the liberal, and the spirited.

The first ideas of the members of the new administration, even before they assumed power, were coldness and jealousy towards Holland, and a desire to make peace at its expense. This was evident from the language of Lord Raby, who succeeded Lord Townshend as ambassador at the Hague. He was instructed to demand a modification of the Barrier Treaty. France was sounded as to a peace. But the first reply of Louis was evasive.* He knew at once that the war would no longer be prosecuted with vigour, that the English Tories would soon fall off from the Dutch and disgust them. But the emperor's death, which soon after took place, afforded the Tories an ample opportunity for bruiting to the world their eagerness for peace. The queen was made to express to Parliament

* St. John to Lord Raby, April 20.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

her sense that the election of the Archduke Charles to be emperor would afford facilities for an accommodation. The French court hereupon made overtures of peace, through the Abbé Gauthier, offering the English all commercial advantages in the ports of the Spanish monarchy, and no more.* Gauthier took Matthew Prior back with him to Paris in the middle of July, to devise some mode of accommodation. They returned in August with Mesnager, a French official skilled in commercial questions, and whose mission seemed to be to bribe the English by offering advantages in the way of trade, especially over the Dutch.† England was offered Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay, Gibraltar and Minorca, ports in the West Indies, trade with Spain in the Indies, as the most favoured nation; and to have the Assiento, or slave-trade monopoly, transferred to them. St. John and Harley, assured of the landed interest in the new House of Commons, thought merely of bribing the commercial interests, which had hitherto supported the war. Every sentiment of English pride and every aim of English policy abroad were sacrificed to this consideration—the great interests of policy to the smaller; the sceptre of England had fallen from the hands of warriors and statesmen to those of clerks and pedlars.

It is needless to observe how completely the change emboldened the French, and restored to them, as De Torcy says, the arrangement of the affairs of Europe, which the Dutch had held. Military events contributed to this; Marlborough was disgusted, and, even if not disgusted, had lost his influence in the court, the army, and with his allies. He was no longer privy to any negotiations. The campaign which he directed was

* Gauthier's letter and De Torcy's proposal in Bolingbroke's Correspondence. De Torcy, &c.

† The Duke of Shrewsbury ex-

claimed how unfair these proposals were to the Dutch. His letter of August 21, 1711, in Bolingbroke's Correspondence.

therefore a mockery. The capture of Bouchain was almost its only feat.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Negotiations were much more active. The preliminary demands made by England were consented to by France in September.* The Dutch were indignant, felt themselves betrayed, and recrimination followed between them and the British government. The Dutch agents joined the Whigs in active opposition to the government. The latter replied by the dismissal of Marlborough. And when Prince Eugene came in person to London in the commencement of 1712 to endeavour to bring back Queen Anne to a sense of her own dignity, and what was due to the allies, his proffers and advice were both rejected.† The Tories maintained their ascendancy in the House of Commons as well as at court. And soon after the Duke of Ormond succeeded to Marlborough in command of the English in Flanders, with orders to join in no hostile operations. Lord Strafford was appointed to meet the Dutch and Imperialists, as well as French plenipotentiaries, to negotiate a definitive treaty.

The conferences for peace opened at Utrecht in January 1712. The French made known, though not at first officially, the terms on which they proposed to make peace. These offers were to acknowledge Queen Anne and the Protestant succession in England, to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk, to cede Hudson's Bay, the island of St. Christopher's, Acadia, the fort of Port Royal in Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland to England. The Spanish Low Countries to be given to the Elector of Bavaria, with Furnes, Ypres, and Menin as frontier towns; France getting back Aire, St. Venant, Bethune, and Douai. France was, moreover, to receive Tournay or Lille as indemnity for dismant-

* Bolingbroke's Correspondence, t. i. p. 375, where the demands and rejoinder are given.

† Accounts sent by Prince Eugene to Vienna, in his Correspondenz.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

ling Dunkirk. The frontier on the Rhine was to be the same as before the war; Exilles, Fenestrelles, and the Pragela to be ceded to Savoy. Commerce with Spain and the Indies was to be the same as that which prevailed at the death of Charles the Second. As a concession to the Dutch, the French tariff of 1664 was to be restored, except with regard to six articles.*

These proposals called forth the loudest remonstrances and recrimination on the part of the Imperialists and the Dutch, and were not even sufficiently conciliatory in their concessions for St. John.† To this M. de Torcy replied that they were obliged to make such demands in public negotiations, but if a private correspondence were opened between the French and English governments, matters would go smoother. Mr. Harley was sent over to Utrecht to acquaint the States that better terms were thus to be had from France, and that, if the Dutch would confide, and would promise to remove the restrictions on English trade in the towns of Flanders, England would consult them fully and support their interest in these negotiations. In Harley's instructions the English demanded for the Dutch barrier the fortresses of Douai, Aire, Bethune, and Tournay, which the French project required for themselves. The restoration of Strasburg for the emperor was also insisted on.

In the midst of these negotiations a new cause of anxiety arose. The famine and misery, which had produced a formidable epidemy, and which decimated the people, penetrated into the palace and wrought its violence amongst the proud occupants. Louis's only legitimate son, the dauphin, whom it is difficult to say whether his own nature, or his sire's alienation and dislike, had reduced to a state of nullity, expired in the spring of 1711. His eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, who suc-

* Lamberti, tom. vii.

† His letter.

ceeded to the title and consideration of dauphin, displayed the fruit of the teaching of Fénelon—a virtuous life; but this was joined to a feebleness of purpose and of will which rendered him null as a politician and unsuccessful as a commander. Although the king, since his private marriage with De Maintenon, had become devout, he still loved splendour and gaiety in his court, enjoyments with which the ascetic character of the Duke of Burgundy did not sympathise. For this, his duchess, a princess of the house of Savoy, made amends, shedding rays of youth and life amidst the sombre colours of the king's adversity and old age. Even this solace the monarch lost at the very time that he began to conceive hopes of a not too unfavourable peace. In February, 1712, the dauphiness was seized with a malignant fever, which carried her off in a few days. Soon after the dauphin, who had not quitted the couch of his expiring wife, was taken by the same malady, and followed her to the grave almost immediately. They left two sons, both of whom soon showed symptoms of the same fatal disease. The eldest died of it. The youngest, because, says Villars, they left him more to nature, and administered to him less medicine, escaped to be the future Louis the Fifteenth.

In the event of the death of the young Duke of Anjou, as the little prince was called, Philip of Spain was next heir to the French crown. The British ministry were henceforth so completely pre-occupied by the possibility of his uniting both kingdoms, that they turned their whole care and attention to preventing it, casting aside what had hitherto been their policy and the aim of the great alliance. They first summoned Louis the Fourteenth to renounce for himself and his heirs the inheritance of Spain, to which the king justly and naively replied that his renunciation was of no value, there being no body of men or of institutions to add their sanction. He could give but his royal word, so

CHAP.
XXXIII.

often falsified. The English then insisted on the king of Spain's renouncing the French succession, or quitting the Spanish throne in favour of the Duke of Savoy, in whose place at Turin Philip might retain his claim and prospects of becoming monarch of France. St. John and Harley, almost demented by their idle fears, and driven by them to such frantic proposals, were easily befooled by the French ministers. These aimed at procuring a partial suspension of hostilities with England, which would leave the Dutch and Imperialist generals first, and then their negotiators, at French mercy. The Dutch, indeed, proved little accommodating. They rejected the overtures brought by Harley, objected altogether to the French proposal of the Elector of Bavaria obtaining the Low Countries, which they preferred seeing in the hands of a powerful prince like the emperor. They required a more ample barrier for themselves than France was inclined to grant, as well as an equal share in all those concessions in the way of trade and oversea possessions which St. John had obtained for England. In April, the French court presented another plan, giving Sicily, in lieu of the Low Countries, to the Elector of Bavaria, but maintaining the frontier line proposed by them in Flanders, and refusing to restore Strasburg or Alsace. Far from abetting the pretensions of the Dutch, the English ministers ignored them altogether. Provided England were satisfied with regard to the union of the crowns, provided the fortifications of Dunkirk were demolished, commercial advantages and colonial acquisitions secured, "the queen," St. John thought, "ought to withdraw from the quarrel, and exchange the character of belligerent for that of mediatrix."*

Finding the British statesmen so eager to swallow the bait, the French were not slow to tender it. They offered Philip's renunciation of either the Spanish throne or the French succession, large cessions in America, with the

* St. John to Lord Strafford, May 3rd.

promise of England's being assimilated to the most favoured nation in the arrangements of trade; Dunkirk they proposed to be occupied by British troops, until an equivalent should be fixed upon for the dismantling of its fortifications. Of what use this deposit of Dunkirk could be to England, it is impossible to tell—its use to France was the jealousy it created between English and Dutch. As for St. John's peculiar plan for preventing the union of the Spanish crown by transferring Philip to Italy, and enabling him to bring Piedmont and Savoy in annexation to France, circumstances fortunately defeated the project.* To crown the admixture of treachery and folly, the Duke of Ormond, in command of the British force in Flanders, received orders† to separate his flag from those of Holland and the emperor, then under Prince Eugene, as soon as Marshal Villars should inform him of the occupation of Dunkirk by the English.‡ The important period, therefore, of Prince Eugene being enfeebled by English desertion, was allowed to be fixed by the French commanders, who of course made use of so unusual a favour in their operations.

The defection of the English court and ministry proved a godsend for France.§ The forces of the allies in Flanders amounted to 125,000 men, well provided, and accustomed to victory. Marshal Villars had but 100,000, recruited by every means, ill fed and unprovided. Louis himself had been so struck by the dis-

* St. John even hoped and believed, that Philip would take Piedmont and join it to France. (See his letters.) Yet in later years St. John attributed this scheme altogether to Oxford.

† St. John's letters of May 10 enjoin him to avoid engaging a siege or hazarding a battle. This letter the Secretary is said to have despatched without consulting either

the Cabinet or Harley. See Mac Knight's Life of Bolingbroke.

‡ St. John's letter to De Torcy of June 6, and to Ormond of the following day.

§ "I will not say," writes St. John to Prior (Sept. 1712), "that this order saved their army from being beaten, but I think in my conscience it did."

CHAP.
XXXIII.

parity of his force with that of the enemy, that he communicated to Villars his intention, in case of another defeat, of rallying all the troops he could upon the Somme, betaking himself to Peronne or St. Quentin, and there make a last effort to save the monarchy, or perish in its defence. "For never," added the king, "will I consent to allow the enemy to approach my capital."*

Louis was soon relieved from such a necessity by the order to Ormond to declare neutrality.† The French were not satisfied with the withdrawal of the English troops; they required also that of the German troops in the pay of England—not so easily managed, as their commander refused to abandon Prince Eugene in the midst of active operations. He had invested Landrecies, and certainly did not make that careful disposition of his army which he had always observed when in conjunction with Marlborough. He took it for granted that Marshal Villars, to interrupt his siege of Landrecies, would attack him in his works before that town. Villars preferred directing his whole force against the Earl of Albemarle, who, with some 8,000 men, was stationed at Denain in an extreme wing, detached from the main body of the prince, for the purpose of keeping up his communications with his depôts at Marchiennes. Villars took advantage of this negligence, attacked Albemarle at Denain on the 24th of July, and his force being of overwhelming superiority, Albemarle was a captive in a few minutes, as well as four and twenty battalions, which were unable to escape across the river. Prince Eugene soon made his appearance on the other bank, but he too could not pass to the rescue, and was compelled to leave the French victorious at Denain. St. Amand, as well as the military depôt at Marchiennes, subsequently fell into his power, Villars following up his success by the recapture of Tournay, Douai, and Bethune. These

* Memoirs of Villars.

† The Duke of Ormond signified this to Prince Eugene, June 24.

blows to the Dutch were not more menacing than the seizure of Ghent and Bruges by the Duke of Ormond, who thus assumed a semi-hostile attitude.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Nevertheless, the agreement between the French and English courts did not advance to completion. Bolingbroke, who was eager to sign a separate peace with France, found a dissentient in Harley, who still clung to the Dutch alliance and the Protestant succession. The state of utter isolation or dependence on France, to which St. John's policy led, alarmed his colleague; and it was in part to meet his objections, that St. John undertook to make a close friend and ally of the Duke of Savoy. All at once, he not only proposed, but insisted, that the duke, besides being declared presumptive heir to Philip in the Spanish monarchy, should also have the kingdom of Sicily conferred upon him, and a strong barrier on the side of the Alps. So bent was St. John upon this, that he himself undertook a mission to Paris to press it, and made it a *sine quâ non* of the further suspension of hostilities. The French court could not resist so imperative a demand, but consented to it only on the conditions that the Elector of Bavaria, whose portion Sicily had hitherto been, should be indemnified by a restoration to his dominions in Germany, besides retaining Luxemburg, and what he held in the Low Countries. But to this the Dutch as well as the emperor had most decided objections, and the year 1712 wore away without a definitive settlement.

Before this period the Dutch made conciliatory proposals to England, and offered once more to treat if Tournay and Condé were left them, if the Elector of Bavaria was not to keep Luxemburg, and if they were satisfied in the matter of the tariff. The concessions rendered it impossible for the English cabinet to abandon the Dutch, and fresh negotiations were entered upon with the court of Versailles to obtain the cession of Tournay. To this Louis at last consented. Difficulties had

CHAP.
XXXIII.

in the meantime sprung up with regard to the treaty of commerce. The French refused to treat the English as the most favoured nation, or to give the low tariff of the Dutch, until they had reduced their own augmentations of tariff since 1664. The right of drying fish on the coast of Newfoundland was another point insisted on by De Torcy. The Duke of Shrewsbury came ambassador to Paris at the commencement of 1713 to remove these differences, in which he for the most part succeeded, and at the demand of the Dutch general negotiations were resumed by the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht.*

Theirs was but a labour of form. The chief points of agreement being settled between France and England and agreed to by Holland, it was but requisite to induce the German princes to join. This the King of Prussia was prepared to do, it having been accorded that France was to cede to him the county of Gueldres. The German Diet had been invited by Queen Anne to send plenipotentiaries, but Protestants and Catholics could not agree, and only the Four Cercles which were particularly implicated in the war were represented. As to the emperor, he was solely bent on protestations.†

France, England, Spain, Prussia, and Saxony therefore signed the Treaty of Peace of Utrecht, on the 11th of April 1713. That fiercely contested question of where the French frontier should run, and of what towns the Dutch *barrier* against them should be composed, was arranged with very slight variation from the Treaty of Nimeguen. France kept its present frontier of Dunkirk, Lille, Valenciennes; the Dutch barrier comprised Furnes, Ypres, Mesnin, Tournay, and Mons. All

* The most remarkable part of Lord Shrewsbury's mission was that his duchess brought the French ladies to do away with their high head-dresses which they had worn for

years, and that the king could not banish, much as he disliked them. See St. Simon, 1713.

† Menzel, Neuere Geschichte.

that Louis retained in this quarter, of his late conquests in 1667, was Lille. He undertook to raze the fortifications of Dunkirk.

As the price, however, of the French being allowed to retain Lille as well as Alsace and Valenciennes, which Louis was prepared to cede at Gertruydenberg, and which the defection of the Tories thus gave him, that monarch ceded to England Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland; Cape Breton, and Canada remaining to the French. He also ceded St. Christopher's, in the West Indies. The English obtained from Spain the Assiento, or the monopoly of the slave trade, for thirty years, as well as the rights of the most favoured nation with regard to trade in the ports of that monarchy. The Dutch were gratified by the restoration of the tariff of 1664, except with respect to six articles. The English parliament was not contented with these concessions being accompanied by similar obligations to reduce their own tariff.

The Duke of Savoy, who was to be King of Sicily,* as well as presumptive heir to the Spanish monarchy on the failure of the heirs of Philip, readily signed the treaty, which left the emperor powerless in Italy. It restored to the king-duke not only the fortresses of Exilles and Fenestrelle, with the high valley of the Pragela on his own side of the Alps, but gave him Château Dauphin, at the foot of the French side.

To the Elector of Bavaria was allotted Sardinia, as well as the temporary possession of Luxemburg, and Namur until an arrangement with the emperor should restore him to his electorate. The Low Countries were to belong to Austria, the Dutch continuing to garrison the principal towns, and to levy on the province the sums requisite to maintain their troops.

From the peace thus concluded at Utrecht the emperor held altogether aloof. And even Spain, under

* The House of Savoy exchanged the crown of Sicily for that of Sardinia in 1720.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

different pretexts, delayed ratifying its treaty with Holland. Austria had, however, some time previous come to an arrangement by which its troops were to evacuate Spain, an armistice being agreed upon for the countries south of the Alps.

France, indeed, at Utrecht made offers to the emperor of the better part of Italy; that is, Naples, Milan with the exception of the Vigevano, and of the Tuscan ports. In return France demanded the restoration of the Electors of Cologne and Bavaria, with the kingdom of Sardinia for the latter. It offered to give up Landau and dismantle Fort Louis, whilst retaining Strasburg. To these conditions, especially the restoration of the Elector of Bavaria, and the loss of Strasburg, the emperor demurred. And Prince Eugene encouraged his holding out, in the thought that he might, though alone, carry on a successful war against France, and re-enact the triumphs which he had formerly achieved in concert with Marlborough.*

If such was his dream, the event deceived him. Villars at once took the field in Alsace, and invested Landau in June, whilst Eugene was not prepared to pass the Rhine to its succour. It accordingly capitulated, and in September Villars passed the Rhine, and laid siege to Freyburg. This was a rude challenge to Eugene; but as the town was well garrisoned and fortified, it might be expected, especially at so advanced a season of the year, to hold out. Villars, however, pressed its surrender with such vigour, sparing no efforts and no sacrifices of life, that he became master of it in November.

The parties most menaced by French success, the elector palatine and the Four Cercles of Franconia and Suabia, had not waited for the capture of Freyburg to press for peace. The emperor at their solicitation sent full powers to Eugene; Villars receiving the same

* Eugene raved no less than the dismemberment of France. See Duclos.

from Louis.* The negotiators met in the end of November at Rastadt. The French would no longer adhere to the offers they had made at Utrecht. They insisted on keeping Landau, whilst restoring Freyburg, and preserving the fortifications of Fort Louis. The emperor agreed to restore the Electors of Cologne and Bavaria. The latter was to have the Upper Palatinate and Sardinia, without the title of king. And the elector, who had been successively promised royal and imperial crowns by France, was compelled to do without either. The Treaty of Rastadt was signed in March 1714.

Such was the Treaty of Utrecht, which terminated the more than half-century's struggle of France to extend its frontier and its sway. It is melancholy to think that this struggle was really over at the close of the preceding century, when the French had secured their hold of Artois and Lille, of Alsace and Strasburg, and when it was manifest that all the power of France, concentrated in the hands of an able and an absolute monarch, could not push advantages further. The testament of the King of Spain broke through this settlement, and by the temptations which it offered to Louis the Fourteenth, gave rise to what was really a war of supererogation. This war, however, covered England with glory, and endowed it with a greatness disproportioned to its size and population, and thus raised up a counterbalancing power to France capable of undertaking a century later, and carrying through successfully, the arduous enterprise of King William, that of preserving the equilibrium of Europe.

Further than this, the wars of Queen Anne's reign were of no import and no use. They fixed the frontiers of France as they long remained, and, with the exception of Savoy, still subsist. The attempts of Louis the Four-

* Villars, in making use of his full powers, did not please his master, who was compelled to redemand

what he had yielded, and to yield what he had refused to give up. See St. Simon, 1714.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

teenth to reduce either Italy or Spain to subjection or dependence failed. A Bourbon name, indeed, headed the acts, and adorned the crown, of Spain. But the monarchy and monarch sunk to a state of lethargy and decay—the natural result of completed despotism—whilst the shadow of their power merely sufficed to give birth and consistence to the intrigues of adventurers, as often directed against French interests as in aid of them. Events have thus shown Bolingbroke and Harley to have been right in abandoning the aim of substituting an Austrian for a Bourbon on the Spanish throne. But of the meanness of having jockeyed the Dutch, and sold the Germans, history cannot acquit them. And could France have again recovered her strength, and resuscitated the spirit of Louis the Fourteenth, England would have found it impossible to re-knit the conservative league. In this respect moderation bore a useful result. Were France deprived of Lille and Strasburg at the peace, as Marlborough and the Whigs desired, a pacific policy might not so incontestably have prevailed in the ensuing reign. Neither should it be forgotten, that if England did concede much to France upon the continent, and to the prejudice of the Dutch and imperial interests, she gained largely in colonial empire and impulse, thus laying or extending the foundation of that naval and colonial preponderance which more than all else constitute the power and wealth of Great Britain.

That peace was more and more indispensable to France than to the allies was sufficiently manifest from the state of her finances. It was in this respect that the continuance of the war by the emperor was most sensibly felt, as it precluded the government from disbanding its forces or seriously diminishing its war expenditure. Money was so scarce, that the provisions stored on the frontier of Flanders were carted off to

feed the army of the Rhine. The ordinary taxes of *taille*, *aides*, and others, for 1713, produced a sum of 115,000,000 *livres*. Of these, upwards of two-thirds were mortgaged or anticipated, leaving no more than 36,000,000 of revenue. The manner in which Desmarests, the finance minister, met this deficit, subsists, very naively told, in the preamble of one of his own financial edicts. "We have had recourse," he recounts, "to divers loans—two of half a million each (*au denier douze*)—on the *tailles*, or to the creation of offices, or the raising of the salaries of functionaries, in return for ready money. We have found considerable resource in bills, passed into currency in return for the precious metals brought to be coined. But the expense of the war exhausts all these resources. And even the issue of bills was effected at great usury and loss. It was tried to keep up the credit of such bills by allowing them to be received at the Treasury, and *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville given in exchange for them. But the famine of 1709, and the bad harvests, soon so reduced the revenue, that it was found impossible, not merely to pay the interest of the Hôtel de Ville debt, but even one-half of the year's interest, as promised. In order to prevent this total loss to the stockholders," says M. Desmarests, "we thought it best to reduce the claims, at least of those who acquired stock since the year 1702." These having been notoriously bought with paper, says the memoir, may fairly be reduced by two-fifths of their interest. This borrowing and bankruptcy, the ordonnancing of taxes that could not be paid, placed the population in the situation of prey, and the government in that of a wild beast, whose only aim was to devour. Finance administration was nothing but extortion. Public functionaries were obliged to pay whatever was demanded of them. The church did not escape. The municipal property and revenues of all the towns of the kingdom, were torn from them.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

The funds of hospitals and those devoted to public charity were not spared.* As to credit, or currency, both were at an end, the government, which paid nobody, not being able to refuse exemption and orders for suspending the pursuit of creditors.† Louis the Fourteenth, in his necessities, was obliged to hide his name and his wants, and to borrow through a third party, giving four millions in obligations for one which he received in coin.‡ To such straits was Louis le Grand reduced.

It was not, however, the permanent distress, or material disorganisation of the country, which most occupied Louis, or disturbed his councillors. They were far above such mean considerations. Care of his soul, and such a redemption of his faults as would secure him in the other world as good a position as he held in this, formed the king's ruling thought. His ideas of religion very much resembled his ideas of government. The prevalence of his own personal will appeared to him the only safe principle of policy. In religion he considered his confession, satisfaction, and absolution as the only orthodox keys of paradise. The great monarch, who ruled one of the most intellectual and civilised societies in Europe, in his splendid palace of Versailles was guided by the same religious principles as those which actuated Philip the Second, in the Escorial. The latter devastated Europe and his own dominions with dungeons, scaffolds, and *autos da fé*, in order to prove his piety by establishing orthodoxy. Louis the Fourteenth, in obedience to his confessor, and in the narrowest limits which civilisation allowed, was eager to sanction such acts, and inaugurate similar persecutions. All depended, not on his own sense or perception of

* Fénelon. *Lettres et Mémoires*
sur la Guerre de Succession.

† Dutot *Réflexions*.

‡ *Ibid.* Davenant, at the end of

the century, valued the pound sterling at 13 French livres. In the middle of the next it was upwards of 23.

justice—neither of which he wanted, if the religion he professed could have tolerated them—but upon the character and aims of his confessor. He enjoyed the good fortune of having for many, for upwards of thirty, years, a confessor who was a gentleman, mild in disposition, who went indeed with the stream when Bossuet and other fanatics preached the persecution of the Protestants, or the proscriptions of Port Royal, or the disgrace of Fénelon; he tempered, however, the fury of bigotry when he could. This easy disposition much displeased the zealots, Madame de Maintenon included, who did not think that those who held power could be saved unless they exerted it with the fierceness of persecution. Accordingly, when Father La Chaise died, in 1709, Madame de Maintenon, through the Jesuits, or rather the Jesuits through her, procured the nomination of Père Le Tellier to be the royal confessor. He was a rude bigoted narrow-minded peasant, as St. Simon describes him, “tenebrous, false, terrible, with a fierce squint that fully expressed his character.” Le Tellier’s aspect affrighted the crowd, but delighted Louis and De Maintenon. He was the man they wanted. The king used to reproach La Chaise with being too soft. “Sire, it is not I that am soft, but you that are hard,” was the reply. The king’s hardness now found a congenial instigator and adviser in Le Tellier. Unfortunately, Louis had an *alter ego* in Madame de Maintenon, who was as selfishly bent upon storing everything for her soul’s future welfare as the king himself, and who believed that heaven was best won by severity to its supposed enemies. Louis and De Maintenon’s religion required the strong excitement of the sixteenth century, with an inquisitor rather than a man of the world for spiritual director. And both were gratified by the new confessor. The miserable *cuistre*, who would have been more fitly employed in blacking shoes than whitening royal consciences, no sooner found himself in office than

CHAP.
XXXIII.

he began by stirring the old king to finish the work of exterminating the Protestants. They had been allowed a kind of slumber for some years, but Le Tellier resuscitated for all Protestants the terrible and disgusting penalties of being *relapse*. The fresh cruelties perpetrated in consequence disturbed the last moments of Louis. His bishops and confessor, the dying monarch observed, must answer for them.

The next victim that Father Le Tellier found for his exuberant zeal was Jansenism. One must confess, that were a liberal and unfanatical mind called upon to choose between Molinism and Jansenism, he must decide for the former, which allowed human will and freedom some share in the conversion of the sinner and the Christianising of the mind, whilst Jansenism, by attributing all to the action of divine grace, affirmed the doctrine of predestination and election. The Molinists had common sense upon their side, and could they have added to it common humanity, they must have triumphed. If either side were open to ridicule it were surely that of the Jansenists, and their claim to superior sanctity. But, unfortunately for the Molinists, their ideas were upheld by the Jesuits, so oblique and so vulnerable on other points, which exposed them to the powerful irony of Pascal. Another misfortune of Jesuits and Molinists was that they were supported by the strong hand of power, and were identified with all the old abuses of the church. They thus fell into the great mistake, and increased the great odium, of being persecutors.

Casual observers are apt to look with contempt and throw aside with impatience a dispute, however fierce, upon the insoluble question of "Grace." But there was more than dogma in the quarrel. Jansenists protested against the received modes in which the existing priesthood managed consciences and conducted education. They thus started up as rivals in the two principal departments of ecclesiastical influence and

profit. Had the king not been despotic and fanatic, and could he have allowed the two sects to continue their rivalry, the result would have been competition and improvement both in education and confessorship. Whereas the blind and barbarous interference of the sovereign power crushed in the end both Jansenism and Jesuitism, and marred in both the means and prospects of education, leaving the French mind open to that which *philosophes* such as Voltaire and Diderot subsequently introduced.

A few data and facts are necessary to aid the reader in following and comprehending the dispute. Molina's book admitting human will to be acted on by divine grace was published in 1588. In 1640 Jansenius insisted that divine grace acted without human will having aught to do with it. In 1642 a pope condemned five propositions of Jansenius. His disciples denied that the five propositions could be found in his book, and they declared that the pope, however infallible as to faith, was very fallible as to fact. The government took part with the church, which it was anxious to conciliate in order to get contributions from it. The monastery and retreat of Port Royal being founded, Pascal sent forth his Provincial Letters in 1656. They turned public opinion decidedly in favour of the Jansenists, but Louis the Fourteenth was of a different opinion. Jansenism, in his view, was a spiritual rebellion, little better than Protestantism. Port Royal too was close to Versailles; Louis saw it in his *chasses*, and could not forget that it was the only centre, the only focus, of opposition to him throughout his realm. The male portion of the Port-Royalists were soon obliged to fly. The nuns were prohibited to take novices, and thus the institution was doomed to die out. But even this did not answer the king's impatience. St. Simon gives an amusing exemplification of it. The Duke of Orleans recommended an officer to command in Spain. The king objected that he was a Jansenist. "I don't know

CHAP.
XXXIII.

anything of that," said the duke, "but I do know that he does not believe in a God." "Oh, in that case," replied Louis, "appoint him; there can be no harm." One may conceive that his Majesty would not tolerate Jansenist nuns to remain within view of his palace or its park. A new formulary and papal bull were presented to them, condemning certain heretical opinions of Jansenism, such as that "there was nothing worth without charity," and that "the Bible should be read." The old nuns of Port Royal refused to subscribe acquiescence in this new code of religion and morality. They were so obstinate that even moderate prelates abandoned them. The Archbishop of Paris, Noailles himself, though seeing certainly no harm in Jansenism or Port Royal, bowed to the king's mandate, and acquiesced in the Jansenist nunnery being placed at the disposal of the lieutenant of police. D'Argenson with his myrmidons broke into the sacred portal, carried off and dispersed the inmates, and then proceeded to wreak the king's vengeance on the edifice, taking off its roof, prostrating its columns,* ejecting its dead from the cemetery,† and treating it as assuredly never Goth or Hun treated a Christian edifice.

Deep must have been the regrets of Le Tellier, who had not long succeeded to the power of king's confessor, that an act so congenial to his nature should have been achieved by other hands than his own. He resolved, however, to re-enact the drama as far as he was able, and slay the slain over again. The zealots had, indeed, been persecuted and crushed, but the *modérates* remained. To make victims of them Le Tellier procured from the pope of the day, who reluctantly did the French Jesuit's bidding, and blushed for what he did, a bull condemning a hundred and one propositions of the Jansenists, contained in a book written by one of

* The bases of the columns still remain in place.

† The remains of Racine were amongst them.

them called Quesnel, and which had the inestimable advantage of having received the approbation of Archbishop Noailles, and almost that of Bossuet himself. But Noailles was the foe that Le Tellier aimed at. He refused to unsay what he had once said, and took refuge under the ægis of the Gallican church, the precepts of which forbade the publication of the bull in his diocese. This was what Le Tellier wanted, a declaration of war; and he proceeded to wage it, by procuring from Louis a *lettre de cachet* to arrest the archbishop, try him by a council, and in fact throw the kingdom into an ecclesiastical conflagration. The timely hesitation of the king saved himself and the archbishop from the scandal and the outrage. Symptoms of the monarch's sinking health supervened, and this spared and cut short the last act of the Unigenitus tragedy which Le Tellier had prepared.

“It is with disgust,” wrote Duclos, “that one dwells upon such a subject as this, which in a little time can interest no one; but as it was almost the only affair that occupied and harassed the king in the last years of his reign, the duty of an historian obliges him to record it.” Unfortunately, neither Louis himself, nor the princes of his family, nor the *grandees* of his court, seemed to know what was important. Few men could have been endowed with greater sense or sharper intelligence than St. Simon, who has recorded and chronicled the daily conversation, topics, motives, and life of the court. And yet with him it is the most trivial things that are important, and all the really serious concerns of life are passed over as non-existent. The memoirs of the duke resemble rather the tales of a nursery than the reminiscence of a public man; the same emptiness, childishness, superstition, credulity, and small selfishness. Sensual, extravagant, and servile as was French life during the prime of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, the qualities were redeemed by active intellect, and by the exercise and

CHAP.
XXXIII.

manifestation of philosophy, of poetry, and of wit. People read and thought, as well as intrigued and chattered, as the Letters of De Sévigné testify. But with the splendour and glory of his age, Louis the Fourteenth's intelligence seems to have set also. St. Simon describes the first publication of Father Damel's work, in 1713; the first book of history, he says, that the king or De Maintenon ever spoke of, much less read, and which the courtiers pretended to peruse. The point of the work was its effort to show that illegitimate princes could succeed as well as legitimate, and had, in fact, often succeeded to the throne.

This was indeed a serious preoccupation of Louis in his last years. By the death of intervening princes, and of the Duke of Berry, third grandson of the king, in May 1714, the sole heir or direct heir to the crown was a sickly child. The other descendants of Louis had been so suddenly carried off that it was difficult to count with any confidence upon this child's life. Rumours of poison, too, were prevalent, such as naturally prevail where there is neither justice nor publicity. The presumptive heir, after the failure of the offspring of the king, was the Duke of Orleans. His life was dissolute; not more so than that of the generality of his cotemporaries, save that, instead of taking pains to conceal his sensual habits, he rather gloried in them. He was moreover of that new and *libertine* school in religion which had been produced by the opposite extreme of furious bigotry in high places. It being treason to be a Protestant, almost equally so to be a Jansenist, freethinkers avowed themselves Atheists altogether, and, not without some show of reason, deemed religion and its professors as the worst scourge and most stupid tyrants of the age. In such profession the Duke of Orleans was joined by his daughter, the Duchess of Berry, to the great horror of De Maintenon, and to the great advantage of the enemies and calumniators of the House of Orleans. The want of even

decent hypocrisy envenomed rather than disarmed the malice of the age, which accused the duke of incest with his daughter, the bond between them being merely the common scoffing of religion. Another charge against the duke was that of having caused the death of the dauphin and dauphiness, and of those who stood between him and the throne. The duke went straight to the king, challenged his calumniators to the proof, and demanded a trial. Louis hesitated, and on the remonstrance, it is believed, of his physician, declined to countenance the accusation.

The legitimate succession to the throne being likely to fall to a prince of such a character, emboldened the Duke du Maine, the son of Louis and Montespan, to play the part of Monmouth, and claim the royal inheritance. Short of sanctioning this supreme right, Louis had done everything for his illegitimate children. To induce the king to take this last step in their favour became their hourly and nightly aim. They had prepared all the means. The royal confessor, Le Tellier, lent his aid, of course, against the unbeliever Orleans. The chancellor, Pontchartrain, resigned about this time, perhaps from a wish not to be an accomplice of what was meditated. Voisin, a creature of Du Maine's, obtained his place. And in August 1714 the decree appeared legitimatising the offspring of the king by Madame de Montespan, and rendering them capable of succeeding to the throne on the failure of the direct male heir. The parliament recorded the edict, and registered it without a murmur. Strange to say, the personage who alone ventured an open doubt upon the worth and durability of the act was Louis himself. Regarding M. du Maine before several witnesses in his cabinet, Louis exclaimed, in a moment of despondency and ill-temper, "You would have it so. But know, however great I may make you, and you may be in my lifetime, you are nothing after I am gone. It will be

CHAP.
XXXIII.

for you to realize what I have done for you if you are able."

The infant prince, the Duke of Anjou, the future Louis the Fifteenth, still lived, however, and it was necessary to provide for his minority, even more than for his successor. If matters were allowed to take their course, the Duke of Orleans would be proclaimed regent at the death of the king, and wield his uncontrolled power. M. du Maine, therefore, supported by De Maintenon, pressed Louis to leave a testament, limiting the power of the future regent, if not replacing him. The king yielded rather to their importunities than to their arguments. He drew up the desired testament, limiting the power of the future regent, the Duke of Orleans, by a council, which was to share his authority, and to participate in his government. M. du Maine was to be one of this council, and was moreover to have the especial charge of the young monarch. This testament the king solemnly committed to the keeping of the chief magistrate of the parliament, who consigned it to an iron coffer or chest, imbedded in one of the walls of the palace. The king, in handing the packet to him, signed with seven seals, expressed his dissatisfaction with what he had done. It was an act of his absolute power, too likely to be disregarded at his death. So he told the judge, and added as an excuse, that he had been tormented, and found it better to purchase repose by granting what was asked of him. "There, take it; let what will come of it, I shall at least be no longer troubled on that head."*

Having thus put an end to the importunities on the subject of his successor, the king gave his chief attention to the Unigenitus bull, and laboured as zealously and as hard with his confessor, Le Tellier, in overcoming Jansenist opposition to it, as he had ever done with Louvois in the great object of conquering Europe.

* Memoirs of Berwick and St. Simon.

Still, certain events recalled the declining monarch to what had been the policy of his reign. Queen Anne expired on the 1st of August, 1714, and with her breath evaporated the scheme of Bolingbroke in favour of the Pretender. This great peacemaker with France came to Paris, but Louis did not see him, and Lord Stair soon came over as ambassador from the English king, George the First, who did not shrink from reminding Louis rather rudely of any neglect in the observance of the stipulations of the treaty. Some works were thrown up at Mardyke, which the English jealousy construed into a desire to remedy or obviate the destruction of the port of Dunkirk. Lord Stair remonstrated with such energy that Louis felt compelled to observe, "that he had always been master in his own dominions, and at times even in those of others, and that his lordship would do well not to remind a King of France of those past times."

The year 1715 was marked by a sensible diminution of the king's health, which was manifest to all the world. In August he was confined to the palace by a pain in the thigh. It was considered to be sciatica; but the limb in a few days displayed black spots, and the presence of gangrene was discovered. Everyone then, the king included, thought but of the future. Madame de Maintenon and the Duc du Maine made him sign a codicil to the royal testament, giving to the latter full command over the guards, the palace, and the royal household, after the king's death. It appointed the Maréchal de Villeroi, under the Duc du Maine, guardian of the dauphin. Louis, on his part, whilst thus obsequious to his worldly friends and intimates, was severe upon his ghostly ones. He told the Cardinals of Rohan and Bussy, who watched his bedside, that all that he had done in ecclesiastical affairs was by the advice of churchmen, with whom he left all the responsibility. And so far was he from being the personal

CHAP.
XXXIII.

enemy of the Jansenists, he was willing to receive the Cardinal de Noailles forthwith. The priests, however, took care that the liberal churchman should not approach the dying monarch. All the princes and princesses, by the king's order, came successively to bid him farewell. His words to his great-grandson and successor were to avoid his "tastes for building and for war, and live at peace with his neighbour." To the Duke of Orleans he bade prepare Vincennes for the young king; in this, and in his injunction to many to obey the Duke of Orleans as regent, he seemed to contradict the spirit of his testament, or at least of its codicil. He preserved his natural calm, and asked the servants why they wept. Had they believed him immortal?

The most surprising circumstance of the end of Louis was perhaps the frequent, and at last final absence of Madame de Maintenon, who left for St. Cyr. Louis summoned her on the 30th of August, and she came but to depart at five o'clock, and return no more. Her conduct is explained, not excused, by her fear of the Duke of Orleans, whom she had injured with the king, taking part with the illegitimate princes against him. The king lived for more than twenty-four hours later, expiring on the morning of the 1st of September, 1715. He had lived seventy-seven years, and reigned seventy-two.

It is impossible to contemplate history without fancying, one need not say believing, that certain experiments have been made from time to time of different forms of religion or of government, in order to prove and ascertain the probable results or comparative excellences of the different forms. One cannot avoid, for example, studying the first eight centuries of our era without coming to the conclusion that Christianity, as then taught and developed, was in the east, and amongst eastern races, a failure. That in the west it has proved not only a divine truth, but an immense social and political success, is equally manifest. That religious despotism,

or a religion of authority, has failed, and that its hold over human society and the best intellect of mankind has only been preserved by the irruption of freedom and free principles of thought, of belief, and of polity, might be rendered equally manifest.

Experiments in the science and nature of government have been equally remarkable. Nothing connected with them is more so than the directly opposite paths taken by France and by England: by France towards political and religious despotism, which placed the whole safety of the state, as well as the salvation of its people, in the supremacy of some one man's will; by England, which refused to believe in or to undergo the infallible wisdom or right of any one or any few to dictate to a people conscious of being able to think and act for themselves. Both countries fell into errors and excesses. England underwent the sway of Independent and Fifth Monarchy men. France trembled under a Richelieu, was froward under Mazarin, but prostrated itself under Louis the Fourteenth, as the incarnation of all that it desired, admired, and believed. If the champions of despotic government had had to frame a prince of their choice, they could scarcely have endowed him with other qualities than those which shone in Louis. He had all those which command admiration and respect, whilst his use of power, except in one or two directions, was tempered by the advance of the age in justice and in humanity. The exceptions were his foreign policy and his religious administration. He had been educated to consider glory as the only aim worthy of his efforts, that glory to be achieved by overreaching or overwhelming his neighbours, and taking their territories to augment his own. This was the traditional policy of France for a century, and in following it the French king knew no difference between just and unjust, nor could he see any crime in the latter. He carried on war with the mercilessness

CHAP.
XXXIII.

of the Hun, devastated whole provinces, his own as well as those of his enemies, with the ruthlessness of barbarism. In religious matters it was the same. His treatment of the Protestants rivalled, if not surpassed, the cruelty of the most infatuated Pagan emperor; the French bishops applauding and inciting him more than ever high-priest of Jupiter incited Nero. And if his persecution of Jansenism was less marked by blood, it was but the more strongly characterised by puerility and ridicule.

The main results of the absorption of all this power and freedom of the country by the monarch, with the suppression of intelligence (for he could not absorb that), this concentration of power exerting itself in the expenditure of more treasure and life than the annual produce of both, were the acquisition of Strasbourg and Lille. The first had been won without war, by bribing the civic magistrates; whilst the other would certainly have been torn from France at the peace, but for the traitorous *laches* of Bolingbroke. The other result of this quarter of a century's rule was to enforce the narrow orthodoxy professed by the most stupid of the religious body, silencing and proscribing every intelligent religionist; the more liberal-minded of the great and the learned being actually forced into infidelity, in order to escape the yoke and the absurdities of the court religion.

Moreover every evil of domestic administration and social order had been aggravated. The division between the two great classes of the nation was widened by exemption from burdens, and enjoyment of privileges and place, being more exclusively reserved to the one; oppression, extortion, and humiliation being the lot of the other. The noble class, the denizens of the court, were all in all, whilst setting the worst example of morality, the meanest of intelligence. Nor was this the fault of individuals so much as of the system, which, rendering education useless, and denying industry or

activity to the mind of the well born, pointed out their only road to advancement in servility and court favour.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

Although the monarch's long reign bore all the marks of material and moral blight at its close, the blaze of intellectual glory which illumined its more prosperous and successful years cannot be forgotten. The rise and encouragement of such varied genius has of course been attributed to royal patronage and favour. They were still more due to the withdrawal of the proud monarch and his court to Versailles, which left the busy metropolis, its capitalists, its judges and lawyers, its rich citizens and its more independent nobles, to form a mixed society and world of their own, far more intelligent than the upper world of Versailles, which affected to patronise and direct it. It was Paris, not Versailles, which produced a Molière, and applauded the early chef-d'œuvres of Racine. It was Paris which formed the novelist and the satirist, and also taught such divines as Bossuet and Fénelon to be something better than courtiers. It was Paris, with the acumen and irony, indigenous to a capital, that prompted Pascal to expose the Jesuits, and Archbishop Noailles to combat them. It was the Parisian spirit which breathed in the letters of De Sévigné, whose home was in the capital, and to whom the court was known merely by brief visits and busy whispers. Wealth and prosperity are, however, even more necessary to the brilliancy of a capital than even to that of a court. And Paris suffered from the exhaustion, the sacrifices and dearth of the last years of Louis. So much so that the Muses fled, wealth disappeared, and the intellects which criticised the court religion or censured its politics were obliged to conceal themselves to do so. Society, thus walled up, went to the extreme of libertinage, losing delicacy of taste as well as vigour and sanity of thought. And for a time they underwent a syncope, till in the ensuing reign they again awoke in Voltaire.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE REGENCY.

1715—1726.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

STRONG repugnance is very often shown by one age for the tastes and ideas of that preceding it. The repugnance is still stronger when an old system of government or opinion has been prolonged beyond its time, overlying, as it were, that which was young and rising. This was remarkably the case during the last years of Louis the Fourteenth, whose compressive rule was felt like a nightmare by his subjects, and even by his court. There was quite an explosion of impatience when it was known that he was no more, and the French public, leaving the remains of the Great Monarch to be poorly and almost ignominiously huddled off to their burying-place, pressed forward to welcome and salute that prince who was known to present in character, in life, and predilections the most complete contrast to the departed king.

The Duke of Orleans had begun life by an act of profound obsequiousness to the will of Louis the Fourteenth. He had married the natural daughter of the king by Madame de Montespan, against the wish of his mother, who showed all possible indignation at the match.* But this did not procure for the young duke the confidence or the reward that he sought. The king shrunk from employing or giving command to princes of the blood. And

* Received the tidings by giving her son a box on the ear—"qui lui faisait voir des chandelles."

the Duke of Orleans, with capacity for any career, was long denied other than that of pleasure. In pursuance of this, he neglected his wife, thereby offending the king, and frequented the Parisian residence of a mistress whose society and converse presented the strongest contrast to that of Versailles. Whilst Louis and Madame de Maintenon became more rigid in their devotions, the Duke of Orleans not only practised but professed libertinism and infidelity. The courtiers retaliated by accusing him of all the extravagance of crime, even to having caused the death of the dauphin and dauphiness, and of those who stood between him and the crown, by poison.

There was a particular motive for this. The devotees and old routinists of the court, including Madame de Maintenon, with the Jesuits, preferred the Duc du Maine, who was all submission to them, and who also enjoyed the decided preference of the king. They flattered the latter that his will and word would suffice to make the Duc du Maine his heir, in case of the failure of his direct legitimate offspring, and to the exclusion of the Houses of Orleans and Condé. Louis listened to them, and obeyed their injunctions, whilst doubting the efficiency, probably even the justice, of his act. He did not believe in the guilt attributed to the Duke of Orleans, and observed that he was more likely to boast than to commit a crime.* This was true. For Philip, though driven to mock at religion by the hypocrisy and virulence of those who affected to monopolise it, still prized the virtues of the soldier and the gentleman. The reckless Henry the Fourth was his model, not scrupulously imitated by him indeed, but sufficiently revered to render Philip of Orleans satisfied with vice and abhorrent of crime.

The Duc du Maine was not the only rival of the Duke of Orleans. Philip of Spain, directly descended from Louis the Fourteenth, pretended to succeed to the throne should the infant Duc d'Anjou fail to survive, notwith-

* Louis's expression was that the duke was a "fanfaron de crimes."

CHAP.
XXXIV.

standing the solemn renunciation on which the Treaty of Utrecht was based. The Duke of Orleans was an old enemy of Philip. When commanding in Spain, and when there were thoughts of Philip abdicating, the duke hoped to take his place, and intrigued to do so. Philip of Spain now sought to do the same by him, and sent an envoy, Prince Cellamare, to Paris, to collect and consult friends, and pave the way for the Spanish king to the French regency and succession.

On Louis's demise, however, Philip made no sign, and the Duke du Maine but a feeble stand. The Duke of Orleans had been advised to prepare formidable means to put down hostile pretensions, to summon the States-General, and convoke the *grandees*. His good sense taught him to prefer appealing to the parlement to cancel whatever was injurious to him in the king's testament. It was the precedent followed, on the death of Louis the Thirteenth, by Anne of Austria. And as the judges were almost all of Jansenist or Gallican leanings, the object of the hatred and persecution of the old court and its confessor, Le Tellier, to dethrone these by cancelling Louis's will was considered a labour of love by the magistrature.

The Duke of Orleans accordingly, on the day after the king's death, proceeded to the parlement, where the dignitaries of state and justice were assembled. He requested to be at once declared regent, and to have his rights by birth and blood acknowledged, before the reading of the will. The judges objected to this.* The testament of Louis was produced and read, appointing a council to discuss all matters in concert with the regent, the plurality of voices deciding. Codicils drawn up in the last days of the king's life were also read, giving the guardianship and education of the young king to the Duc du Maine, with the command of the household troops. The regent then rose to com-

* Buvat, *Journal de la Régence*, MSS. Bib. Impériale.

plain of these testamentary dispositions, as injurious to his rights and to the interests of the state, as well as to the last intentions of the late king, who on his deathbed addressed him as the rightful heir to the crown, should the Duke of Anjou fail, and as his successor in the government, with power to change whatever might be impracticable or wrong.* The Duc du Maine rose to speak; but being contented that the regent, whilst attacking the testament, seemed to respect the codicil, he was easily reduced to silence. The abrogation of the testament was voted, and the regent endowed with all authority, not only independent of the council, but over it. He could remove or nominate its members. After this his declaration that he would be guided by the plurality of the council's vote was idle.

The chiefs of the parlement had, in fact, agreed before the sitting to set aside the testament. They had, however, not prearranged how to deal with the codicils; and when the Duke of Orleans rose to protest against them, the Duc du Maine defended them, and a prolonged altercation followed betwixt them, which was felt to be awkward, dangerous, and inconclusive by the regent's friends.† They forced the regent and duke to adjourn their wordy dispute to another room; and as this was equally inconclusive, the sitting of the parlement was adjourned to the afternoon. In the interval the chiefs of parlement were dealt with; and when the regent again harangued that body and declared that his government would be guided by their sage remonstrances, to which he would restore their rights, judges and counsellors burst forth into acclamations. Du Maine was not listened to; the late king's order giving him the command of the guards was rescinded. The Duc du Maine demanded that he should at least have the command of the guard stationed at the king's residence.

* Mémoire de Mathieu Marais

† St. Simon.

CHAP.
XXXIV

Even this was denied.* “In that case,” exclaimed the duke, “you may as well take from me the guardianship of the king’s person, which I can no longer answer for.” “With the greatest pleasure,” hastily interrupted the regent; “we will relieve you of that trouble too.” Thus the Duc du Maine, though allowed to continue his superintendence of the young king’s education, was left dependent, and the regent endowed with power as absolute as that wielded by Louis.†

Whatever was the private life of the Duke of Orleans, his first intentions as a future ruler were the best, and moreover planned and discussed with the best men. Both court and public had been fully alive to the disorder, dilapidation, and decay produced by the abuses of a superannuated administration. The late Duke of Burgundy had sent commissions through all the provinces, and studied their heartrending reports.‡ The politicians who had aided and surrounded the dauphin betook themselves to the Duke of Orleans, who promised to adopt all that was feasible in their suggestions.§ The opinion of Fénelon, the head of the dauphin’s school, was that despotism was the great malady which was eating up the monarchy, and that the States-General offered the best remedy. But how could the tax-worn and despised commons agree with the clergy and the nobles, if no external force was applied? or, did the people throw out that force, how could resistance and civil war be avoided? St. Simon himself recommended the convocation of the States-General, chiefly to perpetrate a state bankruptcy in their name. The regent himself already felt that constitutional reform would be revolution, and limited in consequence his views to administrative amelioration.

* Staal.

† Memoirs of St. Simon, Duclos, Noailles, Registres du Parlement, &c. Lemontey, Histoire de la Régence, Mathieu Marais, &c.

‡ They are in MSS. in the Bib. Impériale.

§ One of the acts of the regent at this time was to order the publication of “Télémaque.”

The grandees, who possessed his ear, never failed to declaim against the tyranny of single ministers, who in the late reign were little kings in their departments. Government by councils, not ministers, was a favourite idea of the dauphin's friends. The regent resolved to put it in practice, yet this had been the system established by the princes of the House of Austria, in Spain, as elsewhere; and it had been found to aggravate all the ills and all the stagnation of despotism.

More pressing than even financial embarrassment was the management of ecclesiastical affairs. The prisons were full of victims immured for the crime of being Jansenists, and for entertaining different ideas from the Jesuits and the late king on the efficacy of Grace. The instrument of their persecution, Le Tellier, was appointed by the king's will confessor to the young sovereign. The regent dismissed him with a pension; whilst the chief object of Le Tellier's enmity, the Cardinal de Noailles, was appointed to preside over the new council for ecclesiastical affairs, of which the eminent lawyer Daguesseau became a member. The gates of the Bastille were flung open, and the Jansenists came forth, with others even more ignorant of the crime for which they had suffered years of incarceration.*

One should have expected that Protestants had shared in the effects of newly awakened tolerance. But their sufferings remained unattended to until the regent's attention was attracted to their condition by the information that they were about to rise in the south, and that a quantity of arms prepared for the insurrection had been seized. His impulse then was to avert the danger by once more granting liberty of worship and conscience to the religionists. The Abbé Dubois had,

* Cardinals Rohan and Bussy waited on the regent to ask what was to be done in the matter of the Constitution and the Bull Unigenitus. "Leave it alone," said the regent; "it would have been better had you never meddled with it." Buvat.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

however, by that time acquired chief influence over the regent; and he, hoping and intriguing to be cardinal, could not consent to a measure of tolerance that might incense Rome. The Protestants, therefore, were abandoned to all the rigours of proscription, in order that a dissolute politician might become cardinal! * For the same reason, the regent had resisted Daguesseau's proposal to banish the Jesuits. He felt that he had sufficiently offended Rome by the reversal of all that had been done against Jansenism by the Bull *Unigenitus*.

Foreign relations also pressed upon the regent for guidance and solution. A council, with the Maréchal d'Uxelles at its head, was formed to administer them. But the regent soon took these affairs into his own hands, and found a practical minister to conduct them in the Abbé Dubois. Torcy was set aside, though retained in such a position that recourse could be had to him for information and advice. It was impossible to continue in office the old foreign minister when the object and scope of French policy became totally changed.

Louis the Fourteenth had one great idea, the aggrandisement of his monarchy and the extension of its frontiers. To this he had sacrificed the internal prosperity of the kingdom, and with such disproportionate success that it was impossible to do other than abandon the policy of aggrandisement and war. From this time till the fall of the monarchy it made no acquisition, and sought none, if Lorraine be excepted, which the French kings in many respects already considered their own.

This wisely stationary policy of France allowed England to adopt one similarly pacific, the tranquillity of the west being for some years only disturbed by the personal intrigues of upstart ministers or mistresses. Wars themselves, when they arose, had a personal more

* Duclos, *Memoirs*.

than a national object. It was, in fact, the House of Orleans and the House of Hanover which armed, negotiated, or struggled for their peculiar interests, and not England or France; until later the commercial development and colonial aggrandisement of England gave rise to a rivalry between the nations, and to hostilities carried on more on and over sea than disturbant of the peace or frontiers of the Continent.

Hence is it that the history of the foreign policy of the west of Europe, from the peace of Utrecht to the last years of the century, became comparatively insignificant and uninteresting. No great political aim was pursued, and no great results of any kind attained. And the great monarchies of Western Europe having had all freedom obliterated and authority concentrated chiefly for purposes of war, when these purposes were abandoned, the monarchical machines themselves were without an object or principle of activity, and consequently rotted upon themselves.

But whilst the west of Europe thus slumbered and mouldered, the eastern portion of the Continent became the scene of great changes, great struggles, and of results which altered the whole aspect of European politics, causing considerable anxiety, and in time awakening a certain degree of agitation in the west. In the interval between the peace of Utrecht and the French revolution, Russia rose to be an empire. Peter the Great, its regenerator, was a visitor at the regent's court in 1717. Nor did he come with the mere purpose of curiosity. He offered his active alliance to France, showing the latter how absurd it was to continue its close connection with Sweden, a fallen power, which could no longer play the part it did in past times, when it balanced and even overcame the emperor. Russia and Prussia had taken its place, and it was with them that France ought to ally, not with Sweden, Holland, and England. Marshal Tessé was charged with

CHAP.
XXXIV.

hearing and replying to their proposals, which fell to the ground.* What the czar said of Sweden was true enough. After a splendid burst of victory under Charles the Twelfth, it fell with him, and lost its influence in North Germany. Prussia took its place as the great Protestant power; whilst Austria, that low and torpid state which seems never able to live and never able to die, maintained, but could no more than maintain, its position in face of the new powers which rose around it.

Simultaneous with the rise of Prussia and of Russia are to be recorded the fall of Poland and the decline of Turkey; important events, of which the consummation and results are, even to our day, not complete, the uncertainty attending both contributing to keep the west unsettled, and to necessitate the large armies and the war policy which still affright and exhaust the world.

Ere the regent could turn his view to such remote objects of policy, he was summoned at the very moment of his assumption of power to decide upon the relations which he was to maintain with England. The pretender to the crown of that country, though banished to Lorraine, was actively preparing an expedition to recover his lost kingdom, the preparations too being made in French harbours. The late king had aided him as far as he durst without an open breach of the stipulations of Utrecht. But Lord Stair, George the First's vigilant envoy in Paris, made him acquainted with every movement of the Jacobites, and repeatedly summoned the French government to observe its engagements. He received but evasions from Louis, and insults from Torcy. He therefore drew closer to the Duke of Orleans, represented that both he and the British monarch were threatened by Philip of Spain, as well as by the faction of De Maintenon and Du Maine, who were guided by the Jesuits. The Abbé Dubois was the intermediary

* *Mém. de Tessé*, t. xi.

between Lord Stair and the duke, and through him the former offered the full support of the English court in establishing his regency, on the understanding that he would discountenance the Pretender, and give up, when he had attained power, that Mardyke canal, so dreaded by the English. The duke, when he became regent, gratified the envoy so far as to seize the vessels which the Pretender had prepared. This, however, did not prevent him and the Duke of Ormond from sailing to England. But the Earl of Mar, who had raised the standard in September, was defeated at Sheriffmuir, and the Pretender, returning a fugitive to France, left the regent no motive for upholding or tolerating him.

It exasperated George the First to find danger and invasion come upon him from France. That prince, closely connected with Holland and the emperor, might at any time, it was feared, be induced to join a coalition against the new regent, who, having at the same time the Spanish court hostile, would be perfectly isolated. This danger was more fully pointed out to the Duke of Orleans by the Abbé Dubois than by any of his councillors, and the means at the same time indicated for obviating the peril.

It was the extraordinary result of Louis the Fourteenth's death to transfer political power both in Paris and in Madrid to two men of humble birth, great talents, and intriguing habits, supported altogether by their own merits and address, and finding and forcing their way to power, chiefly through the ignorance and incapacity of those who sought to grasp it. The opposition, the kind of social conspiracy, which was formed at Paris and Madrid against absolutism, wielded by De Maintenon in the one, and the Princess Orsini in the other, was composed chiefly of *grandeos*. At the accession of the regent, those of the *grandeos* who deemed themselves most intelligent, seized power. So they sought to do at Madrid. The several councils of government depart-

CHAP.
XXXIV.

ments had all noble presidents. But they were soon found utterly incapable of performing the task they undertook. The Duc de Noailles was the minister of finance, with the embarrassments of which he was unable to cope, and he in consequence gave way to the influence of Mr. John Law. Over foreign affairs, the Maréchal d'Uxelles presided; but that diplomatist, fresh from Utrecht, had no idea save following in the track of Torcy and Louis the Fourteenth. The regent found a councillor of more original stamp in the Abbé Dubois, who had been his preceptor, and who at the same time had busied himself with diplomacy. Though an abbé, Dubois had made himself the companion of the duke's pleasures as well as of his studies, and thus ingratiated himself with the prince. When the Maréchal d'Uxelles, who was in truth attached to the Duc du Maine and party, recommended a continuance of that antagonism to England and support of the Pretender, which Louis the Fourteenth displayed, the Abbé Dubois hinted that this led to war and exhaustion, and was likely to aggravate all the evils, as well as continue the non-results, of the late reign. To remove and neutralise the hostility of the Spanish court, it was but necessary to conciliate England, and come to a permanent understanding with its government. The regent, who had a great admiration for English liberty and institutions, hearkened to the abbé. Dubois had been in England, where he had known Stanhope, with whom he soon opened a correspondence, preparing the way for closer understanding.

The rise of Alberoni was not until that of Dubois. A native of Reggio, of humble birth, he was educated for the church, and showed such ability as to be employed by the cardinal who came to negotiate with the Duc de Vendome. Alberoni captivated that wit and pleasure-loving commander, and was by him brought to Spain. He there became agent for the government of Parma,

and contributed to the choice of a Princess of Parma, Elizabeth Farnese, to be the wife of Philip the Fifth. He in consequence became councillor, and rose to the first political influence under her patronage. The moral portraits of Dubois and Alberoni have both been handed down to us, limned by their enemies, the grantees, some of whom, like St. Simon, however incapable of wielding a sceptre, were most able at wielding the pen. Those magnates who, as politicians, were tripped up by Dubois and Alberoni, took their revenge by leaving to posterity the grossest caricatures of their upstart and successful rivals.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

Whatever truth there may be in the narration of Alberoni's servility to Vendome, and Dubois to the regent, we have reason to suspect that their faults have been grossly exaggerated. There was enough, however, in Dubois' conduct, to make him a churchman as loose in his morals as in his creed. He fearlessly professed the coarse libertinism of the age; but this was the fashion, the court suit which it was requisite to wear. But however objectionable the morals of Dubois, there could be no question of his wit. By it he pushed his way in London society, making the acquaintance of Stanhope, through St. Evremont, and drawing down upon him, by his social success, the envy of the ambassador.

Dubois' visit to England and knowledge of its society must have suggested to him the absurdity of that school which considered Englishmen and Frenchmen as destined to be necessary and mortal enemies. He saw that what France and the regent most needed was peace. This could only be permanently procured by an understanding with England, and with the liberal and constitutional party then in power. Dubois proposed those means to the regent, who after some hesitation closed with and adopted them.

The difficulties in the way of bringing about such an alliance were not to be encountered in France alone.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

George the First suspected the prince from whose ports hostile expeditions issued towards England. The Whig ministers were as much opposed to the French alliance as the French grandees to the English connexion.* The idea, therefore, of Dubois having been bought by English statesmen, or being subservient to them, is simply absurd. Even Stanhope, the only English minister who listened to Dubois, and whom the latter converted to the Anglo French alliance during a visit which he paid to Holland, was reluctantly persuaded. Not that he could be blind to the advantages of agreement between the countries; but he feared the misrepresentations and attacks of the press and of the public. To conciliate these oppositions, Stanhope, like Stair, insisted on satisfying the demands of public opinion in England, which saw in the canal of Mardyke a breach of the Treaty of Utrecht, and a renewal of the project for invading England.

Dubois was prepared to yield this, as well as the exile of the Pretender from France, provided he could obtain the guarantee of England for the Duke of Orleans' right to succeed to the French crown, in preference to Philip of Spain. Although the guarantee was to be reciprocal, the French court guaranteeing the Protestant succession in England, still George the First hesitated, until he found himself menaced by Russia. Peter the Great, who had founded a capital at St. Petersburg, wanted to establish another at the western end of the Baltic, and looked to Wismar or Kiel with Mecklenburg and Holstein as a desirable Russian outpost. George the First took fright, as well he might, at the idea, and hastened his agreement with France. Dubois repaired to Hanover for the purpose. The treaty signed between England and France, November 1716, was adhered to by Holland in the

* See the letters of Horace Walpole, Lord Townshend, and their colleagues, in Coxe's Walpole.

January following, and thus obtained the name of the Triple Alliance.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

French historians are apt to stigmatize this treaty as something humiliating and base on the part of France, as that of Utrecht had been on the part of England. And yet the stipulations on either side were and came to nothing. The only portion of the treaty followed by effect, was the suspension of that rivalry and hostile intrigue between the courts and countries, which led to war, and produced for no purpose and no result the bad passions of the two people, with the exhaustion of their resources. To the House of Hanover indeed the treaty was most favourable, securing the alliance of France at a moment when the Powers of the North, Sweden and Russia, embraced the cause of the Pretender. Had Spain and France at the same time lent him their aid, the Protestant succession in England would have been exposed to a severe struggle.

The French regent was, however, himself almost equally menaced from Spain. A strange fatality beset the monarchs of that kingdom. Whether Austrian or Bourbon, a prince was no sooner enveloped in the torpid atmosphere of the Spanish court than he sunk below the rest of mankind, and became incapable of the exercise of either judgment or will. In order to keep up the imaginary dignity of their king, national prejudice as well as court rules, prescribed to him a complete seclusion, which shut him out from the world. The wife or the confessor were the only intermediates permitted between the Spanish Grand Lama and mankind. And of all the causes which contributed to the depression and nullification of Spain, none was so potent as the Oriental idea of a monarch being an idol to be worshipped, not a rational being to be instructed, and allowed to collect the knowledge current in the world. Philip was governed by Elizabeth Farnese of Parma, his queen by a second marriage, and by her countryman Alberoni, to

CHAP.
XXXIV.

whom she gave her confidence. He was, like Dubois, one of those amphibious ecclesiastics who had one foot in the world and the other in the sacristy. Still Alberoni had higher ideas than Dubois. The first use he proposed making of his power was to reform the finances and administration of Spain, ere he ventured to embark it in ambitious schemes.* But the king and queen, whom he dazzled by unfolding the latter, refused to wait for the result of Alberoni's proposed reforms. Philip himself, actuated by past reminiscences more than by recent circumstances, retained the old jealousy which had animated him when at Versailles against the Duke of Orleans. The throne of Spain did not content him, but, in direct breach of his own most solemn renunciation, he claimed to be regent of France and sovereign of it, preferably to the Duke of Orleans, in case of the failure of the direct heir. He had even prepared to claim the regency on Louis' demise, and had charged his envoy to Paris, the Count Cellamare, to pave the way for him by intrigue. The regent retorted by sending the Marquis de Louville to Madrid on a similar errand. He was not allowed to remain.

Could the Spanish court have confined itself to one purpose, there might have been some possibility of its success. But whilst the king's jealousy made him aim at contesting the regency and crown of France with the ruler of that country, the views of the Spanish queen were directed with equal eagerness against the emperor, by driving whom from Italy she hoped to instal her own son, Don Carlos, in the possession of Tuscany and Parma. To attain this double object, Alberoni had at first striven to ingratiate himself with England and Holland, and to obtain their support. He offered them commercial advantages, guarantees of succession, and all that was considered to be esteemed valuable in London. But the English monarch, absorbed in the ideas and in-

* His Life and apologetic letters.

terests of Hanover, sought above all things to add to the electorate the maritime duchies of Bremen and Verden, which the emperor could chiefly help him to obtain. They had been conquered by Denmark from Sweden, and then sold to George the First. Sweden resisted the spoliation; and Russia, its old antagonist, felt a kindred resentment against George for his opposing its desire to appropriate Mecklenburg. The three great political personages, Charles the Twelfth, Peter the Great, and Alberoni, thus came to league against the House of Hanover, and plotted to establish a Stuart prince upon the British throne. The three clever madmen were baffled by the dull man of sense, George. Their envoys were arrested, their secret discovered, and the whole plot exploded. Peter the Great tried to detach the regent from the English alliance, but failed. And George, instead of being dethroned, obtained the adherence of the emperor to his Triple Alliance against Spain and its Northern allies, which thus became Quadruple and irresistible.

Alberoni was not to be easily baffled. The adherence of the emperor to the Quadruple Alliance had been obtained by the promise of the restoration of Sicily. The Duke of Savoy, who had worn its crown, was compelled to transfer his throne and royalty to Sardinia, much to his discontent. Alberoni resolved to drive a fleet and army through at least this clause of the hostile treaty. A considerable Spanish force was landed in Sardinia, and made itself master of the island between August and October 1717.*

When the other Powers charged Spain with committing such a flagrant breach of the Treaty of Utrecht, Alberoni replied that a greater breach had been committed by the stipulations of the Quadruple Alliance. None of the Powers forming that alliance were prepared,

* Doddington's despatches in Kings of Spain. Historical Register. Coxe's Memoirs of the Bourbon Lord Mahon's History.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

like Alberoni, for war. All deprecated the extremity and the expense, and hastened by negotiation to half satisfy, half check the ambition of the Spanish court. The regent remonstrated, but did not threaten, and Stanhope was sent by England to Madrid. Alberoni was willing to give up the expedition to Sicily, provided Sardinia was left him; but this Stanhope said he durst not even propose to the emperor, who had reluctantly entered into the Quadruple Alliance, and only desired a pretext to withdraw from it.* The English envoy could thus not overcome Alberoni's obstinacy, and another expedition was prepared by him against Sicily. England alone determined not to stand a quiet spectator of this new aggression. Its minister appealed to Parliament, and a fleet was equipped and ordered to the Mediterranean. Alberoni was more irritated than dismayed, and displayed the utmost spirit and determination in seeking to excite enemies to the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance. He sent to offer subsidies to Ragotsky, the Transylvanian foe of the emperor, to Brittany and the Cevennes to form insurrections against the regent. The Dutch he tempted by commercial advantages, and the Duke of Savoy he sought to seduce by large territorial offers. All in vain. The Spanish troops disembarked in Sicily in June 1718, and were very soon masters both of Palermo and of the town of Messina. The citadel of the latter held out. And the British fleet under Byng soon appeared in strength to oppose the Spaniards. A conflict ensued between the fleets, wherein that of Spain was destroyed. Instead of taking any undue advantage of this success, the English Cabinet tried by every means, and especially through Stanhope, to bend the Spanish court to accept the arrangements of the Quadruple Alliance, abandon Sicily and Sardinia, and be contented with the reversion of

* Stanhope to Craggs, Madrid, May 27, 1718. Add. MSS. B M 15, 936.

Tuscany and Parma. Alberoni scorned these proposals, and proceeded to carry on the war of conspiracy and intrigue, since success did not attend his more open efforts.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

The Count of Cellamarc, that ambassador whom Philip of Spain had sent to oppose and prevent, if possible, the accession of the Duke of Orleans to the regency, had remained ever since in the capital, and naturally fell into relationship with the opposition and enemies of the regent and his government. These were not a few, and comprised many of the *grande*s, who were disappointed at not retaining the influence and position they expected, and who took advantage of the financial and other embarrassments of the time to vilipend the regent and his government. The promotion of Dubois, who became minister at the time, especially galled them, and they exclaimed loudly against the new policy, so contrary to that of Louis the Fourteenth, of an alliance with England and the emperor, and antagonism only towards Spain. The restless Maréchal Villars was one of the foremost of these malcontents. St. Simon himself considered that there was some great national policy in aiding Spain to reconquer its hold of Italy, and some modern historians agree with him. Really, however, the interest of France, or any other nation, was but little concerned. It was the personal interests of the Queen of Spain, of the Duke of Orleans, and of the Elector of Hanover, which were in play, and not those of any one of the countries engaged, or sought to be engaged, in the idle strife and struggle of the great families.

Whilst the more prudent of the malcontents limited their opposition to protests against any hostility to Spain, the more foolish pushed their intrigues to the height of conspiracy. The court of Spain was fatuous enough to entertain any hope and follow any suggestion. The Prince of Cellamare, its ambassador, conceived

CHAP.
XXXIV.

the scheme of carrying off the Duke of Orleans, arresting the States General, and claiming the regency for Philip. The Duke and Duchess of Maine were the puissant auxiliaries on whom Cellamare depended. The former, whose character procured him more enemies than friends, had engaged in antagonism to the legitimate princes of the blood, as well as to the higher ranks of the peerage. He pretended to succeed to the throne over the heads of the former. This had been overruled and cancelled. But he still had his rank as prince of the blood, and guardian of the young monarch. The Duc de Bourbon deprived him of both. It was at the time when the Parliament strenuously resisted the financial measures of Law. A Bed of Justice, at which the young king was made to preside, put down at once the Duc du Maine and the Parliament. The former was deprived of his guardianship, and the edicts of Law were registered in despite of the latter.

The Duke and Duchess of Maine were still smarting with this degradation, when Cellamare's conspiracy was ripening. How far they joined in it is uncertain. An agent of Cellamare's was seized on his way to Madrid with letters which mentioned and compromised a number of persons. In consequence of this discovery Cellamare himself was arrested, his papers seized, and the conspiracy soon divulged to the public. The Duke and Duchess of Maine were arrested, the prince deprived of his position and residence in the Tuileries, and sent to Dourlens; the duchess was immured in the donjon of Dijon. Alberoni's letters revealing the plot were made public, and France joined England in formally declaring war against Spain.* (January, 1719).

Marshal Villars refused the command of the army destined to cross the Pyrenees. The world was more surprised to learn that the Duke of Berwick had ac-

* It was accompanied by a manifesto of which Fontenelle was the author.

cepted it. The Prince of Conti commanded under him. The army entered Spain in the spring, and was soon master of Passages, then a naval arsenal of importance and wealth. Six ships of war were in the harbour, and abundant stores, all of which became a prey to the flames. Berwick then laid siege to Fontarabia. Philip the Fifth, with his court and a few troops, marched, not so much to oppose the French army as to seduce it. He was led to suppose that his presence would induce the invaders to lay down their arms and join him.* He came but to see the fall of this hope, and the Spanish court withdrew to Madrid. St. Sebastian surrendered to the French in August, as did Santona, which contained also an arsenal and many ships of war. The English are accused of having insisted on the destruction of the naval force of Spain. Berwick then marched his army to the Mediterranean coast, but did not penetrate into the country. Indeed his desire was but to conquer peace, and preserve it by compelling Philip to dismiss Alberoni. The failure of that bold minister's scheme, with the threatening aspect of Europe combined against him, necessarily overcame the royal predilections. The Jesuit confessor of the monarch recommended that he should be abandoned, and in December 1719 Alberoni was dismissed. Soon after the court of Spain submitted, and consented to accept the terms and views of the Quadruple Alliance. These views were to complete the peace of Utrecht by compelling the emperor and the King of Spain to become reconciled. This was effected by a compromise, Austria receiving Sicily, and the Queen of Spain's son, Don Carlos, being secured the succession of Tuscany and Parma. One is quite at a loss to comprehend the abuse and lamenta-

* There was a good deal of desertion from the French army. That the English government feared that the French troops would not fight is

evident in a letter from Craggs to Worsley, congratulating him that they had captured Passages. Add. MSS. B. M. 15, 936.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

tions which French historians lavish on this treaty, and on the policy which produced it. Though somewhat unjust to the House of Savoy, it was the only fair and feasible path towards terminating the wars between the Imperial and Spanish houses. Nor can we glean from the rabid effusions of French ultra patriotism, what real advantage England gained, or France lost, by this pacific policy.

The unheroic, if not unsuccessful, part which the regent played in foreign affairs, was forced upon him by the embarrassments of domestic administration. Louis the Fourteenth had left immediate debts amounting to 2,400,000 livres. Though he had reduced by one-half his chief funded debt, that on the Hôtel de Ville, in 1713, the interest had not been more regularly paid. The *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville amounted to 32 millions annually, and other *rentes* or funds to 104 millions. The entire revenue, if received without deduction, would not have done much more than pay this interest of the debt. But the net revenue was but 70 millions, and the necessary annual expenses more than double. There were Treasury bills for 600 millions in circulation, negotiated in the market at from 80 to 90 per cent. loss.

The regent was advised to wipe away this mountain of debt with a sponge. The kingdom was shipwrecked, argued these councillors, and one portion of it must be sacrificed to save the other. The smaller mountain should be sacrificed to the greater, the creditors to the mass of the population.* Disguised, divided, and partial bankruptcy was much safer than the wholesale measure, and was therefore adopted.

The first step in that direction was to order that all

* Dutot, *Reflexions sur les Finances*, c. i. art. 5. The Duc de St. Simon recommended the state bankruptcy with the convocation of the

States General. The duke stigmatizes as the most dishonest of men, Dubois, who opposed the sweeping measure.

taxes should be paid directly into the treasury without passing through the hands of the receivers-general, who had made large advances, and refused to continue them. This threat to supersede them brought the wealthy class of functionaries to reason, and they consented to continue monthly advances. The holders of treasury bills were next dealt with. These were subjected to a visa or examination by a commission, which reduced the 600 millions to 250, for which merely fresh bills were given bearing 4 per cent. interest. Fifteen per cent. was the common rate of interest at the time. The funds were also dealt with. The rentes on the Hôtel de Ville had been reduced by two-fifths so late as 1713; they were now passed over, and the reduction applied but to the rest.

One wonders how the public tolerated all this, or how a government, which never kept its word, and cheated in all its dealings, could still obtain credit. But the truth was that no investment existed for money, save what was in the power, if not in the hands, of government. The frugal individual who saved money must either buy *rentes*, or a salaried place, or join a trading company, also in the power of the state, or lend on mortgage, which, as we shall find, was equally subject to the interference of the government. Land produced nothing, partly owing to Colbert's depression of agriculture, but still more to the impediments and duties in the way of circulation. The noble landlords eked out their revenues by military or other functions; and when the state could not pay them, it gave them in return exemption from being pursued by their creditors. If to lend money was thus fruitless, it was still more dangerous to hoard it, government lowering or raising the standard according as it had to pay or recoin. At the beginning of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, the marc of silver was coined into twenty-eight or thirty livres. He afterwards coined

CHAP.
XXXIV.

them into forty. Until in the year of peace which preceded his death, it was found profitable to bring the coin back to the old standard of twenty-eight.* The Duke of Noailles, who presided over the finances of the regent, ordered a recoinage in 1716, by which he altered the value to forty livres the marc. Indeed the mint did not recoin, but receiving a louis at the rate of sixteen livres, re-stamped and re-issued it at twenty. The consequence was that crowns and livres hid themselves or ran away to Holland, whence they were fraudulently re-stamped and returned at the new mint price.

Instead of assailing the government, whose ignorance, profligacy and prodigality were the cause of distress, the public—at least the public of princes and nobles—exclaimed against the monopolizers of money, as they called the capitalist class. They stood in the light of the Jews of old. The high interest they received for what they ventured to lend, was usury. This usury formed almost the only source of industry remaining, for the land lay uncultivated, without labour or cattle to make it fructify. Yet the general impulse was to immolate those who practised it. Such benighted ignorance and cruelty does a despotic state produce.

The government did not fail to take advantage of the cry, and establish, as Richelieu had done, a *Chambre Ardente* of judges, empowered to enquire into the accounts of all who had dealings with the State. Those holding unpaid bills had already been mulcted of two-thirds by the government. But the new chamber was to enquire into long settled accounts, and to punish capitalists for being rich. To strike awe into the victims was considered requisite. Consequently, all who sought to evade justice, to conceal or complex accounts,

* Equal, says Stuart, to 40 shillings, which rendered the 2000 mil-

lions of livres of the French debt equal to 143 millions sterling.

were threatened with the galleys and confiscation. Clerks, confidants, and domestics were promised one-fifth of the sums recovered if the betrayal of those who employed them led to this. And the masters were threatened with death if they retaliated or used counter measures. The Jews of the middle ages were never tortured by the rude barons, their contemporaries, with such refined cruelty as the Duc de Noailles, the pious friend of Madame de Maintenon and of the dauphin, thought fit to inflict upon those guilty of having lent money or supplied commodities to the state. From this menacing decree many saved themselves by flight, and some by suicide. Some were caught, and executed or pilloried. The people enjoyed their suffering, the stage mocked, the caricaturists raised a laugh at their expense, and the regent himself had a medal struck, representing him as Hercules destroying the pestilent creatures who had supplied him with money. As for the court of justice, in the hall adjoining it the instruments of torture were displayed,* and each rich man's head was set down as to be ransomed for so much, the amount of the ransom being proportioned to the extent of his means, or the probable rate of his expenditure. On looking over the list of the sums which the Duc de Noailles expected to extort by this violence for the use of the state, the regent and his boon companions thought they would be much better appropriated to their own use. Pardons were prepared and secretly offered on the part of the courtiers to the menaced, who thus escaped ruin through the corruption of their persecutors. Buvat says that the regent had seven farmers-general for his share. It is singular enough that the cry of "war to the rich," which has continued to mingle itself with popular revolution in France down to our day, should have been inaugurated and acted upon by a Bourbon regent and a ducal

CHAP.
XXXIV.

* Lemontey.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

finance minister. As some set-off for the cruelties of the chamber of justice, and the *visa*, some remissions were made of the *taille* and in the capitation. The extraordinary duties levied between province and province were abolished, and the metropolis was relieved of the sur-tax upon its markets. The trade to Guinea as well as to Canada was thrown open. The Duc de Noailles considerably reduced the army as well as the host of civil *employés*. Of these nearly 2,500 were got rid of in the capital alone, the government indemnifying them as far as possible.

Whilst the regent sanctioned and profited by such measures, he was soon made to perceive their utter failure in financial results. The trifling measures for giving activity to commerce and industry were more than neutralized by the holocaust of the capitalists, and of the lending class, which made them hide rather than employ what they possessed. Noailles' efforts in the way of reduction of expenditure, had so far effect as to bring the revenue to cover the expenditure, if the interest of the debt were not taken into account. The deficit of 1716 equalled in amount about the interest of the debt.* Noailles, the regular physician, who promised to restore financial health by economy, dishonestly or honestly effected, failed; and it was necessary to recur to the financial skill of a man of a more empirical school.

Like Alberoni and Dubois, Law at this time raised himself to influence by a knowledge of this department of political science which he had studied, far superior to that of the grandee Noailles, who was a mere follower of routine. John Law was born in 1671, the son of an Edinburgh goldsmith. His calling was that of a capitalist, and Law had all the advantages of the best mercantile as well as intellectual and social education. His

* Forbonnais, Noailles, *Compte Rendu*.

youth was as gaily spent as his money, and he was at length expatriated by a duel. Banking and its creation of credit were then, as steam has been in our days, a novelty that worked miracles. And Law had the advantage of studying the great and new experiments of it in London and at Amsterdam, and subsequently in the commercial cities of Italy. The first essay of his experience and ingenuity in the matter was a proposal to the parliament of his native country, Scotland, to redeem its poverty by the establishment of a Bank, which should issue notes on the guarantee of the soil. The Scotch lords shrank with horror from the proposal to infeodate their lands, not to a monarch but to a commercial company.* Again returning to the continent, Law, in consequence of his great gains at faro, was ordered by the police to quit Paris. But he had made the acquaintance of Desmarets, of Dubois, and of the Duke of Orleans. Through such high influence he soon returned, and succeeded in representing to the latter the great benefit to be derived from banking and paper money. As to paper, the French treasury knew well enough its uses—its bills flooded the capital, and government proposed paying but one-third of their amount. Such paper was a sorry substitute for coin, which disappeared and was only to be had at most usurious prices. Whilst its scarcity and the suspension of trade were but the natural results of the prodigality, bad faith and tyranny of the government, the *grande*s, and indeed the public at large, laid all the blame upon the *traitans*, as moneyed men were called. They had gained 1,800,000 livres of late years by the nation's distress, complains St. Simon. Whilst some were disposed to recommence the system of torturing and robbing them, Law, more mild, merely proposed to the government to take their places, and assume for itself the great

* Lockhart.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

money-making, money-dealing, issuing and lending faculty. The State in France had indeed all along undertaken to perform a certain portion of this. It coined the precious metals for the public use, and considered it justifiable to place on them any value it pleased, coining a mark of gold in 1714 into 28 livres, and in 1715 into 40. Law professed to despise such larceny, and advised the French financiers to leave gold to find its own value, and money its own interest. But to such sound principles Law joined others more doubtful. The State, he thought, could create money, and give value by its decree to the most worthless material. He did not deem it necessary to base its worth upon its convertibility into what was acknowledged value. State stamp was enough for that, and depreciation could be avoided by issuing no more than was requisite for the purpose of interchange. By issuing paper for coin, and endorsing the former with the preference, the current coin of the kingdom might be drawn into the coffers of the State. And as it was supposed to amount to 1,200 millions of livres, it would go far to pay the public debts. Law went even further. He proposed to substitute the government for the capitalist, both in lands and in trade, and affirmed that its monopoly of all the gains of commerce might be turned to defray the expenses of the State.

Law's projects chimed in but too well with the prejudices of the day. The regent was soon a convert to them. But the *grande*s disliked the influence of a foreign upstart. St. Simon pho-phoed, Noailles objected, and Law saw that he had better begin by what was most feasible and unobjectionable in his plan. By the Regent's permission he established a bank in May 1716. Its capital was six millions of livres, divided into 1,200 shares. The shares could be obtained by paying one-fourth in cash, the other portion in Treasury bills. Notwithstanding this mode of payment,

the concern was prosperous. All flocked to the bank, which lent at less interest, and which paid not in fluctuating livres, but in fixed bank crowns. To extend this movement to the provinces, an edict ordained that bank-notes might be received in payment of taxes, and that a provincial treasurer might give them for gold, as well as the bank in the capital. This answered extremely well, and proved a source of ease and abundance to the provinces. But it did not work the miracle that Law meditated, nor could a bank of small dimensions absorb the coin and capital of the country. A subsidiary scheme was therefore indispensable.

Great and active wealth, could only spring, it was thought, from foreign trade. It was by such trade that Venice and the Italian cities, as well as Amsterdam, had grown, its operation naturally suggesting and giving birth to banks. England too had followed in their wake. From the commencement of the 17th century that great rival of France had progressed in maritime adventure and extending trade. Even its civil wars had given new impulse to its marine, to its colonial conquests and extension. The wealth and power thus attained showed themselves in awakening manufacturing industry at home. To this the flight of the Huguenots from France had largely contributed. And if England and Holland had carried on successful wars with France, this was evidently due to their commercial renown and credit.

There was one French statesman who had been fully aware of this, and who proposed in consequence to compete with England and Holland in the ways of peace, by industrial activity and tolerance at home, procuring and opening of markets abroad. This was Colbert, who deemed that the creation of colonies and foreign commerce could best give life to trade and to manufactures at home—reacting upon agriculture, to which he assigned a secondary place. But war drowned the voice

CHAP.
XXXIV.

and the schemes of Colbert, which fell into disrepute. Nothing could be more antipathetic to commercial or colonial greatness than Louis the Fourteenth and his school.* If the enterprise of his subjects did endow him with a colony, his first thought was to impose a regiment of Jesuits upon it to thwart the governor, stop the trade, and reduce a nation of savages into devout children, merely in order that they might be devoured by their still barbarous neighbours. In the colonisation of America the French seized the two finest positions, being the mouths of the two great rivers, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, with the regions adjoining. They gloried in having thus secured the great outlets of trade, whilst the plodding English occupied the country between, dotting the coast, and sowing the produce which was to be the material of trade and the foundation of power and wealth. Possessed of this and of the sturdy population, they necessarily drove the French from their superior but untenable positions.

To the last the government of Louis the Fourteenth was deaf to the advantages of colonial empire. The monarch liked, indeed, to receive a deputation from Siam or some distant land; but actual trade was beneath his care. And in the negotiations of the Treaty of Utrecht, the French monarch was more anxious to gain a village in Flanders than a continent beyond the sea. In their negotiation Bolingbroke and Harley had at least the sagacity to aim at the acquirement of colonial and commercial advantages. This Louis gave them, in return for lenience to him in fixing the Flemish frontier. And it may be said, indeed, that in order to retain Lille and Dunkirk, he gave up those provinces on the St. Lawrence the loss of which left Canada

* The example of Spain—poor in despite of her colonies—influenced many to hold this opinion, which

Montesquieu fully expresses in his *Lettres Péruviennes*, written at this epoch.

isolated, cut off from the sea and from the mother country.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

This blindness of the great monarch and his counsellors, whose cares were exclusively turned to continental politics, was seen and exposed by the politicians of the opposite school, who succeeded to power under the regency. In his feeble way Noailles did what he could to encourage trade, by throwing it open. Law was better acquainted than any French statesman with what was passing in England. There he saw the great commercial companies, not only thriving independent of the government, but aiding it, and offering large sums to it for the continuance of privilege and monopoly. The English India Company was paying ten per cent. to its subscribers, whilst that of France was a mere loss.

But however profitable the trade to India, that to the colonial possessions of Spain in America, so rich in mines, was considered a far more abundant source of wealth. Harley, in 1714, entertaining great hopes of commercial concessions from Spain, conceived and carried into effect the project of forming a company to trade to the South Sea, from the holders of the funded debt. Of course they were to exchange, for the monopoly of the trade, their claims upon the government. Although this scheme failed in England, on account of the subsequent rupture with Spain, and although the French court was for the moment not on such friendly terms with Spain as to hope for commercial advantages from it, Law thought he saw in Louisiana a country quite as rich as New Spain. The privilege to trade with it was in the hands of Crozat, a rich capitalist, who was desirous to be rid of it. In August 1717, royal letters patent established the Company of the West, which was precisely a repetition of Harley's scheme. It was to consist of the holders of 100 millions of State bills, who were to exchange these for shares

CHAP.
XXXIV.

in the company. Not only the monopoly of trade to the Mississippi, but that of beaver-skins from Canada, was conferred upon it, and the property of the soil upon Louisiana was vested in the new company.

The necromancer had thus acquired two instruments to play upon—the notes of his bank, and the shares of his company; but it required some time for the latter to mature or be in a state for use. Law, in the meantime, presented his notes as a substitute for coin. Great as was his success, this did not answer his impatience: so that in April 1718 he had recourse to the grand measure, directly contradictory of his own theories and promises, of forcibly calling in all the coin for a re-coinage; lowering its value, making the mark furnish sixty livres in lieu of forty. He also caused the money in the treasury to be carried to the bank, whilst all payments and salaries were effected in notes.*

At this bold act parliament broke forth. It was no longer kept in respect by the Duc de Noailles being at the head of finance, and by D'Aguesseau being in possession of the seals. Both had opposed Law, and were dismissed; D'Argenson not only taking the seals, but acting as provisional finance minister, while the sole power rested with Law.

The seeds of trouble had at the time been thickly sown; discontent great, and calumny audacious. Parliament had been provoked by a stupid quarrel about etiquette and priority of salutation, got up by St. Simon and the higher nobles. The Duc du Maine, mortified and angered by the decree which deprived him of

* Barbier. Lemontcy well describes Law's treatment of coin. "In order to discredit gold and silver money, he changed and tormented their value by repeated legislation, frightening capitalists, and even reserving the right to receive more and

to pay less. More than fifty variations in the value of money succeeded one another, an example unheard of in the annals of despotism. So that the metals, affected incessantly, found no place of rest but in the coffers of the bank."

the right of inheriting the throne, intrigued with the judges and with Spain, to embarrass, if not overthrow, the regent. Whilst, to render the latter a more obnoxious victim, the most atrocious imputations, such as a design to murder the king, were attributed to him in pointed verse. The regent, who was of a disposition to bear much, was aroused by the atrocity of these calumnies. Yet he might not have proceeded against the Duc du Maine, had not the Duke of Bourbon pointed out to him, with energy bordering on ferocity, the danger of leaving such an enemy in possession of the king's person, and with facility for inspiring the young monarch with prejudices and with passion. Bourbon said, that as first legitimate prince of the blood, he was best entitled to the post. Whilst Bourbon thundered against Maine, Dubois, who had returned from England, pointed out the necessity of putting down the parliament, which the regent fully felt, as it interfered with the large advances that Law had promised to make. A Bed of Justice was determined on and prepared at the Tuileries, not to oblige the young monarch to make any procession through the streets. A Court of Regency preceded it, August 26, 1718, and the Duc du Maine and the other malcontents soon perceived that a military force was in attendance to put down all opposition. The court was opened by D'Argenson, as keeper of the seals, stating the reasons which induced the regent to cancel the *arrêts*, by which the parliament opposed the late financial ordonnance. The regent followed, and declared the necessity under which he found himself of denying the illegitimate sons of Louis the Fourteenth the rank of prince of the blood, whilst allowing them that of peers. The Duke of Bourbon then demanded the post of guardian to the king, in lieu of the Duc du Maine, who was absent. Villars strove to defend him, but was silenced by the regent, who said aloud he preferred an open to a concealed enemy.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

Soon after, the seventy judges made their appearance, and the Council of Regency became a Bed of Justice. D'Argenson declared the *arrêts* cancelled by the king's presiding in person. The first president uttered a remonstrance; but on its being announced that the young king was determined to be obeyed, the magistrates bowed submission and withdrew. Three of them were exiled. Dubois followed up his success by abolishing the councils of administration, assigning to himself the rank of Secretary of Foreign Affairs. That of ecclesiastical affairs was of less import. D'Argenson kept the seals, as well as, in name, the finances.

Thus rid of all parliamentary obstructions, Law pursued his career. Before the end of 1718 the company purchased the farm or management of the tobacco duty, a step to its taking all the other farms of taxes. And moreover the bank was declared a government institution—a royal bank—with liberty to issue notes in any quantity; they being no longer payable in a fixed value, but merely in that of the current coin, so likely to be depreciated. Branch banks were established in the provinces; all large sums were paid in notes, and only smaller sums in coin. A number of edicts followed, which in every shape substituted the bank paper for money. The result was, that whilst the original bank had in thirty-two months issued but twelve millions of paper, the royal bank in five months fabricated nearly sixty.

But however prosperous the bank might be, and however extended its operations, it could not pretend to replace with its notes the whole circulation of the country, or enable Law to keep his promise of settling the debts of the State, and monopolising the trade and capital of the kingdom. His subsidiary scheme of the Company of the West was destined for this. But with its shares at par, neither could it accomplish this great design. Law recurred to the usual mode of enhancing

the value: he purchased largely in time bargains,* which of course awakened curiosity, and then it was rumoured that the Company of the West was not only to monopolise the trade to the Mississippi, but was to have the whole west coast of Africa, and finally all India. It bought up the old India Company, and came forth as the *Compagnie des Indes*. Fifty thousand new shares were created, and were only to be had by holders of the old shares of the Company of the West. Those called *mères*, or mothers, were soon in request, in order to procure the *filles*, or daughters, as the new lot of shares was called. The price of both doubled. The mint was soon after ceded to the company, and 50,000 more shares (*petites filles*) were required. Twelve per cent. dividends were promised; and the shares of 500 livres were soon at 5,000. (August 1719.)

In order to keep up the appearance of colonisation, vagabonds, and such women as herd with them, were collected from gaols and other purlieus, and sent off to be embarked for the Mississippi.† Many youths, the sons of honest citizens, were pressed for the same destination; some escaping who could bribe the archers, others saving themselves by open resistance, in which several were killed on either side. Of those seized and enrolled but a certain number ever reached the port of embarkation, and of course fewer still the huts on the swamps of the Mississippi, dignified with the title of New Orleans.‡

The facility, or rather fury, with which the public grasped—at the price of ten times their original value—the shares of what was in reality a fiscal company, inspired and emboldened Law to attempt what he had promised the regent as the crowning object and advantage

* According to M. Thiers, this was the first example of a *marché à prime*, or time bargain.

of the forced marriages of these unfortunates.

† Duclos.

‡ Buvat gives a striking picture

CHAP.
XXXIV.

of his system. This was to farm the indirect taxes, as a preliminary to taking the management of the whole revenue, and at the same time absorb the public debt by paying its holders in shares at the enhanced value: 300,000 new shares given at the price of 5,000 each would bring the 1,500 millions necessary for this. Only ten per cent. deposit was at first demanded, and a crowd from the French provinces, as well as from abroad,* rushed to procure the materials of speculation and of wealth. The rise of shares continued, not however without fresh efforts on the part of Law, and great fluctuations.† When the shares reached 10,000 it was impossible to prevent holders from realising, some from speculation, some from necessity; for the small deposit of ten per cent. had tempted many to subscribe who had not capital to pay up. To prevent people realising, Law carried on his war with the coin. Payments were to be made and received only in notes, which were quoted at five per cent. more than specie. Notwithstanding these efforts, the shares sank in December, until in the last days of that month a meeting of the company decreed a dividend of forty per cent. for 1720, which occasioned an enormous rise.‡

Although Law inhabited a splendid mansion in the then new Place Vendôme, the market for shares was in the Rue Quincampoix, a narrow, dark and fetid little street, which still survives all the clearing and embellishments of the quarter. Bankers' and scriveners' shops were there, and thither hied the crowd of rich and poor; the jobber of low and the jobber of high condition; the lord and the valet; the lady of rank and the woman of the town. No shops or tables sufficed for transfers and signatures, which were sometimes

* 30,000 foreigners flocked to Paris.

† The fluctuating prices of shares are best given in Buvat.

‡ An individual, says Buvat, ha-

ving bought at 880 and sold at 550, found the shares afterwards rise to 750, whereupon he went and drowned himself. These figures were no doubt over and above the original prices.

effected on the backs of those willing to lend themselves as desks for a sum. As loss or gain animated these crowds, scenes of violence and destruction ensued, which the police were unable to suppress. And they were not without their accompaniment of murder. A certain Count de Horn, who had served in the French army, beset with some accomplices a jobber, whom they enticed into a wine-shop of the Rue de Venise, under pretence of purchasing stock. They poignarded and robbed him, but were overheard, tracked and taken. Horn was but twenty-two, and notwithstanding the great interest employed to save the young noble,* he was broken on the wheel, four days after, on the Place de la Grève.

A more celebrated and more skilful cutter of the well-filled purses of the Rue Quincampoix, was Cartouche. But Cartouche was no highway robber. He was at the head of a gang, which robbed and ransacked the metropolis for many years, ending his career on the wheel of the Place de la Grève. Cartouche had the hardihood but not the heroism of the robber. His last act was to betray the names of the women with whom he had cohabited. The justice of that day thought itself warranted in hanging them all.

The worst of Law's position was, that instead of behaving fairly by the public and by his shareholders, he had to lavish time, efforts and money in conciliating high personages. The Regent himself, his mistresses, the Duke of Bourbon, these required money as they wanted it, and Law supplied them with notes *ad libitum*. When, after his triumph over the parliament in the bed of justice, Law exiled the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, and procured the seals as well as the finance department for D'Argenson, he had merely advanced a more active enemy in the latter.† In the early

* His mother was a daughter of the Academy of Science at this time.
of the Academy of Science at this time.

† Law was also elected member

CHAP.
XXXIV.

struggles of Law's system, D'Argenson had raised an opposition to him and to it in the Brothers Paris, to combat whom had been one of the Scotch financier's principal difficulties. Law saw but one mode of doing this, which was to become himself the Comptroller General of France. A necessary preliminary was to recant, which he did at Melun in January 1720, after having gone through a mock course of religious instruction from the Abbé Tencin. Law then became the acknowledged Finance Minister. Thus armed with all power, he placed himself in the breach to prevent those who had his paper rushing to exchange it for gold. This was difficult when vendors generally demanded twice the price in notes of what they would take in gold. In vain did Law decree notes to be forced and legal payment, in vain did he prosecute those who used coin and exaggerated its value. His decree might intimidate the throng, but such personages as the Prince of Conti defied the minister. Having some reason to be discontented with Law, the prince sent notes to the bank sufficient to carry away three cart-loads of coin.*

Whilst Law's apparent system of credit was thus tottering and crumbling beyond the power of expedient to uphold it, the bold projector strove to cast the blame on other than the natural causes. To attribute it to English enmity was an obvious way of bringing sympathy to the failing scheme. This device has been caught at by modern French historians, who eagerly trace the ruin of Law's hopes to England. The financier himself was always comparing France, its finances and its power, with those of England and Holland, whom he declared he would deprive of their superiority. He frequently said he would break the Bank of England and ruin the English

* The Prince of Conti carried off fourteen millions of specie, the Duke of Bourbon twenty-five. Buvat.

East India Company.* Lord Stair, the English ambassador, held aloof from a politician who employed such language. He did not himself invest in Mississippi stock, and vainly tried to persuade his countrymen to follow his example. In this he did not prevail. Lord Islay, and other English, speculated largely;† and like the Prince of Conti, and all other speculators, sold when the shares reached an exorbitant price.

Lord Stair had, however, strong reasons for mistrusting Law. Far from leaning to the English alliance, the finance minister became intimate with Torcy, and favoured those views of foreign policy which Dubois had exploded, and which, after the example of Louis the Fourteenth, went to provoking England, abetting the Pretender, and keeping up the old rivalry between the countries. Lord Stair was thus naturally no friend to Law; and the causes of his dislike are obvious enough, without suspecting, as some writers do, that his lordship dreaded the policy of the Scotch adventurer, as impelling the French and their government to naval enterprise and commercial greatness. John Law may have done this on paper, and put Louisiana and India in his placards for the sake of gulling the purchasers of his stock; but real trade was never initiated by such a sovereign as the Regent, or developed by a jobber such as Law.‡ He, on the contrary, diverted from it what disposable capital the country had, and superseded trade by jobbing. A few years of peace, financial regularity and economy, freedom given to merchants and to the seaports to develop their own industry, would have done more for the marine and

* Stair's letters in Hardwicke papers.

† An Englishman named Guesche was said to have gained four millions, Lord Stair's secretary a large sum, and

Miss Angletorp a large estate. Buvat.

‡ Walpole's great objection to the South Sea scheme was that it diverted money from trade, and totally put a stop to it.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

consequently the colonial greatness of France, than the scheme of the Mississippi company.

Nor did he more for the internal trade and prosperity of the country than he did for her foreign commerce. His experiments in the way of credit have been extolled as something done in favour of the poor and of the labourer. Unhappily, credit, with all the artificial impulse of paper, does but double or triple the capital of the rich.* It is, if anything, unjust and unfavourable, by giving multiplied advantages to those who have, over those who have not. Credit for the mere labourer is a Utopia realised only in a few rare and doubtful experiments. If there is one thing that more than another enriches the upper, and middle, and moneyed class, leaving the labouring class where it was, it is credit. And instead of being a democratic principle, its tendencies are all in the opposite direction.

Unfortunately for Dubois' success in resisting Law and Torcy, with their Louis Quatorze policy, the English government, after having allowed the Regent to make offer of the cession of Gibraltar to Spain, on certain conditions, shrank from renewing or completing it, their conditions not having been at first accepted. They feared to make such a proposal to Parliament;† and the Regent being piqued at the change, reproached Dubois, and filled him with alarm. Dubois communicated to Stanhope his fears of a change in French policy; to avert which he recommended that, in order to conciliate Law, Lord Stair should be recalled. Stanhope, who had in a previous visit to Paris, in 1718,‡ negotiated the surrender of Gibraltar, now came over to appease the resentment which the withdrawal occasioned, and

* I cannot reconcile myself to the Ricardo doctrine that credit does in no instance double or increase capital.

† Ministers indeed could only meet the threat of a motion in Par-

liament on the subject of Gibraltar, by promising that nothing should be done in that affair. Broderick's letter in Coxe's Walpole.

‡ Stanhope's letters, Add. MSS. B. Museum.

had the weakness to consent; thus sacrificing a zealous and patriotic servant to an ill-grounded trust in the soundness of Law's scheme and the duration of his influence.

Law in the meantime proceeded with the full powers of a minister of a despotic government to maintain his system, and the enhanced value of his notes, by a series of decrees, Draconian in severity, and monstrous for their violence and injustice. The heaviest penalties were inflicted upon those who either kept money or transferred it. Large sums were seized escaping from the kingdom, and domiciliary visits were ordered to discover any hoards that might be in frontier towns. A director of the company, Adine, had his house searched, and a large sum of money being found, he was dismissed and mulcted. In a little time it was equally forbidden to wear or possess jewels or plate, and goldsmiths were forbidden to make any object for sale weighing more than an ounce.

Whilst coin and valuables were thus prohibited, the notes, however propped up, lost their value. They passed at twenty-eight per cent. loss at the end of February. Tradesmen would not have them, great as was the risk of refusal. The bakers would not prepare bread, others would not sell; and Paris one day found its markets empty—not a pound of meat was to be had. The bank then offered to change ten-franc notes on market days; but the crowd was so great at the doors, that several persons were stifled—fifteen at one time. And even then the bank interrupted payment from day to day. An assembly of the shareholders of the company met, to devise means of maintaining the value of the paper. It was by them thought advisable that the king should give up his government of the bank to the company, as a kind of guarantee that no more notes or shares should be issued. These having failed to produce any effect, Law, on the 5th of March, issued a decree,

CHAP.
XXXIV.

fixing the shares of the company at 9000 francs per share, and declaring that at this rate the shares and the notes of the bank were exchangeable for each other.

The result was by no means what he expected. The public ran to exchange their shares for notes, and the amount of these, which reached but a *milliard* in January, swelled to nearly three times that sum in a few months. To prevent the holders of this mass from exchanging it was impossible. The enumeration of the modes tried would be too long. As to the coin, its value was raised and lowered, the marc producing at one time 60 livres, at another 120. To render coin nominally valueless, in order to keep up the value of the note, proved in the end as vain; and Law, helpless, found his authority set aside. On May 21, 1720, appeared a decree, issued, it was said, under the influence of D'Argenson, declaring the *fixed* value of the shares should be brought from 9,000 down to 5,000, and that the value of the notes should in the same interval be diminished one half.

Although this had been devised to prevent the total discredit and fall of both shares and notes, it excited an explosion of fury, and was denounced as bankruptcy and robbery. D'Argenson, who had originated it, tried to throw the blame upon Law, and had him arrested. The examination of his accounts would, it was thought, at once convict him of fraud. On the contrary, they displayed a regularity and absence of any deception that restored the projector for a time to confidence and authority. He had merely embarked in an attempt to put down what could not be extinguished—viz., the value of the precious metals.*

Law made use of his momentary triumph to eject D'Argenson, and recall D'Aguesseau to the management of the seals. He hoped thereby to conciliate the resent-

* Barbier, Journal.

ment of the parliament. But it was too late; its griefs were too profound, and his influence, like his notes, sinking beyond recovery. The chief cause which animated the judicial class against Law has not been sufficiently brought forward by historians. There was one of his decrees, lowering the rate of interest upon all loans and contracts to two per cent. The most earnest and eloquent discourse of the time is the remonstrance which the parliament made against this decree on the 21st of April. It represents the law as overthrowing all securities and moneyed fortunes, making the judges especially beggars, unable to support their families or maintain their rank. Whatever they had saved and could not employ had been lent at five per cent., and on the interest thus secured they lived. Already they had suffered enormously by the facilities which the holders of such contracts or mortgages had found to liberate themselves, by the proffer of notes gained in the Rue Quincampoix; and now came the formal abolition, which cancelled three-fifths of their income. The *rentiers* of the Hôtel de Ville were considered harshly treated when they were reduced to take four per cent. The present decree was far more harsh. Such was the tenour of the magisterial remonstrance, which met with small attention from the regent or from Law. The writers in the interest of the latter, indeed, boasted in reply, that the lowering the rate of interest was one of the great boons that the system conferred upon the kingdom. The antipathy of the parliament to Law, for his cold-blooded theory, may be conceived.* When Law therefore, soon after the two contradictory decrees of May, found himself obliged to suspend all payments of the bank for notes above ten francs, the parliament came forward to denounce the establishment as fraudulent

* The remonstrance and the requisition of the Procureur-Général of Dijon on the subject are in Buvat.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

and bankrupt. Law replied by obtaining an ordonnance of the regent, banishing the parliament to Pontoise.

A few days before this decree, Law's carriage was assailed by the mob, in the court of the Palais Royal, and torn in pieces, he himself escaping into the palace. Several persons had been stifled at the door of the bank on that very day, seeking to change ten-franc notes, to buy provisions in the market. It is needless to enumerate the several devices by which it was sought to stay the depreciation of paper. An attempt was made to float the company by the withdrawal of a large number of shares, but this was not persevered in. To save the notes from total depreciation, the silver marc was declared to contain 120 livres. All in vain. Shares and notes were shipwrecked together. In December the regent named a new finance minister, and Law, to escape the vengeance of the people and the parliament, which had been recalled from Pontoise, fled from Paris in a carriage of the Duc de Bourbon, taking with him a few hundred livres for his immediate wants. But if thus unprovided with money, Law had made large purchases of landed property and houses, of which he could not but hope to enjoy the revenue, sure as he felt himself of the friendship of the Duc de Bourbon and the regent.* In this he took the same care of his future and made the same investments as Dubois, which makes it strange to see Law extolled as the most disinterested, and Dubois the most interested, of men. Law, who spent a considerable time in England, was often given hopes of his return; the English government, which had counselled his dismissal, also counselling his

* Law had the regent's promise that his property should not be confiscated. He had the same promise from the Duc de Bourbon in writing, as he says himself, in a letter to the regent from Venice, dated Jan. 21, 1721. In that letter he proposes

ceding all his property to the Company of the Indies, provided it would remit him the sum he possessed on first establishing his bank and entering upon the king's service. Lemontey, Pièces Justificatives.

restoration. The outcry against him was too strong, however, and Law died in poverty at Venice.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

One of the most striking chapters in the memoirs of the Duc de St. Simon is that in which he describes the sitting of the Council of Regency which followed Law's departure. The regent and the Duc de Bourbon quarrelled outright. The former, although admitting that it was by his order that Law had issued double the number of notes, considered the company responsible, and proposed that all claims should be referred to one commission, to undergo reduction and, as it was called, a *visa*. There were presented to this commission 511,000 claims, for a sum total of 2,222,000,000. Of these, the commission either cancelled or disallowed 522,000,000, and left 1,700,000,000 as the amount of the public debt—much the same as that which existed before Law commenced his operations. On this sum, however, but 2 per cent. interest was assigned, so that, however the capital of the debt remained undiminished, the interest sank from 80 to 40 millions annually.*

It is a subject of discussion with French writers whether Law's system did not produce several good effects among many disastrous ones. It is admitted that the nobles or the landed interest profited greatly by it. It enabled them to pay their debts and liberate their property. The quantity of money raised and lavished also gave birth to many useful enterprises, such as the opening of roads and the improvement of the ports. Consumption and luxury widely increased with the classes which cater to them. Nor was there a total collapse when the system was no more, for in the years which followed, the produce of the old taxes on consumption, the *fermes* so greatly increased, that the regent might have restored order in his finances, had he not also prolonged and persisted in the enormous extravagance which Law's paper money had taught and

* Histoire du Visa.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

indulged him in. This prosperity was more probably, indeed, the result of peace than of any financial catastrophe. As to Law himself, it is surprising with what not only leniency but favour, French writers regard him; even Thiers, the least carried away by the illusions of the day, writes almost his panegyric. What strikes us most in his brief career is the violence that he employed, and the utter contempt for all right and all justice. Despotism was never more mercilessly wielded, overthrowing and disturbing all property, fettering and terrorising society, and not sparing the extremes of torture and the executioner. These Law put in force and in practice, and at a time when the ferocity of such habits was naturally declining. The public benefits which he is said to have conferred appear more than doubtful, whereas the heavy wrong and tyranny he wreaked and inflicted are but too painfully recorded in the memoirs of the time.*

Gladly would the *grandeues* have seen the Abbé Dubois sunk in the same pit with Law. The wily minister, though not refusing to lend his aid at times to the financier, took care not to be implicated in his hazardous schemes. And whilst Law was tottering, Dubois was sedulously pursuing the path to eminence and influence. A cardinal's hat could alone enable him, as it did Mazarin, to keep pace with his proud enemies at court. He did not blush to confer upon himself the dignity of Archbishop of Cambrai, so lately held by Fénelon. The regent was somewhat ashamed—so at least he affected in words. In act he did the contrary, honouring by his presence the ceremony of the new archbishop's instalment.

The archbishopric was a step to the cardinalate, which was more difficult to wring from the hands of the pope.

* Memoirs of D'Argenson, His- writers on the subject, including
toire du Système; Law, Œuvres; Thiers and Louis Blanc.
Forbonnais, with the numerous

Dubois left no stone unturned. He reversed his own policy and that of the regent, with regard to ecclesiastical matters, merely to ingratiate himself with Rome. The accession to power of the Duke of Orleans had, at least, brought tolerance, and even triumph, to the Jansenists. Dubois, however, managed to put the pressure upon them once more, and with far greater success than Père Le Tellier. The churchmen were probably sick of the controversy; and Dubois not only succeeded in making them accept the celebrated *Unigenitus* Bull, but in bringing about the adhesion of the Chancellor D'Aguesseau and the Cardinal de Noailles. All this, however, did not win the hat. Not only was the regent made to solicit his holiness for this purpose, but the King of England, and, strange to say, the Pretender. The confessor of the King of Spain, Daubenton, the great foe of Alberoni, was made to exert himself for the same purpose. Dubois employed every means; yet he was obliged to make a pope expressly for his great design. In the conclave which followed the death of Pope Clement the Eleventh, Dubois bargained with the successful candidate for the red hat, on the promise of French support. Cardinal Conti was elected as Pope Innocent the Thirteenth, and Dubois, in 1721, became cardinal, Rome obliging him to pay, at least, in money as largely as he had already done in efforts.*

Dubois, however, had other merits to plead. The great reproach cast upon his policy and that of the regent was, that they drew closer to England, whilst detaching the French from the Spanish Bourbons, and thus sundering one of the great achievements of Louis the Fourteenth. Dubois now made his English allies consent to a renewal of the amity between France and Spain. And he contrived to follow up the disgrace of Alberoni by a reconciliation between the courts of Paris

* Barbier, Lemontey, Dubois' Mémoires Secrets par Tevelinges, Journal de Dorsanne.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

and Madrid. The signature of the quadruple alliance by Spain in January 1720 had removed the large differences between Philip the Fifth and the emperor, but there still remained much to settle, many grudges and suspicions to eradicate and allay. The promised succession of Don Carlos in the duchies of Parma and Tuscany, reluctantly consented to by Austria, was difficult to insure. Dubois leant to Spanish interests in the matter, whilst England inclined more to the emperor. Thus considerable antagonism rather threatened to prevail in the contemplated Congress of Cambray. Austrian perversity, however, came to modify the favourable sentiments of the English king. The emperor established an East India Company at Ostend, and in other ways displayed the foolish desire to make his possession of the Netherlands and its ports the basis of commercial rivalry with England and Holland.* The English ministers neglected to take the true way to prevent this rivalry by bribing the imperial ministers. It was, however, but natural of the emperor to seek to share in that mine of wealth which Law had apparently opened in France, and Harley in England, and which at the time was so promising that George the First allowed himself to be declared Governor of the South Sea Company.

This tenacity of the emperor in turning against England and Holland those Low Countries ports and possessions which they had procured him, considerably abated their antagonism to Spain. Philip was willing to make large concessions to England, provided Gibraltar were ceded to him. The regent took upon himself to promise this for England, and a commercial treaty was concluded by which England recovered not only the old advantages stipulated by Alberoni, but the liberty of sending one vessel to trade with the ports of the Spanish Main.

Having thus anticipated and removed any jealousy

* Menzel.

on the part of England, Dubois proceeded to draw close the family bonds between France and Spain by a double marriage, the betrothal of the infanta with Louis the Fifteenth, and the espousal of the heir to the Spanish throne, Louis, Prince of the Asturias, and Don Carlos, to the two daughters of the regent.

Nothing could be more unexpected to the party of the *grandees* of the old court,* who looked to Spain, its antagonistic policy and ideas, as their great stay. Dubois took the ground from under them by reconciling the King of Spain and the regent, and cementing the reconciliation by the intermarriage of their families. Even St. Simon himself, the great enemy of Dubois, consented to become the agent of his policy, and undertook to conduct the young princesses to Madrid. Duclos recounts how an effort was made to indispose the young king to the arrangement, and how at last Fleury's good sense induced him to acquiesce.

There was a rock ahead, however—the young king's majority. In February 1723 Louis the Fifteenth would attain the age of thirteen, and with it the right to enter upon the exercise of the royal authority. The regency would then vanish, and the authority of the Duke of Orleans at least assume another title. Dubois, in view of such a project, dismissed the *Maréchal de Villeroy*, who had hitherto retained the guardianship of the young king's person, and who had performed its functions with a mixture of grossness and adulation which was anything but salutary. In order that he and the regent might exercise their supremacy, Dubois had the court removed to Versailles. Fleury, who had been preceptor to the young monarch under Villeroy, was desired to remain, his tranquil nature inspiring no umbrage. Dubois caused himself to be declared first minister, and a Council of State was formed of himself, Fleury, and the princes of the blood. A regular

* Duclos, *Régence*.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

government thus arranged, Louis the Fifteenth was brought to Rheims to be crowned, and soon after his return the Duke of Orleans ceased to bear the title of regent. Cardinal Dubois survived the period of the king's majority but a few months. No great political event marked these. But the cardinal would not repose. Though seventy years of age, he laboured to amass more wealth, acquire more honour and more favour, monopolising the direction of every State department. The ministers indulged him by throwing upon Dubois the settlement of every difficult affair. This but hastened the progress of the disease under which he succumbed in August 1721. The regent strove to save the cardinal's life, by insisting on his undergoing a painful operation. But it was too late; gangrene had set in.

He must be a bold man that would offer himself as the apologist of Dubois. That, dissolute himself, he had encouraged the Duke of Orleans in sensual pleasures, and formed a creed of religion and morality, or rather a negation of them, favourable to such dissoluteness, is not to be denied. As his life and character thus offered so convenient a surface for malice, as well as resentment to shed calumny upon, Dubois' memory has been buried under a more than ordinary heap of filth. The regent himself, as well as Law and many others, may be adduced as examples, that having shared in the fashionable immorality of an epoch, does not at the same time imply criminality in all other respects. The regent acknowledged the principle of honour, and was not the assassin which his contemporaries so often supposed; and Dubois was, in all probability, as honest a politician as the generality of his contemporaries and calumniators.* His policy was peace, general peace, to which he may have sacrificed some ideas of French vanity, but nothing whatever of French interests. Had he

* For Dubois, see his *Mémoires Secrets*, the *Mémoires de la Régence*, Duclos, St. Simon, &c.

continued the old superannuated policy of Louis the Fourteenth, enmity against England and the House of Hanover, as Lord John Russell says, "his utmost possible gain would not have equalled his utmost probable loss."

CHAP.
XXXIV.

Indeed, Dubois' unwarlike policy, which Fleury followed out, gave France and the French monarchy another and a fairer chance of redeeming itself in finance and administration, and thus arresting the final ruin into which mad despotism was driving. The French writers who vilified Dubois and gibbeted him, less for the immorality, which they pardon in others, than for the crime of his alliance with England, seem to forget that the antagonism of Louis the Fourteenth to England, which they regret not to have continued, was an antagonism to constitutional freedom, to religious tolerance, to industrial developement, and to every principle of progress. How writers calling themselves liberal can abet such antagonism, and regret its abandonment, appears as inexplicable as it is retrograde.

The last months of Dubois' administration, as well as the period intervening between his death and that of the regent, were scarcely marked by any public event. The quarrel of the cardinal, for precedence in council, with the dukes and marshals; the dismissal of Noailles from court; the arrest and exile of Villeroy from his government of the king, on account of his obstinacy in half opposing the wishes of the cardinal; the assumption of the post and title of the principal minister by the Duke of Orleans himself, after the death of Dubois, did not have any great influence in the march of affairs. The cardinal expired in August. An apoplectic stroke carried off the regent on the 2nd of December. His death had been foreseen by himself and all around him. Suppers and excess every night left him in a state of lethargy all the morning. He awoke in the afternoon to necessary business, and to the consciousness that death was imminent. A dropsy

CHAP.
XXXIV.

on the chest or a stroke of apoplexy threatened. The latter might have been arrested by temperance; but the regent rather desired and sought the more speedy deliverance. Wine had ceased to excite and women to charm him; yet he sacrificed time and life to pleasures that he no longer felt. The high birth of the regent, says Lemontey, caused the most imaginary crimes to be imputed to him. The low extraction of his favourite authorised envy to exaggerate his vices. Philip and his minister, surrounded by enemies and outrage, disdained to take any vengeance, one from his natural temper, the other from calculated selfishness. Absolute master of all the wealth of France, the first left seven millions of livres, the other a simple chattel heritage, not equal to two years of his revenue.

The Duke of Orleans was the victim of that despotism which made the French king the tyrant of his family as of the State. Almost forcibly married to a princess whom he did not respect, then denied all occupation or employ, though of a spirit and capacity requiring both, Philip of Orleans fell into dissipation. Curbed and kept down by a monarch who had himself indulged in every vice, but who now exchanged it for devotion, the duke, like the age, rushed from a very natural disgust of Jesuitism and its morals into the contrary extreme, not only of dissoluteness and unbelief, but an avowal of both. Infidelity then wore the charm of being new and bold; coupled with indecency, both were taken for wit, but it was in a small circle. That which surrounded the regent was far less in number, and more circumscribed in influence, than the apparently decorous but more flagitious proceedings of Louis the Fourteenth's courtiers, whose bigot persecution of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, worked more harm to religion than all the regent's profanity.*

* The Duke of Orleans cannot be better studied than in St. Simon; see also De la Hoade, Duclos, &c.

The Abbé Fleury, a mild and circumspect personage, who had acquired, from congeniality of disposition, as much as from his authoritative post of preceptor, the chief influence over the young king, was advised by St. Simon to assume the place of principal minister on the death of the regent. Though not reluctant to seize the authority, Fleury shrank from the audacity of the act, declared the transfer from the regent to himself would be too great, and that a prince of the blood must necessarily exercise the functions of prime minister. When the Duke of Bourbon, as the chief of the family of Condé, was called to appear at Versailles after the regent's death, Fleury begged him, in presence of the king, to accept the post of prime minister, Louis assenting by an inclination of the head.

The Duke of Bourbon was chiefly known to the public from the ardour with which he had flung himself into Law's speculations, and for the greed which made him largely profit by them. He was a man of such purely personal passions that he could scarcely be said to raise his mind to any view of public affairs. Iracund, brutal, hideous in aspect, and one-eyed, the profit he made of Law, and his ungenerous abandonment of him, alone would stamp him as worthless. As, however, it was not decorous to load even the memory of a first prince of the blood and chief of the family of Condé with any monstrous weight of crime, the memoir writers of the day have transferred the blame of the principal acts of his administration to his mistress, Madame de Prye. Her influence, indeed, was great, especially in one respect. She belonged to one of those families who lent money to the State, and was initiated in their schemes. She it was who introduced the brothers Paris Duvernay, especially the youngest, to the duke, and these cruel enemies of Law became, though without any real title or authority, disposers of the financial affairs of the monarchy.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

The Paris Duvernays had superintended the *visa* which cut down all public debts so unsparingly during the regency. There was already a necessity for the same simple and dishonest manœuvre. The public debt, reduced so considerably after Law's flight, had increased two milliards again, such had been the prodigality of the regent. The increase in government paper arising from this cause, accompanied by the general distrust of the honesty of ministers, occasioned the usual depreciation. The price of all commodities was so enormous that the army, says Villars, was deprived altogether of the use of meat. Paris Duvernay's device was to lower the standard of money to restore the balance.*

Several, the Duchess of Bourbon especially, desired to bring back Law's system, support the India Company, and make it issue fresh paper. The brothers Paris set their faces against it. Their manipulating the coin not sufficing to bring down prices, they decreed a *maximum*, and tried to fix the price of all commodities. They reduced the rate of interest at the same time. This tampering with all the instruments of interchange necessarily produced resistance. Duvernay sent all he could lay his hands on to the Bastille. It was Law, without any of the redeeming principles and compensative honesty of that adventurer. As a natural appendage to his prohibition of high prices, Duvernay issued an edict against beggars, only he forgot to provide funds to nourish these unfortunates. He ordered, however, hot irons to brand them. Cupidity, ignorance, and cruelty, were never combined in stronger doses. Bigotry could not be wanting to rulers thus endowed. And as a necessary complement to the partial legislation of the time, an edict against the Protestants was issued, subjecting them to all the

* The louis was brought down from 27 livres to 14.

barbarous penalties and disqualifications of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, which had been somewhat relaxed in the regency.*

CHAP.
XXXIV.

Principles of foreign policy, the Duke of Bourbon had, at first, apparently none. His ideas scarcely reached so far. But his perilous position at home soon prompted him to seek alliance abroad. The first prince of the blood in France, and the presumptive heir to the throne, was the Duke of Orleans. Set aside on account of his youth and political insignificance, he still appeared a formidable rival to the Duke of Bourbon. Influential grandees offered him political support. This the Duke of Orleans declined. He would have been contented to play a secondary and submissive part, had the watchful jealousy of the Duke of Bourbon allowed him. The possible death of the young king, who was subject to frequent ailments, alarmed him with the inevitable consequence of the succession of Orleans to the throne, and his own descent to an inferior station.

To obviate that possible event, the Duke of Bourbon resolved to instigate, if not reawaken, the scarcely-dormant ambition of Philip of Spain. That monarch did not, indeed, seem likely to be an active or formidable competitor. Disgusted with politics and public life, Philip abdicated in January 1724, and retired to San Ildefonso, leaving the Spanish throne to his son Louis, whose queen was a princess of Orleans. Coxe supposes that Philip's abdication of the throne of Spain was considered by him a step to that of France. This seems scarcely credible. And yet it was to Philip, at San Ildefonso, that the Duke of Bourbon despatched Maréchal Tessé, as envoy, to reanimate his rivalry with the House of Orleans. A simultaneous effort had been made to rouse Alberoni, and induce him to quit Rome once more

* Duclos, Isambert, Lemontey, Coquerel, Eglises du Désert.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

for Madrid. But the aged politician declined to enter upon a new intrigue. Spain, he declared, was a dead body which he had contrived to galvanise, but which had long since been reconsigned to the tomb.

The English government, it may well be conceived, was ill pleased with these tendencies. Horace Walpole had been sent to Paris in the last months of the regency to combat the influence of the party opposed to Dubois. He continued these efforts after the regent's death, and enticed Lord Bolingbroke to aid him in his design. He is also said to have continued to Madame de Prye the pension of which Dubois had been in receipt. There is more of obvious and natural conjecture in this charge than there is proof. The policy of the Duke of Bourbon was too completely swayed by his fear and hatred of his cousin of Orleans to admit of other aims.*

The death of his son Louis, in August, restored Philip to the Spanish throne. It was, indeed, with reluctance that he resumed it, and more in obedience to the wishes of his wife and his confessor than his own. He was dead to the world; not so his queen, Elizabeth of Farnese. During the retirement of her royal spouse at San Ildefonso, the Congress of Cambray had been sitting for the purpose of terminating the difference of Spain and Austria with regard to Italy. Had the northern negotiators and developers of the Treaty of Utrecht pursued the plan, recommended later by Bolingbroke, of constituting Italy an Italian country, and keeping both Spaniards and Germans out of it, they would have done more for its welfare and for the peace of Europe than could be done by any other policy. But the Houses of Hapsburg and Bourbon

* "The feud between the princes (Orleans and Bourbon) increases daily," writes Bolingbroke to Harcourt (Dec. 1723). "Those who help

to increase it drive the ministry into the King of Spain's interest." Coxe, Walpole's Letters.

would struggle for that heritage. Elizabeth Farnese, especially, demanded Tuscany and Parma for her son Don Carlos. England had promised to secure his inheritance. But the English Hanoverian kings were too submissive to the emperor to be zealous in opposition to him, notwithstanding his hostility to them in the matter of the Ostend India Company. Amidst conflicting interests the Congress of Cambray made no progress; and Elizabeth Farnese was so disgusted with them, that she took what she thought the short road to the settlement of her son, by applying directly to the emperor. A clever Dutch politician, Ripperda, was sent* to Vienna for this purpose. His character and ideas were an admixture of those of Alberoni and Law. He thought he saw his way to a restoration of the credit, trade and revenue of Spain upon the ruin of those of the maritime powers. In such a course of rivalry Austria was naturally not a foe, but a friend. Philip, who could only be awakened from his pious lethargy by such schemes, became a convert to them, and Elizabeth Farnese saw, in an accord with the emperor, the shortest path to the instalment of Don Carlos in the Italian duchies. Ripperda departed on his mission secretly, well provided with money to bribe the indisposed at the imperial court, as well as with arguments to convince. And Europe was soon astonished with the intelligence that the King of Spain and the emperor, whom the rest of Europe was struggling to keep at peace, by bringing to agreement their rival pretensions in Italy, had all of a sudden done of themselves what all the other powers had vainly sought to accomplish.†

It does not appear how far the Duc de Bourbon was informed of the mission of Ripperda and of the views of the Spanish court towards a direct reconciliation

* In the summer of 1724.

† See *Mém. de Tessé*, April 1725.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

with the emperor. He, however, had learnt enough to be aware how little he could count upon the support of Philip the Fifth in the domestic affairs of France. He had applied to the court of Madrid for the elevation of M. de Prye, husband of his mistress, to a Spanish grandeeship, and had been rather rudely refused. Although the existence and influence of such minor causes as these are much exaggerated by the scandal-loving newsmongers of the day, certain it is, that several causes of coldness alienated the two courts, and that whilst Philip was negotiating with Vienna, the Duc de Bourbon had resolved to break with Spain altogether, send back the infanta, and hasten the young king's marriage with some princess more fitted by years to give an heir to the throne.

This last event could best secure the Condés against undergoing the sovereignty of an Orleans. The difficulty was to make a proper choice. One of the views of the duke and Madame de Prye was no doubt to have a queen of their own making, absolutely grateful to them. The sending back the infanta must cause resentment in Spain, which, now leagued with Austria, might threaten the duke and his administration with war. The French court, therefore, demanded the hand of a granddaughter of George the First. The difficulties in the way of such a marriage need not be mentioned. Soon after, in February 1725, the young king was attacked by a rather dangerous fit of illness, which filled the Duke of Bourbon with dismay. Lecomtey remarks, that in the midst of these projects of marriage, Russia, lately deprived of Peter the Great, offered one of its princesses, and of course an alliance to the French court; nay, amongst other schemes, held up as a bait to the Duke of Bourbon the crown of Poland, if he would espouse the daughter of Stanislas Leszczyński.

The claimant of the Polish crown lived obscurely on

the borders of France, with his daughter Marie, on a pension which Dubois had supplied him with. The choice of all parties interested at last became fixed on Marie Leszczyński, whose portrait subdued the king, and whose humility pleased Fleury as much as it did Bourbon. The offer of the hand of the King of France was made to the almost deserted prince and his daughter. The exultation and delight of the former knew, as was natural, no bounds. The royal marriage was celebrated at Fontainebleau in September 1725.

This rupture between the crowns, commenced by Ripperda's mission, had been already rendered complete by the sending back the infanta in March. The resentment of the Spanish court, of course, was intense, and the hasty conclusion of the treaty with Austria was no doubt the consequence. The terms upon which the old antagonists came to an agreement were much the same as those stipulated in the quadruple alliance. The emperor renounced his pretensions to Spain, Spain its claim upon the Netherlands. The emperor kept Milan, Sicily, and Naples, the son of Elizabeth Farnese being now apparently secured, by the assent of the emperor, in the inheritance of Tuscany and Parma. The imperial court obtained from Spain the support of the Pragmatic Sanction, which ruled that the entire of the Austrian dominions should pass to Maria Theresa, eldest daughter of the emperor. It was, moreover, secretly stipulated that there were to be intermarriages between the Spanish princes and the Austrian archduchesses, and that Gibraltar was to be demanded from England, and, if refused, wrested by force.*

Such a warlike alliance naturally gave rise to an antagonistic and defensive one. England, France, and Prussia signed, in September, the treaty known as that of Hanover, destined to counteract the league between Spain and Austria, concluded at Vienna. And the

* Coxe's History of Spain under the Bourbons.

CHAP.
XXXIV.

Continent seemed thus divided and marshalled forth for war, without much stomach in the people of the countries or much spirit in any of their governments to carry it on. Scarcely one country could be said to have its interests engaged in it. Thus the government of the Duke of Bourbon, who had revived the old persecuting laws against the Huguenots, engaged in the new treaty to avenge the Protestants of Thorn whom the Polish Catholics had massacred.

The sound and the prospects of war compelled those wielding the government of France to put their financial and military resources in some order. But the war, indeed, was deemed a convenient excuse for the Duke of Bourbon, whose treasury was as usual so empty that there was not wherewith to meet the interest of the *Rentes*. Paris Duvernay met the occasion by a bold measure, which, had the war been more national, or the country called upon to make an effort for an intelligible cause, or had it even had a representative assembly to which such necessity could be made known, might have been not only borne but been popular. But when the duke's government decreed an income-tax of the fiftieth part of the revenue of every person and every class, there arose a rumour and a resistance, parliament leading the way, quite alarming to the timid Fleury, who was the more shaken by the clergy being the loudest of the opposers of the tax. Other imposts were added, such as a forced gratuity upon the king's accession. This fiftieth was to be levied not only in money upon the rich, but in kind upon the poor. 1726 happened to be a year of famine; the populace of the provincial capitals rose in insurrection. Those of the capital were as dangerously minded.

Menaced by this general discontent of all classes, Bourbon perceived that the young king and his preceptor, Fleury, especially the latter, shared in the bad opinion entertained of his talents. He sought to sup-

port himself by interesting in his favour the young queen, who certainly owed him everything. Through her aid the duke contrived to hold a court at Versailles, the king being present, and Fleury being excluded. The venerable ecclesiastic perceived the slight, and withdrew to his retirement at Issy. Louis the Fifteenth, annoyed, sent an order to the Duke of Bourbon to recall him. Fleury came back triumphant to Versailles, and the result was an injunction upon Marie Leszczyński not to meddle with state affairs, but to follow implicitly Fleury's counsels.* At the same time a royal order, signed by the young king, exiled the Duke of Bourbon to his seat at Chantilly (June 1726).

Thus terminated the successive reigns of two princes of the blood, one with, one without capacity. The talents of the first, ill-directed, profited as little to the state as the dullness of the other. They left, as they found, domestic administration a chaos. Their foreign policy, forced upon them more by circumstances than their own choice, had the great advantage of being pacific, and of enabling the country, despite their extravagance, to recover itself, and turn to the tasks of industry and trade.

* Lemontey ; Mémoires de Villars, &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FROM CARDINAL FLEURY'S ADMINISTRATION TO THE
PEACE OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

1726—1743.

CHAP.
XXXV.

It is but natural that strange freaks should be played, and sudden changes take place, in those countries of which the rule depends upon the absolute will of the sovereign. And yet these are less than one might expect in old, polished and settled kingdoms, where, although the nation may have lost all control over its rulers, still habit, prejudice, tradition, and the influence of institutions akin to absolutism—such as those of a powerful church and an hereditary aristocracy—keep the government and the head of it in the established routine, and, unless he have a commanding intellect, like Louis the Fourteenth, make of him but a formidable puppet.

In new and barbarous countries, indeed, where the throne is so often reached through blood, where education is a nullity, and rude instincts are allowed their full development, great princes of startling character often spring up, not only to turn the nature of their own government and empire topsy-turvy, but to do the same by those of their neighbours. This was especially the case in the north of Europe, where, whilst the Louis and the Philips of old dynasties slumbered, new monarchs carved out new monarchies, or resuscitated old. The appearance and career of Charles the Twelfth was that of a comet, frightening the world, and leaving no trace. Peter the Great was of another metal; he founded

an empire. And soon after him, Frederick the Great conquered for himself a kingdom with his sword.

The history of these illustrious initiatory monarchs lies not within our scope; and they are merely mentioned to mark the contrast they make with the young Louis the Fifteenth—as absolute as they—but so hampered by etiquette and timidity as to render his sceptre but a child's plaything. Naturally enough the young monarch, not yet alive to any pleasure save the chase, and feeling neither taste nor interest in politics, entrusted power to his reverend preceptor and religious guide. Fleury, whom Rome hastened to make a cardinal, assumed, at the age of seventy-three, the authority of prime minister without the name. He knew almost as little of politics as his disciple; but he instinctively shrank from braving public opinion, and offending both church, magistracy, and people, as Bourbon was doing. And Fleury wrested power out of the hands of the latter, simply to undo his violence, and to abolish the *cinquantaine*, or income-tax of one-fiftieth, exiling at the same time its proposers, and especially exempting the clergy from taxation. One of the usual manipulations of the coin was going on at the mint; Fleury instantly stopped it, and with good sense and justice, rather than science, proclaimed a fair value as that of the precious metals, and declared it should be inviolable. The mere change of government had such a favourable effect upon what might be called the money-market, that much higher prices were offered for the *fermes* than the duke could have obtained. Still there was a *deficit*. This Fleury was determined to meet for the future by a diminution of expenditure, beginning with that of the king and queen. Household pensions and places* were lopped off. By a singular mode of reasoning it was argued that, when the salaried classes had their incomes curtailed, the rentiers or fundholders should be mulcted

* A list of them is in Barbier.

CHAP.
XXXV.

in proportion. The new comptroller-general therefore proposed sweeping away a number of annuities, and getting rid of small claimants by the sponge. The pretext he gave was that these annuities were gained or procured during the reign of paper.* The outcry was great, naturally, amongst the poor annuitants. Parliament lent them its voice, and Fleury, who does not seem to have approved of the harshness of the comptroller, caused the decree to be rescinded as far as regarded the smaller holders.

Whilst with little effort, less knowledge, but great prudence, the domestic affairs of the country were put in a fair condition, the pacific Fleury had to face the eventualities of war. Horace Walpole, Sir Robert's brother, the English envoy, had shown sympathy and attachment for Fleury at the time of his retirement and supposed disgrace. It was not forgotten. The French king signed the treaty of Hanover. The alliance of the Imperial and Spanish courts, indeed, scarcely left him a choice. As France, however, could only be attacked by the emperor, who had no resource or means of moving armies without putting Germany in the van, and as Germany saw no motive for rushing into a struggle with France and England, the war on the part of the emperor, who, indeed, had never ceased to negotiate, † dwindled away, and left Fleury small anxiety on that score. The Spaniards laid siege to Gibraltar, but the English, by stopping their galleons, deprived them of the sinews of war. The results of the treaty of Vienna, therefore, soon proved that it was easier to declare war than to wage it. The monarchs of Austria and Spain were disappointed, and in consequence of this, Ripperda, the negotiator of the Vienna treaty, fell into disgrace on his return to Madrid. He had chiefly upheld himself by promising the queen, Elizabeth Farnese, an

* Barbier ; Bailly, *Hist. des Finances ; Anciennes Lois Françaises.*

† *Mémoires de Villars.*

archduchess as a wife for her son, Don Carlos, a promise which he could not realise, and which the court of Vienna refused to confirm.* He had divulged the secret articles, and thus swelled to the utmost the aversion of Europe to the terms of the treaty. The emperor was the first to withdraw from the war, and signed preliminaries of peace with France and England at the end of May (1727).† The Ostend Company was given up, and other points referred to a congress. Spain followed the example, and raised the siege of Gibraltar.

If the preliminaries of peace were thus easily accepted, the final adjustment of its terms was not obtainable with the like facility. The place of congress was fixed at Soissons, within a short distance of Compiègne, where the king could enjoy his accustomed pleasure of the chase, and Fleury in a few hours reach his brother plenipotentiaries. The congress met from June 1728 to November 1729, and chiefly occupied the period. The labours of diplomacy, in which the public felt little interest, were only interrupted in September of the latter year by the queen giving birth to a dauphin. After so many daughters, this event caused lively pleasure in France, whose attachment to the reigning family still had deep, and one might have thought imperishable, root. Any hopes of the Spanish princes to the French crown were thus fortunately cut off. This accelerated the conclusion of the treaty, by which England and France secured the succession of Don Carlos to Parma and Tuscany by introducing Spanish troops into these duchies. This accord with the Spanish court in Andalusia bears the name of the treaty of Seville. It was far from conclusive, as the emperor refused his acquiescence. The death of the Duke of Parma occurring early in 1731, being followed by the entrance of Austrian troops into the duchies, the Spanish government retaliated by seizing the money and property belonging to

* Mémoires de Montgon.

† Coxé, Dumont.

CHAP.
XXXV.

England and France in the galleons. The maritime powers then proposed to the emperor not to disturb the general peace by holding out, and refusing Parma and Tuscany to the Farnese. The Austrian replied he was ready to abide by England's wishes in this respect, and in that of the Ostend Company, provided it guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction. George the Second yielded, and thus, for the sake of reconciling the quarrels of the rivals for the possession of Italy, procured for his kingdom the prospect of future wars in behalf of interests less important to the British islands.

"One day of Cardinal Fleury's administration," says Duclos, "resembled another." There was no incident or variety to mark them. Not but that the minister gave himself more pains than might be required to settle the affairs of Europe, to arrange, in what he thought an orthodox manner, the ecclesiastical quarrel of Jansenism and its opponents. Fleury, having gained the high clergy, was almost as inexorable as Louis the Fourteenth, without the violence of that monarch. Still crowds of resisting clergy were dispossessed, and the capital, at least its parliament and ecclesiastics, was in a state of continual struggle and agitation perfectly incomprehensible. The Jansenists, whilst supporting the better cause, that of freedom of opinion and devotion, against mere reglementary religion, still took strange and unwarrantable ways of upholding it. A deacon of the name of Paris, who had lived a charitable and pious life in Jansenist connexion, having died, the poor whom he had fed collected several times round his tomb to pray. Many were afflicted with maladies. In the ardour of prayer and affection for the dead, some had convulsions, and many of these declared that they had been suddenly cured of their ailments. Hereupon the cry of miracles arose, and crowds, not merely of the poor, but of every class of Parisians, hurried to the tomb of Paris to be cured. But it was evidently a Jansenist movement.

The upper clergy and the police tried to prevent and forbid it. Yet it lasted several years. The wits indulged themselves less at the expense of the *convulsionnaires* than of the police. Soon after the cemetery of St. Medard had been closed by royal authority, a placard was put up there, with this couplet:—

CHAP.
XXXV.

De part le Roi, défense a Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.*

From such futile cares the French government was awakened in 1733 by the vacancy of the Polish throne. Augustus of Saxony claimed to succeed his father thereon, with the support of both Austria and Russia, whilst France was prepared to support the claims of the queen's father, Stanislas. But war, if not for Poland, at least with the emperor, had been for some time mooted in the French cabinet. Chauvelin, whom Fleury had introduced there, was for a spirited and, if required, a warlike policy, careless whether this broke the alliance with England or not. For Walpole seemed so indifferent to Continental politics that he was justly deemed as little profitable as an ally as formidable as a foe. The current of opinion, too, in England and in France ran different ways. The French had renewed their alliance with the Spaniards, and also regained their respect for the government of that country, which, making better use of the gold of its galleons, of the trade and seamen that its colonial empire nourished, proposed turning them to the old scheme of Alberoni's and to Italian conquests. Not to be idle, indeed, the Spanish government sent an expedition to Oran in 1732, of which it accomplished the conquest.

Its exhortations to the French court to join it in war were never wanting.† A more active instigator of change and of war had sprung up in the person of the

* Recueil des Miracles du Diacre Paris; Barbier.

† Mémoires de Villars.

CHAP.
XXXV.

new sovereign of Piedmont, Charles Emmanuel, king by the abdication of his father. The ex-monarch plotted to resume power, but was defeated and confined by his son. Charles Emmanuel offered France the bargain which we have seen accomplished in our day. He would cede Savoy to Louis in exchange for the Milanese. All these influenced France, which was not without motives for war peculiarly its own.

By the Pragmatic Sanction, which the emperor had forced down the throats of almost every European government, he proposed marrying the heiress of his empire, Maria Theresa, to the Duke of Lorraine. This brought the future emperor to Nancy, into the very heart of the French territory, with increased power to support that old inheritance of the Dukes of Burgundy, which the policy of French statesmen, and the victory of French arms, had destroyed. France could not see its *quasi*-possession of Lorraine seriously called in question. As early as June 1732, Villars rose in the council, and demanded that France should join at once those powers who were prepared to make war on the emperor, and to support them with all its forces. "But we must have some pretext or reason for war," observed Fleury.*

The pretext was soon afforded when early in the following year Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, expired. Stanislas, father-in-law of Louis the Fifteenth, had occupied that throne, advanced to it by Charles the Twelfth. In six weeks after the vacancy of the throne, France declared that it would support the rights of Stanislas. The emperor liked the father-in-law of the King of France on the throne of Warsaw as little as France liked an emperor in Lorraine. Not only Austria but Russia declared for the son of the late monarch Augustus of Saxony.

It was difficult to bring Fleury to sanction actual war.

* Mémoires de Villars.

It was not till June that a formal treaty of alliance could be signed with Spain. And only then more warlike preparations were made, and Stanislas allowed to make the best of his way to Poland, whilst a very small division was embarked to sail to the Baltic for his support. He soon proved that he was the choice of the Poles, being almost unanimously elected by the diet in September. But a Russian army soon after entered Lithuania. The Poles had no means of resistance. They never would listen to the necessity of a standing and disciplined army to defend them against a similar force kept up by all surrounding nations. The Russians and their partisans held a counter-election, in which, of course, Augustus of Saxony was proclaimed, and Stanislas fled to Dantzic, which was soon invested by the enemy.

Meantime the treaty between France and Spain received the adhesion of the King of Sardinia, who was appointed generalissimo. Villars was to command under him with the rank of *maréchal-général de camp*. The French troops in Italy were not to exceed 40,000. War was formally declared against the emperor in October. Early in November Charles Emmanuel occupied Pavia and the town of Milan. He was soon joined by Villars. At the same time, a more considerable French army, under Marshal Berwick, crossed the Rhine, and marched through Kehl to Stolhofen. Little progress was, however, made by either army at this advanced season. And instead of news of victory, the Parisians were presented with a decree re-establishing the tax of one-tenth of all income; the creation of annuities by tontine accompanied it. The tax caused much discontent, all being aware that the royal revenue had doubled since the accession of Fleury to power, and war was only popular on the condition of victory. The militia also was called out and enregimented.*

In the following campaign of 1734 the French over-

* Massuet, Hist. de la Dernière Guerre.

CHAP.
XXXV.

ran Lombardy, the towns of which had been feebly garrisoned, but the Austrian general Mercey now descended from the Alps with a veteran army to bar their farther progress. Charles Emmanuel resisted all the persuasions of Villars to intercept his march by sending troops into the mountains. The French marshal was as little satisfied with Don Carlos, the future King of Naples, as with Charles Emmanuel. He took the liberty of telling the chamberlain that the prince should hold up his head from between his shoulders, and try and look like a conqueror; the marshal excusing himself at the same time for thus infringing by his remark on the duties of him whom he addressed. "Oh," replied the Spaniard, "these things do not concern me in the least, they concern the prince's dancing-master."

Villars was soon obliged to withdraw from the army, whether from his extreme age or disgust is uncertain, and he shortly after expired at Turin. The Austrians, led by a general almost as aged, Mercey, attacked the French in the environs of Parma. These, under the Duc de Coigny, were advantageously posted, so as to fight a defensive battle. They were fully covered by entrenchments. Mercey, ill-judged, ordered the attack on the 25th of June, but after repeated assaults, and a most destructive battle, he was unable to make any impression on the French, or penetrate their lines. Mercey himself was slain in the fight, and the general who replaced him could but draw off his troops.

The battle of Parma was followed by two engagements, one at La Secchia, the other at Quistello. In the first the Austrians had the advantage, routing the French general Broglie, and taking all his baggage. At Quistello the French took their revenge. All this went merely to prove how nearly matched were Austrians and French, and how hopeless an enterprise was the conquest of even Lombardy by the latter. The King

of Sardinia, not slow to perceive this, so conducted himself towards the emperor and his court that communications were soon opened between them, and Charles Emmanuel became a lukewarm ally to Fleury.

CHAP.
XXXV.

But if contending armies were balanced during this year of 1735 in North Italy and also in Germany, where the capture of Philipsburg was the only exploit of the French, that too purchased by the loss of their commander, the Duke of Berwick, killed in the trenches, the Spaniards succeeded in making a memorable and important conquest. Don Carlos had himself come to Italy with an army to take possession of Parma and Tuscany. But learning that Naples was occupied with no great force of Austrians, who, moreover, were highly unpopular with the inhabitants, the prince marched across the Roman States to the attack of these kingdoms (March). They proved an easy conquest. The German commanders quarrelled, divided. One suffered himself to be blockaded in Capua, whilst the population of Naples welcomed the Spaniards, and surrendered the capital. The Germans retreated south, and were followed by the Spaniards, who engaged them at Bitonto, and gained a complete victory. Thus was the southern kingdom of Italy, with Sicily, transferred from the Austrians to the Spanish Bourbons, who obtained a sanction for their title in the ensuing treaty, and who held their conquest to our day.

It was the opinion of most courts that Spain by these acquisitions had gained enough, and that Elizabeth Farnese, having obtained a crown and a kingdom for Don Carlos, ought to be contented. This insatiable woman was, however, not so. She looked to keep Parma and Tuscany too, and, in fact, to become a formidable Italian power. If Cardinal Fleury, in agreement with Walpole, considered such aims extravagant, Chauvelin, the second influence in the French cabinet, was inclined to support them. To drive the Austrians

CHAP.
XXXV.

from Italy was his desire: a fair one if it was to give Italy to the Italians. But where was the advantage of transferring it from the supremacy of Vienna to that of Madrid? Still Chauvelin caused Fleury to hesitate in the acceptance of Walpole's proposals, not very palatable to France, which gained nothing. What Fleury desired was to detach Lorraine altogether from the empire—an aim that England would consider it part of her traditional policy to oppose. Fleury and the imperial court opened secret negotiations with each other. France offered the Duke of Lorraine, the future husband of the heiress of the Austrian empire, Tuscany in lieu of that duchy, which it proposed conferring on Stanislas Leszczyński during his life, to lapse to France at his death. The imperial court accepted, and the great objection of France to the Pragmatic Sanction being thus removed, the cardinal promised to guarantee it. This arrangement, known as the preliminaries of Vienna, was signed between Austria and France at the end of 1735, and accepted by the other powers in the following year. Stanislas abdicated the throne of Poland. Don Carlos was confirmed in his possession of Naples and Sicily. The King of Sardinia acquired Novara and Tortona. Such were the difficulties attending the settlement, and so perverse the obstinacy of Elizabeth Farnese, that the arrangements were not all completed till 1738, from November of which year dates the peace of Vienna.

The conclusion of the treaty was followed by the fall of Chauvelin. He had given Fleury many causes of umbrage, had obstructed his negotiations, and entered upon others without his knowledge. A letter from the Pretender to Chauvelin, which he unwittingly handed amongst other papers to the English ambassador, was sent back from London to Versailles. But the great aversion which the cardinal conceived for Chauvelin proceeded from the knowledge that the latter was the

friend and instigator of that party of young lords (Marmousets) who induced the king early in 1736 to take Madame de Mailly for his mistress. Through her and her circle, of which the Count de Belleisle was one, Chauvelin worked upon the king to induce him to make spirited and warlike opposition to Fleury's timidity. These were ample reasons for the removal of that minister.*

CHAP.
XXXV.

An event, that to some may appear insignificant, but which had really more importance than the murderous heroism of all the battles of Lombardy, was the appearance about this time of Voltaire's "Lettres sur les Anglais." It was the first work in which that daring genius imparted to the French public his opinions of their religion, their government, and their philosophy, which he contrasted with those of the English, exemplified chiefly in the works of Bacon, Locke, and Newton. Voltaire, originally Arouet, was born in 1694, the son of a notary of the capital. At thirteen his wit excited the admiration of Ninon de l'Enclos. At twenty he passed two years at the Bastille, for some satires which he did not write. The time of his captivity was spent on a tragedy, *Œdipe*, which had great success, and laid the foundation of his fame, as well as, no doubt, upon the *Henriade*. Mingling in the best society, he soon experienced the inconvenience which the non-noble used to find from the unequal contact. The Count de Rohan Chabot caused him to be beaten by his valets; and on being challenged, his adversary obtained a *lettre de cachet* for the poet. Voltaire fled to London, where he spent the years 1726 to 1729, and where he enjoyed the acquaintance of Bolingbroke, of Pope, and of the English literary men of the day. He was struck by nothing more, during his sojourn, than the funeral honours

* Journal et Mémoires du Marquis d'Argenson, années 1766-74. See the letter addressed by Fleury to

Chauvelin, at the time of his dismissal, in De Flissan, *Diplomatie Française*, t. v. p. 34.

CHAP.
XXXV.

accorded to Newton, whose remains he saw borne in pomp to Westminster Abbey.

It has been observed how Hispanified the French had become in the first half of the 17th century. With Louis the Fourteenth literature and fashion, as well as politics, became altogether national. The regards of that great monarch turned northwards. It was in that direction that his kingdom required rounding. But the great intellects of his time were purely French, carrying the language and its literature to all the sublimity and perfection of which it was capable. It carried something still higher, and that was conversation, society, and intellectual intercourse. These, indeed, escape record, except in a few gleamings. Yet what powers of observation and description do not the Memoirs of St. Simon reveal! What a charming and brilliant reflection of the conversation of the time do we not find in Sévigné!

With Louis the Fifteenth or before him disappeared the great intelligences of the age. But the genius of society did not die, retaining down to the period of the Revolution that charm and that superiority which subjugated every foreigner that came within its sphere. Such activity and cultivation of the great and refined social qualities is said to have been accompanied by increased corruption of morals. This may be doubted. The regent was a sorry rake, whose position and whose suppers are made to represent the society of Paris, of which they may have been solitary exceptions. Gallantry was certainly too much the vogue. The rich, condemned to idleness, could scarcely find any other pastime than that of making a plaything of the sex, which in turn makes fools and tools of them. Give to every class freedom, an aim, a participation in public business, and the idle pleasure of gallantry and deception is left to such as have no intellect for aught else. There is often, however, the affectation and fashion of

vice, and that evidently prevailed towards the end of Louis the Fifteenth's reign. Yet it did not prevent that high state of intellectual and social intercourse which pervaded a large class of French, especially of Parisians, and which formed a public for such a writer as Voltaire.

The weak point of Louis the Fourteenth's age was its philosophy. Malebranche could not replace Descartes. The ruling powers and the only class it would patronise thought that formal and traditional religion answered all such purposes. Controversy was a crime; and though Louis the Fourteenth employed an atheist in preference to a Jansenist, a work of Spinoza would scarcely have met with his indulgence. Bishops and court preachers were very eloquent, subduing, touching, pathetic. But it was the froth of religious zeal, not the learning or the solidity of conviction. Louis and his court thought it perfection, and with the sublimity of Bossuet, and inquisitorial tyranny of a Le Tellier, the king imagined he had for ever founded the faith. He sacrificed a million of Huguenots to his idea, with thousands of Jansenists, both of them the most devout Christians of his empire, whilst a different kind of religion was thundering at the door of his absolute monarchy. From the commencement of his persecutions the religious exiles had raised their voices in Holland. They had not much effect on the Catholic world of France, until Bayle took up another tone, and, proving the intolerance and abuse of the one dominant religion, drew conclusions as to the odiousness of all. That kind of argument told. The sect of *libertins* grew up in France, and with the regent denied every law that interfered with their pleasures. The regent's example was, however, more deterrent than inviting. Infidelity ran through society, and instead of, as in England at the same time, meeting men of genius and intellect to combat it, encountered no obstacle. For the church and

CHAP.
XXXV.

the churchmen of the Bossuet school were ignorant, whilst their peculiar kind of pulpit eloquence had lost its power.

With religious incredulity was joined political distrust, a disbelief in the worth of absolute governments. It is an easy step from the conviction that many things are wrong, to the idea that all are so. Politics, however, had been but little studied. A kind of club, called that of the *Entresol*,* was formed in Paris to discuss such matters. But Fleury, jealous, if he did not put it down, so frightened its members that their labours were idle. In public and political matters the appearance of Montesquieu's work on the "Grandeur and Fall of the Romans," arrested the attention of the public, to which his "Esprit des Lois," in 1728, gave inexhaustible food for enquiry and discussion.

Voltaire's writings, however, were more influential and more amusing than those of Montesquieu. The works of the latter opened sources for reflection in the closet. Voltaire's works of the day gave materials for conversation; were read, understood, and remembered by every one. A great secret of his power was that he may be said to have had no opinion, at least no peculiar one. Notwithstanding his essays on Locke and Bacon, he gave himself no time to form any. Between society and the muses, Voltaire could not hope to be a philosopher. He had, however, one convenient and ready principle—negation. He denied everything, mocked all the old received opinions and institutions of the kingdom. Priests, magistrates, the courts of justice and administration, were exposed, though covertly; and his satires, whilst respecting the authorities, now and then ventured on allusions to that temple of dullness—Versailles.

The royal abode was as sombre as the capital was

* A list is given of the names by D'Argenson.

gay. The king liked not Paris, and it was thought a wonderful achievement to get him to the opera. Up to this period the pleasures of the chase absorbed him. To these were soon associated those of voluptuousness, the queen having ceased to charm, or Fleury to control Louis' private conduct.

Strange to say, when the intellects of France and England were blending and borrowing colours and ideas one from another, not only did the political interests and tendencies of the nations fall asunder, but passions of mutual rivalry and hate were awakened, which put an end to the long peace, and made the latter half of the century a succession of wars. Never did ministers wield greater power, though kept in different ways, than Fleury and Walpole. Never were ministers more attached to peace. But the current of events and opinions in both countries ran so counter to the policy of the two ministers that it dragged both into wars, and upset Walpole, after his having reluctantly engaged in one.

The public opinion in both countries was based upon interests, real or supposed. It has been noticed with what ardour the English had flung themselves into naval enterprise and commercial adventure. In pursuit of these, they acquired and founded colonial empire. Walpole's pacific policy fostered and developed this very spirit which was to put an end to it. In the same way, as soon as Fleury gave fixity to the government, abated the extortions of the fisc, and left capital free, the flame of activity instantly lit up in the sea-ports; money went thither, as did the population. All amity between English and French became impossible when the hardy mariners and colonisers of both countries met in distant regions, founded settlements near to and threatening each other, which, in addition to the rivalry of trade, sought to make allies of the barbarous natives, and drive them into hostilities with their neighbours.

CHAP.
XXXV.

It was thus that, about the period we treat of, the New-Englanders began to encroach on their French neighbours of Canada, who built a fort on Lake Champlain to defend their territory. In India the flags of the rival nations floated on the east coast not far apart, at Pondicherry and Madras, as also in settlements on the Ganges. The growing rivalry of maritime power and trade thus divided the nations. But England by no means looked upon France at first as her chief naval and colonial antagonist. Spain was regarded as a more natural enemy. Possessing what was supposed to be the richest colonies in the world, she kept them sealed, and only allowed foreign interlopers under strict rules, and, as it were, by stealth. England bore this repression with impatience. And the story is well known of a Spanish captain having cut off the ears of an English officer, and handed them back with the injunction, "to show them at home," as a sample of how Spaniards would treat Englanders. The tale, true or false, upset Walpole's policy first, and his power afterwards, and plunged the English into war towards the close of 1739.

It was a great source of embarrassment to Fleury, opinion in France calling upon him to support Spain, the old cardinal still clinging to peace. Moreover, he had the conviction of the inferiority of the French navy, very much, if not altogether, neglected since the commencement of the century. Certain encouragements were, however, given to Spain, especially an important convoy to its fleet. The French government, moreover, began to listen to and encourage the emissaries of the Pretender. But France and England still hesitated to strike at one another, till an event in the north completely metamorphosed the policy of Central Europe.

In May and in October of the year 1740 took place the successive deaths of the King of Prussia and the emperor. We have seen the latter during the last

years of his reign labouring to secure his dominions entire, as well as his power, to his daughter, Maria Theresa. He sought to do this in binding the different courts and sovereigns of Europe by the faith of promises and the ties of diplomacy. They gave these with little intention of observing them. Had the emperor followed Eugene's advice,* and kept up a disciplined army of 200,000 men, instead of wasting his small revenue in extravagance; or had he secured one friend amongst his brother sovereigns by frank and generous treatment, he would have done better. But he was ever higgling, negotiating, and ceding one day what he tried to clutch back the next. Thus he treated the King of Prussia relative to certain claims; so he behaved to Spain.

A very different policy was incumbent on a monarch who made of Germany the vast demand of not only the hereditary possessions of Austria for his daughter, but eventually of the imperial crown for her husband, a prince, who, either from birth or character, had few claims to it. The moment Charles breathed his last, all Germany protested against the empire being considered simply hereditary. The authority and dignity of imperial vicar were assumed by the Electors of Saxony, of both Palatinates, and of Bavaria. Prussia also demurred, and asked whether the right of electing an emperor could be exercised by a female.† As to Bavaria, its elector not only disputed the claim of Maria Theresa or her husband to the empire, but pretended to the inheritance of the dominions proper of Austria. Charles Albert of Bavaria was descended from Anne, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand the First, who was said to have left a will, settling the Austrian dominions upon her heirs in failure of male heirs of the direct line. The court of Vienna proved the wording false, and

* His correspondence.

† K. A. Menzel, vol. x.

CHAP.
XXXV.

Cardinal Fleury, who had promised, as far back as 1738,* to support the Bavarian candidate for the imperial crown, refused at first to sanction his claims to the Austrian dominions.

In 1740, however, Fleury's voice was no longer so potent. Louis the Fifteenth, not humoured or consoled by his queen, had turned to mistresses. And these had their favourites and their little court. One of these ladies, Madame de Vintimille, had amongst her intimates the Count de Belleisle and his brother, the chevalier, who spoke loudly for war, and depicted the brilliant prospect opened to Louis to destroy the power of Austria and divide her dominions, taking at least the Low Countries for himself. For this purpose it was but required to espouse the cause and claim of Bavaria. On the death of the emperor, the elector wrote in the most pressing and humble terms to Fleury, who hesitated, but was overborne, and the Count de Belleisle despatched to negotiate with the German powers at Frankfort.†

Held back at first by Fleury's instructions, Belleisle could not stir up German allies. The lesser princes of the country were indeed sunk in dissoluteness and imbecility. Count Brühl governed Saxony—that is, lavished its every resource. Charles Albert of Bavaria was no better. He had but 10,000 soldiers, and not a dollar, expecting everything from his ally. The emperor had left the Austrian court, finances, and army, in almost as forlorn a condition, which the keen and masculine spirit of Maria Theresa soon remedied. She at once cleared the palace of idle placemen and besotted chamberlains. But it took time to set her house in order.

During that interval a rival more formidable than the Bavarian elector started up; this was the young King of Prussia, who, declaring in a manifesto that he must

* To the elector's envoy, Törring.

† For this period and these events, see Schlosser's Hist. of 18th Century,

who consulted the French archives, and derived from them novel, curious, and valuable information.

at least preserve the neighbouring province of Silesia from such a host of claimants, entered it with 30,000 men about Christmas-time 1740. This province was in a great measure Protestant, and bore the Austrian yoke with little loyalty or attachment. Remote from Vienna, and partaking of northern habits and interests, the invading army was welcome. And partly owing to their courage, and partly by the employ of adroit cajolery and celerity, the province as well as Breslau, its capital, was occupied.

These daring acts excited the amazement of Europe. Austria, however low in its finances, and disorganised in its military arrangements since the death of Eugene, was still a formidable power. It had not long previously baffled the united attempt of France, Spain, and Piedmont, to occupy Lombardy. That a King of Prussia, lord of a kingdom of not three millions of souls, should succeed in bearding that old and vast empire, seemed impossible. Frederick has himself, in the "History of his Time," very plainly told the pleas that he could put forward for such an aggression, as well as the motives which actuated him. He had great cause of complaint against the late emperor with respect to the Duchy of Berg, as well as on other points. And he felt himself fully entitled to vindicate his right by arms. Given up in his early years to the pursuits of literature, which, if they enoble, have also the result of greatly awakening vanity, Frederick said he wanted to make a name. He had been despised by the old king, and had not yet earned respect even at home. Not only he, but Prussia itself, partly through the mean spirit of the late king, was slighted abroad. Frederick heard each day of mortifying instances, and he burned to make at once his own reputation as a great and formidable prince, and his country as something more than an electorate. And, possessed of the treasure which his sire had amassed, and of the soldiers whom he had taught to manœuvre and

CHAP.
XXXV.

combat with a precision yet unknown, Frederick conceived that he was more than a match for the old troops of Austria.

He was right in this calculation at Mollwitz, his first battle with the Austrians under Neuperg; the quick and regular force of the Prussian infantry, three deep, was such that no Austrian corps could withstand or approach it; though the imperial cavalry was superior, and, indeed, drove the king himself off the field, the foot, under Schwerin, maintained their ground, and achieved a complete victory.

Europe then felt something more than amazement. A lion had broken forth from his lair, and those who shrank from declaring themselves previously were eager to come forward to hunt down the noble quarry, and fatten upon Austria's spoil. Belleisle soon made his appearance at the Prussian court. He proposed no less than to divide the Austrian empire between Bavaria, Prussia, France, Spain, and Sardinia, giving the imperial crown to the first. Frederick, however, nettled by the contemptuous refusal of Maria Theresa to treat with him, had still too much of the German in him to approve of this. He preferred getting Silesia, or even at first the Duchy of Glogau, and aiding the house of Lorraine in maintaining its power. He intimated his views to England, which, both nation and government, was enthusiastic for Maria Theresa. Its envoys, those at least at Vienna,* sought to bring about an accommodation, but the Queen of Hungary, as she was called, could not bring herself to cede what Frederick had conquered, and what it was not to be expected he would yield. Frederick, compelled to it, signed at the beginning of June 1741 a treaty with France and Bavaria. France guaranteed to Prussia the

* Frederick accuses those in Russia and elsewhere of striving to raise up local enemies to him. It is one

of the causes, indeed, which he assigns for signing his treaty with France.

greater part of Silesia, and promised to send two armies, one to the north, the other to the south of Germany, for his support. Frederick, in return, was to second the pretensions of the Elector of Bavaria to the empire.

To rouse Charles Albert from his poverty, imbecility, and sloth, was no easy task. Belleisle caused him to be declared lieutenant-general of the French armies. But the elector could not move his own, till French money came to float them. The first use he made of it, however, was to order all kind of luxuries and magnificence from Paris, not forgetting four and twenty casks of the best Burgundy.* In the treaty, which was soon after concluded at Nymphenburg, France agreed to pay Bavaria 2,000,000 of livres a month for fifteen months, and even more if more were required, in return for which the French were to retain permanent possession of all the provinces and towns they should conquer; Charles, when emperor, stipulating not to redemand them. The Low Countries, which the French hoped also to conquer, were to be appropriated by them in the same way.† Similar concessions were made to Spain.

In pursuance of this treaty, one French army, under Maillebois, invaded North Germany, where its approach was sufficient to frighten dissolute Saxony and fickle Hanover, the first to desert the Austrian cause, the other to accept neutrality. The other army of 40,000 men, united with the Bavarians, under the elector's command, occupied successively Passau, Linz (August 15, 1741), from whence advanced parties swept unresisted to Polten, within a few leagues of Vienna. Maria Theresa fled to Hungary, whilst every preparation was made for the defence of the capital. The elector, however, provided by France with an overwhelming

* K. A. Menzel, *Neuere Geschichte* of Nymphenburg from the French archives.

† Schlosser, who copied the treat-

CHAP.
XXXV.

army, had neither the artillery nor other requisites for undertaking the siege of such a city as Vienna; neither did it enter into Fleury's plan that he should take it. This would have made the Bavarian prince too powerful. The Marquis de Beauvais, the French envoy at the elector's court, indeed said as much, which was repeated to Frederick, and made deep impression on him.* The elector, in consequence, turned his views and arms to Bohemia, alarmed probably more than pleased by the progress of his ally, the King of Prussia, in this quarter, who had taken Glatz. Charles Albert, turning north of the Danube, arrived without resistance before Prague, which was ill prepared to stand a siege.

Meantime, Maria Theresa, as is well known, appealed to her Hungarian subjects. She had already captivated more than their good will when, in youth, dignity, and beauty, she came to be crowned at Presburg, and when she frankly and fortunately took the oath of Andrew the Second, declined by her Austrian predecessors, to respect the freedom and privileges of the Magyars. She reaped the benefit of this when a fugitive from her menaced capital. She summoned the magnates of Hungary to the great hall of the palace on the 17th of September, 1741. Clad in mourning, with her infant son, the crown of St. Stephen on her head, she appealed, and though in Latin, still with feeling and force, to the Hungarian nation, in whose fidelity † and valour now reposed the last hope of her house and crown. The harangue, broken by tears, subdued and electrified the assembly. All present drew their sabres, and offered their life and their blood for their sovereign Maria Theresa.

These were no empty words. The Hungarian heroes, aided by a subsidy from England, soon swept the plains

* Mém. et Nég. du Marquis de Valori.

† Wraxall, Courts of Berlin and Vienna.

of Bohemia, as well as the valley of the Danube; the 16,000 Franco-Bohemians left upon the river under Segur being obliged to retreat to Linz, whilst the Duke of Lorraine led Hungarians and Austrians to the relief of Prague. The elector wanted the means of reducing it by siege, as much as he lacked them before Vienna, when an officer in his army, Maurice of Saxony, proposed carrying it by storm (November 26). The plan was adopted, and the city stormed on a November night in several places. The Franco-Bavarians fought their way into the town, and from its walls defied the Austro-Hungarian bands. The elector took the opportunity of being crowned King of Bohemia. He gave a succession of splendid fêtes on the occasion, and then betook himself, though overwhelmed by "gout and gravel," to Frankfort, to be elected and crowned emperor (February 1742).* Charles the Tenth, as he was styled, attained all these objects of his ambition.

With his coronation ebbd the good fortune of the Bavarian prince. Khevenhüller, who proved the able reorganiser of the Austrian army, besieged Segur in Linz. The Franco-Bavarians despatched a force from Prague to relieve him, but he was beaten, and Linz surrendered late in January, the 10,000 Franco-Bavarians promising not to serve for a year. Meantime Croat and Pandour poured over Bavaria, and rendered it a waste, penetrating into Munich, whilst the elector was being crowned at Frankfort.

The upshot of the war, however, depended mainly on the policy and resolve of the master spirit. Neither Bavaria nor Saxony, under their imbecile electors, nor the French armies and diplomacy under Belleisle, promised success, and even success would have been

* The new emperor was taken ill from the weight of robes and ornaments which he was obliged to wear at his coronation. The crown

of Charlemagne alone weighed fourteen pounds. Curious note in A. K. Menzel's Hist. of Germany.

CHAP.
XXXV.

the commencement for realising the most extravagant schemes. Frederick, with such prospects before his eyes, was continually besieged by English envoys, who moved heaven and earth to bring about an accommodation. The king recounts the tone of grandiloquence he assumed towards Mr. Robinson, who spoke somewhat imposingly and majestically. With Lord Hyndford he was more open, and when he heard that the Franco-Bavarians had withdrawn from the road to Vienna, the Prussian king commenced the preliminaries of agreement, by which he was to retain all Lower Silesia, and certain portions of Upper, Neisse included, with a suspension of arms, to last until the preliminary agreement was brought to a definite peace. Of all things, Frederick stipulated secrecy, the non-observance of which might bring the French and Bavarians against him. On the faith of this temporary agreement Frederick withdrew to Berlin.

This accord did not last long. Neither party was probably sincere. Austrian agents disclosed the secret that Prussia had treated with them covertly, and Frederick relates several other circumstances which led his suspicious mind, justly or unjustly, to believe that the Austrians, if victorious, would not pardon him, or consent definitely to cede Silesia. Convinced of this in ten weeks after his signature of the preliminaries, Frederick broke through them, and despatched Marshal Schwerin to invade Moravia, whilst he himself went to Dresden, to induce the Saxons to join him, with the promise that their elector should have Moravia. The Saxons grasped at the bait; Frederick, whose aim all along was to keep the war alive in the central provinces of Austria, near Vienna, and thus divert them from Silesia or Bohemia, exerted himself to make Moravia the seat of war.* He reduced Brünn, and blockaded

* Frederick's reasons given to the Bavarian elector to carry the war into Austria.

Olmütz. But Frederick was defeated in his calculations. The Saxons would not fight. Their commanders, especially Maurice of Saxony, opposed and obstructed Frederick's plans.* The elector or king, being King of Poland, preferred purchasing a green diamond to sending succours to his army. The Prussians and Saxons could not, or would not, take Brünn; and Frederick saw he was unable to hold Moravia. He therefore allowed the Saxons to depart, and himself retreated on Bohemia. The indefatigable Lord Hindefort was soon in his camp, trying to resolder the broken preliminaries, and Frederick was not averse to treat. As soon, indeed, as he knew that De Broglie had withdrawn or been beaten back into Prague, he resolved to come to an accommodation with Austria † He learned, however, that in a council held at Vienna it was resolved to try first the fortune of battle, and only in case of being unsuccessful treat with Frederick. ‡ He accordingly prepared for the necessary trial of war, and in the meantime raised his demands. The engagement took place at Czaslau, or Chotusitz, on the 17th of May, 1742, somewhat south-east of Prague, and terminated in a victory for Frederick. The result was the peace of Breslau in the ensuing month, by which Austria ceded to Prussia all Silesia and the county of Glatz, with the exception of Troppau, Jägerndorf, and the counties beyond the Öpper.

The defection of Frederick, whose example was followed by the King of Saxony, left the French army in the midst of Bohemia, even though possessed of its capital, under very unfortunate circumstances. Owing to Belleisle's ill health, Marshal Broglie assumed the command, and endeavoured to keep possession of country as well as town, and so be enabled to join Marshal Maillebois, who was advancing from Germany to his

* Valori.

† His conversation with Valori.

‡ Valori.

CHAP.
XXXV.

succour. No sooner, however, had the Prussians withdrawn, than the Austrians under Prince Lobkowitz attacked Broglie, and drove him and his army to take shelter behind the walls of Prague.* The city was immediately invested. The French were between 25,000 and 30,000 men, the besiegers more than double their number. But they were chiefly Hungarian cavalry, and not very fit to undertake a siege.

The aged Fleury took fright at the situation, and, forgetting himself, sent the most humble and pressing letters both to Lobkowitz and Maria Theresa for terms of peace.† They laughed at the letters, and by rendering them public made all the world join in their mirth. A more energetic minister would have raised and despatched an army of somewhat more than 16,000 men to relieve Broglie and Belleisle in Prague. Instead of this the French government sent Belleisle word to evacuate Prague after a long and idle defence of it. Had the order been issued in autumn, it would have been prudent and merciful; whereas Belleisle could not commence his retreat till the 18th December, in the midst of a terrible winter. He quitted the city stealthily, gained some marches upon Lobkowitz, and by his celerity succeeded in bringing some 8,000 of his stoutest soldiers to join Maillebois at Eger, whilst the weaker to the number of thousands fell victims to the severity of march and weather. French historians extol this retreat as heroic. The Parisian public of the day made it the subject of satire, epigrams, and songs upon Fleury and Belleisle. Frederick makes light of the feat, and expresses contempt of the policy which ordered it.

Such events sicken even the most heroic nations of

* Fleury, all along strongly opposed to Belleisle, seized the first pretext to give the command to Broglie. But Belleisle on his recovery caused himself to be carried to Prague in a litter, and took the

command of the troops within the town. D'Argenson; Belleisle's Despatches.

† See Mémoires de Luynes, June 4.

war. Had they not had this effect on Louis the Fifteenth and his court, the contest might have long continued. For two events took away the great living obstacles to ambition and bloodshed. Early in 1742 Walpole was driven from power, and Lord Carteret, who succeeded to his lead in government office, excited nation and king to raise an army, march into Germany, and emulate the great deeds of Marlborough.

In June 1743 Cardinal Fleury expired under the weight of years, and still more of the anxious and unexpected cares that the reverses of the war heaped upon him. He was, to be sure, not answerable for this. The king and the Belleisles had plunged France into the idle project of conquering and dividing the Austrian empire. On Fleury, however, fell the responsibility, as well as the task of making the most of imbecile allies, and deprecating the hostility of involuntarily made enemies.

It is difficult not to compare Fleury with Walpole, two prime ministers who maintained peace between their respective countries for so many years, in despite of national currents in the opposite direction. Walpole had a troublous world of faction to control, as well as a warlike and un-English king to manage. Fleury had to defeat the efforts of an ever-changing band of courtiers to wean the young monarch from the certainly inglorious policy of his minister. Both showed equal address. But Walpole was the more accomplished politician. He was fully versed in domestic administration, and perfectly understood the science which in France seemed wanting, that of finance. Neither of them had any far-sighted views; Walpole, indeed, did not need them. For England was in the right track to attain prosperity within her shores; her only true policy abroad being abstention. France, on the contrary, stood in need of something more than a mere weathering and adjourning of difficulties. Its government,

CHAP.
XXXV.

laws, and social state required complete reorganisation. Fleury made no attempt to accomplish this reform, of which he scarcely descried the necessity. He thought that economy would remedy all the evils of finance, but found, when he was driven into war against his wish, that economy did not suffice. The peasant, whom one might have expected the mild churchman to favour, benefited little by his rule. The cardinal sorely vexed them by resuscitating the *corvée* for the sake of opening those magnificent roads of idle and monarchical grandeur. The famine of 1740 laid bare all the misery of the population, and showed it as heavily shorn, and as hardly pressed, as in the last days of Louis the Fourteenth. To the courtier and noble class Fleury's reign was highly distasteful. He denied them place, influence, and power. They, therefore, haunted Paris, not Versailles, and mingled more with other classes, forming a society with a community of ideas, which laughed at the epigrams of Voltaire one day, and studied the novel theories of the Encyclopedia the next. Fleury tried to stop this flowing tide of infidelity, but he who was unable to stem the war tendencies of a few courtiers could not repress the progress of intellect in a nation. If thus powerless over the country which he seemed to govern, he had become almost equally so over the king. His frequent illnesses had weakened the exercise of his influence in political affairs. Over the private conduct of the king and his batch of mistresses he had no control. His tenure of power was thus necessarily declining, when death spared him the mortification of disgrace.

If ever monarch or monarchy stood in need of a prime minister, it was that of France. A personage of high character and of superior talents could alone keep down the licentious and greedy courtiers, the royal mistresses, the intolerant clergy, and the host of intriguers of all kinds. Chauvelin certainly had the

greatest claims to the post. But Fleury, in anticipation, combated his recall by introducing Cardinal Tencin and the elder D'Argenson to the council. The former he sought to recognise as his successor in lieu of Chauvelin. As long as Madame de Vintimille and Madame de Mailly were the dominant mistresses,* Louis adopted their preference of Chauvelin and the Belleisles. In November 1742, however, Madame de Mailly was rudely dismissed, and her younger sister, Madame de la Tournelle, better known as the Duchess of Châteauroux, was installed in her place. This lady disliked Chauvelin, and favoured the Duc de Noailles, who thus acquired most influence after the death of Fleury. Aware, however, of his inability to keep such an office, the duke recommended the monarch to be his own minister, citing to him the example of his great-grand-sire. Louis was flattered by the proposal, and, when full of the idea, received a rather impudent letter from Chauvelin, demanding the place of prime minister. He was not aware of the change of feminine influence at Versailles, and his unseasonable demand so incensed the king that Louis replied by ordering his ex-minister to a more remote place of exile. The monarch's determination to act as his own prime minister merely displayed his utter inability to perform such functions. The six ministers of departments each managed as they could, and as they pleased, the result being no government at all.

Frederick of Prussia makes very merry with the ministers to whom was left the government of France. A lawyer minister of war, a captain of dragoons at the head of the finances. Amelot, a mere clerk, who could not see a yard before him, was foreign minister, whilst Maurepas, the wit and courtier of the cabinet, neither of which precluded his imbecility as a politician, pleased

* Madame de Vintimille had superseded her sister in the predilection of Louis. D'Argenson.

CHAP.
XXXV.

the king by his manners. His department was the marine, which suited him, as Fleury had left no fleet, and scarcely the materials for one.

The cardinal, nevertheless, or the party which overruled him, had provoked hostilities with England. This country was at war with Spain, and the French court concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with that of Madrid. The Pretender lost no time in returning to France, and when the English government remonstrated, it was answered by a declaration of war.* The English, however, did not put forth their strength until 1743, when it collected an army of English and Hanoverians in Flanders to renew the feats of Marlborough, and rescue Austria from the enmity of France and the rivalry of Bavaria. A French army under De Broglie had succeeded in repelling the Austrians from a portion of Bavaria, and thus enabling the elector-emperor to revisit Munich. His stay was not of long duration. In the spring of 1743 the Austrians defeated the Bavarians at Braunau, and drove the French with considerable loss from the electorate. Whilst the Bavarian emperor withdrew to Frankfort, and Broglie to the Rhine, another French army, under Maréchal de Noailles, watched the movements of the English king. George might with advantage have attacked the French on their northern frontier, but he wished to restore the Austrian cause in Germany, where all the petty princes, greedy for the subsidies of France, were induced by the promise or receipt of these to rally round the elector-emperor.

In the month of May 1743, the English army, which had been nominally under Lord Stair, but was really commanded by the king in person, was on the north bank of the Maine, near Aschaffenburg; the French, under Marshal de Noailles, on the south of that river; King George's army mustering about 40,000, not one

* The arguments on both sides are published by De Flassan, t. v.

half of whom were English. The French were superior in number, probably 60,000. The English, too, had been brought by the unskilfulness of their commander into a perilous position, hemmed in between the impenetrable forest of the Spessart and the river Maine. Their stores were at Hanau, with which Noailles had intercepted their communications. It thus became a necessity for the English to fight their way back to Hanau, the road to which lay through Dettingen, and through a narrow pass beyond it.

Noailles was able to sweep this with his guns from the southern side of the river, whilst he had occupied the defile with some three-and-twenty thousand men. This was his mistake; had he posted the strength of his army in the defile, and kept but a portion on the other side to cross and attack the English in the rear, he might have succeeded. But the English king and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, perceiving the strait they were in, each put himself at the head of a regiment, and marched to the attack of the defile. The French attribute their failure, and their being driven from thence, which they were by sheer fighting, to the circumstance of the Duc de Grammont having charged with the cavalry, and thus prevented the batteries on the other side of the river from firing. His impetuous charge had been near succeeding, and would have done so upon less solid troops; but English and Hanoverians, recovering from its effect, pressed forward in their turn, and drove the French from all their positions, Noailles vainly beholding the rout from the opposite bank. (June 26, 1743.)*

Dettingen may have been glorious to the English king and his son as gallant soldiers and commanders, but as politicians neither they nor the English minister

* *Mémoires de Noailles*, of De Luynes, t. v. Appendix. Lord Carteret's despatch. Coxe. Lord Mahon. Voltaire's Louis XV.

CHAP.
XXXV.

could make any profit by it. George crossed the Rhine, and collected a large army, the Dutch having joined him at Worms. The most arrogant hopes and plans were entertained and conceived of conquering at least Alsace and Lorraine. The events of the war seemed indeed to warrant such pretensions. The poor Bavarian emperor, finding no spot of neutral ground which he could safely inhabit, signed a treaty of neutrality with Austria, the troops of which occupied Bavaria, whilst the elector was allowed to return and remain a guest in its capital. At the same time the King of Sardinia was detached from the alliance of France and Spain, the latter country putting forward pretensions to all Italy, whilst Austria, under the pressing advice of England, offered Charles Emmanuel the Milanese left of the Tessin, as well as Piacenza. (Sept. 1743.) Yet the Austrians and English had during 1742 at least kept the Spaniards in check. A British fleet, by the threat of bombarding Naples, forced its king to neutrality. The same fleet was, however, unequal to cope with the Spaniards and French united; and these convoyed secretly a Spanish army for the conquest of Tuscany and Lombardy.

The year 1744 brought increased complications to the war, and inflamed the passions which fed it. The French court took up the cause of the Pretender, and an expedition under Maurice of Saxony was prepared at Dunkirk, to effect a landing in England to dethrone the house of Hanover. It is needless to say how the political world of London took fire at such a project, and what preparations were made for the enemy's reception. In the Mediterranean the French and Spanish fleets came forth from Toulon, and fought a battle with the English, which the latter were prevented from conducting with advantage by the rivalry, or rather enmity, of their two admirals.

The chief event of the year was, however, the King of Prussia again coming forward to take part in the hostilities against the Queen of Hungary, whom he did

not want to crush, but whom he equally dreaded to see triumphant. George the Second had that mania of which Bolingbroke accuses the age—the mania of negotiating. In addition to his treaty with Sardinia, he concluded another with Saxony, and in these were clauses guaranteeing the integrity of the Austrian empire to Maria Theresa. Frederick, who obtained copies of the treaties, thought himself menaced thereby. This at least formed his chief pretext. He immediately entered into a counter-alliance with the Bavarian emperor and with other German princes for the maintenance of the empire and the independence of Germany against Austria. France of course adhered to the treaty of Frankfort.* The terms were that Prussia should conquer Bohemia, and divide it with Bavaria. France was to invade North and South Germany with two armies to support the Bavarian emperor, and was to be indemnified in Flanders. (June 1744.)

A change had been wrought in the slothful current of the monarch's ideas by the Duchess of Châteauroux. Admiring men of spirit, she reproached Louis with being wanting in that manly virtue. War had then been waged through several campaigns, in which the King of Prussia had conquered provinces, the King of England won a battle in person; he of France lingered at Versailles. Louis was stung by these remonstrances: he dismissed Amelot from the post of foreign minister, which the king undertook himself, and at the same time intimated his intention of proceeding in person to the seat of war.

Once more the heavy carriages of the court of France bore it, mistresses and luxuries, to camps pitched before the towns of Flanders. The days of Louis the Fourteenth seemed to return, and his early good fortune too, for the first towns, Cambray and Ypres, were easily reduced. (June 1744.) Flanders seemed already in the

* The Baron de Besenval tells in his memoirs a story of Frederick's proposal of giving co-operation to Louis.

CHAP.
XXXV.

king's power, when tidings came that the Imperialists had crossed the Rhine in despite of the Bavarian army, and threatened to cut off the French troops in Alsace from communication with those in Flanders. It was necessary to hasten to their rescue, especially as the enemy overran Lorraine, and menaced the provinces beyond. In his progress from Flanders to Alsace, the king succumbing to fatigue, the exhaustion of which he combated by intemperance, fell ill at Metz, and the physicians declared his life in imminent danger. (August 1744.)

The most beneficent, the most heroic, the most virtuous sovereign could not have called forth the sympathies of the Parisians in any degree greater than those excited by Louis the Fifteenth's danger. The whole population was seized with a paroxysm of loyalty. The crowd rushed to the churches to pray for the monarch's recovery, nor could the people sleep, eat, or enjoy any amusement, till they learned the well-beloved king (Louis le Bien-aimé) was out of danger. The physicians had given him over, the clergy had chased his mistress, Madame de Châteauroux, from his residence, when a strong emetic recommended by a stranger saved the royal life.

"What have I done to deserve all this affection?" was the ejaculation of Louis. Half a century later, Marie Antoinette exclaimed of the same people, "What have I done to deserve all this hate?" The enthusiasm of loyalty was the more unaccountable as manifest signs betokened that the sentiment of loyalty had largely evaporated, and that contempt of royalty and absolutism had gained ground. But popular sentiments are often but an epidemic, caught from a few, though manifested by the many, who have scarcely a will or reason in the matter, but who are ready to weep or to roar, or to massacre, when they see others or crowds so excited and employed.

The king's illness had considerable effect in rendering null the great design for a campaign beyond the Rhine. The Austrians withdrew from Alsace before the French armies brought from Flanders, and hastened to swell the army opposed to the King of Prussia in Bohemia. The French were not active to follow; so, whilst little was accomplished on the Rhine, Frederick, who had conquered Bohemia, and reduced Prague, was soon overwhelmed by superior forces, and compelled to retreat, after disgorging all that he had won. Frederick's conquest of Bohemia was as signal a failure as the expedition of the Pretender into England from Dunkirk.

The repulse of the King of Prussia from Bohemia, the death of the Bavarian emperor, early in 1745, and the impossibility of his son, the new elector, resisting the Austrians, which he confessed by accepting their terms, and submitting, left no tangible cause for continuing the war. France, too, was exhausted, and though anxious to strike another blow for its honour, and wipe off the disgrace of Dettingen, Louis was desirous of peace. But war projects were in progress; and England, as usual, which only warms to a war after some years' duration, was all as enthusiastic for its continuance as if its objects in Germany had not been fully gained.

The king and especially the Duke of Cumberland were influenced with the spirit of William the Third, and were determined to drive the French from Flanders, towards which they led the allies of the old triple alliance. The Dutch were alarmed at the capture of the barrier towns, and thus the Duke of Cumberland found himself at the head of some 50,000 men, little more than one-half English, the rest Dutch and Austrians. The French army was commanded by the Maréchal de Saxe, who, though infirm and borne in a little carriage, was still fully equal to the duties of command. The king and the dauphin were with the army, and both

CHAP.
XXXV.

were gratified by the usual homage offered to French princes in this region, when witnessing the investment of an important city. Tournay was the one threatened, and the Duke of Cumberland, like another King William, advanced to its deliverance.

The French awaited him much as they had done Marlborough at Malplaquet, before an opening in the forest, with the village of Fontenoy in front, and the woods on either side defended by entrenchments and redoubts. It was the opinion of the French that, owing to the skilful arrangements, and the cross fire of their batteries, their line was unapproachable. The Duke of Cumberland thought of Dettingen and its success, but forgot that in the defile there the English and Hanoverians were superior in number, whereas at Fontenoy, unless the Dutch behaved well, the English were but as one to three. There is no fairer account of the action than that to be found in *Voltaire*.

The Dutch were ordered to attack and carry the village of Fontenoy, whilst the Duke of Cumberland, at the head of the English and Hanoverians, marched to attack the French left, protected by the wood of Barre and its redoubt. Colonel Ingoldsby was despatched to storm this redoubt, but he wanted the courage even to attempt it. The Dutch more valiantly attacked the village of Fontenoy. But assailed by cross and flank fire from the ably managed batteries of the enemy, they turned and fled, after losing a considerable number of men. They were no longer the soldiers of William or of Malplaquet.

A prudent general, in the Duke of Cumberland's situation, would have retreated. For his sole way to the enemy led between Fontenoy and the batteries of the wood of Barre, to the flank of which he was exposed. The duke, however, marched on, in thick column, encountering flank and front fire, and entered the now open but still narrow space beyond the passage of the

woods. Voltaire describes its breadth at 900 *toises*, or 1,800 yards. Here the three columns could not keep apart, but were pressed into a phalanx, which kept advancing, and which nobody seemed able to stop. Meeting the French royal guards, the well-known compliment passed, of each bidding the other fire first. But the rolling fire of the English, imitated from the Prussians, prostrated rank after rank, and routed the French guards. No regiment seemed able to stand before the advancing column, and preparations were made for retreat, and for the safety of the king; the latter, however, would not budge. It was then proposed by the Duke of Richelieu, it is said, to bring cannon to bear upon the serried columns of the English, and to take advantage of the gaps thus made in their ranks by charging with the remaining regiments. Similar attacks were ordered from the flank; notwithstanding, had the English and Hanoverians received the least support from the Dutch or Austrians, their advance could not have been stopped, and Fontenoy would have been a victory. But the fire of the French guns, the English having no room to use theirs, with the gallant and desperate charge of the French, and especially of the Irish regiment, anxious to retrieve the fortune of the day under the eyes of the sovereign, had its effect. The column formidable, though counting but 10,000 men at the first, paused, and, unable to face the number and reawakened spirit of its enemies, steadily and in good order retreated from the field.*

The result of the battle of Fontenoy, so glorious to the Maréchal de Saxe, and to Louis the Fifteenth himself, was the capture of the chief towns of Flanders, Tournay, Ghent, and Ostend. This was compensated by the triumph of Austria, at least, in South Germany. The young Elector of Bavaria having submitted to save

* Voltaire. Coxe's Pelham. Lord Mahon, Appendix. The Marshal Saxe's account, see De Luynes, t. vii.

CHAP.
XXXV.

his paternal dominions, the husband of Maria Theresa was elected emperor at Frankfort (September 1745). There remained for the house of Austria but to crush Frederick; but that wily and warlike champion was indomitable; he repelled the attacks of his enemies, and gained more than two decisive battles in the course of 1745. Such arguments always brought Maria Theresa to reason, so that, contented with her mastery over Germany to the Maine, she allowed Frederick to keep his hard-won province of Silesia, and signed a peace with him at Dresden, in the last days of the year.

If the French were thus deprived of their hopes and allies beyond the Rhine, in England they were not more successful. In July of this busy and memorable year, the Pretender landed in Scotland, and not only became master of Edinburgh but inflicted defeats upon the troops of England. So serious a reverse of course occupied the troops and efforts of George the Second; and the Low Countries, abandoned, fell an easy prey to the French. Brussels became theirs in January 1746. Mesnin was reduced soon after. Mons and Charleroi fell also. Even the strong citadel of Namur could not resist. And yet the Austrians and Dutch under Prince Charles counted 80,000 men.

Marshal Saxe attacked them in the neighbourhood of Liege on the 11th of October. The English and Hanoverians were posted in several villages, the principal one being Raucoux. These were the chief points of attack, and the French succeeded in dislodging those who held them, as they were unsupported by the Austrians. The resistance, however, was so great, and the retreat so orderly, that Marshal Saxe missed the only aim he had in giving battle—that of cutting off his enemies from Maestricht.* Notwithstanding his military triumph and the success of his arms, Louis the Fifteenth per-

* Letter of Marshal Saxe to the King of Prussia. Mémoires de Luynes, t. viii. Lord Gower's letter in Bedford Correspondence.

sisted in offering peace, especially to the Dutch. The king, in fact, was wearied of campaigning, and not ambitious of conquests. His minister of foreign affairs was a politician of singular ideas, and of views far in advance of his age. Thus he deprecated making Flanders the principal point of attack, since he was aware how impossible it was to fortify its towns and preserve such a conquest, which would unite England, Austria, and Holland in their old anti-French alliance, under which Louis the Fourteenth succumbed. Louis the Fifteenth attacked Flanders because it was most convenient for his court, and most productive of laurels; whilst he left the provinces of the Rhine weakly defended, and abandoned his German allies—more especially the King of Prussia—to their fate. D'Argenson, moreover, deprecated conquest. He thought France large enough, and too much embarrassed in its finances and resources to excite the enmity of its neighbours by aggrandisement. He looked upon the house of Austria as the chief enemy of France. His project of humbling that power was to exclude it from Italy, and leave their own country to the Italians. This accomplished, France would not only have an ally beyond the Alps, but Austria, almost excluded from the Mediterranean, would no longer excite such sympathy or command such support in England. The great instrument for the liberation of Italy was the King of Sardinia.

Events had but ill prepared that monarch for listening to D'Argenson's proposals, although Louis the Fifteenth at first sanctioned them. The French and Spaniards, under Maillebois and Gages, had driven Austrian and Piedmontese before them in 1741, defeated them near Alessandria, and menaced Piedmont. In June 1746, the court of Vienna, delivered by the peace of Dresden from the pressure of Prussia, was enabled to despatch an army across the Alps. Commanded by the Prince de Lichtenstein, it attacked the French and

CHAP.
XXXV.

Spaniards near Piacenza, and inflicted such heavy loss upon them that the allied army was obliged to retreat. This action was more than a military triumph for Austria, for it completely defeated the scheme which D'Argenson had well nigh brought to a conclusion, of bringing Sardinia and Spain to join in a league for dividing Italy between them, and excluding the Austrians altogether. After the victory of Piacenza, the King of Sardinia remained true to the imperial cause, and attacked the French division in Asti. Irritated by such duplicity, Louis the Fifteenth turned upon D'Argenson, and would hear no more of his schemes, which, indeed, were scarcely to be realised at that epoch. And had he succeeded, he would merely have excluded the Austrian influence from the peninsula, to substitute that of Spain.

On the present occasion the French found what feeble allies the Spaniards were. The death of Philip the Fifth and the accession of Ferdinand modified the policy of the court of Madrid. Orders came from it to the Spanish army no longer to push the conquest of Milan, but to withdraw to the sea-coast. The French were obliged to follow this retrograde movement, and both armies evacuated Italy by the Var. Thus left without an enemy, the Austrian general turned his forces to take vengeance on the Genoese, who had not only taken part with their enemies but furnished them with a large body of troops. Whilst the Austrians and Piedmontese approached to invest the city by land, the English fleet blocked the port, and shut out all succour by sea. The Genoese, panic-stricken, instead of thinking of defence, resolved to recur to the generosity of their enemies, and surrendered in September 1746 to the Austrians.

The Imperialists and the English determined to make themselves amends in the south for the advantages which the French had gained over them in Flanders. They persuaded the Germans to pursue the French over

the Var into Provence, and capture some of its seaports. The Austrians hesitated, indeed, whether they would not reduce Naples, ere they marched to take Toulon. They decided on the latter, relying on the aid of the English fleet. Invasion of France along the coast of the Mediterranean has been frequently tried, and always failed, from the difficulty of procuring provisions, and from the strength of such towns as Toulon, which required a long siege. The valour of the French, too, aroused by seeing the enemy on their soil, must be taken into account. The Maréchal de Belleisle was sent to Provence—a task which he accepted with reluctance, knowing that neither troops nor money were forthcoming for such a service.* Belleisle mustered what troops he could, threw succours into the towns, especially into Antibes, and limited his efforts to watching rather than resisting the enemy. They, however, appeared bent rather on plunder than conquests. The Austrians ravaged not only Provence but Dauphiny; but having no siege artillery, they could capture no towns, and after spending two or three winter months in France, they were recalled by the tidings of a popular revolution which had expelled their troops from Genoa. They made haste, in consequence, to repossess the Var, followed by Belleisle, who blessed his stars that the expedition was over, seeing that his own army was so short of means of subsistence that it could have kept together but a few days longer as a corps d'armée.† The conquerors had treated Genoa with little generosity. They had levied a fine of 24,000 livres, of which the Genoese paid all they could, and prayed for a remission of the remainder. The Austrian commander was inexorable, and the Austrian soldiers equally so in their pillage of palaces and maltreatment of the inhabitants. An officer had struck a Genoese on the 5th of December. The insult fell like a

* De Luynes, t. viii.

† Belleisle's accounts and letters in the Mémoires de Luynes, t. viii.

CHAP.
XXXV.

spark upon a train, and the entire population of Genoa rose, overpowered the Austrians, and expelled them from the town. They then more regularly armed themselves, and, aided by the peasantry round, drove the Imperialists not only from the suburbs of Genoa but even from the strong post of the Bochetta.

The attack and defence of Genoa formed the great object of all the belligerents in Italy during the year 1747. The only certain mode of raising the siege was that of a French army penetrating into Italy, and driving the Austrians from Piedmont. The Chevalier de Belleisle led a considerable force to accomplish the passage of the Alps at Exiles, and so reach Coni. The Piedmontese, however, took up such a position as totally to defeat Belleisle, who perished in the attempt, with a great portion of his soldiers and all his officers, victims of his temerity.

Meantime the French were masters of the Low Countries; Bruges and Namur had fallen into their hands. Nevertheless they could not but foresee a more serious struggle when the English forces, triumphant from the defeat of the Pretender, should once more come to the defence of Belgium. To anticipate this, the French had sought to bend the obstinacy of the Dutch, and made overtures for peace, which led to the conference at Breda towards the close of 1746. The English king and the Duke of Cumberland were, however, for again trying the fortune of war, and the Dutch were led by their persuasions. To punish this, Marshal Saxe, early in 1747, commenced his invasion of the Dutch territory, and captured some towns upon the Scheldt. At these tidings the people rose as they had done on a similar occasion during the invasion of Louis the Fourteenth, deposed their republican magistrates as incapable, and installed in their place the Prince of Orange, William the Fourth, as Stadtholder.

This was a defiance to France, and Louis the Fifteenth came in person to the seat of war to encourage

Marshal Saxe by his presence. This general resolved to lay siege to Maestricht, but it was first requisite to dislodge the Anglo-Dutch army, which, under the Duke of Cumberland, maintained communications with this fortress. Marshal Saxe attacked him at Laufeldt on the 2nd of July.* As at Fontenoy, the English bore the brunt of the battle: the Austrians scarcely joined in it; the Dutch gave way. The British cavalry in vain endeavoured to prevent the whole of the French army from falling upon their infantry; their charge was successful, but useless against numbers. The English foot, after having twice retaken Laufeldt, retired under successive attacks of an army far superior in numbers, led some of them by Marshal Saxe in person. They withdrew in good order, and in such wise that the communications with Maestricht, the great object of the battle, were not broken off. Saxe, after this victory, instead of investing Maestricht, conducted his army to the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom. Considered the strongest fortress of the Netherlands, its capture was looked upon as impracticable even by the French. But Count Lowendahl, a Danish officer—the French had come to have invariably foreigners for commanders—undertook it with assurance of success, and the result fulfilled his promise. Bergen-op-Zoom was carried by storm in September (1747).

Sir John Ligonier, the gallant commander of the English cavalry, was made prisoner at Laufeldt. Though an Huguenot refugee, he was well received by the king, who expressed his regret at not being able to make peace. An official memoir was put into the hands of Ligonier, who was sent back with the document, containing the offer of the French to restore all their conquests in the Low Countries save Furnes. Marshal Saxe expressed himself loudly for peace. Of what advantage, thought he, to shed blood and treasure in

* D'Argenson's bulletin in De Luynes.

CHAP.
XXXV.

making conquests, when the king is determined to give them back? Besides, he was threatened by enemies and intrigues at court, and consequently not always on the best of terms with the king.* The results of these overtures were that Lord Sandwich went over to concert with the French foreign minister, Puy sieux, and it was agreed to open a congress for peace at Aix-la-Chapelle.

One of the reasons given by Puy sieux, who had succeeded D'Argenson in foreign affairs, for the anxiety which the French displayed for peace was the fear that the continuance of the war would deprive them of their colonies in America and elsewhere.† The English were consoled for their inability to defend Flanders by the rich prizes which their men-of-war captured from the Spaniards. Not only the English but their descendants of the New World were excited by the love of enterprise. An expedition from New England captured Louisburg, the capital of Cape Breton, and the principal fortress of the French, in 1745. The superiority of the English by sea was incontestable, so that no reinforcements could be sent out from France. Their West Indian fleet was taken and chiefly destroyed in October 1745. The shores of Brittany, as well as Provence, were insulted by the landing of the English troops. In 1747, at the very time when Marshal Saxe was triumphantly marching into Holland, a naval engagement took place off Cape Finisterre, in which the English intercepted a squadron under La Jonquière proceeding to the relief of the French East Indies, and captured several French men-of-war, some belonging to their Indian company.‡ There remained but seven, and of these Admiral Hawke gave good account in the same year, bringing, after an engagement, six of them into the Thames.

* D'Argenson.

† Puy sieux told the Marquis de Valori that the principal reasons for making peace were the famine in the eastern provinces (caused by the

English blockade) and the danger to the French colonies in America. Mémoires de Valori.

‡ See D'Argenson, t. v. p. 81.

In the eastern hemisphere the French inflicted far greater losses on the English. The military and other resources were then in the hands of two able men, Labourdonnais, governor of the Mauritius or Isle of France, and Dupleix, who superintended the French factories at Chandernagor and Patna, in Bengal, as well as Pondicherry, on the Coromandel coast. When war really broke out between France and England in 1744, there were hopes of neutrality being observed in India; but the local governor could not answer for that of the marine. Hostilities ensued. In September 1764,* a French fleet, under Labourdonnais, anchored off Madras. It had 1,800 men on board. The English in Madras, including the garrison, did not exceed 300. The town, in consequence, capitulated after a bombardment, the French commander promising to restore the town, and merely require a ransom. This agreement, however solemnly concluded, did not suit the views of the governor of Chandernagor and Pondicherry, Dupleix, who looked to nothing less than overthrowing the English power in India, and substituting that of France. He arranged to have the restoration of Madras deferred, till Labourdonnais went home under recall to France, and then he threw off the mask, and avowed his purpose of retaining the settlement. His next effort was to dislodge the English from Fort St. David, to which they had withdrawn from Madras. With a paid Indian force (for the French were the first to enlist and discipline Sepoys), Dupleix marched to the attack of Cuddalore, but an English fleet deterred him, and in 1747, naval reinforcements coming from England, the English in turn were so much the superior as to be able to lay siege to Madras. Such was the state of things when the French government entered upon the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle. From the superiority of the English at sea, they feared the loss of all they

* Mill's British India.

CHAP.
XXXV.

possessed both in America and in India; whilst peace would at least bring them the opportunity of recruiting and reforming their marine.

Illustrative of the French colonial administration is their treatment of Labourdonnais, whose government of the Isle of France, husbanding and developing its resources, and whose creation of the naval force which captured Madras, entitled him to all the honours the French could bestow. Instead of any such reward, a trial and a prison awaited him in Paris, both occasioned by the jealous misrepresentations of Dupleix. Labourdonnais had been taken prisoner by the English, but they released him to undergo his trial. The preliminary to it was two years' confinement in the Bastille. When Labourdonnais was brought to trial, he was, indeed, honourably acquitted, but such was the effect of the harsh treatment on his health and spirits that the gallant governor never rallied, and died soon after.*

Gladly would the historian avoid recurring to the private life of Louis the Fifteenth. But the spring of administration was there. The appointments of generals, ministers, and financiers, are to be traced to the influence which prevailed for the moment with the corrupt and imbecile monarch. Louis the Fifteenth in general saw but through the eyes of the woman who amused and governed him. Though fond of the fair sex, says De Luynes, Louis was totally without gallantry: he might have added, without taste or choice. He took what was under his hands, and sought no further. Hence the monstrous crime of his taking three or four sisters, one after another, to be his mistresses. Madame de Mailly was the first; Madame de Vintimille succeeded—a woman of spirit, who first prompted Louis to go in person to the army,† and who supported Belleisle, as Madame de Mailly did, against

* Mémoires de Labourdonnais.

† D'Argenson.

Fleury. Madame de Vintimille died in childbed, or of its consequences, in September 1741, and Madame de Mailly reigned again, till she was superseded by her younger sister, Madame La Tournelle, created Duchess of Châteauroux in 1743. Her influence drove the king to the seat of war, which proved fatal to herself. For when his majesty took ill at Metz, she was banished by the clergy, and she soon after died. It was through her advice that Maurice of Saxe was given the command of the army with which De Broglie had retreated with such pusillanimity from Bavaria.

The death of Châteauroux, as the previous fate of Vintimille, filled Louis with remorse, or rather with religious fear of future punishment. He became penitent, and promised reformation. But the habits of his life had been so idle, and himself so indifferent to the great duties of his position, so incapable of social intercourse, of occupation, intellectual or any other, that the yoke of a woman had become a necessity to him. Early in 1745 the dauphin espoused a Spanish princess, daughter of Philip. A ball given by the Hôtel de Ville on the occasion offered to the regards of the monarch a handsome person, not nobly born, Jeanne Poisson, or D'Étioles; "fair and white," says D'Argenson, "tall, but without features, full, however, of grace and talent." She was soon Marquise de Pompadour. As this lady had been adopted and bred by a farmer-general, her first care was turned towards the finances of the kingdom, in which were implied her own. She asked Orry, the prime minister, to appoint one of her friends to an important place. Orry replied, "If you are the king's mistress, you have no need of my patronage or support; if you are not, I cannot grant your request." Orry was in consequence superseded forthwith by another and, indeed, an abler controller-general. This minister, Machault, showed his gratitude to Madame de Pompadour, to whom he owed his

CHAP.
XXXV.

appointment, by procuring a regular allowance, which no mistress had yet been able to obtain from Louis the Fifteenth, and at the same time the payment of her debts.*

If this was a change for the better, the superseding of the Marquis d'Argenson by Puysieux, in foreign affairs, was the contrary. Though full of spirit, D'Argenson was against campaigning in Flanders, the only country in which the king liked to appear at the head of his army. A journey to the Rhine was too remote for his pleasures. It must be owned, however, that D'Argenson was somewhat of a visionary, and if Louis the Fifteenth displaced him on account of the failure of his efforts for the unity of Italy, it is scarcely to be wondered at. The policy was too adventurous, and too little practicable, and Puysieux, though a far less talented, was a far safer minister.† Unlike former royal mistresses, Madame de Pompadour was for peace, as more conducive to her interests, and profitable to her resources. But, notwithstanding this, the royal mistress still exerted her influence to support Maurice de Saxe, who was the great champion of war, against the courtiers, against some of the ministers, and the Condé family.

After all, it was Maurice who conquered peace. The English king and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, had spurned during the winter the offers of peace, made through Ligonier and Marshal Saxe. The duke reckoned upon mustering a force of 180,000 men in Flanders, to oppose the enterprise of the French commander. The greater part of these, however, was to consist of Dutch and Austrian contingents, as well as of a Russian army, which was advancing to their

* Mémoires de Madame de Hausset. De Luynes.

† According to De Flassan, t. v., D'Argenson was superseded in con-

sequence of a memoir drawn up by the Marshal de Noailles, concerning his behaviour towards the Catholic courts.

succour. When spring came, however, the Austrians were not reinforced, though the English government threatened to withhold the subsidy in consequence. The Dutch were still more backward. The appointment of a Stadtholder had not added to their efficiency and vigour. They neither furnished soldiers nor even the money which it was stipulated they were to pay the Russians. The Duke of Cumberland was in despair. And when Marshal Saxe invested Maestricht, without the possibility of the allies attacking him, or succouring it, the Pelhams resolved that peace should be concluded without delay, and orders were sent to Lord Sandwich, the English plenipotentiary at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, to conclude peace at any cost before Maestricht should surrender, and Flanders be lost.*

Lord Sandwich accordingly signed preliminaries of a treaty, containing the principal conditions, on the 1st of May. On their being made known, all the allies of England, excepting the Dutch, were indignant, and even they were not satisfied. The King of Sardinia, obliged to restore Finale to Genoa, which had been guaranteed to him by the treaty of Worms, was of course disappointed. Maria Theresa, and still more her plenipotentiary, Kaunitz, were furious at the cessions they were all to make in Italy, and as to the guarantee of Silesia to the King of Prussia. It became a question with the English ministry whether they should sign without the adhesion of Austria. The Duke of Newcastle leaned one way, his brother, Mr. Pelham, another; the latter feared, as did the Dutch, that the French would blow up the fortifications of Namur and Bergen-op-Zoom, thus rendering the restoration of the barrier vain. Austria, whilst opposing the conclusion of the treaty, recalled, in concert with the French, 30,000 men from the Low Countries, thus rendering the conclusion of

* For the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, see Coxe's Pelham, and the correspondence attached. The Bedford Correspondence.

CHAP.
XXXV.

the treaty imperative. England, therefore, definitively signed it on the 18th of October, 1748, and all the other powers, even Austria, followed the example.

The terms were,—the restitution of the French conquests in the Low Countries; Dunkirk to remain fortified towards the land, but not towards the sea. Parma was given to Don Philip, and Piacenza, of which the King of Sardinia was deprived, as well as of Finale—an arrangement that dissatisfied both Spain and Piedmont. The Pretender was to be exiled from France. The Duke of Lorraine, husband of Maria Theresa, was acknowledged emperor. England recovered the *Asiento*, and the liberty to trade by one ship under Spanish colours. As the French restored their Flemish conquests, England restored hers in North America, and Cape Breton again became French.

Such was the conclusion of a war of eight years, which exhausted the revenue, and swelled the debt, of the principal countries engaged, impoverishing France, especially its provinces, to a degree of misery indescribable—and all this without a result, save that Austria recovered strength and defied its foes, whilst England and France were neither more rich nor more powerful. The worst result of the treaty to the monarch and monarchy was the universal censure of the French public, which would not take into account the general distress, but felt mortified and greatly incensed at the abandonment of the Low Countries, the expulsion of the English Pretender, and the dismantling of Dunkirk. When the Pretender, refusing to obey instructions to depart, was arrested and brought to Vincennes (December), public indignation knew no bounds. To this discontent the language held by Marshal Saxe greatly added. He did not conceal his opinion that the Low Countries might have been held, and even Holland conquered. This he thought desirable, because “masters are always guardians,” and because “Holland was the right arm

of England." Louis the Fifteenth justly observed of this opinion, that it was like that of all generalissimos, "a policy of red-hot shot." St. Severin, the minister, censured the marshal, by stating that it was not so easy to conquer the Dutch if they were given the courage of despair—that, even if possible, it was not desirable, for Holland was a support of France against Germany. Against the reason for continuing the war, and provoking a general European coalition against France, St. Severin observed that the controller-general had declared that no more money was to be found, that the intendants of provinces notified that no more recruits could be levied for the militia, and that in the province of Guyenne especially the population was threatened with extinction from hunger.*

* De Flassan, Histoire de la Diplomatie Française.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FROM THE TREATY OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE TO THE DEATH
OF LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

1748—1774.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

ALL French writers of this and a somewhat later period agree in making two assertions, which do not seem very compatible. They attest the immensely increased luxury and wealth of cities, Paris especially, and the simultaneous depression and misery of the agricultural population. The obvious mode of accounting for this state of things would be that the landed proprietor took all the profits of the soil, leaving the peasant the bare necessaries of life, and, at the same time, the whole weight of taxation. And this was true to a great extent. The French tenant paid a higher proportion of rent than the English farmer, because he had no capital, and because there was a greater competition for land.* We are thus surprised to find, from so unimpeachable a witness as Arthur Young, that the French agricultural population suffered not so much from the abuses we suppose of feudal oppression, and the monopoly of land by the noble classes, as they did from the very ills which now, in the nineteenth century, beset them. Arthur Young found a far greater number of small landed proprietors in France than in England, who, if they had money, invested it solely in the land:

* Arthur Young.

from whence arose an undue competition for possession of the soil. Another cause of the poverty of the French proprietor, especially in the vine countries, was the "universal division of property between children, the new proprietor having no other capital than a pair of hands."

The great cause of depression to the cultivator of the soil was, however, the obstructions in the way of transport, often amounting to absolute prohibition. Sometimes a province, whose corn could not be exported, declared itself in consequence unable to pay the *taille*.* The *fermier-général* of the province exerted himself thereupon, and procured a permission to export, in order to get his taxes paid up. As a rule, however, the farmer grew but as much corn as would suffice for his own consumption, and that of the locality, so that, when a bad year came, there was no surplus, and famine prevailed throughout the land.

The finance minister was of course obliged to seek for money where it accumulated. Orry, who filled that office from 1730 to 1745, found his task not difficult so long as Cardinal Fleury upheld economy and peace. When he was overborne, and the Polish war ensued, Orry had recourse to *tontines* and lotteries, † re-establishing an income-tax, towards which every one was bound to declare the extent of his property. The clergy were exempt, on giving twelve millions in the shape of a *don gratuit*. In the interval of peace which followed, Orry managed to limit the expenditure to 156 millions, the revenue being 148 millions. The personal

* Barbier, Mai 1739.

† "The nature of his lotteries was curious. His edict, announcing one in 1737, fixes 650 livres as the price of a ticket, of which 150 livres were to be paid in coin, and 500 livres in rentes on the *gabelles* and *aides*. Those who did not get prizes

were to have their billets converted into *rentes viagères*, at 20 livres for each billet. In 1739, when war began, there was another lottery opened, of which the tickets might be paid, one-half more rentes, and two-thirds less in coin."—Isambert, *Lois Françaises*.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

expenses of the young king had been reduced by Fleury to a trifle. The Austrian war came to disturb this balance. There was such great difficulty found in the collection of the income-tax that Orry compounded for so much with the chief towns and provinces, allowing them to raise the tax themselves. It proved more profitable, but probably more unequal. All the ingenuity of Orry, however, could not supply the expenses required by Flemish sieges, as well as for subsidising Bavaria, and other German states. When to this came to be added the demands of Madame de Pompadour, Orry resisted. Royal mistresses had hitherto cost little; but the new one was not so easily satisfied. Orry withstood her exigencies, whereupon he was dismissed in 1746, and Machault appointed in his stead.*

Although an able man, and recommended by the Brothers Paris, as well as D'Argenson, Machault could do little during the remainder of the war except bear witness to the impossibility of finding resources to carry it on. But he taxed every article of consumption, and even raised the *taille*. The farmers of the taxes had paid several years in advance. The rich were vexed with the heavy tax upon plate and jewels, which was as bad as in the days of Law. Paris was burdened by an enormous *octroi*, from which the Duke of Orleans with difficulty obtained the exemption of flour and bread. Noailles declared that, notwithstanding the appearance of affluence in certain classes, the kingdom was more unable to support war or taxation than in 1704.

In 1747 the penury of the treasury was such that D'Argenson writes, there were but 12,000 livres in the *caisse de la guerre*. Machault issued inscriptions for half a million, to be paid out of an augmentation of the *dixième*.† Four sous a livre were added to the *octroi*

* Madame de Hausset. De Luynes. Barbier. D'Argenson.

† Barbier, December 1746.

duties,* and a gigantic lottery was set on foot to last twelve years, which succeeded so ill that the tickets were soon at a discount.† No wonder Louis and Madame de Pompadour were anxious for peace, the latter especially, for a share of that wealth which she saw hopelessly lavished on the sieges of Flanders.

When peace was concluded, and the reduction consequent upon it had been effected in the army and in other departments, the debt and the difficulty of meeting the obligations of the State were still the questions of first importance. The controller-general, Machault, had bold views, the scope of which was to compel the privileged classes, nobles and clergy, to contribute in due proportion to the exigencies of the State. The *dixième*, indeed, was due from nobles as well as *roturiers*. But when a tax had endured some time, so many persons and classes of influence contrived to get exemptions on one pretext or another that the burden came to fall exclusively on the peasant and the tradesman. Machault, whilst promising to withdraw the *dixième* in a year, established at once what was to replace it, a *vingtième*,‡ as a permanent tax, to be levied in peace as in war, upon all revenue, upon the clergy as well as upon the nobles. A decree at the same time ordained that land, even that of nobles, should be sold to pay just debts. A tax on the transmission or transfer of chattel property alarmed the middle classes and their representative, the parliament. A more unexceptional measure was the abolition of import and export duties on corn, cotton, wool, hemp—in fact, on the materials of subsistence and manufacture. These were bold steps, in taking which Machault counted upon the support of the king, influenced by Madame de Pompadour. That lady, closely connected with the Brothers Paris, and the families of

* Barbier, October 1747.

† Ibid.

‡ A valuation of the income of the kingdom, drawn up by the in-

tendants, concluded that the one-twentieth would produce twenty-one millions of livres.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

financiers, was imbued with their ideas, and was, moreover, of that humble birth which exempted her from class prejudices in favour of nobles or churchmen. Between these and the financiers existed strong antagonism. They mulcted the capitalists when they could, and the financiers seized every opportunity to take their revenge.

Whilst thus enforcing a measure of justice against the privileged classes, the controller-general sought to propitiate the ranks beneath them—at least the citizens—by the abolition of the most oppressive taxes, such as those on tallow, wax, hair-powder, wood, and objects of daily consumption. Such exemptions were not sufficient to give the popularity required to face the enemies that Machault created. The Church was in arms against him. Although it possessed one-third of the soil of the kingdom, it pretended to have exemption from all taxes, and to pay nothing to the State, save a voluntary contribution. Machault, on the other hand, resuscitated the laws against *mainmorte*. An edict obtained by the controller cancelled all the monastic establishments founded during the preceding twelve years, and forbade new ones without the king's sanction. Capitalists were forbidden to lend to the clergy, to enable them to purchase property. But what alarmed and aroused the clergy even more than this was another edict issued in 1750, enjoining them to give a return of their revenues.* The clergy, all powerful in Languedoc, raised the estates of that province against the controller, and the other *pays aux Etats* were equally obstinate in opposing the *vingtième*. The government did not yield without a struggle. It dissolved estates, and broke parliaments. All in vain. The fiscal quarrel became complicated by religious strife, and in the end, Machault and Pompadour were defeated in their attempt, Machault quitting the finance department for the marine. This failure was in a great measure owing to

* Isambert. Barbier.

their not having had the precaution to make friends. Even those who would have benefited by joining in a scheme for humbling the nobles and clergy did not see their true interest at the time. The parliament and the men of letters, instead of supporting the king and his mistress, poured forth remonstrances and epigrams against them. Not only the courtiers, but Machault's brother ministers, were his enemies. This they showed, indeed, not so much by opposition in the cabinet as by songs and satirical effusions. Pompadour was of course gibbeted, and Loffis himself not spared. They defended themselves by *lettres de cachet*. Even the accomplished courtier, Maurepas, did not escape. He was suspected of being the author of some of the satirical effusions upon the mistress, which circulated at Versailles, was dismissed and exiled to the country.*

It excites both surprise and regret that an able and powerful minister did not arise at this epoch, to remedy abuses, abrogate the pernicious privileges of the clergy and noblesse, and anticipate, by reform, the revolution which was already impending. The king had power to appoint and uphold such a minister. Madame de Pompadour was ready to support and second such a movement. Voltaire was frequently her guest, and encyclopedists reckoned on her protection. But the crying sin of her position marred all her good tendencies. All that was faulty in the government was imputed to her. The pusillanimity shown and the advantages thrown away at the peace were laid at her door, and the arrest and expulsion of Charles Stuart the Pretender, in obedience to the stipulations of the English treaty, were scouted as disgraceful and keenly satirised. The public, in fact, preferred Louis the Fourteenth and Maintenon to Louis the Fifteenth and Pompadour. As to reform, the first step to be taken towards this was in the domain of finance. Machault tried it boldly, with

* Journal de D'Argenson, t. v. p. 456.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

the full support of Pompadour. He failed before the determined resistance of clergy, noblesse, and parliament. And whilst these, more reckless and forgetful of the necessities and advance of the age than even the king and his mistress, proceeded to quarrel about dogmas and trivialities, the court and Pompadour turned their attention to foreign policy, success in which promised to redeem popularity and augment power more than any wisdom shown in domestic administration.

The French clergy thus escaped what might have been their salvation, the deprivation of their idle privileges, bringing them down to a fair equality with their fellow-countrymen. The conduct of the higher classes was, indeed, marked by a fatuity almost inconceivable. Each of them possessed every advantage that could be desired. Nobles and ecclesiastics enjoyed immunity from taxation, and in great measure escaped the action of the law. Although a taciturn and reserved sovereign like Louis the Fifteenth might not open his court or his council to the members of the noblesse, still these had the monopoly of all military and of the highest civil appointments. Such advantages might have inspired moderation. But Chateaubriand testifies that what galled and incensed the middle classes was not so much the monopoly of place, privileges, and power, as the insolence of their demeanour, and the total want of consideration they showed for all beneath them. The Church, too, possessed of solid power, wealth, and respect, might have shown tolerance and even affection for the middle classes. Instead of this, their sole object seemed to be to find victims, or to make them of such as dared to differ with them. That they should seek to exterminate the Protestants is conceivable, as the reformers scouted the very idea of a hierarchic priesthood. But the Jansenists, those devout men and families, chiefly of the professional and middle class, who entertained but shades of difference with the

Catholics, and objected merely to the sweeping censures of the bull *Unigenitus*, that these should have called forth the violent and unwarrantable enmity of the clergy at this time does seem little short of madness. The ecclesiastics entertained the idea that, by striking hard blows, they increased and displayed their power. And thus, whenever they fell into disputes with the government, about taxation, or ought else, the clergy universally had recourse to slaying Protestants and persecuting Jansenists. Such were the tactics which they now employed.

The Huguenots of the south had been allowed to breathe during the years of the regency. This cessation of rigour opened to them free communication with their pastors from Geneva. Of these, Antoine Court especially devoted himself to revive the spirit of his Church. For years its members had not met. They were now encouraged to assemble *au désert* (in the desert), and in lonely places, chiefly by night, to have divine worship, as well as the rites of baptism and marriage, performed.* The Catholic spirit was roused by accounts of these meetings, and the Duke of Bourbon, under the influence, it is said, of his mistress, Madame de Prie, was induced to re-issue and re-enact, in 1724, all the severe laws of Louis the Fourteenth against the Protestants. The galleys and confiscation were the penalties for attending the reformed worship. Pastors were to be executed, and those who harboured them sent to the galleys. No place could be held, or duty performed, without a certificate of Catholicity. This and the receiving the sacrament were indispensable for burial and for marriage. The clergy and the parliaments in the south took delight in executing and enforcing this Draconic code, under which so many pastors perished on the scaffold. Cardinal Fleury, indeed, gave no encouragement to this zeal. But soon

* Coquerel, *Églises du Désert*.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

after his death, in 1744, the Huguenots having, imprudently perhaps, held a synod, or assembly, frequented by upwards of 10,000 persons, the clergy of the region exclaimed, and the court itself took alarm. It was the time of the English descents upon the coast, and of the invasion of Provence. The Huguenots were accused of being in communication with the national enemy. In February 1745 came forth in consequence severe edicts, subjecting them to all the penalties that cruelty could devise. As to the rich suspected of Protestantism, they were reduced to penury by fines. Those of Dauphiné paid 200,000 livres; Nismes 60,000. Those who could not pay were sent to the *bagne*. Numbers of pastors were hanged. The most cruel persecutor of the Huguenots of the south at this time was, strange to say, the dissolute and infidel Duc de Richelieu, the friend of Voltaire, and the obsequious servitor, who had supplied the king with so many mistresses. Sent to Genoa to command, he had made use of his time to amass and rob all the money he could grasp. Appointed governor of Languedoc, the Protestants became his prey. He washed his hands in their blood, in order to fill his pockets with their money. Such was the gallant and fashionable noble of the eighteenth century.

Although the young members of the different provincial bars showed an advanced and liberal spirit, as well as gave great promise of eloquence, the elder judges remained bigoted—as bigoted as the prelates. Even the Jansenist judges sanctioned the persecution of the Protestants, and approved of the expedient of requiring certificates of confession, which alone entitled to civic rights and Christian burial.

The Jansenists who committed such a blunder and such an atrocity were caught in it as in a trap; for the clergy of Paris thought the instrument of exclusion and persecution too good and convenient a one not to be employed. In Paris there were no Protestants to per-

secute, but there were Jansenists, strongly suspected of making common cause with the philosophers, which they did only so far as to recommend private devotion as of equal value with the ceremonies of the Church. They censured, too, those frequent masses and daily communions by which the priesthood lived, but which in the eyes of Jansenists vulgarised and deprived of all reverence the holy rites.

This was quite as bad as Protestantism in the eyes of the Parisian clergy, a great many of whom resolved to refuse absolution and the last rites of the Church to all who should deny acquiescence with the bull *Unigenitus*. This bull condemned some of the most self-evident principles of religion and morality, and subsequent popes were thoroughly ashamed of it. But it answered the purpose of the bigoted clergy all the better. The refusal of the sacraments, and consequently of burial, to Jansenists excited no trouble until the curate of St. Stephen thought fit to treat in this manner a judge named Coffin (end of 1750), as well as the Duke of Orleans, who was a devout Jansenist. The parliament issued a writ of arrest against the curate. The king interfered to protect him, but at the same time promised that he should be withdrawn from his cure. The parliament declared it illegal on the part of the clergy to refuse the sacraments on account of objections to the *Unigenitus* bull. The king, though convinced that the parliament was in the right, still considered the clergy as more attached and loyal to him than the judges, and thought to compromise matters and adjourn the quarrel by withdrawing all contested causes from the parliament, to be tried by his council. This but emboldened the clergy, and the Archbishop of Paris, De Beaumont, to sanction the refusal of the sacraments. The parliament, annoyed, issued no less a sentence than that the archbishop's temporals should be seized, and himself brought to trial before his peers. This threatened to produce

CHAP.
XXXVI.

civil war between judges and bishops, until the king put an end to it by exiling the leaders on both sides, ecclesiastical and judicial. The courts of justice were closed, and a temporary tribunal appointed. Such a state of things, of course, could not last; and when both parties were sufficiently punished and wearied, the exiles were restored to their homes, and an apparent reconciliation took place. Amidst the noise and trouble of the dispute, the clergy succeeded in their refusal to give any declaration of their property, and to submit to the Controller Machault's system of taxation.

It is not unimportant to note that in 1751, the very time in which the clergy were thrusting the bull down the throats of the dying Jansenists, the first volume of the *Encyclopédie* appeared, declaring war to both, and yet dedicated to the minister of the day, Count d'Argenson.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, between England and France, could not be said to extend to the colonies. There the rivalry was too strong, the prospects and the aim of each country, being no less than the possession of the greatest continents, North America and Hindostan, too important and too vast to admit of even temporary repose on either side. The ink of the treaty was not dry when the French took possession of the mouth of the river St. John. Nevertheless, in 1750, commissioners from both nations met to try and agree upon a frontier,—in vain. The French government persisted in the preposterous pretension to connect their possessions in Canada with those of Louisiana by a chain of forts, which were to shut out the English from the vast region beyond, and impede trade and communication. This the Virginians objected to, and a force under George Washington marched to oppose their proceedings on the Ohio. On this occasion the future liberator of America was defeated (1754).

At the other extremity of the globe similar causes

produced similar results. Dupleix, the French governor, was as restless after the peace as before it. His maxim was that nothing was to be gained in India by trade, and that the only object worth looking for was empire. This belief, accredited in France, lay perhaps at the bottom of all the national failures at colonisation. Nothing could be more untrue. The English India Company divided a large annual profit amongst its shareholders; the French might have done the same. Dupleix preferred the game of diplomacy and intrigue, of throning and dethroning Indian princes, which was the more easy as Mahomedanism was the ruling caste, having to depend in a great measure upon Hindoo followers.

The feuds and revolutions of the Indian courts gave Dupleix the occasion to support two candidates, one to be Subahdar of the Deccan, the other Nabob of the Carnatic. The English, in self-defence, opposed the princes sought to be instituted by the French. Dupleix, at first successful, was in 1749 completely defeated by Nazir Jung, the Subahdar, but the French governor having formed a plot with the officers of the latter, they combined against him, and Nazir was slain. Dupleix installed his own *protégés*—first, Moozuffer (1750), and then his son—in the sovereignty of the Carnatic. Dupleix was thus master of Southern India, and would have proceeded, no doubt, to the expulsion of the English, had not a rival started up, in their ranks, to the talents and fortunes of Dupleix. This was a young officer, or rather clerk, named Clive, who offered with a few soldiers to take Arcot. He succeeded in the daring enterprise, and performed a most wonderful feat in defending it against a superior force (1752). Soon after the quarrel of the Deccan was complicated by the ruler of the neighbouring province of Mysore joining in it, at first to aid the English candidate. When, however, the Mysoreans succeeded in destroying his rival, they claimed Trichinopoli for themselves.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

They were of course supported by Dupleix, and attacked by the English, with no result save bloodshed and expense. On this the home governments intervened, and agreed, contrary to Dupleix, that trade, not fighting and empire, should be their mutual object in India. Dupleix was superseded, sent home to France; and a treaty was concluded in the end of 1754, by which the French gave up the territory of which Dupleix had obtained the sovereignty. And momentary peace was restored to the Carnatic.

It was not in the colonies alone that colonial rivalry produced war. The public and the governments of both countries were, far different from those of 1714, eagerly alive to transmarine interests, trade, and possessions. In enumerating the sources which fed Parisian wealth and luxury, whilst the rural districts of France remained so poor, we omitted to mention the wealth derived from the colonies, whither French capital flowed in preference to be employed at home.* Trade in those days of universal international prohibition was only possible with a country's own colonies, which were thus a source of revenue to the state, as of wealth to the trader. "Our *fermes*, including the customs," observed Maurepas, "produce 100,000,000 of livres. What would that revenue sink to if we lost our colonies?"

If colonies and trade were the chief object of the French, their best policy at the epoch was certainly peace. Their naval forces were far inferior to the English, notwithstanding the efforts of Maurepas, and subsequently of Machault, to put the marine in a better state. The English colonists, industrious and active,

* Arthur Young complains that the capital which ought to have reared corn in France was sent to raise sugar in the West Indies.

The chief investment of the day

was the shares of the *Compagnie des Indes*, the price of which, as well as those of the great lottery shares, began to be regularly quoted in the *Mercure* and *Gazette*.

were ten times the number of the French, and able to crush arrogant pretensions. The soil of America was vast enough for both, and it is to be regretted, that emigrants seeking the New World, did not throw off the passions of the Old. The French, however, were for colonising by arms rather than by industry. Their leading men were officers and agents from the mother country, and their designs were far more strategic than politic. Still, in France, Madame de Pompadour, threatened by the clergy, was for peace, and her influence defeated the efforts of Count d'Argenson and St. Contest, the ministers of war and foreign affairs, to provoke hostilities with England. There were differences indeed, the fortifications of Dunkirk exciting the susceptibilities of George the Second. Yet as long as the Pelham ministry reigned, a pacific policy prevailed. But in these years a great change was working in the politics and political relations of the courts of Europe, which precipitated France and England into a renewal of their old hostilities. The almost invariable aim of the English sovereign and ministers upon the Continent had been to support the house of Austria against its enemies. Marlborough had saved that empire, and more recently, when threatened by France, Spain, Prussia, and Bavaria, England expended blood and treasure to maintain Maria Theresa on her throne. But, however great the qualities of that empress, political gratitude was not of the number. Although the English government since the peace had paid her and the German States large sums for the purpose of securing the election of her son, Joseph, to be King of the Romans, and heir to the emperor, Maria Theresa had turned her back upon England, derided its efforts in her favour, and laboured with meanness as well as astuteness to form new alliances and a new league hostile to England. The

CHAP.
XXXVI.

motive was that, with English aid, she could never hope to recover Silesia, whereas by sacrificing the Netherlands to France she might bribe that power to assist her in recovering her cherished province on the Oder.

The chief councillor and instructor in this change of policy was Prince Kaunitz. He had been plenipotentiary at Aix-la-Chapelle, and there showed indignation at what he called the desertion of England,* although it was Austria who deserted the cause by never furnishing her quota of troops, and even recalling them whilst negotiations were still pending. Kaunitz, the most affected of *petits maîtres*, admired the French and the French court.† He ingratiated himself with Pompadour, and induced the pious Maria Theresa to address that lady as her dear friend and honoured cousin. Pompadour had other reasons for supporting the Austrian alliance than mere gratified vanity. She detested Frederick, not for his sarcasms alone. In 1754 the desire of the lady, to be installed Princess of Neufchatel, was communicated to Frederick. The transfer would cost nothing to Prussia, France offering to pay an annual indemnity, and at Pompadour's death the principality would have reverted to the Prussian crown. But Frederick would not listen to the proposal.‡ To Louis the Fifteenth it was pleaded that the two great Catholic powers should unite against the two Protestant ones, and by putting down England and Prussia earn a recompense in Heaven. Louis thought such policy might indeed be a good set-off against the seraglio which he kept of young females in his *Parc aux Cerfs*. The Saxon minister, Brühl, was at the bottom of this anti-Prussian, anti-English league. Frederick discovered it early. But the British king and government knew nothing,

* Schlosser. Coxe.

† Coxe's Pelham.

‡ Mitchell Papers.

as Sir Hanbury Williams' letters from the court of Vienna amply show.*

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Whilst this fire was smouldering in Europe, flames broke out in America. Fain would the English minister have kept them under. The Duke of Newcastle cared little for colonial affairs, and knew little even of colonial geography. When warned that he should defend Annapolis against the enemy, the duke replied, "Certainly, but where is Annapolis?" But the repulse of Washington in 1754 aroused the public mind in England, and in consequence the administration. General Braddock was sent early in 1755 with a regular army—the Duke of Cumberland had faith in no other—to drive the French from Fort Duquesne, and the line of the Ohio. An effort at accommodation was made, but the French insisted that the English should retire altogether east of the Alleghanies, thus leaving them the rest of America, and this, too, when the English colonists were to the French as twelve to one. Braddock's expedition was therefore persisted in (June 1755). Franklin, who attended the expedition, and furnished the commissariat wagons, warned the English general of the danger of traversing thick woods, marching in file, the army thus extending for miles, and liable to be cut in many places as a thread by the watchful Indians.† Braddock spurned the advice. The moment the Indians opened yell and fire, the wagon-drivers fled with the horses, and the English regiments were alike unable to fight or to fly. Braddock himself was slain; his regulars shot down in the woods, and the retreat of the remains of the army covered by Washington. Another encounter took place near Lake

* There may be some doubts as to who first suggested the Austro-French alliance of 1756. The correspondence in the 1st volume of Coxe's Pelham states the proposal of France aiding Maria The-

resa to recover Silesia to have come from the court of Versailles.

For Frederick's early discovery of the Austro-French treaty, see Carlyle's Frederick.

† Franklin's Memoirs.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Champlain, not to the discomfiture of the English, but with doubtful success on either side.

Acts of hostility about the same time were committed at sea. Admiral Boscawen, whose orders were to intercept the French fleet proceeding to the St. Lawrence, captured two of its men-of-war. This was considered a signal, and the English soon after swept between two and three hundred of French trading vessels from the ocean. The war thus became flagrant, and the French determined to inaugurate it by a splendid feat. In April 1756, a fleet of 12 ships of the line, commanded by Galissonnière, sailed from Toulon with some 12,000 men on board. The Maréchal de Richelieu, who was the general, landed on the 17th in the island of Minorca. The English force in Port Mahon, the capital of the island, scarcely exceeded 7,000; they therefore shut themselves up in a fort near the entrance of the harbour, in order to be near succour from the fleet. Admiral Byng, whose vessels outnumbered those of the French by one, but whose number of guns was inferior, attacked La Galissonnière off the harbour, but could not defeat him. Hesitating to renew the attack, Byng called a council of war, and in obedience to it, or to his over-caution, made sail for Gibraltar, and left Port Mahon to its fate. Richelieu, confiding in his numbers, and despairing of taking the fort by regular approaches, risked a general assault, which was conducted with the most daring spirit. It succeeded—the garrison surrendered. And thus by sea and land the French opened the war with a double triumph. The possession of Minorca increased the appetite of the French for Mediterranean conquests, and Corsica, half purchased from the Genoese, was the next of them. In Canada the French had also the advantage in the first encounter. Montcalm, the governor of Quebec, attacked Oswego on the south side of Lake Ontario, and captured two forts with their garrisons.

English diplomacy was no better directed than Eng-

lish military operations. The Stadtholderess of Holland, an English princess, was obliged to disavow her relatives and allies, and accept neutrality. The English government retaliated by declaring the French ports blockaded, and ordering the seizure of all Dutch vessels trading thither. Maria Theresa was applied to, and offered the usual subsidies by the English government, yet ignorant of her change of policy. She refused the money, and declined to have anything to do with the English, saying that, as France would not meddle with her, she should send no troops to Flanders.* Thus repudiated by all his old allies, George the Second turned to Prussia. Frederick had already attempted to conclude a treaty with France, but the court of Versailles and Pompadour were already too Austrian, and Frederick signed a semi-alliance with King George to oppose any force that would invade Germany, that is, Hanover (January 1756). Frederick's chief reason for allying with England was his belief that by so doing Russia would be prevented from declaring against him.† This served as a pretext for Kaunitz to substitute an offensive and defensive alliance for his former understanding with France. The negotiation took place secretly in a summer residence of Madame de Pompadour, the Abbé de Bernis being her counsellor whilst Staremburg represented Maria Theresa. The alliance was concluded on the 1st of May, 1756. It was called defensive, although France promised to aid Austria with an army against Prussia. Maria Theresa stipulated, for form's sake, that she would remain neutral in the present quarrel between England and France. George the Second would gladly have accepted neutrality for Hanover, could he have done so without altogether offending Prussia. He could not, however, obtain such

* Fox tells this to Doddington. His Diary.

† Sir Andrew Mitchell's State of Europe. MSS., B. M. England offered

Russia £100,000 a year as the price of its neutrality, which was declined. Ibid.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

immunity for his electoral domains without consenting that French and Austrian troops should pass through them in their hostilities against Frederick. To this George would not consent, and in 1757 a further treaty was concluded between England and Prussia, Austria and France also drawing close their bonds of alliance. Fifty thousand English under the Duke of Cumberland were expedited for the defence of Hanover; whilst the French promised an army of more than 100,000 men for Germany, with subsidies to Austria, Russia, and several German States. Sweden joined the league, and Russia was preparing to do so. Frederick appeared so outnumbered that his enemies already divided his spoils. Maria Theresa was of course to receive Silesia, in return for which she was to cede the Low Countries to France, as an earnest of which French garrisons were at once to be received into Nieuport and Ostend. When one considers the effort and the wars which England waged to preserve the Low Countries to Austria, for the empress to cede them, and give up their ports to the French, at a time when the latter were busily preparing fleets and means of invading England, was perhaps one of the most gross instances of political ingratitude on record.

Frederick, who had seen the storm brewing, was the first to take the field. He learned that, in addition to French and Austrian enmity, he was threatened with that of Russia. His first aim was to punish Saxony and its minister, Brühl, who had originated this hostile league. Previous to doing so, he sent to ask the empress the meaning of her warlike preparations.* Receiving an evasive answer, Frederick, towards the end of August, marched into Saxony, and occupied Dresden, whilst the Saxon troops shut themselves up in their camp at Pirna. Blockading them, Frederick advanced into Bohemia; the Austrian general Braun endeavoured to bar against him

* Marquis de Valori.

the road to Prague. Attacked by Frederick at Lobositz, he was driven in and defeated, but not routed. Frederick owns how much the Austrian soldier had gained since Mollwitz. Maria Theresa had in fact all the organising and regenerating faculties of Frederick himself. Her armies were well appointed, their numbers swelled to 180,000 men, and her generals little inferior to those of Prussia. Frederick contented himself for the present with compelling the Saxon army to surrender, and levying such contributions on the country as to fill his stores and treasury with resources for more than one campaign.

Whilst Frederick was crushing Saxony, the French minister was driven to acts of rigour to procure funds for the 100,000 men which Madame de Pompadour had agreed to send to North Germany. The controller-general did his utmost; he doubled the *vingtième*, appointed 20 new *fermiers-généraux*, who paid 40 millions for their places, put fresh taxes upon coals and wood, and by this and other means raised between 80 and 90 millions for the war. Strange to say, increased taxation always coincided with a renewal of religious disputes. The clergy once more got astride their favourite hobby, the bull *Unigenitus*. And the parliament had to oppose their insolence, as well as the controller-general's rapacity. The king rather leaned to the clergy, yet endeavouring to moderate their intolerance, whilst by peremptory edicts and Beds of Justice he sought to overcome the opposition of the parliament. The legists, however, became bolder every day, and Louis was obliged to exile the chiefs both of parliament and of the clergy, without staying their mutual animosity, or quelling resistance to his fiscal edicts.

The quarrel was at its height in January 1757, when an individual, named Damiens, penetrated amongst the guards that surrounded Louis the Fifteenth at Versailles, and stabbed the monarch in the belly with a knife. It

CHAP.
XXXVI.

being winter, the thick clothing of the king prevented the blow from taking full effect; it did little more than penetrate the skin. But it gave a fright to Louis, who took to his bed, sent for his confessor, and insisted on frequently receiving absolution.* The would-be assassin was seized and questioned. Poor maniac! he had been in the service of a parliamentarian, and had heard so much of the infamous conduct of the clergy in refusing the sacraments to the pious, and of the folly and injustice of the king in supporting them, that he resolved upon the extreme of regicide, to vindicate what he considered to be justice. The tortures are not to be described with which the act of the regicide was punished.

When the king was known to be secluded in his own apartment and closeted with his confessor, the courtiers expected nothing less than a repetition of the scene of Metz. The king was in that vein. He spoke of resigning and giving up the government to the Dauphin. He even told his minister to go and transact business with that prince.† He charged a great lord to warn Madame de Pompadour to begone. The courtier excused himself from the task, which the straightforward Machault undertook. Madame de Pompadour began to pack up for departure, when her friend, the Duchess of Mirepoix, entered, and observed, "he who left the game lost it."‡ Pompadour kept her ground, and fears and scruples soon vanishing from the monarch's mind, he felt the old charm again, and underwent the wonted influence of his mistress. His first act was to dismiss Machault. Count d'Argenson was another of her enemies. Him she sought to retain, and visited him with the hopes of turning his enmity to alliance. The count, however, had gone too far with the Dauphin, whose speedy advent to power he expected. He therefore rejected all Pompadour's offers, and was in consequence dismissed from the war office.

* Mémoires de Besenval.

† Ibid.

‡ Madame de Hausset.

The department of foreign affairs at the same time passed from the hands of Rouillé into those of the Abbé, afterwards Cardinal, de Bernis, the chief instrument of the Austrian alliance. The new minister not only exaggerated this alliance, and the efforts which France was bound to make, but laboured not unsuccessfully to restore domestic peace. Taking advantage of the sentiment of loyalty called forth by the attempt on the king's life, Bernis negotiated peace with the bishops, and reinstated the parliament, with the exception of those magistrates and courts that had shown most inveteracy. But there was no amnesty for the *philosophes*, lenity to others being attended with a sweeping edict of proscription against the Encyclopedia, its authors, publishers, and all connected with it. Diderot's papers were seized. But the obnoxious writer was warned by the censor, Malesherbes, to whom he sent his most precious papers and correspondence, the police obtaining possession of nothing that was important.

The opening of the campaign of 1757 seemed to realise the great hopes entertained of it by the allies. The French army, under the Maréchal d'Estrees, occupied without obstruction the dominions of the King of Prussia on the Rhine and in Westphalia. Frederick called on the English to defend these, but the Duke of Cumberland, with an army not half that of the French, kept behind the Weser. Frederick himself advanced early into Bohemia, and, having in view the capture of Prague, attacked the Austrians, under Prince Charles of Lorraine, on the heights overlooking the city, winning the victory, but with the loss of many of his bravest soldiers, Marshal Schwerin amongst them. Excited by this dear-bought triumph, Frederick rushed forward to win another at all risks, attacking precipitately Marshal Daun at Kollin, with a force far inferior to that of the imperialist general. He even

CHAP.
XXXVI.

forgot or flung aside his usual precautions for composition in front, though defended by two hundred and fifty cannon. This terminated in one of the most serious repulses that Frederick had ever suffered, and compelled him to raise hastily the siege of Prague, and retreat from Bohemia into Saxony.

He accomplished this only to learn that the Duke of Cumberland was defeated at Hastenbeck, and driven to the furthest limits of Hanover. The resistance of the duke had indeed not been serious. The left of his line terminated at a wooded height, on which was a redoubt. The French general Chevert captured it at day-break, when Cumberland retreated. How little occasion there was for this appeared from the fact of a straggling band of the Hanoverian army recapturing this very redoubt, though afterwards obliged to abandon it, and accompany the retreat of their army.* The courts of England and Hanover had been all along striving to obtain neutrality for the electorate, which France and Austria would only accede to on condition that their troops might traverse the electorate to the attack of Prussia. This George the Second could not consent to. And yet it was out of his power to send a sufficient force to defend the electorate, even the most warlike of the English ministers, Pitt himself, being opposed to the despatch or employ of a body of troops in Germany capable of resisting the French. The result was the disgraceful capitulation of Kloster-Seven, concluded between the Duke of Cumberland and Marshal Richelieu, by which the British troops were to retire, the greater part of them beyond the Elbe, and take no further part in the war.†

This news reached Frederick at the same time with an account of the repulse of his eastern army by the Russians at Jägerndorf. Resistance to so many enemies,

* Mémoires de Besenval, and of Rochambeau.

† Sir Andrew Mitchell's Correspondence.

and against such multiplied misfortune, seemed hopeless. But like William of Orange, whose preventive to seeing his country conquered was to die in its last ditch, Frederick was determined to die on his last field, and not cease combating till then.

Fortune, however, gave Frederick some consolation, and retrieval. Whilst a French army under Richelieu was overrunning Hanover, another under Soubise was on the Saale (1757). The war minister, Belleisle, pressed the prince very urgently to advance, it being a shame, he said, that the Prussians should hold Saxony for the winter with a force but one-third of that opposed to them, and commanded by Richelieu and Soubise,* notwithstanding letters from the court, which dissuaded such advance. Soubise, with the Duke of Saxe-Hildburghausen, commanding the German troops of the cercles, approached Leipzig. Frederick encamped near them, at Rosbach, when the Duke of Saxe insisted on fighting. Soubise was for retreating, but the duke represented that, by marching to turn the left wing of the King of Prussia, he must be beaten. The manœuvre was tried. Frederick awaited it, and when he perceived his enemies extended and almost divided by these manœuvres, he sprang upon them. He took but half an hour to march up, form his own line, and attack, whilst those opposed to him required infinitely more time to concentrate and to form. His first charge drove in their right wing of cavalry. Then the Prussian infantry advanced with the bayonet against the French regiment of Piedmont, which responded with sating inferiority of numbers, and attacked the Austrian

* There are curious proofs of the contradictory nature of the French war administration in the vol. No. 15, 945 of the *Addit. MSS.*, B. M. A letter from Marshal Belleisle is there, upbraiding Soubise and Richelieu for not driving the 30,000 or 40,000 Prussians behind the Elbe.

This is dated Oct. 2. Another, dated the next day, signed by the Marquis of Paulmy, manager of the king's secret correspondence, warns Soubise in his majesty's name to be cautious, and not advance to the Elbe, without being sure of the means to capture Dresden and Torgau.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

the same arm, but ere they met, the Piedmontese regiment turned and fled, its example being followed by the whole of the French and German infantry. It was a complete rout; the fugitives leaving 7,000 muskets upon the field. But for the night intervening, the French would not have saved a man.* Frederick had not time to follow up his victory; Breslau, the capital of Silesia, had been taken by the Austrians, and Schweidnitz, its principal fortress, reduced. To retain his winter quarters under such a loss was impossible. Late as it was in November, Frederick hurried to the scene of disaster, mustered the troops which had been beaten there, and attacked Marshal Daun at Leuthen early in December. Napoleon considered this battle the master-piece of Frederick. It cleared Silesia, and flung the Austrians into Bohemia. Whilst these victories proved so decisive to Frederick, that of the Maréchal de Richelieu evaporated, by the negligence with which he had drawn up the conditions of Kloster-Seven. By that arrangement there was to be a suspension of arms, no term being fixed for its expiring. The auxiliary German troops were to retain theirs, but there was no clause that they should not recur to war. The French government accordingly hesitated to sanction the convention of Kloster-Seven, and demanded fresh articles; the Hanoverians took advantage of this to declare the whole convention null; and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, assuming the command of them and of the English, declared hostilities to have recommenced.

The campaign of 1758 was more favourable to Frederick, although the number of his enemies was undiminished, and although England was far from making the same efforts in his favour that France did for his destruction. A new spirit, however, came to

* Account by the Count de St. Germain, who led the French advance, in the Mitchell Papers, B. M. vol. lxiv.

animate the councils of England. Pitt was lord of the ascendant, and not only paramount over foreign diplomacy but over military and naval operations. Continental war, however, he disliked. He strenuously opposed the despatch of troops to the Elbe, to repair the disaster of Kloster-Seven, whilst he employed large sums and forces in futile attempts on the French coast and on French ports.* An attempt on Rochefort in 1757 failed, although there were few troops to defend it. At Cherbourg and St. Malo, in the following year, the English were more successful, being able to land and destroy works and shipping. Nevertheless, they were severely handled on relanding in the bay of St. Cast. Such bootless expeditions merely served to inflame the resistance of the French, and prompt them to retaliate by an invasion of England.

Far different in energy, in the choice of officers, and in consequent success, were the efforts of the great minister to found a great British colonial empire on the ruins of that of the French. This, indeed, became Pitt's dominant thought; and as it was also the aspiration of the most active and influential spirits in the nation, nothing could exceed the minister's popularity save, indeed, the success of his enterprise. In 1758 he directed an attack upon Cape Breton and its capital, Louisburg, a necessary prelude to the mastery of the St. Lawrence, and the reduction of Canada. The French made a gallant defence, but the English fleet under Boscawen and its artillery were too formidable, and Louisburg surrendered. The Fort Duquesne was reduced soon after; and although the French commander, Montcalm, repelled all attacks upon Canada, he was obliged to give up the intolerable pretension of shutting out the Anglo-American population south of the Lakes by an imaginary prohibitive line along the Ohio. In the same years the English deprived their

* Chatham Correspondence, March 1758.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

enemies of the commerce of the west coast of Africa, and of the gum trade.

The capture of Louisburg had been but the prelude to that of Quebec. Pitt had selected Amherst as the commander-in-chief, and Wolfe, who had distinguished himself at Rochefort, as the fittest leader of a daring expedition such as that against Quebec. Events fully responded to the minister's choice. Towards midsummer 1759, British vessels, with about 10,000 men, appeared on the St. Lawrence opposite the city. Its lofty and imposing position seemed, however, to defy assaults, several of which were tried in vain, and a bombardment resorted to. Wolfe then be-thought himself of a stratagem. He ascended the river St. Lawrence with fleet and army, as if to lead it some distance westward. The Marquis of Montcalm, the governor, despatched one of his lieutenants and a considerable force to watch and oppose him, thus considerably weakening his own already insufficient garrison. Wolfe in the night dropped with his fleet down the stream, until within a short distance of Quebec, where precipices on that bank of the river above the city seemed to preclude all possibility of landing. Wolfe, however, did land, and his zeal and the efforts of his soldiers overcame the difficulty of climbing the precipitous ascent, 250 feet, up by a path where two could not go abreast, and at the top of which an enemy's guard awaited them.* In the morning (September 13) Montcalm perceived that his enemy had possession of the heights of Abraham. He did not hesitate to march forth to attack them. Their whole force, he thought, might not have yet surmounted the declivity. He was mistaken. The English met the assault with their usual steadiness, and the French were driven back upon camp and city. In the action both Wolfe and Montcalm fell mortally wounded, the

* Wright's Life of Wolfe.

first not expiring till he was consoled with the shouts of victory. The enemy retired; and Quebec became a British possession, which the French vainly endeavoured to re-capture in the following year. The result to them was the loss of all Canada. The remainder of their forces, un-reinforced and unsuccoured from home, succumbed at Montreal in the autumn of 1760. And French dominion ceased over what might have been a flourishing colony, had not the home government rushed into war to restore Silesia to Austria. In 1759 their West India islands were menaced with the same fate as Canada. And though Martinique successfully resisted, Guadeloupe was taken.

The superiority of English over French arms in the east was even greater than in America. To the ports of the latter some small reinforcements might creep, but India, removed by such an extent of sea from the contending powers in Europe, must necessarily fall to that which remained lord of the ocean. By the year 1757, Clive, sent out governor from England, had made himself master of Bengal by the victory of Plassy. The future Sir Eyre Coote was almost equally successful in the Carnatic over a more powerful enemy. As hostilities broke out in Europe, the French governor had despatched a considerable force, with an Irish refugee, Count Lally, at its head, to perform that task of conquering the south of India, in which Dupleix had been interrupted. Lally was a magniloquent person, who promised wonders, but who was as unfortunate as he was brave. There was a multitude of obstacles to his success, his inexperience of Indian affairs the greatest. Then his army was ill paid, and he himself insufficiently supplied. All these defects ended in the defeat of Lally, and the capture of Pondicherry by the English. The chief advantage which the French had promised themselves from the renewal of the war was

CHAP.
XXXVI.

the recovery of India. The French East India Company was now blamed, as more incapable than even the French war-office. And Count Lally, on his return, had not the same indulgence shown him as Labourdonnais. He was placed upon his trial, condemned by the parliament, which proved as impassioned as the public, and the unfortunate Lally perished on the scaffold. Voltaire as eagerly exerted himself in his behalf as he had done for the family of Calas. Choiseul would have saved him. But Louis the Fifteenth was himself inexorable.*

Notwithstanding all these disasters, France possessed at the time a minister quite as spirited, and, as far as French requirements went, as talented as Chatham. Madame de Pompadour had discerned the feebleness of Cardinal de Bernis. Louis disliked him. The minister despaired finding resources for the war, and saw of that war sufficient to prognosticate its ill success. Instead of being more obsequious in consequence to Madame de Pompadour, he grew negligent, and even defiant. She accordingly summoned from Vienna a diplomatist who had shown himself zealous for the Austrian alliance, and who had on one occasion displayed his profound obsequiousness to her. The Count de Stainville was appointed minister of foreign affairs, and elevated to the rank of Duc de Choiseul (1758). His first idea, like Pitt's with regard to France, was to strike the enemy at home. It had been also the idea of the war minister, Belleisle. As was the case before and since, the necessary step to accomplish invasion of England was the junction of the French naval forces of the

* In these years the Abbé Morellet collected the rules of procedure established by the Inquisition, and their mode of conducting trials. He brought his book to the celebrated Malesherbes, who, after perusal, observed to the author, "All this tissue

of infamy deserves to be exposed; but, unfortunately, it does not inculpate the Inquisition only, for these are our own traditional French modes of conducting a criminal prosecution."

Mediterranean and the ocean. There were twelve vessels of the line at Toulon, observed by Boscawen with an equal number, not always able to blockade the port. The English admiral had Gibraltar to fall back upon, the true station for preventing the junction of the hostile fleets of the two seas. In the middle of August the twelve men-of-war from Toulon succeeded in passing the Straits into the ocean. Soon perceived by Boscawen, he came up with seven of them, the remainder having separated in the night. They were, of course, an easy prey to him, though one of the French captains made a heroic resistance. The government thought to punish the others, but they were found to belong to the influential families of Provence, and it was considered dangerous to offend them, it being a province governed by states in which the democracy prevailed.

The naval defeat of Lagos, as it was called, induced the French minister to abandon the scheme of invading England with a large army; but he still persisted in partial executions of this design, such as the despatch of an expedition to Ireland and to Scotland. Thurot sailed from the French coast with the troops that were at Dunkirk, and lost both them and himself after failing in a descent near Carrickfergus. The main army of succour, consisting of forty battalions under the Duke d'Aiguillon, were quartered at Vannes and at Nantes. Admiral Hawke's task was to watch the fleet, which lay at Brest, and which was destined to transport and carry D'Aiguillon to Scotland. A tempest drove off Hawke to the coast of England, which Conflans took hasty advantage of to sail out of harbour in order to embark the expedition. Hawke was soon back, and came up with the fleet of Conflans at the mouth of the Vilaine. The French admiral withdrew amidst the rocks and shallows, better known to his pilots than to the English, but Hawke followed him at all risks, losing, as it turned out, but two of his ships, which

CHAP.
XXXVI.

grounded. The retreat of Conflans left the vessels of his rear-guard at the mercy of the English. The van made good its retreat to the Isle of Aix. Conflans ran his flag-ship aground and burned it, whilst some vessels took advantage of the tide to run up the river Vilaine, which they did with such complete success that they were never able to be brought down again. This action was to the resuscitated French fleet of Louis the Fifteenth what that of La Hogue was to the navy of his predecessor: little less than complete annihilation. After such a catastrophe, all hopes of either an invasion of England or preservation of the colonies was lost.

By land Choiseul was not more successful. He wanted either the sagacity or the power of Pitt to select or appreciate able generals. Those successively opposed to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick between the Elbe and the Rhine had generally superior forces, but proved unequal to profit by the advantage. In 1758 Ferdinand followed the retreating French to the Rhine, crossed it, and attacked them at Crevelt. They were commanded by one of the Condé family, the Abbé Count Clermont. He was too ignorant or too irresolute to take advantage of the imprudence of his opponent, who divided his forces, sending one-half round to accomplish a flank attack. Having allowed the enemy to execute this at his leisure, the French were driven in at Crevelt with an immense loss of men, and still more of noble officers. The minister of war, Belleisle, lost his only son, the Count de Gisors. Although later in the year the French, under Soubise, defeated a small body of Prussians at Lutterberg, it was far from redeeming their previous disasters, though Soubise gained from it, thanks to Madame de Pompadour, the *bâton* of *maréchal*.*

In 1759 the French, being reinforced from home, as well as by the Saxons, drove the Prussians across Westphalia to the Weser. The *Maréchal* Contades

* Mémoires of Napoleon, and of Rochambeau.

commanded them, with the Duc de Broglie as a lieutenant. The French encamped on the left bank of the Weser near Minden. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick approached them, and was allowed to seize the village of Todtenhausen, close to their right, and even entrench himself there. The battle of Minden, as it is called, which took place on the 1st of August, commenced by efforts on the part of the Maréchal de Broglie to get possession of this village. Instead of attacking boldly, he hesitated, however, and waited for fresh orders; he neither agreed with his principal, Contades, nor obeyed him willingly. Contades sent his cavalry to the support of De Broglie. But these were attacked with such vehemence by the English foot, in the Prussian ranks, that they were completely defeated.* Had the English cavalry charged at the same time, or immediately after, the retreat of the French would have been a rout and a destruction. But Lord George Sackville, who commanded them, preferred remaining a spectator to being an actor in the fray. For this he was obliged to quit his command, and lose his rank in the service. The result of the defeat of Minden was the withdrawal of the French to Frankfort, where the Duc de Broglie assumed the command, Contades being recalled.

Whilst the French had but little reason to be satisfied with the state of the war in Germany, the King of Prussia had fought two campaigns, with varying success, against Austria and Russia. In 1758 he renewed a favourite scheme of his, which was to transfer the seat of war to Moravia. But being more a battler than a besieger, he failed in taking Olmütz, and was obliged to retreat. Later he attacked the Russians, defeated them at Zorndorf, and drove them out of Brandenburg. Then turning upon the Austrians, he, with equal success, delivered Saxony from the occupation of the enemy. In 1759 he attempted to repeat over the Russians his

* Frederick, *Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans.*

CHAP.
XXXVI.

victory of the previous year. Instead, however, of being defeated at Kunersdorf, they took their revenge, and the Prussian monarch in consequence was unable to prevent the Austrians from recapturing Dresden. In 1760 the fortunes of Frederick seemed at the lowest ebb. The Russians advanced from Poland, the Austrians were already in Saxony, the French in Hanover. They promised to join hands in Berlin, and consummate the ruin of the Prussian king. The Russians and Austrians did indeed approach his capital, fling some bombs into it, and ransom it by levying 1,700,000 crowns from its inhabitants. The English, whom Frederick bitterly accused of supineness, promised to send another army to his succour through Antwerp. The young Prince of Brunswick marched to meet it, but was intercepted by a superior French army under Castries, at Closter-Camp. The young prince nevertheless attacked it with impetuosity. He was repulsed, but the encounter had been so fierce that the French did not interfere to prevent Brunswick's retreat over a tottering and temporary bridge.* The successes of Austria and Russia on the Elbe seemed to preclude all hopes of Frederick's recovering his advantages. Yet when the campaign appeared to be over, the indefatigable battler was still erect and active, and on the 3rd of November attacked Daun at Torgau. Fortune again smiled upon Frederick; he was once more victorious, and the enemy was driven not only from Brandenburg but Saxony.

The war had now lasted six years, and all parties were disgusted with results which so little answered their expectations. The only person who gloried in it

* It was on this occasion that took place the well-known act of self-sacrifice. Captain D'Assas, imprudently in advance of his men, fell amidst a body of the enemy, his men being about to make the same mistake. He was forbidden to utter a

word to warn them under pain of death; Assas, nevertheless, cried out to his soldiers to fire, as the enemy was on them. He was instantly pierced by a score of bayonets. *Mém. de Rochambeau.*

was Pitt. His task had indeed been accomplished to the full. The French had been driven from the East Indies as well as from the continent of America. He had but to do by Spain what he had accomplished in regard to France, in order to constitute England the only colonial power. The nation shared Pitt's warlike views, but numbers of politicians differed with him. They deplored the expense, the increase of the debt, and of the national burdens. The Georges saw Hanover occupied and pillaged by contending armies, the King of Prussia being unable to afford troops for its defence, although England subsidised him with four millions of dollars. As to Frederick, he sighed for the termination of the war, though resolved not to sacrifice his conquests to obtain it. Maria Theresa, indeed, was similarly opposed to peace without the submission of Prussia, and she made a treaty with France to that effect. The court of Versailles she held by Pompadour, and that of St. Petersburg by other means. In vain did England offer the czarina 100,000*l.* a year* if she would only adopt neutrality. Russia was the more inclined to accept the offer, from the court of France having sent the Baron de Bretueil ambassador to St. Petersburg in 1760, with instructions to request the empress to come forward as mediatrix between Austria and Prussia, and to end the war.† The court of Vienna, however, contrived to do away with the impression made by such offers, in hinting that Russia might very well hope for and claim the province of East Prussia, as an indemnity for war expenses.

France paid Maria Theresa upwards of seven millions of livres a year to keep her true to an alliance and a war, which was far more for her interest than that of France. Louis the Fifteenth was to gain the Low Countries only on condition that Maria Theresa recovered Silesia. For this vague prospect, the French

* Mitchell Papers.

† De Flassan.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

government spent 200 millions of livres a year over and above its revenue. The controller-general, Silhouette, endeavoured to meet this enormous war demand in 1758 and 1759. He borrowed, nominally at three per cent., really much higher,* and devised all kinds of strange taxes, and another income-tax under the title of a general salvation. At last he seized the public deposits, and adjourned the payment of all government engagements. A general explosion of discontent drove Silhouette from office towards the end of 1759.† His successor found the treasury empty, 800 millions of arrears,—in fact a bankruptcy. His first necessary act was to borrow two millions from the Prince of Conti, to be sent by post to the army, which was in want of everything.

The effort of France to arrive at peace through the mediation of Russia has been mentioned. The same endeavours were made at Madrid. Charles the Third, formerly known as Don Carlos, had quitted the throne of Naples for that of Spain. The French urged him to come to the aid of the house of Bourbon. France, it was said, had lost all her colonies save that of San Domingo, and it was for Spain to stop the encroachments of the English, which otherwise would swallow up the colonial possessions of European powers. To these representations the Duke de Choiseul added that the French government stood in imminent want of twenty millions (it was about the period of the dismissal of Silhouette) for their armies, which they found it impossible to procure till January without stopping the payment of the *rentes*, and thereby probably producing a revolution.‡ Charles was touched by this appeal, “declared that, when he heard of the capture of Quebec, he felt his blood curdle,”—the blood of the house of Bourbon! He forthwith made offer of his mediation in

* “England,” writes the Duke of Newcastle in 1757, “can borrow at 3½ per cent., whilst France must

pay 11½.” Mitchell Papers.

† Monthyon, *Particularités*

‡ De Flassan.

London, but Mr. Pitt replied that he could listen to no negotiation which did not include the King of Prussia. Annoyed at the rejection of his offer, and inspired by regret at seeing the elder branch of the Bourbons stripped of their colonial possessions, Charles the Third went the length of proposing an alliance to France, which terminated in the following year, 1761, by the signature of the Family Compact.

The French had soon reason to believe that the English would prove more tractable. In October of 1760 George the Second expired. Pitt's influence was shaken by the change, and it was soon perceived that a policy, the contrary of his, would prevail under the new reign. George the Third, in addressing his council for the first time, regretted the sanguinary and expensive war, and expressed a hope of an honourable and lasting peace. Pitt resisted. He saw at once that the King adopted Bute's policy of peace, and he proposed to the Duke of Newcastle a political alliance to oppose the new favourite. The duke refused, and Pitt's became a declining influence. The French government, nothing slow to perceive the change, proposed negotiation. A congress was arranged to meet at Augsburg. M. De Bussy came to London, Mr. Stanley went to Paris. The former declared himself at once horrified at the haughty tone and severe exigencies of the English minister.* Mr. Pitt, with regard to exchange of conquests, would not hear of the French acquisitions beyond the Rhine being put in the scale against English acquisitions beyond sea. He was for keeping all, save a few West India islands, and giving up Belleisle, which had just been taken, for Minorca. Pitt would not even allow the French the right of fishing off Newfoundland, which he had been told was the most lucrative part of the French colonial empire.†

* Grenville Papers.

† "The fisheries were the prin-

cipal object which made these colonies valuable. Without it, the trade

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Pitt also refused to restore the vessels taken before the declaration of war,* or to rescind that article of the treaty of Utrecht which forbade the fortification of Dunkirk. Notwithstanding these harsh terms, the English minister entertained hopes of peace being concluded, when the French negotiator brought forward certain claims of Spain, possibly for the very purpose of causing the breach that ensued. He asked for Spain the right of fishing off the banks of Newfoundland. Pitt took fire at the proposal. He denied France the right of interfering in England's relations with Spain, or dictating concessions to that country. The French presented a memorial on the subject, and that document contained a threat that, if no regard was had to the demand of Spain, it might lead to war on the part of that power, a war in which France could not but join. This was an avowal of the close alliance of the two branches of the house of Bourbon, and of their making common cause. It at once put an end to negotiations. And Pitt and Temple, informed of the existence of the Family Compact, demanded in council a declaration of war against Spain. The English council rejected the bold measure. The two ministers immediately resigned, and Lord Bute became lord of the ascendant. He tried in vain to re-knit the broken links of the late negotiation. He signified to the Spanish envoy, Fuentes, that England would accept the *ultimatum* proffered by Spain, and which Mr. Pitt had rejected. He at the same time asked Spain for communication of their recent treaty of alliance with France, promising to take into consideration all the just demands of the court of Madrid. With this the Spanish cabinet could not comply. For

in peltry was not equal to the support of the colony. Canada without the fisheries is not worth accept-

ance." Jenkinson to Grenville.—Grenville Papers, vol. i. p. 342.

* Bedford Correspondence.

the convention which accompanied the treaty, and which was signed a month before the rejection of the French proposal by England, stipulated a joint war against England. To have made this known was to have justified all the provisions and resolutions of Pitt, and was refused of course. The English ambassador therefore left Madrid, and war was soon declared between the powers. Pitt would have anticipated the declaration, and intercepted the Spanish fleets. But the direction of English policy was in the hands of two weak and ignorant boys, George the Third and Lord Bute.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

The impulse, however, given by Pitt survived his tenure of office. The continuation of the war, which he foresaw could not be prevented, and the results to the combined governments of France and Spain, were such as the great minister had planned. The first tidings which reached Europe in the spring of the year 1762 was the capture of Martinique. The blunder of the preceding attempt was avoided by the English, and Fort Royal capitulated. A few months later an English fleet threw some thousand soldiers on the island of Cuba; they marched immediately to the capital, carried the fort of Moro, which defended it, by assault, and were masters of the Havana in 1762. At the other extremity of the globe an English naval and military force captured Manilla, the capital of the Philippine islands, and carried off its treasure. Such were the results to Spain of its making cause with France. And they would have been more serious had not the French government, struck by the hopelessness of the contest, taken steps to bring about an accommodation with the too willing government of England.

Military events, indeed, had not proved more fortunate to the Bourbon allies than naval. The Spaniards undertook by way of diversion an invasion of Portugal, the traditional ally of England. They sought

CHAP.
XXXVI.

to get possession of Lisbon in order to exchange it for the English conquests in America. Thirty thousand Spanish and French troops accordingly marched in April 1762 to the conquest of Portugal. Great Britain had sent to its aid 2,000,000*l.*, and soon after a corps of 6000 men, under the Count De la Lippe, a descendant of George the First, bred in England, and belonging to the British service. He succeeded in organising the Portuguese troops and preparing means of defence so effectually that, when the Count d'Aranda arrived with the Spanish army upon the Tagus, he found, as was the case in our day, that the hilly country north of Lisbon was not to be forced even by a superior enemy.

In Germany, France and Austria were not nearer their aims. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, all through 1761, kept the French generals at bay, whilst Frederick with varying fortune made head against his adversaries. In the midst of his struggles, he was mortified to learn that Lord Bute * had made overtures of peace with Austria, no doubt at the expense of Frederick, as his subsequent negotiation with Russia proved. He announced at the same time to Frederick, through Sir A. Mitchell, that the English subsidy to him would cease.† A dawn of hope, however, broke from the east by the death of the Empress of the Russias, and the succession of the Czar Peter the Third, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Frederick. Hostilities against Prussia soon ceased, and were about to be exchanged for active support when Peter fell a victim to the sanguinary habits of the Russian court, and Catharine the Second succeeded. She, though unprepared

* Mitchell Papers, Bedford Correspondence.

† Letter of Lord Holderness to Sir A. Mitchell. Mitchell Papers. Memoranda in the Grenville Papers, vol. i. p. 467.

The English cabinet were divided on the question of continuing the subsidy to the King of Prussia. But King George was against it, and it ceased. See Bedford Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 76.

to embrace the cause of Frederick, was unwilling to second Austria in crushing him. And Frederick, having but the forces of Austria and France to contend with, displayed at once his superiority in the field. In July 1762 he recaptured Schweidnitz, the bulwark of South Silesia. Prince Frederick of Brunswick, about the same time, defeated the French at Wilhemstadt, and captured Cassel in their very presence, though their numbers far surpassed his.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

In the autumn of 1762 fresh overtures were made by both countries for peace. Since Russia had assumed a posture of neutrality, it became hopeless to crush the King of Prussia, and so attain the ends of the Austro-French alliance. The dragging Spain into the quarrel merely threatened to deprive that power as well as France of its colonies. Choiseul desired peace, and now that Pitt was out of office, he had every prospect of obtaining fair conditions from Lord Bute. Indeed, the latter had signified his readiness to accept the terms which Pitt had rejected. And Choiseul, in a letter to a neutral envoy, had professed his willingness to resume negotiations upon this footing. The Duke of Nivernois came to London for the French government (1762). The Duke of Bedford, who had strongly disapproved of Pitt's rejecting the terms offered by Choiseul in 1761, and who was even more inclined to France than Bute, was selected as plenipotentiary. Hissed as he passed through the streets of London, his lordship was welcomed in France. The first hitch in his negotiation was the demand of the French to share in the Newfoundland fisheries, and for Spain also to participate in them. England was at length induced to cede the right at least to France, with the possession of St. Pierre and Miquelon for drying their fish. In the midst of the negotiation came news of the capture of the Havannah by the English, on which the latter demanded a compensation for restoring it. The French drew out a new

CHAP.
XXXVI.

project, taking no notice of the demand, and the cabinet was alarmed to learn that the Duke of Bedford had proposed signing it without referring home. Hereupon his powers were limited, to his great disgust. Fresh instances were made, and at length Choiseul agreed to cede Flanders for the Havannah, and Minorca for Belleisle. France retained Louisiana, guaranteeing the free passage of the Mississippi to the colonists higher up; also Martinique and Guadeloupe, England restoring the two islands. All its territories in the north of that continent, including the islands of the St. Lawrence, were ceded definitively to England. Senegal and Goree remained French settlements. In Hindostan the French recovered merely the few commercial settlements which they had possession of at the commencement of 1749. In the autumn they evacuated Nieuport and Ostend, and stipulated that the only fortifications of Dunkirk should be landward. All that England stipulated with regard to Germany was that the French should evacuate Wesel, Gueldres, and the Prussian fortresses left of the Rhine. Such was Bute's hatred of Frederick that his intention was that the Austrians should immediately occupy them.* It was however stated that they should be given up to the first comer, and the King of Prussia took care to be that—raising an irregular corps, and menacing the country with a renewal of the war.†

Peace upon these conditions was signed between England, France, and Spain on the 10th of February, 1763, at Paris.‡ On the 15th was signed the peace of Hubertsburg, between Austria and Prussia. These seven

* See Duke of Bedford's minute of his conversation with Bute. Bedford Papers, vol. iii. p. 90.

Earl Russell seems to argue in his Introduction to the above volume, that the English government was merely unfair to Frederick in the *form*. The withdrawal of the subsidy, the secret negotiation with

Vienna, and finally the attempt to give Wesel and Gueldres to the Austrians, were hostile and treacherous acts that Frederick never forgave.

† Carlyle's Frederick, vol. vi. p. 326.

‡ Bedford Papers, vol. iii. Grenville Papers, vol. i. De Flassan.

years, war between them, for Silesia, cost the lives of a million of soldiers, augmented the debts of France and England prodigiously, yet left the frontiers of the two great German powers just where it found them!

What may be called the great public of England and of France never felt or displayed such interest in a war as they did in this. Instead of the scanty bulletins which told of the exploits of Marlborough and Eugene, journalism had now sprung up, annuals and diurnals recording events with a minuteness and a degree of ability previously unknown. There was not unanimity, indeed. Courts, and their hangers on, had a great dislike to Frederick, who was a talking as well as a living satire upon their absurdities. And though the elder Pitt gloried in the exploits of the Prussian hero, these excited in George the Second little more than a painful grimace. Pompadour was the decided antagonist of Frederick. King and court obeyed her. But not only in London, but even in Paris, there were numbers who sympathised with him; some Frenchmen not being displeased with the defeat inflicted at Rosbach on a court general and his undisciplined army of marauders.

Frederick upheld and represented what were considered the advanced principles of the day—a contempt of religious bigotry, and with it unfortunately a denial of religious sentiment. Frederick had not only adopted Voltaire, made a guest and a chamberlain of him, but established at his court those French writers who carried farthest their aversion to priestcraft. Their philosophy was indeed simply negation. Those who had feelings, like Voltaire, paused necessarily at deism; those who had none, who had geometrical minds, saw no reason for stopping short of atheism. After all there was not much difference, so loosely put together were all the creeds produced in sarcasm and in obedience to fashion. The prevailing opinions of the educated classes were those of reaction against a religion as tyrannical as it

CHAP.
XXXVI.

was dissolute. Any gibe, any contradiction, was good enough to fling at the clergy.

It was manifestly not intended by Providence that religion should be taught, or should impose itself, demonstratively. Were it so, responsibility as well as merit and demerit must disappear. Proofs of revelation were thus left to be vague, and their appreciation by reason difficult. Its facts, manifested to one generation, or to a small fraction of that generation, were recorded and communicated with a certain admixture of human bias and current prejudices. Each age, too, requires a different mode of proof and of persuasion. To the unlettered and superstitious Jews, a miracle was necessary for conviction. At a later period, authority sufficed to draw the multitude. Unfortunately, even holy authorities quarrelled and misbehaved. Their moral turpitude, worldly and sensual nature, were so gross and so apparent, as to disgust mankind, and drive it to found for itself, out of the materials furnished it, a religion consonant to its nature. This was the effort of the eighteenth, as it is of the nineteenth century. It is impossible to deny the strong temptation to the intellect of the former epoch to set aside the religion that was imposed upon it by the priesthood and the government. These, in the name of religion, prohibited all freedom, all fervour, even of devotion. They treated the mind of man as they would treat that of a child, whilst at the same time they offered undoubted proofs that they were themselves the most ignorant and foolish of the species. No man could stand such tyranny. The most devout religionist of 1850 must have sympathised with the great party of negation a hundred years before. Any milder mode of protest was idle. To admit the great truths of religion, and denounce its abuses—this was either Huguenotism, which had failed in France and could not be re-attempted, or Jansenism, which was equally scouted. There was nothing left than to follow

the example of Bayle, and denounce religion altogether. Be it remembered, too, that deism or atheism was yet untried, as the profession of a people. There was no experience of what they might produce. As to the *philosophes*, they had the greatest possible hopes of the experiment. And after all, the best thing that could be done for the cause of religion was, perhaps, that the negation of it should be fully and frankly tried. It was so.

The crime or the glory of the incredulity which beset the age, must not be attributed merely to Voltaire, to Montesquieu, Rousseau, or the *philosophes*. The condition to which men, their minds, fortunes, hopes, their pride and prospects were reduced, was quite sufficient to create disgust with the whole order of things. Religion had become a tyranny, an absurdity, and a pest. It warred with letters, prohibiting the most innocent works, such as Hamlet and Belisaire for example. It refused Christian burial to the actor or the Jansenist. Then came the disgusting facts of persecution, which displayed the clergy, even in the last half of the eighteenth century, to be men of blood. At a period when personages of rank and office professed downright infidelity, a Protestant pastor, if caught, was hanged. At Toulouse in 1762, on the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's massacre, observed in that demoniac city as a fête, four persons were executed for the crime of being Protestant. These were Rochette, a pastor, and three brothers, gentlemen of the name of Grenier. Some days after, Jean Calas, an old man of sixty-eight, was brought to the same place of execution. He had had a son of wayward temper, who had expressed an intention to turn Catholic, and who was found dead, having indubitably committed suicide. The father was accused of having murdered him to prevent his conversion. Proof there was none, save the bigotry of the magistrate. And

CHAP.
XXXVI.

old Jean Calas, protesting his innocence, was broken on the wheel in the Place of Toulouse, and made to endure two hours of torture until he expired. The case became universally known from the circumstance of Voltaire having taken it up, and demanded a new trial for the sake of reparation to the family of the victim. In this the poet, seconded by public opinion, amply succeeded so far as to reverse the judgment, and disgrace, if they were capable of feeling it, the judges and magistrates who had ordered and permitted the bigot murder. Similar events, such as the execution of a young officer, La Barre, for having in a nocturnal freak overthrown a cross at Abbeville, spread the belief that the chief characteristic of the French clergy and their religion was cruelty added to injustice. Indeed, till nearly the end of Louis the Fifteenth's reign, the *bagnes* of Toulon were crowded with convicts, guilty of the sole crime of Protestantism. Such were the deeds, and such the spirit, with which the French clergy faced an age full of hatred to them and contempt of all they professed.

If the state religion had thus failed of every object which Christianity proposed, monarchy was an equal failure. It had degraded the upper class immediately around it into the lowest depths of dissoluteness, servility and corruption. The middle class it spurned, mulcted and treated with every contumely and neglect. It had reduced the peasant to beggary. The army was without order, without glory, without self-respect. The treasury was empty, and the finance minister—as we shall see in the Abbé Terrai—was nothing less than an insolent public robber. Justice, or the awards in its name, was bought and sold, as shown by Beaumarchais, who was to the judges what Pascal had been to the Jesuits, the exposé of their vileness and corruption.

It was the clergy and Louis the Fifteenth himself, with his Parc aux Cerfs, Pompadour and her extravagance, Soubise and his defeats, Terrai and his extortion

—such were the great promoters of the revolution, and not Voltaire or Rousseau. But these, no doubt, supplied arguments and ideas to those whose minds had been mortified into entertaining them. The too general and too just conviction that all was wrong in France, the writers contributed fearfully to confirm. Voltaire exposed the shortcomings of the church; Montesquieu compared the different forms of government and the principles which should actuate them—necessarily a solemn satire upon what existed. Rousseau attacked first the state of society, and accused civilisation itself and social refinement as but other names for corruption. With powerful nerve he came forth to preach the natural equality of mankind, and followed it out by proving the equality of political rights, founding government upon a contract which princes had falsified, and of which the people had a right to re-claim the first conditions.* This was revolution, to which no one gave so great an impulse as Rousseau. Strange that a writer with the smallest of worldly experience, and no political knowledge whatever, should still have contrived to be the great apostle of revolution, and to be a teacher in public affairs and conduct of far more influence than was ever publicist or statesman.

There was one forerunner of the revolution which here should not be passed over, and that was the breakdown of education. There was none at all for the upper classes. The young nobles who used to frequent the colleges of the Pays Latin found they learnt there nothing, and discontinued even the semblance of following the University. The Duke de Chaulnes, in a remarkable address to Louis the Fifteenth at the commencement of his reign upon the necessities of the period, stated the ignorance and want of education in

* *Émile* was published in 1761, according to Grimm. The *Contrat Social* about the same time in Holland.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

the nobility to be the evil most to be deplored. They acquired neither the healthy habits of the country gentlemen, nor even the instruction requisite for a military officer. The military school of cadets afterwards grew out of this crying deficiency. The Jesuits, with their usual assiduity, had tried to fill up the void, and proved themselves at first certainly to be able instructors. But their political and polemical intrigues soon neutralised their efforts, and excited such enmities, that they were swamped and all education disappeared with them.

This left the French mind to be a *tabula rasa* for the reception of the new doctrines, which the professors taught not indeed in schools, but by publications. There was censorship to be sure with some restriction upon prints, as well as the Bastille for froward authors. But all these checks were eluded. Works profane or revolutionary were printed abroad, smuggled into France without difficulty, and sold by colporteurs through every province and every town, Paris not excepted.* The *Encyclopédie* was indeed stopped once or twice. But the *philosophes* had friends at court, and the censor of the period (Malesherbes) happened to be one of the most enlightened of men. Indeed Diderot, D'Alembert, and Voltaire as often besought the authorities to protect them against attacks, as they implored non-molestation for their own effusions.

In this manner the anti-church-and-state writers inundated the minds and homes of their countrymen with their doctrines. As these were the universal topic of discussion, no one could remain ignorant of them if they wished to converse or to be in the spirit of the day. And it was certainly marvellous, the industry which the new teachers showed. Voltaire composed a

* The Count de Tocqueville in the 2nd vol. of his *Histoire Philosophique du Règne de Louis XV.*,

gives an account of how this publishing was accomplished.

Universal History, or, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, as he afterwards called it, to instruct and to teach history in a spirit the direct contrary to Bossuet. It is difficult to say which was most forced in its conclusions. Bossuet saw the immediate hand of a Jewish Providence in all human affairs: whilst Voltaire would see nothing beyond the natural current of events. Science and natural history were admirably taught: they could not have found more able exponents than Buffon and D'Alembert. The aim was to renew all knowledge, and connect its scattered parts in one grand system of materialism and irreligion.

Such was the scope of the *Encyclopédie*. The most essential portion of it was that philosophy of mind and that account of the invisible which might replace religion and satisfy the spiritual cravings of man's nature. Voltaire would have left this vague, and contented himself with the gentlemanly views of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke. But philosophers of science and system demanded a more logical and laboured plan of metaphysics. Condillac supplied it by expounding Locke, and grafting on the irrefragable elements of his essay a new science. Locke taught, that there were no ideas and no knowledge save what were first derived from the senses, or from the mental operations which these awakened. But he was far from denying the existence of the spiritual world, or of the powers to which these operations pointed. He merely thought them unfit objects for disquisition, for affirmation or for dogmatism. Diderot, with the Encyclopedists and those who followed them, clearly saw that any portion of spiritualism would bring back religious tendencies, and religion itself in some shape or other. They boldly denied in consequence that there was aught but matter, and declared morality itself to be as baseless as religion. Here Rousseau broke altogether with his brother philosophers. He agreed indeed somewhat with Voltaire.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

But Rousseau scouted, with a warmth that Voltaire wanted, the denial of the spiritual portion of our nature. He represented religion as a sentiment, and though he gave but loose rules and in his person a most miserable example for the culture of this sentiment, still he won the hearts of women and the enthusiasm of many men. Could Rousseau have lived a life of dignity and decorum, and put some consistency and system into his conduct, he might very possibly have been a Mahomet of the eighteenth century, such, at least, as would have suited a civilised people and era.

Mahomet, who furnished a political as well as a religious system to his own race, had however no diversity of castes, and few of interests to deal with. Rousseau had before him the rich and the poor, the noble and the ignoble. Strange to say, the rich and the noble applauded his eloquence even before the humbler classes became fully cognisant of them, just as that high society which was the object of Beaumarchais' satire flocked to listen and enjoy the wit and the allusions directed keenly against their caste. The French upper class were long in the habit of entertaining principles without acting on them. They were monarchists who treated their sovereign with epigrams and slander; Christians who had not an idea of Christian morality; and admirers of Rousseau's doctrine of equality, with the firm determination of defending their peculiar privileges to the last. They took up democracy as a harmless plaything, or at most a sling, wherewith to pelt the government and the court. But the people, and the newly educated amongst them,* read

* It is remarkable how far down in society education descended. That charming book Marmontel's *Memoirs* depicts how he, the son of a poor farmer, received his education, living in college at the rate of twenty-five sous a month, his family

furnishing the bread and cheese that formed his sustenance. Before the revolution in fact, whilst there was no education for the upper classes, there was a superabundance of it for the necessitous and poor.

Rousseau with views far more practical and with a political faith the fervour of which approached and indeed replaced that of religion. The old reverence for monarch and monarchy, the old respect for birth and eminence were exploded, a belief and a sentiment rising in lieu of them, that men were to govern themselves, revere and glorify their country alone as the great classic race had done.

CHAP.
XXXVI

Louis the Fifteenth unfortunately could have adopted no more efficient mode of discrediting royalty, than the life which he chose to lead. So licentious was it, that it perplexes even the historian to relate. His successive connection with the four De Nesle sisters has been mentioned, as well as his captivation by Madame de Pompadour. The king ceased to love the latter as a woman; but she kept her influence by catering to his amusements, varying his festivities, and getting up dramas, in the performance of which she herself excelled. As these pleasures palled, Madame de Pompadour did not shrink from superintending the labours of the king's valet to procure younger females for the monarch's pleasures. A mansion was fitted up in a remote corner of Versailles, known as the *Parc aux Cerfs*, whither girls were sometimes inveigled, bought from their parents, or procured by even more shameful means. The rank of the person who visited them was scrupulously kept from the inmates of this abode, many of whom bare children to M. le Comte as they supposed; till one, more bold than the rest, rifled the pockets of the personage, and found that her lover was no other than the king. An Irish girl, of the name of Murphy, gave immense trouble from the hold she obtained over Louis's affections, which alarmed Pompadour—as well as by the ungovernable feelings of maternity with which she re-demanded the child that had been snatched from her. Pompadour and her agents triumphed over all these difficulties, so as not to excite any commotion at court. But the facts became

CHAP.
XXXVI.

known to the public, and their turpitude was even exaggerated, difficult as that might be. Numbers of female children were kidnapped in the streets of Paris. The king was accused of being the cause of it, and on one occasion there was an *émeute* of mothers, which awakened the grave enquiry of Parliament.

All this time the two great sections of the French Church were engaged in vilifying, persecuting and punishing each other. How the partisans of the Jesuits tormented the Jansenists, and thrust them out of the pale of the church by the refusal of the sacraments, has been recounted. But towards and after the close of the war and the treaty of Fontainebleau, the Jansenists in Parliament were offered ample opportunities of revenge, which they did not fail to seize.

It seemed to be the law indeed of religious sects and opinions in France, that they should always devour one another. And the rule extended even to different shades and orders in the same religion, which could never be brought to practise toleration. We have seen Protestantism persecuted, its followers given up to torture, the galleys and the executioner. The Catholic world was not the more harmonious. The Jansenist exposed the falsification of religion by the Jesuits, the latter retorted upon the extravagant tenets of their opponents. The Jesuits triumphed at Rome, compelled the French clergy to accept their bull, and the refusal of the sacraments carried ruin and vengeance even into the sphere of private families and the middle classes. And yet in reality the Jesuits lost ground. Their character for true piety and morality was shaken. They lost their hold over the aristocracy, the members of which learned either to dispense with confession and spiritual guides or to choose humble or innocuous ones. However timid and superstitious Louis the Fifteenth, he was not led by his confessor as Louis the Fourteenth had been. The mistress Pompadour, and the minister Choiseul, detested

the *Order*, and neutralized it at court. The latter could point out to his master the abject and miserable condition of those European states which had completely undergone subjugation by the Jesuits, and in which they ruled supreme. There was Bavaria;* there was Portugal, where the Jesuits had grasped all power and wealth, and where all else, sovereign as well as nobles, were reduced to utter nonentity. Even those qualities for which the Jesuits were renowned, were lost by them when they became predominant. Their system of education, for which they were famous whilst struggling, was neglected by them when they had acquired paramount power.† From the cure of souls and the instruction of the young, the Jesuits turned to the amassing of wealth by manufactures which they set on foot, by trades which they monopolised, and colonization from which they used their authority to drive all competitors. In some ages and countries this possession of wealth might have consolidated their power. But from the lap of its many luxuries, the 19th century looked wistfully up to knowledge and ideas, and prized intellectual capacity as what was most desirable and indispensable to the times. In this the Jesuits were totally wanting. Originated to combat infidelity with spiritual and intellectual arms, the stalwart prowess of the Templars being no longer needed, the Jesuits had continually the worst of it in polemics and in controversy. Even in the 16th century, the *Satiro-Menippée* covered them with ridicule. In the 17th, Pascal overwhelmed them with their own weapons. In the 18th, they had but court intrigues and Roman bulls. With these they fought their immediate antagonists, but their voice and action was alike unheard in the far more serious war of infidelity against the church. Rome made the mistake of supposing that

* For Bavaria under the Jesuits, see Schlosser's Eighteenth century.

For the decline of the order and

the relaxation of its discipline, see Ranke's Popes.

† Schlosser, Ranke.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

the organisation of large bodies of men, bound by vows and held by discipline, could form the most powerful army against all foes. For whilst these large compact bodies awakened the jealousy of governments and the suspicion of the people, the education and life of the members fettered their intellects and incapacitated them from making even a decorous defence. The church stood forth as a Goliath, safe in its panoply, and not to be met or matched in stature. Yet any youth with a sling, from the ranks of common life, was capable of prostrating it. As to the Jesuits, they helped to drag down the church by their greed and immorality. They uttered not a word in its defence.

The assumption by the Jesuits of colonial wealth and power as well as domestic authority, first raised a fatal enemy to them in the Marquis of Pombal, prime minister of Portugal. Pombal had been Portuguese ambassador in London and at Vienna, where he married a daughter of Marshal Daun. London was a school of politics very different from Lisbon. Even at Vienna, Maria Theresa, though devout, did not favour the Jesuits.* When Pombal returned to Lisbon, with ideas far different from the retrograde and bigot ones prevalent there, he found an Austrian queen, to whom the Austrian Marchioness of Pombal became naturally attached. The queen ruled the king, and Pombal became prime minister. He was not a statesman to wield power in submission to the Jesuits. And if he hesitated to do this in Portugal, he had but the other alternative of attacking and overthrowing them.

Several circumstances encouraged him to this; the chief one being the knowledge that the principal Catholic courts were as weary of Jesuit influence and domination as any liberal public could be. Nothing is more strange than to find, at this epoch of the Family Compact or the alliance founded on relationship between

* Schlosser.

the Bourbon monarchies of France, Spain and Naples, the three courts acting in concert against the Jesuits. That they should have combined against England or Protestantism, would have created no surprise; but that they should unite to put down one of the chief supports of the Papacy, does seem singular. So, however, it was. Not only Pompadour and Choiseul in France, but the Bourbon ministers at Spain and at Naples agreed in hostility to the Jesuits. But their chief enemy was themselves. Their great desire was to have influence in distant lands. This they found to be impossible in the West Indies and South America, on the European principle of monastic poverty. The Jesuits, to maintain their poor, were obliged to become proprietors, traders, sovereigns. And in these capacities, they carried on what has been called a "roaring business," with Lisbon for their principal centre. They had also establishments in the French colonies. They had especially a mission at Martinique, which mission soon became a counting-house, of which Father Lavalette was the principal. Money transmitted from Martinique to Europe lost a third of its value. It was more profitable to send merchandise. This was what Father Lavalette did. He purchased colonial produce in Martinique, and sold it in France. The Society being rich and trustworthy, the colonists made use of its mission as a commercial bank for transmitting home funds. All went well until 1757, when the English captured the vessels bearing the produce of Father Lavalette. The latter had drawn for the value upon Messrs. Lyonci and Gouffre at Marseilles. When the bills were presented to them—whilst the goods which represented them were confiscated in England—the merchants dishonoured the Jesuits' bills. Those who had transmitted their funds through Lavalette brought an action, which came at last before the Jansenist Parliament of Paris in 1761. Their sentence was, that the Jesuit college of La Flèche was accountable

CHAP.
XXXVI.

with its property for the debts incurred by its mission in Martinique.

The Parliament followed this up by two *arrêts*, both dated August 1761, the one ordering the Jesuits within six months to furnish the titles and nature of their several establishments. The other, after making numerous citations from books published by Jesuits recommending regicide and enjoining immorality, ordered the said books to be burned publicly, and at the same time forbade the order of the Jesuits to receive any more novices or to continue their lessons. This ordinance closed their schools.* The king instantly interfered, and by letters patent suspended for a twelvemonth the action of the Parliamentary *arrêt*. The judges allowed the year to elapse, and on the 6th of August 1762, issued a more severe edict against the Jesuits, whose crimes were stated at length in the preamble. The society was declared inadmissible in an *État Policé*. They were not a religious institution, but a political body eager to monopolise power and wealth.†

The Marquis of Pombal, in Portugal, had before suppressed the order, and sent the greater number to Italy, whilst the superior Malagrida was burnt in the public square as a heretic, an extravagant cruelty worthy of the Inquisition. The Duc de Choiseul and Madame de Pompadour pressed Louis the Fifteenth to sanction their expulsion from France. The monarch, dreading the traditional habit of assassination inherent in the order, hesitated. He consulted a commission of prelates; and even they were obliged to admit that an order of monks, guided by and obeying a foreign *général*, was a reprehensible institution. In 1764, therefore, the Jesuits, or those who persisted in still remaining so, were finally banished. All the Bourbon courts followed the example. That of Spain took advantage of the insurrection occasioned by the

* Isambert Lois Françaises.

† Ibid.

prohibition to wear large flapped hats, to make the Jesuits pay the penalty of it. They were driven from Spain, from Naples, and from Parma, the exiles being received and welcomed in the character of educationists by Frederick of Prussia and, it may be added, by the Poles!

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Soon after the abolition of the order of the Jesuits, in the spring of 1764, Madame de Pompadour expired. To the last she maintained her ascendancy over Louis the Fifteenth, more by her tact, intelligence and power of amusing the fastidious monarch, than by her charms. One of her modes of retaining influence, that of being privy if not instrumental to the formation of the *Parc aux Cerfs*, was certainly infamous. Yet she must have been a woman of great sagacity and wise intentions. She was in favour of political reform, of which she clearly saw the necessity. Almost her first act was the appointment of Machault, whose attempts at restoring equality of taxation she warmly approved. She gave what protection she durst to the Encyclopedists, and won the flattery of Voltaire. He quarrelled indeed with her as he did with Frederick, and she could never overcome the prejudice of the king against him. Her next choice in a minister was Choiseul, certainly the ablest statesman of his time and country, the one best fitted to inaugurate and accomplish reform. But he was too much hampered by war, and by the necessity of preparing for it, to devote himself to domestic changes. In any attempt of this kind, he, as well as Pompadour, were opposed by almost all the royal family, by the dauphin and his wife, the second dauphiness, by the queen, and by the king's sisters. He triumphed over the Jesuits in their despite.* How fully Voltaire reckoned upon Madame Pompadour and Choiseul to aid in any act of tolerance and religious liberalism, may be seen from his letters in one of

* D'Argenson.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

which* he portrays that what most flattered Pompadour was to represent her as doing as much good by tolerance as De Maintenon did evil by bigotry. If the alliance of France with Austria, to which Madame de Pompadour so largely contributed, be measured by its success, it was a miserable and a barren policy. But the chief cause lay in the decay of military discipline and spirit, and in the lack of military genius. The French armies were recruited from the militia, and the militia were not only the refuse of the population, but were totally without discipline;† whilst so ignorant and incapable had become the young French noblesse, that good officers were either to be sought amongst foreigners, or amongst the *roturier* class.

If unfortunate in the appointment of such commanders as Soubise, Madame de Pompadour deserves credit for having discovered a political economist, and introduced him to the king's cognizance and favour. Quesnay was her physician, and came to be liked by the monarch, though he was too lazy to follow the thread of the philosopher's disquisitions. The French economists formed certainly the strangest of political schools. From premises erroneous and extravagant they drew conclusions liberal and wise. The soil they declared to be the only source of wealth. Trade, manufacture, colonization according to them brought in nothing. It would have been consolation to the French in 1764 to think so. And it is possible that ideas of this kind floated through the brains of the king and Choiseul, when they made the last treaty with England. But natural instincts contradicted the economists. The conclusions which they drew from the theory were, that trade should be free, customs null, and that the net revenue of the land should bear the burden of taxation.

* Letter to Moulton.

† The militia, writes the Duc de Chaulnes, is held in horror through-

out France. It is a monstrous disorder.

Such proposals were a century before their time, and came to nothing, except to a few edicts for the free export and import of grain.

What was wanting was not theories respecting wealth, but the freedom and security of amassing and enjoying it, order and honesty in the finances, with a policy of publicity and peace, so as to dispense with increased taxation, except such as the public should see the necessity of according. It was impossible, however, to get the country to consent to any change however salutary, as long as government remained exclusively on the old absolute basis. Equally difficult was it to get the king to consent to any other. Choiseul was for the nearest approach to representative government, which facilitated taxation, and reconciled a people even to a dynasty it disliked, as was the case in England. He agreed with the elder dauphin, who was for extending the boon of provincial estates to every part of the kingdom. Choiseul, indeed, durst not make such a proposal to Louis the Fifteenth. But the scheme gained ground; and when in the following reign a provincial assembly was established in Berry, Choiseul thought it should have been applied to the more important province of Normandy.*

Unable to realise the convocation of provincial estates generally, Choiseul deemed it the next best policy to ally with the parliaments, the most eminent and influential of the middle and professional class. At his instigation and with his support, a new controller-general whom he had appointed, attempted a broad plan of municipal institutions, as the basis of a more popular and fairer system of taxation. Municipal freedom in France, though reduced to a shadow by the absolutism of successive monarchs, still preserved life in its roots, and was able to put forth fresh shoots when pecuniary necessities abated the

* Mémoires de Choiseul.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

rigour of despotism. Instead of continuing to exercise the right which it had usurped of appointing municipal and fiscal officers, the needy government began to sell these posts. Such necessarily close corporations were not the municipal bodies that Choiseul and his finance minister needed. And they accordingly, by a decree of 1764, abolished the venality of municipal offices. The mayor in small towns, as the *prévot des marchands* in great ones, was to be selected by the king from three candidates, whose names were presented to him by the citizens. The chief magistrates were to be assisted in their labours by a council or assembly of notables, consisting of the eminent men in each profession, the community of *arts et metiers* (i.e. artisans) not being forgotten.* We need not give further details of this scheme, as it was not destined to endure; the law being repealed in 1771 by the Abbé Terrai, and the venality of municipal office re-established. But it is important to mark these efforts, made under a liberal minister, to reconstitute the *communes* and establish municipal rights and customs on a broader and fairer basis.

The Duc de Choiseul found it difficult to make peace between the government and the parliaments of the kingdom, a necessary preliminary to obtaining their adherence and support. The favour which the court had shown to the clergy, the suspension of the tribunals, and banishment of the judges left resentments rankling. The destruction of the Jesuits somewhat mollified the parliament of Paris; yet some of the provincial parliaments, that of Brittany for one,

* From 1692 to 1704 venality invaded successively every municipal employ, from that of mayor and sheriffs down to the valets, standard-bearers, drummers, fifers, and porters. Nantes spent half a million of livres during the century to keep

the nomination of its officers in its own hands. Dupin, *Histoire de l'Administration Locale*.

Terrai derived six millions in 1771 from the sale of municipal offices. *Collection des Comptes Rendus*.

regretted the fall of that puissant order. Increased taxation and expenditure proved the chief difficulty of the time. Two or three controllers had successively filled up the place of Machault, without being able to do more than meet demands by ruinous devices. Silhouette received the appointment in 1759, and found an expenditure of upwards of 500 millions* with a revenue not one-fourth of that sum. He began by selling all the profits or supposed profits of the farmers of the revenue, which being left in their hands of course produced nothing, whilst it so much indisposed the financial capitalists that Silhouette in a short time could obtain no advances. He declared himself an enemy to loans. To register a new law in the parliament, or impose it on the people, was so difficult, that he at first shrank from it, and tried diminution of expenditure, cutting down salaries and pensions and profits so unsparingly, that his name became proverbial for the shadowy outline to which he strove to reduce the substance of every man. He had the courage to refuse the outlay required for the royal gambling-table, and Choiseul was obliged to supply it from the secret funds of the foreign office. He must have been a friend to population, for he tripled each tax upon bachelors, and laid a heavy fine upon monastic vows. But to direct taxation Silhouette was obliged to come at last, and this he promulgated in the shape of a general subvention under a new name and form. As this came in addition to two twentieths already levied upon industry as well as property, and as the mode of assessing it was more inquisitorial than the prevailing system, Silhouette was obliged to abandon his tax. His other efforts were equally unsuccessful, whilst, to meet daily demands, he was obliged to seize funds deposited and prepared for regular payment, over which he had neither right nor control. The

* *Mercure Historique*. Baily, *Hist. Fin.*

CHAP.
XXXVI.

king sent his plate to the mint, and invited others to do the same. In short the treasury was bankrupt, and Silhouette withdrew before the general indignation.*

His successor was obliged to borrow two millions of the Prince de Conti for the current expenditure, and to supply the army. The *subvention* was converted into a third *vingtième*, and the capitation doubled did not suffice. The interest of the debt was nearly 100 millions, besides annuities, with 800 millions of arrears. The Duc de Choiseul had then recourse to parliament for a controller-general. A judge called Laverdy was appointed to fill that post. He it was who made the attempt to introduce municipal freedom. His financial plans were similar to those of Machault, except that he proceeded in another manner. He ordained a general *cadastre* or register of landed property, intending to apply a system of regular taxation on that base: the register was, however, a work of time, which awaited the Constitutional Assembly a quarter of a century later to regulate and enforce.

The appointment of one of its members to be controller-general of finance, conciliated the parliament of Paris for a time. Its younger councillors all hoped to find places and scope for their ambition in the administration. The members of the provincial parliaments had not received the same satisfaction. That of Toulouse had stoutly resisted the orders and efforts of the Duc de Fitzjames, governor of Languedoc, to enforce the various fiscal edicts of the controller-general of the day. The duke wearied with their resistance consigned the judges to prison. These in return issued a writ of arrest against the governor, who felt obliged to plead his right as peer to be amenable only to his peers. The parliament of Toulouse questioned this. But the parliament of Paris, in which the peers sat, and which formed, in fact,

* Monthyon, *Particularités sur les Ministres des Finances.*

the court of peers, cancelled the judgment of the Toulousans.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

The quarrel of the court with the parliament and estates of Brittany was much more serious, blended as it became with all the leading causes of agitation. The constitution of the estates of Brittany was as chaotic as that of Poland. Every gentleman had a seat in them, along with some score of clergy and citizens. Rustic prejudices of course predominated. The Duke d'Aiguillon was governor of the province, a noble attached to the retrograde party of the court, and considered to be under the patronage of the dauphin. He opposed the parliament of the states in the affair of the Jesuits. But the fate of the order was decided, and the question of ever-increasing taxation offered a better cause for resistance to the Bretons. The gentry were burdened with the *vingtièmes*, imposed one in addition to the other, whilst the peasantry were ground by capitation and *corvée*. To overcome the opposition in the estates, the government obtained an order in council to the effect that the consent of two of the orders bound the other. The vote of a certain number of clergy and citizens would hence overrule that of the landed proprietors of the duchy. Such a despotic order, changing the entire bearing of the provincial constitution, stirred the ire of the Bretons to the utmost. Parliament and estates were unanimously agreed to resist the innovation. Choiseul was opposed to the rigour and violence shown by D'Aiguillon, and represented to the king the danger of exciting almost a rebellion in the province. The procureur-general of Brittany, La Chalotais, was in consequence enabled to bring about an accommodation by which the parliament consented to register the *vingtièmes*, saving the rights and privileges of Brittany. The estates which assembled soon after protested at once against the parliament taking upon itself to sanction taxes, which required the solemn consent of the states. The parlia-

CHAP.
XXXVI.

ment at once bowed to the superior authority of the representative assembly, and La Chalotais' compromise was thus destroyed. The court in anger summoned the entire parliament of Brittany to repair to Versailles, in the commencement of 1765, where the monarch reproached and threatened them with the fate of the parliament of Paris, just dissolved. For all answer the Breton judges or five-sixths of them resigned. The court attributed this resistance to La Chalotais the procureur-general. He was accordingly arrested with his son and the most spirited members of the Breton parliament. Amongst their papers seized at the same time, were many letters freely written both against the system of government and the habits of the monarch himself. Some of these papers formed new grounds of accusation, and the procureur was ordered to be tried by the successors of the Breton parliament. La Chalotais in France became, in fact, what Wilkes was in England, the arch-enemy of the court and tribune of the popular party, both supported secretly by men in power, as well as by the popular voice. The fate of Wilkes was merely to raise a few bubbles on the surface of English political society, then disappear in exile and oblivion. La Chalotais, transferred to the Bastille upon a false accusation, was kept there by the vindictive anger of the king, upon whom he had reflected in his writings. But the storm which he excited continued to rage, and to place not only the Breton, but all other parliaments of the kingdom, in such a state of opposition to the court as to produce finally a total breach between them and the legislature.

When La Chalotais was about to be tried, and when a young procureur, named Calonne, urged as his accuser the strongest arguments for his condemnation and punishment, these it was believed might affect his life. The parliaments of Paris and of Rouen both came forward to protest against the unusual nature of the tribunal, and the vindictive form of the prosecution

(February 1766). Louis the Fifteenth, excited by the party of D'Aiguillon, who perceived, not without foresight, a tendency to revolution in the proceedings of the parliaments, summoned that of Paris to attend a Bed of Justice. On this occasion Louis lectured them severely on their pretensions to establish unity between the different parliaments. He told the judges that they formed no order in the kingdom, but were simply his officers. It was pretended that the magistrature was the basis of the monarchy, the organ of the nation, the protector and depositor of liberty, and was thus a judge between king and people. All these prerogatives, said the king, belong not to you, but to the crown; the sovereign power, authority and legislature being concentrated in my person, the parliament has the liberty of remonstrating, but not of resisting, much less of libelling authority. If the parliament persisted in such conduct, he, the king, would know how to obviate the fatal consequences. The parliament in reply did not deny the theory of Divine right adduced by the monarch, but argued that their remarks and remonstrance to previous edicts were in support, not in defiance, of the royal authority.

A great portion of the king's rivalry and resentment had been owing to the influence of the dauphin and his party, of which D'Aiguillon was one. This prince had sympathised with the Jesuits, and had done his utmost to mitigate their fate. His representation to Louis was, that in allowing the parliaments to assume the position and hold the language they did he was sanctioning a body more dangerous to the crown than the Jesuits. The dauphin, however, expired towards the close of 1765, and with him disappeared the virtuous portion of the reactionary party. The prince, like the Duke of Burgundy, was pious in the extreme, but of that monastic piety which was in strong contrast to the ideas and current of the age. After his death,

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Choiseul gained some influence over the king, and persuaded him to put a stop to the agitation occasioned by the trial and confinement of the Bretons, and by the quarrel with the parliaments and states. This, indeed, was urgent, for the tribunal before which La Chalotais was tried shrank from either acquitting or condemning him. The king evoked the trial to his own council, and a little later quashed the proceedings altogether, ordering the accused to be liberated or exiled to different parts of the kingdom. The estates of Brittany were summoned, and a new governor sent to preside over them. The innovations they complained of were revoked, and D'Aiguillon was thus obliged to resign, the judges of the provincial parliaments being soon after restored (1769). The quarrel between the court and the Bretons was thus terminated, although the spirit which it had aroused continued to animate parliament and province.*

Whilst Choiseul thus succeeded in tempering the conduct of the king, he was far from overcoming or from changing royal convictions. These unfortunately were, that the only rectitude and the only safety for a state lay in the concentrated power of the monarch. Louis the Fifteenth had been bred in these principles, which with all his timidity he did not shrink from professing, and he was seconded by the old courtiers and devotees who, however they might see the popular storm approaching, saw no safety except in holding on by the anchor of absolutism. It was the difficult task of Choiseul to combat them. He saw the necessity of conciliating the middle class, whose most eminent men were to be found in the parliament, and with their aid to introduce some order in the provinces. But at the same time, with Pitt, whom he strongly resembled, he saw the best chance for the monarchy recovering popularity and vigour in the prosecution of successful war.

* Mémoires D'Aiguillon.

As England was the arch-enemy to be chiefly combated at sea, Choiseul turned attention to the marine and obtained the administration thereof, placing his relative and dependant the Duke de Praslin in the foreign office. From the states and assembly of each province, Choiseul obtained a vessel of war and its equipment. Great jealousies as usual prevailed between England and France. Dunkirk and its fortifications were a standing theme of complaint with the former. In 1765 Choiseul complied with most of the demands of the English envoy, the Duke of Richmond. When Pitt returned to office, the fears and jealousies of the French became greater than ever. And not without reason, for Pitt no sooner held the reins of power than his first effort was to accomplish an alliance of the north, to oppose that alliance of the south which was considered the work of Choiseul. In this scheme the great Chatham made more than one mistake. In the first place Choiseul had not remained so wedded to Austria as the English minister supposed, whilst Austria itself, aware of this, was not disinclined to return to the English alliance. Instead of following in this open path, Chatham preferred knocking at the door of the great Frederick whom he so much admired, and pressing him to form the desired alliance. "To do what?" asked Frederick: "alliance and treaty for remote and general purposes are idle." Frederick would have nothing to do with England, whose sudden ministerial revolutions had always deceived him. Any ambition of English statesmen, however, to meddle with the affairs of the continent was soon quenched by the more serious spirit of hostility which the American colonists began to display against the mother country. The attention of the French government was about the same time principally directed towards the fate of Poland, where Russia was evidently prepared to dominate.*

It is difficult to account for the blindness of all those

* St. Priest, *Partage de la Pologne*.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

courts, which strove for a century to bring forward Russia and its armies into the wars and very centre of Europe. Flatteries, intrigues, and demands were all directed to St. Petersburg, passing over Poland as non-existing, or as no longer counting in the balance of the world. This was much the fault of the Poles themselves, of their elective monarchy, and reckless character. But if the Poles forgot themselves, Europe should not have done so. For Poland was the bulwark which protected the west from the hordes and the barbarism of Asia, north and south. The most interested in the maintenance of Poland and Polish independence were certainly the Germans, France being but remotely affected by the revolutions of the east of Europe, and England scarcely at all. But the Germans, who have never succeeded in constituting a nation, were still less a nation then than ever. And it was only as a race and a nation that Germany could feel the humanity and policy of respecting and supporting the Poles. But instead of the German nation, there was the little Prussian monarchy solely anxious for its own petty aggrandisement, and Austria still less German and actuated by the feelings and policy of an empire. The sovereigns of these states, having no other principles than that of grabbing, sacrificed Poland to Russia, bargaining merely for a share. But as a less civilised country cannot absorb a more civilised one, Poland has remained Polish to this day, and will continue to do so, please Providence, till the Germans prove a nation with national interests and feelings; and then their first impulse, as their first duty, will be to re-establish Poland. As to France, England, or any other country accomplishing what Germany alone from position can do, the hope is vain, and the dream illusory.

The work of De Smitt* has rendered it clear to

* Frédéric II. et la Partage de la Pologne, par Frédéric de Smitt. Berlin. Paris, 1861.

everyone, that Frederick was not only the original plotter but the wily accomplisher of the partition of Poland. He indeed it was who had the deepest interest in effecting it. Between east Prussia and Brandenburg, between Königsberg and Berlin, the cradle and the throne of the Prussian monarchy, the Polish territory intervened, following the course of the Vistula to the sea, and destroying that connection and unity without which Prussia could neither stand nor grow. When Frederick undertook to wrest Silesia from Austria, the monarch had in view to complete his eastern frontier by the Duchy of Posen, and the country from Dantzic to Thorn. Could he have effected this by another Seven Years' war, leaving Poland still independent, he would have done much better than he did for Prussia and Germany. But Russia already considered Poland as its prey; and Frederick, weary of war and of its risks, preferred sacrificing Poland to Russia on the condition of getting himself the province which rounded and completed his empire.

With Russia thus averse to cede a portion of Poland, and Austria opposed equally to the aggrandisement of either of her northern neighbours, French diplomacy might have managed to form a national party in Poland, and give it strength and advice in maintaining itself against natural enemies. The French government had made efforts towards this. And Louis the Fifteenth had formerly entered into a secret correspondence with the French envoys in the east of Europe, urging them to support the cause and the interests of Poland. The Prince of Conti, who aspired to the throne of that country, had been at one time the secretary of the king's private correspondence.*

When Choiseul resumed power, he took no sanguine view of the cause of Poland. His instructions to M. de Paulmy, his first envoy to Warsaw, reproached

* See Schlosser, and Ségur, *Politique des Cabinets*.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

plainly former French governments with the folly of treating Poland as a regular or powerful state. Poland is but an anarchy, observed Choiseul, and *this anarchy suits the interests of France*. The ambassador was accordingly instructed to remain an indifferent spectator of the struggles of faction in Poland.*

Frederick took the same view as Choiseul in considering the anarchy of Poland advantageous to the interests of Prussia. In 1762, when the accession of Peter the Third turned Russian enmity towards Frederick to friendship, the latter proposed a treaty of alliance, which Baron de Goltz signed on the part of Prussia. By one of its secret articles, both powers guaranteed that Poland should never be other than an elective sovereignty, and that the choice should fall on a Piast, or Polish noble, after the death of the reigning monarch. Moreover, Russia and Prussia concluded to support the Polish dissidents. Hence, as far back as June 1762, was founded the Russian agreement to the nullification of Poland. Different as the policy of Catharine was to that of Peter, Frederick brought her in 1764 to sign a treaty containing the two articles of that of 1762 respecting Poland.† Four years later Catharine prepared to make use of Poland as an ally and a defence. She sought to realise Pitt's idea of an alliance of the north, excluding the western powers, and making Poland its advanced guard. For this purpose it was to have a national army. When the proposal was made to Frederick, by Saldern the Russian envoy, he shuddered,‡ and was equally horrified at the idea of establishing a permanent council in Poland. "Such arrangements as giving the King of Poland a permanent council or any number of troops, and that

* Flassan, *Histoire de la Diplomatie Française*, t. 5, p. 260.

† Marten's *Récueil des Traités*, vol. i.

‡ Prussian Notes, Nov. 1762. Smitt.

of his revenue could only lead to what is most to be prevented, his sovereignty."*

CHAP.
XXXVI.

The events of Poland are well known, the election of Poniatowski, the demands of the dissidents, the support of Russia, the confederation of Bar, and the anarchy which ensued. Choiseul had the unfortunate idea of stirring up Turkey to attack Russia, just as he conceived previously to excite Spain against England. The latter resulted in the loss of its colonies to Spain, the former in the conquest of the Danubian provinces by Russia. Austria would not suffer Russia on the Danube. Frederick and Joseph the Second accordingly met for the second time at Neustadt in 1770. The latter insisted on making the Russians give up Moldo-Wallachia. The king observed in reply, that there was one way to effect this, viz., Russia taking a portion of Poland, Austria and Prussia, of course, doing the same. The first partition of Poland in 1772 was the result, Frederick being the impellent force, Russia and Austria the acquiescent. D'Aiguillon felt the slur upon his government and country, but when Choiseul's chosen scheme for embarrassing Russia and liberating Poland had not only failed but contributed to the destruction of the latter, what could the Duke d'Aiguillon do?

Choiseul somewhat redeemed the bad success of his interference for Poland by the acquisition of Corsica. The island had been for some years in a state of rebellion against the Genoese, had, in fact, altogether shaken off their authority; and, in doing so, had established a regular, a firm and a prudent government. Pascal Paoli was the name of the Corsican who succeeded in the double task of defending the liberties of the Corsicans, and subjecting them to a liberal administration. Had Choiseul a spark of the liberalism he protected in the *philosophes*, he would have respected the Corsicans and

* Prussian Notes, Nov. 1762 Smitt. Rulhiere.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Paoli, the former of whom consented to acknowledge the suzerainty of France, and pay to it the same tribute they had paid to Genoa. But Choiseul wanted to strengthen his position in France by a conquest. The French minister therefore bought the island, or their right to the island, from the Genoese for 2,000,000 livres, and sent the Marquis de Chauvelin with 7,000 men to complete the conquest. The Marquis and his 7,000 men were, however, no match for Paoli and his band of peasants, with whom the French commander was obliged to conclude a peace. In the following year, 1769, Choiseul, determined this time to conquer, sent about 30,000 or 40,000 men under the Count de Vaux. Paoli relied on succour from England, often promised him. But England had a more serious quarrel pending with its North American colonies, and could offer but a few guns and bayonets to the Corsican. The large French army overcame the island, and Paoli was compelled to take refuge in England. It was in the spring of 1759 that Corsica thus became French, and in a few weeks after it formally became so, Napoleon Buonaparte was born at Ajaccio.

This want of success in foreign policy was fatal to a minister whose influence was already undermined at home. "Of excellent parts," writes Walpole, who knew him and his circle intimately, the "duke was of a levity and indiscretion, which most men of his nature divest themselves of before his age. Rash and presumptuous, good humoured, but neither good nor ill natured, frank, gay and thoughtless, he seemed more the sovereign than the minister. Scorning rather than fearing his enemies, he seldom condemned or persecuted them." In 1768, Louis the Fifteenth was fascinated by the charms of Mademoiselle Lange, or Madame du Barry. A professional caterer to the pleasures of mankind, she pleased the old voluptuary, and her influence was soon supreme at Versailles. The whole court, with

one or two exceptions, turned their back upon this woman: as none were more indignant at her rise than the female friends of Choiseul, especially his sister, who had great influence over him, the minister refused to pay court to the new mistress, or come to any understanding with her.

This was Choiseul's enemy the first; the second was the chancellor Maupeou whom the duke selected and favoured. Maupeou as councillor of parliament had shown himself after the fall of Machault a useful intermediary between the government and the judicial body. He was, in consequence, made vice-chancellor and keeper of the seals, and whilst holding that office employed every kind of adulation towards Choiseul. The latter, though warned of the artful and supple nature of his protégé, appointed him chancellor in 1758.* Maupeou soon made Madame du Barry, instead of Choiseul, the object of his worship, and thus became an adjunct of the party opposed to his benefactor.

A more unfortunate choice was that of the Abbé Terrai, to be Controller-General of Finance. Choiseul stated to the king the necessity of a new appointment in 1759. The king agreed, but neither monarch nor minister knew whom to appoint. Choiseul had made two controllers-general, both of whom had failed. He declined to name a third. D'Aiguillon hints that the duke wanted to be appointed to the finance himself. A more probable story is, that he wished Maupeou to become

* "Maupeou was sullen and black," writes Walpole, "with eyes penetrating, acute and suspicious; his complexion spoke determinate villany; his eyes seemed rather roving in search of prey for it, or glaring on snares that he apprehended. His parts were great and his courage adventurous. Power was his object, despotism his road, the clergy his instrument. Not being

qualified like D'Aiguillon to shine in a voluptuous court, and having noticed the king's tendency to superstition, he reckoned upon the advantage that bigotry would gain over love in a veteran monarch. He accordingly initiated himself into the confidence of the king's Carmelite daughter, Madame Louise, the only engine that he could employ for his purposes."

CHAP.
XXXVI.

controller, as necessarily leading to failure and disgrace. Maupeou declined the place for himself, but recommended a parliamentary subordinate and a man like himself, in the Abbé Terrai. As ministers of justice and finance, Maupeou and Terrai were the cope-stones of the venal, iniquitous and arbitrary system of government in all its branches, which discredited and ruined the monarchy of the Bourbons. Injustice, rapacity and cruelty could be carried no farther.

Terrai was one of those who most contributed to the coming revolution, by disgusting the middle class with the monarchy and its government. It is reported by D'Argenson, that when the news spread in Paris of Damiens' attempt on the life of the king, the middle class showed every kind of sympathy, whilst the people remained indifferent and mute. The middle class, or men of small earnings, had often suffered from the fisc, but their suffering was due to the necessities of the state and the ignorance of the finance minister. Terrai pillaged them with a perfect cognizance of what he was doing, and accompanied his acts, not by regrets or sympathy, but by sarcasm and jocularly. He was as dark and disagreeable to the eye as Maupeou; tall, yet bent; dissolute in morals and in language. No fitter gossips than he and Maupeou could be found for Du Barry.

Yet it required a man of reckless morality and audacity to undertake the management of the finance in 1769, when the revenue for the ensuing year was already spent or anticipated. There was an arrear of 381 millions, with a debt of 2,300,000,000, bearing 110 millions of interest. Bankruptcy, towards those state creditors whom he could despoil with impunity, was the sum of Terrai's financial views. He began by seizing the sinking-fund, by refusing payment of bills on the treasury, as well as upon sums due to the farmers and receivers-general. The claims of these were converted into *rentes*, and at the same time the half of the interest

due upon the *rentes* was cancelled. The *tontines* were converted into simple life annuities, and the life annuitant reduced one-fifth or one-fourth. Terrai also seized the money lodged as judicial deposits, putting depreciated treasury bills in lieu. Heavy contributions were laid on all placeholders, and on those lately ennobled. The Abbé left the direct taxes untouched, and avoided, at least at first, arousing the ire of the landed and proprietary classes.*

Of the millions thus grabbed and stolen by the Abbé Terrai, a large portion was spent in the spring of 1770 on the festivities to celebrate the marriage of the Archduchess Marie Antoinette with the eldest son of the late dauphin, then dauphin himself—the future Louis the Sixteenth. It took place on May 30, and, owing to a quarrel between the municipality and the police, the latter were not employed on the occasion. The fireworks, instead of taking place on the Seine or on its banks, were arranged between the centre of the Place Louis Quinze, and the Rue Royale, the boulevards being also illuminated. The streets between them thus became encumbered, when the wooden frame constructed for the fireworks began to burn. The panic this occasioned, with the engines that were brought to extinguish it, so blocked up the Rue Royale that a crush took place, 1,200 persons being left dead when the crowd dispersed. The dauphin and dauphiness were deeply and ominously affected. The people kept a more durable remembrance of an event which was then as afterwards considered a presage.

The power of Choiseul was thought to be strengthened by this marriage, which he had recommended, and which was also supposed to strengthen the Austrian alliance. The parliamentarians seized the opportunity to press for the liberation of La Chalotais from exile, and the restoration of the enemies of D'Aiguillon. The

* Coquereau, Mémoires de l'Abbé Terrai.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

duke was accused of various malversations, especially that of having suborned witnesses against his Breton opponents. D'Aiguillon, piqued, demanded to be tried by his peers. His desire was complied with, and the trial carried before the parliament of Paris, at whose sitting the peers attended. The progress of the enquiry was however far from being as favourable to D'Aiguillon as he had hoped, and he had recourse to Madame du Barry's influence with the king to save him. The monarch went to the parliament, and in a Bed of Justice—which ceremony overcame all opposition—quashed the prosecution against D'Aiguillon, and evoked the cause to himself. This was interference with what was essentially the parliament's right of justice; it declared that a trial once commenced could not thus be extinguished. The parliament of Rouen was still more violent, and all the provincial judges joined in the clamour. Calonne, who had distinguished himself by violence against La Chalotais, was implicated in the testimony brought forward on D'Aiguillon's trial. He had just been appointed intendant at Metz. The parliament of this province refused to recognise him till he had cleared himself of culpability. The parliament of Paris declared D'Aiguillon suspended from his right of peer. The king overruled the act of the judges of Metz as well as that of Paris, as he was compelled to crush with the same authority the parliaments of the south. The Paris judges refused to give up the papers relative to D'Aiguillon's accusation. The king was obliged to hold another Bed of Justice to compel them. In December a similar ceremony became necessary. Ministers and parliament had issued each an edict condemnatory of the other; that of the parliament boasted of being the only conservative power in the state, and ended by demanding the punishment of those who calumniated the judicial body. Maupeou could not rest under such a threat. The king insisted on the parliament registering his edict.

The judges refused, threatened to resign and cease the performance of their functions.

For a moment—and but for a moment—the vindictive action of the government against the parliament was suspended. Choiseul, though shorn of influence, was still minister, and he would have strenuously opposed any measure of extreme violence. It thus became necessary to get rid of him. But Louis still clung to one whose abilities he well knew could not be replaced from amongst his enemies. He even wrote a letter to Choiseul, entreating him to live on good terms with Madame du Barry.* Choiseul could not demean himself so far. He who had told the late dauphin, when they disagreed about the Jesuits, that he (the duke) might one day be his subject but never his servant, could not stoop to a Du Barry. Louis might still have upheld Choiseul, had not the latter, probably to render himself more necessary, proposed nothing less than a war with England.

In 1769 a serious quarrel had arisen between the countries, on the occasion of a French ship refusing to salute in the Downs, and having been fired into in consequence. Later came the affair of the Falkland islands, which Spain had seized, capturing a small British occupying force. Spain and France—or rather Spain and Choiseul—were one, and the latter had looked forward and prepared for a time when the united navies of the Bourbon powers might once more cope with England in war. The quarrel of England with her North American colonies offered an opportunity; but it was not yet safe, and Choiseul had to appease English remonstrance in the affair of the Falkland islands. But ministers in London changed continually, the patriots there scorning any submission to Spain, which, in case of war, offered itself more as a prey than as a foe. The English were therefore peremptory, and Choiseul recom-

* Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third—end of 1769.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

mended replying by war. D'Aiguillon, Maupeou, and the Du Barry deprecated this extreme. It is possible, indeed, that Choiseul, foreseeing his fall, proposed war as a good and spirited measure to go out upon. He accordingly received his letter of dismissal on Christmas eve 1770, and was exiled to his estate at Chanteloup. The most popular statesman in France was succeeded by the most contemned and unpopular personage in it, the Duke d'Aiguillon, just saved from the judgment of the parliament, saved too by Du Barry, and making common cause with Maupeou and Terrai. More outrageous defiance of public opinion was impossible. Nor was it merely the general esteem which followed Choiseul into exile; the very courtiers hied thither, and it was as much the fashion to visit Choiseul as to desert Versailles.

The overthrow of the duke was followed by that of the parliament. Never had the judicial body a juster cause of complaint and resistance, than the quashing of the proceedings against the Duke d'Aiguillon. But when they thought fit to resist an exorbitant tax, their mode of showing discontent was the same. They remonstrated, and if not listened to, suspended their sittings and interrupted the course of justice. This was really monstrous. The parliament of Brittany suspended its sittings for the space of three years, during which no trial took place; the prisons were filled to overflowing with accused persons—many of them crammed into dungeons, and devoured by vermin and disease. This was avenging, on the most unfortunate class of the people, the arbitrary conduct of the government, which in the matter of taxation did not see its way, from ignorance and impracticability as much as from prodigality and abuse. Then the parliament itself was far from being, in many points, in advance of the court. That of Toulouse had racked Calas; that of Picardy had executed a young officer of nineteen, La Barre, for overthrowing a crucifix in a drunken frolic.

The Paris parliament itself had sent Count Lally to the scaffold, for no greater crime than failure, at a time when all generals and commanders failed. The parliament was as severe as the bishops against such writers as Rousseau, and condemned in the same breath new doctrines and old abuses. The judicial body were unequal to save either the monarchy or the nation. Nor does it appear that even Choiseul could have turned them to the public profit.

Parliaments, however, offered the only opposition to the crown, the court corruption, and financial decadence; they were in consequence dreaded by the court, which foolishly thought that it would acquire security and strength by destroying such independent bodies and institutions as opposed it. But the same causes gave the parliament popularity with the nation. The judges were severally summoned by officers of the royal guard to declare whether they would promise to resume their judicial functions or not. One hundred and twenty who refused were immediately sent to different places of exile. So loud and unanimous was public opinion in their favour, that the thirty or forty judges, who had in timidity agreed to continue their sittings, felt it prudent to retract, and they took the road to exile. The *Cour des Comptes*, the criminal tribunal of the Châtelet, volunteered to participate the fate of the parliament. Maupeou imagined he was strengthening the monarchy when he banished the parliament, and substituted the king's privy council for it. He did the same in the provinces, appointing six superior courts to suffice for all save the Pays d'États, with which, except Artois, he did not at first meddle. In April 1771, the king held another Bed of Justice, his last, in which he instituted a new tribunal to replace the parliament. Louis closed his address by declaring that he would *never change*. "You hear that," observed Madame du Barry to the Duke de Nivernois, who opposed this arbitrary measure.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

"I heard the king utter the words," replied the duke; "but, Madame, he was looking at you." The mistress was an ardent foe of parliaments, and having purchased a portrait of Charles the First, by Vandyke, she hung it up and showed it to her father, as she called the monarch, with the observation, that parliaments would serve him as they had done Charles. The princes of the blood, with the exception of the son of the Prince of Condé, absented themselves, and signed a solemn protest, for which they were forbidden the court. Thirteen peers signed their names to the protest; almost all the notables were absent.

The most remarkable protest against the arbitrary measure was drawn up by the *Cour des Aides*, of which Malesherbes was president. No one wished to deny, it said, that the king's authority came from God, but that did not dispense with the necessity of its being just, and respecting the law. Almost the only guarantee or relic of freedom in France, was the law requiring the registration of royal edicts by the parliament. The rights of property had hitherto been respected in France; and the inamovibility of the holders in the offices for which they had paid, was equally sacred. A Frenchman ought to be deprived of neither, except as the consequence of a criminal trial. Yet now confiscation of property, and of offices was daily perpetrated by the decree of the royal council, or rather by the instrumentality of one man. Hitherto the remonstrance of parliament supplied, though imperfectly, the absence of the estates. "Now the public has no organ. The noblesse are excluded, the princes of the blood are forbidden to approach the throne. *Interrogate the nation*, Sire, since there remains only the nation itself, whose voice your majesty will listen to." The reply to this was the abolition of the *Cour des Aides*, and the exile of Malesherbes, its president.

Soon after, a more regular tribunal was formed in

Paris of such magistrates as would accept the office. Some dozen ecclesiastics were added, no doubt to modify the too legal spirit of the lawyers. To popularise the tribunal, its members were to receive no fees. Unfortunately for the character of the parliament Maupeou, the witty Beaumarchais had soon after a process, in which he thought himself unjustly treated. And he clearly proved and published, that bribes were everything with the new judges. He had been himself obliged to give fifteen livres to the wife of the judge Gozman, in order to obtain an audience of her husband. The chancellor avenged himself by forbidding the first representation of the "Barber of Seville," which thus was not acted until the new reign.

Delivered from the importunity of parliamentary remonstrance, the Abbé Terrai carved and cut into the resources of the tax-payers. Most of the provinces were in arrear of their taille. The peasant living on chestnuts and rye could only pay his rent and taxes out of the produce of his corn crop. When this either failed or produced a glut, the peasant, having no sale, could not pay his taille. The picture which Turgot has drawn of the Limousin, where he was intendant, fully exposes this state of things; showing the poor to be ground down to mendicity or extinction, whilst the town population defended themselves against the fisc with some success, but not with less animosity against the government. The fisc occasioned a continuous fight between the controller and the middle and lower classes: the latter merely resisting in silence. Under Terrai, it was more a razzia than a combat. He knew no law, respected no right, and feared no check. How else could he find money for the expenses of the court? He increased the tailles by two millions, augmenting by tens, sous and fractions all the other taxes. He cared little whether they were onerous or not. The necessity of diminishing the

CHAP.
XXXVI.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

gabelle or salt tax had been contemplated: Terrai at once increased it. When the people were thus ground, collectors, generals, and functionaries were not paid. By exactions of all kinds he was able to procure a balance of receipt and expenditure. But the court would not abide by the dictates of economy, and Terrai was still by thirty millions short of his aim. He once more sold municipal offices. The only thing that could be said in his favour was that, armed with the plenitude of power, he spared no class. "Terrai is a spoiled child," exclaimed the wits; "he puts his finger in every one's pockets." "Where should I seek for money, if not there?" said the Abbé. The agents of the clergy remonstrated with him upon the injustice of some of his taxes. "Who pretended that they *were just?*" asked the controller. Such repartees were the habit of Paris, whose inhabitants consoled themselves for every case of exaction or oppression by a shower of epigrams. The suffering of the provinces was more serious. The province, on losing its parliament, felt as if it had lost the last vestige of its political existence. Maupeou threatened to deprive Brittany of its *estates*. Three-fourths of the better class would thus lose fortune and place. One might think some demoniac foe of the monarchy prompted its chief and his advisers to commit acts calculated to alienate every friend, disgust every loyal subject, and sow disaffection in the breasts of every class. The Duke d'Aiguillon, who with the support of Du Barry succeeded the Duke of Choiseul as foreign minister, had splendid opportunity for the exercise of his talents or his influence. Had war threatened, or great events occurred, this might not have been the case, as D'Aiguillon preferred the Prussian to the Austrian alliance, and cared little for that influence over Spain and the southern courts of Europe, on which Choiseul prided himself. The only event of importance during his ministry was the

first partition of Poland. If the Austrian alliance had been worth anything, it ought to have saved France from an event which was considered as humiliating to it. But the court of Vienna, or rather Joseph the Second, had given up Choiseul, and was naturally displeased at his having so unfortunately incited the Turks against Russia. With D'Aiguillon and Du Barry, Austria had no terms to keep.

There is no more ominous incident in the history of this period than the tendency to turbulence and insurrection which manifested itself in the population of France during the last ten years of Louis the Fifteenth's reign. These troubles were, in fact, the forerunners of the Great Revolution. Although maladministration had much to do with this, there were other causes which deserve to be noticed, and which passed any ministerial power of prevention. It has been remarked, that the period which elapsed between the commencement of the century and the Peace of Paris in 1763 was marked by a more constant series of good harvests than similar periods before or since. Whilst the English labourer was known to have profited by these years of abundance, to have had higher wages, and succeeded in substituting wheaten bread for a diet of the inferior grain,* the French peasant knew no amelioration. There was a tariff in England upon exports, which at least returned money to agriculture. In France there was prohibition and insufficiency of transport, and yet the peasant rarely ate wheaten bread, contenting himself with chestnuts and rye. With the year 1765, another period commenced, marked by a succession of bad harvests, high prices and famine.

This was the moment, unfortunately, which the economists had chosen, or in which they had tried, to obtain the promulgation of an edict, permitting the free exportation of corn. The ill-timed measure came

* Tooke, History of Prices, vol. i. p. 60.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

out in 1764, and was far, even under the circumstances, from being a fair experiment, as although the circulation of corn was declared free, the transit dues were still levied on it, no funds being procured to buy them up. Exports too were forbidden when the price of corn reached twelve livres ten sous the quintal, which closed Nantes and the Loire for three years, exceptional permission to export being granted to the injury of the real trade. Amongst those who made money by this privileged power of export was the king. He and Maupeou purchased corn, sent it to their store, and kept it till a rise of prices afforded profit. The Normans broke out into fiscal insurrection, riots took place in the markets, the parliament of Rouen siding with the peasantry, suspending the edict of exportation, and accusing the court, if not the king himself, of being a monopoliser of grain. His majesty, indeed, could not deny this, having royal stores at Corbeil, with a manager whose name and position was announced in the royal almanack. A functionary having thought fit to disclose a contract entered into between the monarch and a company for the purpose of trafficking in corn, the accuser was arrested, and consigned to a dungeon, his proofs and papers disappearing with him. In other provinces as well as Normandy, popular insurrections took place; whilst the anarchy was as great in the legislature as in the people. Each parliament or baillage issued different decrees, some forbidding the export of corn, some allowing it. In some provinces grain could be only bought at market, and farmers were obliged to bring a ton to the place of sale each market day. In other districts sellers as well as buyers of corn were obliged to be registered. The authorities of towns stopped all the corn boats that floated down the river. It was upon a population thus ground by famine and distracted by contradictory edicts, that Terrai began to launch his spoliating

decrees. In 1771 and 1772, one or more of these appeared every fortnight. Government combined with the seasons and the local authorities, to inflict all the ills and cause all the troubles in their power.*

CHAP.
XXXVI.

Feeble as was the monarchy, corrupt and rotten as were its institutions, still its splendour and gilding had fascination for foreign visitors. Gustavus the Third of Sweden was at Paris in 1772, when he learned his accession to the throne. His impulse was to imitate Louis the Fifteenth, destroying senate and parliament, and all that offuscated royalty. And he returned to Stockholm to carry out this brilliant plan. He succeeded by means of the army, and reduced Sweden and its government to the same nullity as that of France. Sweden was to Versailles, what Portugal was to the court of London, a political dependence. Louis promised to send 7,000 soldiers to support Gustavus. They could only reach Sweden by going through Germany, which the government would not allow; or by sea, which was in the power of the English. To avoid both difficulties Louis sent General Dumourier first to raise a foreign regiment in Hamburg, without the knowledge of D'Aiguillon: the latter discovered the scheme, and with it the fact of Louis's secret correspondence. As the minister was maltreated therein, he insisted on punishing the members, Dumourier and the Count de Broglie. To this disgrace of his agents, inflicted on them for having served and obliged him, Louis consented. He had not a will of his own.

A prey to despondency, and to the impossibility of finding pleasure in aught, Louis, though not in very advanced age (he was sixty-four), felt his end approaching. A court preacher once compared him to Solomon, not the wise, but the voluptuary, who, lost in the pleasures of the senses whilst his people were in

* Terrai's edicts, as well as those *Journal Historique*, and other periodicals of the time.

CHAP.
XXXVI.

misery, would soon be called to account for his derelictions. Louis made the man a bishop. Had the king survived some time, he might have become a saint. But for the moment he relapsed into those habitual and effeminate connexions which disgraced his reign. The result of an excess of this kind at Trianon was that the monarch was brought back to Versailles attacked with small-pox. In four days the disease attained a degree of virulence that left no hope of recovery. Louis advised Madame du Barry to withdraw to the residence of the Duke d'Aiguillon at Rueil. The three daughters of the king courageously attended his last moments; and the monarch, thus not deserted like Louis the Fourteenth, expired on May the 10th, 1774. His obsequies were as hurried and attracted as little reverence as those of his great predecessor. Madame du Barry survived him some twenty years, in her beautiful retreat of Loubcienne. She perished on the revolutionary scaffold, as did Malesherbes. Machault died in prison. Madame du Barry was one of the few victims of the revolution who met her fate with shrinking, and in the agony of human weakness. She was untouched by the sad and passive heroism of the time.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH TO THE
MEETING OF THE STATES GENERAL.

1774—1789.

THE general opinions entertained of the great catastrophe which befel France some fifteen years after the accession of Louis the Sixteenth, were and are still that it was unavoidable. The tendency consequently has been to exonerate in a certain degree, and cover with the cloak of fatalism, both those whose fatuity precipitated, and those whose extravagance infuriated the Revolution. And no doubt the storm, when it did break forth to lash popular opinion and power into frenzy, too fearfully resembled the effect of the hurricane upon the ocean, to admit that man's skill or arm could have the steadiness to pursue a definite course, or the sagacity to avert the impending ruin.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

The fatalistic view, however, is one that cannot be affirmed without strange injustice both to God and man. And it is still more pernicious to rulers and the ruled to accredit the maxim, that a change from tyranny and the absence of institutions, to the establishment of a free and constitutional system, cannot be accomplished without precipitating society as well as government into the abyss of anarchic revolution.

Upon calm inspection, there does not appear to be any period at which the monarchy of France might not have been saved, had the prince been endowed with

CHAP.
XXXVII.

firmness of character, and the influential classes with a moderate degree of fairness and sagacity. The finances were certainly in disorder, the debt and deficit considerable. There were none, however, of those obstructions which economy and credit, with the powers of taxation in the hands of the crown, might not have removed. As to what far more irritated the people and wounded the pride of the masses—the pretensions of the noblesse—these could have been reduced by a sovereign who communicated with and relied on his people, to those fair dimensions which the age might tolerate.

At the present period of our history, the accession of Louis the Sixteenth, the king could certainly have acted as arbiter, and preserved for himself and for his nobles all that was profitable for them to keep. No prince was better fitted by amiability of character to play such a part, than Louis the Sixteenth. He had no passions, and, indeed, no pleasures, save those of duty. To gratify every one, and offend no one, was his supreme delight. Unfortunately those propensities applied more to the persons whom he saw and heard, than to the people or the public, who were beyond his cognisance or appreciation. Royalty lived behind a screen, which court and courtiers carefully formed; shutting out the world from the monarch, and shutting in the monarch from the world, in such a way as to beget mutual ignorance; the king coming to dread the people as a monster, the people strangely mingling up the morals of one king and court with those of another, and looking upon the palace as the necessary abode of selfishness, dissoluteness, and crime.

Yet the people would scarcely have formed of themselves opinions so erroneous and unjust to royalty, if influential persons had not concocted, set afloat, and propagated such calumnies. The opposition that was long formed in Paris against Versailles, consisting of

nobles and men of letters, supported by younger members of the parliament, and by the citizens generally, was triumphant over opinion as long as Louis the Fifteenth lived. His court, his conduct, and his policy were all contemptible, and his enemies had but to point to them in order to discredit royalty. The accession of a young and virtuous prince, of a beautiful and accomplished queen, threatened this triumph with a reversal; and Versailles well inspired might have overcome Paris, however witty and astute. To avoid defeat, those influential in the capital had recourse to other courses—to those of calumny and sedition. Who was the originator and mover of this hostility to the court, is a subject of much conjecture and doubt. But that the Orleans family, and even some of the Condés were no strangers to it, is more than probable. Several societies too were formed for the purpose of developing principles of subversion, and of fostering dangerous opposition to the crown. Had this opposition been merely political, it might have been justified; but to carry it on by means of calumny, by pursuing a young and virtuous queen with the same expressions of contumely that had been employed against a Du Barry, was a work of wickedness, which, though the mob in their ignorance carried to its dreadful completion, princes and nobles in their malevolence wilfully originated.

All, however, of these puerile motives and class grudges, which converged to the destruction of the monarchy, were inferior in importance to the palpable results of that absolute monarchy on the condition of the people. Let us contemplate what this was, and try to ascertain and depict the state to which the principle of Divine and uncontrolled right had reduced the native of France.

Whatever might be his rank, he enjoyed not a vestige of personal liberty. If the inhabitant of any consi-

CHAP.
XXXVII.

derable town, and member of even the lower grade of society, he was liable to be carried off and imprisoned by a *lettre de cachet*, and immured for life without being informed of the reason. Nor was this done for merely political offences. The people of the home office sold *lettres de cachet* sometimes unfilled up; so that to imprison a rival or an enemy was a mere question of money. The story is told of a husband and wife, who each procured a missive to immure the other, and both attained their aim.

If the arrest took place from suspicion of crime, and not mere rivalry or caprice, the Frenchman if innocent was as badly off. Consigned to a horrible dungeon, he had to await trial without any certainty of its term. If the parliament of the province had, from ill humour or political opposition, suspended its sitting, the trial of the prisoner awaited the resumption of business. And the accused was finally tried before a judge, who always assumed the attitude of an enemy to those brought before him.* If the inhabitant of a town was poor, he and his offspring were liable to be seized by the *maréchaussée* and despatched to Louisiana, Guiana, or wherever it pleased the minister of the day to found a pretended colony. Terrible was the edict against beggars; branding was one of their slightest punishments. Depôts of mendicity were afterwards established, which no doubt partook of the barbarism of French prisons.†

If such were the restrictions on men's liberty, what security had they of property? Of movable property, none. If money was put in the funds, the interest was often either curtailed in the half, or refused on the whole. If lent on mortgage, an edict lowered the rate

* This is, indeed, still the case in French courts, where the judge conducts the interrogatory of the criminal in general with the tone and animus of the public accuser.

† At a time when soldiers in barracks and the sick in hospitals were packed three in a bed, it may be conceived what were the accommodations of a prison.

of interest and voided the contract. If an office was purchased, ten to one the finance minister suppressed it, or paid it off at half the value. As to commercial enterprise, trade was impossible in competition with privileged companies, and ruined through them. Hear what D'Argenson says of manufactures: "Industry is ruined in France by the fruitless inspections imposed on it. Every new regulation causes one to tremble for the manufacture which is the object of it. A single inspector for a province measures his words and his recommendations by caprice. The manufacturers run to the capital to demand rectification or justice. They spend months in trying to see a minister, and are ruined and bankrupt in the end, a single instance of this kind flinging into discouragement all the industrials of the province." Whatever company or trader was suspected of making money, the fisc always came to demand a share of it. This system of robbery and bad faith on the part of the administration, carried on by all finance ministers, reached its height under the Abbé Terrai, who robbed everyone.

If from freedom of person and of property we turn to observe what freedom there was of thought, of publicity, of religious conviction, we shall find them null. Clergy and parliament united to gag the public, when they did not strive to gag one another. The best works on law, on finance, and on politics, those of Vauban, of Boisguilbert, were burnt by the hangman. Fortunately the Dutch press was open, and French intellect used it largely; but it was expensive, circuitous and dangerous. We have depicted the consequences of being a Protestant, one of the least being a life spent at the galleys. Jansenism was no better treated, later. Atheists alone not only escaped persecution, but received from the crown the patronage which Protestants dared not hope for. No wonder that intellect conspired against authority, and carried

CHAP.
XXXVII.

on that occult war for a century, which ended in the prostration of priesthood and monarchy.

When such was the condition of the French civic population, what was that of the rustic? The people in the country were even more at the mercy of the intendant* and the governor, than their brethren in towns of the administration and the police. The obstructions to the transport, the sale, or the preservation of corn, have been mentioned. Customs' barriers were drawn round every province, each being allowed no sale in abundant years save within itself, and in years of bad harvest no supply. Wine was worse treated than corn, for the entire produce was obliged to be registered. Families were permitted to consume but a certain portion of their own wine. Far more than the value of the crop was added to the price in surcharges. For the farmer to produce either corn or wine, was not a blessing but a curse.

Then there was salt! What a source of oppression and of crime! It was decreed that every Frenchman should consume or pay for a certain quantity of salt, and that he should consume no more. Not every Frenchman; for the greater part of the *Pays d'États* continued to be free of salt duties and laws. Other provinces were less fortunate. In Amiens, for example, the people paid sixteen times the price for salt which it could be had for in Arras.† What cost eight sous at Clermont, cost four times eight on the hills above it. Of course, such difference of prices, established by the difference of tariffs, produced contraband. Who could resist? The frauding of the salt duties alone filled the gaols, and peopled the galleys.

Then came drawing for the militia; and when, instead

* "Know," said Law, on quitting France, to Dangeau, "that you have neither parliaments, nor committees, nor estates, nor governors, and I might add neither king nor minis-

ter. The kingdom I know is governed by thirty intendants."

† Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*.

of drawing lots, parishes were charged with furnishing a quota, conscripts escaped to the woods, and the rest of the valid population set forth to hunt and capture them, to avoid being drawn and carried off themselves. These *réfractaires* were the only game that the peasants were allowed to chase, and such sports sometimes resulted in a sanguinary *battue*.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

If the peasant escaped the horrors of military service in that day, the *corvée* awaited him at home—the *corvée*, civil and military. The military obligation was to transport the baggage and provisions of troops without payment; the civil *corvée* was to make and repair roads and other public works, also without payment, and often at a distance from their habitation. Intendants and the lords of the soil had thus the peasant at their mercy. The Duc d'Aiguillon nearly flung the whole peasantry of Brittany into revolt by the severity with which he enforced the *corvée*.

To crown these hard measures, came the *taille*, the *vingtième*, and *capitation*, which the clergy shook off altogether, and from which influential persons contrived to exonerate themselves by degrees. Turgot, intendant of the Limousin, calculated that the *taille* and the *vingtième* took from forty-five to fifty per cent. of the nett profit or produce of the soil. Landlord and tenant divided what remained, and, after paying *dixième*, and other charges, scarcely found one-fourth of the nett produce at their joint disposal.* In bad years, so common after 1765, proprietor and farmer divided nothing. The former found resources at court or elsewhere, the latter having none but mendicancy;† this, too, with all the penalties with which it was visited by Draconian edicts, found in these years of famine impossible to execute.‡

Turgot issued an order, that in the famine years the proprietor should feed the *métayers* or farmers. The

* Arthur Young.

† Turgot, Sur la Taille.

‡ Ibid.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

proprietary class—with many exceptions, no doubt—showed small sympathy for the peasant. They stoutly opposed the abolition of *corvées*, which Turgot began in the Limousin, and afterwards tried in vain to extend all over the kingdom. They fought hard for their seignorial rights, and rendered them more galling by the ineffable supremacy claimed as due in right of noble birth. In towns, this was galling to the pride and vanity of the professional and industrial man. But in the country, it was rank oppression to all who were not noble. Though seignorial power had been combated by intendants, these were not able to contend against court influence. And the aristocracy were still powerful in their own province.* They retained judicial rights, maintained seignorial dues, and the monopoly called *banalité* of oven, mill, and wine-press. They treated even the roturier, who had purchased landed property, as the native of another and inferior planet. No wonder that the strong, and soon to be fierce, aspirations of the French people were for equality.

Nor did the freedom, the competence, and the wealth thus ravished from the peasant, go to the ennobling or enriching of any other person or class. The nobles obtained small rent from an impoverished tenantry.† Though many may have paid their debts through the trickery of Law, future indebtedness became only the more onerous and the more difficult to shake off. At the commencement of the century, the great portion of the public revenue went to pay offices, dignitaries, pensions, and places. These sources were dried up towards the

* When it was proposed to introduce provincial assemblies, the Duke of Orleans complained to the Marquis de Bouillé, that this would cut off 300,000 livres of his revenue. "How is that?" asked the Marquis. "Because at present I make my arrangement with the

intendant, and pay pretty much what I please. It would be greatly different had we provincial assemblies." Bouillé's Memoirs.

† The average produce of corn in England is 24 bushels to the acre, in France 18. Arthur Young.

close of Louis' reign. Pensions were unpaid. Navy and army were reduced; and the noblesse, dependent on their own revenue, were, with the exception of a few, as impoverished as their tenants. There were as many malcontents in the class of nobles as in that of the ignoble. As to the clergy, it resembled the nation, consisting of a few high prelates who monopolised power and wealth, whilst the curate of the parish was just as narrowed in his means and as discontented in his mind, as the peasants among whom he lived and whose oppression he shared.

Whilst the property as well as the just pride of the millions were thus sacrificed to the ignorance, the rapacity, and the vanity of a few, what had become of that great conservative element, the doctrines of religion, which inculcated patience and acquiescence in all the ills of this world, promising retribution in the next? It was sapped and destroyed by those most interested in maintaining it. The clergy indeed allowed religion to die out; routine and intolerance being their only principles, the servility of intellect, which was part of their profession, rendering it impossible for them to form an idea, or conduct a defence, of their belief against the freer intellects that attacked it.* The nobles, and the intellectual society of which they formed a part, saw religion, both in its acts and in its functionaries, the one exciting reprobation and ridicule, and the latter anxious to shake off the weight of both. Government was so bad that all admitted a completely new one to be indispensable. The corollary was that religion had equally failed in attaining any useful result, and that since it could not be renewed, it required to be abolished.

Such was the wretched and depressed, though forward state of French men and French mind, which

* 'Partout,' writes Lacordaire, prévalu, le Christianisme véritable
'où le despotisme civil a fermement s'est à peu près éteint.'

CHAP.
XXXVII.

Louis the Sixteenth at twenty was called upon to govern. The first resolution required of him was the choice of a prime minister, the Duc d'Aiguillon being too unpopular to be continued in office. In this first choice Louis experienced the embarrassment which he was destined to feel through life, that of two conflicting motives. His impulse was to appoint a liberal politician and a reformer; but then he was determined not to appoint any whom his father might have disapproved of—a prince as bigoted as he had been retrograde.* The name of Machault, however, was one the prince approved, owing no doubt to his having been exiled by Pompadour. He was therefore fixed upon by the king, and a letter written and addressed to him; when the old court and priestly party, full of alarm, urged the king's aunts to interfere and expostulate with him on the bad effects of appointing a minister who, like Machault, had dared to ask the clergy for the amount of their revenue, and who consequently was odious to them. Would the new monarch commence his reign by an affront to the bishops and the church? The king hesitated. The letter was taken from the messenger about to start with it, and the missive despatched, not to Machault, but to Maurepas, requesting his attendance.† Maurepas, exiled for an epigram on Pompadour, was the fittest of men to manage a court. Notwithstanding his advanced age, he was still gay, witty, adroit, and superficial. But to the courtiers, to the high clergy, and to mesdames the king's aunts, the court was a far more important object of care than the nation. Ignorant as the young king himself of politics, Maurepas had the same desire to please, although what in Louis was goodness and amiability was merely self and laziness in the new minister. But whatever the motive, Maurepas felt, as well as the

* Soulavie, Mémoires de Louis Seize.

† Mémoires de Campan. Droz, Hist. de Louis Seize.

monarch, the necessity of making large concessions to popularity and to public opinion.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

The king's first acts displayed his honourable and economical views. He ordered that there should be but one table for the royal family, sold upwards of 500 horses from the royal stables, and got rid of useless residences, giving them to different members of the royal family. Another act, which was considered bold and liberal, was the king's own inoculation, with that of his family and brothers. An edict was issued, in two articles: the first assuring that the interest on all state debts should be punctually paid; the other waiving the right to the *joyeux évènement*, a tax incident to the king's accession, and which Louis the Fifteenth had excited great unpopularity by demanding. Such ordonnances were the direct contradiction of the administrative habits of the Abbé Terrai. The latter, however, appeared, and pretended to have originated them. He prepared a financial statement, recapitulating all that he had saved and gained for the state, and so staggered Louis by his successful impudence as to be allowed to affix his bad name to these equitable decrees.*

Neither Maurepas nor the king had in fact yet decided how far the politics of the late monarch should be reversed. The important point was, what was to be done with the parliament. Should the provincial magistrates installed by Maupeou be continued in office? or should the old body of judges be restored to the plenitude of their powers? The Duke of Orleans spoke the popular sentiment of Paris in favour of the great act of retribution. As it implied the restoration of the parliament of Brittany too, the Duc d'Aiguillon withdrew from before so formidable an opponent early in June. The marine minister also resigned, and the first significant act of Maurepas was his appointment of Turgot to that office.

As the intendant of Limoges, Turgot, a disciple but

* Periodicals of the day.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

not a blind one of the sect of the economists, had proved himself a bold and intelligent reformer. He had abolished the *corvée* in his province, taken steps towards levying the *taille* by a *tarif* or fixed scale, and incensed the local aristocracy by his eradication of old abuses. In all this Turgot was not carried away by the current of popular opinion. He deprecated for example the restoration of the old parliament, which Maupeas proposed as a popular measure. Turgot did not deny that it might be so, but he deprecated the raising up a body which would prove obstructive to necessary reforms, both in finance and administration. Maupeou said with justice, that restoring the parliament would be abandoning a victory already won. Louis, however, felt repugnance to levy new taxes without the sanction and support of some established body in the state.

Turgot indeed was for meeting this want by other means than restoring parliaments. He proposed endowing all the provinces with estates, each of which bodies were to send two deputies to form a central assembly in Paris, for the purpose of examining financial accounts and bills. The deputies to the provincial estates were to be elected by assemblies of parish or commune, these to be chosen by holders of land—six hundred francs of revenue giving a right to one vote, double that revenue to two, and so on. Whether such a plan would have remedied the evils, which Turgot himself signalled, may be much doubted. "The nation," said he, "is a society of several orders without any link between them, and in fact without any social connection. The consequence of this fractioning was, that no one attended to more than his individual interests, completely ignored his relations with his countrymen, and knew not what it was to fulfil a duty." *

Such a revolution in the entire system of administra-

* Œuvres de Turgot.

tion was not to be hastily resolved, or lightly attempted. A shorter road was the recall of the old parliament, which had the advantage in Maurepas' eyes, of shaking off Maupeou, Terrai, and the remainder of the old administrators. When the measure was decided they were at once dismissed, and forthwith hung in effigy by the people. Their dismissal taking place on St. Bartholomew's day, some one observed that it was the St. Bartholomew of ministers. "At least," rejoined Count Aranda, the Spanish envoy, "it is not a massacre of the Innocents." On this occasion Turgot was advanced from the marine department to the treasury, and Miro-mesnil, president of the Rouen parliament, made keeper of the seals. The Paris parliament was declared to be restored towards the close of the year in a solemn Bed of Justice. No censure was passed on the act which had suspended the magistracy. It was merely observed, "that circumstances were altered;" and the members of the restored parliament were told to be thankful to the goodness of the king. Some restrictions were added, and not unjust ones. The chamber of requests, composed of the younger and more popular members of the Paris bench, was not restored. It was forbidden for these counsellors to assemble unless at the summons of their president, and at times of their ordinary service. They were allowed to make remonstrances, but not to suspend their sittings or interrupt the course of justice, under penalty of forfeiture. The spirit of the parliament was more irritated by its previous suppression, than mollified by the king's generous restrictions. Instead of uttering thanks, the members assumed a high tone. "The dominant truth," declared the advocate Target, "is that in a nation, which has no other interpreters, you the parliament are its necessary organs. Your rights are the nation's."* Their first care was to examine the new restrictions put upon their

* Journals of the time.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

assembling, and to draw up a remonstrance against them. Instead of being warned or incensed by their frowardness, the government made in a short time the still further concession of restoring the chamber of requests. The Châtelet, or criminal court, was also re-established in January.

Though foreseeing the opposition of the reinstated parliament, Turgot set vigorously to work. He renewed the edict for the free circulation of corn. Its export he could not permit, as several influential people had paid for a share on the profits of all such exports: he could only tell these people to send in an account of their claims. Even the internal free trade in corn had not had a fair trial previously, as the supply of the three great centres, Paris, Lyons and Rouen, remained in the hands of a privileged few, and was only now taken from them. The transit duties in the interior were done away with, though, in order to do it, government was obliged to recompense the holders of debts due to them from the crown. Wine, salt, meat, fish, fresh and salt—all in fact that constituted the food of the people—were set free of tax and obstruction by Turgot. Yet, as will be seen, those most benefited were the first to complain and to resist. The harvest had not been abundant, and the fault of scarcity was of course flung upon the new laws.

In May 1775, numerous bands of vagabonds sprung up, chiefly along the Seine, to pillage farms and small towns. The intendants and functionaries, indisposed towards Turgot, did not do their duty in putting down these riots at first. The disorderly multitude at last broke into Paris, plundered the bakers' shops, and, although they failed to induce any of the Parisians to join them, still enjoyed an impunity of disorder for several hours. Another band invaded Versailles, forced the iron railing which surrounded the palace, to crowd and clamour under the king's windows. The Comte

d'Artois rode amongst them to offer money, but they refused it, to the cry of "We want bread." The king himself at last appeared on the balcony of the palace, to promise that the price of bread should be reduced by two sous a pound.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

Turgot was infinitely annoyed at this act of weakness, and astonished that the troops of the military household did not show more zeal in defending the palace. He suspected certain magnates of suborning the rioters, or conniving at these acts. He caused Lenoir, the lieutenant of police in Paris, to be superseded; whilst the crime of suborning the rioters he fixed upon the Prince of Conti. On Turgot's expressing such suspicion, the king consulted Maurepas, who at the time was much offended at Turgot's frequently taking counsel with the king, and obtaining warrant to act without his, the prime minister's, sanction or cognisance. Maurepas hinted that the sole cause of the disturbance was to be sought in Turgot's own rash edicts, and in his theory that corn, the food of the people, should be left unregulated and unrestricted. This, according to Marmontel, first shook the king's confidence in Turgot. The controller took the right mode of dealing with the disturbance. He mustered a little army of from 20,000 to 30,000 men, which, under Marshal Biron, soon dispersed the rioters. Two of these only were hanged for an example. Although a display of force was no more than requisite, the Parisians, as was their wont, celebrated the campaign of Turgot in ironic verse, and Biron, as General La Farine, served as the burden of the *chanson*.*

That the king and Maurepas remained still firm, through the year 1775, to their plan of reforming the government, and selecting the fittest persons to accomplish it, is proved by the appointment of Malesherbes to be minister of Paris, as he is sometimes called, or

* Mémoires sur Terrai ; Soulavie ; Droz ; Mercure.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

minister of the king's household. Malesherbes was the author of the boldest denunciation of abuses, the Remonstrance of the Court of Aides. It was not published as yet, to be sure, but had been laid before the government and the monarch. His chief functions as minister were those of awarding and despatching *lettres de cachet*. It sufficiently evinces the backward principles of even liberal functionaries, when such a man as Malesherbes believed in the expediency of the king's retaining the right to issue those arbitrary mandates of imprisonment, and that Turgot shrank from the idea of a representative assembly interfering with the king's political prerogative. Malesherbes proposed to commit the issuing of *lettres de cachet* to a commission of five members, whose unanimity should be necessary to warrant the arrest.

Later in the year the war office became vacant by the death of De Muy. Even Maurepas felt that the army required reform more perhaps than any department. The young king had recently nominated several marshals, none of whom, except perhaps the Duc de Noailles, had any claim to such an honour. These appointments were followed by a shower of epigrams. One likened the new marshals to the seven deadly sins: another to the planets, with the proviso that none of them were found to answer to the position of Mars. The court was overwhelmed with ridicule, which Maurepas felt keenly. He therefore gave the war office to the Count of St. Germain, who had served in the armies of northern Europe. The count immediately introduced the Prussian drill, and the Prussian discipline. A part of the latter was to punish military delinquents by blows of the flat of the sabre. This raised almost a mutiny amongst the soldiers. At the same time St. Germain reduced the greater portion of the household troops, the musketeers, the *Grenadiers à cheval* and the *Garde du corps*. The officers of course

resided at Versailles, were known to the court, and formed part of it. Loud were the execrations against the sweeping reforms of the Count of St. Germain.*

CHAP.
XXXVII.

Whilst the military noblesse were thus alienated, and whilst courtiers and the members of the old school declared that the abolition of *lettres de cachet* would leave them helpless, Turgot insisted on abolishing the *corvée*. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, took the lead against it, and we have in print the disputations and the reasons on both sides. The superior intelligence and policy of Turgot shine forth in the discussion. And yet it must be confessed, that he bore hard upon the landed proprietors. He himself owned that when the *taille* and *vingtième* were paid, there remained but half the nett produce or profit of the soil to be divided between landlord and tenant. And yet Turgot proposed flinging on this *vingtième* the expense of the roads and other works, hitherto performed by *corvée*. He levied on this, besides, the cost of the three great canals of Picardy, Burgundy, and the Charente. He suppressed their transit dues, the rights of bailiwick, and in fact mulcted the nobles or gentry of divers sources of profit, whilst the great one of military and civil employ was largely dried up and curtailed. Moreover, Turgot, whose theory it was that the land should bear the chief burden of taxation, did not conceal his intention of raising a *subvention territoriale*, which would fling a greater proportion of burdens upon the possessors of land.

The nobility and landed proprietors were thus in arms against Turgot; courtiers and functionaries equally so: whilst enemies, who could assume the appearance of impartiality, pointed to the bad results of several of the schemes. The free circulation of corn, for example, had raised disturbances not only in the capital, but in many parts of the kingdom. Some 500 troops were killed in a riot at Dijon. To remedy the

* Vie et Mémoires du Comte de St. Germain.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

effect of a deficient harvest, Turgot offered a premium upon importation which disturbed prices and scarcely tallied with free trade.*

Turgot's financial policy was of the simplest. He at first insisted on three points, which the king fully conceded. These were—no bankruptcy, no loans, and no new taxes. To keep up to such a programme, there was but one way, that of economy, which of course bore hard upon a host of people. Terrai had raised the receipts by all kinds of rigour to 370,000,000. But the expenditure was 400,000,000. The debt left by Terrai amounted to 4,700,000,000 livres, with an interest of 235,000,000. The fault found with Turgot was, that he did not diminish the weight of taxation; augmenting it for some classes, on the contrary. Neither did he restore the balance between receipt and expenditure. Turgot, however, saw his way, through peace and economy, to a perfect liberation of the revenue, and to the means of reducing the heaviest portion of its burden. But whilst he was thus appealing to time for the accomplishment of his plans, a personage who was a far inferior administrator to Turgot, but a more subtle and experienced financier, contrived to whisper in the ears of Maurepas, that much might be done by credit, and that the king's service might be carried on, and a fair economy enforced, without impoverishing and discontenting anybody. This person was Necker, a Swiss banker, established in Paris, where he had first signalled himself by his defence of the East India Company, when threatened with destruction. He took different views from Turgot, with respect to the import and export of grain. On coming to present his book to the controller-general, the latter rather rudely and superciliously refused to look at it, and thus defied instead of conciliating the author. Such was the character of Turgot.

* Œuvres de Turgot.

His chief care seemed to be to augment the number of his enemies. To the landed proprietors he had been severe by his fiscal reforms, and menaced them by the greater one of a *subvention nationale*. The clergy was to be subject to the tax also. The farmers-general and capitalists he had docked and reduced, as much as Terrai himself. To the army, the court, the parliament he was odious. As to the people, whom he chiefly protected, they had been made to rise in insurrection against him. And then came the turn of the middle class. Turgot expressed his most urgent reforms in six edicts, one of which abolished the *corvée*, another all corporations of trades called *jurandes*. This set the Paris citizens in a flame. All the tradesmen and shopkeepers of the capital were enrolled in one or another of these corporations, from which they kept out competition by monopoly. The parliament took fire at this, even more than against the *corvée*. It was a blow aimed at the civic class. The Prince of Conti took his seat in the commission of parliament charged with examining the six edicts; and it concluded for the rejection, with the exception of the abolition of the corps de Poissy, which rendered meat dear. Although the king was more alarmed at exciting unpopularity in Paris than even throughout the kingdom, still he supported Turgot, and enforced the registration of the edicts in a Bed of Justice. Still the monarch was shaken in his opinion of the wisdom of his finance minister. The procureur general, Seguier, in a very able and passionate harangue, denounced Turgot as the destroyer of every institution that Colbert had founded, and of every principle on which that great man had based the prosperity of France. This was Necker's opinion too. And in short both Maurepas and Louis began to fear that their economical statesman was leading them not only into unpopularity but error.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

A more serious question now began to occupy the attention of the French government. The quarrel between England and its American colonies had swelled to open war; and French statesmen were tempted to take part against that power which so lately had deprived their country of every colony. The Count de Vergennes, who had indeed almost commissioned Beaumarchais and others to furnish arms to the Americans, thought it necessary to bring the matter fully before the council; and he accordingly drew up a paper containing the reasons, which almost necessitated the French government interfering. The chief object of Vergennes' dread was, that England should get the better of her colonies, which would be such an accession to governmental power in England, that it could not fail to attack and subdue the Spanish colonies abroad, and at the same time overcome all parliamentary opposition at home. Should the king and the government of England thus become absolute, argued Vergennes, they would be so powerful that France could not stand before them. And it was imperatively necessary to interfere, to prevent such fearful results. It would be difficult to amass a greater amount of ignorance and error than the policy of the old school of diplomacy put together.

Turgot, who was no diplomatist, but who had all the sagacity of common sense, observed, in the first place, that it was almost impossible for England to subdue her colonies. And any amount of victories over American armies would never conquer the difficulty of ruling Americans, and the impossibility of deriving power and profit from them. But the probable result of the war, according to Turgot, would be the separation of England and its colonies, and with it the explosion of the doctrine that any country could keep colonies for its profit. The Spanish colonies would infallibly one day imitate the English. And there

would be an end of monopoly, of restriction and protective systems. It is almost incredible that a man should have the genius and the foresight to declare all this in 1776. But such was Turgot. He deprecated war. He thought, indeed, that the sale of arms to the American rebels could not be prevented. But he was opposed to sending them any French envoy, or allowing France to be idly dragged into the quarrel. With the exception of Malesherbes, Turgot found none to support his opinion. The old court party desired war, as the surest means of breaking through Turgot's economy, and getting back patronage and expenditure. The necessity of refitting the navy, preparatory to a struggle, was represented to the finance minister. He replied that he had no funds, but consented to a loan of four millions, in Holland, to meet that necessity.

Louis still hesitated to get rid of a minister of whom he was known to have said: "It is only Turgot and I who love the people." Malesherbes was driven to resign in the spring of 1776. His idea of a committee to examine and issue *lettres de cachet* was not entertained; and as the court world was evidently against reform, he withdrew. Similar modes of disgust were applied to induce Turgot to follow the example of his friend. But he was determined not to forsake his task till actually driven from it. He was in the habit of reading long memoirs to the king. After an infliction of this kind, Louis asked, "was that all?" On Turgot's reply in the affirmative, the monarch observed, so much the better. In the same evening Turgot received his letter of dismissal (May 1776);* and Maurepas was appointed president of the council of finance.

But a few years before, when a minister was dismissed, he was also exiled, and lucky if he escaped with

* Other causes are assigned to Turgot's dismissal, such as the intercepting of a counterfeit letter, in which he was made to abuse the

court. Another story is, that he refused to pay an order, presented from the queen, for the payment of a large sum.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

no further punishment. Such was the case with Choiseul. Now Malesherbes and Turgot, both of them, on leaving office, addressed letters, not of supplication, but of warning, to the king. Turgot had the hardihood to tell his majesty that, if he left himself the mere instrument of his courtiers, he had but to choose between the fate of Charles the Ninth and that of Charles the First.

Maurepas summoned Clugny from Bordeaux, where he was intendant, to be controller-general. The change had the instant effect of stopping all credit. The Dutch would not complete their loan; and French capitalists, though not liking Turgot, despised Clugny. His only acts, indeed, were to undo what Turgot had done, to restore the *corvée* and corporations, to the delight of landlords and master-artisans, but amidst the disgust and resistance of the labouring classes in town and country. Clugny's only financial act was a lottery. His death, after a few months of office, enabled Maurepas to make a better essay; this was to entrust the finances to Necker, the Colbertist, the rival of Turgot, and the foe of the Economists. Necker was a foreigner and a Protestant; he could not, therefore, sit in council, or hold high office. Thus, whilst the real management of affairs was given to him, a nominal minister was appointed in the person of Taboureau des Réaux.

Necker's first care was to introduce into the treasury what Turgot's experience as mere intendant did not enable him to execute. This was a regular system of accounts. Those existing were a labyrinth through which no one could see his way. Nor, indeed, were such things as receipts found in the treasury. Necker thus showed his incontestable superiority as an accountant.*

The economy which Turgot had shown in diminishing the expenses of the court, and suppressing the useless officers of finance, were applied equally by Necker, who, however, did not shrink from a loan to facilitate his

* Œuvres de Necker; Memoirs of Marmontel.

reforms and meet exigent demands. Appointed director of finance in October 1776, Necker so strengthened himself by ability and assiduous labour that he was appointed Controller in the following February. Less courageous than Turgot, or warned by his fall, Necker did not pretend to any great measure of reform, but limited himself to economy and the amendment of details. He showed his sympathy for the artisan, by exempting from the *vingtième* all those who followed their calling in small towns. Necker, too, accepted what Colbert could not tolerate, a war with England, provoked by aid sent to her insurgent colonies.

There was no more active promovent of the revolution in France than the eagerness with which the government embraced the American cause, inspired by mere jealousy of English greatness. This was the event which chiefly overthrew Turgot, and adjourned, as it proved, for ever, the attempt to preclude constitutional revolution by reform. The war that ensued necessitated increased expenses, met by Necker with loans, indeed, but leaving the finances in such a state that nothing remained for pecuniary exigencies, save convoking the nation itself. Moreover, the political opinions of the country, theoretically shaken by reform, were completely turned against monarchy and aristocracy by the tenets, the arguments, and the triumph, of the Americans. Louis the Sixteenth, in sowing the American storm with what he hoped would pacify France, did unfortunately but reap the whirlwind. Vergennes was, however, wary. He would concede but secret succours to the American agents Dean and Franklin,* until the surrender of an English army and its commander, Burgoyne, in October 1777, gave

* Beaumarchais, introduced to these agents by the French government, contracted for a supply of ammunition and stores, the greater part of which came out of the French arsenals.—Hildreth, Hist. of United States. Moreover, a number of French corsairs received American commissions, and committed vast depredations upon British commerce.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

courage to the French cabinet to display all its malevolence. But previous to this, several young French officers, who, of course, were nobles, such as Lafayette and Segur, had crossed the Atlantic, and taken service under the banner of Congress. Lafayette, wounded at Brandywine, was made a major-general; and his praise and fame were hailed in France, and contrasted with the do-nothing generals and marshals of Versailles. Three months had scarcely elapsed after the surrender of Burgoyne ere the French government came to a solemn agreement with the agents of the United States. The avowed treaty was simply one for commercial interchange, recognising the successful belligerents as a nation. This alone was to be signified to Great Britain, but as a rupture was expected on the part of that power, another and eventual treaty was signed on the same day by the French and the Americans, stipulating mutual aid in case of war proceedings from England, as well as a promise not to treat one without the other. February the 6th was the date of these treaties. When that of commerce was announced to the British government, it replied at once by the recall of its ambassador from Paris. Declaration of war soon followed.

Hostilities between France and England, caused by colonial and transatlantic differences, were necessarily confined to the sea. And for this the French had made more ample preparation than their rivals supposed. A fleet of sixteen vessels, under the Count d'Estaing, sailed from Toulon for America almost immediately; whilst one double that number, under D'Orvilliers, was assembled at Brest, and was intended to dispute superiority in the Channel, and so prepare the way for an invasion of England. Naval actions soon took place, first between frigates, and between the fleets off Ushant. In neither was the victory decisive. The French showed themselves on equal terms with

their foes. The admirals on both sides threw the fault of their failure upon their lieutenants. The Duke of Orleans, who commanded a division of the French fleet, was strongly impugned, and but weakly defended by the organs of the government. In England similar accusations went through all the publicity of courts-martial as well as of criticism and inquiry. In France all was hushed up, cowardice as well as crime. The want of success on the part of D'Orvilliers had the effect of leaving the troops collected in the camps of Vaussieux and other parts of Normandy for the purpose of invasion completely idle.*

CHAP.
XXXVII.

The Toulon fleet had in the meantime reached the coast of America, and landed the French diplomatic envoy, M. Girard. Their very approach compelled the English to abandon the Chesapeake, and concentrate their naval and military forces in and near New York. The Americans, masters of Boston, greatly desired to get possession of Rhode Island. This they hoped to accomplish with the co-operation of the French fleet. Lord Howe soon came to challenge it, and D'Estaing not refusing, a naval engagement commenced, in which the elements interfered with far greater violence than the belligerents, almost destroying the French admiral's vessel, and compelling both fleets to make port for safety and repairs. Later in the year the fleets of the two nations were engaged in futile conflicts and small conquests through the West India Islands, D'Estaing at last receiving a severe repulse before Savannah.

The year 1779 was marked by the accession of Spain to the Franco-American alliance against England. Charles the Third began by proposing to mediate between the belligerents, but, as he insisted from the first on England's recognising American independence, the mediation was rejected. † Spain therefore joined

* Mémoires de Rochambeau. appendix to Coxe's Spanish Kings
† Florida Blanca. Memoirs in of the House of Bourbon.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

France, with what aim was soon apparent when the united navies, amounting to sixty sail of the line, besides frigates, appeared in the Channel. The British admiral, Hardy, had scarcely half the number to oppose to this formidable armada, from an encounter with which he shrank into Plymouth. The French had 50,000 men ready at Havre and St. Malo, to embark for England, whenever the combined fleets of France and Spain were masters of the Channel. They were so indeed when Hardy withdrew into port. But the impossible order was given for the French transports from the above ports to meet at Cherbourg, the wind, which would be favourable for the one, being necessarily adverse to the other. Sickness reigned on board the fleet; they repaired to Brest, and the expedition evaporated as that of the Great Armada had done. The Spanish government had in the meantime formed the siege of Gibraltar, and pressed it with more than usual vigour. Rodney first made his name remarked by re-victualling the fortress early in 1780. What was more menacing to England was the junction of all the maritime powers in opposition to its right of search and of blockade. Russia and the powers of the North entered into the league of armed neutrality, which in Holland went further. American cruisers brought the British prizes into the Texel, and the Dutch showed themselves eager to profit by what they considered the decadence and ruin of Great Britain.

In 1781 the French government, which had hitherto given little real assistance to the Americans, felt the necessity of doing something more effective, if the American alliance were not to escape and turn to their disprofit. Necker's active influence prevailed for a moment over Maurepas' nominations, and new ministers both of war and marine, far superior in activity and talent to their predecessors, were appointed. These were Segur and Castries. The former had bled in

the common cause. Ten thousand French soldiers and a proportionate naval force were prepared under Rochambeau, to bring efficient aid to Washington. And after he had landed, their number was augmented by a considerable reinforcement. The great military aim of the Americans was to drive the British from New York, as they had already done from Boston. And they were the more tempted to it as the English scattered their forces, and strove to retain with insignificant armies positions both in north and south. This might have been more feasible and less dangerous had they preserved the full command of the sea. But the strangest feature of the war was, that the English never succeeded in preventing the arrival of succours from France to the insurgents, or even in maintaining their own superiority in the great gulfs and rivers. Formerly, when the French fleet, in conjunction with the American army, threatened the British in Virginia, their commander had the good sense to withdraw to New York. Now not only the French fleet under D'Estaing was expected in the Chesapeake, but Rochambeau, deprecating an attack on New York, had directed his own army and that of America to drive Lord Cornwallis from Virginia. Neither withdrawn, nor reinforced in time, and unsupported by the fleet, that general allowed himself to be driven into one of the nooks on the Chesapeake, where at Yorktown, though entrenched, he was attacked by his foes; the French alone, 7,000 strong, were equal to the English, and there were, moreover, 9,000 or 10,000 Americans. The French, under Viomenil, carried one of the redoubts which defended the English posts at the point of the bayonet, the Americans reduced the other, and nothing was left to Cornwallis but to surrender (October 1781).*

Although the treaty of peace was not concluded for a year after, here virtually terminated the struggle

* Memoirs of Rochambeau and Lafayette.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

between England and her American colonies. The nature of that struggle, especially when the French joined it, was as unexpected as the result was the contrary. From previous wars the English superiority by sea was considered to be established. Yet from the very first the French disputed it, and almost to the last maintained an equality. The absolutism of French monarchs had, it was thought, reduced the administration of the kingdom to the last degree of disorder and insufficiency, rendering the existence or discovery of talent in commanders impossible, whether in army or in navy. True as this was, the free and constitutional administration of England was not more successful. For, outnumbered at the commencement of the war, and obliged to shelter within its ports, the British navy at that period seemed to have fallen from its traditional reputation; and, until Rodney appeared, their admirals seemed not a jot superior to the French. The military efforts of the British in America were still more deficient in capability and judgment. The attempts made to subdue a continent of exasperated millions with armies of 20,000 or 25,000 men were persisted in, and even these inadequate forces were driven into corners still more incapable of defence. Never, unfortunately, was a greater example of impotency given in council or in the field than was shown by the English statesmen who provoked and mismanaged the American war. The French government, bankrupt as it was, showed far more efficiency and courage than did the ministers of George the Third.

Costly as was the American war to France, and dangerous as was the principle it taught and set in vogue, still much use might have been made of it by an able minister, to point out the necessity of reform, and to enlist the support of people and parliament in reducing the more favoured classes to a fairer degree of equality. But in Turgot Louis did not find, and

indeed did not seek, a politician who would venture to apply a large measure of reform. Necker was, in truth, not without views, but the example of Turgot deterred him. Nor did he enjoy Turgot's power of proposing and discussing projects in council, as well as impressing them personally upon the king. Whatever project Necker conceived, he was obliged to communicate it and discuss it first with Maurepas, and he has minutely described the pains and difficulties with which he overcame the prejudices of the old courtier. The latter, indeed, only bore with the upstart and uncourtly controller for the sake of the credit which he commanded, and the supplies which he brought to the war with England or of America. Yet that was soon so popular that parliament could scarcely have ventured to reject any taxes that Necker might impose for carrying it on. But his system was to borrow, not impose new taxes, and he by so doing threw away an opportunity, never subsequently offered, for overcoming parliamentary resistance. Necker found towards the support of this war about 500 millions of livres, raised chiefly on sales of annuities; this, greatly increasing the weight of debt and of the interest upon it, subsequently necessitated an appeal to the nation.

The mode of drawing up French financial accounts was then, what it is still, one that baffles rather than facilitates comprehension. The ordinary revenue was represented to consist merely of what reached the treasury, the part abstracted from it by mortgages, anticipations, or guarantee, being left out. The interest of the greater part of the debt being paid in this way was also left out of the accounts of expenses. By this means it was easy to present a decorous statement of ordinary revenue and expenditure, whilst the extraordinary requirement and outlay, although equal in amount to the ordinary, was altogether omitted. Necker thus boasted in 1781 of expending but 254 millions of livres,

CHAP.
XXXVII.

with a revenue of 264 millions, leaving him a surplus of ten millions. Whilst his predecessor thus boasted of a surplus, Calonne declared that there had been yearly deficits without interruption, one of upwards of fifty millions in Necker's model year of 1781. The latter defended himself ably against an unscrupulous antagonist. He affirmed that the interest of all that he borrowed was met by reduction and improvement of the revenue. But even by this account the fruit of all Necker's economy and reduction was swallowed up by the war. And it afterwards appeared that a real and large deficit threatened in the year 1781, till it was covered by a loan, raised subsequently to Necker's statement.

One of the greatest innovations of the time was the publication of the *Compte Rendu*, or financial statement, the first that was ever made in France, and which the retrograde blamed, not only as giving publicity to what in their opinion should have remained a mystery, but for the reform which, though it did not propose, it suggested as necessary. Thus Necker signalled the twenty-eight millions of livres expended on pensions as exorbitant, and as double of what all the sovereigns of Europe taken together paid for similar services. He also recommended, though he did not insist on, the abolition of the *corvées*. The *gabelle*, or salt duty, was the object of the minister's disquisitions. He discussed and rejected the idea of the Economists to suppress and replace it by a territorial tax. It brought in fifty-four millions. A direct tax, equally productive, would, he declared, be far more onerous. The equalising the salt duty to about six sous the pound throughout the kingdom would remove the existing ills of injustice, extortion, and contraband.

The only organic reform that Necker strongly insisted upon was Turgot's idea of provincial assemblies. No finance minister, he declared, possessed of centralised power could fully know the condition of the pro-

vinces, and their ability to bear taxation. There was little use in consulting the intendant or his subordinates, all of whom had their own interests. The proprietors of each province should be consulted, and their complaints and recommendations, controlled by the intendant, could alone furnish proper data.

Necker's memoir upon the subject was presented to the king in 1778, the year after he became controller. Turgot's plan was greatly modified to meet the objections of Maurepas and the king. There was no mention of provincial assemblies, or of members to be chosen by electors. Necker merely proposed provincial assemblies of from fifty to sixty members, the greater number chosen by the government, and these filling up the number. It was first applied in the province of Berri. The assembly consisted of twelve ecclesiastics, twelve gentlemen, twelve inhabitants of towns and middle class, and twelve of the country. The most remarkable part of the regulation was that the members were to form but one assembly, and to vote together, as was the case with the states of Languedoc. The task of the assembly was to give their opinion as to existing taxes, and to superintend the distribution. For the latter purpose there was to be a standing commission, the provincial assembly itself only meeting every two years, for a couple of months.

The provincial assembly of Berri answered admirably, and Arthur Young depicts the roads and appearance as far superior to that of other provinces. The liberals and philosophers clamoured, however, against the large influence given to the clergy. In consequence Necker gave the clergy a lesser representation in the provincial assemblies which he instituted in Dauphiny and the Haute-Garonne. In the latter province it consisted of ten clergy, sixteen gentry, and twenty-six commoners. Dauphiny was similarly endowed, but the Dauphinois regretted their old Estates, and would be contented

CHAP.
XXXVII.

with nothing else. The Bourbonnais showed equal discontent with the assembly appointed to meet at Moulins, and the intendant, heading the opposition, proved one of the main instruments in putting an end to Necker's administration, as well as his scheme.*

Necker, indeed, in the course of his four years' administration of finance, had made almost as many enemies as Turgot. The party of the queen, which began to exhibit its influence, and the friends of Choiseul alone showed him some favour. But Maurepas was more hostile every day, and his brother ministers, including Vergennes, were as unfriendly as Maurepas. Latterly Necker became as odious to the parliament as Turgot himself, owing chiefly to his memoir on provincial assemblies, which exposed the pretensions of the parliament, as inimical to progress, and injurious in their effects upon the administration. This memoir, surreptitiously obtained from the ministerial office, set the parliament in a flame.

Maurepas' enmity was the most influential in the overthrow of Necker, as it had been in that of Turgot. The old minister could not tolerate any one that threatened to diminish his hold either of popularity or of the king's favour. Sartine, the minister of marine, was a follower of Maurepas. He managed his department, especially the expense, more after habits of old license than according to the new, which Necker had laid down, for the necessity of each head of a department consulting the finance minister ere he launched into extraordinary expenses. Necker admitted some four or five millions extra as tolerable, but Sartine exceeded what we should call his estimate by twenty millions, which was the cause of much perplexity to the finance minister. The latter demanded his dismissal, and Maurepas, who could not then, in the midst of the war, do without the credit that raised loans, was

* Lavergne, *Assemblées Provinciales en France*.

obliged to submit (October, 1780). What was still more mortifying, Necker, in consequence of Maurepas being confined with the gout, nominated Sartine's successor. This was the Marquis of Castries, an able minister, but both from his ability and his connexion with Choiseul peculiarly invidious to Maurepas. The appointment of a new and efficient naval minister was followed by a similar change in the war office. Owing to the same choice, and the same influence, the Marquis of Segur was appointed to the war office. And the sagacity of Necker was manifest in the increased vigour shown in the two military departments, a vigour rendered sufficiently manifest in the succour afforded to commerce, and to the important results which followed in the last years of the war.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

But what raised Maurepas' hostility to the utmost was the appearance of the *Compte Rendu*, which preconised all the reforms to which the court was opposed, and which, though an official statement of finance, made no mention of Maurepas himself. It was the first of blue books, and the minister mocked it as a *conte bleu*. The court being as indignant at its appearance as the public was pleased, the treasurer of the Count d'Artois, Bourboulon by name, wrote an answer to it, and exposed what he considered its fallacies. Necker replied, and overwhelmed his adversary with indignant refutation. He allowed himself to be carried away by the personal intolerance of the period to demand the dismissal of Bourboulon from the prince's service. This, he was informed, was impossible even to demand. Who could so insult the king's brother? Whilst Necker was thus attacked at court, and denied reparation, he encountered the opposition we have spoken of in his own department of finance, which then included much of what would be considered to belong to the home administration. Not only did the people of Dauphiny object to his edict for convoking a provincial assembly,

CHAP.
XXXVII

but the authorities of Moulins flatly refused to execute his order. The intendant of that generality, Reversins, stood forth in open opposition to the minister, and was supported by the provincial parliament. He insisted on the intendant being removed, and registration of his edict rendered compulsory on the parliament. Maurepas hesitated to dismiss him, as he refused to sacrifice Bourboulon. Necker then demanded entrance to the council, that in the presence of the king and his brother ministers he might plead the necessity of his measures, and perhaps carry them in despite of the prime minister. The latter met the demand by the same objection which was raised against Law, that he was a Protestant. He who would not go to mass could not possibly enter the council. Necker applied to the queen, and invoked her aid. Marie Antoinette would willingly have given it, for she infinitely preferred him to Maurepas. But she was powerless as yet, and could merely recommend Necker to be patient. He regretted not having followed her advice, when towards the close of the year, he heard of Maurepas' death. Necker resigned (May 1781). All Louis' regrets were for the pleasant old courtier. He had none for such devoted ministers as Necker and Turgot, the latter of whom died also about this period. However disgusted with the evils of administrative disorder and prodigality, and of privilege abuses, Louis was evidently equally weary of efforts to do away with and reform them. Whatever the system was, good or bad, Louis the Sixteenth wearied of it in a year or two. He was a perfect child in his good-nature, his pettishness, his change of humour, and unaccountable dislikes.

As the parliament had contributed to the fall of Necker, and was flattered thereby, it was considered wise to secure its support, which was attempted by the appointment of a judge, Joly de Fleury, to the place

of controller-general. He began by falling into the old ways of borrowing; adding to the whole range of indirect taxes two sous the livre, calculating at producing thirty millions. Fleury at once borrowed two hundred millions, half as much almost as Necker had done during his whole administration. Nevertheless, the parliament registered the new tax without difficulty. And Fleury, encouraged, restored the pensions, the receivers and treasurers-general, and all those high and well-paid officers which Necker had reduced. Then came the news of the defeat of the Count de Grasse, in the West Indies, by Rodney, which brought the necessity of refitting a fleet, an excuse for a new loan, as well as a new tax, and a third *vingtième*, to prosecute the war. At the same time it was felt that the finance administration was a sieve through which money passed rapidly. Fleury threw the blame on the other departments, and a council of finance, with Vergennes at the head, was appointed to examine and control. Castries and Segur, the navy and war ministers, protested, and offered their resignation. As they were able and popular, they were soothed by the promise of being made marshals. But Joly de Fleury was obliged to resign.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

In March, 1783, a younger judge, Ormesson, was chosen to succeed Fleury. He was honest and a foe to prodigality. He resisted the importunities of the princes, and offered to resign when Louis the Sixteenth bought Rambouillet for fifteen millions without consulting his finance minister. The latter seemed indeed not worth consulting. He was unable to procure any loans. Fleury had restored the custom of borrowing, on the condition of the interest being based upon new taxes, and Ormesson durst propose no new tax. The honest financier was thus reduced to expedients. He took away the six millions lying in the bank of discount; the capitalists instantly sent to withdraw their money.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

The minister ordered the bank to refuse payment, at least of bills to any considerable amount. Under the scandal of such a bankruptcy, and for such a trifling sum, Ormesson was obliged to withdraw. In the space of two years, years mostly of peace, Ormesson and Fleury had increased the state liabilities by as large a sum as Necker, that is, by upwards of 400 millions.

The ship was evidently sinking. How little the king was aware of it, is apparent from his purchase of Rambouillet. Castries had the courage to declare that Necker alone could avoid a general bankruptcy. But Louis felt offended at the want of respect or etiquette shown by Necker in his letter of resignation. At the same time the queen and the princes had found a person to their taste in Calonne, a confident man, who promised wonders, and who had all Maurepas' art of pleasing and fascinating the great. Yet Calonne did not please Maurepas himself, whom he once tried to impress with the idea of his genius. But he failed, and was set down by the veteran as empty and presumptuous.*

The queen would indeed have preferred Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, for prime minister. But Louis had an objection to appoint an ecclesiastic to be minister, especially one like Brienne, of immoral character. Calonne was disagreeable to him also for being disorderly and indebted. But Vergennes supported him, and the Parisian capitalists expressed confidence in him. He was accordingly appointed towards the close of 1783. Calonne's first act was frank. It was to inform the king that he was indebted to the amount of 220,000 livres, which it was easy for a controller-general to pay, but it would render him more independent if his majesty would pay it. Louis, astonished at the boldness of the man, gave him the money. Calonne recounted these circumstances to

* Monthion.

Machault, and added, "the state of the finances was so bad that I should not have undertaken to mend them if my own private affairs were not so desperate."

CHAP.
XXXVII.

When Calonne entered upon office, there were nearly 650 millions of arrears. The expense of the marine had increased 400 millions, the fault of De Grasse's defeat. Of 500 millions raised from the tax-payers, but 300 reached the treasury. The ordinary expenses, independent of arrears, had risen to 350 millions. The labours of Turgot and Necker had thus in a couple of years been undone. Calonne thought it futile to recur to their system of economy. His policy seemed to be, first, to conciliate every influence, the king, the princes, the courtiers, the capitalists, the parliament, and the public; then, having secured the good-will of all, to come forward to redeem debt and renew abundance. He was rash enough to rely upon his ability to perform this miracle. And in the meantime he resolved to strew his path and that of everyone else with flowers. His first act was to renew the lease of the *fermiers généraux*, which his predecessor had cancelled; the *fermiers généraux* in return helped the minister by setting afloat the bank of discount, which Ormesson had ruined. A loan of 100 millions was the next operation. To encourage lenders, he promised to pay off the annuitants by means of the bank of discount, and issued a prospectus for reimbursing the floating debt in twenty-four years. This would bring Calonne's operations down to 1800, long before which time the deluge was likely to come, and did come. The new minister, no doubt, saw something of the kind in the future, but his only mode of preparing for it was the philosophic one of enjoying the present. The plente of money which Calonne was successful in procuring enabled him to gratify the court. He bought St. Cloud from the Duke of Orleans, and gave it to Marie Antoinette. The king's brothers had their

CHAP.
XXXVII.

debts paid, and the *grands seigneurs* had what they pleased. "When I saw everyone tending his hand," observed a prince, "I stretched out my hat, and Calonne filled it." Not only the *grandees*, but the lesser courtiers, received their pensions and crosses that Turgot and Necker had so mercilessly cut off. He created all kinds of new places with high salaries for few or for many. Twelve receivers-general did Necker's work. Calonne appointed forty-eight of them. In an operation on what was called the *rescription*, the officers were allowed to make a profit of thirty-two millions. He thus flung away the amount of a loan. If this went to satisfy the capital, the provinces had their share of expenditure. Considerable sums were given to each seaport for enlargement and embellishment; the navy was popular. The *acquits au comptant*, or payment without specification, swelled beyond the proportions of even Louis the Fifteenth's reign.

In the midst of such prodigality, Calonne's first loan was soon exhausted, whilst the produce of the regular revenue was much diminished. The winter was rigorous, the summer unproductive, leaving no surplus or profit wherewith to pay the *taille* and other taxes. Many localities required food, instead of paying contributions. Calonne issued another loan about the same time that Necker published a work on the administration of the finances, which proved a complete satire and exposure of the malversation of his successor.*

It is difficult to reconcile the patriotism of Louis the Sixteenth with his support of Calonne. There was no war, no extraordinary need of such large sums, against which the parliament protested, and the nation murmured. Some misgiving ought surely to have aroused the vigilance of Louis, which had been so easily awakened in the case of Turgot and of Necker, but so benumbed in that of a Maurepas or a Calonne.

* Necker, *Œuvres*, Calonne's *Mémoire*, Calonne tout entier, *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, Bachaumont.

The king supported the latter against the remonstrances of parliament, forcing it to register his edicts. He closed the eyes and ears of court and administration to those reports, which everywhere circulated, of the fraudulent and unconscionable mode by which Calonne strove to raise money. No budget would have been sufficient; no credit enabled him to resist the difficulties which his reckless administration raised up. Loans became impossible. New taxes still more so. And even the old tax of the third *vingtième*, the term of which expired, Calonne dared not, in the face of parliament, venture to renew.

Reduced to the last extremity and to the verge of bankruptcy, the result of his three years' jubilant administration, Calonne had no resource but to confess his situation to the king. Full 1,000 millions were levied on the French people; one-half of the sum was destined for the treasury, but what with expense of collection, mortgages to pay interest, and *fermiers*, there were not 200 millions of revenue to meet 300 millions and more of expense. This was in time of peace. Necker, with his boasted borrowing, had left a disastrous example, as well as facility, to his successor. If he had thus procured 440 millions, Fleury and Ormesson had raised as much, whilst Calonne, borrowing all that he could, had increased the incumbrances by 500 millions. The whole debt stood at 1,600,000,000. Calonne avowed a yearly deficit of 114 millions, with an arrear of 600 millions.

After such an astounding confession, Calonne proposed to stave off bankruptcy and ruin by calling an Assembly of Notables, and proposing to them the very plans of Turgot and Necker for which the king had got rid of these ministers.* Wondrous as was the audacity of Calonne, still more wondrous was the acquiescence of the monarch. The natural movement of

* Calonne's Mémoire.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

almost any sovereign on such an exposure should have been to expel Calonne, and call at least Necker, to superintend and complete the schemes which he and Turgot had proposed. But no; Louis retained his anger against Necker, as well as his faith and friendship to Calonne. That the king fully perceived the origin as well as the tendency of Calonne's proposal is evident from the observation which he uttered on receiving them. "This is pure Necker," said Louis. Calonne did not deny it, merely rejoicing that this was the best course he could suggest. The minister's main argument with the monarch might indeed have awakened the mistrust of the latter, had he known aught of history. Convoking the Notables in lieu of the estates had been a device of Henry the Fourth and of Sully, both of whom dreaded the bigot prejudices and hot passions, exaggerated by recent civil war, which influenced both citizen and gentleman. Henry summoned the notables; their first step being to demand the receipt and management of half the revenues of the State. Sully amply indulged their greed, and acquiesced in their monstrous demands, aware that they could make no use of their power, and that it would prove merely an embarrassment. So indeed it did prove, but the circumstance might have deterred a wiser monarch than Louis the Sixteenth from adopting the measure of his great progenitor.

It is said, and is probable, that Louis would not have given such implicit confidence to Calonne but for the support which the latter received from Vergennes. He was of the old courtier school, in some respects the double of Maurepas, for whom Louis showed much deference. Vergennes, too, had been a successful minister. The war for America and the subsequent peace with England were due to him. The relations of Versailles with European courts had also been discreetly managed, whilst the task was some-

times difficult. The alliance which Pompadour had brought about between France and Austria still subsisted, although it no longer had an object, and Louis the Sixteenth's queen, Marie Antoinette, was strongly attached to her mother and brother. The latter was a personage of original views, and of a policy almost always opposed to that of France. Joseph the Second, unable or unwilling to resist Russian ambition, adopted the more prudent though pusillanimous course of allying with it, in order to share its conquests. Thus Austria had procured a portion of unfortunate Poland, and was in full career for acquiring Wallachia at the expense of Turkey, when France interfered, and brought about the peace, which, indeed, left Russia the Crimea, but at least confined Austria within the Carpathians.

The next object of the Emperor Joseph's ambition was Bavaria, the direct race of which being extinct, Munich had passed to the elector palatine. Him Austria could have induced to part with the greater portion of the electorate. But France again interfered, Frederick the Great coming forward too, and levying war rather than permit his great rival to extend its sway over all Southern Germany. The result was the treaty of Teschen in 1779, which secured the integrity of Bavaria.* Again the French government found itself opposed to Joseph the Second with regard to Holland and the Low Countries. The designs and efforts of that emperor to reform in these dominions all those abuses which the philosophers of the day denounced are well known. To weed religion of monasticity, to relieve society from sacerdotal domination, and lift the priesthood itself out of their old routine by forcing education upon them, was his first effort. His next was directed against the privileges and claims of the noblesse and the law functionaries. Had Louis the Sixteenth as boldly entered upon such reforms, some think he

* De Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplomatie* ; Schlosser.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

might have saved his throne. And yet Joseph the Second failed. Joseph's views thus far were those of patriotism and philanthropy. In domestic administration he sought to liberate and enlighten his subjects, whilst at the same time he undertook to free Antwerp from the annihilation to which Amsterdam had consigned it. But the Belgians seconded their monarch in no one of these designs. The people of that country, instead of looking to him, pressed round their monks, their clergy, and noblesse, and rose in rebellion against the liberal reforms of Joseph with the same inveteracy, with which their ancestors had striven against the bigot legislation of Philip and of Alva.

Joseph's views for the emancipation of the Scheldt brought him into collision with the Dutch, who during the American war had developed a strong hatred of England, and had fallen completely into the arms of France. Joseph ordered the attempt to be made of opening the Scheldt. The Dutch fired upon the imperial vessels, and the emperor would have replied to such an act of hostility by war, had not Vergennes notified that France would support the Dutch. Troops were collected with this view. But negotiations intervened, and ended by a dispute between Vienna and the Hague as to the amount of indemnity which the Dutch should pay. These did not come up to Joseph's demand of ten millions of florins. They offered one-half, and Joseph still threatened, when Vergennes offered on the part of France to pay the difference. These five millions, paid by France negligently, and for nothing, were a great cause of reproach to Vergennes, and to Marie Antoinette, of obloquy.*

* An instalment of the money, 100,000 crowns, according to Weber, was forwarded in coin to Vienna, after the revolution had taken place. Stopped at the barrier by the populace, they learned that it was money intended for the queen's brother, the emperor, which enabled calumny to

give the appearance of truth to the report of the large sums which Marie Antoinette sent to her family.

The payment to Austria now was coupled with the interest of seven millions given to Maria Theresa during the war, really for supporting her own quarrel.

The hatred which the Parisian and French people came to entertain of the unfortunate queen, and the malicious stories with which this hatred is still sought to be excused, can with difficulty be accounted for. The personal jealousy of the Duke of Orleans, and the malice of his hangers on, no doubt invented many of these stories, and exaggerated all. Born of a virtuous mother, bred under her eyes, and nurtured in the simplest domestic habits, Marie Antoinette was never taught in her Austrian home to curb or dissemble the exuberance of natural high spirits. But she came from a country where gaiety was associated with innocence, to a court where it had long been made the concomitant of licentiousness and crime. Louis the Sixteenth did not love company, nor join in its excitement. He retired to bed at the hour when everyone else wished and enjoyed society, grave as gay. The female friends of her choice, the Princess of Lamballe, and Madame de Polignac, were virtuous women, and although her peculiar set were rather the young and gay, none but the grossly ignorant and notoriously vulgar imputed impropriety to their mirth. On some occasions, however, the queen carried her love of pleasure so far as to go to the masked balls of the opera; on one occasion, her carriage having broken down, she and her company went thither in a fiacre. The queen herself told the adventure, which malice seized upon, and repeated with its own colouring and additions. Then she sate late of summer nights on the terrace of Versailles. On such slight foundations did the public class Marie Antoinette with those female members of the royal family who, in the last century, indulged in laxity and licentiousness. The court of Versailles had acquired the character of a pandemonium, from which it would have required the ugliness of a gorgon, and the asceticism of a saint, to escape. Marie Antoinette had neither. She was beautiful and

CHAP.
XXXVII.

nirthful. The envy and uncharitableness which the selfish and insolent habits of the French upper class had excited in the lower, greedily caught at the belief that these qualities must be connected with crime.

The great and real fault of Marie Antoinette later was that she used her influence over the king to promote the rash and incapable courtiers instead of the provident and sagacious statesmen. But this was not the case in the early part of Louis' reign. The queen preferred Choiseul to any minister. She at first favoured Necker, and her enmity to the Duke d'Aiguillon and the creatures of Dubarry drew upon her their hatred and venom in addition to that of the Orleans. Still she was stigmatised as the Austrian, and murmurs, instead of plaudits, were heard on every occasion of her visiting Paris, when one miserable act of perversity and folly on the part of a dignitary of the church implicated the queen's character irremediably.

The Rohans had rendered themselves as remarkable in that age by their extravagance as by their eminence and high birth. The Duke of Rohan-Guémené was declared a bankrupt for thirty millions of livres; and whilst the public as well as even the court cried shame, the duchess being obliged to give up the education of her younger children, his cousin, the Cardinal of Rohan, boasted that it was a princely bankruptcy. This personage had been French ambassador at the court of Vienna, and had written rather disparaging accounts of Maria Theresa. He is scarcely to be blamed for this, nor was it his fault that he depicted Maria Theresa as wiping away her tears for Poland with one hand, whilst signing the treaty of partition with the other. The contents of the letters were divulged by Madame Dubarry, and made the Cardinal de Rohan odious to Maria Theresa and to Marie Antoinette.

Superseded at Vienna, and not welcomed at court,

the Cardinal de Rohan was far from contenting himself with the large revenues derived from his archbishopric of Strasburg, and from his place of grand almoner. He directed his efforts to obtain political office and emoluments, and to triumph over the evident aversion of the queen. The path he took was singular for an incredulous age. The cardinal, like the Duke of Orleans, and several others who were far above the weak-mindedness of believing in religious truths, was not proof against the artifice of conjurors and magicians. Such charlatans abounded, and seem to have been in the greatest vogue about this very period, the philosophers of which had, it was boasted, put to flight all the powers of ignorance and darkness. The Cardinal de Rohan put faith in one of these adepts, Cagliostro, who boasted to possess the philosopher's stone. A petition for pecuniary aid addressed to him as grand almoner made Rohan at the same time known to Madame de Lamothe, a Valois by birth, descendant from an illegitimate son of Henry the Second, and long noted as an adventuress. She pleased the cardinal, became his mistress, and at the same time the friend and confidant of Cagliostro.

Through Madame de Lamothe, the conjuror learnt the weak points of the cardinal's character, his ambition of place, and his desire to overcome the aversion of the queen. Upon these two weaknesses they played. Madame de Lamothe pretended to be intimate with the queen's private circle. Cagliostro guaranteed her veracity, and foretold the complete success of her operations. The woman affirmed that she made known to the queen not only the cardinal's loyal attachment, but his personal feelings of affection towards her. Marie Antoinette, according to Lamothe, took advantage of this to ask the cardinal for different sums of eighty thousand and of forty thousand livres, on the understanding, no doubt, that her majesty returned and would recompense the

CHAP.
XXXVII.

cardinal's affection. The latter swallowed the bait, gave the money to Lamothe, and put faith in the incredible favour which he had just acquired. He appeared at court, however, to test the truth of what he was told, and received nothing save signs of haughty aversion from the queen. Lamothe explained this by the necessity of prudence, but felt it necessary to satisfy the cardinal's mistrust. This she did by boldly promising that the queen would grant him a meeting in one of the bosquets of Versailles. A hurried interview accordingly did take place between the cardinal, at the appointed spot, and a female who resembled the queen, but who was no other than a Mademoiselle d'Oliva; she muttered some excuses, and promised the cardinal royal favour and protection. Hurrying away, after having uttered these few words, the lady dropped a rose, on which the cardinal prostrated himself, and kissed the feet, as he imagined, of the queen.

While under the effects of this hallucination, Lamothe informed the cardinal that the queen wanted to purchase a rich collar of diamonds, which a jeweller had shown her, but to obtain which she wanted funds. The jeweller had indeed shown such a collar to the queen, but received for answer that the king had need of ships of war more than jewels, and that this amounted to the price of one. Nevertheless, Lamothe showed the cardinal an authorisation signed by the queen, but in such a manner as a queen of France never signed. Courtier as he was, the dupe did not perceive that the signature of Marie Antoinette *de France* must have been a forgery.

Desirous of purchasing the necklace for the queen, Rohan had not the money. He gave bills, however, one for 400,000 livres for payment the following July. The bargain with the jeweller was made in February 1785. A *valet de chambre* in royal livery was made to come for

the necklace to the cardinal, and to announce himself as *sent by the queen*. It is needless to add that the necklace, once in the possession of this agent of Madame Lamothe, was forthwith broken up, and sold by her. In July the cardinal had not the money even to make the first payment. The jeweller hastened to the queen, and mentioned his claim to Madame Campan, her attendant. The whole affair thus came to the knowledge of Marie Antoinette. She consulted the Baron de Breteuil, who was then minister, and the Abbé de Vermond. Had Vergennes been consulted, he would have taken the trouble to enquire, and probably advised to keep the affair from the public. But Breteuil did not enquire, and the king was informed of the cardinal's scandalous conduct, without his being made aware of the manœuvres of Madame Lamothe. Still there was a possibility of avoiding the open scandal. The cardinal, summoned to the king's closet in the presence of the queen, owned the chief facts of the case, confessed his culpability, but gave as an excuse his being deceived by the false letters of the queen, which Madame Lamothe had shown him. He offered to pay for the necklace, and humbly asked pardon of their majesties.

Unmollified by this submission, the king ordered the cardinal's arrest, which was so little strict that he was enabled to send home a message to have his papers burnt. He was permitted to choose whether he should be tried by the parliament or by a commission. He chose the latter, and the trial took place before the assembled judges. It is needless to state that the cardinal was well defended, and that his principal relatives, as well as all the antagonists of the court, made the utmost exertions in his favour. The final sentence threw the whole blame of the affair upon the woman De Lamothe, whose forgeries had deceived the cardinal. She was condemned to the brand and

CHAP.
XXXVII.

perpetual imprisonment. The cardinal was acquitted. It would have been difficult for a court of justice to condemn the dupe who had lost money and all else. A court of honour, indeed, must have condemned a prince who had so criminally, as well as fatuously, outraged his sovereign. The parliament were not this. And yet both court and public, the one received, the other applauded, the judgment as seriously implicating the queen. The circumstances of the case, made plain by evidence, led to no such interpretation. But the queen had been the chosen victim of resentment, and every opportunity of flinging discredit upon her was eagerly and ungenerously seized.

The Cardinal de Rohan could scarcely expect to preserve his place of grand almoner after such a scandal. Yet when the king deprived him of it, and exiled the prelate to one of his abbeys, the public condemned this order as vindictive. In the same way a feeling of humanity, and respect to her descent, having caused the penalty of the brand to be suspended for Madame de Lamothe, it was counted as connivance or complicity. The sentence was in consequence executed, and Lamothe, who some time after managed to escape from prison, made use of her liberty in England to vilify in every way the Queen of France.*

To shake off the disagreeable remembrance of this trial, Louis the Sixteenth undertook a journey to Cherbourg to visit the works which only in our day have been completed. His progress was a fête. The population of the western provinces at least had not yet caught the epidemy of disaffection and revolt from the capital. About the same period Louis, who was interested in geographical discoveries, conceived the plan of a scientific voyage round the globe, and despatched Lapeyrouse upon that mission.

* Procès du Collier, and the numerous Memoirs of the time.

A more important event that occurred in the short breathing time before the French Assembly of Notables, the first actual step towards the revolution, was the commercial treaty between France and England. The principal cause of so unusual a connexion between the countries was, no doubt, that the practical statesmen of both were weary of the long and idle animosity between them, which no longer, indeed, had an object. The wisdom which the possession of power inspires, was shown in Pitt's disclaimer of the prejudice that France and England must necessarily be enemies, whilst the paradox to which opposition is often condemned appears in the language of Fox, which belied his philanthropic heart in maintaining that neighbours should be foes. Pitt's aim was to diminish contraband; Vergennes, who foresaw a coming time of trouble and disturbance for him, sought, it was said, a truce with England, and signed the treaty as a guarantee. There were other solid reasons, however, such as the detaching England from Portugal, and allowing French wines to enter England on the same terms with the wines of the south. Pitt thus anticipated Cobden by three-quarters of a century, French manufacturers and public uttering the same discontent on both occasions. The complaints, which have proved so powerless against Napoleon the Third, contributed not a little to damage in 1786 the French government and king.

1786 was drawing to a close. The last week of the year was generally the epoch for declaring a loan, and announcing the financial projects for the year ensuing. The ministers had nothing of the kind to offer. On the 29th of the month the king announced to his council, from which, as from every one, save a few persons, the project had been concealed, that he convoked for the same day of the ensuing month, January 1787, an assembly of most qualified persons

CHAP.
XXXVII.

to lighten the distress of the people, reform abuses, and restore order to the finances. The announcement of the convocation of the Notables was a thunder-clap to the old courtiers. "I wonder what Louis the Fourteenth would have said to Calonne," observed the Maréchal de Richelieu. "The king has sent in his resignation," said Segur. None were more annoyed than the princes, save, of course, the Orleans, and *Monsieur*, the king's eldest brother, each of whom hoped to play a more conspicuous part when the great national drama should be opened. The queen and her friends, including even Breteuil, one of the ministry, were much mortified also. All had been concealed from them, and they did not forgive Calonne. However anxious to keep his intention from the premature knowledge of those who might impede it, the monarch saw the necessity of obtaining the suffrage of the public. As early as the 13th of January, nearly a month before the assembly met, a printed sketch of the ministerial plan was issued from the control office. The Notables, it declared, were not called for the purpose of raising loan or subsidy, but to establish equality of taxation, and alleviate the burdens weighing on the poorest class. On the 18th another official communication of the same kind appeared, stating the twelve proposals to be made to the assembly; numbers 10 and 11 of which were the abolition of *mainmorte* and the legal recognition of Protestants.*

The Notables, summoned by the royal order, were 144 in number, seven princes, fourteen prelates, thirty-six nobles, fifty legists of the parliament, twelve representatives of the three orders from the provinces which enjoyed estates, and twenty-five mayors or chiefs of municipalities. Summoned to meet in the *Hôtel des Menus Plaisirs* at Versailles at the close of January, the opening was deferred on account of

* Mem. of Mirabeau, Lafayette, Soulavie, Monthion, Calonne's Mémoire.

Vergennes' illness, and Calonne not being fully prepared with the statement of his formidable and separate measures of reform. Fixed for the 14th February, the death of Vergennes on the previous day again deferred it. His loss was severely felt by Calonne and by the court.

On the 22nd of February Louis opened the assembly by a short speech, after which the controller-general, seated and with his hat on, read a lengthened statement of the distresses of the treasury, and of the measures by which he proposed to remove them. Calonne began by declaring that the views he was about to develop were those personally of the king, who desired to extend the commerce of the nation abroad and secure its prosperity at home. The minister then represented the destitute state in which he had received the finances three years ago, and recounted all he had done to restore them. Money had grown abundant, credit was re-established, and the interest on the debt was regularly paid. The incongruous conclusion of so promising an exordium was the confession to large arrears and an annual deficit of upwards of an hundred millions. The minister then passed to the remedies which he proposed. The first was the equalisation of taxation, the abolition of barriers to internal trade, the lowering of duties, the cessation of the *corvée* and of the *gabelle*, the diminution of the *taille*, and the substitution, for the tax of the *vingtième*, of a territorial subvention, which was to be paid by all lands, ecclesiastical as well as lay, in kind. As a political guarantee for truly carrying out such financial reforms, Turgot's scheme of parish meetings, district assemblies, and provincial estates, was to be put in execution. The primary assemblies were to be elected by proprietors of lands of all classes; 600 livres of revenue entitling to one vote.*

* Discours de Calonne. Procès Verbal des Notables.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

Calonne here proposed, and the king sanctioned, a very large measure of political and financial reform, without either of them being able to mark out or limit its scope. Want of sagacity and common foresight was apparent in the assembling of so peculiar a body, and the asking them to sanction changes especially unpalatable and hostile to them. Moreover, a great many of these changes were not at all required by the great necessity of the crisis, but were foisted into the minister's scheme by theorists, right for the most part in their doctrines, but most foolish from the way and the manner in which they propounded them. Calonne, without well knowing it, was the tool of the Economists. What he proposed was no other than to take the burden of taxation from the peasant, the artisan, and the commercial classes, in order to throw it on the proprietor of land; yet it was precisely the landed proprietors whom he called together to sanction the measure. He abrogated the *vingtième*, he lowered the customs, being the duties on imports and exports, to the amount of thirty millions. He, moreover, abolished the *corvée* and diminished the *gabelle*, obliging the landed proprietor to make good the deficiency. He spoke, indeed, of the new territorial subvention as not amounting to more than half a *dime*, but it was quite evident that the new tax would be swelled to meet all the deficiencies of the revenue, for which Calonne's additional project of a stamp duty and letting of the domains could not suffice.

To hope that a body of large landed proprietors would sanction such innovations was of almost insane miscalculation. Class interests were as much offended as material ones. The nobles saw their privileges set aside by the elections to the Paris assemblies, and probably by the provincial ones. The committees, or *bureaux*, into which the notables divided for deliberation, protested against the scheme; that in which *Mon-*

sieur, the king's brother, presided, insisting that the distinction of the three orders should be observed in the assemblies. The upper clergy were still more loud in reprehension. For the first time they were to be subjected to the territorial subvention, and the weight of the other taxes and duties abrogated were to be flung upon them conjointly with the nobles. Other changes equally unpalatable were at the same time foreseen. It was also proposed to take away the penalties and disabilities weighing upon Protestants. Calonne's scheme of reconciling the clergy to such changes, whilst compelling them to pay their debts by the sale of lay-rents and feudal rights, incensed them still more, the committees generally declaring it a breach of the rights of property. Calonne, in fact, had called for consultation and decision a meeting of his enemies, from which he sedulously excluded his friends. There were not half a dozen of the middle or commercial classes amongst the notables. Had he summoned these in numbers, and appealed to them and to the people against the privileged orders, he might have prevailed; but the king would not have permitted it.*

The discussion relative to the territorial impost in the committees occupied the first week in March. All agreed to repudiate it; but to save appearances, they limited their objections chiefly to its being raised in kind, which would cost more, they said, than the amount of the tax. Calonne took advantage of this to compliment himself, through the organ of *Monsieur*, on the assembly's objecting more to the form than to the substance of the ministerial plan. Whereupon the notables took fire, and protested. Whilst accepting the abolition of the *corvée* and other measures, they declared the impost inexecutable in the form proposed, and at the same time said, that they were unable to substitute any other mode or tax until accounts

* Procès Verbal de l'Assemblée des Notables.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

of receipt and expenditure were laid before them. Calonne made a half attempt to satisfy these demands by a statement read to a certain number of members assembled in the apartment of *Monsieur*. In this he owned to a deficit of 114 millions. The minister's annual accounts were, however, so jumbled up together that the notables declared them to be unintelligible and insufficient.

Calonne then perceived that he had nothing to hope from the notables, and tried to arouse the popular voice to support him. He published a memoir in which he developed his different schemes of reform, and prefaced them by some remarks which reflected upon the notables, and represented them as what they were, a privileged class opposed to any legislation in favour of the non-privileged. This document made little impression on the public, which favoured the notables in their attacks upon crown and government, forgetting that, whilst the crown pressed for equal taxation and other new reforms, the notables evaded and opposed them. But if the public were indifferent to Calonne's explications, the notables were not so. They felt the danger of the obloquy of failure being thrown upon them, and every bureau hastened to draw up a protest and petition to the king against the minister. No one stood up for him save the Count d'Artois, and he stood alone in his committee. The Duke of Orleans was the most violent. And he had the *naïveté* to complain that Calonne's abolition of internal customs deprived him of 400,000 livres revenue. He thus confessed himself an interested retrograde. The most powerful protest was that drawn up by the Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux.

The king was stricken by this unanimous denunciation of Calonne by the notables. Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, conveyed to the monarch a daily report of what passed in the committee. Whilst pondering upon

all this, Louis was aroused by a quarrel between Calonne and Necker, the latter denying and asking to be allowed to prove his denegation of the minister's assertion, that the treasury was left unprovided when he had resigned. The king bade the ex-minister be silent. But he at the same time consulted Joly de Fleury, Necker's successor in the Control, as to who was right, Calonne or his adversary. Fleury decided for Necker, and wrote his opponent a severe letter, of which the Chancellor Miromenil placed a copy before the king. Calonne, challenged by the monarch, remonstrated on being made the tool of a conspiracy, in which ministers joined. He at the same time offered to resign if Miromenil were not dismissed. The king for the moment admitted the justice of Calonne's remonstrance, and consented to the dismissal of Miromenil, who was immediately replaced by Lamoignon. Thus feeling his ascendancy over Louis, and at the same time driven to desperation by the prospect of failure, and by the enmity he encountered, Calonne proposed to overthrow the other ministers, and to punish the notables, for the arrest of whom he is said to have had three-and-thirty *lettres de cachet* prepared. The next dismissal he demanded was that of Breteuil, which the king was willing enough to grant. But Marie Antoinette came to the support of the threatened functionary, and so wrought upon her husband that the letter of dismissal, intended for Breteuil, was addressed to Calonne himself on the 8th of the month of April.*

Although the monarch had dismissed Calonne, he still thought his plans, at least the greater part of them, feasible. Who could be got to execute them? Louis had filled the office of foreign affairs on the death of Vergennes with the Count de Montmorin, who had been his *menin*. Montmorin now proposed the recall of Necker. Louis could not bring himself to stoop to one

* Monthion, Particularités.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

who had just committed a formal act of disobedience. Notwithstanding the royal request to be silent, Necker had published his answer to Calonne, and was exiled to a distance of twenty leagues from Paris for his forwardness. The queen recommended the Archbishop of Toulouse. His majesty objected to both. Yet he resisted more feebly a second attempt of Montmorin and Castries to bring back Necker. Breteuil, however, opposed it, and the royal choice fell on Fourqueux.

“The wig of a councillor of state never covered a poorer head,” says Madame de Staël. With such a minister, Louis ventured to propose to the assembly of notables to vote at least the stamp duty prepared by Calonne. To this they showed equal repugnance as they did to a tax of any kind. Louis therefore was compelled to have recourse to a minister who had influence in the assembly. Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, was supposed to possess this, as he had led the opposition to Calonne; and to the queen’s great joy Brienne superseded Fourqueux as Controller (May 1).

A man more the opposite of Necker than Brienne it would have been difficult to find. Though a churchman, he was a complete man of the world, gallant in morals, and loose in religion. Like Calonne, he appeared to contain a mine of capacity, yet never did a minister, when tried, show such an utter want of it. “He was cunning and supple,” says Marmontel. “He espied rather than looked at you; more astute than sagacious, he had abundance of ideas, but all superficial. He had glimpses rather than a fair prospect of a policy. His was an *esprit à facettes*, as they say of diamonds.” The new minister possessed, however, a certain influence amongst the notables, and he made the most of it by getting them to sanction a loan of eighty millions of livres. So far they would go. But when the archbishop wanted them to consent to the new impost, he found them demur. The real objection to the territorial impost was that it might be

indefinite. Brienne proposed to limit it to eighty millions, and he added a new capitation and a stamp duty, which weighed more upon the commercial classes. The notables, however, were opposed to any of the new systems of taxation. To avoid any vote in furtherance of them, they demanded the accounts of revenue and expenditure, which Brienne furnished to the best of his ability, but from which it was difficult to derive any knowledge. Still the higher noblesse, that of Paris and the court, might have been brought to vote a territorial subvention, but the notables of the provinces were dead against such a concession. The assembly accordingly notified to the minister its incapability of coming to a decision. A law officer from Provence declared that the states general could alone do what was asked of the notables.

M. de Lafayette, who belonged to the second bureau of the notables, startled the Count d'Artois by asking for a national assembly. "The estates you mean," said the count. "Ay, the estates, or something beyond, if it could be had," rejoined the marquis. Still he only asked for them in three or four years, an idea which Brienne caught up and adopted.*

It was evident that no more pecuniary aid was to be had from the notables. They had however, given their sanction, although unwillingly, to certain portions of Calonne's scheme. They had admitted that taxes should be more equally levied; that the *corvée* should be abolished; provincial assemblies held. It was the opinion of the king and of the Chancellor Lamoignon that Calonne's scheme might be proceeded with, and Brienne, though somewhat at variance with the chancellor, professed this opinion too. He was, however, determined to conduct the affair in his own way, and not as the chancellor recommended. Lamoignon perceived that, the notables having disappeared, the parliament would occupy their place in acting as check

* Mémoires de Lafayette. Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

or opposition to the government. He recommended therefore that no time should be lost in bringing down to parliament the registering the whole of the intended scheme, putting foremost the impost to be levied equally on noble and non-noble. If parliament opposed them, the popular voice and that of the provincial assemblies might be invoked against it.

Instead of following this advice, Brienne sent down first to register the edicts for rendering the trade in corn free, for abolishing *corvées*, and establishing the provincial assemblies. The parliament registered them without an observation; and Brienne next presented them the stamp duty. At the mention of a new tax the parliament reproduced all the objections of the notables. They demanded previously to have the accounts of revenue and expenditure laid before them. The government in answer told the parliament it had no right to make such a demand; the notables had examined the accounts, and admitted the necessity of increased revenue. In addition to the *timbre*, or stamp duty, the edict for the territorial subvention was presented to the parliament, evidently with the view of enforcing the registry of both at the same time.

During these days of July parliament discussed the question, its sittings being attended not merely by the judges but by the princes and peers. The assembly presented "an image of the English parliament," observed a journal. The debates were free. Epresmenil did not shrink from accusing the royal family, and the queen herself, of extravagant expenditure. He declared that it was idle for parliament to discuss a question of fiscal interest, the states general being alone empowered to pass such a law. He had made the observation before, but the parliament now grasped it. There was indeed no other excuse to be given for denying all increase of revenue to the crown. On July the 9th there were twenty-nine votes in the parliament to demand the

States General, twenty-seven to reject them, and sixty for the intermediate course of iterative supplication. July the 14th there were but sixty voices demanding this, and sixty-three for referring the disputed question to a committee. Nevertheless, they declared with accord, that the states general alone could vote a perpetual impost, and this was couched in the shape of remonstrance.

To these acts of frowardness and opposition, the court replied by summoning the parliament to Versailles to assist at a Bed of Justice, in which the king compelled the two edicts of the *tontine* and territorial impost to be registered. The judges who attended this ceremony bowed their heads in silence, but it was only to raise them on their return to Paris, and join in haranguing against the tyranny of the court. The people began to take part in the agitation. They crowded the hall *des Pas Perdus* and staircase leading to it, questioning the judges, and forcing them to repeat the hostile votes they had passed against the court. As for the king, he put in force the reductions which Calonne had thought necessary in his household. Yet, when the monarch was saluted on his passage by numbers of his guards and gendarms dismissed, he burst into tears, and could not speak. The queen shut herself up in Trianon. The monarch, compelled to silence the parliament if he would not succumb to it, exiled by *lettres de cachet* the whole body to Troyes (August 6).*

The *cour des aides* and that of *des comptes* at first remained in Paris. And the two princes went to them to register the obnoxious decree. They were attended by a strong body of military, the Count d'Artois being already most unpopular. The crowd thronged after them, and with so little respect that at the head of the great staircase the officer of the guard cried out,

* The parliament exiled to Troyes was of the number of 235.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

To arms. The word caused the crowd to rush precipitately down the great staircase, and pour like a torrent into the streets. The remaining courts imitated their exiled brothers in discussing and haranguing against the government. The crowd on one occasion seized the first president, Nicolai, and compelled him to state the last vote of his court. A man was killed in the tumult.

The peace of the capital was only preserved by a large armed force. There were 1,900 guards, say the journals, on foot every day, which did not prevent the mob from burning Calonne and Breteuil's effigies. They even proceeded at one time to follow this up by burning the effigy of the queen, when the lieutenant of police interfered.* The Palais Royal was, however, impervious to the police, it being under the protection of the Duke of Orleans. But a decree ordered its clubs and society rooms to be closed, the *lycées*, or literary circles, and the chess clubs being alone excepted.

Brienne had as yet no intention of suppressing the parliament. He hoped that their exile would weary and mollify the judges, which in truth it did. The elder magistrates listened to the offers of the court, and a compromise was effected. The government withdrew its obnoxious edicts. The parliament was to sanction the renewal of the *vingtième*, and its sentence of exile was to be recalled. Yet this obsequiousness to the court was only carried at Troyes by fifty-five votes against forty-five, the younger counsellors remaining firm as ever in their opposition.

Before and at the moment of the parliament's recall in 1787, full attention was drawn to foreign affairs and to the miserable part which the government necessarily played therein. For some years French minis-

* The populace were incited to such acts, and taught the victims they should single out, by caricatures,

which were industriously circulated. Descriptions of these will be found in the Memoirs of Bachaumont.

ters, especially Vergennes, by favouring the democratic party in Holland, had become completely masters of that country, and excluded from power the family of Orange and its young representative. The latter had the support of England and of Prussia; the great Frederick was no more, but his successor, brother to the Princess of Orange, was not unwilling to employ his troops to put down the Dutch republicans. These upon one occasion insulted the princess, which brought the irritation of the Prussian king to a point, and he prepared to invade Holland. Such a move on his part was long foreseen in France, and, to obviate it, Castries and Segur had insisted on a camp being formed on the frontier at Givet. Had there been any amount of troops in this camp, the Prussian king, it is thought, would not have ventured to invade an ally of France. But Calonne, and after him Brienne, had neither money nor attention to bestow on aught beyond their domestic troubles. The King of Prussia, therefore, seeing that the French were totally unprepared for war, marched in and occupied the towns of Holland one after another, the democrats behaving very pusillanimously, and the Prince of Orange assuming the power of Stadtholder almost without opposition (September 1787). The leaders of the Dutch popular party took flight for France, which they filled with their complaints, their diatribes, and their republican writers. The court of Versailles had refused them not only succour, which it had not to give, but a commander like Lafayette, which it might have given. And the impression that the French court was opposed to popular emancipation, even in its own interests, was confirmed.

Meantime Brienne's policy of cajoling the parliament led to no satisfactory result. The *vingtième*, which it had sanctioned, brought in so little that the government was obliged in October to raise twelve millions by a lottery under pretext of beginning to build the

CHAP.
XXXVII.

new hospitals. Louis and Lamoignon would have preferred following Calonne's plan of procuring an accord of all the provincial assemblies to overcome the blind opposition of parliament. Brienne had at first acted upon this. At parting with the notables, he threatened them with the *tiers* or commons in the provincial assemblies, in which he told them that the commons should be equal in number to the two privileged orders, and that all the orders should vote together. The parliaments, however, first in Paris, and still more in the country, felt that the provincial assemblies would eclipse their political importance, and quite supersede their financial power. The rustic parliaments therefore opposed the assemblies with all their might. That of Bordeaux actually forbade the assembly of the Limousin to meet, for which act of audacity it was transferred to Libourne. At Besançon, at Dijon, in Brittany, and still more furiously at Grenoble, the parliaments denounced and opposed the provincial assemblies. And Condorcet, secretary of the academy, wrote a pamphlet to prove the worthlessness of these assemblies.

Brienne, with his usual fickleness, gave up contending with them. He could count upon a doubtful majority in the Paris parliament; and his plan was to propose to that body a large loan, for 420 millions, negotiable in five years, at the end of which period he promised to convoke the states general. The queen and the court strongly protested against making any such promise. The king almost equally disliked it. But in the court there was no large opposition. Segur and Castries had withdrawn, and although Malesherbes and the Duc de Nivernais attended the sittings, they were men without influence; Brienne reassured the queen that the promise of the future *États généraux* was mere moonshine, that, if he could get the deficit filled up by means of these loans, there would be no

need of recurring to, or at least of seriously consulting, such an assembly. And the Archbishop of Sens, Brienne having translated himself to that richest of sees, was allowed his way.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

A royal sitting was commanded for the 15th of November, with the ominous accompaniment of summoning the guards to Paris.* After the king had opened the proceedings with a short speech, Lamoignon addressed the assembly at considerable length, developing the most ultra-monarchic theories; denying the right of any person or persons to demand the states general. Notwithstanding this, the king, after having regenerated the finances in five years, by the successive loans then proposed, would summon the states general before the completion of that term. Ministers and monarch hoped that this solemn promise would dispose the assembly to vote the loans, and they accordingly allowed the discussion to commence. During its progress it was evident, from the acclamations given to the speeches and arguments of Epresmenil and others, who demanded the speedy convocation of the estates, and called upon the king, as the father of a family, to grant them; that this was the sense of the assembly; and that, if put to the vote, it would be carried, such a condition necessarily curtailing the loans to the grant of merely one or two instalments. The debate had lasted seven or eight hours. Were it adjourned for the purpose of ascertaining or influencing the votes, the monarch must have returned from Versailles the following day to listen to a repetition of what he had heard. There was a pause, the first president awaiting the order of the king to proceed to take the votes. In this pause

* The able historian of Louis' reign, Droz, represents the vote of the parliament as certain, and Lamoignon as setting it aside, and substituting compulsory registry for it, from ultra-monarchic

perverseness. The *Introduction au Moniteur* takes a different view, and the *Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont*, from what they make Louis say, corroborate the uncertainty of the vote.

CHAP.
[XXXVII.]

the Chancellor Lamoignon approached Louis, addressed a few words to him, and received an answer. In consequence of it, the chancellor, instead of, as was expected, either adjourning the debate or proceeding to the vote, pronounced the formula by which the king in a bed of justice ordained of his own authority the registry of the edicts. Every one was taken aback. The Duke of Orleans started to his feet, and observed that the act was illegal, and he afterwards expressed in a written protest, that, if it was a bed of justice, then every one's mouth would be compulsorily shut. If a royal sitting, there should be a vote after the debate. The king, in reply, observed, that what was done was done of his will and order, and therefore legal. He then withdrew, and the sitting broke up in disorder.*

The parliament passed a declaration, that it "takes no part in voting the edicts for the loan." The king sent for the register and the parliamentary officers to Versailles to cancel this declaration. Two of the most vehement orators, Sabatier and Fréteau, were seized and sent to prison. The Duke of Orleans was exiled to his country seat of Villars-Cotterets. He had but lately succeeded to the title, but by no means to the popularity of his father. He had built round the square of the Palais Royal to the exclusion of the houses commanding it. He had filled it with arcades, reading-rooms, and placed a horse amphitheatre in the middle. This plan was considered to be for the purpose of gain. The duke had been to England, and had brought from thence a love for the rustic sports of that country. But he also imbibed a desire for that political freedom which prince as well as peasant enjoy with us, whilst in France nobles, and especially princes of the blood, were treated like children, with the leading-strings in the hands of the king of the day.

Brienne had gained nothing by recalling the parlia-

* Sallier, *Annales Françaises*. Bachaumont. *Mém. de Besenval*.

ment to Paris. The capital remained as disturbed as ever. The parliaments of the provinces might have been shown to be retrograde and interested in their opposition to the provincial assemblies, but the events of the royal sitting, and the punishment of those who showed themselves turbulent therein, offered a more popular subject for the legists. Those of Brittany demanded the recall of the Duke of Orleans. The Paris judges formally demanded the abolition of *lettres de cachet*. The last months of the year were occupied with discussions upon tolerance. Epresmenil, the most furious of the parliamentarians, denounced the project of giving civil rights to the Protestants as a second crucifixion of our Saviour. As to Brienne, he was confined to his bed with illness, where he paid as much attention to his own interests as he did to state affairs.

The crisis, nevertheless, was urgent. No money could be had upon the loan since the parliament declined to sanction it. Calonne had declared that by verifying every man's property the tax of the *vingtième* might be doubled. So erroneous were the returns that parliaments everywhere opposed the verification. That of Paris threatened to prosecute the fiscal officers who were then levying the *vingtième* in Paris. This suspended the tax. The parliament remonstrated once more in April against the royal sitting of November. When they presented their remonstrance, the king observed, if every act of his was to be controlled by the councillors of parliament, the state would no longer be a monarchy, but an aristocracy of magistrates. The parliament rejoined in a subsequent remonstrance, "Let there be no aristocracy in France, but no despotism." Brienne was reduced to the alternative of either overcoming the parliament or declaring the state bankrupt. In the end he was maladroit enough to do both. In April he set about preparing a plan for doing away with the parliament altogether, establishing new courts of justice,

CHAP.
XXXVII.

as Maupeou had done, and appointing another body, a *cour plénière*, to act the part of parliament in registering fiscal and other edicts.

The secrecy indispensable to the success of a measure was not preserved. It was in fact betrayed by orders to commanders of troops to bring their regiments to Paris, and to official functionaries to be prepared for some new and solemn act. The terms of it were disclosed to Epresmenil by one of its printers. He immediately convoked a meeting of his colleagues of parliament for the 3rd of May, when he informed them of the *coup d'état* which was meditated by ministers, and besought the opinions and resolutions of the court thereon.

It is curious to observe how, on this solemn occasion, the French judges first adopted the great precedents of the English parliament and the American congress, and how fatuitously the French court adopted the ill-fated acts of Charles the First. The Paris parliament, at the summons of Epresmenil, drew up a declaration of rights, in which they blended their own peculiar ones with those of the people. They declared the constitution in danger, and the states general, which had been promised by the king, indispensable.*

On learning the debate and the declaration of the 3rd of May, the royal council issued orders for the arrest of Epresmenil and of Goislart, who had stopped the levy of the *vingtième*. They managed to escape from their homes to the *palais de justice*. The Marquis d'Agoust, the officer charged with their arrest, learning where they had taken refuge, invested the *palais* a little after midnight. The sitting of the parliament had been declared permanent. D'Agoust presented himself, and demanded the two members. The president replied that parliament would deliberate. "I know nothing about your forms of deliberation," said D'Agoust,

* *Introduction au Moniteur.*

“I must have my prisoners. Point them out to me.”
“We are all Epresmenils and Goislarts,” replied the members assembled. And the peers present, of whom there were about a dozen, uttered sarcastic reproaches to the Marquis D’Agoust. The latter withdrew, but maintained the investment of the hall in which the parliament sat. No one was to be let out or in. After a time, indeed, orders were sent to the peers to withdraw, but they refused, all except the Duke de Luynes, who was suffering under a fit of the gout. The guard was maintained for upwards of four-and-twenty hours, those within being excluded even from the *buvette*, or refreshment room. D’Agoust was determined to starve them out, when the two members declared their intention of resigning themselves into the hands of justice. That officer being called in, Epresmenil first delivered himself, and then Goislart. Both were conducted to carriages, and carried off to state prisons at the farthest ends of the kingdom.

After the capture of the two magistrates, and the departure of the rest, the doors of the *palais de justice* were closed, and parliament summoned to Versailles on the 8th. It was to listen to a series of edicts altogether abolishing the old and instituting new courts of justice. Parliament itself was reduced to one-fourth of its members, and its functions limited to trying great causes. For the ends of justice, great and small *bailliages* were created throughout France, for which the provincial parliaments were sacrificed, as well as that of Paris. And for the purpose of registering laws, a plenary court was appointed, consisting of judges, peers, and councillors of state. Although the members were named for life, the edict declared that the registering of new loans would only be exercised by the court until the states general should meet, and until the king should finally decide upon the result of their deliberations. The resistance to this *coup d’état* was passive

CHAP.
XXXVII.

and silentious in the capital and at Versailles. It was chiefly limited to the refusal of all those named to vote in the *cour plenièere* to accept the position. But in the provinces the abolition of parliaments excited a much more outspoken and formidable resistance.

Had the provincial assemblies, as even Turgot had imagined them, been generally established and in working condition, the outburst of the provinces against the suppression of the parliaments might have been avoided. Indeed, there were no insurrections where there were provisional assemblies. They arose in the provinces which were *pays d'état*. Brittany and Dauphiny were foremost. By the constitution of Brittany every gentleman had a seat in the states. The class was numerous and poor. The Breton estates thus formed a perfect democracy. Animated against the crown, the gentlemen, or nobles, as they are called, made common cause with the judges. The government resolved not to make use of the military against all classes united, and the result was impunity for revolt. The Bretons sent a deputation of twelve gentlemen to Versailles. Lafayette lent them his aid. But Brienne sent them to the Bastille, and deprived Lafayette of the command of his division.

There was more method in the resistance of Dauphiny. The Protestant leaning in this province, and the cruelty with which it had been treated, raised the feelings of the people against the crown. They united in repudiating even its efforts at reform. The Dauphinois resisted the provincial assembly from the first. They refused to let the judges of parliament be deprived, and clamoured for their old Estates, rose in insurrection against the Count de Clermont-Tonnerre, and only tolerated the governor, De Vaux, who succeeded him, on condition of not opposing their designs. As if anyone, he wrote to the court, could

put down the Dauphinois. The provincials, accordingly, took the bold resolve amongst themselves of summoning their Estates, to meet after the old form, not, indeed, in the capital, Grenoble, but at Vizille, on the other side of the valley. There in the lordly chateau, which had been built by Lesdiguières,* the three estates of Dauphiny met on the 21st of July, 1788. This decidedly revolutionary measure, the first of the kind in France, was determined by the nobles and clergy of the province almost exclusively, the citizen and trading classes being generally opposed to it. Mounier and Barnave were the spokesmen of this assembly, which proclaimed its declaration of rights. "The people of Dauphiny," the assembly declared, "were, by the convention with the crown, exempt from arbitrary taxes, but were there no convention, they were equally exempt by natural right." †

Thus from the remote corners of France, on the east and on the west, arose the resistance which served as an inflammatory example to Paris itself; whilst the organisation and agitation of this resistance to the crown in both regions were neither amongst the people nor the middle ranks so much as with the clergy and the gentry. The very classes whose interests were bound up with those of the crown, and whom the monarch might so easily have attached to him, were the first and the most furious to strike the blow from which monarch and monarchy never recovered. Another and even a graver symptom showed itself at the same time, both in Brittany and Dauphiny, which was that the military, officers and soldiers, avowed their repugnance to engage in combat with the people. ‡

* Purchased and still possessed by the family of Perrier.

† De Moleville, Hist. de la Révolution. Mémoire de la Noblesse de Bretagne.

‡ The Breton Parliament decreed it to be *infamous* for soldiers to act against the people. See Mém. de Rochambeau.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

As to Brienne, he could think of nought save his empty treasury. His absolutist edicts, and feeble strokes of mere authority, produced him no returns. Credit could only resuscitate with confidence. Lay assemblies having so egregiously failed him, the archbishop tried one of his own order. But even the high prelature seemed bitten with the mania of snubbing the ministry and refusing everything to the king. It declared against the *cour plénière*, and separated without even voting the usual ecclesiastical subsidy.

Deserted by gods and men, or at least by the aristocracy, Brienne appealed to publicity and the people. He invited all classes to join and to publish their views and opinions as to the fittest basis for the election of the future states general. Tribunals and municipalities were told to search in their archives and give the public the result of these researches. This was the liberty of the press, which gave birth to a whole host of political theories and ideas. And these were rendered more important by a subsequent decree, issued on the 8th of August, summoning the States General for the August in the following year of 1789, and suspending the *cour plénière* till that event, in other words, for ever.

If these large concessions were intended to produce money, they failed. The minister was reduced to seize small deposits of money wherever he could find them, even though devoted to the most sacred purposes. In his despair he wrote to Necker, begging him to take the place of controller-general. He was refused. Brienne then issued an order that all state payments should be made but half in money, the other half in bills. The *caisse*, or bank of discount, was forcibly comprised in that order. And an indomitable panic ensued. Everyone gave up Brienne except the queen. Even the Count d'Artois demanded his dismissal.* He re-

* Mém. de Besenval.

signed on the 25th of August, and admitted on departing that Necker alone could save the state from bankruptcy.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

It was his daughter, the future Madame de Staël, who announced to Necker, at their residence in St. Ouen, his reappointment to the ministry. "Ah," exclaimed he, "why did they not give me the fifteen weeks of Brienne's administration. It is now too late." When Necker was again installed at Versailles, on the 26th of August, 1788, amidst the acclamations of the people, there were not 250,000 livres in the treasury. The Chancellor Lamoignon, who clung to office, and who still pressed for a new Bed of Justice, with a modification of the late obnoxious edicts, obliged Necker to insist on his withdrawal. To this he would not consent without being allowed to carry off the little money there was in the treasury. He thus imitated Brienne, who also filled his pockets and multiplied his fortune on leaving. Necker applied to the capitalists, who, on seeing the funds rise 30 per cent., did all in their power to accommodate him. The minister advanced two millions from his own private funds. Bankruptcy was avoided. Necker even opened the prisons, and set free all political prisoners, amongst others the twelve Breton gentlemen.

He next recalled the parliament. The resumption of their duties by the magistrates was accompanied by very serious street troubles. The rabble and the *clerics* of the palais had enjoyed together the excitement of the tumult occasioned by the arrest of the two councillors. It had ended, however, to their discomfiture. And they now proceeded to manifest their triumph by a riot of another kind. They assembled at the Pont Neuf, burned the effigies of Lamoignon and Brienne, and laid violent hands on all passers-by who did not shout as they did. They then attacked the palace of Brienne in the Rue St. Dominique, and

CHAP.
XXXVII

the house of the officer of the *guet*; the guards, however, fired upon them, and some were wounded.

The Parisians were struck by the unusual number and hideous aspect of the rabble on this occasion. The officers of the *octroi* had signalled to the police the unaccountable multitude of vagabonds that crowded into the capital from the provinces. Many circumstances produced this. The failure of the silkworm in the previous year had caused the looms of Lyons to be idle. No less destructive hail had left the vines and cornfields barren. The winter of 1788–89 was one of the severest known. The rumour circulated through the provinces that the old monarchy was about to fall with all its high and wealthy supporters. Every person that could combine a political idea with hunger hastened to join in the chase, and participate in the booty. On the present occasion the rioters had been put down chiefly by Dubois, lieutenant of the *guet*, or watch. Parliament commenced an enquiry, the infamous result of which was the dismissal of Dubois and the impunity of the rioters. Necker, who had few previsions beyond finance, might have succeeded in rescuing the elders of the parliament from complete subservience to the younger counsellors. But his habit of letting things take their course unfortunately prevailed.

On the 23rd of September, a month after his restoration to office, a royal edict restored the provincial parliaments, and ordained that the States General should meet in January. The vague announcement showed that the king's government had not decided in what number the different orders should be chosen, nor how they should sit and vote. The parliament registered the edict, but added that the convocation of the states should be according to the precedent of 1614. No set of schoolboys ever made a more puerile blunder. In 1614 the commons numbered 192 members, the clergy 144, the nobles 130. As each discussed and voted in their

respective halls, the *tiers* was annulled. Nobles and clergy had all their own way, and duly inaugurated the reign of Richelieu. An orator of the *tiers* having declared that his order was the younger brother of the other two, the orator of the noblesse replied that the commons had no right to use the word brotherhood, as they wanted alike the blood and the virtue of the noblesse. A shout of impatience and derision greeted the rule laid down by the parliament. And the nation set to work to reason with unusual frowardness.

Necker was alarmed at the passion and vehemence with which the middle classes decided in their own favour. Gladly would he have proposed a constitution like that of England, with two chambers; an idea which some few other able men abetted, Mounier for example. But the king was as much opposed as his people to what he considered the ignominy of borrowing from England. Besides there were real difficulties in the case. If the noblesse (counting 80,000 families) offuscated the middle classes, the two or three hundred really historic and ancient families had no longer of themselves either influence or respect. In the assembly of the notables the old noblesse would listen to no proposal to distinguish them from those recently ennobled. And it was not in the power of the crown to give to a chamber of old nobles the facilities to resist at once the commons and the inferior noblesse. The time was past for attempting anything of the kind. Necker could have conceived no such hopes in a second time assembling the notables. But he did hope to awaken them to the necessity of not so much retaining their own influence as nobles in separate chambers, as of making use of their power as landlords to influence the elections for the commons. In the announcement of the council of state to the second assembly of notables, Necker told them that the elections for the commons hitherto were concentrated in towns, and that country feelings and

CHAP.
XXXVII

interests were totally excluded.* Of this important hint the notables took no notice, declaring that the elections ought to take place by *bailliages*, that is, in towns; disdaining in fact to take precaution or interest in the elections for the *tiers état*. The several committees were unanimous against the number of the commons being equal to that of the other two orders with a single exception, and in that a majority was obtained for the popular augmentation by the somnolence of one noble.†

The truth is that the question of the increased number of the commons was already decided by such having been long the custom of the estates of Languedoc, and the rule having been in consequence adopted in the provincial assembly. If the custom had prevailed in Languedoc, this was no doubt because the members of the commons voted just as the other orders, and especially as the upper clergy directed. The right was thus consecrated, and it was too late to recall in 1789 what had been unthinkingly conceded for so long a period. The princes, indeed, insisted, but Necker had not the power to take so retrograde and unpopular a step. At all events, it required something more on the part of the noblesse than wordy protests to enable the minister to do so. And in almost all the provinces the nobles had hitherto made common cause with the rest of their fellow-citizens. In Brittany alone at the commencement of 1789 did the nobles show the determination to stand up for their exclusive privileges. And even there, when they did so, the youth of towns and middle classes started up against them, formed a league, besieged the nobles in their hall, and compelled them to force their way out with the sword. A few years' progress of the revolution taught the Breton gentlemen what they had to expect from

* Procès Verbaux de l'Assemblée des Notables.

† Mémoires de Lafayette.

rejecting every overture from the crown, and making common cause with the democracy that was to devour them.

CHAP.
XXXVII.

Whilst the privileged orders thus made no efficient defence by either tongue or sword, the commons spoke out with the voice of genius as well as power. Sieyès was the most able mouthpiece. This ecclesiastic of the cathedral of Chartres asked in a pamphlet, "What was the *tiers état*? Nothing in actuality and consideration. Yet what was it in reality? Everything, 25,000,000 to 200,000 *privilégiés*." At this time the parliament saw its error in declaring for the estates after the superannuated form of 1614. Its young lawyers, Duport and Epresmenil, members of the Duke of Orleans' club of the *Enragés*, drew up there quite another set of resolutions, amounting to ten. They demanded the liberty of the person and of the press, the equal repartition of taxes, the responsibility of ministers, and the right of the states to accuse them before the parliament. This recantation of the parliament in the presence of the coming states general commanded but small attention.

The princes of the blood, all except he of Orleans, protested about the same time against the double representation and pretension of the commons, and should it be allowed, threatened a scission.

At the end of the year Necker closed the discussion by according, after the advice of the council, the double number of members to the *tiers état*, but maintaining the separation of the orders. The elections were to take place in each *bailliage* in two degrees. An ordinance of the 24th of January, 1789, fixed the 4th of May following as the day for the assembling of the Estates at Versailles.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.*

FROM THE MEETING OF THE STATES GENERAL TO THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

1789—1791.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

It was the misfortune of Louis the Sixteenth that he was only induced to make the grand concession of a representative assembly when years of tampering and hesitation, of failure and distress, of discussion and irritation, had awakened political passions, and worked the minds of all classes to an incandescent state of excitement. At the commencement of his reign the most that was required was financial revolution, with such abatement of the privileges of birth and standing as would have compelled all men to contribute to the necessities of the state in due proportion. But neither court nor king would tolerate Turgot in his attempt to lay down this, their only plank of safety. In the years which ensued, although financial distress formed the chief perplexity of government, the people, far more interested in the doctrines of Rousseau than in those of either Necker or Calonne, began to look, not so much to fiscal, or even political, as to social revolution.

* In the previous and ensuing chapters a considerable portion of the narrative is derived from the *Moniteur*, the *Histoire Parlementaire*, or other reports of the sit-

tings of the assembly. To avoid quoting them in every page, their mention is confined to this general reference.

From the agitation, discussion, and often insurrections of the provinces, provoked by insufficient and incoherent measures to reform and assimilate them, and from the exaggerated demands made in their *cahiers*, or instructions for their deputies, it was manifest that to shake off the social yoke of the noblesse was the dominant desire of the middle classes. They took arms for it in Brittany. And even in Dauphiny, where the nobles fraternised with the commons, the theorists, who prevailed, loudly and openly proclaimed the principles of social revolution.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

It is not to be assumed that this proceeded from a sentiment of mere jealousy and impatience, however just. The doctrines which were broached, and which took possession of the minds even of the most enlightened and disinterested men, pronounced the political evils of the country irremediable until society was reconstituted upon a new basis. Rousseau had represented it as utterly pernicious and retrograde. His more rational disciples, like Sieyès, taught that all society founded upon violence, such as feudal society had been, necessarily made one man an obstruction and an enemy to the other, but that society founded upon freedom would make real brethren of the entire human race, and thus prepare a new era which was to be the millenium of the philosopher. Religious reform was to keep pace with social. Christianity and Judaism had represented man as fallen, as incapable of good, and formed for a life of misery and submission. The philosopher, on the contrary, considered man as perfectible, as animated naturally by the best motives and the highest aspirations, and only degraded to crime by the prevalence of aristocratic ambition and priestly oppression. To politicians actuated by such views, partial reforms, or modification of the feudal constitution of the monarchy, seemed illusory. They were for radical change, leaving the king indeed on the summit of

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

power—for republicanism at least in name had not yet come into vogue—but sweeping from his side and support all the personages and principles of feudalism. This was the really formidable party which the crown had to contend with, a party scattered at first, uncognisant of its strength, and so disunited in its conduct that the Abbé Sieyès, its high-priest, publicist and philosopher, who developed the doctrines of Rousseau, and fitted it to the present time, found a place in the assembly by the merest chance.*

Had the king and his ministers, tardy and compulsory as was the convocation of the states general, shown themselves frankly liberal at the opening, and announced from the first those concessions which they made six weeks later; had the crown by such conduct obviated the insane and irritating struggle of the noblesse against the *tiers*,—the partisans of exaggerated revolution would have been in a minority, and their moderate opponents might have accomplished their desires of reconstituting the monarchy without annihilating the higher classes.

The most eminent men of these moderate opinions, Malouet, Mounier, and the Bishop of Langres, pressed Necker to take the initiative, but the minister declined. He did not feel himself sufficiently strong to compel the court to assent to such a change. He looked to the assembly to do this, and was not aware of the danger of letting it seize the axe of reform, instead of government using the pruning-knife. The views of Necker, as well as of Malouet and Mounier, were chiefly directed towards the English system of two chambers, a plan of considerable difficulty, even if the nobles accepted it. But neither court, *grandees*, nor the lesser noblesse

* See Bailly's account of the elections in Paris. The Bishop of Chartres had tried in vain to get

Sieyès elected by the clergy of his diocese.

relished it, and their certain opposition rendered the proposition idle.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Yet there was no other middle term. If noblesse and clergy formed orders apart, and the passing of new laws and reforms was to take place by their separate votes, the *tiers état* would be baffled in their every effort. If, on the contrary, the commons succeeded in absorbing the other orders, these would be reduced to nullity, and the social revolution be complete. It was not to be expected that a contest in which defeat was destruction should be carried on without an appeal to force. That the commons would be supported by the people, and that the crown had but the army to depend upon, was clear.

But the French army did not offer at the time those means of support on which the court reckoned. Had the latter been wise, it would have long since sought to render the army efficient and attached, instead of disgusting the soldier by severity, the officers by economy, and allowing even the guards to become imbued with the popular tenets and passions of the time. The division of command was as ill-judged as the entire military administration. The central provinces were under one commander, Paris forming an exception. The parliament, as well as the minister of the household, exercised there a kind of joint authority over the police and the military.* Besenval, commanding the army round the capital, found it no easy task to keep the corn markets quiet in those days of famine. The loose and starving population flocked to Paris, where they were less coerced. Alarmed at their aspect, the government ordered two regiments of French guards into the capital, under the command of the Marquis du Chatelet. "The soldiers," says Besenval, "did not know their officers, nor did the officers, occupied exclusively with their pleasures, know the men."

* Mémoires de Besenval.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Such was the military force to which was entrusted the preservation of order. Their efficiency was soon tested. On the 27th of April, about a week previous to the meeting of the states general, a crowd collected before the paper manufactory of Reveillon, in the Faubourg St. Antoine. He was sprung from the people, had been a workman himself, and was kind to those he employed. But in the meeting of the district for electoral purposes and for drawing up the *cahiers*, the more wealthy citizens, like Reveillon, had felt disgust, and shown it, at the crude and wild suggestions of the working classes. These singled out Reveillon, as the chief of the burgess party, and attributing to him harsher expressions than he had ever used, they came to punish and to pillage him. On the first tidings of this, thirty soldiers and a sergeant were sent to protect him. Unequal to the task, they looked on whilst the mob broke into the factory and devastated it.* Reveillon took shelter in the Bastille, whilst the mob got drunk in his cellars. On the next day took place the races of Charenton, frequented by the better classes. As these returned, they were stopped at the gate of St. Antoine, which the rioters had seized, made to descend from their carriages, forced to cry *vive le tiers*, and suffered other outrages. On this the military authorities awoke, and a sufficient force was sent. The people of the faubourg resisted, and poured down tiles from their roofs. The soldiers fired, and the rioters dispersed, leaving a few dead. Such was the prelude in Paris to the meeting of the states general at Versailles. The riot has been attributed to subornation by the Duke of Orleans; but what was he to gain by the destruction of the paper fabric? It was more probably a chance outburst on the part of the envious and hungry population. The troops, though they fired at

* Reveillon's Exposé. Memoirs of Ferrières.

last, hesitated long. The Marquis du Chatelet dismissed a sergeant of the guards for disobedience, when all the other sergeants instantly clubbed to indemnify and support him.* Such was the spirit of the French guards on this, their first, collision with the people.

Before popular eloquence and democratic boldness could assert and acquire their natural mastery over the states general, the traditional power which dominated Versailles undertook to regulate the acts, the movements, and the dress, of the members. The grand master of the ceremonies ordained that the nobles should be clothed in silk and gold, lace, and feathers, whilst the commons were condemned to plain cloth and simple linen. Thus contrasted in their attire, the French lords and commons were made to show themselves to the public, and walk in procession to church on the Sunday previous to their meeting. This was arranged as a triumph by the court officials, but the people were not struck by the contrast into any acquiescence in its justice. They loudly applauded the commons and the Duke of Orleans, who walked as one of the body (he had been elected for Crespy), whilst the nobles were received in silence, and the queen, considered the concentration of the court authority and influence, with cries of hatred and derision.†

On the following day, when court, nobles, and clergy marched with dignity in at the great gate of the hall, the commons were reduced to crush their way through a narrow postern. All that chamberlains could devise to irritate those in whose power they were to be on the morrow was done with stupendous fatuity. The king opened the assembly by pointing to the weight of the debt, and the inequalities of taxation. To remedy these evils, but still more to prevent and cut short

* Letters of a Grenadier de la Garde to the Duke du Chatelet.

† Madame Campan.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

“the exaggerated thirst of innovation,” he had summoned the present assembly. Barentin, the keeper of the seals, followed, and enumerated all the benefits which the country owed to Louis the Sixteenth, as well as the reforms which he contemplated. On the subject uppermost in every thought, the keeper of the seals admitted that the vote per head, and in common of the orders, would best make known the general wish, but the king did not desire to make such a change without the sanction of the states general themselves. Necker then made a financial statement, little listened to, everyone being preoccupied with the words of Barentin, which really gave up the question to the *tiers état*.

On the ensuing day the *tiers état* assumed that the other orders were to join in the great hall and proceed together to enquire into the validity of the members' election. But clergy and noblesse kept apart, whilst the government assumed a less liberal attitude. Barentin had promised freedom of the press, yet a print which Mirabeau had set up was suppressed. Against this maintenance of old arbitrary authority sprang up a popular body, that of the electors of Paris, who met and protested against the suppression of the journal.

From the 6th of May to the 10th of June, the *tiers*, or the commons, as they called themselves, waited in vain for the junction of the two other orders to them. These first determined to remain apart, but the clergy proposed that commissioners should be named to negotiate an accord. The attempt was made, but failed. The nobles would not yield.* The ministry then proposed a renewed conference under its presidency, hoping thus to re-unite the orders by a compromise. The nobles rejected this too; and on the 12th of June the commons proceeded to business. Nine members of the clergy joined them. A debate then arose as to what

* Lameth attributes the fierce ennobled and to the legists than to resistance far more to the newly- the old aristocracy.

title the assembly should assume. Sieyès proposed that of representatives of the French nation. Mirabeau preferred the word *people* to that of nation. He was apostrophised by some, who reproached him with making the assembly represent merely the lower class. "And if I do," asked Mirabeau, "is it not in that class alone that you will find strength and support?" Mirabeau, who was feeling his way, perceived at once that the note he struck was far too democratic for the assembly, which, at the suggestion of, it is not well known, whom, proclaimed itself, by a bold but simple title, the National Assembly (June 17).*

· CHAP.
XXXVIII.

The court and the majority of the nobles connected with it were aghast at the assumption of the commons. The king was troubled. He had hoped that Necker would have sufficient influence to impress moderation upon the deputies. The minister was in relations with what might be called the constitutionalists, with Malouet and Mounier. In accordance with these, he had counselled the monarch to declare at once the large concessions which he was prepared to make, and in return demand from the commons not to insist absolutely upon the junction of the orders.† The king but lightly alluded to the former in his opening speech. He left the field of authority open, and the commons unhesitatingly occupied it all. The king then reverted to Necker's plan of announcing large concessions to the assembly, and at the same time effecting a compromise of the dispute concerning the union or separation of the orders.

This was to take place in a royal sitting. The king and Necker were completely agreed as to the language to be held and the points to be insisted on. Louis was to tell the three orders to meet and debate in common upon all subjects of general interest, but, unfortunately, it was not precisely stated what did come under the

* Bailly. Ferrières.

† Madame de Staël, *Considérations*.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

category of general interest. Moreover, he was to insist on two chambers. The final council for settling the words of his speech took place at Marly, whither the court had retired on the death of the young dauphin. It lasted a considerable time, during which every article had been discussed, both king and ministers completely sanctioning Necker's project. When all was nearly over, and the court about to break up, a note was handed to the king, who rose and went out, saying he would return, thus leaving the council and the question before it suspended. No sooner had he quitted the council chamber than he was besought, not only by the queen, but by the Archbishop of Paris and the Count de la Rochefoucauld, not to sanction Necker's plan, which would disgust and alienate the privileged orders. It is universally said that a deep conspiracy was laid to induce the king to this. But in general the important acts and events of this period, instead of being the result of premeditation, were often the effect of sudden caprice or personal mistrust. To the end of the council the king was true to Necker. In half an hour after he quitted it, he returned saying they must suspend all decision.* The princes and certain lawyers were then added to the council, and it was proposed to modify Necker's plan. He defended his project, and declared that to alter was to destroy its effect. Two ministers, Montmorin and St. Priest, supported him. But the queen, the Count d'Artois, and the prelates prevailed, and the minister's plan of reconciliation and compromise perverted into incoherent words of antagonism and menace.†

When the royal sitting and its nature were determined, the master of the ceremonies again came into play, he having received the order to prepare the great hall, in which the *tiers* sat, for the more august occa-

* Necker. De la Révolution Française.

† Bertrand de Moleville. Ferrières.

sion. A few hours would have sufficed, but the courtiers were desirous to prevent the commons from coming together previous to the royal sitting, because a majority had sprung up in the assembly of the clergy for "verifying powers" along with the *tiers*, an arrangement which the king was about to forbid. On Saturday, the 20th of June, the president Bailly found the doors of the hall locked; the deputies crowding thither found themselves in the street. They did not know but that the royal sitting might bring their dissolution. Determined to debate and take measures for such a contingency, a neighbouring ball-court was suggested as a convenient place of meeting. The members and their president instantly repaired thither. The most conservative liberal of the assembly, Mounier, was the first to express his indignation, and to warn his colleagues of "the inveteracy with which a certain party impelled the king to disastrous measures." Those present passed a vote, never to separate till they had regenerated public order and established the constitution. They took an oath that, if an attempt were made to separate or dissolve them, they would meet where they could, and continue their mission.*

On the following day they found the ball-court shut, by order of the Count d'Artois. The members immediately assembled in the church of St. Louis, where 149 members, being the majority, of the assembly of the clergy joined them.

The royal sitting took place on the 23rd. As usual, the chamberlain faction continued to annoy and irritate the commons, by keeping its members exposed to the rain until the court and the other orders were seated. After a few words, inculcating peace and concord, the king ordered one of the secretaries to read his ordinance, which he called a declaration.

* Bailly, &c.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

This document, contrary to Necker's view, commenced by cancelling the recent decrees and votes of the assembly, and its assumption of the title of national. The king, it stated, had *exhorted* the three orders to unite during the present session of the estates, to discuss all questions of general utility (such as finance). But on matters of constitution, feudal property, and honorific privilege, as well as on religious subjects, the orders must vote and remain apart. The king then promised that no tax should be imposed without the consent of the assembly, that a yearly budget should be published, that provincial assemblies should be everywhere established, the *corvée* abolished, but that tithes and seigniorial dues should be preserved.

"Such are my arrangements and views," continued the monarch, "for the public good. If by a fatality, that I will not believe, you abandon me in this enterprise, I will accomplish alone the happiness of my people. I will consider myself their sole representative. And knowing their desires from their *cahiers*, I will proceed in the task with firmness and courage. I now order you, Messieurs, to separate forthwith, in order to meet in your respective chambers."

Louis the Fourteenth could scarcely have uttered more peremptory words in a more peremptory tone. The assembly listened in solemn silence. When the king had departed, Mirabeau complained not merely of the king's words but of the military force displayed to support them. "We have taken an oath, however," said he, "not to separate till we have framed a constitution." The grand master of the ceremonies here intervened to ask if they had not heard the king's orders for them to separate.

"We have heard, sir," replied Mirabeau, "the king's words. But you are not his organ; you have neither place here, nor authority to address us. If, however, you are commissioned to expel us from this hall, you

had better apply for the force requisite; and, in so doing, tell your master that we are here by the power of the people, and will yield only to that of the bayonet."

The commons with acclamation adopted this declaration as their own. The grand master hurried to state their defiance to the king. "Well," observed Louis, "if they will stay in the hall, let them." He was already alarmed at the ominous silence in which his address was received. And when he learned that it had been followed up by Mirabeau's apostrophe, by votes reasserting all they had enacted, and pronouncing their members inviolable, neither the monarch nor his courtiers prepared to enforce the royal orders. Queen, princes, and grandees passed in a moment from insolent confidence to pusillanimous despair. The people of Versailles, who had crowded round the assembly, filled the court of the chateau, whilst the greater number of the members repaired to the residence of Necker.

That minister had not appeared at the royal sitting, and had offered his resignation. Alarmed at the aspect of things, and at the countenance of the people, the queen sent for Necker, brought him into the closet of the king, when both of them entreated him to remain. They professed themselves penitent, and promised to be henceforth guided by the counsels of the popular minister. Necker yielded, and pacified the people outside by informing them of his consent to retain office. To show his sincerity, the king first recommended and then commanded the nobles to abandon their resistance, give up their pretensions to form a separate body, and sink themselves in the assembly of the commons. The Duke of Luxembourg, president of the noblesse, remonstrated, and said that, if they held out, it was much more in the interest of the crown, which would eventually be reduced to a nullity by one assembly, than in the interest of the aristocracy. The Count de

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Noailles assured the provincial nobles that they might as well yield, for in a few days there would be an advance of troops upon Paris, which would change everything. But for the present not only the safety of the state, but the king's life was in peril. This disclosure of danger to the monarch the nobles seized as a pretext for yielding. They and clergy betook themselves to the national assembly.

It was evident from the language of Noailles that the court regretted on the 27th its concessions of the 24th. It was equally evident that, if Necker was momentarily retained to pacify the Paris population and the assembly, this was only to gain time till an armed force could be concentrated capable of awing both. And no doubt the aspect of things called for defence. The electors of each district continued to meet in the capital, whilst the politicians who belonged to no district congregated in the Palais Royal. Here were reading-rooms, clubs, cafés, and in fine weather the garden itself, where anyone who mounted on a chair, and spoke well, soon found an audience, and carried popular votes by acclamation. A new and a still worse symptom appeared there in the presence of many of the *gardes françaises*, who mingled in the groups, fraternised with the seditious, and allowed themselves to be cheered and feasted. The provinces threatened equally. There the struggle commenced openly, and at once, between the poor and the rich. The peasants congregated to burn the chateaux, and rid themselves of their lords. The town mob threw off the authority of the magistrates, and these summoned the citizens to form militia to protect their persons and property. At Marseilles the people were unusually violent, and a regular civil war took place. Other provinces and towns had more or less the same tale to tell; and as provisions were really scarce, it was difficult to distinguish between the

crimes which misery and those which licentiousness occasioned.*

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Towards the close of July, as the troops were concentrating round Paris, and whilst Necker was remonstrating against the folly of bringing into the streets of the capital soldiers of whose fidelity the government was not sure, an event occurred which was the forerunner of revolution. Some of the French guards, who had appeared in the Palais Royal, and had even formed military clubs in imitation of what they had seen there, were placed under arrest, and confined in the military prison of the Abbaye. They found means of communicating their situation to the Palais Royal, from which 200 persons instantly marched. Their numbers swelled as they passed through the streets, and they arrived in such overwhelming force at the prison that its doors were opened, and the captive soldiers not only liberated but carried in triumph (June 30). The national assembly was instantly petitioned on their behalf. It did not refuse to take up the cause of the mutineers. And the government was obliged to pronounce their pardon, on condition of their first reconstituting themselves prisoners.

About the same time the conglomeration of troops around Paris and Versailles became evident. The Palais Royal felt itself threatened, and expressed its fears by mock trials and menaces of death to the retrograde. A journalist bade them be quiet, as all that the court wanted was to provoke them to sedition. The preacher of calm was Marat. A more powerful voice denounced in the assembly the menacing attitude of the military force (July 8), and of the appointment of the Maréchal de Broglie to command. The speaker was Mirabeau. He moved an address to the king for the removal of the troops, and the formation of a civic

* *Révolutions de France*. Dumas. The numerous periodicals of the time.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

guard to preserve order. The latter part of the motion was negatived, but the address was drawn up and presented. It warned the king of the danger of violent measures to the capital, to the soldiers, and to the assembly itself. "There is a contagion," it said, "in passionate movements. We are but men. Mistrust of ourselves, the fear of appearing weak, will drag us further than we wish. We shall be overwhelmed with violent counsels, and wisdom itself can utter nothing oracular in the midst of tumult."

The king answered, that the troops were destined solely to put down sedition in Paris; but if the assembly felt alarmed at their vicinity, he was ready to adjourn it to Soissons, and himself take up his abode at Compiègne. The daughter of Necker, Madame de Staël, says* that he was fully aware of the purposes of the court; which were, after a military victory over the Parisians, to summon to Compiègne the reactionary members of the estates, in order that they might vote loans and taxes, and then be dissolved. A complete counter-revolution was thus contemplated, the first necessary step to it being the dismissal of Necker. This he received whilst at dinner on the 11th of July, the king enjoining him to quit the kingdom without communicating with anyone. The minister obeyed, and in a few hours had passed the Belgian frontier.

It was on the following day, Sunday, that tidings reached the Palais Royal of his dismissal. So mad an act the people refused to believe. When they could no longer doubt it, the ferment was indescribable. Camille Desmoulins made himself the organ of the general sentiment. From a table in the garden of the Palais Royal, he denounced what had taken place as a signal for a St. Bartholomew's massacre of the patriots. The German regiments were prepared to attack Paris and slaughter its inhabitants. "Let us take arms, and a sign

* *Considérations.*

to rally to in this green leaf." There was a shop on the Boulevards of waxen busts of celebrated personages. The people hastened thither, took those of Necker and the Duke of Orleans, who was said to have been arrested, and, crowning them with crape, bore them in procession through the streets. Coming in contact with the military near the Place Vendôme, the people were roughly handled, and one man killed. An order soon after concentrated the military on the Place Louis Quinze. There was a more than ordinary crowd. It being Sunday afternoon, the citizens were returning from their promenade in the Champs Elysées. The Tuileries gardens were also crowded. Insulting shouts greeted each movement of the military, especially of the German regiments. And there was a commencement of throwing up a barricade, though it was merely of garden chairs. The Prince of Lambesc, at the head of about forty dragoons, rode in at the gates of the garden to stop this and to disperse the crowd. An old man was ridden over. But seeing the people endeavouring to turn the movable bridge, which cut off the dragoons from the square, these retreated, dealing some sabre cuts as they passed.*

From the other issues of the garden, in the meantime, the people fled panic-stricken, crying out that the dragoons had begun the massacre. The more spirited thought first of arming themselves. Some hundreds of muskets were taken from the Hôtel de Ville. But the most serious event was the excitement spreading to the French guards, who broke in numbers from their barracks in the Rue Verte, and lost no time in dislodging the royal German soldiers from one of their posts on the Boulevards. They then, in conjunction with the armed populace, marched to the Place Louis Quinze. Besenval had withdrawn his troops to the Champ de Mars. Here, in the night of the 12th, the Maréchal de

* *Moniteur*. Dussaulx. Besenval. Deux Amis de la Liberté.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Broglie held a council of his chief officers as to the possibility of carrying out the orders of government to put down the insurrection. The German regiments, though not prepared to join the people, like the French guards, still showed reluctance to attack the latter. According to some accounts,* the attempt was made, and the regiments ordered to dislodge the French guards from the Place Louis Quinze. If such an attempt were made, it was unsuccessful; and De Broglie, seeing that the regiments would not do battle for court or king, ordered the retreat to Sèvres.

The aggression of the Royal troops, followed by their inaction and withdrawal, first aroused and then gave courage to the populace. The middle class made strenuous efforts to control them. The electors, meeting at the Hôtel de Ville, formed a municipal council, and decreed, what had been for some time mooted, the formation of an urban militia or national guard. To organise and arm this force became the aim of the *prévot des marchands*, Flesselles, who acted as chief of the municipality. He, with this new force, baffled rather than aided the mob in procuring arms. They got but a few at the barracks of St. Lazare, which they plundered. And Flesselles had the imprudence to send them upon idle errands to demand arms in places where arms were none. He caused, however, a great number of pike-heads to be forged and distributed amongst the people.

They were not satisfied, and, taking counsel among themselves, rushed in a mass, on the morning of the 14th, upon the *Invalides*. This hotel contained a large supply of muskets and cannon. The governor, Sombreuil, fearing the visit of the populace, had ordered the veterans of the establishment to dismount the locks of the guns and unfit them for service. They pre-

* Mignet, Hist. de la Révolution.

tended to comply, but did nothing of the kind.* Even they were in favour of the revolution. The mob took 30,000 stand of arms, as well as the artillery. Possessed of these, the mob exclaimed: To the Bastille! That fortress was already threatened. Bodies of youths from the Palais Royal had come to demand arms. Some of these were fired upon. On hearing the tumult, the citizens at the Hôtel de Ville sent a message to Delaunay, governor of the Bastille, to withdraw his cannon, and cease, not only to fire, but to menace. He promised not to fire unless attacked. A certain number of the assailants got into an inner court between the first and second drawbridges. Delaunay dislodged them by a discharge. Firing was then carried on briskly from both sides. Another messenger from the Hôtel de Ville, Thuriot, who has left an account of his mission, came to persuade Delaunay to allow a body of urban militia within the fortress, which would thus be under the control and protection of the civic authorities. The governor would not listen to the proposal. He determined to hold out, though his garrison amounted to but 115 men. Many of these were invalides, who no sooner perceived the French guards amongst their assailants, with the cannon of their establishment, than they hoisted the white flag. The governor, however, would not surrender. An incident marked the ferocity of the mob. A young lady had found her way amongst them, impelled by anxiety for her father, who was one of the garrison. Some one said she was the daughter of the governor. "Burn her, then, if her father will not surrender!" exclaimed some ruffians; and straw was brought and piled up for the purpose, when a brave soldier rescued her from the perilous position. Treason or a chance shot broke the chain of the outer drawbridge, which was then let down. Delaunay seized a torch

* Dumas, Souvenirs, &c.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

for the purpose of applying it to the powder store, when two of his own soldiers with bayonets stopped his way. The garrison cried out they would surrender if their lives were spared. An officer of the French guards, foremost of the assailants, named Elie, pledged his word. The last drawbridge was then lowered, and the people were masters of the Bastille.* The French guards did their utmost to conduct the garrison safely to the Hôtel de Ville; Delaunay, however, was no sooner brought out than he was struck down, decapitated, and his head fixed on a pike. His major shared his fate, as also did those who had prevented fire being set to the powder magazine. Six or seven of the garrison thus perished, and the multitude clamoured, like wild beasts, for the blood of the rest, whom the French guards succeeded in bringing alive to the Hôtel de Ville.

Baulked in their desire of immolating all their victims, the mob turned upon the *prévot*, Flesselles, who had deceived them in their search for arms. A note, written by him, was said to have been found in the pocket of the unfortunate governor of the Bastille, bidding him hold out. Dragged forth, under pretence of being brought to the Palais Royal for trial, Flesselles was shot, and his head, like Delaunay's, fixed on a pike. But seven prisoners were found in the cells of the Bastille. The court had had something else to think of recently than the issuing of *lettres de cachet*.

The events of the 14th in Paris filled Versailles with consternation. The assembly displayed its anxiety and zeal in frequent deputations to the king, who answered at first firmly and even sharply. Mirabeau accused the queen and court. The Count d'Artois had visited the dragoons in the Orangerie to encourage them. Yet when Louis on the 15th declared that there was no hope in the army, and that he must fling himself on the loyal forgiveness of the assembly, none tried to dissuade

* Mémoires sur la Bastille.

him. On the Duke de Liancourt's depicting the state of Paris to the king, the latter exclaimed that it was a revolt. "Not a revolt," rejoined the duke, "but a revolution." The king, in consequence, unaccompanied by guards or pomp, and merely followed by his brother, repaired to the assembly. He solemnly contradicted the report, that any design had been formed against it. He had given orders, he said, to the troops, to withdraw both from Paris and from Versailles. Under these circumstances, he begged the commons to aid him in preserving the state, and, without loss of time, to convey his resolution to the capital.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

As the king retired, and returned on foot to the chateau, the members rose, and accompanied him as well as the people, who were loud in their acclamations. Even the queen was greeted, as she had been in former days. A deputation from the assembly announced the recall of the troops to the Parisians, by whom it was cordially and even enthusiastically received. Lafayette was appointed commander of the new national guard, and Bailly, mayor of Paris. It was thought necessary to signify the king's reconciliation with the revolution by some act more marked than a deputation. Louis the Sixteenth determined to proceed to Paris in person at the same time that his troops were withdrawn, and thus show his confidence in the new power and new state of things which had arisen. Many, especially the queen, feared that Louis would be detained a captive, and not allowed to return. As for the more obnoxious of the court, the Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, the princes of Condé and Conti, with the Besenvals and De Broglies, they all took their departure for the frontier, chiefly regretting that they could not induce the king to take the same step, assured, as they felt, that they would one day force their way back triumphantly over the discomfited revolution.

The visit of the king took place without any catastrophe.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

He was coldly welcomed as he entered, and received a very dubious compliment from the mayor, Bailly. "Henry the Fourth had conquered his people; now the people had reconquered their king." When, however, it was explained to the populace that the king had fully accepted the votes of the assembly establishing equality, and when he appeared in the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville with the revolutionary cockade* in his hat, there was cheering even to enthusiasm. It was midnight ere Louis returned to Versailles; he and the queen wept on again meeting.

The alternations from massacre to festivity, and from suspicion to affected confidence, could not give vigour to a paralysed administration, or its wonted activity to trade.† Although the price of corn remained exorbitant, those who annually bought and sold it being terrified from their vocation, the government and the municipality of Paris undertook not only to supply the population but to give them bread considerably cheaper than the market price.‡ As the loyal and ministerial authority merged in that of the local magistrates, each town tried to stop provisions going through or out of it. There was often in the capital but sufficient flour for the morrow. It was sometimes insufficient, sometimes bad; and popular journalists like Marat threw the blame on the court and the aristocrats. Famine, no doubt, greatly added to the ferocity of the Parisian poor, who were obliged at times to besiege the baker's door for the whole day ere they could purchase a morsel. Wages and employment

* The revolutionary cockade, at first green, was changed to blue and red when the national guard was formed, these being the colours of the city of Paris. White was added on the reconciliation with the king, the Bourbon colour.

† Towards the end of July

450,000 francs were given to those out of work in the Faubourg St. Antoine.

‡ The four-pound loaf cost the municipality upwards of 16 sous. They caused it to be sold at 14½ sous, and later at 13½.—Bailly.

being suspended, the destitute regarded the well-clad and well-provided with malignant hate. Murders were frequent in the streets of Paris for no other cause. Lafayette and his guards saved many lives, but they could not be everywhere.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Foulon, one of the ministers, expelled from office by the insurrectionary movement, was arrested by peasants in a chateau, where he had taken refuge. He had made a large fortune in the corn trade, and was detested and denounced as a monopoliser.* He was said to have bidden the hungry people to eat hay. He was brought to Paris, on the 22nd of July, with a bundle of hay tied upon his back to mark his crime. The Parisian mob assumed the accusation to be just, and followed the unfortunate Foulon to the Hôtel de Ville. The authorities then tried to appease the fury of the mob by proceeding to try the captive. When Lafayette arrived, he enabled them to baffle the murderous demands of the people for a time, and announced his intentions of conducting Foulon to the prison of the Abbaye. The people seemed to approve of this until the prisoner himself was foolish enough to show his satisfaction. Perceiving that the imprisonment was a trick to save him, the people again rushed on their victim, whilst a fresh and furious crowd from the faubourgs poured into the hall. Lafayette was overborne, Foulon was seized, brought out, and suspended to a lamp-post, after which his head was fixed upon a pike.†

The murder had not been long perpetrated when the son-in-law of Foulon, Berthier de Sauvigny, was brought in the evening in the same manner to the Hôtel de Ville. He had been intendant of Compiègne, had been arrested by the people of that town, and with difficulty escaped from them. He unfortunately encountered the mob, flushed with the murder of Foulon; the head of that

* Ferrières.

† Memoirs of Bailly. B. de Moleville.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

victim was thrust to Berthier to kiss. It was at the risk of his life that the elector, who had charge of him, brought him safe to the Hôtel de Ville. Lafayette again came forward with the same proposal, to conduct the accused to prison. But the mob would admit no such subterfuge. The prisoner was torn from his guards, and was about to be hanged to a lamp-post, when he seized an arm, defended himself, and perished under a forest of pikes and sabres. He was not only decapitated, but his entrails torn out, and his heart paraded as a trophy with worse accompaniments.

These terrible events, when made known to the assembly, caused a painful emotion. Yet, when the royalist orators represented such crimes as the natural results of revolutionary legislation, their antagonists felt disposed to attenuate or excuse their magnitude. "Was the blood spilt so pure?" asked Barnave. And Mirabeau observed, that "it was necessary to harden our hearts against individual misfortune." The want of a regularly chosen municipality, of a court of justice that commanded the respect of the people, were urged as the causes of the latter taking the law into their own hands. At last the most dangerous of expedients was adopted—that of a committee of the assembly, charged with examining the culpability of those who were accused or suspected by the people.

The state of the provinces was more alarming even than that of the capital. Civil war broke out in the towns between the citizens who tried to wield authority and the people who refused to be coerced. At Strasbourg there was a fearful struggle of this kind. In other places, such as Caen, the military joined in the strife. Everywhere the citizens armed and organised national guards. And whilst keeping down their own populace, the self-constituted authorities covered this with frenetic expressions of zeal for the revolution and for the acts of the national assembly.

If the towns were thus able to establish some order within their walls, the rural districts were abandoned to themselves. The peasants rushed to burn the residences, and, if possible, the title-deeds, of their landlords. Amongst others, a chateau of the Duc d'Aiguillon was destroyed. He expatiated upon the subject in the Breton club, and observed there that the only means of disarming and tranquillising the peasant was for the noble to come forward and abandon all those feudal privileges which were so obnoxious to the people. The Duc d'Aiguillon was a large landed proprietor, and he announced his intention of making such a proposal to the assembly.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

In the sitting of the 4th of August, the Viscount de Noailles rose abruptly, and made the proposal which he heard D'Aiguillon announce at the club. Noailles was a younger brother, and had really no feudal rights to give up. He seized the opportunity, and proposed that taxes should be levied on all in proportion to their revenue, and men of all classes should have equal rights to post and place; that seigniorial dues should be done away with, or at least redeemed; that *corvées*, *mainsmortes*, and all personal servitude, should be at once put a stop to. The Duke d'Aiguillon seconded the proposal. A Breton farmer then drew a fearful picture of the oppressive right of the feudal landlords. Another, from Franche-Comté, denounced that right of the seigneur to warm his feet in the bowels of his vassals! The nobles exclaimed against such monstrous misrepresentations, but declared their readiness to abandon every oppressive claim. The Duc de Chatelet represented the grievance of tithes levied in kind; the Bishop of Chartres, in apparent retaliation, that of the game laws. Whilst the eminent of the nobles and clergy thus mutually denounced their own unjust claims, and demanded that they should be abolished, the commons, witnesses of the exciting scenes, loudly applauded each successive sacrifice. Lally Tollendal exclaimed that the assembly

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

was losing its senses, and cried to the president to adjourn the sitting. But some one exclaimed that towns and provinces should also resign and abandon their exclusive privileges. The deputies of each eagerly answered the appeal, and declared themselves, on the part of their constituents, ready to make every sacrifice. In this general act of self-spoliation, the nobles made no mention of their rank and honorific titles. The assembly, however, when it subsequently drew up into law this general reduction of the privileged classes to equality of rights, included titles in the holocaust, and totally abolished all distinctions of name and rank.

Necker soon after arrived to resume his office, more liberal colleagues being given him in the persons of St. Priest and Cécé, Archbishop of Bordeaux. In his journey to the capital, he interfered to prevent Baron Besenval, who had been arrested, from being transferred to the capital, lest he should share the fate of Foulon and Berthier.* Necker repaired to the Hôtel de Ville to give an account of the act, and of his motives, and asked an amnesty for Besenval and the other political prisoners. As the mob loudly welcomed Necker, the electoral municipality thought it might grant his request of an amnesty. But when the people and the assemblies of districts heard that they were to be deprived of their victims, they clamoured both against Necker and the Hôtel de Ville. Neither, they said, had a right to issue pardons. Mirabeau, ever hostile to the minister, supported this view in the assembly, and Necker's humane efforts were defeated. Nor was he more successful in his financial schemes. He demanded to raise a loan of 30 millions. The assembly hesitated, chicaned. Lacoste and Lameth pointed out church property as being at the national disposal, and as the fittest fund to meet present

* De Staël, *Considérations*.

exigencies. The commons, however, permitted Necker to raise the loan, provided he could do so at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. CHAP.
XXXVIII

Whilst Mirabeau was thus punishing and extinguishing Necker, Lafayette was labouring with some success to enforce tranquillity in the capital. He raised the national guard to 25,000 men, of which a portion, consisting chiefly of the old French guards, were to receive pay. The Marquis de la Salle, one of its commanders, was assailed by the populace, and threatened with the fate of Foulon and Berthier. It cost Lafayette a day's effort to save him, but he succeeded. The famine, however, continued, and all the people wanted was a word or a cry to rally round. This was unfortunately given them in the *veto*.

The assembly, in framing the constitution, had come to consider the respective powers of the king and the assembly. The conservative members were, of course, for endowing the former with the right of applying a negative to its decrees. The liberals, even many of the moderates, conceived that to give the power of the veto to the monarch, especially to a monarch who hated the revolution, would be to undo all that had been done. A meeting took place between the two shades of constitutionalists. Barnave and the Lameths offered to support the scheme of two chambers if Mounier and his friends would insist on no more than a suspensive veto. Mounier, cautious and impracticable, refused. But had he even accepted, it is improbable that the majority of the assembly would ever have established two chambers. It was evident that the king, who was denied even an absolute veto, would not have the nomination of the upper chamber, which, as an elective senate, might come to consist of the same elements and ideas as the commons.* Prelates and

* Mem. of Bailly, of Lafayette, Dumas, Lameth, Hist. de la Constitution, Necker, &c.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

aristocracy both repudiated such an upper house. And it was apparent from the division how they voted. There were but eighty-nine members for two chambers, nearly 500 against, upwards of a hundred abstaining.

But what the Palais Royal thundered against was the veto. The king had not given his sanction to the sacrifice made by the nobles and clergy in the passionate sitting of the 4th of August. Give him the veto, it was argued, and an extinguisher is put upon the revolution. The chiefs of the Palais Royal feared that the assembly would sanction it. They had no doubt heard of the negotiations between Mounier and the Lameths. And their undisguised recommendation to their mob audience was to march on Versailles, bring the king and the dauphin to Paris,* and send the queen into a convent. Loustalot, in *Les Révolutions de Paris*, Marat, in his *Ami du Peuple*, insisted on the necessity of the electors revoking the deputies they had chosen, and purging the assembly. Amidst this excitation, some hundreds of the rabble, under St. Hurugues, formed a deputation to Versailles to present to the assembly a resolution of the Palais Royal to act on the suggestion of Marat. Lafayette, at the head of the national guards, met and dispersed the deputation. They contrived, however, to make known through Lally these injunctions to the assembly. Lafayette and his guards made a descent on the Palais Royal. Hurugues was arrested. The assembly, on the 11th, decided by a majority of two to one, that the royal veto should be not absolute, but merely suspensive. This, however, did not settle the question or allay the irritation. The suspensive right was absolute for the time. How long was it to last? How long were the progress of the revolution and the completion of the constitution to stand interrupted at the

* Sybel asserts this proposal came first from the *commune*, or its vice-

president, whilst in truth it had been proposed and agitated weeks before.

king's command? One of the motives for sanctioning the suspensive power was an announcement, on the part of the minister, Necker, that the one veto was as good as the other—a piece of advice that rendered the absolute prerogative impossible, yet accumulated all its unpopularity on that of suspension.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Great as was the agitation in Paris towards the end of September, rendered more dangerous by the scarcity of bread,* Lafayette and Bailly would have got the better of it, and put down the perturbators, but for the imprudent conduct of the court. Malouet and Mounier, finding their proposal of two chambers and an efficient veto in the king's hand negatived, and negatived too in some measure in consequence of the threats of the Parisian democracy, besought the king to withdraw himself and the assembly to Compiègne or Soissons.† The king declined, but as a protection against any invasion of Versailles by the Parisians, of which there was continual talk, he summoned the regiment of Flanders to replace the French guards, who had deserted him. On the arrival of the new regiment, the *gardes du corps* asked the officers to a banquet, which took place in the theatre of the palace, and which was attended by a number of royalist officers. The repast, joyous at first, soon took a political turn. Toasts were given and responded to. The queen, besought to honour the banquet by her presence, came with the dauphin; the king, just returned from the chase, was induced to accompany her. The royal family was received with more than transport. The song of Blondel, in *Cœur de Lion*—

O Richard, ô mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne—

* "The horrors of famine are renewed," wrote Marat on the 16th of September. "The bakers' shops are again besieged." And on the 20th he prints, "It is the fault of the

government, that does not execute the decree for the free circulation of corn."—*Ami du Peuple*.

† Bertrand de Moleville. Droz.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

was sung with sad enthusiasm. The tricolour cockade was dashed from many military hats, trodden under foot, and black cockades, in sign of mourning, substituted for them.

Paris and the Palais Royal were soon informed of the orgies of Versailles—so they termed them. On the 4th of October the journal of Marat summoned the people to arms, bade them march to Essonne to supply themselves with ammunition at the dépôt there, and implored the districts to withdraw their cannon from the Hôtel de Ville. Marat boasted afterwards, and no doubt with truth, of having largely contributed to the revolution. His friend Danton, chief of the Cordeliers club, was no doubt equally active. The leaders of the people in the faubourgs and districts prepared in fact a great movement, whether aided or instigated by higher personages remains doubtful. Fearing Lafayette, however, the insurrectionists commenced with a crowd of women, who collected on the morning of the 5th of October on the place before the Hôtel de Ville, crying out "Bread! bread!"* The municipal council had not yet assembled. But the impatient women broke into the Hôtel de Ville, followed by men who plundered. They were prevented from setting fire to the papers by one of the captors of the Bastille, who, as he alleged, in order to divert them from the Hôtel de Ville, proposed to lead them to Versailles. There they might ask bread of the king and the assembly. Santerre, who commanded the national guard of the Faubourg St. Antoine, and who was considered to be of the Orleans faction, had got rid of the mayor Bailly for a time. But Lafayette was soon at his post, and beset by the crowd with clamours that he would lead them and the national guard to Versailles. "You may not

* Procédure du Chatelet. Chabroud's report. Bailly. Lafayette. Camille Desmoulins' *Revolutions*.

deceive us, general," observed the grenadiers of the national guard, "but the court deceives you. Let us go to Versailles; the king is imbecile. Let us set him aside and crown the dauphin. A council of regency can then govern the kingdom." * Lafayette was the less inclined, after this disclosure of popular intentions, to head the march. He might have resisted the people had the national guard been staunch; but these had been inflamed as well as the people by the reports of the banquet at Versailles. Then the *gardes françaises*, who formed the paid portion of the new force, were incensed at the Flanders regiment having been called in to guard the king. They liked in consequence the project of bringing the royal family to Paris, and guarding them there themselves; whilst the mob went so far as to threaten Lafayette with the lamp-post. The citizen soldiers showed symptoms of a determination to march to Versailles without him. About four o'clock therefore the general yielded, and announced his consent to leading the national guard to Versailles.

The women had in the meantime reached that town about three o'clock. They proceeded to the assembly, which Maillard harangued on their behalf, the women soon breaking in among the members. The assembly was at the time but little contented with the way in which the king used his veto. It had asked him to confirm the votes of the 4th of August. Louis had replied on that very morning by accepting most of them, but criticising and objecting to others. In the midst of the sitting Mirabeau went up to Mounier, who was president, and told him that the Parisians were marching on Versailles, and advised him to adjourn the assembly, hasten to warn the king, and take measures proper for the exigency. Instead of thanking Mirabeau for the warning, and following his advice,

* Procédure du Chatelet.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Mounier replied tartly that the mob might come. He only hoped that, instead of killing some, it would slay all of them. "A pretty answer," observed Mirabeau. When the female torrent did burst into the assembly, Mounier was glad to follow Mirabeau's advice. A deputation of the members accompanied him, and a number of the women also. Passing with some difficulty through gates and guards, they were brought into the presence of the king, who received them, especially the women, kindly, promising they should have bread. One of the women fainted at the unexpected kindness of the monarch. She and her companions withdrew full of confidence in him. But when they expressed this, their comrades were for no less than for hanging them, and took off their garters for the purpose. But there was no lamp-post near, and the *gardes du corps* interfered.

In the evening Lafayette appeared, and hastened to the king, who, he found, had again declined to depart or escape, and who had signified to the assembly his full acceptance of the decrees they had sent for his sanction. On entering the palace, the general was saluted with the exclamation, "There's Cromwell!" "Cromwell, my good friends," observed Lafayette, "would not have entered the palace alone, and without a guard." *

As the women and the mob still occupied the courts of the palace, and prepared to pass the night there, although there was no distribution of provisions or bread, it was necessary to provide for the defence of the chateau. Lafayette was for confiding it to the national guards, especially as disputes and struggles had taken place between them and the *gardes du corps*; some had been even killed. At length it was arranged that the national guard, or paid portion of them, should have the posts in the courts, whilst the *gardes du corps* should keep those towards the garden. The night

* Lafayette. St. Priest. Necker. Dumas.

passed in comparative quiet, and Lafayette retired to rest. A little after six he was roused by the intelligence that some of the mob had penetrated into the chateau. The most usual entrances to it were, and are still, the columned passages between court and garden. Towards daybreak some ruffians, finding the portal on the south side unguarded, rushed in, overcame the first *garde du corps* that encountered them, and, well led or well instructed, rushed towards the queen's apartments. Two of the *gardes* were slain in the attempt to stop the assassins. Another made an obstinate defence, though severely wounded, having given the queen warning to escape. This she did by what one might call the nursery staircase to the king's apartment. The ruffians made their way to the bed which she had just left. More of the mob having broken in, continued to struggle with the *gardes du corps*, till a company of national guards, sent by Lafayette, arrived, and put an end to the combat.

The multitude in the court without, though they had taken no part in the onslaught, poured forth vociferations that the king should come to Paris. A council was hastily held in the chateau; and the extreme likelihood was represented of the Duke of Orleans being proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom if Louis resisted the demands of the Parisians. The king immediately resolved to proceed to Paris, and caused it to be announced. Lafayette asked the queen what was her determination. "Not to quit the king," was her reply. "Come, then," said the general, as he led the way to the balcony, to which as Marie Antoinette advanced, imprecations worse than death to her were heard. Lafayette knelt and kissed the queen's hand. The multitude applauded the dumb show of reconciliation. The voice of the assassins was drowned in joyous clamour. Lafayette then brought forth a *garde du corps*, embraced him also as a sign of reconciliation with that corps. The

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

people applauded this also, and the pact between the king and the people was virtually concluded.

The procession was soon formed: the royal family in one of their large coaches; some troops crestfallen; the *gardes du corps* disarmed;* the cannon with women astride them. The national guard, the diversely armed and strangely accoutred mob, formed one of those scenes which no other epoch has produced. Lafayette kept what order was possible. The king, troubled at first, recovered calm as he proceeded. The queen, who wished to stop at the Tuileries, was told it might be dangerous. The royal family therefore went to the Hôtel de Ville; and the king, addressing the people, said, he returned with confidence amongst his good people of Paris. Bailly repeated the words aloud, but omitted mention of confidence. The queen remarked the omission. "It is all the better to have it repeated at your suggestion," observed the mayor. The procession then returned to the Tuileries, where the royal family, in much disorder, once more established itself. The national assembly, little thought of during the catastrophe which overwhelmed it as well as the crown, also declared its sittings removed to the capital. They were at first held in the archbishop's palace, until a temporary edifice of wood selected opposite the Tuileries received them later.†

The French revolution is generally considered to have been a cataract of popular passions long pent up, but which, the barrier once burst, rushed precipitately and without intermission into the abyss of anarchy and blood. It was not so. The first rush of the revolution, which commenced about the time of the opening

* The heads of the two *gardes du corps* slain had been fixed on pikes, but formed no part of the procession. They had been already borne with the tidings of triumph

to the Palais Royal.

† Montgaillard says this *manège* occupied the site of the present Nos. 36 and 38, Rue de Rivoli.

of the assembly, and which was signalled by the repulse of the troops and the capture of the Bastille in July, culminated in the popular expedition to Versailles and the bringing of the royal family to Paris. Some few excesses and villanous crimes followed. But on the whole there was a suspension of street anarchy and murder. The middle class organised as national guards, and, under the lead of Lafayette, got the better of popular turbulence; which, though it continued to ferment, was still prevented from boiling up into insurrection. For very nearly two years, which elapsed from the removal of the king to Paris till after his flight to Varennes, there was a pause in the downward progress of at least violent revolution. The assembly was enabled leisurely to complete its task of framing a new constitution and a new order of things. And a long interval was afforded to the friends of constitutional principles, and to the enlightened classes, to concert, to combine, and take the requisite measures for maintaining that ascendancy and authority of the educated and experienced over the ignorant and impassioned masses without which no solid foundation for even popular liberties can be laid.

It is painful to observe how completely this opportunity was thrown away, although Lafayette and Bailly did, to a certain degree, their duty. Towards the close of October an unfortunate baker, named François, was accused by the people of secreting some loaves for his own consumption. Brought before the authorities of the Hôtel de Ville, these, as usual, sought to save him by the delay of a formal trial, which the mob perceiving tore their victim from the hands of municipal justice, hanged, and decapitated him. Lafayette could not prevent, but he at least punished the perpetrators. A man, taken with the baker's head on a pike, was arrested, condemned, and executed. In

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

the assembly some proposed a proclamation to the people. "And when you have scolded and disgusted the people," asked Robespierre, "who will defend you against the reaction of the court?" The assembly, nevertheless, voted that martial law might be proclaimed by the hoisting of a red flag, after which the rioters might be fired upon if they did not disperse. The sections, or electoral assemblies of districts, resisted, indeed, these conservative measures. Marat denounced them in his journal. And Danton stigmatised them from his chair as head of the section of the Cordeliers. Such dangerous defiance could only be overcome by a stringent law against the abuse of the press and of the clubs. But each of these was a wide question, leading to fierce struggles and disputes in the assembly. To put a stop or even a check upon either went directly contrary to that declaration of the rights of man which Lafayette himself had affixed to the constitution. And hence the general, when driven to any severe act of repression, was much more given to repent and atone for such a contradiction to his principles than to follow up with vigour a steady and sensible policy of resistance.

It was not in the streets, or in the police of them, that the principal duty of utilising and serving the revolution lay. This should have been performed by the national assembly, by the king, and the minister whom he might select. But authorities and politicians, unfortunately, instead of continuing to guide the revolution in a safe and salutary course, either did nothing or worked their utmost to send the country and themselves to perdition. The majority of the assembly, contented with the chief conquests of the revolution, the abolition of privileges, the equality of all before the law, were inclined to stop short and merely consolidate what had been done. But there was no point or person around which they could rally. The king was the most uncertain of

men,* adhering to the constitution one day, and plotting against it the next. The queen awoke from despair, merely to pursue chimerical hopes and projects. The eminent men of the assembly, its orators and statesmen, showed little save profound distrust of each other. There was a considerable number of the nobles and clergy who, if well instructed and guided, might have joined the constitutionalists in preventing the revolution from going further. Instead of doing so, they adopted a policy of spite, and sought to avenge themselves for the loss of rank and privileges by voting with the republicans every destructive and precipitate measure. The framers of an English constitution, Mounier, Malouet, and Necker, had but a small following. The latter altogether lost his *prestige*. His financial arrangements were no longer crowned with success, whilst in political affairs he was bewildered and could take no initiative. Mirabeau had, long before the events of October, offered his co-operation to the constitutionalists, that is his secret co-operation, for as there was none but the popular breeze blowing, he necessarily spread his sails to catch it. Necker and Mounier, like prudes, rejected Mirabeau's offer, and he with justice denounced them as incapable. After the events of October, Mounier withdrew from the assembly,† first to attempt vainly provincial resistance, and then to emigrate. Mirabeau was the pivot on which turned the revolutionary and conservative parties. And yet Barnave and the Lameths continued to side with the revolutionists out of mere personal antagonism to him. In reality they were of the same opinion as he, as they afterwards manifested. But they would accept

* "If you want to form an idea of Louis the Sixteenth's character," said his brother, the future Louis the Eighteenth, to the Count de La Marck, "take a number of ivory balls, oil them, and try to hold them

together."

† Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally Tolland, Bergasse, and the Bishop of Langres with him. For the part played by Mounier, see his *Appel*.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

neither his lead nor his alliance; and if his oratory overwhelmed them in the assembly, they took their revenge at the Jacobin club. Beyond them sat the republicans, such as Robespierre, who were as dissatisfied with having a king to rule them as their antagonists were with a monarch in name, without power or prerogative.

No one was really more horrified at the events of October than Mirabeau. He had always seen the necessity of a strong government, and with this view would have preferred any other prince of his family to Louis the Sixteenth. Seeing this impossible, he sought, however indirectly, to strengthen the king's hands and office. Mirabeau was for the absolute veto, and Barnave carried the suspensive veto against him. Soon after the removal of the court Mirabeau drew up a plan of conduct for it, the principal recommendations of which were, after due preparation, to transfer the seat of government and the assembly to Rouen, and appeal to the provinces of the west against the tyranny of the Parisian mob. Nothing could, however, be done without an able ministry. Mirabeau complained that all the king's ministers were nullities, Necker included, who knew nought but finance, and whose finance was no longer fitted for the troublesome atmosphere of the revolution. Long and intricate negotiations followed between Mirabeau and those who held place or wielded power. The great orator took especial pains to captivate Lafayette, and to persuade him of the necessity of dominating the king, and influencing the country by the appointment to office of the principal men of the national assembly. Lafayette was at first persuaded, and exerted himself to bring about the desired solution. But the selfish resistance of the actual ministry, the hesitation of the king,* and, above all, the repugnance

* "What the court wants to find," writes Mirabeau to La Marck, "is an amphibious being, who to the talents of a man might add the soul of a lacquey."—Correspondance.

which Lafayette felt to eject or be unjust to Necker, caused every effort to fail.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

The crown was thus isolated from the liberal conservatives in the assembly; and these, repudiated by the king, and fearing to be so by the people, wanted the opportunity or the courage to make any systematical opposition to the series of measures by which the assembly destroyed all the old institutions and administration of the kingdom without founding any new ones, capable of standing on any other basis than the popular will.

Events more powerful than legislative acts had annihilated the royal power. The provinces no longer obeying either intendants, commandants, or tax collectors, authority necessarily merged in the municipalities; but as these were formed of the middle class, the men who lived on wages joined in refusing to obey. It was the same in Paris as everywhere else. The national assembly was called upon to restore order, and establish some fulcrum upon which authority could be based. Mirabeau himself proposed universal municipalities; but he could only found them upon election, and there was no certainty of the municipality consisting of other elements than the non-propertied. The assembly, in fixing the constitution, decreed that the payment of a sum in direct contribution equal to three days' labour was necessary for the primary franchise. Such alone were considered active citizens, and allowed to form portion of the national guard. In peaceful times such a restriction might have had its effect; but, with the sovereign people master, how was such a law to be enforced? Mirabeau soon saw the futility of what he himself had proposed, and then his continued cry was, "Make an executive; strengthen an executive. Till you have done this, you have done nothing; and your rights of man are a humbug." The assembly did not, and could not, create an executive. They had full

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

powers to demolish, none to rebuild; and the nation was so pleased and occupied by the work of devastation that it looked on in comparative quiet as long as it lasted.

The first edifice to which they applied the axe, after the transfer of the assembly to Paris, was the church. The conviction that church property was available for public uses had long taken possession of the assembly, and was the chief, though secret cause, of their rejecting or spoiling each successive proposal of Necker. During the previous August the finance minister had presented to the assembly a lugubrious picture of his distress, and demanded an immediate loan of thirty millions. The Marquis de Lacoste and Alexander Lameth took the opportunity of observing that the property of the clergy was at the disposal of the nation. As the assembly would allow no more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the loan was not taken. After the events of October, and his subsequent retirement, Necker proposed a contribution of the fourth part of every one's revenue. This, although voted by the assembly, did not answer the expectation of the minister.

In the meantime the report of the committee upon church property was drawn up and read to the assembly by Talleyrand, then Bishop of Autun. That prelate established, to the satisfaction of the assembly, that "a beneficed ecclesiastic had merely a right to so much of church revenue as was necessary to his subsistence; of the surplus he was but an administrator for life."* But tithes having already been suppressed, along with all feudal dues, by the vote of August, Talleyrand had but the remaining two-thirds of church property, consisting of its immovable, to dispose of. He valued the whole at 150 millions of livres annually. He proposed leaving a hundred to support the clergy,

* Talleyrand's report. Lameth. Maury.

and selling the rest for the repeal of taxes and to meet the exigencies of the state. The discussion was long and animated, the clergy finding its chief advocate in Maury, afterwards cardinal. The assembly, however, on November 2, declared all ecclesiastical property to be at the disposal of the state.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

As crown domains were equally so, a new financial system, based on selling or raising money upon both, became too obvious and too convenient not to be adopted. Necker intervened with a proposal for raising 170 millions by metamorphosing the *caisse* of discount into a bank; but the assembly scorned such petty means, and proposed to sell for 400 millions' worth of property of the clergy and the crown domains. *Assignats* were to be issued for that amount. The municipalities, and the class which composed them, caught at the scheme; that of Paris offered to purchase one-half of the entire property offered for sale. Other municipalities followed the example; and the reign of *assignats* commenced.

Having dispossessed the clergy of its property, the nobles of their privileges and distinctions, whether fiscal, judicial, or honorary, deprived the crown of all but a suspensive veto, whilst leaving in its hands that administrative power which events totally prevented it from exercising, the assembly proceeded to lay the basis of what was no other than a large republican system.

The spirit that animated them—at which we need not wonder—was war to the past. To clear the foundation for a new edifice, they abolished all distinction between provinces, and divided the country into eighty-four departments. In vain did Mirabeau propose to keep up the spirit of the provinces by merely dividing them into departments and maintaining their ancient frontier. The assembly would not hear of it. The sentiment and pride of the provinces were to be crushed

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

along with their privileges. The great object was to level things and men, so that nought should exist capable of stopping or resisting whatever power installed itself in the capital, and seized the reins of administration, whether it was a red republic or a popular empire.

The payment of a contribution equal to three days' labour—three francs in fact—constituted a primary elector. A contribution of ten days' labour was required for those who were the final electors; a contribution of fifty francs was required for a deputy. Mirabeau proposed to restrict the admission to the legislature, and to render those only eligible who had been twice chosen members of a provincial administration. Barnave pointed out the defects of such a clause, which was accordingly negatived. The reorganisation of justice made part of that of the administration. The national assembly suppressed the parliaments, some of them uttering lugubrious, others violent protests. The noblesse of the *robe* suffered the same fate as the noblesse of the sword, and received as little commiseration. Judges were declared elective, and of different degrees, the *juge de paix* being the lowest. Once elected, they were to sit for life. At a later period, after 1790, juries were to give verdicts in criminal cases, but were not to be employed in civil trials.

With regard to the army, it was decreed that all grades were completely open to every aspirant. It had been already ordered that every French citizen should inscribe his name and take the oath to the constitution on reaching the age of twenty-one. This act enrolled the youth in the national guard. To the conscription it was but a step. Dubois Crancé prepared and foreshadowed that institution. But the application of democratic principles, most important in its immediate consequences, was that which concerned the appointment of the clergy. The French church had been

more stunned than irritated by the sudden and complete confiscation of its wealth. Its more fanatic orators had striven in the assembly, not to reverse or mitigate that decree, but to obtain a declaration that the Roman Catholic was the sole national religion of the country, and that no other worship should be authorised. A philosophic assembly could of course not pass such a vote; but what the partisans of the clergy sought was its rejection, in order to obtain a better pretext for religious war than a dispute about property and tithes. The declaration of intolerance was of course rejected; and the clergy could point to the vote as a proof that the assembly was hostile to the Catholic faith. A more practical question soon presented itself. How were bishops and curates to be appointed? Should the king—that is, his government—retain their power of ecclesiastical preferment, which the pope had ceded to them? An ecclesiastical committee had been formed. Zealous Catholics have denounced this committee as consisting chiefly of Jansenists, whose aim it was to bring back the church to its primitive condition. But, Jansenist or not, the committee had no choice. There was but one principle of authority that survived, authority proceeding from election. It was impossible to make an exception for the church. The committee proposed and the assembly decreed that curates should be elected by their parishioners, or by the primary electors. Prelates were to be chosen by the secondary electors, those who returned deputies to the assembly. Seminaries were abolished, cathedrals brought back to be parish churches. Such were the bases of the civil constitution of the clergy, against which, especially when later they were subjected to an oath to accept and be true to it, the greater majority of ecclesiastics rebelled, flinging themselves, and those of their flock who chose to follow them, into open rebellion with the legislature and the government of the country.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Such were the legislative acts of the constituent assembly. Never certainly was the scythe more mercilessly wielded. The crown, the aristocracy, the parliaments, the church, the army, the colonies, all fell before it. Every institution by which birth, wealth, experience, or intelligence, might hope to prevail was swept away. The assembly expected indeed that superior intelligence would always preserve its ascendancy. Unfortunately, however, it had been obliged to make its own ideas prevail, not by eloquence or logic so much as by the force of the populace. The events of July and October were the acts of the mob, and they established mob sovereignty. The ignorance, the barbarity, the cruelty, of such a mastery was foreseen, and the middle classes under Lafayette in Paris and other leaders elsewhere stood up to resist. But this was of little use without an executive that could draw to it, maintain, and exercise government authority. The king could not do this. The assembly could not make or enable him to do it. And yet they dared not and could not attempt any substitute for kingship. It laid the broad foundation of the political pyramid, but could not raise it, for want of materials, to any height, much less find aught that would substantially and effectually crown it.

Lafayette in the meantime was optimist enough to hope that the king might be reconciled to his position, the capital and kingdom restored to order. He attributed the worst portion of the scenes of the 5th and 6th of October not indeed to the Duke of Orleans but to his party. To demonstrate to them the hopelessness of their efforts, he compelled the duke to leave Paris for England. Under his protection, too, the court of the Chatelet had acquitted and released Besenval and other obnoxious prisoners. Unfortunately, a new criminal was found in the person of the Marquis of Favras, who had plotted and prepared the means of carrying off the king, proclaiming *Monsieur*, his brother,

regent, and slaying the popular leaders. *Monsieur* came forward to deny all cognisance of him, a denial that few believed.* Favras was found guilty and executed, to the great contentment and agitation of the populace. The revolutionary journalists especially took advantage of the circumstance to denounce the treason of princes and of the court. Lafayette caused a stringent law against the seditious press to be introduced, and the national guard made several descents upon Marat's printing-office. Danton and the Cordeliers declared they would defend him; but Marat's journal was suppressed for the time, and he himself, as he alleged on resuming his journal, withdrew to England.†

CHAP.
XXXVIII

A government of any foresight would have taken advantage of the calm to acquire strength; but Necker was out of his element, and Cicé, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, praised and applauded for his talents, showed merely one for mischief. He knew of Mirabeau's desire to become minister. Instead of favouring an event so useful to the crown, he it was who prompted Lanjuinais to propose the motion forbidding members of the assembly from accepting any place in the government.‡ The personal jealousy which chiefly animated the assembly ensured the passing of such a vote. Mirabeau deprecated it as suicidal to the assembly itself. "Do not pass such a law!" he exclaimed. "Limit it to the purpose the proposer has in view, and decree that Mirabeau, member for Aix, shall be precluded from office."

In February 1790 the king volunteered to take the oath to the new constitution, and came in solemnity to the national assembly for the purpose. It was a fit of

* *Monsieur* had partisans, who wished to make him lieutenant-general of the kingdom. He himself tried to impel the court to appoint him first minister. "The queen treats him," writes Mirabeau, "as a

little chicken that one likes through the bars of a hen-house, taking care at the same time not to let it out."

† Marat's *Ami du Peuple*.

‡ Law passed January 1790.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

sincerity and resignation which lasted but a short time. Mirabeau styles it a comedy. It set the fashion of every one swearing fealty to the constitution. The population of the provinces had since the events of July sprung up into national guards. The aim was first the preservation of order. But as the year 1790 opened, a new element of disturbance arose. The princes and aristocracy mustering at Turin and other courts began to organise and stir up the dormant spirit of loyalism throughout France. The clergy aided by pointing out to such of their flock as remained faithful that not only had the church been spoliated but its supremacy and even truth denied. There were rumours of a league of kings against regenerated France. Counter-revolutionary movements took place in several provinces, especially at Marseilles, where a commandant was massacred. The national guards, the most zealous and patriotic of the population, not only mustered and exercised but fraternised. Those of Languedoc, Dauphiny, and the Nivernais, met, to the number of 12,000, at Valence, in the last days of January. Bretons and Normans joined. The national guards of Touraine and Berry met at Orleans. They took the oath to the constitution, and also to be true to each other. The northern provinces did not join in this movement. In order to prevent the great military institutions from becoming localised and leading to schemes of federation, the national assembly and the Parisian patriots proposed a grand federation of all the national guards of France in the Champs de Mars.

The ceremony took place on the 14th of July, the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille. To render it visible to spectators as well as actors, it was undertaken to remove the soil from the middle of the field, in order to form it all round into a continued mound, from which the Parisians might regard the scene. The workmen employed were not sufficient for the gigantic

task, which was no sooner perceived than the entire population, men, women, and children, poured forth to aid in the work. This preliminary to the fête was one of the most joyous parts of it. An altar was erected to the country in the midst. Bishop Talleyrand and three hundred of the clergy undertook to officiate. But before the mass the king, deputies, and all the authorities took solemnly the oath to the constitution. 69,000 national guards were marshalled on the plain. The rain fell in torrents; but to show how little their spirits were damped by it, the armed assembly broke into a dance. The sun shone, however, for the Bishop of Autun's mass; and the rest of the day or days was a joyous fête, such as the French know so well how to get up and to enjoy. But if the federation was a meeting of glad and patriotic hearts, it was also the means of bringing together wicked ones. That class of the Parisian mob whose vocation was to hang and to massacre had been for some time kept down; but now they met with kindred spirits from the provinces, men without means or scruples, who found the capital too promising a field for their exertions ever to quit it. How easily such bands were recruited from the federals of the south may be judged from the fact of 50,000 workmen being found totally destitute of employ at Lyons alone. The fête of the federation, therefore, which was imagined as the crowning ceremony of the new constitution, was in fact but the inauguration of fresh scenes of insurrection and disorder.

Still, however the anarchists gained ground for a future opportunity, authority held its place in the capital and elsewhere. Lafayette, suspected and frowned upon at the Tuileries, awed its enemies more than his own into respect. Military mastery was more threatening than civic in 1790. The Count de Bouillé commanded in Lorraine, where he found great difficulty in keeping his troops from being seduced

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

by the emissaries of the Paris anarchists. In August the soldiers of several regiments stationed at Metz rose, and began by imprisoning their officers; the reactionary tendency of these was the great cause. The assembly, having abrogated the aristocratic privileges of the officers of the old army, ought to have lost no time in reorganising the army itself. Bouillé succeeded in pacifying the mutineers. This was no sooner done than the garrison of Nancy mutinied also. Bouillé had the address to make the soldiers of Metz march against their comrades. A severe conflict ensued. In the end the mutineers of Nancy were put down, and their leaders given over to punishment. This event had a salutary effect in discouraging the anarchists of the capital, but a pernicious one in encouraging the reactionary party and hopes of the court. The queen and Louis placed trust in Bouillé. He and Mirabeau were most anxious to recover the king from the nullity to which he had been reduced, a nullity that Mirabeau saw must end in the supremacy of the rabble. Bouillé entertained the same opinion; and could Lafayette have been similarly persuaded, the three might have devised the means and accomplished the end of setting the monarchy once more erect. But none of these fully agreed either amongst themselves or with the court. Bouillé's idea, that most congenial to the court, was that the king should escape to a fortress on the frontier, where he could not only hoist his own royal banner, but receive aid from his brother potentates of Europe. Mirabeau deprecated this. He would have the monarch rely solely upon French support, and that not royalist so much as moderate revolutionist. Lyons he recommended latterly as the best rallying place. At one time he thought Fontainebleau sufficiently distant. But Lafayette was as yet averse to any plan of escape, not only because he was in a manner responsible for the guard of the king, but that he believed the consti-

tution to be capable of being worked, and the king endowed with no insufficient amount of power.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Independent of flight, Mirabeau's plans for the recovery of the monarchy were neither coherent nor hopeful. At first he was anxious to be appointed to office, and to wield its power in prosecuting his scheme. The court was wrong in not gratifying him. A minister so able and energetic might have rallied the scattered elements of conservatism, and saved the throne; but neither the royal family nor the ministers would admit such preference. We have seen how the Archbishop of Bordeaux defeated it. Suspected and rendered impotent by his colleagues of the assembly, Mirabeau prepared to discredit that body, ruin its popularity by impelling it to rash measures, and then make use of the discontent it created, especially among the clergy, to strengthen monarchic reaction. Mirabeau's great mistake lay in supposing that a new assembly would be more moderate and practical than the old. In the new he even favoured the exclusion of a member of the constituent assembly from re-election.* Mirabeau in fact thought the tide of revolution at its ebb when it was in fact about to flow with redoubled energy.

His own death, however, contributed greatly to this, not only from the check to demagogism which it took from the assembly, but from the inconsiderate and ill-conducted measures into which it flung the court; for Louis and his queen, however little they followed the counsels of Mirabeau, still trusted in his miraculous power of oratory to save them. Unfortunately, the superiority of his eloquence did but raise up enemies to him in the assembly, where his influence was daily decreasing. His own excesses, more than years—perhaps, too, his despair of reaching any issue from the revolutionary career in which all were involved—contributed to cut short his days.

* Correspondance de Mirabeau avec La Marck, t. ii. p. 451.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Hostility to him disappeared and malice grew silent when his approaching end was announced; and when it was consummated the assembly decreed to him all the apotheosis that genius and virtue could claim. His body was borne to the Pantheon with royal pomp; and yet the assembly a few days after passed a vote that no member of a representative assembly should be appointed minister, thus marking their dread and jealousy at the same time with their admiration of the great orator.

The year 1791 had brought fresh causes of popular discontent and ministerial embarrassment. Prepared to make a change, and appoint other and more liberal men, Louis as usual did but half of what each required, and so satisfied none. Necker had withdrawn, and all the ministers followed him save Montmorin. But their successors were equally null. The machinations of the *émigrés* beyond the frontier began to make themselves felt within it. The majority of the clergy declined the oath to the civil constitution ordained for them; and ecclesiastics began to take the place of nobles in popular execration. The assembly discussed a law against the *émigrés*, and ordered the regiments to be put on a war footing (January 1791). Prussia and England had put down the ultra-liberals of Holland. Austrian troops had marched to do the same by those of Flanders. England threatening Spain with war, the latter invoked the succour of France, according to the family compact. Louis the Sixteenth hoped to take advantage of this, and raise an armed force; but the democrats dreaded an armament under any pretext as long as the king retained his power.

In the middle of April, about a fortnight after the death of Mirabeau, the royal family ordered their carriage to proceed to St. Cloud. They had spent the previous summer there without much objection; * but this

* The only reproach, and probably a just one, was, that the national guard were treated with disrespect at St. Cloud by the court.

year the jealous fears of the people were more awakened by the malevolence of the *émigrés*, and by the too well-founded report that the court meditated a furtive removal to some frontier fortress. When the carriage therefore appeared at the gate of the Tuileries, and after the royal family had taken their seats, the people collected to oppose their departure.* Lafayette was summoned, and the general used his utmost efforts to persuade the people to allow country air and exercise to the royal family.† They were inexorable; and the national guard so evidently sympathised with them that Lafayette durst not order them to use force to clear the way. Louis and his family accordingly withdrew to the palace, which appeared to them henceforth a prison; and, not without reason, they commenced planning their escape from a duration so harsh and so humiliating.

There can be no doubt that, from the death of Mirabeau, and even previously, the king had taken a resolution decidedly hostile to the revolution. He could not sanction the civil constitution of the clergy, and his chief reason for desiring to go to St. Cloud was to pass Easter there, and receive the sacraments from a priest who had not taken the oath to the constitution. This was perceived, and formed the subject of discussion in the journals, as well as a source of fresh popular animosity to the king. Louis, too, formally and regularly registered his protests against the sanction which he felt himself compelled to give to the decrees of the assembly. A position so false could only end by a catastrophe. Early in June Louis signified to M. de Bouillé at Metz that he would quit the Tuileries on the night of

* Mem. of Lafayette, &c.

† According to La Marck, it was not a mob that collected, but citizens, shop-keepers, and artists, who, on this occasion, crowded to the Car-

rousel, which made it more distasteful to the national guard to act against them. La Marck, *Corresp.* t. iii. p. 143.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

June 19, and would proceed by Varennes to Montmedy. Bouillé in return sent excellent advice. He disapproved of the route by Varennes, where there was no large posting establishment. He deprecated the royal family travelling together in their large coach, and he insisted upon an officer of true courage and ability, such as the Marquis d'Agoust, accompanying the king. Louis as usual made light of all these counsels. He persisted in going by Varennes in the large coach, and would not compel Madame de Tourzel, *gouvernante* of the children, to yield her place for the journey to the Marquis d'Agoust. To crown their blunders, the time of departure was put off for four-and-twenty hours, deranging all the preparations and escorts that Bouillé had arranged and ordered. Fatuity presided over every act.

At midnight, on June 20 to 21, the shortest and consequently the least favourable day, the royal family left the Tuileries, and succeeded fully, nevertheless, in pushing along the north-east road till they passed Chalons. They were recognised there, but only by persons who rejoiced in their escape. During the rest of the journey the fugitives were to have been met at each post by military detachments. This unfortunately did but arouse the suspicions of the people, and at St. Menehould the king was fully recognised by Drouet, the postmaster. It was here that the king's route diverged to Varennes. Drouet had allowed the royal carriage to proceed, but after a little time hurried himself on horseback to stop them at Varennes. Before he arrived, the fugitives had ample time to obtain fresh horses and force their way. But they failed to drive to the exact place where the escort, and where the relay, waited; and, moreover, they had no active officer like D'Agoust to remedy an accident, repair a delay, rally the escort—which, though feeble, was sufficient—and impose on the hesitating village authorities. Louis and his queen

were alike helpless in such a predicament. Drouet had time to come, to get the streets of the town barricaded against the carriage, and, in fine, to retard the royal family till an aide-de-camp of Lafayette arrived from Paris with orders to bring back the fugitives. Bouillé indeed would not have respected such an order; but he was at Stenay, and whilst the royal family had reached Varennes at eleven at night, he was not informed of it till next morning. They had been expected in the afternoon, and this want of punctuality deranged everything. Bouillé hastened with the regiment of the royal Germans to Varennes, but the king had already quitted it on his return, and the regiment refused to follow. Bouillé, in despair, betook himself across the frontier. Louis and his family had definitively fallen into the gulf of revolution.*

The king's every act had contributed to render that gulf fatal. In departing he had left a paper addressed to the assembly, protesting against all that had taken place since the 6th of October, thus undoing what had been done and even sanctioned in the matter of the constitution, and placing himself without its pale. It was not to be wondered that the people assumed the royal power to be at an end, that they effaced its ensigns, and would not contemplate its restoration. The assembly affirmed its suspicions, declared the executive power to be in its own hand, and on their return appointed a guard of the king's person, and of those of his family.

The flight of Louis the Sixteenth, with the declaration that he left behind, and his subsequent capture, decided almost irrevocably the fate of the old monarchy in France. The act of desertion, and the evident purpose of recurring to foreign as well as reactionary force in order to combine and put down the revolution, were too plain to be mistaken.

* Mémoires de Bouillé, de Lafayette.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

And it was neither illogical nor extravagant of the people to consider that his reign was at an end. Such, indeed, was the universal exclamation of those who had a voice in the streets, in the press, or in the clubs.

The constituent assembly, or its great majority, thought otherwise. Not merely the members of the right or conservative side were for reinstating the king, but even the left, including some of the fiercest opponents of Mirabeau, were for condoning the king's fault, and making use of him to crown the great edifice of the constitution. The motives for this with the greater number were, no doubt, the old feeling of loyalty which lingered in their breasts, and which they very incongruously combined with an admiration for political equality and popular sovereignty. Lafayette offered the example of an honourable man actuated by the two conflicting sentiments, which till too late he would never believe to be incompatible. Men who had long stifled the old feeling of loyalty found their sympathies powerfully excited by the misfortunes of the royal family, joined with its amiable and virtuous character. One of these so influenced was Barnave, who had made the journey from Varennes in the royal coach, and thus had the opportunity of personally testing the worth and weakness of the royal fugitives. Other members of the assembly, uninfluenced by personal considerations, and called by the crisis to make choice between a monarchic and a republican form of government, infinitely preferred the former, as avoiding the jealousies and anarchy that would, they saw, necessarily ensue upon any attempt to govern the country by elected magistrates. An executive power must exist, and all, save a few, such as Robespierre and Brissot, preferred seeing this exercised by Louis the Sixteenth than by any of their colleagues. They might have a leaning to republican principles, but they had no faith

in their fellowmen to work them. Besides, the majority of the country was certainly not for the experiment of a republic. Every town and province had its parties, and the most numerous, if not the most energetic, was that which deprecated the rule of a Robespierre, a Lameth, or even a Lafayette. The national assembly therefore decided on maintaining or voting the monarchy, fixing the time of the latter to be the king's acceptance of the constitution, although it was evident that the Parisian multitude were bent on retaining the republic.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

Not only in the assembly was there a majority for the monarchy, but also in the Jacobin club. Instead, however, of keeping possession of the club and its locality, so potent, not only over Parisian but provincial opinion, the monarchists committed the mistake of abandoning it to the extreme party, because they disliked their language and principles, and repairing themselves to the club *des Feuillants*, which embraced and professed the cause of constitutional monarchy. The vaulted hall of the Jacobins was thus left empty for a time, but it soon filled exclusively with demagogues, who thus inherited the potent influence of the club over its hundreds of affiliated societies throughout the country, the *Feuillants* possessing no such advantages.

In the assembly itself the monarchic majority felt that they and the crown were threatened by a dangerous and unscrupulous demagogy. But encouraged by the accession of Barnave and the Lameths, as well as supported by the right, they avowed their determination to employ all the force at their disposal. Robespierre was threatened with prosecution; he, Desmoulins, Danton, and in fact all the leaders, shrunk away at the moment to escape arrest. Some of the Jacobins, with Brissot, had drawn up a petition that the king should not be restored till the departments and the

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

country at large were consulted. But on learning the decree of the assembly, restoring the king as soon as he should have accepted the constitution, they abandoned the scheme of a petition.

The Cordeliers took it up, and made preparations for a monster meeting in the Champ de Mars on the 17th of July, to allow and enable the people to sign the petition against royalty on the altar of the country. They gave the legal notice to the police of their intention to do so, and invoked the articles of the constitution giving them the right. The assembly, however, summoned the municipal and departmental authorities to them, enjoined them personally to put down the agitation and tumult which the petitioners sought to produce, and also proclaimed the express decree which had been voted with respect to the restoration of the king.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the municipal authorities, the people, and especially the members of the Cordelier club, without their leader Danton, collected in the Champ de Mars on the morning of the 17th. Two individuals were found concealed under the wooden altar. As they could give no rational reason for their being there, and the people suspecting treason, they were killed without mercy, and their heads fixed on pikes. A petition was then drawn up and signed by the multitude; the names of Chaumette, Hebert, and other democratic underlings were there, but not those of Danton or Desmoulins. These lay concealed. Bodies of police or national guards appeared in the field during the day, and were assailed by a few stones and gibes. Lafayette came on one occasion and received from the multitude a promise that they would disperse as soon as the petition was signed.* Towards evening the municipality, fearing perhaps a night tumult, gave orders for clearing the Champ de Mars.

* Mémoires de Lafayette.

Lafayette accordingly marched thither at the head of 10,000 national guards, and accompanied by cannon. Bailly, the mayor, and the municipal officers went too, bearing the red flag that proclaimed martial law. The advocates of the people and the witnesses declared afterwards that the mayor was behind the troops, and the red flag so small as to be able to be carried in the pocket.* The crowd, therefore, not aware of the gravity of the case, assailed the armed force with stones, and one pistol shot, it is said, was fired at Lafayette. Provoked by the assault, and without waiting for the three legal and prescribed summonses, the guards fired at Lafayette's command, first in the air, and then upon the multitude collected on and around the altar of the country. Some hundreds fell killed or wounded, and the rest were dispersed by the cavalry. The leaves of the petition scattered about were picked up by the municipality. The victory over the republican democracy was complete, and was followed up by the breaking of Marat's presses, the discontinuance of Desmoulins' journal, the arrest of a few demagogues, and the momentary disappearance of the rest. It is much to be regretted that this first punishment inflicted by the national guard upon the populace and fanatics of the capital did not take place when these had been manifestly guilty of massacre and sedition,† and was not accompanied by those formalities which the law directed, and the forbearance which might have been expected from Lafayette and Bailly. The circumstance of the case gives unfortunately to the popular writers grounds for accusing the authorities of having set the law aside to inflict unnecessary and ill-timed repression, and of having

* Trial of Bailly.

† Lafayette says, he did not wish to prevent the signing of the petition, but that, learning the intention of the mob to menace the national

assembly, he dispersed it. Had he waited till the displaying of such an intention, the repression would have been more becoming and more useful.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

wreaked vengeance not upon the king, who had sought to betray the revolution, but upon the people who came forward to support it. The consciousness of over-severity, indeed, prevented Lafayette and Bailly from following up the scene of the Champ de Mars by any ulterior measures, such as closing the clubs, or placing restrictions on the rabid press, and both in a short time recovered their activity and influence. Will it be believed that in a little while after the assembly passed a decree dividing the national guard, and virtually removing Lafayette from the command? * It voted that there should be no higher or under officer of the guard than a commander of a district. Each section of Paris was a district. And thus was the only conservative force disarmed and paralysed by the assembly on the eve of its dissolution.

Another result of the constitution was to render the election of a new mayor requisite. Bailly scarcely desired to preserve his place, especially since he had sacrificed popularity to defend the monarchy and the assembly. He was allowed to resign. The constitutionalists strove to get Lafayette chosen mayor in his stead. But will it be credited, the queen and the court, in hatred of their only saviour, Lafayette, canvassed zealously that Petion should be preferred to him; Petion, whose conduct was so uncourteous during the return from Varennes, and who in no wise disguised his republican ideas? † Had Lafayette been mayor, or had the national guard remained under his control, the coming insurrection of June and of the 10th of August 1791 might have been avoided, and the massacre of September prevented. But Louis and his

* Lafayette, irritated, resigned, but no effort was made by the assembly to alter his determination, or leave the national guard as he had organised it.

† The correspondence of La Marck shows how easy it would have been

to set aside Petion. "There were 10,000 voters only out of 80,000 who abstained. These were evidently not for Petion. Their coming forward must have defeated him."—Tom. iii. p. 268.

queen laboured to advance to power and authority the very men who forwarded the popular movement, in order to swamp the monarchy, so incredible was the fatuity and folly of the royal pair.

CHAP.
XXXVIII.

The policy of the royalist party in the assembly was equally incredible. Although it must have been plain to them that the moderate liberals, such as Lameth and Barnave, were prepared to support the crown, this had no effect to induce them to meet or conciliate these men. The momentary suspension of the royal authority, after the flight to Varennes, had been unavoidable. Yet the members of the Right were so indignant that they announced, to the number of nearly three hundred, their determination to take no part in the future deliberations of the assembly.

The more liberal royalists, those who followed Malouet, might, it was hoped, be more accommodating. The Lameths and Barnave sought interviews with them, and proposed that they should play into each other's hands when the constitution, as a whole, was to be discussed, and a correction of its errors and mistakes attempted. Malouet agreed to this plan of revising the constitution. But the accord was so awkwardly acted upon, the liberals fearing to expose themselves to obloquy, and the royalists to the charge of inconsistency, that nothing material took place to set aside the ultra or democratic provisions of the constitution. The assembly was in a hurry to complete it, as the king did not resume his executive power till the moment of his acceptance. He hesitated, nevertheless, objecting especially, though tacitly, to the religious articles of the constitution. But the danger of refusal, as usual, overcame his scruples, and Louis declared that he accepted what the national representation had decreed. At the close of September the assembly held its last sitting, and dissolved itself, leaving a completely new field for new ideas and new men.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

October 1791 to October 1792.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

NEVER was a more complete change of scene, of personages, and of the whole spirit and nature of politics, than that which ensued upon the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in the last days of September 1791, and the opening of its successor, the Legislative Assembly, immediately after. The first of these national representations was the youth of the revolution, sanguine, enthusiastic, dreamy, and inclined to worship the unseen and the ideal, but with that strong intellect which could turn from the imaginative to the practical, and legislate, when it was required, with grandeur and precision. If the characteristic of the constituent assembly had been hope, that of the legislative was fear. The confidence of youth had vanished; the anxiety of manhood had begun. There was neither taste nor leisure to dream of the future or pursue an ideal one. The difficulty was to live, to ward off the blows of enemies, to meet danger from home and from abroad, and to prevent not only these but their maddening effects upon the multitude. To fulfil such a task required far more able and experienced men than the country had been able to find or been allowed to elect. The self-denying clause of the late assembly had demanded of the country a new crop of politicians, which

was not to be found. The entire class of gentry had disappeared, or been discredited. The injunctions of the emigrant princes, supposed to be entitled to set the fashion, had driven them abroad, so that but a small sprinkling of the upper class was to be discovered on the right benches of the new assembly.

Their places were filled by young men, following professions, lawyers chiefly, judges of inferior tribunals, or persons employed in the administration. Men of letters, and such clergy as had accepted the constitution, swelled the number. It was remarkable, and indeed unfortunate, that the eminent in such an assembly were so few of them Parisians. Three years of revolution had worn out or compromised all of them who had not become rabid, and aided in rendering the people so. The middle class in Paris, the industrious and trading citizen, had been completely set aside and cowed by the turbulent populace, who received daily pay from the demagogues of the sections, on condition of their attending and being ready, pike in hand, to awe the intelligent and the moderate. This at once created an antagonism between the Parisian mob, with their champions who loved revolution for revolution's sake, and the professional men of eloquence and education who were in all respects provincial. The most able of these had been returned by Bordeaux, and the department of the Gironde, Vergniaud foremost, with the oratorical powers of Mirabeau, but without his vices, his vigour, or his knowledge of the world. Isnard and Guadet had bursts of eloquence, too, which electrified the assembly. Genonné was the able drawer-up of a report, Brissot the experienced journalist, who daily addressed the people, but in the language of a man of education, and who for this reason yielded in noisy popularity to his thoroughly blackguard competitors. Brissot was not of the Gironde, but a native of Chartres, as were Petion and Sieyès. Condorcet was the philosopher of the party,

CHAP.
XXXIX.

a disciple of Voltaire, who carried his principles to an extreme.

By certain revolutionary writers the party of the Gironde has been stigmatised as that of a narrow middle class, of the *bourgeoisie*, in fine, which is treated as a very pestilent and pusillanimous portion of society. By this classification history is falsified altogether. Before the revolution, as well as after it, the men of intelligence and education, who gave impulse and effect to the great changes, were, nineteen out of twenty, of the middle class. Indeed, almost all the actors of the revolution, until the pike and the butcher's knife became its instruments, were of the middle class alone. Robespierre, Danton, and Marat belonged to it, quite as much as the Gironde. They were all three professional men: Marat, a physician, who sought power and obtained it merely for the purpose of killing; Danton, who did the same for the avowed passion of enjoying luxuries; Robespierre, for the gratification of envy, and without one rational end. "I always opposed Robespierre," said one of the Mountain, "because I never could discover in him an aim. He was always talking of virtue and the people's happiness; they were mere words, and used solely for his own power and profit. No one could tell what he was driving at."* To call these men champions of the people, because they obtained large power of life and death by the blindness of the multitude, were as idle as to proclaim the Girondists champions of the middle class, because they struggled for the common rights of humanity. The Girondists knew nothing of trade or business. They were men of the closet, noble in their aspirations, desirous of rendering the revolution beneficial and humane, as well as triumphant, but unable to communicate their sentiments to an ignorant people, whom the despotism and the priestcraft of the preceding century had brutalised.

* Mémoires de Baudot, quoted by Quinet.

The first acts of the new assembly showed fears, lest it might not command that respect due to its position. After a solemn act of adoration towards the constitution, a deputation was sent to the king to announce that the assembly was constituted.* He could not receive them, they were told, till the morrow. Louis probably required time to consider what he should say. The deputation, indignant at the reply, demanded to be received then. They were so. And the king spoke but a few words in answer. He could not go to the assembly till Friday. All this was natural; but deputation and assembly took fire, as at an intended insult. With the spite of children, they voted that the terms *sire* and majesty should be suppressed for the future, and the king's chair put on a level with that of the president. Louis, in consequence, said he would not go at all, and, certain of the national guards, threatened some of the deputies with the bayonet.† They thought it advisable, therefore, to rescind their angry vote. The king came in due form. Yet because the members sat down when he did, Louis the Sixteenth was more indignant than he ever was at the loss of important portions of his prerogative.‡

More serious differences soon arose between powers so ill-fitted to agree. Certain duties devolved upon the unfortunate monarch which, since he had accepted and sworn to the constitution, the nation had a right

* To give all the references to works consulted for this chapter would fill the pages to the exclusion of the text. The *Moniteur* and Buchez and Roux's *Histoire Parlementaire* are the principal sources of debates and events. For the state of parties and affairs at the opening of the legislative assembly see the *Souvenirs* of M. Dumas.

† Several complained of this in the Jacobins. Bazire brought it before the assembly. "The na-

tional guard," writes La Marck (Oct. 10), "has insulted several deputies, some of whom have been stupid enough to complain that they were treated as *Va-nus-pieds*. True, indeed, that nineteen-twentieths of the deputies have no equipage save umbrellas and galoshes. The entire revenue of the seven hundred members would not amount to 300,000 livres."—T. iii. p. 246.

‡ Madame Campan.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

to expect his performing sincerely and efficiently. It was then threatened from without by foreign powers, as well as by its own *émigrés*, who, to the number of thousands, had congregated on the Rhine under the command of the brothers of the king. Moreover, the majority of the priesthood which refused to take the oath to the civil constitution, and who were encouraged by the pope to reject it, had already made progress in the organisation of rebellion throughout the western provinces.*

Commissioners had been sent to enquire into the state of La Vendée. Their reports, drawn up by Gensonné, were laid before the assembly at this time. The ministers, called upon for statements of affairs in their several departments, did not conceal their gravity. Thus the first debates of the legislative assembly necessarily turned upon the penalties to be inflicted on the obstinate *émigrés* and the nonjuring priests, the first of whom were levying war against the country, and the latter against the constitution. The only other subjects which interested and disputed attention with them were the finances and the colonies.

In nothing had the constituent assembly effected a greater revolution than in the laws of taxation and finance. *Taille*, capitation, and *gabelle* were abolished, the latter virtually. The imposts to replace these were voted, but to begin to raise them in such times was impracticable. In Necker's *Comptes Rendus* the ter-

* The constituent assembly had allowed such priests as refused to take oaths still to officiate in the chapels, as well as the constitutional priests. But the bishops forbade this, lest the two should be confounded, and ordered the nonjuring clergy to perform mass in holes and corners rather than in the desecrated churches. The nonjuring denounced those priests who accepted the civil constitution as no longer

priests, and declared the marriages performed and the absolutions given by them null. Dumouriez, who commanded in La Vendée, says that at first the majority of the clergy were for submission, but when the oath was to be taken not only to what the assembly had decreed but might afterwards decree respecting the church, they fell off, and obeyed the injunctions of the royalist prelates.

ritorial taxes were estimated at 180 millions of livres. The estimates for 1791 calculated 198 millions for land-tax, and fifty millions for house-tax. The capitation was nearly fifty, tobacco and *aides* thirty millions, *octroi* forty millions; 500 millions were expected to be raised in these and other ways. But with expenditure valued at 750 millions, besides the interest of debt at 280 millions, such ways and means were insufficient. The *commune* of Paris, in addition to all it had robbed, demanded 200 millions of livres as the cost of its insurrections and assassinations. There was no hope of meeting this, even before war was proclaimed, except by the sale of church and emigrant property, and the issue of assignats thereon. At the time of the king's deposition 2,700,000,000 livres of assignats had been issued, and of course spent. Several millions, not of paper, but of coin, were imperatively demanded by Dumouriez to pay the army that had repelled the enemy. They were procured, of course, by a large issue of assignats,* which Cambon declared himself fully entitled to create, since, although the estimated value of the confiscated property was well nigh exhausted, the taxpayers owed two years' arrears of contributions.

The colonial question was equally unsatisfactory. The application of the rights of man to a community of masters and slaves begot troubles. The constituent assembly made matters worse, by first proclaiming the broad principles of equality, and then setting up as broad an obstacle to them in the rights of the colonial assemblies. The inevitable result was anarchy. The mulattoes, first siding with the whites, were rejected by them, and then turned to lead the blacks to insurrection. Not at first successful, their chief, Ogé, was taken and cruelly tortured. This was followed by the rising of the whole negro population,

* 'December 1790. The paper louis had fallen to 8 livres 10 sous. It is now at 16 livres.'—Pelhenc.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

and the complete massacre of the planters and their families. The conservatives pointed to these events as the first-fruits of revolution, and as a sample of what must necessarily take place at home.

In the month of November the assembly, after long debates, passed decrees against the *émigrés* and against the nonjuring priests. The former were bidden to return before the new year, under penalty of death to their persons and confiscation of their property. Military men who emigrated were to be treated as deserters. The princes' pensions had hitherto been paid, but were no longer to be so. The decree against priests who refused to take the oath deprived them of their allowance, and enabled the authorities to send them out of their old parishes. Upon both these decrees the king placed his veto, thus nullifying the first acts of the assembly, and showing that he did not participate in their just sentiments of fear and indignation against the enemies of the state.

Louis was guided at the time very much by the moderate members of the late assembly. Barnave and the Lameths had succeeded to Mirabeau as the secret councillors of the court, and these, together with Lafayette and the members of the club of Feuillants, looked not only with jealousy upon their successors in the new assembly, but underrated their talents. The constitution of 1791 had organised local administration in councils of departments and municipal councils. The former, chosen like the deputies by the secondary electors, were of a higher class, so as indeed to be afterwards denounced as so many nests of aristocracy throughout the country. The departmental council of the Seine, with the Duc de la Rochefoucauld at its head, was now the great stay of the Feuillants, or constitutional conservatives. They began by making a very imprudent use of their authority, persuading the king secretly, and petitioning him publicly, to apply his

veto even to the first penal decrees against refractory priests. And this was at the very time when the report of Gensonné showed these ecclesiastics to be exciting an open and dangerous rebellion. The assembly, finding itself resisted by the court, took measures to do without it. The members formed themselves into committees. Those devoted to the internal affairs of the kingdom opened a correspondence with the provinces. The committee of foreign affairs demanded of the minister all his documents and information. Seeing this, the Count de Montmorin withdrew; a new ministry was formed, chiefly on the recommendation of the Feuillants or Lameth party. Delessert became minister of foreign affairs, and undertook the dangerous task of at once satisfying the queen and the assembly.

A better choice was that of the young Count de Narbonne for minister of war. The friend of Madame de Staël and of Madame de Condorcet, he sought to conciliate the two parties, those of the old and of the new assembly. By his eagerness to organise efficiently the military defences of the country, he won the confidence of the liberal leaders of the Gironde; whilst by his promises and purposes, first to render the armies victorious, and then make use of their ascendancy to strengthen moderate councils in Paris, he commanded the adherence of the Feuillants. He won thus not only upon politicians, old and young, but even upon the king, whom he prompted to redeem the ungracious use of his veto by coming down to the assembly (December 1791), and declaring his indignation at the conduct of the *émigrés*, and his determination to compel the Elector of Treves, by the extremity of war if it was necessary, to disperse the menacing armies that were collected at Coblenz.

In this the king was up to a certain point sincere. He deprecated the threats and proposed invasion of the *émigrés* as exasperating to the French people and provoking

CHAP.
XXXIX.

them to crime; but he placed hopes, nevertheless, in the hostile attitude of the great powers of Europe.* He recommended their meeting in congress, and presenting such united and formidable remonstrance to the French government and assembly as would induce the latter to restore the sovereign to the exercise of at least his constitutional influence and rights. The agent whom he sent to Germany found the emperor disposed to peace, and yet he promised to support the Elector of Treves if attacked, and he adhered to the demands of the imperial diet for the restoration of their feudal rights to the German princes who possessed lands in Alsace.

This, though but the language of diplomatic menace, stirred beyond measure the ire of the new politicians of the legislative assembly. The foreign relations of the country formed a subject which had not deeply occupied them. The history of France was not then either profoundly or attractively written, and law was more familiar to the orators of the Gironde than treaties or diplomacy. One man alone was well acquainted with the foreign policy of the country; and this was the journalist Brissot. Passionate in language, from the habit of daily addressing an impassioned people, and going further than even the most extreme demagogues upon one most essential point, Brissot was still for leaning on the intelligent class rather than upon the infuriated mob. Foremost of all, he entertained the conviction, and expressed it, that Louis the Sixteenth could not be king of the revolution; † and he proclaimed

* "Narbonne and the king," says M. Louis Blanc, "were for a *guerre restreinte*, or merely directed against the Elector of Treves." But the emperor had promised his protection to the elector; nor was it possible to imagine that the French republican armies would be allowed to crush that petty prince, without at the same time encountering the resist-

ance of the great German powers. The plan of Narbonne and Madame de Staël, moreover, was to acquire glory for the army and for himself, in order that the glory might give them power to counteract the ultrademocrats. But was glory to be won by hostilities against an Elector of Treves?

† Brissot's Memoirs.

himself a partisan of the republic at a time when Danton hesitated, and Robespierre declared that people did him far too much honour in styling him a republican. It was Brissot who drew up the first petition at the Jacobins against the re-installation of the king. When, however, the constituent assembly decreed that there should be a king, he submitted. He saw, however (his profession of journalist informed him of this too truly), that the people must have some great object of excitement and action; and he thought war the most wholesome. It would draw the ardent spirits away from the capital, would interest those who remained in something more elevated than turbulence and murder. It would create an army and a national government, and turn the minds of the people from abstract theories of social and political science to conquest and glory.

Whilst the members of the Gironde followed Brissot in his ardent declarations for war, the very same reasons which impelled them deterred Robespierre. He already floated foremost and highest on the waves of popular agitation, which he fed by denunciations of the court, of the aristocracy, and of all that existed in creed, habits, or society. A solitary man like Rousseau, with no knowledge of life or politics save a dreamy theory, he embraced this as a religion, and sought to force it upon the human race. With all Rousseau's envy and susceptibility, yet with none of his feeling, or his genius, he lived the same kind of cankerous existence as had done the renowned philosopher.

Robespierre, however, was bred a lawyer. The master he studied under in Paris bade him confine his practice to the provinces, as he wanted all the requisites for success in the capital.* With a squeaking voice, an insignificant person, forbidding features (the

* Memoir of Robespierre, Croker Collection.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

colour of his veins, said Madame de Staël, was green), and a cowardly nature, never was man less fitted for command; but when the times and the tastes descended from reverence for intellect to an admiration of all that was animal in man's nature, and from that subsequently descended still lower to the worship of human reptiles, then orators like Marat, formed to be the fag-end of the species, became, wonderful to relate, its divinities. As yet, however, Robespierre was undeveloped. The arch-assassin still lay swathed in the folds of the infantine philosophy of Rousseau; and he deprecated war, as he did the punishment of death, as things that ought not to exist in his Utopia. In this he disagreed with his friend Marat, who was furious against the proposers of war, but who declared already that the erection of scaffolds and the sacrifice of human victims upon them, would scare and defeat the enemy more effectually than battles.

Brissot carried not only the assembly but the Jacobins with him, and these forced Robespierre to embrace the orator of war. Brissot declared the emperor to have broken the treaty of 1756 with France, and induced the assembly to vote that the king should demand a categorical answer and explanation on this point. But what most influenced the passions of the assembly was the report that the sovereigns were about to hold a congress, and, thus united, issue a demand to the French to modify their constitution and re-establish the king in full authority, with two chambers. Guadet, a member of the Gironde, took hold of this theme, and expatiated upon it with such a warmth that he induced the whole assembly to swear a solemn oath never to tolerate or treat with any demand to modify the constitution.

These acts of the assembly evinced to foreign courts that it, and not the king, exercised the sovereign power, especially in foreign affairs. And this conviction,

according to Hardenberg, implied that war was inevitable. The emperor and the King of Prussia accordingly formed a new league for the defence of the empire; and on the 17th of February Prince Kaunitz, the Austrian minister, forwarded to the envoy in Paris to communicate to the French government a despatch, which commenced with a refutation of the charge or intention of hostility, but which then launched into a virulent accusation of the republican party. "The emperor," it said, "after having first considered with his allies the proper means of aiding his brother-in-law the King of France, then in duance and distress, had abandoned all such projects on learning that Louis the Sixteenth had been restored to power and had accepted the constitution. Events, however, showed such hopes to be illusory. The assembly and its republican party had usurped the king's power, and, conscious that they were opposed by the majority of the nation, had recourse to anarchy and war to maintain their ascendancy."*

This philippic was not the produce of an Austrian pen. The French constitutionalists of the old assembly had drawn it up and forwarded it to Vienna, from whence it was returned in the shape of an Austrian despatch.† Nothing could be more ill-judged. It exasperated the assembly, and forced the Jacobins and Robespierre to cease any opposition to the war, which would have broken forth at once had not the sudden death of the Emperor Leopold paralysed for a moment the efforts of Austria and its allies.

The concoction of the Austrian despatch was not the only blunder of the constitutionalists, Lameth and Barnave. The circumstance most favourable to the king at the time was the presence of Narbonne in the ministry. He commanded the respect of the Gironde, though he

* Mémoires d'un Homme d'État.

† Madame de Staël, Considérations.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

was not of that party, and thus kept the army under his control. Had Louis the Sixteenth the tact or good fortune to have had other ministers like him, the terrible catastrophe of 1792 might perhaps have been avoided; but his ministers had been chosen from the advice of the Feuillants more to deceive and baffle the legislative assembly than to act in accordance with it. Bertrand de Moleville, minister of marine, had succeeded Montmorin as the member of the government most trusted by Marie Antoinette. Instead of busying himself with his department, he undertook to bribe the popular and party leaders. In this he spent large sums to very little purpose. He says himself he might have purchased the Girondists had he given enough. The truth is, he failed to corrupt them, and they attacked him as a vile agent. He was accused of neglecting the marine. The naval forces had, however, gone to nothing from the desertion of the officers and the consequent insubordination of their men. The Girondists strove to oust De Moleville, and send him to trial for this crime; but the majority would not hearken to them, and on the 2nd of January acquitted De Moleville by 200 votes against 193.

The assembly had, however, a ready mode of punishing such ministers and functionaries as displeased it, and which indeed placed the crown and the government completely at its mercy. This was the high court of justice and the committee of *surveillance*, which arrested and sent whom they pleased to be tried. The double weapon of an accusing body and an extraordinary tribunal, which became a precedent for the famous committee of public safety and the revolutionary tribunal, was one of the bright inventions of the constituent assembly. They voted the *haute cour* in May 1791. The legislative assembly did not allow such an instrument to lie dormant. Denunciations flocked in upon it. And when the royalists in the last months of

1791 took the opportunity of a turbulent priest preaching at Caen to excite a sedition, the assembly set its committee of *surveillance* and its *haute cour* in activity. The latter was to sit at Orleans, to be beyond the reach of popular clamour.

Having failed in sending Bertrand de Moleville before it, Brissot and the Girondists awaited an opportunity to be more successful against Delessert, the foreign minister. His correspondence with the imperial court was poor-hearted and piteous, and disgusted not only the committee but the assembly. Still they hesitated to denounce him, until he succeeded in conjunction with the Lameth party in inducing the king to dismiss Narbonne. Narbonne unfortunately gave them the opportunity. Addressing the assembly (March the 8th) on the affair of Aix, which town, agitated by the royalists, the people of Marseilles had invaded and subdued, he maladroitly censured the general officer who had not opposed the Marseillais, and announced his dismissal. This excited the assembly against Narbonne; and when, in answer to some murmurs, he appealed to the most *distinguished* members present,* there was a perfect hurrah against him. Deeming him from these symptoms not only momentarily but irrecoverably unpopular, the Lafayetteists urged the king to his dismissal. They discovered their mistake when the assembly not only voted its confidence in the dismissed minister, but when Brissot took the opportunity to demand and move the accusation of Delessert. The capricious dismissal of Narbonne† turned the majority against the court, and Delessert was ordered to be arrested and sent for trial to Orleans.

* *Histoire Parlementaire.*

† Narbonne is said to have indisposed Louis the Sixteenth towards him by offering the post of generalissimo in France to the Duke of Brunswick, and even hinting to that prince

that he might hope for the crown. This rests on the authority of Hardenberg. If Narbonne ever attempted such a mystification, no one, not even the king, could have considered his offer as serious.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Some time after the Duke de Brissac was *décrété*, as it was called, in the same way. The king had been allowed the power to form a constitutional guard of his person, limited to 1,800 soldiers. They were to be taken partly from the national militia of the capital, partly from that of the provinces. A wise selection of this guard was most urgent. Had it been composed of such national guards as had at once shown respect for the king as well as for the constitution, it might have done good service. But unfortunately the king did not exert himself.* He left the formation of the guard to his courtiers, who collected royalist officers; these disgusted the guardsmen sent from the provinces, who declined to serve, and their places were filled with partisans of the old regime. The vigilant press denounced the scheme and its whole particulars; and the result was a decree dissolving the guard, and sending its commander, the Duke de Brissac, to prison. Louis bore the breaking of his guard with the same nonchalance that he had shown during its formation.

The arrest of Delessert deeply mortified the king, and left him at the mercy of his parliamentary foes; for no one would keep or accept ministerial office unless safe from the vengeance of the assembly. The king could thus find or appoint no other than those agreeable to the dominant party of the Gironde. His first choice was a wise one. None could be better fitted to undertake the difficult task which Narbonne had not been allowed to proceed with than Dumouriez. His character was not unlike that of Mirabeau, whose eloquence he may have wanted, but he supplied its want by a military capacity, a quality more necessary for the epoch. Passionately fond of pleasure, unscrupulous in

* "C'est un système très-fin," writes Pelhenc, "que celui des Tuileries, de se laisser aller au courant des événements. (On est

toujours sur de bien exécuter un pareil système parceque il est très-facile."

pursuit of wealth and power, and plainly seeing that popularity was the path to both, he still, like Mirabeau, had a deep respect for royalty and sympathy for the cruel position of the king. Dumouriez would have saved him, not by flight, like Mirabeau, nor by military success in the field, like Narbonne, but by the king's frank acceptance of the constitution and of its duties. It was easy to persuade the king of this. Not so the queen. She summoned Dumouriez to her presence, and told him frankly that neither she nor the king would tolerate the constitution. Dumouriez expressed his sorrow. The constitution, if in force, he said, would be of the greatest advantage to the king. He abhorred both anarchy and crime, was attached to the royal family; but he knew the state of things, and it must not be supposed the popular movement was a passing one. It was the insurrection of a great nation against inveterate abuses. Faction took advantage of it, and strove to separate king and nation. He would labour to unite them; and no one could give more powerful aid to the completion of this than the queen. Marie Antoinette seemed touched by this frank expostulation.*

As colleagues to Dumouriez, Louis chose from amongst the subordinates of the Gironde, Roland, Clavière, and Servan, to be ministers of the interior, finance, and war. The former had been an inspector of manufactures, honest, methodical, and full of zeal for the revolution. Unaccustomed to good society, much less to courts, Roland displeased the king by his uncouthness, and the chamberlains by his substituting strings for shoe-buckles. He disgusted the monarch still more by his zeal in enforcing the decree of the assembly against refractory priests. Sybel represents him as more than ordinarily fanatic in this respect, but this could scarcely have been the case, since Merlin reproached him (April 23) with opening the churches to

* Memoirs of Dumouriez and of Madame Roland.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

these priests. Roland himself was softened and subdued by the bland manners of the king; but from such sentiments he was shaken by his wife, who came not in contact with the court, and was animated by all the popular prejudices against it. Madame Roland stirred her husband to activity in his department. But she could not supply the place of a man of action like Dumouriez to the Gironde.

There was no one of them, not even Brissot, who out of the assembly could appeal to a popular audience and make moderate principles prevail over the wild opinions of the ultra-democrats. The Girondists were too noble in aim, too intellectual in thought, to have found influence with the rabble, whose brutal passions and powers were fast awakening and strengthening. The time had gone by when a saloon could have influence. Madame de Staël and Madame Roland successively tried to seize in turn the helm of affairs. But their feeble arms were soon pushed aside. And the violent and prudish jealousy of Madame Roland, however they may heroise the party in history, tended rather to make it succumb in the rude political struggle.

Dumouriez from the first distrusted a party so pedantic and unpractical, and one, moreover, with so narrow a political basis. Much might have been done, had the king given his whole support to the ministry, but Louis gave his confidence to the Lameths and the Feuillants, who mocked the Girondists and hated the assembly. There remained the popular party, which it was indispensable to conciliate. Dumouriez's first act on his appointment was to repair to the Jacobins, mount the red cap, and demand their confidence. His speech was such that he and Robespierre embraced; but that demagogue was not sincere: he refused his confidence to the Girondists in office, till they were tried; he still opposed them on the war question, and soon showed himself their enemy. Dumouriez tried

to win Danton, who at this time became influential as a member of the municipality. He was a bold frank ruffian, with touches of humanity about him, a lover of pleasure like Dumouriez himself. He was the animal type of the revolution, as Marat was the reptile. Dumouriez, in the interest of the Girondists, strongly recommended them to make a friend of Danton, since without some popular champion, some able partisan in the clubs, and in the crowd, such sticks as Roland, Clavière, and Servan could not possibly maintain their position. Instead of listening to him, the Rolands and the Girondists could not tolerate Dumouriez himself, who was light of character and purpose, who spent the secret service money without giving any account of it, and who chose his subordinates more for their cleverness than their morality.

It was folly of the little Roland circle not only to indispose the king, but to play the puritan; to exclude and alienate the men best fitted to supply the influence and talents which they wanted. Dumouriez was the chief whose dexterity could have conciliated the monarch, and at the same time inspired the better patriots with confidence; he was a man of action, and a man of the world, and the Girondists should have sacrificed their scruples to obtain his alliance, as the Lafayetteists ought to have done to secure the co-operation of Mirabeau; but the most fatal characteristic of the revolution, the most fatal certainly to the revolutionists, was the impossibility of the chiefs holding together.

Unfortunately Dumouriez's acts with regard to the foreign enemy, though marked by spirit, were not crowned with success. The best hopes for maintaining the king in his position, and giving his ministers real power, lay in the success of the armies. The Jacobins and Robespierre, although they had ceased to oppose the war, continued to denounce Lafayette as incapable of conducting it with sincerity and vigour.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Victory would have been the conclusive answer to such attacks, but unhappily it came not. Dumouriez's summons as minister of foreign affairs to the Austrian cabinet had been met by the dry answer that the latter adhered to its former declaration, and M. de Cobenzel did not shrink from repeating to the French envoy all the fears, griefs, and suspicions of his court. Dumouriez had hereupon induced the king to appear in the assembly and announce a declaration of war against the emperor (April 20, 1791).

Dumouriez pressed the king to follow this up by the invasion of Belgium, the unsettled and disaffected state of which province offering every facility to the scheme, but all was marred by the inexperience of the troops, with the want of skill and influence in the new officers. In the last days of April, Lafayette, from Metz and Givet, Biron, from Valenciennes, and Dillon, from Lille, marched into the Belgian territory. The principal army, that of Lafayette, was intended to get possession of Namur; the other two were destined to support his movements. As Biron was advancing towards Mons, his vanguard, consisting of cavalry, was seized with a sudden panic at the first view of what they supposed to be an army; they fled in disorder, dragged their companions in their flight, and abandoned even their camp to the enemy. Dillon, marching from Lille with an inconsiderable force, fared worse, for his troops were not only seized with panic, but murdered their general to silence and cover his remonstrances. Lafayette, on hearing the disasters of the divisions destined to support him, stopped short, and returned to his original quarters in France. Thus were the hopes of Dumouriez and the scheme of Narbonne defeated for the present.

Such events as these necessarily augmented that great dissolvent of the assembly, fear. Provincial anarchy from within, enemies from without, were

menacing, and the heart of the king was certainly with the enemies who menaced, not with the government which resisted. No wonder that the Girondists, however desirous of maintaining Louis the Sixteenth at the head of the government, were suspicious of him. Neither is it astonishing that the more extreme patriots saw no remedy save in dethroning and setting aside the king altogether. The worst of fear as a motive in political action is its variability, sometimes swelling to a panic, and the rash acts which that inspires, sometimes relapsing to slumbering and passive acquiescence. Such sentiments chiefly actuated the centre, or *ventre*, of the assembly, whose voting one day in a conservative sense, and the next in a revolutionary one, gave hopes to both parties, and forbade a settled plan to either.

This was one of the disadvantages of too numerous an assembly. Its seven hundred and fifty members partook of the fluctuating nature of a mob, and were actuated by the same fears. This was soon perceived, and it was found a much more ready way to success to frighten the assembly than to persuade it. The popular party got up a system of tumultuous fêtes and processions, in which the people, armed with pikes and without uniform, outnumbered the national guards and their firelocks. The council of the department, far more conservative than the municipality, strove to prevent these amusements and manifestations; but the mayor, Pétion, instead of forbidding the manufacture of pikes, merely ordered the holders to register them.

The first experiment of the popular party in the way of a revolutionary procession was to celebrate the liberation of certain Swiss soldiers who had been condemned to the galleys for taking part in the mutiny of Nancy, and for having fired upon the troops which came to reduce them. As times were changed, and as Bouillé, who reduced Nancy, was in exile for his conduct at Varennes, the sentence against the Swiss of

CHAP.
XXXIX.

the Châteaueux regiment was reversed, and Collot d'Herbois undertook to bring them in triumph from Brest. The fête was celebrated in April, soon after the appointment of the Girondists to office, and however offensive to and fiercely opposed by the Feuillants, or constitutional royalists, the Girondists did not offer any impediment to it. The procession halted in the Champ de Mars, and went through the usual jubilee. Unable to prevent it, the Feuillants celebrated in like manner the memory of Simonneau, the mayor of Etampes, who had perished in resisting a mob of cannibals in that town. The Parisians, who welcomed the Swiss mutineers, and adopted their *bonnet rouge*, gave but a cold tribute to Simonneau.*

It was these successful fêtes and processions which inspired the popular leaders with the idea of getting up one, which, concealing its designs under the appearance of festivity, should fill the court and gardens of the Tuileries with the multitude, force their way into the palace, to humiliate and terrify the king at least into abandoning his veto, if not afford the opportunity for a worse crime.

Prudent conduct on the part of Louis and his secret advisers would no doubt have defeated these plans. In order to do so, it was requisite for the monarch to be true to the ministers whom he had chosen, and who did not wish to weaken the throne, whilst determined to uphold and defend the revolution. Instead of such obvious and necessary policy, the king and his advisers of the constitutionalists brought about the dismissal of the Girondist ministers, and of Dumouriez himself, which left the crown at the mercy of the people and its parties.

It was plain, indeed, to the Girondist ministers, Roland, Clavière, and Servan, that the king had no confidence in them. They assembled round the council

* Prudhomme, Révolution de Paris.

table at the Tuileries, and the monarch presided; but he shrank from discussing with them any subject of importance, and paid more attention to Dumouriez's jokes than Roland's suggestions. Moreover, there was the grave circumstance of the veto put upon all the principal votes of the assembly, which veto Robespierre in the Jacobins was continually twitting the Girondists for not overcoming. Louis was encouraged to treat the three Girondists with contempt by perceiving the difference that existed, and that grew wider, between them and Dumouriez. Unable to make their expostulations be listened to in council, the ministers preferred to draw up a joint letter containing their opinions, that is, their grievances. Dumouriez deprecated the drawing up of such a manifesto against the king, which he foresaw would be published. Defeated in their project of a joint letter, two at least of the ministers resolved to pursue their plan separately. Roland did so by allowing his wife to prepare a strong letter to the monarch, which he duly presented. It appeared not only strong but insulting to Louis, and yet it was well meant; for its menaces were intended to warn the monarch that a popular insurrection was in course of machination, and that, if he persisted in his dilatory and deceptive policy, it would inevitably break over his head.

If Roland's letter was uncourtly, the mode which the war minister, Servan, took of venting his opinion was certainly outrageous. Without saying a word on the subject in council, he rose in the assembly (June 4), and proposed that, as on the 14th of July all national guards were obliged to assemble to take the civic oath, the opportunity should be taken of drafting five *fédérés* from each canton, to meet immediately in Paris, and form in its vicinity a camp of 20,000 men. The king was shocked. This was the reinforcement of the Parisian mob with an army of turbulent democrats from the provinces. Dumouriez was no less annoyed.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

He asked Servan in council how he could have dared to make such a proposal without consulting his colleagues? Servan replied in such a way that Dumouriez laid his hand on his sword. The presence of the king prevented the dispute from having a violent conclusion. Servan offered to withdraw his motion; but it was too late. The assembly had hastened to adopt it; and the king, to avoid the danger, was determined to make use of his veto, thus creating another cause of alienation between him and the assembly.

Angered by Servan's motion and Roland's letter, the king commanded Dumouriez to rid him of them. The latter consented; but, as he could not affront the Girondists without conciliating the Jacobins, he made a condition with the king that he should at the same time withdraw his veto from the decrees sending refractory priests to be transported, and ordering the camp of 20,000 men.*

Feeling secure of having obtained these concessions to popular desire, Dumouriez appeared in the assembly, and read a report on the state of the war. Guadet interrupted him, and exclaimed, "He has the impudence to give us advice." "And why not?" observed Dumouriez. After braving the indignation of the Girondists and the assembly, and telling them not to imitate those sailors who get drunk in the hour of danger, and so let the ship founder, Dumouriez repaired to the palace. There was a council summoned, and the king took the opportunity to announce his purpose of sanctioning Servan's proposal to raise 20,000 men, but at the same time to continue to apply his veto to the decree of deportation against the priests. Nothing was then left to Dumouriez but to withdraw; and on the next day, the 15th of June, he with the other ministers

* The first act of severity was voted after a report of François de Neuchateau, detailing the outrageous conduct of the priesthood. One of

their acts was to declare that every one who paid taxes should be damned.

brought their resignations to Louis, having previously warned him that an insurrection was brewing in the Faubourg St. Antoine. The king said he was not to be deterred by such rumours. He accepted the dismissal of Dumouriez, and appointed a new war minister with others, all of the party of the Feuillants.

It was in this party that Louis for the moment put his trust. They were more than usually sanguine, knowing that Lafayette was ready to come to Paris, rally the national guards true to him, and put down the Jacobins by force. He had already forwarded to his friends in Paris a menacing letter to the assembly, accusing the Jacobins of setting the constitution at naught, insulting the king, and laying the country open to the enemy. They made overtures to Dumouriez to join their cabal, now that he was rejected by the court. He spurned their offers; and they introduced some sentences at the commencement of Lafayette's letter which that general could not have written, stigmatising Dumouriez's "equivocal and scandalous existence, and declaring him the victim of his own intrigues." The letter was read in the assembly on the 18th.*

With Dumouriez passed from the king's cabinet the last rational and able politician who had at heart the maintenance of the king and of the kingdom. That Lafayette, instead of inflicting a blow upon the enemy, should turn his pen and sword against the two popular parties of the assembly, was rashness in the extreme. The Girondists had till then respected Lafayette. The chief reproach of Robespierre to them and to Brissot was their attachment to him. But after the dismissal of their friends, the reading of Lafayette's letter, and the appointment of Feuillant ministers, the Girondists smothered or set aside their sympathies for the king, and made no resistance to the efforts of the populace.

* According to Dumouriez, it was Beaumont who re-wrote or added to Lafayette's letter.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

The street leaders of the more infuriated portion of the populace had long mooted an attack on the palace. The first serious difference between the court and the country had been settled by the march of the populace upon Versailles. It was obvious that the same tactics might be employed against the Tuileries. The people then, by marching in procession, and invading the palace, had gained their point. The manœuvre had now but to be repeated. It is not, indeed, to be supposed that the street demagogues would have entered upon so serious an enterprise without seeking counsel and support from the orators and chiefs of the principal clubs. There is no creditable trace, however, of their having done so.* The brewer Santerre, and Alexandre, who had been a soldier, commanding each the battalion of the national guard of the remote suburbs (St. Antoine and St. Marcel), met in a public-house with Fournier, an adventurer from the West Indies, Legendre, a butcher, St. Hurugues, Rossignol, and resolved to get up a popular procession on the 20th of June, the anniversary of the oath of the Versailles tennis-court.† They duly announced their intention, as by law they were bound, to the Hôtel de Ville, which refused to take cognisance of it. The council of the department, composed of

* M. Louis Blanc considers the Girondists to have been the originators of the insurrection of the 20th of June. He finds this opinion upon the testimony given by Chabot on the trial of the Girondists, and upon a short paper written by Marceau, and published in the *Revue Rétrospective*. Such testimony is little reliable. Chabot on that occasion not only charges Brissot with exciting the tumult of the 20th of June, and congratulating himself on its result, but he also makes Brissot the author of the massacres of the 2nd of September. Brissot, he

says, on the morning of that day, foretold the massacres for the evening. This is manifestly a lie, and proves that the *ex-capuchin*, Chabot, when charging the Girondists, had no respect for truth. Marceau's testimony is vague and incoherent. He charges Madame Roland with having been the instigator of the *Émeute* of June. He offers no proof, however, and merely betrays a wish to malign her.

† Déclaration de La Reynie, Croker Collection.

Feuillants, took immediate steps to prevent it, forbidding the national guards to attend, and warning the mayor, Pétion, to put a stop to it. The popular demagogues were, however, supported by the sections, and persevered. Pétion was perplexed. He shared the indignation of the Girondists at their treatment by the king, and had no objection to the château receiving a rude lesson from the mob. To prevent them going further, Pétion wished the national guard to take part in the movement. But the council of the department forbade this. Pétion certainly took no official precaution against the *émeute*. Its leaders alleged that their only intention was to celebrate the anniversary of the *jeu de paume*, and plant a tree of liberty in its honour. The national guards were divided as to the expediency of obstructing so harmless a movement.

The people of the popular suburbs mustered on the 20th in the adjoining place of the Bastille. They formed a motley crowd, the men in uniform in the midst, with the flags, some pieces of cannon, and a tree of liberty on a cart. Invalids, pikemen, some without arms, women and children, swelled the procession. Commissioners from the municipality in vain tried to stop the march, but Santerre politely disregarded their injunctions, and led his band, augmenting as they advanced to an army, to the vicinity of the national assembly.

The directory, as the council of the department were called, sent their officer Røederer to warn the deputies not to welcome or encourage the mob. It was little more than midday when 20,000 of Santerre's rabble surrounded the hall of sitting, and demanded entrance. Vergniaud rose at the crisis, and declared that it was impossible to deny such a multitude what they sought. The danger, he said, threatened not the assembly but the king; and Vergniaud proposed that sixty members should be immediately deputed to the palace to make him be respected. This wise and humane suggestion

CHAP.
XXXIX.

of the leader of the Gironde was at the instant combated by a constitutionalist and a moderate, Ramond, who declared the king to be in no danger. Just as the crowd was in the act of forcing its way into the bar, the assembly gave them the permission to appear. St. Hurugues then harangued in their name, and ended by asking permission for the troops to defile through the assembly. It was not safe to refuse; and so they burst in with the cries of "Down with the veto!" and "Long live the *sans-culottes!*"*

The multitude declared they had a petition to present to the king; but on quitting the assembly, they seemed to forget this, the procession being allowed to pass through the garden of the Tuileries, without approaching the château. They had already planted the tree of liberty in the Capucine convent, fearing they would not be allowed to accomplish this in the royal gardens. The terrace between it and the château was well guarded at the moment, and the armed procession accordingly issued from the garden upon the quays, and from the quays into the Carrousel.

The multitude—for it was no longer a procession—was thus once more in front of the Tuileries, separated from it merely by a gate and a court. Against these the cannoniers of the people soon brought their guns, and demanded entrance of the national guards, who kept the gate closed. The iron bars could not long resist, and short of meeting gun with gun the people could not be kept out. The officers of the national guard proposed a compromise, which was to admit twenty of the mob to present their petition to the king, without arms. This was accepted, and probably blunted the vigilance of the defenders of the gate; for whilst the cannoniers still kept their artillery threatening them, the grating opened—it is not known at whose

* Rœderer, Chronique des 50 jours. La Vareune, Hist. des Evénements.

command—and the multitude rushed with such fury, not only into the court, but up the staircase of the palace, that a cannon was transported to the first story.

The king, with some of his new ministers and his officers, was in an apartment, of which the door was soon assailed. It was yielding to the effort when he ordered it to be opened, himself retreating to one window and Madame Elizabeth to another, both protected by a few national guards. Acloque, one of them, bade him not fear. "Put your hand to my breast," observed the monarch, "and see if my heart beats more than ordinary." The large room was soon full of the multitude, pikes, sabres, and naked arms being brandished over a sea of heads. "Down with Monsieur Veto!" was the general cry. "I have broken no article of the constitution!" exclaimed the king. The butcher Legendre then apostrophised the monarch. "Monsieur," said he, "you are perfidious. You have always deceived us, and are still doing so. But take care; the people's patience is wearied with being your plaything, and is nearly at an end." Legendre then read aloud the people's petition, a tissue of coarse threats. "I will do what the constitution and the laws direct," was all the answer of Louis. A red cap was then extended at the extremity of a pike. The king took it as offered, and placed it on his head, and at the same time drank of a bottle, that was handed him by one of the people, health to the Parisians and the French nation.

Whilst the king was thus in a state of durance and danger, which lasted nearly three hours, the queen, with the dauphin and the ladies of the court, was besieged by a different portion of the mob in another room, that of the *chambre du conseil*. Having in vain endeavoured to force her way to the king, she was placed by some national guards behind the great table, drawn towards

CHAP.
XXXIX.

the window. Here she suffered the same threats and insults as the king. Reproached by a woman with ruining the country, Marie Antoinette replied in words at once so courageous and so tender that the woman burst into tears.

Santerre, the brewer, happened to reach the room where the queen was besieged, and he showed himself more humane than Legendre. He tore off the cap of liberty with which some one had crowned the little dauphin, and told Marie Antoinette that, had she behaved right, the people would have loved her as much as they loved the dauphin. Several of the deputies, Vergniaud and Isnard amongst them, had in the meantime penetrated into the palace, and sought to tranquillise the people. The assembly at first sent a deputation, but afterwards voted that the whole body should repair to the Tuileries. It was the mayor, Pétion, however, who finally succeeded in expelling the mob. He harangued them from the shoulders of two guardsmen; and the multitude, even the most ferocious and designing, on perceiving that no more violence would be tolerated for the present, slowly dispersed.

From the indignation which the outrage to the royal family and to the palace on the 20th of June excited not only throughout France but even in the capital and the assembly, it is evident that the party of the monarchy was still alive, and that, could the king have shown himself seriously opposed to the enemies without, to the sacerdotal and royalist rebellion within, he might have rallied to him a large and zealous body of defenders. But their resistance, to be effectual, must have avoided being reactionary, for the nation still floated between disgust of the *sans-culottes* and a horror of the *ancien régime*. On the day after the riot the general sentiment, even in the assembly, was against the anarchists. It voted that no petition supported by an armed multitude should be allowed or recorded. The Feuillants

sought to direct vengeance against Pétion, who certainly had not done his utmost to prevent the invasion of the palace. He had the audacity to appear on the 21st in the king's presence to assure him that the report of fresh turbulence on that day was false. Paris, he said, was tranquil. "The events of yesterday," observed the monarch, "were a great scandal. The municipality did not do its duty." Pétion replied that it had done its utmost, and did not fear the judgment of the public. He assured him that the capital was tranquil. The king said it was not so; and when the mayor was about to reply, Louis bade him hold his tongue. Pétion said the people's magistrate should not have silence thus rudely enjoined him. The municipality knew its duties, and had no need of being reminded of them. The king bade him withdraw.

Pétion's, however, ceased to be the name in every mouth when on the 28th Lafayette appeared at the bar of the assembly. The events of the 20th had, he said, filled the breasts of his soldiers and himself with indignation. He brought addresses from them to present. It was time, he said, to protect the constitution from attacks, and to ensure the freedom of the national assembly itself as well as of the king. For this purpose he besought the assembly to order the prosecution of those guilty of the violent acts of the 20th, and to destroy a sect (meaning the Jacobins) that usurped sovereignty, and exercised tyranny over their fellow-citizens.

The assembly had previously appointed a committee of twelve to examine and report on all subjects essential to the surety of the state. It now proposed to send Lafayette's petition or remonstrance to this committee. Upon this the Girondist Guadet moved as an amendment, that Lafayette should be asked, had he obtained of the war minister permission to come to Paris, and that the committee should report upon the danger of

CHAP.
XXXIX.

general officers appearing at the bar to petition. This rude slur upon Lafayette was negated by 339 votes against 234.

Lafayette then indicated for the morrow a review of the first division of the national guard. The mayor, Pétion, instantly forbade it. Lafayette did not conceal his intention of marching at the head of such legions as would follow him to close the hall of the Jacobins. The review being countermanded, the general summoned such of the national guard as shared his views to meet in the evening, and in the Champs Élysées, in order to accomplish his desire. The general visited the royal family in the Tuileries at the same time, but they received him coldly, especially the queen, and forbade their friends to lend him any support. Lafayette in consequence was unable to carry out his plan against the Jacobins, and returned to the army without having effected aught, save increasing their irritation against him.

If the Feuillants thus failed of their aim, the Girondists were scarcely more wise. One of their dominant ideas, which, indeed, they had propounded apropos of Servan's motion, was to bring up a body of provincials, people as well as soldiers, not only to oppose the royalists and awe the court, but to support the Gironde against the Paris mob and their leaders. Barbaroux, a handsome young Marseillais, who had accompanied a certain portion of his countrymen as *fédérés* to Paris, had insinuated himself into Madame Roland's circle, and was continually expatiating on the energies and republican nature of the south. He recommended strongly that, if the German sovereigns should force their way to Paris, the patriots of the assembly should retire south, and there establish their line of defence. In case the foreign enemies were repulsed, he equally recommended the bringing his brave and simple southerners to Paris, so as not to leave such men as Santerre and Legendre,

a brewer and a butcher, uncontrolled power in the capital. Both propositions were foolish, for royalism disputed the south with Jacobinism; and their mutual hatred, joined to the ignorance and passions of the population, goaded both sides to ferocity, and rendered them dangerous auxiliaries either there or in Paris. Roland and the Gironde, however, strongly abetted the encouragement of the *fédérés*. In vain the minister sought to stop their coming. The promise of thirty sous a day and the expense of the journey were strong inducements.* The *fédérés* were to arrive before the 14th, the day on which the fête of the federation was to be celebrated. The Feuillants and Lafayette had a scheme for that day, which was to bring off the king, under the protection of the troops of the line and the more faithful legions of the national guard.† The presence of the federals was thus unwelcome. The Girondists, however, not only facilitated their coming, but promulgated the extreme doctrines which they were expected to enforce.

The admiration of the Girondists for the energetic spirit of the south, and the aid they hoped from them, led them at the time to the fault most reproached to them. In the preceding years the different cities on the Rhone had taken different sides, as the upper or lower classes happened to predominate. Marseilles was democratic, Aix almost royalist. The Marseillais marched upon Aix, disarmed a Swiss regiment which supported the reactionists, and put down their antagonists. At Avignon the *bourgeoisie* and noblesse succeeded in repressing the people, who claimed that the town as well as the Comté Venaissin should be torn from the pope and united to France. Avignon had been purchased by the holy see. But the Comté Venaissin was but part of the spoil of the unfortunate

* Ternaux, Hist. de la Terreur.

† Lally Tollendal's letter to the king.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Raymond, Count of Toulouse, whom the pope had hunted down. The patriotic party, driven out of Avignon, as was the case in the troubles of the old Italian cities, collected a force in the country around, and called it the army of Vaucluse. The assembly, after long hesitation, put an end to the civil war by declaring Avignon reunited to France. Commissioners were sent down to establish reconciliation and peace. The army of Vaucluse re-entered the town by dint of the new accord; it was, however, but to tyrannise. Some of the papal army appealed to the Virgin for succour, and the image thus besought was reported to have shed tears. The miracle fanaticised the mob, and a principal man amongst the patriots was killed, one may say sacrificed, at the altar. The army of Vaucluse took revenge, or at least its sanguinary leaders did. They got hold of the principal citizens, and the families of those opposed to them, and shut them up in the old pontifical palace, where, in the night, these victims were slaughtered, and their remains flung into a dungeon at the foot of a high tower, called La Glacière. Thus did the people of the Rhone set the first example of those wholesale massacres which have for ever stigmatised the revolution, and which Paris imitated so largely. The fault, reproached to the Girondists, was that the perpetrators of these massacres, with Jourdan, their chief, were liberated by a vote of the assembly, in which the Gironde joined, and that a complete amnesty was accorded to the large and criminal effusion of blood. Barbaroux had attempted to excuse it, by saying that to punish every murder committed on both sides must have covered the whole region with scaffolds. The chiefs, however, might have been selected for punishment, instead of being allowed to come to the capital in triumph, and repeat their sanguinary exploits.*

* Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Avignon.—Memoirs of Barbaroux.

The reaction in favour of the king, caused by the outrage of the 20th of June, was checked by the ill-concerted measures and failure of Lafayette. At the commencement of July the tide turned completely, even in the assembly, against the court, when it became known that Luckner, after having occupied Courtray, Mesnin, and other Flemish towns, had of a sudden retreated from them upon Lille. A French general had even burned the suburbs of Courtray, this being what the Belgian patriots gained by their having imitated the French. The generals, in fact, including Luckner, were more bent upon marching against Paris than upon conquering Belgium from Austria. These tidings swelled the alarm of the anarchists, and the indignation of the Gironde.

On the 3rd Vergniaud made his famous speech, which was nothing less than an arraignment of Louis, whom he accused of disorganising the ministry, and with it the means of defence of the very towns which the enemy most threatened. "It is not our blood that it is hoped to spare, it is that of Coblenz. The same policy is observed with respect to rebellious priests. Does the sombre genius of Catherine de Medicis still wander in the vaults of the Tuileries to renew, aided by the sanguinary hypocrisy of the Jesuits, the massacres of St. Bartholomew? Does the monarch seek to perpetuate sedition and domestic disorder and revolution? He cannot desire it, but what he does produces these results. It was in the name of the king," Vergniaud pointed out, "that all the attacks from abroad and at home were made against the nation. If the king sanctioned such a use of his name, or favoured it, he forfeited his throne according to the constitution. But what if he kept within the letter of the constitution, and only betrayed it in fact and in intention? Suppose he paralysed the army and the government, put his veto on every measure of the patriots,

CHAP.
XXXIX.

and thus enabled the enemy to come and restore him to his old despotic power. If such was the royal conduct," declared Vergniaud, "would we not have a right to address him, 'Oh king, who with the tyrant Ly-sander considers truth no better than falsehood, and who amuses men with oaths as children with play-things! has the constitution endowed you with power in order to overthrow it, and have we given you authority merely for our ruin?'" The only conclusion of this terrible apostrophe was the *déchéance*, dethronement. This Vergniaud did not pronounce, indeed, but he clearly pointed it out as the consequence.

In the course of his speech Vergniaud had invited the contending parties in the assembly to give up their mutual dissensions. "Gironde and Mountain," he said, "agreed." When Brissot denounced Lafayette, Robespierre fraternised with him. This apparent accord between the enemies of the court suggested to the amiable Lamourette, Bishop of Lyons, the project of a reconciliation even between the more extreme and antagonistic parties. These accused each other wrongfully, he urged: the one of seeking to establish two chambers on the ruins of the constitution, whilst the other was calumniated as championing a republic. Let each side forswear the design attributed to it, and let all embrace. The exhortation, uttered seriously and in simple words, had a wonderful effect, which showed that, notwithstanding the violence of language, party struggles had not yet become those of life and death. At the bidding of Lamourette the chiefs of opposite factions rushed into each other's arms. Merlin and Chabot descended from the Mountain to fraternise with their opponents of the right. Pastoret embraced Condorcet, Dumas Bazire. The Gironde was lost in the Plain. The king, summoned to join in the general reconciliation, came with gladness in his countenance. Public functionaries, the municipality, and the judges, were called to witness and

join in the great pacification. Every one asks, was it sincere? On the part of those present no doubt it was. The majority of the assembly, forming a middle party between the extremes, was delighted and flattered at both meeting on their ground. But Merlin and Chabot were not the real leaders. Robespierre mocked their simplicity, and the Jacobins scouted it.

A few hours after the scene of Lamourette's kiss, as it was called, the court itself had cooled in its amicability. Røderer besought it to cancel the proceedings against Pétion and Santerre. The king took no such step; and two days later, on the 9th, Brissot uttered a philippic against the war and foreign policy of the government as fierce as Vergniaud, and concluded that "the country should be declared in a state of danger." This, which had for its consequence that all the sections of Paris and *communes* throughout the kingdom should be in a state of permanence, in order to enrol soldiers and expedite measures of defence, was voted by the assembly. To such revolutionary devices the Feuillants, filling the directory or council of the department, replied by issuing writs of arrest against Pétion and Manuel. They were signed by *juges de paix*, and the rumour ran that the inculpated were to be tried by these magistrates, sitting in the Tuileries. Loud was the indignation against what was considered the illegality. The bold act was met by a bolder one—the printing of a petition from the municipality of Marseilles demanding the dethronement of the king! Louis immediately signified to the assembly his sanction of the suspension of the mayor, Pétion.

The constitution of 1791 had organised local administration by municipal and by departmental councils. The latter, generally called the directory, had the right of suspending all inferior functionaries, such as the mayor, procuring the king's sanction first and the assembly's afterwards. Making use of this right, the directory of

CHAP.
XXXIX.

the department of the Seine had suspended Pétion. The king now gave his sanction to the act of suspension, and of course to the subsequent trial, of that functionary. But the festival of the federation approached, when the king and the authorities were to visit the Champ de Mars in presence of the assembled people. For this to take place, whilst the popular Pétion was suspended from his functions and menaced with trial, was merely to provoke turbulence. The convention consequently cancelled the suspension of the mayor, and restored him to full authority.

The following day, the 14th, was the anniversary of the federation. The assembly and the clubs had done their utmost to attract recruits from the provinces in numbers sufficient to accomplish the project, which the court had negatived, of a camp close to Paris. A million of francs had been voted for the purpose,* and more than three thousand men had arrived. These were the most fierce and revolutionary of the provincial rabble, the more moderate and monarchic having been deterred by rumours that the capital was on the brink of another revolution.† Robespierre welcomed the federals in most subversive language, telling them to take the oath to the king of nature, and not to any other monarch. Danton himself proclaimed that the *déchéance* would be demanded by the federals. The king, therefore, went to the Champ de Mars, surrounded by troops of the line and a strong body of the national guards. These regiments were not either prepared or willing to combat the people, but they would have resisted attack. While some of the royalists wished for a collision, others preferred that the king should take the opportunity of withdrawing from Paris altogether. Louis, by a determination not to fly, defeated all these plans and preparations of his friends for his escape. He could not have been

* Thirty sous a day, besides five sous a post, was given to them.

† Pétion's letter.

worse received. No one cried, God bless him! whilst thousands of voices greeted the triumphant Pétion. The queen read in this her fate and the king's, and was in tears and trepidation. It was, indeed, Louis' last chance of escape, as was soon seen when a vote of the assembly ordered all the regiments out of Paris. The king's guard under Brissac having been broken, the royal family was placed at the mercy of their enemies.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

The most remarkable circumstance of the last half of July was the change which came over the sentiments and aims of the Girondists. Up to the day of the federation none had been more ardent than they against the monarch, and they seem to have fully shared the fears of the Jacobins, that Lafayette and Luckner were in collusion with the court, not to prevent the enemy from reaching Paris, but to aid them. These fears, which continued indeed to agitate the Jacobins, who occupied the last fortnight of July with their accusations of Lafayette, no longer pressed upon the Girondists, whose fears of invasion were calmed by the presence of General Luckner in Paris, and by the assurances which he gave.

The aspect of the capital and of the interior was by no means so encouraging. Those provincial soldiers or national guards, the federals, recently arrived, displayed a far more rabid spirit than the Parisian population. They looked to the Mountain and the Jacobins for orders, and not to the Gironde. They denounced the king, clamoured for the *déchéance*, and were ready for any excess. It was already mooted in the revolutionary *conciliabules* to repeat the scene of the 20th of June, and not merely to frighten royalty but to prostrate it. The Girondists would not evidently be the masters of such a movement. The consequence of popular victory would not be in their hands, but in those of the more rabid revolutionists. This checked their zeal. It showed them the prospect of a republic, with Robespierre and Danton as its chiefs, Santerre and

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Legendre as its instruments. Vergniaud and Brissot accordingly exerted themselves, not to reject a vote of dethronement, indeed, but to adjourn it, which drew down upon them the execration of the Jacobins. To take advantage of the delay, the Girondists made overtures to the king.

A letter was written by Gensonné to Boze, a portrait-painter connected with the underlings of the court, which Vergniaud and Guadet signed. It pointed out to the king what measures he should take to recover popularity, and it insisted at the same time on his re-appointing the ministers in the confidence of the Gironde—Roland, Clavière, and Servan. The letter warned the monarch of impending insurrection. Two other members of the Gironde waited on Malesherbes, and communicated to him the same fears and the same offers.* According to Lamartine, Guadet had an interview with Louis on the subject. All these advances of the Gironde came to nothing. Louis or his queen saw but too truly that they were mere talkers, and that it was more expedient to gain the actors in the drama that was rehearsing. Instead, therefore, of listening to the Gironde, the court paid 50,000 crowns to Danton in the first days of August; and Madame Elizabeth was heard to declare that they felt themselves secure in consequence.†

Fierce accusations are made against the Girondists for entering upon such a negotiation, and especially for having demanded that men whom they trusted should be appointed to office. That Marat or Desmoulins should have denounced such a desire, as mere corruption, is natural enough in revolutionary logic. But that writers of the present day should make the same charge merely shows that their good sense is still offuscated by the fumes of 1792. What attraction could there be in office or in power then, to such men as the Girondists, pure, simple, and honest to the last, without

* Bertrand de Moleville.

† Lafayette's Memoirs.

a solitary stain of luxury or rapacity, save that it was only by the executive that a check could be put upon insurrection and anarchy. They feared, no one can say without justice, the further excesses of the revolution. And they were ready to fling themselves into the breach to stop it, had the king the sense to listen to them, or the sincerity to act up to his promises. To desire or accept office for themselves or their friends was at that time the greatest of sacrifices. To represent it as mere corruption or personal ambition is to look in the middle of the present century upon the revolution of the last age with the blood-stained glasses of that period.

When Louis would have none of them, the Girondists were still anxious to uphold the monarchy; not that they disliked a republic, but that they shuddered at one such as Jacobins and *fédérés* would initiate. Their view was to suspend Louis and to govern with a regency during the minority of the dauphin. But where was the regent? It was the impossibility of answering this question satisfactorily that gave the great and final advantage to the thorough republicans. The Duke of Orleans was a miserable intriguer. Some of the Girondists, therefore, admitted the necessity of a temporary executive, appointed by the assembly. Actuated by such fears and doubts, the Girondists evaded rather than opposed the repeated demands for the dethronement of the king, until in the first days of August a document appeared that swelled the tide of French passion to a height that overflowed every barrier, and carried everything once more down the torrent of revolution.

This was the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, declaring that the purport of the march of his army was to restore the king to his legitimate authority. Whatever Frenchmen opposed the Prussian march would be treated with the utmost rigour and their houses burnt. As to the city of Paris, if it did not instantly submit to

CHAP.
XXXIX.

the king, the allies would consider the members of the national assembly, of the municipality, and national guard, accountable for the rebellion, and they should be tried for it in military fashion, without hope of pardon! The manifesto, dated from Coblenz, July 25, evidently emanated from the exiled aristocrats and princes of France, not from a foreign power. It had at first been sent to Paris, submitted to the king and queen, and subscribed to by them. Yet no sooner did it officially reach the capital than the king protested against it in a message to the assembly, declaring that he was true to the nation as to the constitution, and would not receive the law from foreign armies. It was impossible for the assembly, much less the people, to put faith in so false and hypocritical a declaration. It refused accordingly to order the printing of the king's letter. The cruel course of circumstances may have forced such hypocrisy upon the king, but it was not the less hypocrisy, and certainly of a nature to warrant—what ought to have been long before accomplished—his suspension.

Had the assembly at once decreed this, and, as Danton proposed, sent the queen out of the country, if not the ex-monarch himself, it might have avoided the scenes of violence which ensued. But the assembly was uncertain and paralysed. Barbaroux, a young Marseillais, an intimate of the society of Madame Roland, had influence to bring a second batch of *fédérés* from Marseilles. Although several of the Gironde chiefs foresaw that these supposed auxiliaries from the provinces would be as turbulent and rabid as the Parisians, the Rolands encouraged Barbaroux. Yet these new comers were ruffians of the most ferocious class, who had signalised their march by all kinds of violence and excesses. Barbaroux proposed to join them at Charenton in the last days of July; Santerre, at the head of the legions of the faubourgs, meeting

them too. When united, they were to march upon the Tuileries and the assembly, holding the latter blockaded until it should vote the dethronement of the king.

Singular to say, the reduction of the assembly by blockade and menace was precisely the mode followed by the Jacobins when they afterwards procured the proscription of the Girondists and of Barbaroux himself. But for the present the scheme failed. Santerre, the follower of Robespierre or of Orleans, would not aid the triumph of Barbaroux. And so the Marseillais marched to a banquet in the Champs Élysées, where they soon quarrelled with the national guards, a conflict ensuing in which some of the latter were slain and many wounded, the honour of victory being to the Marseillais.

Both parties came to clamour at the bar of the assembly; the national guards for the punishment of those who had attacked them, and the removal of the *fédérés* from Paris to the army. To this the federalists replied by demanding the dissolution of the staff of the national guard and the dethronement of the king. In the discussion which followed, Guadet, a leading orator of the Gironde, supported the vote, ordering the *fédérés* out of the capital.

The sections in the meantime, declared permanent by the decree of the country's being in danger, began to press and petition for the dethronement of the king. The *commune* of Paris itself took the lead, and the mayor, Pétion, however Girondist, was obliged to present its petition for that purpose; which petition declared also against the councils or directories of departments, 'forming so many upper chambers throughout the provinces.' The section of the quarter of Mauconseil went further, and declared that it no longer owned Louis the Sixteenth as king. Vergniaud and Condorcet both protested against such extravagance, and the assembly annulled the declaration of the section. It

CHAP.
XXXIX.

showed how much it was disgusted at the conduct of the anarchists, by voting on the 8th the acquittal of Lafayette by 406 votes against 224. These votes inflamed to the highest pitch the anger of the *fédérés*, and the populace both in the street and in the galleries of the assembly. The galleries indeed were a scene of a continued turbulence, those who occupied them apostrophising the speakers and interrupting the business of the sitting. Out of doors the same class stopped, struck, hustled, and threatened the lives of the deputies who had voted Lafayette's acquittal. Vaublanc, a member of the Right, after complaining of the violence which he and others had suffered, announced a motion, that the assembly should transfer its sittings to Rouen. The minister of justice, Dejoly, at the same time addressed a letter to the assembly, saying that he could no longer repress the turbulence and the crimes of which the people were guilty. The impending insurrection of the following day was in every one's prevision, in every one's mouth. Pétion, the mayor, was summoned: he avowed himself powerless. Bidden to arm the national guards, since the declaration of the country's being in danger, the mayor replied that the national guards, with other citizens, joined in the debates of the section, one thinking differently from the other, so that to call them to arms would be to give the signal and opportunity for a civil contest.

The insurrection was, in fact, a measure determined upon, and Pétion, though he really sought and strove to counteract it,* durst not do so openly or by force. He waited on Robespierre, and begged of him to leave the dethronement to the assembly, with decorous time to discuss and pronounce it.† This was the desire of the Girondists, in order to set aside Louis personally, whilst preserving the succession to his son under a

* Camille Desmoulins, *Fragments*.

† Robespierre, *Lettre à ses Commettants*.

regency. Such was not the view of Robespierre, some of whose friends brought Barbaroux to him in those days, and endeavoured to impress upon him the necessity of a dictator, Robespierre being the man. "I did not consent to overthrow a king," replied Barbaroux, "in order to bow my neck before a dictator."

Robespierre would not listen to Pétion. The mayor tried to dissuade Danton too, who presided at the section of the Théâtre Français; but the latter, with the 50,000 crowns just received from the court in his pocket, did not look to do more than save the king's life by shutting him up in a tower. The directing power of the insurrection was in fact the sections of Paris, or those who were the most turbulent and anarchic. The latter may not have formed the majority, but the others were timid or indifferent, and deserted their posts, leaving the more fierce democrats masters of the field. These agreed to take possession of the Hôtel de Ville on the night of the 9th, instal themselves in the place of the municipality as delegates from the sections, and thus give a centre of action as well as a show of legality to the insurrectional movement of the faubourgs. This was got up by the popular street leaders. They had considerable difficulty in mustering their men on the appointed night of the 9th of August, it being reported that formidable means of defence had been taken at the chateau. The national guard, though the mayor had refused to summon it, still collected at the Tuileries under the command of Mandar, who was the superior officer of the time. He was a military man who knew his profession and his duty, and who felt strong by the presence of the national guard to the number of, probably, 3,000. There were also the Swiss and the gendarmes, each of the latter corps numbering about 1,000 men, besides a crowd of royalist gentlemen, not too well armed, who filled the apartments and corridors of the palace. Mandar's orders were to keep possession

CHAP.
XXXIX.

of the bridges, so as to prevent the union of the faubourgs, and to sweep the quays with cannon. The cavalry, or gendarmerie, he ordered so to post themselves as to charge at once on the front and rear of the legion of the Faubourg St. Antoine, whilst marching along the quay between the Hôtel de Ville and the palace.

The night was one of vigilance and anxiety in the Tuileries, the assembly, and the Hôtel de Ville. One of the first cares of the defenders of the chateau was to summon Pétion, who, indeed, had a difficult part to play wherever he happened to be. He hesitated some time to repair to the chateau, aware that he would meet there with no friendly reception. When he did reach it, he was anxiously questioned, especially by the king, as to the state of the capital, which he confessed was in the greatest effervescence. Mandar reproached the mayor with the want of cartouches, which the national guard and Swiss* could not get, whilst the Marseillais were well supplied. Pétion excused himself and withdrew from the chateau to the garden of the Tuileries, from the guards of which, however, he could not escape. At length some of his friends observed in the assembly that the mayor was a prisoner in the Tuileries. They instantly summoned him to their bar, which was a liberation to Pétion.

If the Tuileries had been anxious to have Pétion as a hostage, the Hôtel de Ville was as desirous to have Mandar in its power. The national guard, under his orders, held the Pont Neuf, and forbade the cannon of alarm to be fired, though the cannoniers refused to point their guns offensively towards the people. In the middle of the night the delegates of the sections, who were eventually to supersede the existing municipality, reached the Hôtel de Ville, and formed under some pretext another council, which sat in a different

* The Swiss had thirty cartridges each.

hall from the legal one.* Their task seemed to be at first to watch and incite the zeal of the councillors. They sent to make more urgent demands upon Mandar to repair to the Hôtel de Ville. He had declined doing so during the night, but being pressed before daybreak by that meddling fool, Rœderer,† who gave every one the worst advice, and fearing to resist too obstinately the reiterated order of the municipality, he repaired thither. He was questioned as to his military precautions, his doubling of posts, his hold of the Pont Neuf. The municipality did not object to his explanations. But when called to repeat them before the assembled delegates of the sections, he perceived that he had fallen among enemies. They wanted to obtain from him information of the exact state of the force defending the Tuileries, Mandar evading to give it. The assembly of delegates, then, assuming the functions of the municipality, undertook to suspend him, and to substitute Santerre as commander in his stead. In the meantime they obtained a copy of Mandar's order to attack the column of the faubourg in front and rear as it was emerging from the Hôtel de Ville. On hearing this, the populace which thronged the hall and galleries of the municipality burst into fury. They had not long to contain it, for Mandar was ordered to be conveyed to the Abbaye. Brought forth under this pretext, he was shot as he descended the first steps of the Hôtel de Ville. Having thus got rid of Mandar, installed themselves in the place of the old municipality, and sent a detachment to guard Pétion in his hotel, the new *commune*, or the delegates of the sections, ordered the advance of the armed insurrection.

When the soldiers and national guards in the courts and gardens of the palace were thus left without a commander, it occurred to some one that it would be

* M. Ternaux, Histoire de la Terreur.

† Ibid.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

advisable for the king to show himself to the troops, and pass a kind of review, in order to encourage them. Louis grasped at the idea, announced his intention from the balcony, and then descended to execute it. He was at first well received, especially by the officers of the national guard, in the court before the great gate. But as he proceeded, the cries of "*Vive le roi*" became mingled with those of "*Vive la nation*," and then with shouts of "*La république*," with "*A bas le veto*," "*Vivent les sans-culottes*." The worst cries were uttered by the cannoniers of the national guard, composed of smiths and artisans of rough trades. A battalion of the Faubourg St. Marceau also showed manifest signs of disaffection. The national guard was, in fact, divided. The gendarmerie was not staunch. None were really prepared to stand by the king, save the 1,000 Swiss and the couple of hundred nobles who had thronged to the château, and whose presence disgusted the national guard and aroused their revolutionary feelings. The king returned from his visit to the troops with humiliation and despair upon his countenance. The queen herself declared that all was lost.

It was the moment of the first serious attack, and the foremost bands of insurrectionists began to make their appearance on the Carrousel. The death of Mandar had enabled the new municipality to remove the guards and obstructions on the bridges, and to unite the forces of the faubourgs for the assault. La Chesnaye, who assumed the command in default of Mandar, with Rœderer and others, signified to the troops the order to resist if attacked. This met with no cordial or spirited reply, or with what amounted to a refusal—the declaration that they could not fire upon their brethren.* The cannoniers gave theirs by turning down their *mèches*, a sufficient indication that they would not fire. Of the

* Duval, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*. Depositions before the Tribunal Criminel, Rœderer, Varenne, &c.

national guard a great many made their escape. Some even joined the mob, which already began to shake the *grille* of the royal court and vociferate for entrance. Rœderer, who contemplated the scene, was at once stricken by the impossibility of defence, as neither the national guard nor the gendarmerie would evidently fight. The artillery of the mob was at the gates ready to fire, and the dozen guns brought to defend the château would certainly not reply. The cannoniers had already declared for the people. Struck by all these circumstances, Rœderer hurried up to the apartments where the royal family were anxiously but passively awaiting their fate. "Sire," said Rœderer, "you have not five minutes to lose. You have not force enough to defend the palace; and your cannoniers won't fire. There is no safety for you but in withdrawing to the national assembly. I speak in the name of the council of the department." "But," observed the king, rising and looking out, "there is no great crowd in the Carrousel." "There are twelve pieces of cannon," rejoined Rœderer, "and all the faubourgs are marching." The queen showed great repugnance to this at least premature flight. "Are we alone," asked she, "with no one to depend upon?" "No one," replied Rœderer. "The crisis is so great that we have no longer a counsel to give. We must drag you along with us." "Come," exclaimed Louis, rising, "*marchons*; let us go."

It was eight o'clock on the morning of the 10th of August that Louis the Sixteenth, followed by his queen, his sister, the dauphin, and some ladies, left for the last time his palace to proceed to the assembly. A guard of grenadiers accompanied them. They walked up the great alley of the Tuileries gardens, strewn already with fallen leaves, the heaps of which the little dauphin amused himself by scattering. Turning to the right, they reached the terrace of the Feuillants. The popu-

CHAP.
XXXIX.

lace was there in great excitement, of which, fortunately, the royal family knew not the immediate cause. In the guardhouse of the terrace were some prisoners taken up in the night armed. Suleau, the royalist journalist, was one of them, and it was against them the populace were chiefly aroused. They were led by a virago, a native of Liège, Theroigne de Mericourt, whom Suleau's pen had been accustomed to outrage. And she came for vengeance. The guardhouse was forced, the eleven prisoners brought forth, slain, decapitated, and the fierce Theroigne had consummated her vengeance when the royal family reached the terrace. Three of the heads on pikes were paraded at the time.*

The guard of grenadiers being obliged to leave the royal family, as they crossed the terrace towards the assembly, the people surrounded them, some ferocious, some sympathetic in language. One snatched the dauphin from the queen and took him up, but it was only to place him on the table of the assembly. This body, which had vainly striven to save the prisoners of the neighbouring guardhouse, had sent a deputation to the king to offer him an asylum. "I have come," said Louis, entering the assembly, "to avoid great crimes. I cannot be more in surety than amongst you."

"You may count upon our firmness," replied Vergniaud, who presided. "The members have sworn to die in defence of the rights of the people and the constituted authorities."

The king took his seat near the president, but, it being objected that the house could not debate in his presence, it was arranged that the royal family should occupy the box of the stenographs or logographs behind the president's chair. Here it was the fate of Louis and Marie Antoinette to sit during seventeen hours listening to the discussion and the votes, which terminated in

* Deposition of Avril in Mortimer Ternaux.

their deposition and transference as prisoners to the tower of the Temple.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

The flight of the king was the signal for the rest of the national guard to withdraw. As to the gendarmerie, it had been posted in the Louvre to execute the manœuvres ordered by Mandar, which was to attack and disperse the advancing column of the faubourgs. Unsupported and without orders, instead of making any charge it retreated, not to the Tuileries, but round to the Place Louis Quinze. The commander of the Swiss, seeing the defence abandoned to them, withdrew the men from the courts into the interior of the palace, and especially to the great staircase. And this was no sooner achieved than the gates of the court were opened to the insurgents, with whom the cannoniers of the national guard, and even some of the gensdarmes, instantly fraternised. The first thought was to induce the Swiss to do the same. With hopes of succeeding in this, the insurgents advanced to the portal of the palace with their hats on their guns and pikes in token of amity. Some Swiss, stationed at the windows, answered by flinging down their cartouches. But the presence of the officers kept those on the staircase from making any such demonstration. Westerman, an Alsatian, consequently speaking German, and who commanded the advanced body of insurgents, then bravely ascended amongst the Swiss with a Marseillais and a cannonier, beseeching them in the name of *Union* to surrender. They denied that they could do so if their arms were to be taken from them. The Marseillais replied they should keep their arms. On this several Swiss soldiers joined the populace, when, to prevent the general defection, some shots were fired from the top of the staircase, where were the non-military defenders of the château. If this account be correct, as it seems affirmed by the testimony of Colonel Pfyffer,* himself a Swiss officer, the provocation for car-

* Mem. of Weber.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

nage came from the palace. The royalists, on the other hand, declare that the mob not only tampered with the Swiss by promises, but dragged them down with hooks such as river-boatmen carry; and that it was on seeing this that the royalists fired from the top of the staircase.

Whichever side provoked the collision, it took place; the Swiss fired upon the insurgents, who retreated, and following them, not only into the court but even the Carrousel, cleared in a short time the space before the château of the first division of its assailants. The Swiss, however, were too few to occupy so large a space, and the cannon of the faubourg soon opened upon them, partly protected by the houses, which obstructed the Carrousel, and the Swiss withdrew to the château. Here again there ensues a difference of opinion between the historians favourable to the cause of fallen royalty and those who worshipped the revolution. According to the former, the Swiss received an order from Louis the Sixteenth by D'Humilly to cease the combat, which the greater part of them obeyed, mustering in the garden behind and marching off to the assembly. When they reached it the king bade them lay down their arms and retire to their barracks.

There can be no doubt that the Swiss could have made a longer and more murderous defence but for the order of the king that they should join him in the assembly. About sixty made their way to the Place Louis Quinze, when they were attacked by the mob and by the treacherous gendarmes, so lately their comrades. Very few escaped. Between eighty or a hundred were left in the apartments, when the insurgents, finding no obstacle before them, rushed in. The Swiss gathered together and defended themselves as long as they had ammunition. It was this resistance that gave to the capture of the Tuileries the semblance of a victory. The sack of the palace by the infuriated mob followed the death of its last defender. But when this contest

was over, the massacre was prolonged. Numbers of fugitives, of servants, of persons employed in a host of capacities, were found concealed in different corners of the château. The mob made no enquiry, and showed no mercy. Their mode of enjoying victory was to kill, and they indulged in it. The female attendants on the queen were saved by a happy appeal of the Duchess of Tarente, who besought pity for the *maid servants*. The assassins heard the appeal, and the ladies were put under guard till they could leave at night. Madame Campan separately had an equally miraculous escape. A Marseillais was in the act of slaying her in the upper story, when a voice from below cried, "The women are not to be killed." "*Heim!*" exclaimed the Marseillais to his interlocutor, and spared the life of his victim. She never forgot the terrible *heim!**

If Louis the Sixteenth, his queen, and their timid counsellor, Rœderer, had had the sagacity to foresee that the abandonment of the Tuileries to a triumphant mob must have the intended effect of striking down the legislative assembly, and annihilating its power and independence, as well as those of the crown, they would have hesitated to take the fatal and pusillanimous flight. A young officer witnessed the attack from a window in the Carrousel, and could not but conceive the opinion, which he afterwards expressed and acted upon, that a few hundred of determined soldiers were quite sufficient to rout the turbulent mob. The officer was Napoleon Bonaparte. A soldier might have saved royalty, as he afterwards saved the convention; but the monarch was doomed not to find at that epoch one capable follower.

Prostrate as monarchy was, the Gironde did not despair of preserving and raising it. This could only be done, however, by bowing the neck before the popular whirlwind. Guadet was president of the assembly, and

* *Memoirs of Madame Campan*; *Soulavie*; *M. Dumas*. *Depositions of Chabot in Trial of Girondins, &c.*
Rœderer, Chronique; *Prudhomme*;

CHAP.
XXXIX.

was congratulating himself and his friends that the noise of cannon, musketry, and riot were subsiding, when, about mid-day, a deputation arrived from the intrusive municipality. It came, it said, to concert the measures required for the public safety. They declared their confidence in the assembly, shown by their keeping Pétion, Manuel, and Santerre in place; but they made a proviso against considering it the judge of the extraordinary measures which the people, their common sovereign, had thought proper to take in its primary assemblies!

In such language the new *commune* asked to be recognised by the assembly. Guadet fully accorded their wishes and applauded their zeal. "Only," added he, "pray set Pétion at liberty." Petitions even more impudent succeeded each other at the bar. At length Vergniaud ascended the tribune with the decree sanctioned by the extraordinary commission, and drawn up by himself. He began by lamenting the rigour of the measure which circumstances rendered necessary. He then proposed—

That a national convention should be called.

That the king should be suspended till the convention pronounced respecting him.

That a ministry should be appointed by the assembly, as well as a governor for the dauphin.

The king and his family were to remain for the present within the precincts of the assembly. The palace of the Luxembourg was to be prepared for their reception.

The propositions of Vergniaud were voted without opposition, and were followed by another, establishing universal suffrage, and abolishing all distinction militating against it. The assembly then proceeded to use its new power of appointing ministers, and reinstated Roland, Clavière, and Servan in their several departments. Monge, a man of science, was placed at the head of the marine, and Lebrun at that of foreign affairs. All these were moderate men. But it was thought

necessary to give the Jacobins at least one member of the government, and Danton was appointed as the least obnoxious of the party, and probably as the man best calculated to outbid Robespierre.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

This demagogue, as well as Marat, had escaped from the holes where they had lain hidden during the insurrection—Marat to swagger, sword in hand and crowned with laurel, at the head of a band of *fédérés*; Robespierre to mount the tribune of the Jacobins, to point out the necessity of the mob's recurring to arms, and putting it out of the power of the members of the national assembly to damage the cause of liberty. He then proceeded to take his seat at the table of the new council general of the *commune*, which, by virtue of its insurrectionary power and triumph, took the place not only of the old municipal council, but of the legislative assembly itself. This, indeed, sunk into nullity: it neglected to pass the most important decrees, and take any resolution at so important a crisis. The more moderate politicians of the assembly either disappeared or shrunk into silence. The timid members not only of the Right, but even of the Centre or Plain, stayed away from the sittings. The 700 members dwindled down to scarcely more than 200, and this alone was sufficient to deprive the assembly even of the authority it might have had and claimed. The national convention was summoned; the elections for it were about to take place. In a short month it would assemble; and moderate members deferred till that moment their vindication of law, of order, and humanity, against the *commune* and its army of ruffians.

These ruffians, however, feeling how brief promised to be their hold of power, determined to make use of it. Their first act was to set aside the humane order of the assembly, that the royal family should be allowed to inhabit the Luxembourg. They represented that this palace was insecure, the rear of it opened on the fields,

CHAP.
XXXIX.

and formed an easy opportunity for escape. With some reason they alleged that the king at the Luxembourg was no more safe from popular assault than at the Tuileries. They, therefore, proposed the tower of the Temple; and thither, accordingly, the royal family were conducted on the evening of the 11th of August. The carriage made its way with difficulty over the fragments of Louis the Fourteenth's bronze statue, scattered on the Place des Victoires. All such monuments had been overthrown. The gates of the Temple soon closed on the persons of the king, his queen, sister, and children, with one servant to wait upon them, the accommodation being the two stories and narrow chambers of the tower.

The next act of the *commune* was to seize, confiscate, and destroy all the journals opposed to it, and distribute their presses and type to the *sans-culottes* papers. A general system of plunder and robbery was then organised. The churches were despoiled of their plate; the houses of *émigrés*—all those unoccupied were supposed to be so—were entered and robbed not only of valuables but of furniture. The country-houses all round Paris were treated in a similar manner, that of the Condé's at Chantilly especially. This was wound up at a later day by the breaking open and plunder of the Garde Meuble, which was to the jewels and valuables of the crown what the Tower of London is to those of the English sovereigns. This spoil went, of course, into the pockets of the adroit robbers directly. But the common plunder was brought to the Hôtel de Ville, and piled, money and goods, in divers apartments, over which certain members of the *commune* acted as commissioners. The secretary Tallien was one.* The produce, no doubt, went to pay the mob, its councillors, its leaders, its executioners. But this could not have

* Tallien, Marat, Sieyès, and Paris were the guardians appointed, all of them members of the ensuing

convention. See Granier de Cassagnac, *Histoire de la Giroude*, and the documents appended.

exhausted the mass of riches which disappeared amidst the keepers of the treasure.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Plunder, which seemed to be the chief object of the foremost of the anarchists, could not satisfy their followers. These, indeed, received their subvention—there was at that time scarcely any other mode of living—but they had a passion to gratify, and that passion was for blood. In peaceful times this is hardly credible or explicable. But those turbulent periods, in which the lowest class of society becomes uppermost, diverted them from regular industry and labour, and suggested to their ignorant and envenomed minds the right not only to reduce the better conditioned classes to their own level, but to punish the present possessors of wealth and power for having so raised themselves above others; this begets in men the rabid and sanguinary propensity of wild beasts, into which natural humanity seemed to merge. The animalised populace were now the masters of Paris, and menaced to be so also in the provinces; not that they formed anything like the majority, but that they were armed, reckless, and fierce to such a degree that the sane portion of the community shrank and hesitated before their threats and their deeds.

These ruffians for a time were emphatically the people, and as there was no authority but that derived from the people, the men who pleased and flattered them were sure to predominate. The way to please them was to gratify their thirst for blood. This Robespierre, Danton, and Marat undertook to do, or felt themselves in the necessity of doing. Their first thought was to satisfy the cravings of their friends in a regular and judicial way. The *commune*, under their direction, suspended the existing courts and judges, and erected a revolutionary tribunal with a mock jury to try those accused of treason, or, as they called it, uncivism. The category was wide, since all who had signed a petition in favour of Lafayette were considered

CHAP.
XXXIX.

suspect, and worthy of death. Lest any should escape, guards were placed at the barriers to forbid egress; and similar measures were taken which evince that a system of exterminating all opposed to the anarchists was contemplated. A great many, however, it was found, had already fled in such haste that they had left behind them their wives and children, thinking it impossible that these could be the object of political vengeance. But the *commune* passed a decree on the 18th of August that the wives and children of *émigrés* should be incarcerated, in order that their husbands and fathers might come to reclaim them, and so place themselves under the axe of the new law. With such preparations the guillotine was soon put in motion. There was a tavern at the entrance of the Tuileries gardens from the Place Louis Quinze, kept by a Swiss. It contained a cabinet, the windows of which commanded an excellent view of the guillotine, which, in general, was made to perform its functions in the evening, and even after nightfall. Robespierre chose this closet as his favourite dining-place; and he was able to report in the *commune* how few were the victims, and how far short of the expectation of the multitude fell their number.*

It is, of course, not this reason that the men of blood and their admirers put forth as the cause. Yet the sentiment which they do plead is, perhaps, more vile. It is the existence of fear that, whilst the foreign enemy advanced, those better classes of society, which could not but consider the past with all its abuses preferable to the present, would come forth to fall upon and take vengeance of the revolutionists. The leaders, however, could not have believed in any such courage, or any such design on the part of those who had allowed the perpetration of the deed of the 10th of August. They might have feared the triumph of the Prussian and

* Prudhomme, *Révolutions de Paris*.

Austrian armies, and their final entrance in the capital with the exasperated *émigrés*. We do not think that such idle vengeance was the dominant wish of either Marat or Robespierre. Both hoped that the massacres, begun in the prisons, might extend beyond them. It was notoriously the desire in some of the sections that the inmates of the Temple should be made away with. And Robespierre at the *commune* on the day of the massacres denounced a conspiracy in favour of the Bourbons, which enveloped Brissot and the Gironde in the category of *suspects*. A bill of arrest was expedited against the first. Marat launched another against Roland. To get at the royal family, and not only those who sympathised with them but those inclined to treat them with respect and commiseration, was part of the aim of at least the two chiefs of the assassination plot.*

With the same view of exculpating the originators of the massacres, they are represented by one historian as a fortuitous event, sprung from the very impulse of the people, the unpremeditated vengeance of its passions excited by the news of the capture of Longwy, the probable capture of Verdun, and consequently the threatened arrival of the Prussians in Paris. These events naturally produced a good deal of excitement. The Girondists expressed their fears of the necessity of retreating south with the king and the legislature; Danton, on the contrary, maintained the necessity of staying in Paris, which he proposed defending by audacity, audacity, and still audacity. These were empty words, had the Prussian commander the talent, or even the zeal, for war. But the Duke of Brunswick, strange to say,

* Robespierre afterwards pretended, and his admirers assert for him, that he took no part in the massacre, and merely attended the committee of surveillance in the council of the *commune* on that day.

M. Granier de Cassagnac adduces proofs from the *procès verbaux* of the council, that Robespierre's denial was false in every respect, and that he took an active and leading part in the proceedings.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

entertained a respect, mingled with awe, for the revolution and its armies, and allowed to them the fullest opportunity for an easy victory.

Danton's expression of "audacity" did not mean placing himself at the head of a forlorn hope to repel the enemy. His audacity was merely to massacre the disarmed prisoners. And that he did meditate it, is irrefragably proved by his and Desmoulins' answer to Prudhomme, the bookseller, who came to expostulate. Desmoulins, not denying the project of massacre, observed that the innocent would not be confounded with the guilty, and appealed to Danton for the truth of what he said. The minister of justice and his acolytes were thus not only fully aware of the intended massacre, but of the mock forms of justice with which the murderers accompanied it.

In some of the prisons the jailers well knew what was intended. They sent away their families, deprived their victims of knives and forks; and at the Abbaye the prisoners had their dinner two hours earlier than usual lest the meal should interfere with the slaughter. It must have been plain, indeed, to the prison authorities that the jails had not been filled with thousands, far beyond the capacity of containing them, in order for the prisoners to continue to inhabit them, or await trial. The barriers had been closed, and on a certain evening domiciliary visits were made by the police, under Marat's superintendence, to search for arms it was said, but really to arrest prisoners. All coming under the category of *suspect*, Lafayetteists as well as royalists, were crowded together in the prison cells, evidently for massacre. The prisoners and their friends, indeed, fully saw through the whole scheme; and, of course, the latter made every effort to procure the liberation of those in whom they were interested. The rich in many instances succeeded, no doubt, in bribing the police. In this way Lally Tollendal, Beaumarchais, and Jaucourt were let

out of the Abbaye. Daubigné, imprisoned at La Force for having stolen 100,000 francs in the sack of the Tuileries, was released by his friend Marat. But the register of the deliberations in the sections afford ample proof of their being privy to, and accomplices in, the massacres about to commence.*

CHAP.
XXXIX.

The first deed of blood on this terrible Sunday, the 2nd of September, was the murder of twenty-four priests: these were a portion of the ecclesiastics arrested during the domiciliary visits. When the cannon of alarm, the signal for massacre, was fired at two o'clock, the victims were put in carriages and drawn to prison through crowded streets. The mob attacked them as they passed, and the *fédérés*, soldiers of Marseilles and Avignon, who guarded them, were foremost to cut them down. Pétion and others accused the poor priests of provoking their guards. This is little likely; at all events, the greater number of the priests arrived in the court of the old church of the Abbaye, where they were attacked, not by the mob, but by that band of cut-throats, with Maillard at their head, who were commissioned and paid by the executive council of the *commune* for the special work of slaughter. Of the twenty-four priests, three escaped from the massacre at first by rushing into the apartment occupied by the committee of the section then in permanence. Of these, the Abbé Sicard, then employed in the hospital of the deaf and dumb, and director of it, alone was preserved.

When these priests had been despatched, Maillard cried out, "*Aux Carmes!*"—a convent not very distant, in which one hundred and twenty priests were confined. The same scene just described in the court of the Abbaye was repeated in the Carmes. The victims

* Granier de Cassagnac, Matthieu de la Varenne. M. Louis Blanc acquits the *commune* of any participation in the massacre, against the express assertions and boast of the

commune itself, which in its address to all municipalities applauded the act, and recommended its general imitation.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

there were found in the church, and, fearing their fate, in the act of prayer. The assassins did not call them forth, but fell to slaughter them where they were—among them the Bishop of Arles, for whom they asked, and who was pointed out. It took considerable time to perpetrate this second massacre, which, when concluded, was celebrated by a discharge of musketry in the church. The assassins then returned to the Abbaye, to quench their thirst and resume more regularly their fearful mission.

Ordered to employ some forms in their despatch, they agreed to sit round a table, with Maillard as president. The prisoners were then called on one by one before this improvised judge, dripping with gore. After a question or two, Maillard exclaimed, "*A la Force.*" A door was then opened; but, instead of being conducted to another prison, the victim was assailed by the pikes and sabres that awaited without, and immolated on the spot. Some forty Swiss soldiers, those saved by the assembly and sent to the Abbaye, were amongst the first slain, and without even the proposed shade of trial. Some hesitated, till a young Swiss soldier demanded the doors to be opened, and flung himself upon the pikes. There were two issues of this kind, and both became blocked up outside with dead bodies. The last of the Swiss murdered was a colonel, of the well-known family of Reding. Wounded and suffering, pain forced cries from him as he was removed, to stifle which one fellow severed his neck asunder with his sabre. Night having by this time fallen, grease-pots and torches were procured; and a crowd of common people, many of them women, collected to enjoy the spectacle. M. de Montmorin, the ex-minister of the unfortunate Louis, was one of the victims brought forth. He was more fierce than resigned; and, when told that he was to go to La Force, he demanded a carriage. They pretended to send for it. On going forth he was slaughtered. Thierry,

the king's valet, followed. He had the courage to cry "*Vive le Roi!*" Deputies from the assembly made their appearance on the bloody scene—Bazire, Dussaulx, Isnard, Chabot, and others. They were not listened to, and even felt obliged themselves to take refuge in the section. Billaud Varennes, the friend of Danton, came too, but it was to encourage the assassins, not moderate their fury. The massacres of the Abbaye lasted all the following day, the 3rd. Wearied and inebriated, the assassin-judge and his assessors allowed a few to escape. The most remarkable was that of M. de Sombreuil. His daughter covered the old man with her arms, and clung to him so desperately that the executioners could not kill one without the other, and were too much struck with her filial courage to immolate her. She received several wounds, indeed. At last one of the men seized her, and held a cup to the bleeding head of the last victim. Some wine and powder were thrown into it, and the girl was told to drink *that*, and the victim should be saved. Mademoiselle de Sombreuil did not hesitate, swallowed the dreadful draught, and saved her father.*

Mademoiselle Cazotte saved her parent by similar devotion and obstinacy, but it was only to remove him to the revolutionary tribunal, which sent him to the guillotine some days later. His terrible prophecy of his own fate and that of so many others is well known and attested.

Journiac de Saint Meard managed to speak Provençal to one of the assassins who was of that province; and, thus interesting him, he succeeded in interesting Maillard himself by his boldness, and was acquitted. Four of his acolytes, with torches, conducted him safely through the band of executioners outside.†

The same scenes of horror took place in the different prisons, in the Conciergerie, at La Force, the

* Letter of the lady's son, in *Vérité Entière, par Felhemesi. Procès Verbaux de la Commune.*

† *Mon agonie de 38 heures. La Déposition de Jourdan, &c.*

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Salpêtrière, Bicêtre, and others. The ladies attached to the queen had been confined at La Force. Pétion succeeded in releasing them. They were scarcely free when the Princess de Lamballe was brought thither from the Temple. When examined before the mock tribunal, the president asked her to swear hatred to the king, queen, and royalty. The princess raised her hands to her eyes for an answer, and declined the oath. "Pronounce it or you are dead," whispered one near. "Set madame free," said the judge, and the princess was thrust out on the steps of the prison, where she was soon massacred, her body cut in pieces, and her head fixed on a pike. It was borne under the windows of the royal prison of the Temple, where some sought in vain to prevent the queen from seeing it; others took care to inform her of what was on the pike. Marie Antoinette fainted.

How can those writers who attribute the massacres of September to political excitement, and to a real fear of aristocratic reaction, account for the wholesale murders committed at Bicêtre and at the Salpêtrière? In the former prison was a number of boys, about the age of twelve, imprisoned no doubt for vagabondage or petty robberies. Their youth, the impossibility of their having even a political motive or idea, weighed not with the assassins. Upwards of thirty of these children were massacred and flung into a heap!

At the Salpêtrière were confined exclusively women, very young most of them, guilty of penury and street-walking. There was no mercy for them even. The hordes, who were animated, according to certain revolutionary writers, by ardent desire to save their country, and who were forced to think that it ran the risk of losing its liberty—these men, who never dreamt of marching to meet the Prussians, remained not merely to massacre these women, but to indulge in such brutal extravagance connected with them, that even Madame Roland, who gives details which we must shrink from,

exclaimed that they made her abhor the revolution as hideous.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

The wholesale murders of September in the prisons of Paris excited the emulation of the provincial Jacobins, who, at Lyons, Macon, and other towns, sought to follow the example. But the chief supplement to the metropolitan massacres was that of the prisoners of Versailles. The more eminent persons charged with hostility to the revolution had been sent to the high court established at Orleans to be tried. One of the first demands of the victors of the 10th of August was that they should be transferred to Paris and tried before the revolutionary tribunal. The assembly, which had itself accused and incarcerated these persons, refused to allow them to be tried elsewhere than at Orleans. Even before the slaughter of the 2nd of September, the all-powerful committee of twenty had despatched a band of ruffians to Orleans. After the massacre, Danton appointed Fournier, the American, as he was called, to take 1,500 Parisians and conduct the Orleans prisoners to Paris. They were brought away on the 4th, and reached Versailles on the 9th.

A multitude of Parisian assassins filled the town, waiting for their prey. The *procureur* of the district, aware of their intention, hastened to Paris, and represented to the minister of justice, Danton, the necessity of providing for the safety of the prisoners. Roland, on his part, had done his utmost by warning and exertion; but Roland was powerless, and Danton alone could stop the fresh effusion of blood. He, however, told the *procureur* of the department that he could do nothing, and that the prisoners must be left to their fate.

The file of carriages containing these, accompanied by an escort, traversed Versailles towards two o'clock of the day of the 9th. The Ménagerie was prepared to receive them. But after they had passed through the *grille*, or town-gate near the Orangerie, some of the assassins

CHAP.
XXXIX.

shut it, so as to separate the carriages and their freight from the guard and from the mayor who protected them. In an instant the prisoners were assailed before the gates of the Orangerie itself by the band of assassins. The mayor made the most courageous efforts to open the gate and protect the victims, but he was dragged away, and in a very short time the ruffians had not only killed, but cut in pieces, the forty and odd prisoners just arrived. The minister Delessert was amongst them, as was the Duke de Brissac. But three or four escaped. The assassins were evidently disappointed at the fewness of the victims. They therefore proceeded to the prisons of Versailles, where they set to work to enact over again the ferocious drama of the Abbaye—that is to say, a mock tribunal, the prisoners brought before it according to the gaol list, and then instantly handed over to the pikes and sabres that awaited them. The assassins were but 200, and yet the mayor encountered the utmost difficulty and peril to stop the proceedings and save the prisoners who had not yet been despatched.*

The Girondists and their minister, Roland, did their utmost to repress and put a stop to these excesses. They were at first without power, and, indeed, were only enabled to acquire some by the outrageous extravagance to which the anarchists proceeded. The wholesale robbery of the committee of *surveillance*, no longer confined to Paris, was carried on in the provinces. The Marquis of Louvois' ancient château of Ancy le Franc was completely gutted of its valuables by command of the *commune*. On the 16th of September, the *garde-meuble*, or treasury of the crown, was broken into, and all the jewels carried off. Not content with this, the ruffians attacked well-dressed persons in the public streets, and tore the jewels and chains from the necks of the

* La Varenne ; Prudhomme ; Ternaux ; Cassagnac, &c.

women. Moreover, Marat, acting under the committee of the *commune*, was filling the prisons of the capital, just emptied by massacre. In ten days he had made 500 arrests.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

These audacious acts, repeatedly and courageously denounced by Roland, at last roused the indignation of the people and the courage of the assembly. "I know," exclaimed Vergniaud, "that these men wield poniards. I know that they sought to direct them on the night of the 2nd against my breast, and against those of several deputies. Fortunately for us, the assassins were fully occupied, and the people, to whom their denunciations were made, would not listen to them." Pétion, in reply, said that the arrests were not issued by the *commune*, which knew nothing of them, but by the *police de sûreté*. The assembly ordered the abolition of that committee or the removal of strangers, such as Marat, from it. It appealed to the sections against the *commune* itself, and ordered the re-election of that body. The decree, however, for this effect was merely issued in its last sitting, which took place on the morning of the 20th September.

One of the great excuses for the terrible scenes of bloodshed which took place in Paris is, that they gave vigour to the national defence. It is, however, difficult to perceive any connexion between the crimes of revolutionists and the failure of the Austrians and Prussians to penetrate into the country. The only corps of volunteers which Paris sent to the seat of war at this time ran away at the first sight of the enemy, and nearly destroyed the whole army by its inconsiderate panic. As to the failure of the invasion, this was more owing to the lukewarmness and irresolution of the Prussian commander than to any other cause.

Dumouriez himself says that the Prussians had nothing to do but to advance, in order to march over the French army to Paris. That of Lafayette was utterly disorganised by his flight. The events of the 10th of

CHAP.
XXXIX.

August had so disgusted that general, that he thought more of marching upon the Paris insurgents than routing the enemy. Instead of following the current of the revolution, he caused his own army as well as that of Dillon and Luckner to repeat the oath to the king. Dumouriez, at the head of his small division, refused. Lafayette, in despite of his republican principles, ordered the commissioners whom the assembly had sent down to the army to be placed under arrest, making the town authorities of Sedan execute this order. Victory over the enemy could alone have entitled or enabled him to assume such a position, which he soon after saw was impossible. His soldiers were not prepared to embrace the cause of the old monarchy, which degraded them, against the new order of things, which opened to them all grades and advancement. A middle course between the monarchy and the republic was no longer possible; and Lafayette, who could follow no other, was obliged to quit the army, and, with his few followers, fly to the Austrian outposts, where he was made and kept a prisoner.

It is almost inconceivable that the two great German powers did not take advantage of the double disorganisation of the French government and the French armies. From the dismissal of Servan in June to his reappointment in August, Louis the Sixteenth—it was his principal crime—maintained a war minister, Lajard, who opposed the scheme of raising any revolution in Belgium, and who, with Lafayette, looked upon the assembly as a more dangerous enemy than the Prussians. The French armies of the north could scarcely have exceeded 50,000 men. The coalition was to bring 100,000 into the field. And although Austria furnished far less than agreed, the Duke of Brunswick was still at the head of 80,000 men.* The duke, however, had no other thought

* Sybel.

than to defeat the plan of invasion. He detested Austria, cared little for the royal family of France, despised the *émigrés*, and looked upon regenerated France more as an admirer than a foe.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

Thus, whilst the King of Prussia was hot for advance and invasion, accompanying his army to enforce it, the duke knew how to throw cold water on his zeal, and insisted that the reduction of the fortresses on the Meuse was the only safe way of commencing the war. The flight of Lafayette, however, with the easy capture of Longwy and Verdun, rendered it impossible for the duke to arrest the march of his army into France. He lingered, nevertheless, and gave time to Dumouriez to occupy the several roads and defiles through the hills and forests of the Argonne, by which the Prussians must necessarily advance to Chalons.

Dumouriez called these the French Thermopylæ, and French writers indulge in a lengthened description of them. There does not seem much need of this, the strength of these French Thermopylæ being much exaggerated, and the Prussians having found no difficulty in forcing their way through one of the passes. When Dumouriez found this the case, he hastened to evacuate the Argonne, and to concentrate his army on some small eminences near Valmy, protected by rivers. The Prussians poured into the country around and south of them. There was no force between them and Chalons; but they could not leave Dumouriez in the rear. On the 20th of September, the day of the installation of the convention, the Prussians approached and seized the heights of La Lune, opposite to Kellerman, posted on the hill of Valmy. A cannonade from hill to hill, and a few skirmishes in the valley, were all the feats of the day, costing the lives of some 200 men. The Prussians formed more than once a column of attack, their soldiers as well as the French being eager for an engage-

CHAP.
XXXIX.

ment. But the Duke of Brunswick would not fight, nor allow the king to do so, thus giving up the cause of monarchy, and all hopes of saving the royal family of France. "You may say," said a Prussian officer to Göthe, who was present, "that you have seen the commencement of a new epoch in history!" *

* Sybel; Hardenberg; Memoirs of Dumouriez.

CHAPTER XL.

THE CONVENTION.

(September 1792 to the Surrender of Toulon, end of 1793.)

THERE was not any marked difference in the elections of the country at large, for the legislative assembly and for the convention, notwithstanding the complete opening of the franchise. One hundred and forty-seven members of the former were re-elected, with about fifty of the Constituent. The number of lawyers diminished; that of judges and mayors, the functionaries of the revolution, was augmented. The Gironde appeared in full, although Brissot and Condorcet were no longer members for Paris.

CHAP.
XL.

Whilst France advanced hesitatingly and reluctantly in the path of revolution, Paris, within a year, had made an enormous stride. Robespierre, Danton, Desmoulins, Collot, Billaud, Fabre, and Philippe Égalité were returned for the capital. This extreme party were reinforced too from the provinces—not, indeed, as might be thought, from those of the hot south. In addition to Robespierre, a native of Arras, the north now sent Carrier, Lebon, Lebas, the most sanguinary proconsuls, as well as St. Just, a gentleman from the Soissonnais, the singular complement of Robespierre.

Revolution works a great change in tendencies and views, but is apt, after all, to leave principles much the same. The curse of the old monarchy was, that it could not tolerate any opinion or party save its own, and

CHAP.
XL.

deemed itself entitled to crush all dissidence by persecution and prison. The revolution adopted the self-same odious and tyrannical principle, substituting merely the guillotine for the Bastille, and prison-massacres for the *dragonnades*. And the Jacobins flattered themselves with the idea that they were regenerating and freeing humanity, when, in fact, they were merely continuing the criminal intolerance and stupidity of the ancient *régime*.

The first act of the convention was to abolish royalty, a necessary consequence of the disesteem and collapse into which it had fallen—so necessary that it was unanimously adopted. On the motion of Collot, the comedian, France was declared a republic. The Girondists hailed it (their hope of preserving the crown for the young dauphin had been abandoned), some with enthusiasm, whilst others, such as Vergniaud, foreseeing that it subjected intelligence to brutality, confessed their misgivings that the Gironde might prove its first victim.

The next act of the convention was to ordain that all municipal and administrative bodies should be re-elected and renewed, and the same was urged with regard to the tribunals. What the Girondists, like Mirabeau, saw the necessity of, was a strong executive, to preserve order and justice, to protect the people, their interests, and their industry, from the suggestions of their own ignorance and envious passions. The executive was now only to be found in the assembly; and the great misfortune was, that a government with real power was not selected from it immediately after the 10th of August, such as could gradually calm down and supersede the permanent action of the insurrectionists. The legislative assembly having failed to do this, the commune and the clubs had grasped power, and showed what would be the spirit of their government in the massacres of September.

It was these dreadful acts that rendered agreement or even tolerance impossible between the parties of the convention. The members of the Mountain either had participated or gloried in these useless massacres, these gratuitous crimes; and the Gironde was not only disgusted with that atrocious blood-spilling, the approbation of which the Mountain put forward as its *credo*,* but alarmed to find not only their opinions denounced, but their lives aimed at. In the moment of proscription and massacre, Robespierre had denounced the Girondists as sold to Brunswick, and an order of arrest had in consequence been issued against Brissot. Marat had done the same by Roland, and Danton alone prevented its being executed upon the ex-minister. The anarchists had thus lifted up the knife against the Girondists, and these in no measured terms denounced the disciples of massacre.

It was thus too late, when the convention opened, to effect, not reconciliation indeed—that could not be attempted—but sufferance of each other. This was most unfortunate. Had the Girondists been allowed the lead, Dumouriez would have continued his career of victory, which was only interrupted by the Jacobins. Not only would the foreign enemy have been repulsed and compelled to make peace, but domestic opposition and civil war would have fallen before the efforts of a revolutionary, indeed, but still respectable and humane government. There was no fear but that, both in and out of the assembly, the ultra-democrats would have had ample influence to prevent any treason against the republic, or reaction against its principles. All that was wanting was that one party should respect the other, and confine its struggle for power within constitutional bounds, which would unite every citizen in defence of the country and its liberties.

* Collot d'Herbois in the Jacobins.

CHAP.
XL

The anarchists could not and cannot contemplate such a state of things. Their admirers to this day cannot abide its possibility, which they say would have been the abandonment and defeat of the revolution; and, no doubt, if revolution means murder, on and off the scaffold, it would have been so. But if the revolution required merely the abolition of absolute and arbitrary power, of hereditary and class privileges, with the establishment of freedom of thought and action, and the fair and peaceable participation of all classes in the government of the country, this assuredly could have been secured without the agency of massacre and crime. It was not to be so. The anarchists had made their first step in blood, and this alone made necessary enemies and reprovers of all who were intelligent and honest. The anarchists, in turn, declared war upon these, spurned their co-operation, and would not abide even their presence. To indulge in such hatred, to carry out such proscription, could not be effected by any regular government or in any normal state. Prolonged excitement, perpetual strife, a crowd of men congregated in clubs or in the streets, playing at a game in which not only fortune but heads were at stake, and this giving birth to all the evil passions of hatred, greed, and blood-thirstiness, formed an atmosphere in which alone Jacobins could either live or let live.

In a few days after the opening of the convention, Kersaint commenced the attack upon the anarchists. Commissaries had been despatched to the armies and departments to explain and enforce the substitution of the republic for the monarchy. Kersaint demanded also the appointment of a commission to propose means of putting a stop to brigandage and assassination. Tallien, Fabre, Sergent, and Collot, all the Septembrists, started up to oppose the motion, whilst Brissot shaped Kersaint's proposal in three articles:—that a commissioner should report on the state of Paris; that it should pre-

pare a law against those who provoked assassination; and that means should be taken to procure for the convention a guard drawn from the eighty-three departments. This proposal of Brissot's was voted by the assembly at once, neither Robespierre nor Danton opposing it in the assembly. In the Jacobin club, however, the excitement and indignation were great.

Disputes also were furious and frequent between the deputies out of sitting. The Girondists declared they had need of a provincial guard to protect them from assassination, of which they had already had threats. They denounced the deputies of Paris as chiefs of assassins, and as aspiring to a dictatorship through their support. The Girondists were, however, two to one in the convention, they said, and would defeat any such project. The dispute being continued in the assembly, the accusation of aiming at a dictatorship was treated as vague. "Who is the dictator?" exclaimed Merlin, "that I may poignard him!" "It was not one man, but several, who aimed at a dictatorship," it was answered. "If you would know who they are," cried Rebecqui, "they form the Robespierrean party." Here Danton rose to deprecate such attacks, and sought to exculpate the Paris deputation from the extravagances imputed to it. They were not answerable for Marat, who had spent his life in caverns, and had an ulcerated spirit. As to a dictatorship, let death be decreed as the punishment of whoever pretended to it. But at the same time let the same penalty be decreed against the federalists who would divide France. "Your defence is idle!" exclaimed Brissot; "my motion for a departmental guard in Paris is unity, not federation. And as to a dictator, who would proclaim himself one? What we would prevent and punish is, a man laying the foundations of future dictatorship and preparing it." Robespierre then entered on his defence by stating what he had done for liberty under the constituent assembly.

CHAP.
XL.

He was loudly interrupted. They did not want to know what he had done three years ago, but during the last three months. Robespierre then refuted the idea of his aspiring to a dictatorship—he who had constantly refused office or place. Barbaroux related how Panis had introduced him to Robespierre as the fittest man to be appointed dictator, a dictator being necessary at such a crisis to assume the management of the republic. Panis denied the truth of the allegation; whereupon Brissot asked him could he deny having issued a decree of arrest against him, Brissot, during the massacres of September. Marat then appeared at the tribune, and was met by a shout of indignation. “I have many enemies in this assembly,” were his first words. “All! all!” cried the members from the benches. “I recall them to some degree of modesty,” said Marat, who claimed the idea of dictatorship as his own. He had proposed a dictator for the purpose of cutting off 500 heads, but with his legs chained to a log or *billot*, in order that he might limit his power to the extirpation of the one evil. Vergniaud, who succeeded the maniac at the tribune, turned the attention of the assembly to the really guilty. The committee of *surveillance* of the *commune* had issued a circular to the provinces, enjoining them to imitate the massacres of September. This was signed by Marat, Panis, Sergent, and the members of the department of Paris. The circular denounced the late assembly, whilst Robespierre had accused a portion of its members as having agreed to deliver up Paris to the Duke of Brunswick. This was the true dictatorship. The effect of Vergniaud’s speech was defeated by the reappearance of Marat, who concentrated all indignation upon himself, and who yet, by reading a recent article of his, promising to amend his ways, and pursue a more moderate line, escaped any immediate or personal condemnation.

These disputes created a flagrant breach between the convention and the Jacobin club. The latter expelled

Brissot and Fauchet; whilst the convention, in forming a committee to frame the new constitution, omitted every Jacobin name save that of Danton. In the last days of October the minister Roland presented to the assembly his report on the state of Paris, which exposed the corruption of the *commune*, and the disorders that had occurred from this and the weakness of the legislative assembly. The Robespierre party were plainly denounced in that report, and Marat, as one of it, who had dared to issue a writ of arrest against the home minister. The report reawakened the fierce dispute of parties. Robespierre exclaimed that no one durst accuse him to his face. "I dare!" cried Louvet; "I accuse you!" "And I second the accusation," said Rebecqui. But Louvet took the lead in framing the accusation. Louvet, the author of "Faublas," a discreditable novel, and editor of the "Sentinelle," a journal subsidised by Roland, was not the man who should have conducted the attack on Robespierre. He was full of fury and exaggeration, and did not carry with him the convictions or respect of the middle party. He took the ground of himself and the Girondists being thorough revolutionists, and of having fully participated in the events of the 10th of August, during which Robespierre and Marat lay hidden.

If the 10th of August, argued Louvet, was the act of the Gironde and of the people, the massacre of the 2nd of September was the work of neither the Gironde nor of the people, but of the committee of the *commune*, the Robespierre party, and their two or three hundred cut-throats. Marat was no doubt the chief agent of insurrection; but how could the chiefs deny complicity with him, when they furnished him with money for his placards, and paid him the 15,000 francs which Roland had refused? Robespierre, however, was the man who aimed at supremacy, who affected and called himself the most virtuous of citizens, and, as such, proclaimed his sole

CHAP.
 XL

right to represent the people! This was the old trick of all usurpers from Cæsar to Cromwell. Had he not had the audacity to come in the name of the *commune* to declare that if the assembly did not decree the dissolution of the council of department, he knew how to dissolve it with the tocsin? On hearing this accusation, Robespierre rushed to the tribune in a rage. But Louvet continued; and, comparing Robespierre's conduct to Sylla's, whose principle it was to get rid, by calumny and murder, of all eminent citizens that offuscated him, accused him of aiming at the dictatorship.

Robespierre in reply derided the idea of his aiming at the dictatorship—he, a poor man, without place, without an army. His sole arms were his tongue, his character, his views. If the Jacobins found these just, was he in fault? He did not deny having denounced the Girondists and the Brunswick plot, or of having been frequently violent and illegal. What was a revolution but a series of illegalities? He, however, denied all complicity with Marat, who had declared that he, Robespierre, wanted the audacity of a statesman.

Fierce and truthful as was the accusation, plausible and able as was the reply, the members of the convention were little open to eloquence or argument. The convictions and the policy of the majority were with the Girondists, which they had shown in many votes. But they feared the Jacobins, who were supported by the only force which then existed—the armed rabble. To fly against and provoke them by proscribing Robespierre would, they knew, be vain, and the convention passed to the order of the day. The Girondists should have deferred their accusation of Robespierre until they had a force to defend the independence of the convention. As yet they had none. The federals from the provinces—even those brought by the Girondists—were soon won over to fraternise with the Parisians, many surpassing them in fury. And this might also have proved the case

with the departmental guard which was now proposed. Had the national guard been maintained, as in the days of Lafayette, by the enrolment chiefly of the citizen class, and had a succession of its commanders opposed and defied the anarchists, the cause of order and humanity might have been preserved. But the legislative assembly, unfortunately, had so truckled to the sections and the *commune*, that it is very doubtful that at this period the convention and the Girondists could have put any effectual check upon the populace. The Girondists themselves did not despair of it, if the king had but aided them. But the only effort of Louis and his queen was to trip up and defeat the moderates, whilst intriguing with and trusting their future murderers.

This proved his ruin. There were but two lines of conduct for him to have adopted: first, abdication, the avowal of the impossibility for him to govern under existing circumstances; the other was to conform and be true to the constitution, to which he might have rallied all shades of moderates. The court did neither; it trusted to the broken reed of foreign assistance. How little this was to be depended on appeared when the Duke of Brunswick shrank from attacking the French at Valmy. If the Prussian government showed thus little ardour for his cause, the Austrians showed less. Instead of taking the lead, and sending a sufficient army to rescue a daughter of Austria and her husband, the distressed King of France, they furnished a weak contingent, and were more eager to oppose Prussia in Poland than support her on the Rhine. The Austrian general, Hohenlohe, had even sought conferences with Dumouriez. When, therefore, Lombard, a secretary of the Prussian king's, was taken in the attack of the baggage behind Valmy, and brought for a moment to the French headquarters, communications between the two commanders sprang up through him. On the 22nd, the Prussian colonel, Mansfelt, met Westermann, Dumouriez's lieu-

CHAP.
XL.

tenant. The King of Prussia, angry with the conduct of Austria with regard to Poland, merely asked Dumouriez that Louis the Sixteenth should be set free, and should represent the French nation, and that the latter abandon revolutionary propagandism. The decree of the convention abolishing royalty, an account of which then arrived, was the sole answer that the French commander could give.

Meantime the French army became reinforced, being so near its towns and capital; whilst the Prussians, removed from their basis of operations, felt the want of provisions of all kinds. Famine and anarchy had stripped the country of its produce. The lateness of the season, too, brought rains and obstructed roads. The Duke of Brunswick, who would not attack at Valmy, could still less attack when his enemies were augmented and his soldiers disheartened by privation and illness. The question then was, would Dumouriez allow them to retreat? He wanted Prussia to abandon the Austrian alliance, which the king was quite prepared to do if he could but save appearances. This last, however, was impossible, and the negotiations ended by the French allowing the Prussians to retreat without any definitive or separate treaty being concluded between the powers.*

Dumouriez paid a short visit to Paris in the middle of October to concert with the minister as to his project of conquering Belgium. He saw the state of parties in the convention, and foretold that the Girondists, although they had the majority for the moment, would infallibly lose it and decline. Could they have made a friend of Danton, he might have joined them against Marat and Robespierre, but the Girondists, Guadet especially, would not accept his alliance. During a fête given at the time to Dumouriez, at which Talma was present, Marat came to reproach the general with his ill-treat-

* Mémoires tirés des Papiers d'un Homme d'État. Sybel.

ment of a patriot. "You are the person they call Marat," said Dumouriez, and turned his back. The general opinion of the inaptness of the Girondists was confirmed by the choice of ministers. Danton resigned the justice department, it having been decreed that a deputy could not hold it. The war ministry also became vacant. The Girondists named to these places Garat and Pache, the latter of whom became their determined enemy, and the former but a lukewarm friend.

Dumouriez was right as to the Girondists. They knew not how to make use of their majority. They failed in their attack upon Robespierre, and, what was more unfortunate, failed also in their attempts to put down and renew the *commune*. Being in the possession of the ministry, indeed, they denied to the Hôtel de Ville the ample funds it clamoured for, declaring that it gave no account of what it had received and spent. Danton had procured them what he could, but seeing that any minister must be unpopular, he had withdrawn. Roland, indeed, drew up severe reports against the *commune*, as Buzot against the Septembrists. The convention applauded the reports, and voted committees to examine every proposition against the ultra-revolutionary; but when it came to the point of converting them into law, and thus declaring war upon the Jacobins, the convention, zealous in launching forth words, shrank from performing acts.

Still, though the Girondists had no strength to brave their opponents, they excluded them from power, influence, and administration, whilst the Jacobins had but the clubs and the people. To retain possession of these, it was necessary to keep alive the revolutionary excitement by offering to it a new object. And of these objects was one calculated to enlist every popular passion on its behalf, whilst the more generous or moderate sentiments of the Gironde opposed it. This proposal, which so completely answered the views of

CHAP.
XL.

the anarchists, was for the trial and punishment of Louis the Sixteenth. The passion of the mob was for blood, and the blood of the great was far more pleasant to them than any other. To gratify this envious and beastly craving was the sure road to popularity. The Mountain, therefore, proposed the trial of the unfortunate king.

Whilst some were actuated by such base views, others, both of the Mountain and the Plain, were struck by the danger of Louis the Sixteenth being left alive. In the assembly, and especially in the convention, no vote was irrevocable. The most solemn ones were reversed (*rapportés*) every day. Thuriot declared in the Jacobins that the aim of the Gironde was to bring the convention to annul the decree abolishing royalty. The sure, the sole way, then, to render such reaction impossible, was a vote of the convention condemning Louis to death. If such considerations influenced the Centre of the assembly, which dreaded above all alternatives a royalist reaction, the conviction that the spilling the blood of Louis on the scaffold would be an immense gratification to the mob prompted the leaders of the Mountain to satisfy them, and reap for themselves an increased amount of popularity.

If this movement of vindictiveness against Louis the Sixteenth had been produced by the fear of his resuming power, it ought to have been checked by the news which arrived precisely at the moment when the trial commenced. This was the victory of Jemmapes. The Prussians having agreed to evacuate Verdun and Longwy, as the price of being allowed to retreat unmolested, Dumouriez turned his attacks against the Austrians, with the view of conquering Belgium. The Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, after a vain bombardment of Lille, had collected 30,000 men in the neighbourhood of Mons. He had but 20,000 of them entrenched at Jemmapes when Dumouriez, on the 16th of November,

attacked him with superior forces; some say, though the French do not admit it, with double the number. After a fierce combat of from two to four hours, the French carried the fortified positions on the two wings, the Duke de Chartres, the future Louis Philippe, carrying Jemmapes, which lay in the centre. The troops under his command fell at first into confusion, but the young duke rallied them, brought them to the attack, and had the principal honour of securing the victory.*

The trial of Louis the Sixteenth may be considered to have commenced on the 6th of November, when Valazé read his report on the papers found in the Tuileries. From this it was evident that the king was in correspondence with the *émigrés* and Bouillé, and paid money largely to the partisans of the counter-revolution. The facts divulged in this report might have had more influence had they not been followed by another of Bazire, which attributed a portion of the massacres of September to the royalists, and the murder of the prisoners at the Orangerie of Versailles to the followers of the queen! Mailhé followed with another report on the best mode of dealing with the accused. He undertook to refute the objection that the king was declared inviolable by the constitution. It would be idle to enumerate the sophisms by which this was done. Mailhé's conclusion was the proposal of a decree, ordering that Louis the Sixteenth should be tried by the convention. The discussion of this motion lasted many days. Pétion opened it by a speech as regicide as any of the Mountain could have desired. Tom Paine propounded the opinion that Louis the Sixteenth ought to be tried and punished as one of those public robbers called kings. Robespierre declared that there was no occasion for a trial at all. The convention was composed of statesmen, not judges, he said. What was demanded

* Dumouriez, Mémoires. Sybel, &c.

CHAP.
XL.

of them was not a sentence, but a measure of public safety. What was wanted was not an act of justice, but of policy; to engrain in people's breasts the contempt of royalty, and strike royalists with stupor. To put Louis on his trial is to suppose the possibility of his being innocent; if so, what had become of the revolution? The nation, having been forced to employ its rights of insurrection, relapsed into a state of nature with regard to its tyrant. St. Just was of the same opinion as Robespierre, and was for immolating the king at once. Notwithstanding this, the convention decreed that on the 3rd of December Louis the Sixteenth should be tried by itself.

On the 11th the king was brought to the bar of the convention, a fresh discovery of papers at the Tuileries having in the meantime augmented the irritation of the people against him. When almost a prisoner in his palace, Louis had caused an iron safe to be made, and built up in the wall by a locksmith, for the purpose of keeping his private papers. The locksmith now divulged the secret. Roland, the home minister, opened it, and took away the papers. Amongst them was the correspondence of Mirabeau, and other members of former assemblies, with the king. The receipt of sums of money by the former was here duly recorded. And the bust of the orator in the assembly was accordingly veiled, whilst it was flung down at the Jacobins, and his remains ordered to be removed from the Pantheon. There was nothing found against the Gironde, but its enemies observed that, had there been any such documents, Roland might have suppressed them.

When Louis was about to appear at the bar of the assembly, its president, Bazire, seemed equally afraid of the tribunes insulting, and of the members showing too much respect. He proposed that they should affect to be careless enough to discuss some other question when he arrived. The king's presence dispelled all fear of

insult. Unshaven, depressed, and resigned to all humiliation, the aspect of the fallen monarch excited commiseration even in the breast of Marat. Kept for a long time standing, the convention had at length consideration enough to allow Louis a chair. The king had not been warned of the intention to interrogate him, and his nature and habits were such as to require previous consideration for every step he took. He listened with patience and impassibility to the rigmarole act of accusation, enumerating what were stated as his crimes. His calling the states-general was the first, or at least the inevitable embarrassments that ensued upon a measure so unusual.

Every untoward event and government act before and after his coming to Paris was laid to the charge of the king, who either shrugged his shoulders, said he knew nothing about it, or declared that his ministers, not he, were responsible. Even his attempts to remove from the Tuileries to St. Cloud in the summer was styled a crime. "That is absurd," observed the monarch. The charges of having conspired against the cause of the country after the establishment of the constitution, of having bribed its leaders, communicated with the royalists, and paid many of them, was more serious, especially when supported by the documents found in the iron safe. Louis, fearing there were documents which might implicate others, took the course of denying any cognisance of them—an artifice which, however prudent in a common person, ill became the dignity and position even of a fallen sovereign. "I was so embarrassed and surprised," afterwards observed Louis, "that I knew not what to say."

Louis was, indeed, the man of domestic life more than the king. In the most palmy days of royalty he could have done little more than evince that desire which always animated him to do good, without the intelligence to see how it was to be done, or the energy to

CHAP.
XL.

execute. The sceptre had broken in his hands, and he had flung away the fragments without regret, at least for himself. Since his immurement in the Temple he had lived solely for his family or with them, teaching his infant son, playing with him, and trying to console rather than aggravate the grief of his attached wife and sister. From the very day of their getting him into their power, the ruffians of the Paris *commune* had subjected the unfortunate monarch and his family to every kind of indignity they could invent—shut him and them up in a narrow tower, set the most brutal guardians they could find to watch over, to terrify, and torment them. Just before his compulsory appearance at the bar of the convention, he was deprived of the company of his little son, and of communication with the rest of his family. He was to be *au secret*. Previous to this the entire family had been deprived of all their little trinkets and keepsakes, under pretence of their being allowed no cutting instruments. The star was torn from the coat of the king; even the faithful valet was made to suffer indignities for the crime of being attached to him. Fiends in human shape, the Héberts, the Chaumettes, the Simons, watched and surrounded them. No wonder that so helpless a being as a monarch left to himself was embarrassed when brought unexpectedly to the bar of the assembly to be accused; yet he showed no irritation against his gaolers. Having eaten nothing since morning, he merely begged a bit of bread of Chaumette, and satisfied the cravings of hunger as might the humblest inmate of a prison.

Informed of his approaching trial, Louis demanded to be aided by counsel. In despite of Chabot, Marat, and consorts, the demand was granted. Louis chose Target and Tronchet. The latter alone accepted. Malesherbes offered his services. "Twice called to the councils," wrote he, "of him who was my master, at a time when such functions were the aim of everyone's ambition, I

owe him the same service now, even if it be one of danger." De Sèze, the young lawyer who had successfully defended Besenval, was chosen instead of Target. He and Malesherbes conducted the king's defence. The first visit of the aged minister to the fallen monarch in his solitary prison was in itself a trial. They both burst into tears. Malesherbes had last parted with the monarch in the pride of power at Versailles.*

On the 26th of December Louis again appeared at the bar of the assembly. De Sèze spoke his defence, to which the king added but one word—a protest against the accusation of his having spilled blood. When he had withdrawn, some one having demanded the printing of the defence previous to judgment, Bazire, for the Left, cried out for no delay, and for proceeding to instant judgment. Lanjuinais increased the storm, not merely by opposing this, but demanding that all which had been done should be cancelled. "Where is the justice," exclaimed he, "of having Louis tried by the conspirators of the 10th of August, who thus enact the parts of accusers, juries, judges, and executioners?" This was followed by proposals of adjournment; but Couthon moved and carried a motion declaring that the debate was open, and was to be continued.

The desire of the Gironde was to save the king's life; but how to effect that object? To vote his acquittal was to do so in a small minority; for if the convention had passed such a vote, a popular commotion like that of the 10th of August, now against the convention, was inevitable. Mountain and Gironde knew this, and it was the great encouragement to the former. To avoid such extremity, and save the king's life by some subterfuge, which the members of the Plain could be got to support, was the only feasible way of the Gironde obtaining its object. The greater number of the party, therefore, were for voting the death of the monarch, and

* Journal de Malesherbes; Clery; Memoirs of Garat, and Prudhomme.

CHAP.
XL.

then making an appeal to the people, which, from the idea of the general moderation of the provinces, would reverse the decision of the convention.

Salles proposed, Buzot developed, the plan of an appeal to the people. Robespierre combated it with force, and not without reason. It was in fact civil war, setting the two parties throughout all France in presence and collision. Vergniaud supported the appeal, and was obliged to employ for it an argument which the more extreme republicans might have gloried in—the necessity of consulting the people on every important act. This very much weakened the effect of his eloquence. He derided the fears of civil war; but foreign war, the hostility of Europe, he depicted as serious, and certain to be rendered more so by the immolation of Louis. “Should the reverses of war be aggravated, the finances be exhausted, misery increased, take care that, even in the midst of its victories, France may not come to resemble Egypt, with the gigantic monuments that tell of its power, but which, when one enters them, turn out to be nothing but tombs.”

Vergniaud continued—“You have heard here and elsewhere men exclaiming with rage, ‘If bread is dear, if corn is scarce, if our armies are unsupplied, the cause is in the Temple; if indigence is to be found in every rank, the cause is in the Temple.’ Yet the people who utter this know very well that the famine, misery, and defeat have other causes. What, then, are their projects? These men tell us that a new revolution is required, since the convention has merely succeeded to the tyranny of Louis, and that the republic wants a *defender* and a *chief*. What is to prevent these men, when Louis shall be no more, from crying, that, if bread is dear, the cause is in the convention; if corn is scarce and the armies ill-supplied, the cause is in the convention? In the seditions and tribulations that must ensue, the aristocrats of course will join, and we shall have new tempests and

massacres of September; and then what is to become of Paris, enslaved by a handful of brigands? Who would survive in it, or who live here? Industry, resources, means of existence—all would disappear. Then go and ask bread of those who brought you to this. If you do, they will tell you to seek in the quarries, amidst the bloody remains of the victims heaped there, which will furnish the fit and only food for such a people.”

Vergniaud's speech, which sought to obtain the appeal to the people by denouncing the views and policy of the extreme party, neither persuaded nor pleased the Plain, which was for not submitting to the yoke, yet not exciting the resentment, of the Mountain. Barère represented this middle party, and spoke its sentiments and its rules of conduct. These were against the appeal, and were fatal to Louis. The Gironde had managed unskilfully. Could they have deferred the judgment of the king until they had put down the *commune*, elected an energetic mayor, and obtained, either from the national guard or from the proposed provincial one, a force capable of resisting an insurrection of the faubourgs, then the Plain would have gone with them in saving the king. Amongst the arguments adduced in favour of Louis was the menacing attitude of foreign powers. Spain offered expressly to make peace if the French monarch were leniently dealt with—a proposal that awakened the ire rather than the humanity of the assembly. The suspicious conduct of the English government in augmenting its naval force and empowering the police to eject foreigners was pointed out. Barère dismissed all such considerations by observing that war with England and with all other powers was inevitable. Monarchies could not forgive or live in peace with republics.

The discussion was closed on the 7th. The 14th was fixed for the vote. In the intervening week the letter which the Girondists had written to Boze, the

CHAP.
 XL

painter, counselling Louis the Sixteenth previous to the insurrection, was disclosed and flung in their teeth. It called forth eloquent disclaimers, but showed how ineffectual their struggle was likely to prove against the anarchists. Fonfrède fixed the order of the questions to be put to the vote on the 14th. They were these:—

Is the king guilty?

Shall the people be called to ratify the sentence?

What is to be the penalty?

The members of the assembly were 749, of whom 28 were absent. Of the 721 present, 683 voted the king guilty. On the question of the appeal to the people in their primary assemblies, there were 281 votes for and 425 against. The question of the punishment was then put. There were 361 votes for death, 286 for imprisonment or banishment, 46 for death with *sursis* or reprieve, and 26 for death with reprieve to be examined by the assembly. These last numbers, added to the 286, give but a majority of three votes for immediate execution. Had it been ruled that two-thirds, or more than a simple majority, were requisite for condemnation, the king would not have been condemned to death. More firmness on the part of the Gironde, therefore, might have saved the nation from the crime of spilling the blood of a mild, a humane, a virtuous, and a well-intentioned king, from mere motives of political and personal expediency. When the vote was reconsidered the Girondists withdrew the condition of a *sursis*, and added their votes to those for immediate death. This gave a majority of 21. It sealed the fate of Louis, and, we may add, of all the parties who combined from weakness or malevolence to condemn the king.

An honourable and courageous vote was that of Condorcet, who voted for detention or exile. Salles, Sillery, Rabaud, Boissy d'Anglas, Lanjuinais, Dussaulx, Kersaint, voted with him. The rest followed the ex-

ample of Vergniaud. Camille Desmoulins was far from showing the first quality of a man of letters, humanity. His proposal respecting the king's execution was barbarous. Thomas Paine had uttered a truculent sentence against the unfortunate monarch, but in the last actual days more humane considerations prevailed with him, and he expostulated with the convention for committing an act of vengeance, not justice. "Do not give," said he, "to the English despot the pleasure of seeing that prince perish on the scaffold who aided to break the chains of America."*

Garat, who succeeded Danton in the ministry of justice, and who lived to write his reminiscences under the restoration, signified the sentence to Louis the Sixteenth. The monarch, in reply, demanded three days for religious preparation, and a confessor that he should name. He asked also permission to see his family, and to be undisturbed by the importunities and severe watch set upon him.

If Marat himself was affected by the noble aspect of Louis at the bar of the convention, Hébert, the gross and sanguinary Père Duchesne, was equally struck by his demeanour on the present occasion. "The nobleness," wrote he, "and dignity of his attitude and his words drew from me tears of rage." He came to gratify his contempt as well as hatred, but could not. Finding nought to cater to his hatred of royalty, Hébert contrived to indulge his equal hatred of the priesthood. "Since the constitutional priests of the convention," said he, "have condemned the king to death, let us select two of them to conduct him to the scaffold." It was to one of these priests that Louis, going to execution, sought to give his will. Roux was his name. The fellow refused to take it, saying, "This is not my business. I have but to conduct you to the scaffold."

When the king learned that he was to die on the

* Histoire Parl.

CHAP.
XL.

morrow, he asked for his family, which ever since the commencement of his trial he had not seen. Who shall describe the embraces and the sobs of the unhappy family which met for the last time? On parting, Louis promised to see them on the morrow, with the purpose of not subjecting them or himself to such a trial. Louis slept calmly. Long before dawn the Abbé Edgeworth, the confessor whom he had chosen, and who had passed the night in the royal prison, performed mass for the illustrious victim. At nine in the morning Santerre came to conduct him to the scaffold. And Louis, casting a last look at the gloomy tower which still immured his family, entered the carriage. The journey from the Temple to the Place Louis Quinze lasted an hour, and was marked by silence. An overwhelming force was mustered to prevent any attempt at rescue. Louis dismounted at the foot of the scaffold, erected towards the entrance of the Champs Élysées. He stripped himself, and showed repugnance at the attempt of the executioner to bind his hands. "It is but another point of resemblance with the Saviour," said the confessor. Louis suffered it, mounted the scaffold, and, advancing to the side, told the people that he died innocent, and prayed that his blood might not fall upon France. The drums immediately interrupted him. As the axe fell, the Abbé Edgeworth exclaimed, "Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!"

There is believed by some to have been a plan for the rescue of Louis at the time of his execution. It is natural to suppose that many must have meditated such an enterprise; for the government and the convention feared it. The royalists were, however, too isolated. One of them, named De Paris, aware how impossible it was to save the king, entered a restaurant of the Palais Royal, and, finding Lepelletier de Saint Fargeau, who had just voted the king's death, plunged his sword into his body. He hoped to do the same by the Duke of

Orleans, who had not shrunk from voting the death of Louis the Sixteenth. A decree for exiling the duke, proposed by the Gironde, was with difficulty negatived by his friends of the Mountain. Philip thus escaped exile and the assassin's knife, to perish in the mode which best befitted the man of blood.

When the convention had offered up to its fears and principles the sacrifice of the king, it was relieved of a great weight, and felt as if it had then first secured the plenitude of power. Several members, even such as Sieyès, who sat paralysed and mute, became animated by supreme activity. And not only the great tasks of internal transformation and foreign conquest were strenuously undertaken, but the most speculative were not neglected. Condorcet drew up his report upon the new constitution. A committee laboured at concocting a code, the penal portion of which came before the assembly in these days, and was remarkable by the insertion of what it considered a new punishment, the *cachot*, or consignment of prisoners to chains and perpetual darkness. As usual, the codifiers thought they were producing something new, whereas the said *cachot*, being intended for crimes against the republic, was merely the Bastille and its *régime* that the conventionalists were renewing and exaggerating. In the month of June Robespierre read to the assembly a plan of public education. It was quite Spartiate; took children from the parent at five years of age to be fed and reared, rich and poor in common, and taught reading, writing, and republicanism. This carrying off children at five was to be compulsory, at least after a delay of five years, allowed for the republic to acquire strength and the people to lose their objection to its tyranny.

These were but the superfluities of tyranny; its essence, which, in the first years of the republic, lay in frightening away the rich, and taking the property both of those who stayed and those who fled, of that class as

CHAP.
XL.

well as the clergy, now took another shape, that of satisfying public wants and private greeds by foreign conquest. In 1791, the Girondists had clamoured for war as a vent for revolutionary passions. The Jacobins opposed it, but soon altered their opinions when Belgium was overrun by French armies, and when French agents followed these to enforce a worse system of spoliation than had prevailed even in France. Pache, the new war minister, though named by Roland, made himself the tool of the Jacobins, and caused all their creatures to be elected commissioners and officers of war and the commissariat. They plundered and revolutionised Belgium, to the disgust of Dumouriez, obtaining a decree in December for the confiscation of all church and noble property in that country; whilst the native authorities were superseded by French commissaries and regenerationists. Cambon represented this as the best way of utilising the French assignats, giving them more extended circulation and guarantee in the subdued countries. Belgium was not the only conquest of France. Savoy and Nice had become theirs as well as Mayence and many German districts. To all were to be applied the same system of robbery and regeneration, in the success of which the convention was so exultant, that on the 15th of November it declared itself ready to offer its alliance, that is, its supremacy, to all countries of which the people, that is, the poor, would have recourse to it, rejecting the old-fashioned authority of church and king or landed proprietors. The system of the convention was thus war—perpetual war; for as it advanced and conquered, it could not but come in contact with other neighbours and other people, of which certain classes must desire to profit by revolution. War, too, offered the pretext to the convention to prolong and extend its dictatorial system and powers, whilst it kept more and more remote that which could alone put it down—the army.

The states of Europe could not but be alarmed at such policy and such pretensions. No statesman had been more forbearing or more desirous of being at peace with the republicans than Pitt. Nor would he have quarrelled with their theories, however atrocious. But their armies already were overturning the old states of Europe, and their acts declared their contempt for old treaties and stipulations. No sooner were they masters of Antwerp than they declared the Scheldt open, that fertile cause of war and subject of conditions and provisos with the Dutch. Dumouriez threatened Holland itself, for he, too, had need of conquest in order to keep up his reputation and his command. England, alarmed at the same time by clubs formed throughout it on French principles, and propagating French doctrines, began to arm, and obtained from parliament greater power over foreigners. After Louis's death, it dismissed the French ambassador, Chauvelin. On the 1st of February the convention replied by declaring war.

The most fatal and most lasting of the legislative acts of the convention was the measure which it now enacted for flinging its armed youth upon Europe. Hitherto it had been enabled to complete its armies by volunteers who came from every department; the fact being, that other profession or livelihood for earners had become impossible, save the military. This alone procured advancement, prospects, and glory, as well as subsistence. And yet the levies thus procured were found or thought to be insufficient. In February the convention decreed that all males from 18 to 40 were under requisition, that is, at its disposal. And they forthwith ordered the levy of 300,000 men, each department to furnish its quota. Such was the origin of those large armies, raised, not by recruiting, but by conscription, which Napoleon received from the convention, and which, adopting and exaggerating himself, he forced upon the adoption of the other states of Europe. This, after a long lapse of

CHAP.
XL.

years, did not produce that universal and extended domination which the French looked to. But it saddled upon them, and upon the rest of the world, a military organisation with which free institutions are incompatible, and are only interrupted at intervals by those terrible popular insurrections which no force can resist for the moment, but which pass away and produce nothing, owing to the elements of anarchy and weakness which they inevitably develop.

To feed or pay such enormous armies at home would have been impossible under the existing state of famine, with assignats for the only revenue, and these at a ruinous discount. But thrown forth upon a foreign soil, the agents of the convention put in practice the system of requisition, that is, buying up all the produce of the country at the price they liked to pay, and distributing it to the armies. This, nothing less than confiscation to the state of the whole produce of the country, was first applied in Belgium, and became afterwards the system in France itself; the Montagnards, as soon as they got completely the upper hand, decreeing the *maximum*, that is, a price beyond which nothing could be sold, a law at the same time forbidding monopoly in the hands of persons and communities, and the seizure of all by government for state purposes, and at state prices.

The infuriated part of the nation, which was bent on the complete subversion of society, and giving to the poor and the ignorant the place of the intelligent and the rich, found a formidable obstacle to their designs in the members of the Gironde. These still commanded a majority in the convention, except upon questions and in moments when the public mind was excited, and people armed and menacing to do violence to the legislature that should oppose it. If the city was tranquil, and its population unexcited, then the convention implicitly obeyed the suggestions of the Gironde. But the

moment the popular storm arose and threatened, the trembling members of the Centre took refuge under the wings of the Mountain, and left its antagonists forsaken and powerless.

Still the Gironde held the ministry, formed the executive, and stopped most of the channels through which the public money had flowed in to the *caisse* of the *commune* and into the hands of the professional insurrectionists. The municipality of Paris confessed to be indebted nearly four millions of livres, and demanded to be allowed to levy a tax on the rich to meet it. Although Roland resigned in January, still the general influence of the Gironde prevailed, especially in financial matters; and the fury of the anarchists was directed against them. In the combat of the press, too, the Gironde had the advantage. Such writers as Brissot might have little influence over the mob, which found the frenzied apostrophes of Marat, or the indecent language of Hébert, more to their taste. But the anarchist members of the convention writhed beneath the lash of their antagonists; and Duhem proposed, in consequence, to render the profession of journalist and the post of deputy incompatible. This advantage and superiority were held by the Girondists till the first days of March, in which the war in Belgium took a new turn, and aroused the fears and passions of all men.

Dumouriez had made himself master of Belgium, from Antwerp to Aix-la-Chapelle, in the last months of the preceding year. Administrator as well as general, he sought to respect the independence of the Belgians, and so reconcile them to the French. But in the latter end of December the commissaries of the convention arrived to confiscate the property of nobles and clergy, supersede the municipal government of the wealthy citizens by that of the *sans-culottes*, and at the same time to melt the church plate and replace the coin by assignats. Dumouriez came to Paris in January, hoping to be

CHAP.
XL.

instrumental in saving the king. He found it difficult to preserve his own influence and command. He renewed his intimacy with Danton, and found that the demagogue shared in his disgust at the sanguinary and anarchic tendencies of the time. Danton was indeed ready to grasp at any solid means or support for stemming the revolutionary current. He tried more than once the Girondists, who rejected his alliance. Dumouriez declared that the only mode of putting down the anarchists was the intervention of a victorious general with an army attached to him. Danton admitted it. But Valmy and Jemmapes were not enough. Dumouriez proposed to add to his laurels by the conquest of Holland; then consolidating and augmenting his army by Belgian levies, and concluding a truce with England and with Austria, march on the convention. His original purpose was no doubt to place an Orleans prince, the Duke de Chartres perhaps, on the throne; but when, for the furtherance of his plan, he entered into negotiations with the Austrians, these compelled him to set aside Orleans and agree to proclaim Louis the Sixteenth king.* The scheme was not displeasing to Danton, who, with Lacroix, was sent commissary of the convention to the army in Belgium.

Borrowing 1,200,000 florins of the Antwerp merchants, Dumouriez set out on the 22nd of February with some 10,000 or 12,000 men to conquer Holland. He met with slight resistance, captured Breda and Gertruydenberg, blocking Bergen-op-Zoom, and advanced to Moerdyke, where his first difficulty and delay awaited, in the broad canal that he must pass. It was a mad scheme to hope to cross the many rivers of the region at their broadest part at a time when the Dutch were far from intimidated, and when France was threatened

* See Sybel, and Miacowski's Roux, as well as Dumouriez's Memoirs, and those of Mad. de Genlis.

by the most formidable coalition that had ever assailed it. Its own vaunts and threats had given strength and vigour to this coalition. The inroad of Custine into Germany, his capture and plunder of Frankfort, and retreat over the Rhine, after having put in practice all the spoliatory and propagandist policy of the convention, stirred up the states of the empire, as well as Austria, which resolved no longer to trust the defence of Europe against France to the timidity and tergiversations of Prussian generals. Upwards of 100,000 Austrian troops were prepared to operate in Belgium under the Prince of Coburg, and about 50,000 on the Upper Rhine.* The French were scarcely inferior in number, but were scattered—the greater portion under Valence being engaged in the siege of Maestricht and Venloo, the rest under Miranda and Harville along the Meuse. It was not the troops that the French wanted, but the eye of a commander-in-chief, which post Dumouriez had desired to win after that success which was necessary to his political projects. He was soon aroused from his dream by news of the Austrian invasion of Belgium, and by the peremptory recall of the convention. Coburg with 50,000 men had passed the Meuse, and entered Maestricht. Miranda and Valence abandoned the defence of the river, and fell back upon Louvain and Tournay. From Aix there had been a complete rout, which Lacroix hastened to announce to the convention. On the 13th of March Dumouriez was back at Louvain, having retreated to Antwerp with a portion of his expeditionary force.

On the 15th the two armies encountered each other near Tirlemont. Neerwinden, the principal village, occupied by the Austrians, gives its name to the battle. The numbers were fully equal—40,000 or 50,000 of a side. The French attacked the Austrians, led on by

* Sybel, from the imperial despatches.

CHAP.
 XL.

Valence on the right, and by the Duke de Chartres in the centre. The combat was obstinate and prolonged between these and the Austrians. Several of the villages were taken and retaken. On the left, Miranda was opposed to the young Archduke Charles, with more volunteers than experienced troops under his command. These gave way after a time, on which the archduke, by frequent charges of cavalry, completed their defeat. Miranda, unable to rally them, continued with them his retreat to Tirlemont.*

On the field of Neerwinden all Dumouriez's schemes evaporated. His army not only retreated from Belgium, but did so by means of a secret accord with the Austrians. The purpose of the general was to march on Paris, and put down the Jacobins. He scarcely concealed it. He had avowed his enmity to them in a letter to the convention, and did not conceal it in his interview with the commissaries sent down to him by that assembly. Nor did he shrink from informing them of his project to replace the convention by the presidents of districts; but already the garrisons of Lille and Valenciennes disowned his authority. Four new commissaries of the convention, with Camus at their head, and accompanied by Beurnonville, the war minister, soon made their appearance, and summoned the general to accompany them to Paris. Their language was in the wheedling style of those emissaries of the Porte who come with a smile on their face and a bowstring in their hands. The orders of the convention were to get rid of Dumouriez in any way. The general was deaf to their wheedling and to their threats; and when Camus announced his deposition from command, he ordered his German hussars to arrest the commissaries, with Beurnonville, and convey them to the Austrian head-quarters. He subsequently bestirred himself to

* Memoirs of Dumouriez, Sybel. Report of Miranda. Toulangeon.

little purpose. His soldiers showed their distrust. On one occasion, marching with a corps of volunteers, they rushed to capture him; and, when he fled, fired, killing several of his suite. Even after this he returned into his own camp; it was only, however, to take a final flight, and with the future Louis Philippe and some friends seek refuge in the Prince of Coburg's tent.*

The crossing of the Meuse by the Austrians, and the sudden reconquest of Belgium, had the same effect, at the commencement of March 1793, as the capture of Longwy and Vendôme by the Prussians caused in the previous year. The capital, too, was equally prepared for revolutionary excitement. Every kind of provision in Paris had become dearer and scarcer in the course of February. Soap and groceries could only be purchased by the rich. The price of bread doubled, according to Prudhomme. "Hang a few grocers at their own doors" was the remark of Marat in his print. The populace took up the idea, and there was an *émeute* against the poor grocers on the 25th of February. People took from them what they pleased. Santerre, the commander of the only armed force, was absent. Whilst the citizens were complaining of this disorder, news arrived of far worse at Lyons. Civil war had broken out there. The Girondists and Montagnards struggled, provoked, and slaughtered each other. In the midst of this the commissary Lacroix, who had witnessed the irruption of the Austrians into Belgium, reported what he had seen to the convention, and denounced the officers, so many of whom were absent at the moment of attack. Whilst the sympathies of Barère and Danton were still for Dumouriez, Marat denounced him as a traitor. As to Robespierre, he was overflowing with denunciations, and quite as rabid as Marat. The foremost demands of the ultra-revolutionists was for a

* Ibid., and Hardenberg.

CHAP.
XL.

revolutionary tribunal. It is difficult to say what connection this had with the defence of the country, except that when the enemy advanced these leaders of the Paris insurrection sought to perform their share of the campaign by brutally massacring their fellow-citizens at home. Chaumette, in the name of the *commune*, demanded a revolutionary tribunal; Robespierre recommended a new and more vigorous executive. The Gironde protested loudly against the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal, judging without appeal. Danton's advice to the convention, "to be terrible, in order to dispense with the people being so," had its influence. He certainly feared a renewal of the massacres of September, and hoped to prevent this by the establishment of a tribunal.

Still there was reluctance on the part of the convention to go the lengths of the Montagnards, and to pass this revolutionary measure with the fulness demanded. The necessity was thus felt of getting up a popular insurrection to intimidate the assembly, if not purge it of those members who opposed the anarchists. As usual, the only leaders to which the movement can be traced were mean and disreputable ruffians—Varlet and Defieux, stump-orators, as the Americans say; Lazowski, a Pole; Fournier, a leading Septembrist. That such men as these, with their kindred spirits in the sections, should have clamoured for the dethronement and death of the king, can be understood. He represented the monarchy, and concentrated in himself and in his name the old system and abuses of government. To destroy Louis was to set a seal upon the revolution. But the members of the Gironde, what was the cause of their inveteracy against them? They had voted the appeal to the people on the king's trial, denounced the massacres, and obstructed somewhat the supply of funds to the *commune*. But these were not sufficient causes for demanding the expulsion of the Gironde from the

assembly, and the sections demanding their heads. Such demands could only have been made at the suggestion of the anarchists of the assembly, who writhed under the eloquence of Vergniaud and the lash of Brissot. The truth was that, whilst former movements were directed against superiority of birth, of state, of wealth, the proscription of the Gironde was the outburst of mediocrity against genius, and of ignorance against education. The Mountain, indeed, confessed it. The bitterest reproach that Marat could make to the men whom he proposed to murder was, they were statesmen.*

Such were the feelings which prompted Marat and Robespierre to get rid of the Girondists. In order to do so, they fanned and excited every revolutionary passion, hoisted the black flag, declared invasion imminent, and opened recruiting-booths in every square. The fuss and panic were openly pooh-poohed by Brissot and the Girondists, who declared it was got up for the purpose of anarchy, not defence. This maddened the anarchists, so that on the night of the 8th they openly declared in the Jacobin club their purpose of marching on the convention, and slaying the Girondists. The purpose was so well understood that the women, who were regularly paid by the anarchists for filling the galleries of the convention, were bidden to absent themselves on the occasion. The Girondists got wind, however, of what was intended, and stayed away from the morning sitting of the convention of the 9th.

That assembly was evidently alarmed at the threats and intended movements of the sections, the clubs, and the populace. Its wish was to propitiate them and prevent a movement; and the principal Girondists, except Lanjuinais, being absent, the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal, judging without appeal, was decreed. This probably averted for the moment the

* "Tout ce qui parlait d'ordre parlait des lois était ridiculisé comme était flétri comme royaliste, tout ce qui homme d'état." — Thibaudeau.

CHAP.
XL.

designs of the anarchists from the convention. They turned their fury, however, against the Girondist press. In the evening they forced their way into the establishment of Gorsas, a deputy, and printer of Brissot's "*Patriote*," and subsequently into that of Fievée, both of which they completely devastated and destroyed. Gorsas himself escaped with difficulty. The convention had resumed its sitting in the evening when word was brought of these acts of violence. The panic of the morning still depressed them. No one raised his voice against the outrages; on the contrary, a decree was passed in accordance with them, declaring that the functions of deputy were incompatible with the profession of journalist. This was the expulsion of Gorsas after his presses had been burnt. The decree, however, also ejected Marat; and this demagogue, in consequence, declared against the movement, and denounced Fournier, with his fellow-Mountaineers in the sections.*

It was not Marat alone who opposed these innovations, but Santerre, and they proposed replacing him by Fournier. Thus the old batch of the Septembrists opposed the new one, which wished to tread in their steps; and Varlet and Deffieux, when they strove to get up a popular movement on the 10th, found themselves baffled. Although they hawked about a petition for prosecuting the Girondins, for which they alleged the sanction of the Jacobins, the authority of the document was disputed. The *commune* refused to close the barriers at their demand, and sent round an address to the sections against the insurrectionists. These accordingly failed of their aim so far as to find it impossible to march upon the convention, or at least to penetrate into it and slaughter the Girondists as they intended.

But although the vulgar instruments of trouble thus failed, and the murderers were for a time balked of

* Barère denounced Fournier as chief of the Orleans plot.

their victims, the leaders fully profited by the *émeute*. The convention, terrorised, shook off the influence of the Gironde altogether, and gave itself for an entire sitting to the dictation of the Mountain. Robespierre, in his absurd but popular language, declared that all their reverses in Flanders were owing to the laxity in punishing traitors. The remedy which he proposed was, the revolutionary tribunal first, and then a complete change in the system and organisation of the government. To concentrate it in the convention or in a committee of its members was his aim. Vergniaud protested against what would be worse than the inquisition at Venice. "Give us the tribunal," exclaimed Amar, "or you shall have an insurrection." Still the Plain hesitated. Cambacérés and Barère both objected at first to the tribunal. To allay their fears Billaud proposed that there should be a jury annexed to it, but that it should be named by the sections. "By the departments, rather," exclaimed Fonfrède. It was decreed that both judge and jury should be named by the convention—and, more important still, that every act of accusation should be submitted and consented to by a committee of the convention.* The revolutionary tribunal thus seemed harmless, but the anarchists knew well that once they obtained the principle, they could soon get rid of the constitutional fetters that bound it. This, indeed, was soon proved, for on the 8th of April the revolutionary tribunal was allowed to prosecute without the intervention of the committee, except in the case of deputies. What gave the Jacobins power to carry their measure without opposition was undoubtedly the panic occasioned by the loss of the battle of Neerwinden and the defection of Dumouriez. Neither Danton nor yet the Centre had a word to say in support of moderation, lest they should be accused of connivance with the traitors. Dumouriez's defection

* That confiscation followed condemnation was also voted.

CHAP.
XL.

was the more serious from the Duke de Chartres having fled with him, and the suspicion being thus excited that his plan had been to enthrone the family of Orleans. Barère accused Fournier the American of having had no other object in the insurrectionary movements of March.

If the establishment of the revolutionary tribunal was necessary to satisfy the people's craving for blood, the reorganisation of the executive was most at heart with the Mountain. To drive the Gironde from it and occupy it themselves was the object of the Jacobins. Their ministry was already formed—Danton, foreign affairs; Dubois Crancé, war; Fabre, home; Collot d'Herbois, finance; Bon St. André, marine. But Robespierre more wisely deprecated the word and the thing ministry as unpopular. He was, indeed, for preserving ministers as screens, but real power he purposed to lodge in the hands of a committee. This, the *comité de salut public*, was decreed on the 30th of March, Cambacérés at the same time completing revolutionary laws by establishing that the vote declaring any one *hors la loi* was a condemnation to death.

On the 6th of April the committee of public safety was elected, the members being Barère, Cambon, Treillard, Danton, Delacroix, Debry, Guyton, Delmas, and Bréard. The selection speaks the inclination of the Centre, which formed the majority of the assembly. Robespierre was not elected, nor any violent member of the Mountain. The Girondists were at the same time set aside as unpopular. Danton, who had in some degree favoured Dumouriez, was the leading spirit; and Robespierre in pressing the election of the committee of public safety had promoted an enemy and a rival.

But if the ultra-revolutionists were thus disappointed in getting possession of the executive committee, they took efficient steps to render their faction powerful in the provinces. Almost all the commissaries of the

convention sent thither belonged to the Mountain, the Girondists fearing to lose the majority by absenting themselves. The first act of these commissaries was to depose the moderate municipalities and magistrates in every town, and substitute for them fierce Jacobins. This was not effected without exciting resistance.

At Orleans the exasperated citizens fell upon the commissary, and left him for dead; he survived, however, and the vengeance which he took may be imagined. At Lyons the task of the Montagnards was still more difficult. They came to introduce the principles of war to the rich, and government by the beggars, into a town of capitalists and manufacturers. In support of such doctrines the Jacobins could appeal but to the workmen; but by the very act of their starting up to insurrection their means of livelihood were gone. Spoliation and a tax on the rich could alone supply their daily earnings. But the rich themselves became poor by the suspension of industry and works; hence mutual recriminations, quarrels, and the reduction of humanity to the brute state—a struggle to devour or avoid being devoured. Such was the inevitable result of the principles of the convention. The first struggle took place at Lyons, in February; the arrival of a commissary from the capital turned the scale in favour of the Jacobins. What was the result of this ascendancy may be supposed from the fact that the president, Chalier, was in every respect a second Marat.

But whilst the contest between the ultra-revolutionists and the more moderate and humane was thus carried on, without as yet a certainty in whose favour it would terminate, there sprang up, not indeed a new party, but one thought to be defunct, whose resuscitation and successes did not, indeed, procure its own final triumph, yet proved the ruin of the Girondists. This was the party of the royalists. Their abandonment of the king and his cause in 1789 save by futile gatherings

CHAP.
XL

on the frontier, had covered them with contempt. From this, at least, the peasantry of La Vendée freed them. The remote region between the Loire and the sea, into which Protestantism had once penetrated, and whence it had been driven by proscription and blood, was a country of landlord and tenant, the former not rich or endowed with large domains, not attached to court, and not estranged from the peasants. The *curé* and the *seigneur* attracted all the respect of the population, and both commanded loyalty to the king as a portion of their religion. Still, had not the clergy been compelled to take a revolutionary oath, and punished for refusing it, they might not have meditated rebellion. And had the peasantry been left to their hearths and their fields they might not have quarrelled with what was doing in Paris. But in addition to the proscription of the clergy, the law devoting all men from 18 to 40 to the army, with the immediate instalment demanded of 300,000 youths, shook the equanimity of the Vendéans. It was a clean sweep of all the young and valid of the population. The recruits met at the *chef-lieu* St. Florent on the appointed day, the 10th of March, but not to enrol themselves: they broke into murmurs. The gendarmes coming to threaten with a cannon, the peasants captured the latter with their sticks, beat the gendarmes, and chose Cathelineau the waggoner for their chief. They took the town of Chollet, and finally raised the standard of revolt.* The population of the districts near the sea acted almost similarly at the same time, appointed Charette their leader, and installed themselves at Machecoul. There were some 40,000 insurgents in arms, royalists all, who started up to the cry of 'God and their king.' This remarkable rising gave new life to the royalists everywhere; and whilst, especially in great cities, such as Lyons and Bordeaux, they took the lead in denouncing

* Mémoires de la Rochejacquelein ; Mémoires sur La Vendée.

the anarchists, the royalists took the place of the Girondists, and flung upon the latter the suspicion of being partisans of the old *régime*.

In Paris the Robespierre and Marat faction, amazed at being left out of the executive committee, and at not commanding the majority of the convention, strongly entrenched themselves at the Jacobins, in the *commune*, and in the assembly of the delegates of the sections, which met at the archbishop's palace. From these, as if from batteries, they kept up a continual fire of calumny, of denunciation, and petitions against the Girondists. To overcome such enemies by eloquence or by wise policy and conduct, to wean the Centre, or Plain, from supporting the Gironde on important occasions, the Mountain could not hope. They could only preserve ascendancy by revolutionary measures. The Gironde had full warning, and prudence dictated them urgent measures of defence. The first was to secure an ally in Danton, the rival of Robespierre, and the man who had most influence over the Plain, and moreover who had the first position as member of the ruling committee. Divers efforts were made to reconcile Danton and the Gironde. None of the latter would hear of allying with the minister of the massacres of September. They rejected his offer, and he foretold to them that they were lost. If they would not treat with him they ought at least to have respected him at such a crisis; but the Gironde was not a party, and in general each member did what he thought right in his own eyes.

On the 12th of April, Lasource, one of the Gironde, attacked Danton in the assembly, as the accomplice of Dumouriez. Danton's countenance bespoke the violent commotion within his breast. He rose, and began by confessing the sin of moderation and the folly of respecting his antagonists, an error of which he should not again be guilty. He then launched forth into a two hours' philippic against the Girondists, exposing all their faults,

CHAP.
XL.

exaggerating them into crimes, and this in so overwhelming a manner that the Mountain, overjoyed at finding what they had wanted, a passionate and able orator—which Robespierre was not—embraced Danton, and felt as if an army had come to their succour.*

The Gironde at first knew not how to reply to this fierce philippic, but finally took up Lasource's theme, and tried to prove that the Duke of Orleans was at the bottom of Dumouriez's defection and Danton's complicity with it. However true this might be, it was not Danton that was overwhelmed, but the Orleanists. The family were already under surveillance, but now a unanimous vote was passed, in which Mountain and Gironde joined, for placing all the members of it under arrest, and sending them to Marseilles to be tried.† Danton took the opportunity of declaring that long as he had thought the ambition of Orleans to be a myth, he began to think there was some truth in it.

As to Robespierre, he declared that not Danton but the Girondists had been accomplices of Dumouriez. He would have sent them to the revolutionary tribunal together. The sections echoed the cry. The clubs rang with the crimes of the Girondists, though when they came to be examined there is not one that would bear a moment's scrutiny. Hatred and jealousy, however, supplied all other grounds of enmity. Camille Desmoulins, the secretary of Danton, concentrated the passions in a philippic against the Girondists, which was read with loud applause to the Jacobins.‡ These and all the popular writers stirred themselves to demand, as the only means of restoring peace to the nation and consolidating its defence, the sacrifice of twenty of its ablest legislators for the sole crime of eloquence and moderation. Robespierre expended his entire stock of

* Memoirs of Levasseur.

† Published in the works of C.

‡ Memoirs of Thibaudeau and Desmoulins.
Levasseur.

calumny and venom to prove to the convention the culpability of the Girondists. His long-meditated speech was a failure, whilst Vergniaud's improvised reply to it, one of the happiest bursts of his eloquence, so carried the assembly with it that it would have voted every proposal for silencing its enemies had the Gironde shown the means of enforcing it. Marat, however, intervened with his impertinence, and drew attention to himself by an article which was read, denouncing the convention as sold to England. The majority rose in a body to resent the insult, which the Mountain and Danton defended. A vote, notwithstanding, ordered that Marat should be sent to the Abbaye, and brought before the revolutionary tribunal. The convention, however, had no authority beyond its walls. Marat was no sooner conveyed without these than the crowd of his partisans hurried him off to one of his usual hiding-places. From this he emerged on the day appointed for his trial, and boldly appeared before the tribunal, where he spoke more as an accuser than an accused. The tribunal itself was formed merely to gratify public opinion, and not to thwart it; to give the appearance of legal sanction to the executions which it clamoured for, not to offer a shadow of resistance to the demands of the mob. Marat was of course acquitted by such a tribunal, and the people bore him in triumph, and crowned with laurels, back to his seat in the assembly, which they insulted by defiling through it. Not the least curious part of his triumph was the obligation which it placed upon the Girondist Lasource, who was president, to welcome and compliment Marat.

In the first days of May the convention voted the *maximum* or fixed price of corn, in obedience to the popular demand. In vain did the young Girondist Ducos point out all the danger and injustice of the decree, which, if it fixed a price on bread, should do so upon every other commodity. This, he said, would

CHAP.
XL.

aggravate famine, and drive the people mad for want. Such partial acquiescence with popular demands the Gironde could not prevent. They hoped, however, that when a constitution was decreed, an era of calm might ensue. But the Jacobins had no desire to see a constitution voted, especially such a one as the Gironde had conceived. A dictatorship, to make the rich the prey of the poor, and to sacrifice under the guillotine all who questioned their wisdom and patriotism, was their sole desire. They accordingly impeded the discussion of the constitution by every means. Robespierre was discontented with the Rights of Man, such as the constitutional assembly had promulgated. He came, in fact, with a totally new set of Rights, drawn from Rousseau, and which, with Anacharsis Clootz, he declared to be for all mankind. Their doctrines were for the most part vague theories and empty assertions, with the exception of those which ordained that the poor should live at the expense of the rich, not rendering any service in return, as nature and society have arranged, but after the fashion of sturdy beggars, who forced the rich to feed them.* Some spoke of an agrarian law; but this was not to the taste of the demagogues, for a donation of land would oblige the new proprietor to cultivate it, whilst the mob of Paris did not want either to separate or to work. Idleness and blood were their element; and Robespierre laboured earnestly, both in theory and practice, to gratify them.

In one of these discussions the liberty of the press was brought forward as a principle to be broadly and solemnly sanctioned. Robespierre admitted the virtue of the principle, but times of revolution were exceptional; "and in times of revolution," he went on to say, "all liberties might be suspended, whether of the person or the press." To prolong this cherished state of anarchy, and

* A brother Montagnard went farther than Robespierre, and proposed to decree, not the rights of man, but those of the *sans-culottes*.

obtain the dictatorship for himself, by taking the lives of all who opposed him, comprised the political aims of Robespierre.

The sections were active and persistent in getting up and presenting petitions for the proscription of the Girondists. The *commune*, jealous that the delegates at the archbishop's palace were usurping their functions, and throwing them into the shade, came forward with a fierce petition for suspending the Girondists, and then demanding the sanction of the people of France. The mayor, Pache, presented this petition, and when challenged to sign it did so after some hesitation. The anarchists were much taken aback when the Girondist Fonfrède seconded the prayer of the petition, which thus referred the decision upon the merits or demerits of the Gironde to the people in their primary assemblies. The anarchists were furious with Pache for making such a proposal, and the convention equally declared they must change the words of the petition. Robespierre himself denounced the folly of referring to the primary assemblies, and the convention declared the petition of the *commune* to be calumnious.

It would require volumes to describe, with even moderate fulness, the scenes which during this time took place in the convention, the parties on both sides actually charging one another, some drawing swords, others displaying poniards, and threatening mutual extermination. The public in the galleries always joined in the tumult when they did not provoke it; and the oppression exercised upon the assembly by the sections, the *commune*, and the mob, was seconded by the turbulent galleries, which scarcely allowed liberty of speech to the Gironde.

To deliver the convention from this tyranny, Guadet proposed in the beginning of May to transfer its sittings to Versailles. Vigée, foreseeing that the transfer would meet with resistance, recommended that the members

CHAP.
XL

should accomplish it sabre in hand. Such proposals were met by the remark that the convention was about to transfer its sittings from the hall of the Manège to the Tuileries, where it might be better protected, and where it was proposed to admit persons to the galleries only on the presentation of cards. The assembly did move to the new hall prepared for them in the palace on the 10th of May.

No slight change or precaution could protect the majority of the convention from the metropolitan rabble and the kindred faction within it, who demanded the proscription of the Moderates. Vergniaud appealed to the provinces, and Bordeaux answered by a petition menacing the Jacobins. But Barbaroux declared that they could not long trust to the provinces, throughout which the Jacobins had placed, they boasted, 9,000 of their agents, in different posts of the administration. On the 18th of May, Guadet and Isnard solemnly besought the convention to take measures for its own safety and for that of its members. "It is Pitt," exclaimed Isnard, "who has suborned the conspiracy against the national representatives." Guadet declared the avowed intention of the anarchists to be, to apply to the convention the same precedent of Colonel Pride's purge, by which the English parliament was brought to the feet of Cromwell. There was the same pretension made as at that time, of men assuming to be *patriotes par excellence*, who attained momentary triumph merely to be precipitated in turn. Guadet then pointed out the root of the evil, which was to be found in the municipal authorities of Paris, greedy for gold and domination.* Guadet proposed to depose those magistrates, and to replace the *commune* by the presidents of sections. He

* The Girondists, as ministers or members of the convention, holding the purse was a great grievance with the Mountain. "Ye," exclaimed

Marat, "who hold the treasury at your disposal." And Roland, it is to be feared, did pay his journalists largely.

removed at the same time that the *suppléants*, or supplementary members, elected to the convention, should meet at Bourges, although they must not enter upon their functions until they learned that the violence meditated by the anarchists had been employed towards the assembly. This serious motion was, no doubt, concerted with the Plain; for Barère, its chief, rose and admitted the fact that there existed a plot against the convention to purge it, at the least, and proscribe twenty-two of its members. Chaumette, who was the chief officer of the *commune*, had clearly confessed the intention. Still, Barère did not approve of the motion for deposing the magistrates of Paris, which, he said, would beget civil war. Rather let a commission of twelve be nominated.

The Mountain did not oppose this amendment, which was an attempt at conciliation by Barère. And Levasseur asserts, that, had the commission been fairly composed, many of the Montagnards would not have been displeased at the *commune* being overturned and brought to reason. But the Gironde made use of its majority to name the committee not only of members of its own party but to elect several suspected royalists, such as La Rivière, whilst the Left was completely unrepresented.

One of the first acts of the committee of twelve, charged to ensure tranquillity to the capital, was to regulate the sittings of the sections, in which the turbulent few generally prevailed over the many. It was ordered that they should not sit after ten o'clock, nor pass a resolution or vote with fewer members than 200. The sections being thus restored to the Moderates, Vergniaud, on the 20th, demanded that they should form a guard for the protection of the convention. Meanwhile there were symptoms of considerable reaction, especially in the rising generation. The *commune* had applied itself to enforce the principle which they had propounded in October, viz., that the rich were to pay for the poor. So the levy of men for armies took

CHAP.
XL.

place in Paris, not by lot, but by the designation of the authorities, who seized apprentices and youths of the middle class, leaving the young men who lived by daily labour to stay idle in the capital, to swell an insurrection, and be paid and fed by the *commune*. This application of *sans-culottes* principles aroused the young men of the middle classes. They collected in bands, clamoured against the *commune*, and broke the busts of Marat. The *commune*, and the more violent of the sections, finding themselves both menaced, instantly united and held meetings under the pretext of levying the forced loan and drawing lists of suspected persons. But whilst these were the avowed objects of discussion, the real one was but to combat the committee of twelve. To make a 10th of August against the new occupants of the Tuileries, to seize all the unpopular members, commit them to the Carmes, and Septembrise them, was the proposition which prevailed over all the others.* The Section de la Fraternité, whose delegates were present when this cruel proposal was made, denounced them to the convention on the 23rd; and on the 24th, Vigée, in the name of the committee of twelve, placed the convention under the guard of the sections, whilst the committee declared itself determined to seize the conspirators.

The first person they arrested was not wisely selected. It was Hébert, adjunct to Chaumette, the *procureur-général* of the *commune*. His crime was a violent article in his petty paper; vilifying the convention, certainly, and threatening its members with the guillotine. But such accusations were not uncommon. It would have been better to have seized the actual conspirators of the Archevêché, who formed no recognised body, instead of sending to prison an officer of the municipality. Varlet was arrested at the same time. But the *com-*

* Mémoires de Meillan, notes. Bergoing à ses commettants.

commune, and the more violent of the sections, concentrated their complaints and their efforts for the liberation of Hébert. Petitioners and petitions for this purpose were poured in upon the convention, and the president, Isnard, repelled the remonstrants with more violence than prudence. He bade the petitioners beware, for if the least insult was offered to the national representatives, Paris would be annihilated, the departments would wreak such vengeance on it that posterity would seek in vain the place where it existed. The orator of the sections and the *commune* carefully transmitted Isnard's words, and repeated them as his desire as well as his threat.

In the stormy debates of the convention, Robespierre could scarcely make his voice heard. But he made himself amends at the Jacobins, where, on the 26th, he declared that he placed himself in insurrection, and would exterminate the Girondists and their satellites. The commission of twelve were equally fierce and determined. They arrested a president and secretary of one of the sections, who refused to deliver the register of the sittings; and fearing tumult for the ensuing day, they summoned the national guard of the faithful and moderate sections to guard the assembly. At sight of this display of force on the 27th, the anarchists put forward their timid and time-serving partizans, especially the mayor Pache and the home minister Garat, to make excuses for them, and to assure the convention that they meant no harm, and that the capital was never more tranquil. Pache repeated this lesson in a letter, in which he said, "if the convention would quietly discuss the constitution, it would hear no more of insurrection or conspiracy." Garat made more impression by declaring that their fears were exaggerated; that the commission of twelve had been too severe and too provocative; that the *commune* did not conspire. These declarations, from a man at least in the confidence of ministers,

CHAP.
XL.

mollified the assembly. A deputation having arrived to complain of the arrest of the president of a section, Isnard replied, "The convention pardons your youth." Robespierre wanted to speak, but the majority repelled him, knowing that what he desired was to awaken disorder and to fan the flame of sedition. The Gironde and the Plain proposed to close the sitting, and adjourn the further consideration of affairs till the morning. Isnard accordingly quitted the chair, and most of his friends took their departure. The Mountain was far too vigilant to follow this example. Isnard's answer to the petitioners, and his refusal to allow Robespierre to speak, inflamed their ire, and they determined to prolong the sitting and turn it to profit. One of them, Hérault de Séchelles, took the chair, and opened the bar to a succession of petitions, all in the one sense, demanding, with Robespierre, the "triumph of virtue." This idea of virtue was personified in *Père Duchêne*. "The force of reason and the force of the people," declared president Hérault, "are the same." Thus was Rousseau travestied.*

Although the Gironde and almost all the Right had quitted the chamber, their places were soon filled by the crowd of petitioners who came to the bar, and glided within it to enjoy the "honours of the sitting." In the confusion necessarily arising from such a state of the assembly, some member made a motion that the committee of twelve should be dissolved, and Hébert and Varlet liberated. This was undoing all that the convention had been doing for the last fortnight. Several declared that the president never put the question—at least, they never heard it; others, that there was no vote, and could not have been in the confusion.† The president, however, declared that there was a vote, that the commission was no more, and the prison-door of Hébert open.

* Mémoires de Garat.

† Meillan.

Passionate was the indignation of the Gironde, and, indeed, of the Plain, the next day. Lanjuinais was the first to rise in his wrath, and declare that no such vote had passed. And he ridiculed the extravagant fury of the Parisian anarchists, who convulsed the state on account of the arrest of three men, whilst 50,000 persons had been thrown into the different prisons of the provinces by the commissaries of the Mountain. The answer of the Mountain came through the butcher Legendre, who threatened to throw Lanjuinais over the tribune. After much tumult it was put to the vote, whether the decree of the preceding night had been passed; 279 votes against 238 decided that yesterday's decree was null, and that the committee of twelve still subsisted. As Hébert and the other prisoners were already at liberty, the convention did not persist in recommitting them to prison.

Although the commission of twelve was thus re-established or maintained in the sitting of the 28th, its members, unequal to the task they had assumed, knew not what measures to adopt. Some of them, indeed, resigned. To march upon the assembly of delegates at the Archevêché or on the *commune*, where the direst and most sanguinary measures for putting down the convention or its majority were openly discussed, was the only step that could be effectual. But the national guard of the few sections that favoured the Gironde could not be brought to do more than act on the defensive. The anarchists had full scope. Robespierre at the Jacobins was less enigmatical than usual. He recommended the *commune* to unite with the people—no doubt for another 10th of August. This was precisely what was done. It was not, however, the true municipality at the Hôtel de Ville that undertook to act, but the usurping one at the Archevêché, which, after discussing the most extreme and ruffianly projects, appointed a committee of six to execute them.

CHAP.
 XL.

The morning of the 31st of May was heralded by the sound of the tocsin. During the previous day the anarchists of the sections had elected and sanctioned a new municipal body, which came, fitly announced by the tocsin, to enthrone themselves at the Hôtel de Ville and take command of the insurrection. The barriers were ordered to be closed. And Henriot, a convict branded for robbery,* was appointed commander, a post for which Santerre was no longer ferocious or brutal enough. The Gironde were aware of what awaited them. Lanjuinais had been able to communicate all the particulars of the conspiracy, from his having penetrated, disguised, into the Archevêché. The objects of popular enmity had therefore slept away from their homes. But, instead of flying, they resolved to brave the storm, and, with this view, repaired to the convention.† Their first act, on the sitting being opened, was to cause Pache, the mayor, to be summoned. He came, as usual, with his mouth full of excuses, and of all he had done to preserve order. He had placed a guard on the Pont Neuf to prevent the cannon of alarm from being fired. As Pache spoke, the explosion of the cannon of alarm was heard. Death had been decreed as a punishment of whoever should fire it without an order of the convention. But Henriot mocked the convention. Whilst the Gironde were for punishing his audacity, the opposition demanded the suppression of the committee of twelve. Danton demanded not only the suppression, but their accusation and trial. And already the Plain, alarmed by the thick-coming accounts of troubles without, were inclined to the advice of Danton. A deputation from the *commune* then arrived with what they called a petition, such as Marat might have drawn, and indeed did draw up.‡ They demanded

* De la Varenne. Histoire Par-
 ticulière.

† Memoir of Buzot, Letter of
 Gorsas, Memoirs of Garat, of Louvet.

‡ Esquiros, Histoire des Montagnards.

the prosecution of the twelve and of the twenty-two Girondists, and that these *intriguers* should be smitten by the sword of justice. They demanded a permanent army of *sans-culottes*, paid at the rate of forty sous a day per head; bread lowered to one or two sous per pound for the people, the rich to pay the difference; and so on. Vergniaud coolly moved that the paper be printed and circulated through the departments, to show what the Paris mob was really aiming at. But the Plain was preparing to sacrifice the Gironde. Barère, its chief, the very same personage who had proposed and maintained the committee of twelve, now read a report, and made a motion for annulling that commission.

This, however, did not satisfy the Mountain nor the petitioners, who demanded the arrest and accusation of the Moderates; and the petitioners, breaking into the hall, were prepared, no doubt, to join in the vote, as was done a few days before; but the Mountain did not desire this, for which the Plain was not yet prepared. They therefore contented themselves with passing the motion of Barère, the convention retiring to one side of the hall, the people and petitioners remaining on the other. The accusation, though not voted, was to be enforced in another sitting. In the meantime it was acted upon, by the *commune* issuing orders for the arrest of Roland, Clavière, and Lebrun—all of the Girondists, in fact, that were not of the assembly. Madame Roland was seized and committed to the Abbaye.

Whilst Barère and the Plain hoped that the rage of the *commune* would be satisfied by the dissolution of the committee of twelve, the anarchists declared that they considered nothing to have been accomplished until the Girondists were sacrificed. Still the 1st of June passed over quietly. But executive there was none, save the committee of public safety, which was dominated by Danton. It was, indeed, his presence in

CHAP.
XL.

it that necessitated the creation of the committee of twelve. And he, being present in the committee of public safety, told them they must submit to the *commune*, and that the Gironde must resign. Garat and others expostulated with him. But Danton could really do nothing but serve the passions of Marat and Robespierre. He consulted the latter as to the possibility of an accord, on the principle of the leaders on both sides withdrawing. Robespierre mocked the idea, and justly; for, whilst Danton was thus trying to manage without another insurrection, Marat, at the Hôtel de Ville, went to pull the cord of the great bell and sound the tocsin himself. There was an evening sitting of the convention, which the Girondists did not attend, and where nothing important occurred save the usual presentation of sanguinary petitions from the *commune*, demanding this time twenty-seven heads. The only thing remarkable was that Marat, acting the dictator, took the list and erased from it the names of Dussaulx, Lanthenas, and Ducos; the first as too old, the last as too young, and Lanthenas as an idiot; substituting for them other men particularly obnoxious to him, Valazé amongst them.

At six in the morning of the 2nd of June the convention was open. The revolutionary bands of the faubourgs, under the command of Henriot, were not only on foot, but already in the Carrousel and around the palace. The Girondists had passed the night together in anxiety and doubt. Some were flying to the departments, and invoking their aid. Others determined to appear in the convention and brave their enemies, were it but to die. A member of the Mountain, Levasseur, has left an account of the events of this day, and of the opinions which caused them. They are good to consult for all who are inclined to condemn the ultra-revolutionists. He admits that the vote for the arrest and prosecution of the Girondists was to send them to the scaffold; yet he says he did not shrink from it, for

otherwise the Mountain would have thrown away the victory that was in its hands. Blind to the last, the anarchists did not see that to place the convention at the mercy of the mob, and give one faction the right to murder the other, merely because it disliked its policy and conduct, was to establish principles and precedents by which each portion of the convention must inevitably be massacred by the other, until there were none left but the mere rump of republicanism, void alike of capacity or of character, and certain to be kicked to perdition by the first soldier who knew how to choose his opportunity and accomplish the inevitable end of all—a military dictatorship.

The first news that greeted the assembly on the 2nd of June was the success of the enemies of the Jacobins in La Vendée, in Languedoc, and at Lyons. The anarchists had been crushed and defeated in the latter city. This might be cause of satisfaction to the Girondists, but it added to the exasperation of their enemies. Lanjuinais, as usual, rose to complain of and denounce the violence offered to the Moderates. "Get down," cried the butcher Legendre, "or I will fell you." "Decree first that I am an ox," observed Lanjuinais to the legislative butcher. The latter drew forth, not an axe but a pistol, which he pointed at Lanjuinais. Chabot, Drouet, and young Robespierre rushed forward to support the butcher. The president called these fellows to order. But, as their uproarious supporters without uttered the same threats and made the same motions, the timid members of the Centre showed manifest signs of affright.

One scene of violence and confusion followed another. The Mountain had scarcely ceased threatening to brain and shoot Lanjuinais, than the same petitioners from the *commune* arrived, and acquainted the convention that, if it would not save the country, the people would proceed to this task of themselves. As there was hesitation

CHAP.
XL.

to obey this imperative mandate, the anarchists in the galleries cried, "*To arms!*" The Mountain declared that the only chance of saving the convention from slaughter was to vote the arrest of the twenty-two. "Rather arrest us all," cried La Reveillère. Barère, the great proposer of compromise, besought the members obnoxious to the people to resign their functions as deputies. Isnard declared he was ready to make this sacrifice. Fauchet and Dupont adhered to it. For all answer the *ex-capucin*, Chabot, insulted Isnard. "Allow me," said Lanjuinais, "to observe to priest Chabot, that when the ancients immolated victims, they loaded them with flowers, not insult."

Marat declared that, in order to be allowed to resign, a deputy ought to be pure, like himself. At the moment several deputies, who had sought to retire, returned, saying the insurgents would not let them pass. Barère himself was indignant. And the Plain cried out, "The convention is not free." Barère added, "Let us go forth, and deliberate amongst the national guard. Let us then see, are we free or are we not?" He arose, and the Plain with him. The president, Hérault de Séchelles, was obliged to put himself at their head. As they issued forth, they were met by insult. Henriot refused to salute the president. "What do the people want?" asked the latter. "The people," said Henriot, "want not phrases, but victims; then bring the thirty-four deputies denounced by the *commune*." "Victims! We are all victims," said the members. "Cannoniers, to your guns!" cried Henriot. The armed men whom Henriot had collected round the doors were the ruffians of the faubourgs.* To get beyond them, and appeal to the national guards, who were posted round the gardens of the Tuileries, became the object of the members. They therefore forced their way through Henriot's mob into the garden, and proceeded over it to gate after gate,

* Especially with five francs in assignats per day for their services.

hoping to find some portion of the national guard friendly to them, or which would allow of their escape. But no; every friendly guardsman had been removed or was terrified. The threatened convention found neither sympathy nor support; whilst Marat clamoured after them to return to their hall and do his bidding. No other alternative was left them. They re-entered their hall, therefore, and found the Mountain, which had not stirred, awaiting them. Couthon, the cripple, had been carried to the tribune. He read a decree pronouncing the arrest and conviction of the twenty-two and of the twelve. Whilst he stammered from exhaustion, Vergniaud cried out, "Couthon is thirsty, give him a glass of blood." There was some hesitation as to the names on the list. Some were added—that of Lanjuinais for one—some erased; Legendre was for saving Fonfrède. Scarcely more than one-third of the assembly—that is, the Mountain—voted the decree of arrest and proscription. The rest abstained, of which seventy-three signed a written protest, which in a short time became a sufficient cause for proscribing them in their turn. At first the accused were merely to be confined to their residences, which was done to avoid any sudden outburst of resentment in their provinces. Such leniency was of short duration. With the persons of the Girondists, of course, their journals were suppressed. There was but one voice and one opinion tolerated in the republic, that of the genuine *sans-culottes*.*

The 2nd of June, 1793, was the end of the convention as a deliberative body—the end, indeed, of every pretence of freedom or of free principle in France. The government continued, indeed, to call itself a republic. Under that convenient name cloaked itself the oligarchy of cut-throats, which, with each rising of the mob, and each blow of the reactionary knife, exclaimed in ecstacy

* Mem. of Levasseur, of Meillan. de Maillane, Lanjuinais, Recit, &c.
History of Convention by Durand &c.

CHAP.
XL.

that they were saving the country. The country all the time had but one need and one desire, which was to be let alone. The foreign enemy could not be said to threaten it. It consisted, indeed, of 80,000 men in Flanders. But the Prince of Coburg, the Duke of York, and others who commanded, were utterly incapable of making use of them. These generals besieged Valenciennes, under the walls of which the French general Dampierre was killed in one of the attacks which he repelled. Custine, for a time shut up in Mayence, was soon at the head of an army capable of keeping Austria and Prussia at bay.

The only obstacle—or enemies, indeed—that the now triumphant Mountain had to contend with were those of their own creation. Their tyranny and breach of every principle and rule of representative government, and their ascendancy achieved merely by bribing the hungry mob of Paris to threaten and decimate the convention, raised the indignation of the provinces, and, finally, their rebellion. Had the armies of England, Austria, and Prussia not been in the hands of imbecile princes, they could not but have taken advantage of the insurrectionary state of all France to advance and push their way amidst its anarchy. As it was, the commanders and armies of the three great monarchies of Europe seemed merely exerting themselves to show the utter incapacity of their worn-out system to face even the undisciplined volunteers of a disturbed but still energetic republic.

It was impossible for the Mountain not to perceive that the arrest and suspension of the Girondists would produce wide discontent in the provinces. In order to mitigate this, they professed at first to exercise no further vengeance on those proscribed. Some even offered themselves as hostages for the departments of the Gironde, that their representatives should have a fair trial. But the anarchists were no less determined on

maintaining their ascendancy and power. Masters of Paris they were; but they had yet to keep their mastery of the armies, and establish their dominion over the provinces. They could only do this by proceeding themselves, as proconsuls, to promote their friends to power, and precipitate their enemies under the guillotine. This could not be done whilst the Gironde sat in the assembly, and exercised their influence over the Plain. It was necessary to expel and annihilate these, which would terrorise the Plain into acquiescence, and thus deliver up the provinces to the rule of the *sans-culottes*. The plan of proceeding was much the same everywhere: guillotine the rich, place all power in the hands of the poor and the reckless, fling the upper portion of society prostrate, and put the lower portion over them, to tax, ruin, bully, and ransom them at pleasure. There was one department—the Herault—which had found it a happy expedient to enrol all the rich and send them to war, whilst the poorer classes remained at home to terrorise and take possession of their property. The convention highly applauded the idea, and adopted it, as far as was possible, in Paris.

The republican absolutists, who established their domination in Paris by the revolution of the 31st of May, did not foresee the armed resistance of the provinces. But, in the heat of the struggle, they could scarcely look before them. Not to overcome the Moderates—that is, to succumb to them—would have inevitably introduced a regular government, which would have wreaked merited punishment upon the Septembrisers, and all who had their hands more or less imbrued in blood. To save themselves, these were compelled to continue the revolutionary fever, and to kill those who even proposed to moderate or stop it. How ruthlessly suspicious they were, appeared when Danton was accused of “not being as revolutionary as he used to be;” and when Marat was

CHAP.
XL.

summoned to defend himself for having said that "a chief or a king was wanting."*

To the establishment of such a system of terror, with its accompanying subversion of property, the immense majority of the country was opposed. But there was far from union or agreement in their opposition. Paris, situated considerably north of the real centre of France, has always exercised an irresistible influence over the region between the Seine and the frontier. In this region there are no great towns—Rouen and Lille excepted. But the menaces of the foreign enemy and his threatened invasion attached the entire frontier population and towns to the capital, and to whatever government commanded the national resources and armies. Rouen often tried, but never succeeded in, effectual resistance to Paris. The natural enemies of the ultra-revolutionists were in fact the middle classes, or those who had acquired a certain degree of instruction, and property in towns. But the towns were few in the north. The upper classes, whose wealth consisted in land, had disappeared. The mercantile and civic populace which remained had not the number or importance requisite for political resistance. In the south it was otherwise. The population there is in a great measure civic, or demi-civic. There are no extensive plains, or, as the French say, *grande culture*. The owner of the vineyard is much more civilised than the driver of the plough. Townsfolk, as well as proprietors, in the south might be considered of the middle class, all ardent for the revolution of 1789, since they suffered most from sacerdotal and noble privileges. But to have shaken off the burden of priesthood and aristocracy sufficed them; especially as the same agitation which had emancipated them had prompted the non-propertied class to indemnify itself at the expense of the rich. The social revolution which then threat-

* Thomas Paine was once asked by Marat if he was fool enough to believe in a republic.—Thibaudeau.

ened was far more alarming in the south than in the north; and from the very commencement, civil war, or a state akin to it, had broken out in almost all the great cities, as Lyons, Marseilles, and the towns on the Rhone, as well as Bordeaux. In general, the proprietorial class had the best of the struggle. The rabble was everywhere put down, not without massacre and bloodshed, as the fearful executions at Avignon showed. But still the citizens triumphed, until the emissaries of the Mountain came from Paris to stir up the agitation and arm the dregs of the people against those above them.

The great mistake of such of the Girondists as had escaped arrest was their not betaking themselves to the south at once, and organising there a wide and active resistance to the convention. Instead of this, Louvet, Guadet, Pétion, Gorsas, Lanjuinais, and others, betook themselves westward to Lower Normandy. They first stopped at Evreux, and succeeded in persuading municipality and mayor to embrace their cause.* Caen, a far more important town, displayed the same sentiments. The fugitive Girondists turned thither, and found a General Wimpfen, who consented to take the command against the convention. Brittany was behind Caen, more incensed against the ultra-revolutionists than Normandy. Caen, therefore, seemed a good centre, and the Girondists formed there a committee of resistance.

Unfortunately it was but the inhabitants of the towns who were readers of journals, and who had gathered from them a knowledge of the difference between moderate and ultra-revolutionary republicanism. The Norman rustic was ignorant and indifferent, whilst the Breton peasants were passively opposed to whatever the municipal councils of Rennes and the other Breton

* *Précis des Événements*, par Gardembas. Memoirs of Louvet, of Buzot, and of Meilhan.

CHAP.
XL

towns embraced. The consequence was that the Gironde had no basis, no large population to depend on. As the Parisians were advancing upon Evreux to the number of little more than 1,500, Wimpfen despatched Puisaye to resist them at Evreux. With the national guard of the latter town he marched to meet and drive them back. But the little Parisian army had cannon, the first discharge of which set the army of Puisaye in disarray. It fled on the 13th of June, and Evreux, occupied by the troops of the convention, swore fealty once more to the principles of *sans-culottisme*.

Wimpfen then told the Girondists that there was no hope but in applying for money, arms, and aid from the English, and thus making common cause with the royalists of La Vendée. He spoke truly enough, and whilst they declined to accept any such alliance, the agents of the Mountain were already affixing their placards to the walls of Caen, proscribing Wimpfen and the Girondists. The latter were obliged to fly in the direction of Quimper, which latter port they reached with much difficulty and after considerable suffering. From hence they embarked at last for Bordeaux.

The final discomfiture of the Girondists in the west inspired the Jacobins with fresh confidence in their final triumph, yet it required a robust faith to feel assured of this in the months of June and July 1793, when Mayence, Condé, and Valenciennes were successively taken by the allies, when the entire south was in arms, marching against the convention, and when the Vendéans captured all the towns south of the Loire. If over all these the convention triumphed, one cannot say that it was achieved by either statesmanship or skill. Their treatment of the armies was brutal. They sent the best generals to the scaffold, and appointed the most unscrupulous ruffians to command. They raised the whole country by a levy *en masse*, the recruits of which often ran away at first; they seized all the pro-

duce of the kingdom, and ruined its agriculture as well as its industry by their requisitions and their *maximum*. With all this the convention conquered, but it was able officers in a subordinate position who triumphed over the enemy in despite of the military authorities of the convention—not with their aid.* The resistance of the south failed from the discordant elements of which it was composed, and the general inability of a middle class, at least in France, to oppose the hungry multitude, paid with assignats, and driven by terror to devour them. The great boast of the latter was that they saved the revolution, but in truth they lost and destroyed it, for making the very name of republic and of liberty synonymous with terror, spoliation, and blood, they rendered the establishment or restoration of either an impossibility in the country, as long as the records and remembrance of these days survive.

By the time the fugitive Girondists from Brittany reached the Gironde, this their native department had abated of its fury, and hesitated in its resistance. In the first days of June its rage was as great as its confidence. The indignant Bordelais formed a committee, which they also called of public safety, despatched a menacing remonstrance to Paris, and threatened to send an army against it; but the middle class, however incensed, dared not quit the city in any numbers, the mob being only kept down by their presence, and the difficulty of doing this became greater as the famine, which then spread over France, added the irritation of hunger to that of evil passions. In this division of parties the presence of Tallien with what troops he could collect changed the ardour of the Bordelais into trepidation, so that, when Buzot and Guadet arrived, instead of making a triumphal entrance into Bordeaux, they were obliged to hide themselves in the caves of St. Emilion.

* See the numerous accounts of the conduct of the war in La Vendée and elsewhere.

CHAP.
XL.

Toulouse had imitated Bordeaux, and set at liberty all the prisoners whom Chabot had immured for the crime of entertaining moderate opinions. The citizens of Marseilles closed their Jacobin clubs on the 3rd of June, and prepared to make common cause with the towns of the south, all sending deputations to Bourges to form an antagonist convention. Lyons, however, was the most important centre. The progress of the revolution was nowhere so plainly designed. In 1789 it rose for the assembly against the king, and compelled the military to confine themselves to their barracks, but the king disposed of, and the aristocracy sent adrift, commerce and manufactures suspended by war and disturbance, the indigent rose against the rich, and the Lyons Jacobins declared their purpose more openly than their Paris brethren. Châlier, the Marat of the region, led the way, and his mode of accomplishing spoliation was first to erect the guillotine; this aroused the burgesses to self-defence, and their national guard, in February, put down the Jacobins. The commissioners of the Mountain came to the support of these, with several detachments of the army of the Alps. A regular battle took place between the parties in the great place of Lyons towards the end of May, in which the defenders of property had the advantage. When tidings came that fortune had taken a direction contrary to that of Paris, the Lyonese prepared for their defence; they welcomed Biroteau and other fugitives, raised a force, and there being none but royalist generals to be had, they chose De Précý for that post. Had the Lyonese confined themselves to military efforts, it would have been wiser, but the dominant party unfortunately thought of vengeance before securing victory. In the middle of July they caused Châlier, chief of the Jacobins, to be tried and executed; he well deserved his punishment, but it was a terrible provocation to the convention, given, too, at

a moment when the Nismes insurrection had been quelled, and that of Bordeaux faltered.*

CHAP.
XL

The convention instantly ordered the siege of Lyons, and the generals of the army of the Alps were commanded to detach forces for the purpose. General Carteau succeeded in isolating the allied towns; occupying Pont St. Esprit in force, he prevented Marseilles and Nismes from marching to the succour of Lyons. Dubois-Crancé, as commissary, and Kellerman, as general, formed the siege on the 6th of August with 20,000 men. The Lyonese had but 6,000 to oppose to them; the people were far from being resolute or united. They professed as much attachment to the republic as the convention, and asked for a truce to celebrate the 10th of August. The Girondist Biroteau was obliged to depart. The Lyonese accepted the constitution of 1793, but the order of the convention was to listen to no terms.

Still the conventionalists, being unable to blockade the city, made but slow progress in reducing it, whilst its gallant governor contrived to make expeditions, and surprise the posts of the enemy. On this Dubois-Crancé ordered the bombardment of the town, and its destruction, if possible. A black flag hoisted on the hospital did not even protect it from bombshells. The Lyonese still defended themselves with courage despite the daily tidings which informed them they were more and more alone. General Carteau, towards the end of August, had forced his way into Marseilles, of which the citizens and moderate party fled to Toulon. A sufficient military force could still not be concentrated about Lyons; Couthon, however, the ardent conventionalist and orator, though paralysed in his limbs, found a mode of completing the investment of the city.

* Mémoires de Général Doppet. Memoirs of Montléon. Vie de Histoire de la Siège de Lyons. Châlier. L. Blanc.

CHAP.
XL.

He undertook to revolutionise the neighbouring department of the Puy de Dôme—aristocratic, too, as its numerous chateaux still evince. But Couthon stirred up the populace in every town and every village in the capital, Clermont especially, giving all authority to the *sans-culottes*, and organising their supremacy in clubs. Thus terrorising the province, Couthon precipitated its national guards to form a new division of the republican army before Lyons. The convention, dissatisfied with its military commanders, however able, sent down an apothecary to take the command. He was but the tool of Couthon, who pressed day after day for a general assault, which the military officers hesitated to make. At last, when, after a three months' siege, the troops of De Précy were reduced from six to two thousand, and when famine, bombardment, and the hopelessness of all succour, brought the citizens to thoughts of surrender, Précy found he could not much longer hope to defend the place. The citizens then strove to make what terms they could. Couthon would grant none. The besieged asked but a few hours to calm resistance and arrange surrender; but, by order of Couthon, the besiegers pressed on, and thus getting possession of a gate, Lyons was in their power and its populace at their mercy. Précy's gallant garrison fought their way out, and retreated northward along the Rhone, hoping to gain the Jura. They were but two thousand, divided into two divisions. Followed by superior force, they were soon overwhelmed, and the greater part massacred, thus sharing the fate which Couthon reserved for the inhabitants of Lyons. The siege had lasted from the 8th of August to the 8th of October.

The ineffectual resistance of the south was one proof the more of the impossibility of middle parties making a successful stand in war. They may do so in a parliament, or by the press, when a public is not excited, and is still open to reason; but amidst the fierce ignorance

of a people new to liberty, extreme parties were the only ones that could call men to arms—royalism alone could contest victory with the republic. French writers are apt to lay the blame of the southern towns failing in their struggle upon their having been invaded by royalism. No doubt this animated the revolutionists against them, as well as all those—and they are many—who had advanced and profited by the revolution; but still royalism, the only clear and intelligible expression of conservatism, could alone have given vigour to defence. La Vendée was a proof.

Could the south have imitated the rebellion of La Vendée, and raised a peasant insurrection, keeping the open country, and defending its fortresses and its thickets, the convention might never have subdued the country south of the Loire; but the southerners kept within the walls of their towns, and made it a fight of artillery and numbers, in which they were sure to succumb. The Vendean peasant, on the contrary, trusted to his hedges, not his walls. The troops opposed to him were at first scant, and they sought to defend themselves in the towns. The insurgents not only drove them from these, but defeated them in the open field. La Rochejacquelein gained the victory of Les Aubiers over Quéteineau, stormed and took the town of Thouars, in which he had taken refuge. In the middle of May the Vendean army of 25,000 men defied the republican troops, and captured the important town of Fontenay, and threatened Niort. Had the Bordelais bestirred themselves, and raised an effective force, they could have easily put themselves in communication with the Vendéans, across the department of the Charente. On the other side of La Vendée, the royalists took Saumur, on the Loire, on the 9th of June. They might then have received succours from England, and regularised the war; but they wanted equipments, organisation, artillery. They had far the best of it in a war of surprises, and over the conscripts, undisciplined

CHAP.
XL

as themselves, which the convention poured upon them; but their very victories led to their final defeat, for it emboldened them to form large armies and attempt hazardous enterprises, for which their organisation and resources were disproportioned. Thus, after the capture of Saumur and Angers, the Vendéans tried to get possession of Nantes. Bonchamps deprecated a long and difficult siege, and implored the Vendéans to aim first at obtaining a port in Brittany, through which they might obtain English succour; but Nantes touched La Vendée, and was separated from it but by the Loire, whilst it offered plunder and great resources. Cathelineau, a peasant, was appointed commander of the Vendean army north of the Loire, Charette leading an equal force from the south. Canclaux, commander in Nantes, was a brave and skilful officer. He made able dispositions for the defence, which did not promise to be long; for if the Vendéans did not carry the town speedily by assault, they wanted the means, perseverance, and artillery for a long siege. Cathelineau, with the main army from Angers, was to attack Nantes on the north and east, whilst Charette, crossing the river, penetrated from the south. The attacks were to take place at the same time, and had they done so, Nantes might have fallen; but Charette alone reached his post opposite Nantes on the night of the 29th of June, Cathelineau not making his appearance till the morning. The chief efforts of defence made by Canclaux were against the latter. The artillery played long against each other without any material effect, till Cathelineau, adopting the Vendean tactics, advanced with his tirailleurs through the gardens, and got into the town. Had he been quickly followed, or had he survived, Nantes was his; but a musket shot prostrated Cathelineau, and his attached peasants thought but of carrying off his body. The town was thus lost, and the Vendéans, dismayed, re-passed the Loire.

Cathelineau's was not the only loss suffered by the Vendéans. The Marquis de Bonchamps perished on the field, saving the lives of four thousand republican prisoners with his last breath. M. de Lescure was mortally wounded. Henri de la Rochejacquelein alone, though a mere youth, led such forces as he could keep together, the peasants scattering to their homes after the failure at Nantes. Whilst the Vendéans thus gave up their cause, the convention did its utmost to lose that of the republic. It displaced and discredited every esteemed general, Canclaux amongst them, and sent Biron and Custine to the scaffold because they were nobly born. In the place of the former, two *sans-culottes*, Ronsin and Rossignol, were sent to command in La Vendée, although they were as cowardly as they were incapable, and good for nothing but to destroy military confidence and discipline. Westermann, a kindred spirit, who led the attack on the Tuileries on the 10th of August, now conducted a division into La Vendée, and put in practice his ideas of war by burning and destroying the whole country—towns, farms, and homesteads. The battalions of Parisian insurrectionists or volunteers were apt perpetrators of the devastation. This roused the Vendéans. They fell upon Westermann at Chatillon, and so completely routed his army that the convention not only recalled but imprisoned him. Fortune, however, offered to the convention the best means of subduing La Vendée. Custine had left a veteran army of 15,000 men in Mayence, which was besieged by the Austrians. The garrison within and the besiegers without were both alarmed—one at the impossibility, the other at the possibility, of the French general, Beauharnais, coming to its relief. The garrison accordingly surrendered, on condition of being allowed to retire to France, and not serve for a time against its foreign foe. The convention placed these 15,000 men on the carts and waggons of the peasants, compelling them by requisition to transport

CHAP.
XL.

them with all speed from the Rhine to the Loire.* The Vendéans thus found themselves for the first time faced and overwhelmed by veteran troops, accustomed to regular warfare. The *sans-culottes* generals, Ronsin and Rosignol, did their best, indeed, to defeat every military plan; and in this they were supported in Paris by both Danton and Robespierre, neither of whom had the remotest idea of what was necessary to success in war. The veterans from Mayence, however, would not be guided by the *sans-culottes*. They were commanded by Kleber; and both he and Canclaux, although they refused promotion and declined to assume the rank of generals-in-chief, which was a step to the scaffold, nevertheless continued to direct the movements of the army. It penetrated into the heart of La Vendée. The insurgents soon mustered to the number of 40,000 to meet their foe, and fought almost an equal battle with them at Torfou, near Clisson. The troops of Mayence, however, were able to claim the victory. The convention rewarded them by dismissing their commanders, and appointed another *sans-culotte*, Lechelle, as general-in-chief. As he was utterly incapable of commanding, Kleber stuck by his men. They were again attacked in mid-October by the Vendéans at Chollet. The latter were led by their few surviving chiefs, and at once adopted the discipline and tactics of their new enemies. They kept in line, charged in column, and did all that valour could do to secure the victory; but the veterans of the Rhine were not to be defeated. The Vendéans were beaten, and, as after the effort of Nantes, they retreated into their country. They now, after this decisive defeat of Chollet, re-crossed the Loire to the north, and flung themselves into Brittany. It seemed as if they wished to avoid displaying to their own homes and villages their misery and final discomfiture.†

* Gouvion de St. Cyr's Mem.

La Rochejacquelein; Bouchart;

† Guerres de la Vendée; Kleber;

Turreau; Louis Blanc.

Having thus sketched the triumphs of the convention over federalism and resistance, whether Girondist or royalist, we must narrate how it encountered the foreign foe; but as this, an apparent struggle between France and Europe, was influenced more by the dissensions between foreign courts, and by the successive use of conflicting principles in the French assembly and government, than by the actual events of war, it is necessary to go somewhat into these differences and changes. It has been before observed, that, whilst the great monarchies of Europe came forward to wage a chivalric war against the destroyers of the French monarchy and the murderers of Louis, mere selfish and domestic causes intervened to disturb their alliance. Russia seized the opportunity to swallow up Poland, and offered Prussia a share in order to secure its support against Austria. The latter power, in consequence, felt all its old animosity against Prussia revive. Instead of helping one another honestly in the French war, Austria and Prussia dreaded nothing more than the glory or successes of the other. Thus, when the Prussian army under the Duke of Brunswick had driven the French under Custine from the Rhenish palatinate, the duke, instead of making use of his fine army and following up victory, sat down to reduce Mayence. In the same spirit, the Duke of Coburg, after capturing Condé and Valenciennes, and then penetrating into France at the head of 120,000 men, determined to make no use of his advantages.*

One learns from the history of the campaigns of this time, by the Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr, that the years 1791, 1792, and 1793 were mere years of scholarship for the French recruits. Forced in numbers to the camps by the requisitions of the convention, and its *levée en masse*, such troops were only good for what St. Cyr

* Sybel; Hardenberg.

CHAP.
XL

calls little war—surprises, defences, skirmishing. They wanted alike the discipline or the firmness for fighting a battle with equal numbers, or meeting the requirements of a regular campaign. It was the opinion of St. Cyr, as of Dumouriez and of every competent person, that the Prussians and Austrians had but to advance in order to be masters of Paris. And when we think that Marie Antoinette was executed there at a time when 200,000 German soldiers were within twelve days' march of it, and 80,000 Vendéans in arms on the other side, and at a less distance, it is inconceivable that the audacity of a mere handful of anarchists could prevail against such an overwhelming number of foes.

What rendered the fate of Marie Antoinette still more lamentable and extraordinary was the fact, that numbers of the convention and many members of the French executive hoped to save her. Amongst these was Danton. The singular position of this revolutionist has already been described, his moderate leanings, his friendship for Dumouriez, his desire at first for an alliance with the Gironde, and the active and vindictive steps which he principally took to ruin them after they had first repudiated and then attacked him. Amongst his reasons for eliminating them from the assembly was, that, whilst they remained there, power must oscillate between them and the Mountain, the Gironde commission of twelve holding it one day, and the *sans-culottes commune* the next. Danton wanted something between these extremes. He scouted alike the policy of Brissot and of Robespierre, the former of whom had precipitated the war to strengthen his party, whilst the latter had reaped the advantage of it. Robespierre thought that all nobles ought to be guillotined, that no prince or crowned head should be acknowledged or treated with, that the poor and ignorant should take the place of the rich and educated. In this development of envy and anarchy, his cold-blooded soul found some warmth and satisfaction.

Danton, on the contrary, feared that, with the country south of the Loire in insurrection, the 200,000 enemies, extending from Basil to Dunkirk, might advance and crush the republic. When Dumouriez had disappointed every moderate patriotic hope, Danton built his faith upon Custine. That commander told him that Prussia, more jealous of Austria than of France, was willing to treat, and thus by an accord France might retain the fortress of Mayence, whilst secularising the ecclesiastical electorates and giving them to Prussia. Custine was for accepting these conditions, and setting aside Robespierre, whose *sans-culottisme* would contemplate nothing but continued revolution and war. Custine, however, like Dumouriez, failed. He abandoned 20,000 of his troops in Mayence, which was obliged to surrender. And though re-appointed by Danton to the command of the armies of the north, he was unable there to recover his reputation, or prevent Robespierre,* when he obtained power, from taking vengeance and sending the general to the scaffold.

It was not only with Prussia that Danton tried to negotiate, but with Sweden and with Austria. Two envoys sent by him to Constantinople, being obliged to take Italy in their way, had orders to make overtures through the Italian government to that of Austria for a peace, of which the liberation of Marie Antoinette was to be the first price. Whatever impression such offers made upon the court of Vienna was effaced when early in July the committee of public safety was renewed, and Danton's influence not only annulled but a policy the contrary of his, that of Robespierre, which was one of war and defiance to all courts and aristocracies, avowedly introduced.

The failure of Danton to enforce his moderate policy, and to bring about peace by diplomatic reconciliation

* Procès de Custine; Mem. of Merlin de Thionville.

CHAP.
XL

with some of the great powers, was owing partly to the inconsistency of his own conduct. Moderate in reality, he, like Mirabeau, covered it by bursts of violence, which out-Heroded even that of the Mountain. Thus he alienated the Girondists, the first masters of the majority of the convention, by his complicity in the cruel acts of September. Later he disgusted the centre, or Plain, of the convention by his coercion of it on the 31st of May and 2nd of June.* He did this by throwing himself and the convention into the arms of that violent faction of the *commune* which he professed in secret to dread and to control. Could he, indeed, after having made use of it to crush the Gironde, have succeeded afterwards in putting it down, Danton might still have kept his influence over the convention. But he failed to do so. In the first days subsequent to the elimination of the Gironde, Danton, indeed, spoke in the sense of moderation. He offered himself to go as hostage to Bordeaux. But when Barère in consequence made the proposition, and when Robespierre scouted it, Danton was obliged to remain silent and draw back. Barère, at the same time, encouraged by Danton, attacked and denounced the *commune* both for its audacity on the 2nd of June and for its having since stopped all the correspondence at the post office. But Robespierre's successful defence of the *commune* forced Barère to withdraw the report. Whilst the Mountain thus displayed its power, it shrank from all at once proclaiming its triumph and establishing its domination. It awaited, and allowed the centre to await, the result of the movements in the provinces. And in the meantime it brought forward the new constitution as the order of the day in the convention.

Whilst the Girondists were in the ascendant, Condorcet had drawn up a constitution as abstractedly

* See the Memoirs of Barère for and the insurgents who coerced the Danton's complicity with Henriot convention.

democratic as could be desired. But Robespierre, the worshipper of Rousseau, detested Condorcet, as a disciple of Voltaire, and would have another project of constitution. Héroult de Séchelles, the friend of Danton, was entrusted with concocting it this time. Danton himself had a contempt for all constitution-mongering, being perfectly aware that no fundamental law would be observed in the present state of affairs. Héroult shared his belief, and drew up a constitution for mere form, which he knew would not, and could not, be put in practice. Yet the Girondists' project was the most impracticable; it advised an executive of twenty-four to be elected by the people in the primary assemblies, as if the people in such assemblies could know even the names of the politicians capable of ruling, much less make a selection between them. Héroult de Séchelles sought to remedy this by having the candidates for government elected by the secondary assemblies of departments. Moreover, to please Robespierre, the idea and recognition of a Supreme Being was introduced, which did not square with the materialist philosophy of Condorcet.* The constitution, when it was voted, was attended with no result, save a *fête* and the starting up or disclosure of a new political sect, which went far beyond Robespierre. Chabot was the spokesman; he denounced the constitution as unprofitable to the poor, and as not having established even the principle of progressive taxation, and as not annihilating the monopolisers, meaning holders of any kind of property. Chabot also objected to the dictatorial nature of the constitution. Rejected at the Jacobins, this party gave, as we shall find, much trouble to Robespierre, intrrenching itself in the club of the Cordeliers and the *commune*.

* The religious opinions of the Gironde were as vague as their political ones. Most of them young men, they had not as yet formed mature or steady convictions upon

any point. Six of the Gironde sought a confessor in their last moments, as did Philip Égalité.—Abbé Lothringer's letter, in the Almanac du 19^e Siècle.

CHAP.
XL.

An event which occurred in July greatly increased the revolutionary fervour, and aggravated the unpopularity of the Girondists. A young and beautiful woman, of a noble though poor family, inhabited Caen when the fugitive Girondists arrived there. Bred in a convent, she was no sooner liberated from it than she plunged into the literature of the age, particularly admiring Rousseau and Raynal. Imbued, first with the ideas, then fanaticised by the conversation of the Girondists, and especially of Barbaroux, who eloquently depicted the tyranny of Robespierre and Marat, Charlotte Corday formed her plan, and obtained a letter from Barbaroux to Duperret, in Paris, without allusion to any secret errand. She no sooner arrived than she asked to see Marat. He was ill, and could not receive her. But she insisted, saying she had important intelligence to convey to him from Caen. The house inhabited by Marat still stands in the Rue de l'École de Médecine, at the corner of another street, with an old *tourelle*, that marks its antiquity. The low doorway, through which Charlotte Corday entered, betrays its being of another age. She was admitted to Marat, who was in one of those baths, in the form of a shoe, which almost cover the whole body. In this position he was accustomed to write. The young girl told him some circumstances respecting Caen, and the names of those engaged there in resisting the convention. "Ah!" said Marat, writing down the names, "they shall all go to the guillotine." Charlotte Corday, before uncertain, started up at the word, and plunged a dagger to the hilt in the breast of Marat. He cried out, "*A moi!*" but was dead when his servant arrived. Hustled, threatened, but not hurt, Charlotte was conveyed to prison, and successively to the tribunal and the scaffold. She gloried in what she had done. Why had she slain Marat? For his crimes. She did not want republican energy, she said. What do you mean by energy? That which makes one set aside egoism, and sacrifice one's self to one's country.

Yet the religion of the convent did not recur to her. She spoke of being soon in the Elysian fields with Brutus; such was her dream. To her father she wrote a letter of adieu, in which she quoted Corneille's lines :

CHAP.
XL.

Le crime fait la honte et non l'échafaud.

Without fear, almost without emotion, Charlotte Corday mounted the scaffold, amidst the very mingled feelings of those who witnessed it. The man who held up the head to the people after the execution slapped the face, which a sudden blush was seen to diffuse. The mob shouted shame. The ruffian had gone a little too far for the public sentiment. The poor girl went to the grave glorifying in what she thought a useful act, yet it merely contributed to send her friends of the Gironde to the same scaffold, and to deliver Robespierre of a dangerous and inconvenient rival.*

The renewal of the committee of public safety took place about the same time—the middle of July. The new election fell upon Jean-Bon-St.-André, Barère, Gasparin, Couthon, Thuriot, Hérault, St. Just, Prieur de la Côte-d'Or, and Robert Lindet. Danton was no longer of the number. Foreseeing that he would not be re-elected, says Barère, he affected to decline, and declared that he would be more useful in giving impulse to the committee from without than sitting in it as a member. His friends, Thuriot and Hérault, indeed, continued to make part of it. But these were nullified by St. Just and Couthon, whilst, later in July, Robespierre joined it in the place of Gasparin. Danton, by his conduct on the 2nd of June, and his powerlessness since, had in fact lost the support of the centre, and was no longer what Levasseur called him—the chief of the Plain. The only resource for Danton was to join the Mountain, heart and soul. But, in order to do that, it was necessary for him

* Charlotte Corday, by Dubois; the report of her trial.

CHAP.
XL.

either to rival Robespierre or act second to him—the one as dangerous as the other was repugnant. Danton, indeed, for a time gave up the struggle, and retired to his native place of Arcis-sur-Aube, to enjoy a breathing time from strife and from blood.

Robespierre was no sooner of the committee than he impressed his spirit upon it.* The queen was proceeded against, and the Gironde was denounced and doomed, not merely to suspension, but the scaffold, some of them remaining in Paris under surveillance. Pétion and Lanjuinais having escaped, the rest were conveyed to prison. St. Just's first report upon them was considered too mild, and not acted upon. The chief care of Robespierre was, indeed, to feed the guillotine. He commenced by such general officers as could be proved guilty of noble birth. For this crime, more than for any fault, Custine and Beauharnais were sent to the scaffold. But the terrorist legislator of the time was equally a scourge to humbler classes. The *maximum* had already been voted, by which it was rendered penal to sell above a certain price, or to sell at all, except in the public markets. It was no longer 300,000 men that the committee insisted on levying, but every person, from 18 to 40, was ordered to join the armies. These were the *levées en masse*. To pay such multitudes was out of the question. Indeed, the assignats were so depreciated that they could scarcely perform the functions of money. But the convention decreed, that an estimate should be made of the produce of each department, a sufficient quantity put by for the food of such inhabitants as were allowed to stay at home, and the rest to be taken by requisition, and forwarded to the armies. The great towns, especially Paris, were also to have the benefit of this forced supply. To work such a system, the members of the committee, or rather of the Mountain, took

* Barère.

upon themselves. They separated as commissaries for the armies and for the provinces, to overawe or proscribe every will that opposed their acts. A guillotine was the necessary accompaniment, and it was needed, for terror alone could bow down a population to such sacrifices and such behests. In Paris this display of more energy than of either justice or wisdom failed of its desired effect. The maximum, notwithstanding all the penalties with which it was accompanied, or, rather, on account of them, did not fill the markets of the capital. Neither corn nor meat were to be had there. Whilst famine exasperated the lower ranks of life, the middle or trading population were goaded almost to rebellion by the conduct of the *commune*, who robbed the heads of families by the forced and arbitrary loans, and who especially selected the young clerks and shopkeepers for conscripts to go to the war, whilst the *sans-culottes* youth were kept in Paris to support the revolutionary government and system.

The authorities of the *commune*, and especially Chaumette, were much alarmed by these new insurrectionists, some of whom cried for bread, and others for regular and just government. Chaumette came on the 5th of September to the bar of the convention to complain, not only of turbulence in the streets, but in the very sections, which began to be divided into two parties. Robespierre, whose first attempt at taking the government into his own hands, and applying revolutionary measures, menaced so disastrous a failure, discovered the cause not to be in his own incapacity, but in a plot "to starve Paris, and plunge it in blood." The only person who plotted this was himself. He, however, was in the background, whilst the mob, since it had trodden down the convention, saw no cause of famine but the *commune*. They accordingly besieged it, with the cries of "Bread! bread!" and drove Chaumette and Hébert to their wits' end to satisfy them. Chaumette declared the famine to

CHAP.
XL.

be the fault of the monopolisers—"those infamous persons who had succeeded to the aristocratic landlords, and were quite as bad." He advised the revolutionary army—that is, the mob—to go into the fields, search and ravage the farmers' houses for corn. Hébert, who began to doubt the all-wisdom of Robespierre, and thought he would make a much better dictator, hinted to the people they had better go and besiege the convention. The assembly, to escape the effects of Hébert's threats, adopted Chaumette's advice, and voted a revolutionary army of 18,000 men, each man receiving three francs a day. The moment was perilous for the committee of public safety, especially as Lyons and La Vendée still resisted, and the enemy also threatened from the north. The offer was made to Danton to join the committee. He refused, and his friend Thuriot resigned. Collot and Billaud were then adjoined, that the executive might find strength in these popular partisans. An equally important nomination was that of Carnot.

Thus reinforced, the committee of public safety announced, through its reporter, St. Just, the adoption of ultra-revolutionary measures. One was the law of *suspects*. St. Just declared, that it was not sufficient to strike down enemies, for that the *indifferent* were quite as dangerous and as worthy of punishment. He declared, therefore, to be *suspects* all "those who in their conduct or relations, their writings or words, had shown themselves partisans of tyranny or federalism, or who were related in the least degree to the *ci-devant* nobles or to *émigrés*." All such were to be thrust into prison, and kept there till the peace. It was some thousands of rabid individuals who thus doomed the millions of France to prison or the guillotine. The marvel is, that the millions bore it, and were unable to shake off the incubus.

Jacques Roux, a frantic member of the *enragés*, or Chabot party, was arrested. But much was done to

pacify the mob. A revolutionary army was one grateful measure. Those who attended a revolutionary committee were equally well paid. The position of judge and jury of the revolutionary tribunal was envied. But the chief expedient for pacifying the mob was to furnish eminent victims for the guillotine. This the convention knew would be accepted, even in lieu of bread, by the rabble. It was therefore resolved first to throw to them the head of Marie Antoinette, and then those of the Girondists.

The first act of the new committee, the very day after it was appointed, had been to separate the unfortunate queen from her son. The pretence was a plot—Robespierre dreamed of nothing but plots—said to have been imagined by General Dillon to deliver the queen. The mother clung desperately to her child, and fought the municipal officers for more than an hour, till they threatened to kill him and the two princesses, and by force carried away the boy. They committed him to the cobbler Simon, in order that this worthy might educate him as a *sans-culotte*. The queen was transferred to a dungeon in the Conciergerie. It still exists, that dark abode, dripping with damp, filthy, and fetid. There was a recess of the cell where Marie Antoinette slept behind a screen, two policemen occupying the cell itself. Here was Marie Antoinette left for two months, until it became expedient to offer to the hungry mob an illustrious victim in lieu of bread. The queen's resignation and miserable condition—she with difficulty saved her gown from falling to pieces, or her stockings from rotting with the damp—moved the compassion of more than one of her jailers, who at times brought her fruit, or a note of hope from without. As the cold weather set in, the jailer's wife asked for a cotton blanket for the queen. Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser, declared that the demand ought to be punished by the guillotine. On the 14th of October Marie Antoinette appeared before

CHAP.
XL.

the revolutionary tribunal, and answered to their interrogatories. She was, she said, the widow of Louis, once king, and was thirty-seven years of age. Fouquier Tinville, determined to gratify his audience, accused Marie Antoinette of every crime that cruelty could invent or bestiality suggest. She was an Agrippina, a Messalina, and even worse. Witnesses were called and examined for mere form. Accused of having suggested all the anti-liberal acts of Louis the Sixteenth, the queen replied that the king was not the weak character they supposed. Hébert came forward with a story that Simon the cobbler declared that he had elicited from the little dauphin that his mother had depraved him. Marie Antoinette refused to answer, but when pressed, replied, "Nature refuses to answer such an accusation made against a mother. I appeal to all the mothers here!" exclaimed the queen, turning round. A murmur of approbation arose even from that audience, which was at least sufficient to silence Hébert. At four o'clock in the morning of the second day of trial Marie Antoinette heard her sentence. It was of course death. She descended to the prison beneath, and then, whilst awaiting the executioner, penned the well-known and affecting letter to her sister, the Princess Elizabeth. At eleven o'clock she was led forth, and compelled to mount with difficulty a rude cart with a bench flung across it. Her hands were tied behind, so that she could with difficulty keep her seat as the cart moved on. A constitutional priest placed himself by her side, but she turned away, and reserved her devotions until the cart passed before a certain house in the Rue St. Honoré, from an upper window of which it was arranged that an orthodox ecclesiastic should pour down upon her absolution. After this she sat erect, and showed neither fear nor emotion, except during one look that she cast upon the Tuileries. At midday on the 15th of October perished Marie Antoinette.*

* Procès de Marie Antoinette. Beauchene, letter in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

If the most unexpected and triumphant success could have had any softening effect upon such men as filled the ruling committee of France, the tidings which poured upon the government in October would have inspired them with magnanimity and clemency. Early in the month Lyons was reduced. Toulon, to be sure, had surrendered to the English, an event of far less importance than it might have been some months sooner. About the period of Marie Antoinette's execution, the Vendéans, flying to the north bank of the Loire after defeat, gave birth to the exclamation of Biron, that La Vendée was no more. On the northern frontier, the delay, hesitation, and dispersion of the troops of the allies, whilst the French with their *levées en masse*, and reawakened energy, multiplied and concentrated themselves, produced the decisive victories of Hondschoote and Wattignies.

As soon as the allied generals had separated in the commencement of August, the Prince of Coburg to invest Cambray, and the Duke of York, with some two-and-twenty thousand men, to besiege Dunkirk, an engineer captain addressed to the committee of public safety a plan. The Prussians, after the capture of Mayence, had shown no designs to advance. The plan of this officer, named Carnot, was to draft some 20,000 or 30,000 men from the Rhine, hurry them *en poste* to swell the force with which Houchard was facing the Duke of York, and crush the latter with a force triple of that which he commanded. The committee not only adopted the suggestion of Carnot, but added him to the committee, in order to give him authority to execute his own plan.

The Duke of York had pitched his tent before Dunkirk, ill-provided for a siege. The presence of an English fleet before the harbour was necessary to his success, but no fleet appeared. He had left General Freytag at the head of the Hessians and Hanoverians at Hond-

CHAP.
XL.

schoote, to defend against the French that passage across the marshes. But the opening of the sluices at Dunkirk overflowed the country, and intercepted the duke's communications with Freytag. General Houchard, greatly augmented by Carnot's arrangements, was ordered to advance on Freytag, and completely isolate the Duke of York. He dislodged Freytag from Rexpoode, a village near Hondschoote, on the 6th, but not without stubborn resistance on the part of the Hessians and Hanoverians. At night the latter retook the village; and Houchard retreated to his own quarters, which were also those of the conventionalist representative, Levasseur. The guillotine was the inevitable consequence of defeat. Accordingly on the 8th the French, under such impulse, re-attacked Freytag at Hondschoote, and overcame him, being far superior in numbers. But the delay enabled the Duke of York to retreat from his perilous position, and at least save his army, leaving some fifty cannon behind him.*

His semi-success did not save Houchard, who was sent to the guillotine. He was succeeded in the command by a gallant man-milliner, Jourdan, who promised to be more obedient to Carnot. In October the Prince of Coburg passed the Sambre, and invested Maubeuge, with the reduction of which he intended to close the campaign. The committee of public safety could not endure the idea of the Austrians taking up their winter quarters in France. Jourdan was ordered to fight a battle to prevent it; Carnot came down to direct it. On the 15th the French attacked the Austrian position, the chief of which was the village of Wattignies; under Carnot's direction the two wings were first fiercely attacked, after which the centre was to be forced. Jourdan did not find his success on the wings decisive enough, Carnot did; and the consequence was that the

* Memoirs of Levasseur. The accounts in Buechez et Roux, and Sybel Gay de Vernon's Memoirs. Hardenberg.

general abandoned the command to the commissary, and went to fight at the head of a division. The charge was a failure; the French were repulsed. Another army would have disbanded; and had Coburg been enterprising, he might have converted the repulse into a defeat, but he allowed the French to rally. With the leaders it was really death or victory, and on the following day they returned to the charge, flinging their conscripts *en masse* upon the enemy, and caring for no sacrifice if they conquered. Carnot now massed the greater part of his force against one of the enemies' wings, that which approached Wattignies, and defeated it after a desperate day's fight, the Austrians making a stubborn resistance. At last Coburg retreated, yet in good order, bringing with him all his guns, even those captured from the French. It was, however, what Carnot wanted as the inauguration of his military reign, a victory, and placed France more in the position to conquer Flanders than the Austrians in that of marching on Paris. They had allowed the time to go by.*

A few days after the affair of Wattignies the Girondists were brought to trial. If the execution of the queen had been pressed by Robespierre, not only for the gratification of the mob, but as an answer, and rebuff, to Danton and his friends, who would have treated with foreign powers, and thus attempted at least to restore peace to the country, the condemnation of the Girondists, and the ejection from the convention of all the "indifferents," who had once favoured them, was necessary to secure the ultra-revolutionists their hold of the convention and its majority. It was determined to epurate, such was the expression, all the influential bodies. The Jacobins voted that all their members should undergo a scrutiny; the council of the *commune*

* M. Louis Blanc's account of the battle of Wattignies is from the manuscripts of Marshal Jourdan.

See also Sybel and Piérart, *Recherches sur Maubeuge*.

CHAP.
XL

ordained the same. The convention was epurated even more summarily.

Amar, one of the *tremblers* of the centre, was employed to draw up the act of accusation against the Girondists; its purpose was made known early in October. Although it demanded the heads of some sixty members implicated in the resistance of the Gironde, it no longer agitated the convention or satisfied the clubs. This first batch of victims was expected; they were long since abandoned to their fate. But Amar, in addition, pointed out seventy-three more members, principally of the centre, guilty, as he represented, of having signed in June a petition against the act of the 2nd of that month ejecting the Girondists from the assembly.

It was upon this occasion that a change in the sentiments of Robespierre first became apparent. Whilst the more violent Jacobins were for sending seventy-three moderate members of the centre to the scaffold along with the Girondists, Robespierre interfered. He pointed out to the convention that it was merely necessary to strike down the chiefs, without immolating those who had been but led astray (*égarés*); of these there were several in the list just read; it was quite right to place all under arrest, but the committee of public safety would examine each case, and not confound all degrees of crime in one sweeping accusation. Notwithstanding this the more rabid members carried a vote that the seventy-three should be committed to La Force and other prisons; whilst the younger Girondists, such as Ducos and Fonfrède, as well as Isnard, and those who had proffered their resignation on the 31st of May, were sent for immediate trial with Vergniaud and Brissot.

The events of September, and his own promised accession to the responsibilities of office and of power, had their effect upon Robespierre; he was out-Heroded by the *enragés*, and overborne by the *commune*, whilst the populace murmured against the governing committee

for not warding off famine, and providing for popular necessities. To blunt this appetite of the rabble, and deprive it of its leaders, Billaud and Collot had been admitted to the committee of public safety, and these it was, more than Robespierre, who had decided the proscription of the seventy-three. Robespierre, on the contrary, felt the want of the old centre, and would gladly have preserved all the members of it who were willing to transfer to the Mountain that allegiance which they had previously paid to the Gironde. Unfortunately some members of the centre, and indeed their chief, Barère, who had sought to screen the Girondists quite as much as the seventy-three, had now come round, not so much to Robespierre, as to Collot and Billaud, and the more rabid members of the committee.

These men loved destruction and massacre for destruction and massacre's sake. Robespierre's principles were to crush royalty and extirpate aristocracy, sending everyone who claimed or inherited a privilege, whether of birth, position, or talent, to the scaffold. He was deeply envious of superiority, and could not pardon it. But he saw no use in immolating the common crowd of adherents even to dangerous parties and culpable opinions. He was for sparing Lyons, and for not annihilating its wealth, but forcing it to change hands. Couthon shared these ideas, and would have acted upon them towards the fallen city. But Collot and Billaud prevailed, and wrung from the convention a decree of sweeping destruction, not only to the rich and their houses, but even to the public buildings of the devoted city.

The act of accusation against the Girondists principally imputed to them the crime of having from the first conspired in favour of royalty against the republic. Brissot and Condorcet were represented as accomplices of Lafayette; Pétion as conspiring at the Tuileries against the people on the 10th of August. Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné gave the tyrant king advice.

CHAP.
XL.

Carra, confounded with the Girondists, was accused, and they with him, of having conspired to offer the crown of France to the Duke of York and the Duke of Brunswick. So on, the Girondists had tried to save the life of Louis, and, when proscribed, had raised an insurrection in the provinces. The witnesses brought forward were not the friends of Robespierre, but taken from the *enragés*. They were Hébert, Chaumette, Chabot. The accused evidently had hope of an acquittal, trying several of them to shake the evidence, and assert their innocence of the crimes charged against them. Boileau alone, however, made base excuses, declaring himself Jacobin and Montagnard. The young men Ducos and Fonfrède, not arrested on the 2nd of June, but allowed to sit in the convention since, would, it was thought, be acquitted. But the revolutionary jury, after a mock trial, condemned all indiscriminately to death.

It was between 10 and 11 o'clock at night on the 31st of October that the Girondists were called in to receive their sentence. Some of them heard it with surprise, others with impatience. Valazé, who had been so rude to Louis on his trial, now struck a poniard into his own heart. Vergniaud and his brother chiefs heard their fate with heroic impassibility. But, as others were turbulent and threatened the jury, all were removed. As they descended the stone stairs, leading from the tribunal to the prisons of the Conciergerie below, the condemned raised the song of the Marseillaise :

Pour nous de la tyrannie
Le couteau sanglant est levé.

According to some accounts, a rich and well-served banquet was prepared for them in their large common cell, before and since the chapel of the prison. As all Paris was then pinched with famine, a sumptuous banquet was unlikely. But no doubt they had refreshment of some kind served to them, and tradition recounts that they partook of it in solemn and philosophic dis-

course. The habits and ideas of the ancients were then the vogue, and the example of Socrates was familiar to them. Philosophy and religion were, indeed, wrecked in these days, as well as monarchy and humanity, but there were still fragments which floated for such men as the Girondists to catch at, on the eve of being engulfed for ever. Executed on the following morn, all met their fate with courage.*

The members of the Gironde who had escaped were not more fortunate. Pétion, Guadet, Barbaroux, long obliged to hide themselves in caverns, beyond the light of day, perished with their companions—some by their own hands, others by the guillotine. In Paris the executions continued without intermission. It had been proposed in the convention to include the Duke of Orleans in the trial of the Girondists. The public accuser would have lumped them altogether, though Philip Égalité was detested by the Gironde, and detested it. He had behaved as a franc Montagnard, but Robespierre could not forgive him his birth. He had suffered months of severe imprisonment at Marseilles. A week after the death of the Girondists he appeared before the revolutionary tribunal. The accusation had really no crime to lay to his charge. No one had been more true to the revolution or more prominent in it than he. The tribunal sent him to the scaffold. Reynold's pencil has preserved his rubicund visage and sunken eye. He showed perfect impassiveness going to the scaffold. The executioner wanted to take off his boots. "You may as well take them off after," was the remark. General Coustard perished at the same time. Some days after Madame Roland was brought on the same errand to

* We need scarcely refer to the works of Lamartine, Barante, Granier de Cassagnac, and Michelet, for the different views taken of the Girondists. Their trial is printed

at length in the *Hist. Parlementaire*. The history of M. Louis Blanc gives the Montagnard side of all questions.

CHAP.
XL.

the Place de la Revolution. A statue of liberty had been lately made to adorn it, and preside over executions. "Oh, liberty," exclaimed she, "what crimes are committed in thy name!" Her husband, on learning her fate, rushed forth from his hiding-place at Rouen, and was discovered near the high-road, the sword on which he had flung himself traversing his body. Bailly was another of the victims of this epoch. He who bore the red flag when the anarchists were first fired upon in the Champ de Mars could not escape, yet he had taken no trouble to conceal himself. Death was welcome at that time to every Frenchman, and woman too, who had a station or a thought above the popular dregs. Bailly was brought to be executed, and was dragged from place to place, on an extremely cold day, ere one was found to the taste of his immolators. The old man trembled from the fatigue and the weather. The ruffians taunted him with it. "It is but from the cold," said Bailly.

Numerous and indiscriminate as were the executions in Paris, they were far surpassed in the provinces. At Lyons Collot and Fouché presided, with a staff of Jacobins and a revolutionary army. The guillotine was in continual activity, but it did not suffice for the extermination of all the respectable inhabitants of the city. Other supplementary means were employed. Victims were drawn up in files before the mouth of cannon, which still did not prostrate all, and the sabre and axe had to complete the butchery. Then musketry was preferred, and there was a regular *battue* on the great Plain des Terreaux, shooting the non-Jacobin population like pheasants in close covert. Robbery kept pace with murder, and was often the real cause. Robespierre would divide the wealth of Lyons amongst its poor and real *sans-culottes*; the leading Jacobins were for transferring it to their own pockets.*

The greatest atrocities committed by the proconsuls

* Maignet; Mont leon.

of the convention were probably those of Nantes, executed under the orders of Carrier. A multitude of the Vendean party, women and children especially, had taken refuge there. Kleber asked Carrier to send them home. Their destitute state would have itself proved a lesson in the *bocage*. Carrier durst not. "He would be guillotined," he said, "for such an act of mercy." The inhabitants of Nantes offered to take and bring up some fifteen hundred of these orphans under thirteen. Carrier preferred keeping them for execution. To guillotine them was impossible. The commissary of the convention invented the disposal of them by drowning. Prisoners were crowded in boats, towed into the middle of the river, and the water let in. Some sixty priests were the first thus disposed of. When the victims resisted this mode of slaying them, they were sabred. Afterwards they were tied two and two; men and women were thus sent to be drowned together, which excited gaiety as a republican marriage.* Tallien, at Bordeaux; Fréron and Barras, at Marseilles; Schneider, at Strasburg, were scarcely milder. The extermination of the middle class seemed their aim.

The sole reverse which delayed the complete reconquest of the south of France by the convention was the surrender of Toulon to the English admiral towards the end of August. The town was not only threatened by conventional forces under Carteaux, but by famine. The French ports of the Mediterranean are in general fed from abroad. But an English fleet barred all import of corn. It thus became necessary to surrender either to the English or to the Jacobins. To do the latter was to give their necks to the guillotine. The town submitted to Admiral Hood, who took possession of it in the name of the Bourbon monarch. The inhabitants, however, refused to acknowledge the king unless he would accept the constitution of 1791. This

* Carrier's trial.

CHAP.
XL.

rendered it impossible to summon any of the princes into the town. Yet the English commander could not furnish it with a sufficient or steadfast garrison. He procured some four thousand soldiers, but they were chiefly Spaniards mingled with Italians, and commanded by the Spanish general O'Hara. Toulon is commanded on all sides, the town by the heights, the roadstead by the promontories. To occupy and defend these would have required a large force, steady troops, and an active general. The English were enabled to hold the town at first against the incapable and non-military generals, whom the convention appointed. But towards the end of November, the veteran Dugommier was appointed general, and a young artillery officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, not unknown to the Robespierres,* was empowered to execute a plan of his own for battering the roadstead and driving the enemy from the heights. Carnot and Bonaparte obtained their first appointments in the same manner, by the ability shown in their plans. A large force, far more than double the besieged, was placed at their disposal. And notwithstanding a first repulse, the republican troops successively stormed and captured the fortified heights which commanded Toulon, and the forts which protected the roads. There was nothing left for the garrison but to retreat. The English admiral took advantage of his occupation of the harbour to destroy the French fleet and arsenal, and to blow up the forts. It was not a little disgraceful that, though invited into Toulon by the inhabitants, this should be the only result. Then came the difficulty of saving the population from the vengeance of the republicans. They thronged the shore, crowded into the boats, almost as many being drowned as saved in the attempt to escape. Although the French were crippled by the loss of nine or ten men-of-war, still it were to be wished that Admiral

* Napoleon gave, when emperor, a pension of 70*l.* a year to Mademoiselle Robespierre.

Hood had confined his efforts to the blockade, and left parties upon French soil to contend amongst each other. They were sufficiently expert at destruction and massacre without the English adding to such horrors.*

CHAP.
XL.

Victor, the future Marshal and Duke de Bellune, commanded one of the divisions which entered Toulon (December 19). He has left a description of the ferocious joy of the commissaries, young Robespierre, Barras, and Fréron, as they entered at the head of the troops. The generals forbade an indiscriminate massacre. But the dregs of the town were soon armed by the Jacobins, and furnished with victims; the first were the workmen who had saved a portion of the arsenal from the fire. From the long contests which had taken place, the colour and inclination of every Toulonnais was known. All those who were not Jacobins were now sent in batches to the Champ de Mars, passed for form's sake before a balcony where there were said to be judges, and then shot down. The more furious members of the committee of public safety, delighted with the wholesale massacres perpetrated at Toulon, ordered the commissaries who presided, Barras and Fréron, to proceed to Marseilles, and annihilate the trading and industrious population there also. They obeyed the mandate and fulfilled the injunction by a four months' slaughter. The civic class of Bordeaux, Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons, was swept away in 1793-94 by the guillotine and indiscriminate shootings. Revolutionary principles of government and party prevailed by the extermination of all who possessed or were suspected of any other.

* Fréron, Mémoires de Bellune.—Correspondence of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XLI.

FROM THE TRIUMPH OF THE TERRORISTS TO THE END
OF THE CONVENTION IN 1795.

CHAP.
XLI.

THE French Revolution has obviously and often been likened to one of those terrestrial upheavings which first make the soil tremble, and then crush poor frail humanity amidst the ruins of the very edifices which it had raised. It was no passing or isolated explosion, but a series of systematic commotions, which flung off, layer after layer, each class and institution, as it happened to be uppermost, not resting or reposing till the great popular substratum lay bare in its nakedness, its helplessness, and its ignorance.

The epoch of the constitutional assembly marks the first heave, by which the people, making use of the middle and professional classes, and putting them in front, got rid of the aristocracy, humbled the crown, and made a clean sweep of the institutions in which these were rooted, and by virtue of which they dominated. The middle and professional class, thus finding itself on the summit, became sensible of the difficulties and dangers of its new position. It had triumphed by the physical support of the populace, and the populace demanded its guerdon, which was not so much a share of influence and power as the continuation of that revolutionary excitement and disorder which was so flattering to its vanity, so tributary to its profit, and so swelling to its importance. But this was prolonging the

anarchy of social revolution. The middle and professional class in the constituent assembly sought to stop the growing evil, and clung to the crown. For what remained of the aristocracy refused its support. But the possessor of the crown was unfortunately, both from character and position, unable to conceive, to execute, or even to uphold any rational scheme of resistance.

The legislative assembly brought forward another batch of representatives of the middle and professional class. They were provincial, and still enveloped in the swaddling clothes of theory, whilst their brethren of the constituent had grown old with experience and testy from neglect. The Girondists and the Feuillants could not agree, although the difference between them was merely a difference of time and of political education, not of principle. The professional party, opposed to social revolution, and ready to accept a constitutional monarchy, rather than drift further down the tide of popular anarchy, gained and kept parliamentary ascendancy. The demagogues could not face them in arguments or in eloquence, and the timid waverers who formed the centre of the assemblies rallied to the Girondists against them.

But the popular arm had been called in, and the wielders of it were determined not to be set aside. Condemned to be but a minority in the assemblies, those who embraced the theory of a republic, framed by the people in their own exclusive interests, found another forum in the clubs, and even another government in the metropolitan municipality; they raised their banner in the suburbs and the streets, whilst the convention unfortunately installed itself in the old palace of the kings. The last half of 1791 and the whole of 1792 comprise the struggle of the middle and professional class in the legislative and the convention, to hold their ground and maintain their power. This was impossible in the face of successive insurrections and mas-

CHAP.
XLI.

sacres, which terrified and silenced every moderate man, and rendered demagoguery triumphant through the fears which it excited.

This party became really powerful at the commencement of 1793, forcing even the moderate members of the Gironde to join in the responsibility of the king's death against their conviction and their sense of justice. Their pusillanimous and ignominious vote on that occasion sealed their own fate. Justice or injustice was meted to them as they had meted it to the monarch. They perished. Their fall aroused the resistance of the civic party in the provinces. It was ill-led, ill-united, ill-inspired. The middle class, mustered as a national guard, was no match for the people organized in regular regiments, as well as in revolutionary bands. And those who upheld either the royalist flag, as in La Vendée, or the moderate republic, as at Bordeaux or at Lyons, were crushed alike by the legions and massacred by the commissaries of the convention. The year 1793, marked by the successive victories of the democratic party, was still more signalized and occupied by their vengeance. If former years exterminated the aristocracy of birth and land, 1793 saw the annihilation of the *bourgeoisie* throughout the country. The conventionalists boasted that they destroyed the mercantile aristocracy which had taken the place of their betters, and congratulated each other that the men and the principles of the *sans-culottes* alone survived.

These triumphs of the terrorists have been recounted, and a small portion of that dark veil drawn aside, which covers the greatest series of atrocities that ever disgraced humanity. It would require volumes to describe them even with succinctness. There remains now to narrate the quarrel of the demagogues one with another. The strata of society above them had disappeared, and left none of which to make bugbears or victims. But the habit of immolating brother men is, apparently, one that cannot be

discontinued. The thirst for blood increases with the base portion of mankind in proportion to its being gratified. And independent of blood, the miserable politicians who survived 1793 had all of them vague and stupid, but still discordant ideas of the revolutionary millennium, to arrive at which they had sacrificed the respectability, the intellect, and the wealth of the country.

The men who established their power in France on the successive destruction and ruin of the constituent and Girondist parties, and who in the latter half of 1793 found themselves members of the ruling committees, were of three kinds. These were, first and foremost, the theorists, the disciples of Rousseau, Robespierre, and St. Just, who, after exterminating the entire of the upper classes of society, hoped to found an Utopia of equality, industry, and innocence. Fortunately, perhaps, their ignorance was greater than even their pretensions. And they knew not how to set about the subversion of society except by persistence in the established system of murder. Some indeed proposed an agrarian law, and a plan for obviating mendicity was introduced, which would place the fortunes of the rich at the service of the poor, and give the soil to those who could cultivate it. But even this system was not matured. It might have been expected, that when Robespierre entered the government and became a member of the ruling committee, he would take the lead, and impress a policy upon the government. It appeared, however, that the only impulse which he gave was to the revolutionary tribunal and its executioners. He neither took the direction of the home department, the correspondence with the provinces being left to Collot and Billaud, nor the foreign, which fell to Barère. Robespierre merely undertook to organize the system of public education.* But how establish aught of the kind, when half the population were either hidden or incarcerated as

* Opinion de Carnot.

CHAP.
XLI.

suspects, and when terror completely superseded the schoolmaster? Finding that a ministry of education was a sinecure, Robespierre discovered an occupation more congenial. The committee of general surety had monopolised the management of the police, arrested and executed whom they pleased, often without giving an account to the committee of public safety. Robespierre, as the leading spirit of the latter, grew naturally jealous, and established with St. Just a bureau of police in his own committee, which frequently jarred with the other police.

If Robespierre and St. Just were mere theorists, dreamers in all the affairs of government which were not murderous or personal, and if Billaud, Collot, and Barère merely took pains for their own preservation and for the prolongation of the Terror, Carnot, Lindet,* and some others devoted themselves sedulously to the actual machine of administration, to rendering the army efficient, and providing for its subsistence as well as for that of the great civic populations.

"Robespierre," said Carnot, "never shared in these sollicitudes. He never attended the committee but for a quarter of an hour each day, and then to blame everything that had been done, although he understood not a tittle. He came merely to force the committee to accept his libercide *arrêtes*, and to talk of new and interminable conspiracies in the convention against him. He then went to the Jacobins to calumniate the committee and denounce each member of it, whilst at the same time accepting his share of the almost idolatrous applause bestowed upon the results of our labours." †

Certain writers, however, give Robespierre the credit

* Robert Lindet is adduced as the most able member of the conventional committees, and yet when the directory wanted a finance minister, and Lindet was proposed, Sieyès pronounced him at once

incapable, and so he proved; except Carnot, the convention does not seem to have produced one able administrator, and he was after all a soldier.

† Opinion de Carnot. Croker's Papers.

not only of statesmanship, but of humanity. And he is represented, with some truth, as the opponent of that proconsular party which perpetrated such wholesale massacres and such indiscriminate rapine in the great towns. No doubt he denounced many of these, and Carrier he especially recalled. But on the other hand, he used neither remonstrance nor check to the sanguinary deeds of his friend Lebon at Arras, who massacred all possessed of property or education in Artois.* Robespierre fully disclosed his principles at the banquet recorded by Villate, in which he expressed the well-grounded fear, that too great an effusion of blood would excite disgust, and bring about reaction. Hence his anger at Hébert's bestial accusation of Marie Antoinette, and at the gratuitous murder of the Princess Elizabeth. But if he was for avoiding the massacre of the lower classes, contrary to the desires of Collot and Billaud, who loved blood for the spilling's sake, he saw the greater danger in the false sympathy which would spare the lives of eminent and chief men who either aspired themselves, or were expected by others, to seize the chief authority in the state. †

It is impossible to read the revelations of Sénart, that secretary of one of the governing committees who was necessarily initiated in its information as well as its plans, without being struck by the perfect chaos of pretensions which succeeded the destruction of the Girondists, and the death or expulsion of a hundred members of the assembly. The municipality and the sections had been the main instruments of that revolution, and they were by no means satisfied that the committee of public safety or Robespierre should profit by it. They despised the convention, which they had overridden and decimated. And it appears that they meditated introducing a new

* "Ne laissez en liberté aucun riche, ni aucun homme l'esprit."
—Lebon. Croker Collection.

† See not only Villate, but the published papers of Robespierre.

CHAP.
XII.

system of government altogether. The municipality were for making their *commune* or civic body predominant, establishing in every provincial town a similar assembly,* and mimicking the great Roman republic with its prætors and consuls. If such were the ideas of Hébert and Chaumette, the active leaders of the mob preferred a government more concentrated and based upon a military plan. It was not indeed the regular, but the revolutionary army, which was to be the basis of power, with an aulic council, instead of a municipal one, and with a grand judge and superior tribunals. Amidst these plans and parties there arose others more personal, recommending a triumvirate or a dictatorship, Danton and Robespierre being the chief names put forward. Both of these, however, agreed in preferring the convention to any more popular or municipal scheme. Robespierre, once installed in the committee of public safety, was for maintaining it as the permanent and predominant authority. Whilst Danton looked to rally the moderate party of the assembly, and succeed to power, when the extravagants, including Robespierre, should have lost their popularity in failure and in the general disgust.

Robespierre had thus to guard against the broad party of Hébert and the *commune*, joined with Ronsin, Vincent, and the men who had wielded both military and proconsulate power in the provinces, and who could not endure to sink to the rank of subordinates in Paris, whilst at the same time Danton's ambition and efforts were to be combated in the convention. This double task of Robespierre's was much facilitated by the fierce antagonism which arose between the followers of Hébert and of Danton. Both from policy and in order to keep popularity, as well as from a sincere participation in the taste for blood, Hébert was continually clamouring for more numerous victims, and especially for the heads of the

* Sénart, 6. 11.

seventy-three deputies ejected as compassionate to the Girondists. Camille Desmoulins, the friend and follower of Danton, assailed these anthropophagi and their admirers with more than his usual spirit, gibbeting Hebert, and not sparing Ronsin and Vincent. The following is a passage from his *Vieux Cordelier*.

“Ye worship the goddess of liberty,” said Camille to the Parisians, “not in principle but in stone, and never was a more stupid or costly idolatry. Liberty, heaven-descended, is neither a nymph of the opera, nor a *bonnet rouge*, nor yet a dirty shirt and ragged clothes. Liberty is happiness, reason, justice, equality, the declaration of rights, in a word, the constitution. If you would have me worship it, open your prisons, set free the 200,000 ye have incarcerated as *suspects*. I find no such crime in the constitution or the law.”

This was going too far for Robespierre, who thought the law of *suspects* necessary in order to tread down the *bourgeoisie*. All parties came before the Jacobins, the superior tribunal of demagogic opinion. Danton was accused of moderantism, Camille Desmoulins of sharpening his pen against the party of the revolution. Danton's defence was energetic, but breathed not the less contempt for his adversaries. Yet he would probably have been expelled from the Jacobins, and Camille Desmoulins certainly so, if Robespierre had not come to their rescue. He admitted the error of their present lukewarmness, but their past lives and acts redeemed it. To Camille he gave the advice of being more prudent for the future. Robespierre at the same time caused Cloutz and some other wild politicians of a similar stamp to be expelled.*

Singular to say, it was upon a question of religion that Robespierre came to an open breach with the extravagants of the commune. The object of these was to out-do and out-herod him. But he knew better than to proclaim himself clement or indulgent. He felt the mob

* Report printed in Buchez and Roux.

CHAP.
XLI.

would still support the sanguinary party, and he therefore went full lengths with Collot and Billaud, Hébert and Chaumette, in filling the prisons first, and then emptying them upon the scaffold. Hébert, though he could not denounce Robespierre for clemency or moderation, thought that at least he would out-do him in atheism and profanity. Chaumette, too, proposed to rival the future dictator in *virtue*. By his municipal authority he proscribed and incarcerated the women of the town, and sent not a few of them to the scaffold. Whilst he sanctified murder, he proscribed licentiousness. Hébert's crusade against the clergy was even more violent. He wanted an excuse for robbing the churches of whatever they had still preserved in plate and ornaments, and he hoped to increase his importance by usurping the position of high-priest.

On the 7th of November 1793, at a time when the triumph of the convention over the provinces as well as over the foreign enemy seemed complete, the authorities of the *commune* determined to explode and inhumate the Christian religion, as they had done the monarchy. These acts of theirs seemed to be progress in the right revolutionary direction, and no one in the convention had the courage to oppose it. Fouché had a few days before sent to the bar a mass of plate, gathered from the churches of the Nièvre. On the 7th, Gobel, archbishop of Paris, appeared before the convention, and declared that, in obedience to the sentiments of the sovereign people, he resigned his functions as archbishop. Replacing the mitre by the cap of liberty, Gobel gave up his cross and ring. Several of the clergy, including Julien of Toulouse, who had been a protestant pastor, followed his example. The bishop of the department of the Meurthe did the same. Gregoire, bishop of Blois, entered the assembly at the moment. He was instantly assailed by exclamations to imitate Gobel. Gregoire with dignity replied, he had done good in his diocese and would con-

tinue to do so. The convention was abashed ; the Hébertists furious.*

CHAP.
XLI.

They followed up this abjuration by a solemn fête. A Grecian temple of wood, covered with inscriptions and statues, was erected in the aisle of Notre Dame. Enthroned on it appeared a young actress, whom the authorities of the *commune* saluted as the goddess of Reason, although Prudhomme, the chronicler, announced her as the goddess of Liberty. The convention attended the ceremony, and decided that the cathedral of Notre Dame was henceforth consecrated to the worship of the goddess of Reason. The silver *chasse* of St. Geneviève was at the same time sent to the mint. Hébert solemnly burnt bibles and missals, and exhorted all parishes to demolish the steeples of their churches "which sinned against equality." Why not have levelled Montmartre? As it was hopeless to persuade the provincials to convert their churches into temples of Reason, they were ordered to be closed and all ecclesiastics placed *en surveillance*.

The silence of Robespierre in the face of these votes and acts, which he disapproved, is remarkable. A spiritualist and a deist after the idea of Rousseau, he had boldly professed, on a former occasion, his belief in a God, and had even caused the bust of Helvetius to be removed from the Jacobins. He now, however, shrunk from a contest with Hébert and his party, until the latter began to denounce several of his opponents (one of them a journalist who contradicted atheism), and proposed sending them to the guillotine. Another of the victims he denounced was General Duquesnoy. Robespierre said, that the army had been sufficiently purified, all noble or aristocratic commanders having been executed. Now that they had got republican generals, it would not be just or wise to continue to guillotine them. This simple advice seemed very retrograde to the Hébertists. For-

* *Moniteur*.

CHAP.
XLI.

unately they proceeded to render themselves ridiculous by anti-religious processions through the hall of convention. Perceiving the disgust they excited, Robespierre took courage and attacked them.

“How durst they convert, he said, the solemn homage due to truth into ridiculous farces? Why degrade the dignity of the people by hanging folly’s bells upon the sceptre of philosophy? It was not necessary for the destruction of superstition, to make a religion of atheism. Atheism was *aristocratic*; the belief in a Supreme Being, a popular idea. Even if God did not exist, his existence should be invented.”

Hébert and Chaumette gave way before the peremptory declaration of Robespierre, who was as jealous of priming in philosophy and high-priesthood as in politics. But the ultra-revolutionary party was not abashed. Its youngest and most ardent spirits had returned from their tour of terror in the provinces, their hands and minds reeking with blood, and only annoyed that they could not satisfy their brutal passions equally uncontrolled in the capital. And yet the guillotine was not idle. The Generals Biron, Houchard, Lamarlière, and Brunet were its victims at this time, as well as Barnave, Kersaint, Rabaud St. Étienne, Manuel, and amongst many others Madame du Barry. But a few score of victims seemed child’s play to the perpetrators of wholesale massacres in the provinces. Ronsin, who had been proconsul at Lyons with Collot, was for continuing the proscriptions of that important city, in which he declared, and in a public placard or *affiche*, that there did not exist more than 1,500 honest men and patriots. The remainder of the population of 140,000 ought, in his opinion, to be put to death. This specimen of revolutionary energy and logic alarmed Robespierre, and even the Jacobins. Ronsin, Vincent, and their friends had succeeded to the Santerres and the Legendres, as leaders of the Paris rabble, as of the revolutionary army. The convention

had raised them from nothing to be generals of armies, dictators of provinces; and having wielded supreme power, they spurned the idea of sinking into mere subordinate agents. Entrenched like their predecessors in the Cordelier club, and awing rather than possessing the commune, they treated the convention with contumely, and declared the committee of public safety as unequal to its task. The severity of famine and the want of provisions gave force to their complaints. The committee of public safety, thus threatened, arrested Ronsin and Vincent, and sent them to the prison of the Luxemburg. Chabot, Bazire, and other deputies connected with the Hébertists, were arrested at the same time for embezzlement and forgery of public documents. This flung disgrace upon all inculpated. The committee, as usual, declared it had discovered a conspiracy which it traced to foreigners, and a number of these, some bankers, and especially Proly and Pereira, were arrested at the same time.

Although the governing committee thus struck at their chief enemies, it was not so easy to crush them altogether. Hébert, Chaumette, and the commune supported them. The Cordeliers were completely of their sentiments and party. Even in the Jacobins they were not without friends. And in the committee itself, Collot d'Herbois, the colleague of Ronsin when at Lyons, corroborated his assertions and defended his views. Whilst carrying on a war of police and precaution against the ultra-revolutionists, the governing committee were dispensed from attacking them by the press. The Dantonists undertook that task, especially Camille Desmoulins, who never showed more verve formerly when *procureur-général de la lanterne*, than now denouncing the party of the *Lanterne* of extravagance and blood. But the committee dared not approve of such broad denunciations of the revolution. Terror was necessary to it, and an abatement of terror would not only have let loose against

CHAP.
XLI.

them the Parisian mob, too far implicated to draw back or feel compunction, but would have encouraged the resuscitation of the middle, moderate, and clement party in the convention, the first act of which would have been the deposition of Robespierre and the elevation of Danton.

It was necessary therefore for the governing committee not only to keep down Danton, but to disown the indulgents, and to profess, solemnly, that they were determined to persevere in revolutionary policy. Robespierre did this at the Jacobins, which formed in fact his organ and his press. The opportunity was afforded him by Phelippeaux, a commissary, who returned from La Vendée full of contempt and indignation for the part played there by Ronsin and Rossignol. He accused them in a pamphlet of incapacity and cowardice, as well as cruelty, and of having lain hid in safety when the soldiers, whom they pretended to lead, were surprised and massacred. The convention and the committee had supported as well as appointed these men, so that Phelippeaux' diatribe fell upon Robespierre and the committee as well as upon Ronsin. The Dantonists nevertheless supported Phelippeaux, and Camille Desmoulins lauded his pamphlet to the skies. The dispute came as usual before the Jacobins, where Robespierre began by counselling Phelippeaux to observe moderation. No one listened to such advice, the moderates themselves as little as their opponents. Moderantism itself was violent. Desmoulins had attacked Hébert outrageously, and with him the ministry, by declaring and offering to prove that Hébert had received 200,000 francs from the minister of war, Bouchotte, as the pretended price of the numbers of the Père Duchêne sent to the army. Robespierre, whilst denouncing Desmoulins' writings as delighting the enemies of the government and the aristocrats, excused the writer himself. Him he would pardon, his writings

he would burn. "To burn is not to answer," exclaimed Camille. "Well then," rejoined Robespierre, "let your writings be read, and let the Jacobins pass judgment on them and you."

However successful was Robespierre in parrying the attacks of the Hébertists or ultra-revolutionists on one side, and the Dantonists, or indulgents on the other, the committee could not at once punish or even silence them. It was obliged to set Vincent and Ronsin at liberty. Steps, however, were taken to strengthen the power of the government, both in province and capital, subjecting the revolutionary committees to the central authority, establishing the *Bulletin des Loix* or official gazette, and sensibly restricting the power of the Paris *commune* as well as of others. Yet to prevent the accusation of being lukewarm to the revolution or neglecting its supporters, the convention was made to pass a decree, giving the committee power to liberate such of the *suspects* as were proved to be really patriots, but at the same time to confiscate the property of all who were not such, for the benefit of those who were. This was in fact decreeing and accomplishing by law that revolution of property which the proconsuls had begun and acted upon.

Meantime the party of Vincent and Ronsin received a powerful auxiliary. Carrier, the terrible proconsul of Nantes, author of the *noyades*, or drownings of the Loire, had been recalled through the influence of Robespierre. He came naturally fearful of punishment, if clemency should prevail in the convention or the committees. Collot d'Herbois associated with his brother proconsul, and both addressed the Cordeliers club with furious eloquence, demanding no less than a fresh popular insurrection. Robespierre was confined to his house with illness, and Collot, who governed the Jacobins in his absence, made that club fraternize with the Cordeliers. The policy which the latter proposed to revive

CHAP.
XLI.

was that of Marat. In support of Carrier, Hébert appeared at the Cordeliers, asked pardon for his moderation during the last months, and burst forth anew in his old character of Père Duchêne. What he especially insisted on was the guillotining of the seventy-three deputies expelled from the convention. The Cordeliers ordained that their statues of liberty and declarations of the rights of man should be covered with a black crape, till the extermination of the enemies of the people had restored liberty and plenty. Some of the club sent to announce this to the commune. But they met, notwithstanding Hébert's words, with lukewarm adherents. Pache, the mayor, was absent, though he was to be the grand judge of the new form of government. Even Chaumette hesitated. Whilst the insurrection thus hung fire during the first week of March, St. Just prepared to act. He drew up, as usual, a report, and read it in the convention on the 13th, denouncing a plot of foreigners to starve the capital, and destroy the republican government. It was followed by a decree, declaring traitors to the country all who should endeavour to shake the government, create anxieties as to subsistence, or corrupt citizens. This was acted upon by the arrest of Hébert, Vincent, and Ronsin. Chaumette was at the same time imprisoned notwithstanding his caution, as well as the ex-Archbishop Gobel and Anacharsis Clootz. In a week after their arrest, on the 20th, the Hébertists appeared before the revolutionary tribunal. Koch, the Dutch banker, and Proly, natural son of the Austrian minister Thugut, were included in the indictment. The English government was represented as at the bottom of the affair. Legendre was the chief witness. There came forth many proofs of discontent, but of any plot there was not a trace. On the 24th, the nineteen perished under the guillotine, one alone, who had acted as agent of the police, being acquitted. No man ever died on a public scaffold who more fully

deserved his fate than Hébert, whose cruelty and filth in persecuting and immolating Marie Antoinette and Madame Elizabeth scarcely bear narrating. Anacharsis Clootz is pitied by some as a philosopher in advance of his age, professing pantheism. He died with signal courage, which the worshipper of the goddess Reason did not.

The members of the governing committee, that of public safety, were much in the position of the Roman triumvirate, obliged to hold together if they would not succumb, and, in order to do this, compelled to make the sacrifice of the lives of their own friends to the exigencies of their colleagues. Collot d'Herbois was the friend of Ronsin and of many of the Hébertists, yet he consented to their destruction, nay, aided personally in their defeat at the Jacobins and Cordeliers. But if he and Billaud-Varennes made these concessions to Robespierre, the latter was compelled in turn to abandon to them Danton and Camille Desmoulins. St. Just hated even more than Robespierre the superiority of Danton. He and Barère had writhed under the writings of Camille Desmoulins. Robespierre would probably have saved the latter, if he could; but his notes, which survive, and which formed the basis of St. Just's report against Danton, showed how inveterately vindictive he was towards his principal rival.* It was a great triumph for Danton when the Hébertists fell. He could scarcely believe that his own turn was next, and his fate at hand. To those who warned him he observed, "They durst not." He was exhorted to fly. But whither could a terrorist fly? Or, as he expressed it,

* Croker Collection.—For all that can be said in favour of Robespierre, consult M. Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*. He proves that Robespierre shrunk at first from the sacrifice of Danton. But on having consented to it, he was as ferociously hard as

any. See Daubigny's *Letters to Billaud* in Croker Collection; also Robespierre's *Letters to his Constituents*.

For Camille Desmoulins, his genius is proved by his works, which have been collected, and his crimes attenuated by his *Lettres Inédites*.

CHAP.
 XLI.

Could a man carry his country with him like the soles of his shoes ?

On the night of the 30th of March, about a week after the execution of Hébert, were arrested Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Lacroix, and Phelippeaux. Héraul-Séchelles was already in prison, sent there by St. Just, because he had harboured an *émigré*. The news of the arrest of the Dantonists, immediately after the execution of the Hébertists, filled the convention with alarm. No one seemed safe. Whose turn would it be next ? To an audience thus impressed, Legendre, Danton's friend, arose to demand that the members just arrested should be heard in their defence at the bar of the assembly. Robespierre could not admit this. He insinuated that to allow Danton to speak in defence of his life would be to create a privilege, and prefer the interests of an individual to that of the state. The arrest of such a man might cause some to tremble, *but whoever trembled was guilty*. The guilty in the present case were, however, few. For the government could always distinguish weakness from crime. St. Just, as usual, followed with his requisition of blood. Danton had always conspired. He had been the accomplice of Mirabeau, of D'Orleans, of Dumouriez, of Brissot. Besides, he hated Marat ! He dined with Englishmen ! What other proof was wanting to the crime of which he was charged, that of having plotted to restore the monarchy ?

His enemies were in haste to dispose of Danton. Two days after the arrest he was brought to trial, not only with Desmoulins, Lacroix, Phelippeaux, and Héraul, but with Chabot and Bazire, with Fabre d'Eglantine and Westerman, with Gusman and Dietrichsen and the Freys, all foreigners. The latter were brothers-in-law of Desmoulins. The act of accusation was as confused a jumble as the collection of accused. It could easily be proved that Chabot and Fabre had forged, and that Bazire, though he refused to participate in the act, had

concealed it. But Danton and his friends were total strangers to the whole affair. It served, however, to shed an air of corruption upon all those inculcated. When Danton was first questioned, his reply was, that his existence would now be annihilated, but that his name would survive in the pantheon of history. As to life, he said, it was a burden of which he was impatient to be delivered. The items of accusation he scorned as absurd. He demanded to be confronted with his enemies. Let St. Just and Robespierre appear as witnesses. The juries stood abashed, the judges frightened, at the loud and animated apostrophe of Danton ; and they took refuge from his voice and his regard in questioning the other prisoners. The court sent to consult the committee of government as to the appearance of its members, which Danton demanded. They declined to appear, and even showed anger. But on the second day of trial the accused insisted, clamoured, and the feelings of the popular audience began to be stirred in their favour. At these dangerous symptoms, the public accuser wrote to the committee re-stating the demands of the accused, and the sympathy of the public in their favour. He concluded by warning the government that a storm was brewing.

St. Just and his colleagues were at first at a loss how to conjure this storm, until word was brought that the excitement caused by the trial had not only shown itself in the court, but also in the prisons. A popular movement in favour of Danton was expected. To favour it, General Dillon, who was imprisoned in the Luxembourg, endeavoured to send a sum of money to the wife of Camille Desmoulins, to suborn a crowd. This was quite sufficient for St. Just, who came alone to the convention, represented the storm which had arisen before the revolutionary tribunal as a revolt of the accused, which had been got up with a conspiracy hatched in the prisons to deliver the prisoners, Dillon being at the

CHAP.
XLI.

head of it. By these allegations, St. Just obtained a decree of the convention, empowering the president of the revolutionary tribunal to employ all means for repressing any attempt on the part of the accused to obstruct the course of justice.*

Armed with this, the president of the tribunal cut short at once the demands of the accused, as well as the defence, by declaring the court sufficiently informed. The jury, asked, gave as reply, that they were so. "Thus we are not allowed liberty of defence even on our trial," exclaimed the Dantonists. "Well," added their chief, "we have lived long enough for glory, lead us to the scaffold." Conducted at once to the prisons of the Conciergerie below, the sentence of condemnation which followed was read to them there. The judges feared to allow the sentence to be passed before the public. Condemned on the 4th, Danton and his co-accused were brought to the guillotine on the following day.† When Hérault and Danton were about to take a last embrace at the foot of the scaffold, the executioner tried to prevent them. "Why, you are more cruel than death itself," said Danton. "But you cannot prevent our heads from embracing in your fatal basket." Camille Desmoulins thought but of his wife and child, the former doomed to follow him to the guillotine. Danton, too, left a young wife and a posthumous child. These men of revolution and blood attempted to build for themselves a little bower of domestic bliss apart from the storm and the carnage. Robespierre was wiser. He had paid his addresses to one of the daughters of his host, the carpenter Duplay. But he declined to marry, seeing the insecurity of human life in such times. His admirers still draw pictures of his domestic happiness, which must indeed have been complete, he,

* Report of trial in Buchez and Roux, as also Fouquier Tinville's subsequent trial.

† For what passed in the interior of the prison, see the *Mémoire de Riouffe, et Mémoires sur les Prisons*.

as member of the committee, sending hundreds to the revolutionary tribunal, where Duplay sat as jury to forward them to the scaffold. The calm of such a domestic circle is not enviable. Another of the daughters of Duplay married the terrorist Lebas. Robespierre did well not to wive. Danton and Camille Desmoulins, the *procureur-général de la lanterne*, made the trial, and brought death and ruin on their families. Human tigers should not pair.

Tyranny has reached its extreme when it sacrifices the lives of its own partisans to mere caprice, to jealousy, or personal motives, without an avowable principle or pretext for such acts of blood. The execution of Danton was of this kind. No one had more fully devoted his energies to violent revolution, or more completely flung away all scruples in prosecuting it. If crimes could be redeemed by energy or eloquence, his were certainly effaced. If the revolution or its children could feel gratitude, it must have been for Danton. All such considerations were overborne in the hearts of Robespierre and St. Just by envy and personal hatred. Danton was a rival, yet menacing to power and consideration, not to life. He was not inveterately hostile; but he stood in the way, and was to be swept out of it. There was no crime that revolutionists at least could seriously lay to his charge; and consequently, when Danton did perish, the remaining members of the convention could not but see that the same fate awaited them the moment that they ceased to satisfy the exigencies or the humour of Robespierre.

From that moment, which was also the culminating point of his triumph, dates the commencement of his downfall. All felt then not only the extravagance of the tyranny, but the utter heartlessness of the tyrant. He had sacrificed Danton to his jealousy, and was seen to witness and rub his hands with pleasure at his execu-

CHAP.
 XLI.

tion.* He had attended the wedding of Camille Desmoulins as a friend of the family, and fondled his children, which did not prevent his sending husband and wife to the scaffold with a cold-blooded and sanguinary selfishness, fortunately rare and monstrous in human nature. Such acts begot in the hearts even of the most guilty a desire, sedulously concealed, to strike down the ruthless tyrant, whenever the current of events or his own imprudence should afford the opportunity.

Robespierre and his friend St. Just deemed themselves at first secure in their triumph. The latter had invited or concocted the pretended conspiracy of the prisons, to enable the revolutionary tribunal to despatch the affair of Danton. Their story sufficed to send to the scaffold, in a few days after, Dillon, and the widows of Camille Desmoulins and of Hébert; with them were joined Chaumette and Gobel, the priests of the goddess of Reason, some twenty in all. The public scarcely noticed their execution. To enumerate trials and executions would be impossible. One may suffice. A paper containing a protest of the members of the ancient parliament against the government of Louis the Sixteenth was found in the chateau of Malesherbes. The aged judge himself scarcely knew of the document. Yet for this he and his whole family, sister, daughter, daughter's husband, De Chateaubriand and their child, were sent in one cart to the guillotine. About the same time was executed Lavoisier, the judge of the revolutionary tribunal declaring that the republic had no need of chemists. Of philosophers still less. Condorcet, proscribed for having written against a constitution which the government itself set aside, anticipated the execution by taking poison. St. Just at the same time passed a decree proscribing, not only all nobles and strangers,

* Montgaillard.

but all who were connected with them. "A country must sweat its aristocracy," said Collot, "in order to be in health." Another decree abolished the revolutionary armies, and limited the provisional committees, which were subjected to the several committees in the capital now made to replace the different ministries. Robespierre's popularity, as well as Collot's, was augmented at this time by a supposed attempt to assassinate him. A young woman who demanded to see him was searched, and two knives found upon her. This was enough to awaken the sympathy of the populace for Robespierre. The attempt on Collot was more serious. A man named Arcueil fired at him two shots on his own staircase, No. 4, Rue Favart, and Collot only saved himself by a struggle and calling for assistance. Robespierre celebrated his triumph in his own fashion. He obtained a decree of the convention dethroning the goddess of Reason, and proclaiming in her stead the existence of a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. For the celebration of such a religion there needed neither priests nor temples. But an inaugural *fête* was necessary. The fanatic David undertook to regulate it. On the 3rd of June a large amphitheatre in the gardens of the Tuileries received the convention to witness its president Robespierre setting fire to certain statues, symbolical of crime. They were soon in a blaze, which not only consumed them, but blackened the statue of Wisdom. The guillotine was present in the distance, but concealed by flags and ribbons. There was murmuring, however, in the procession. Robespierre made the principal figure in the one which marched from the Tuileries to the Champ de Mars. He was splendidly dressed, and carried a nosegay as large as himself. There was no reason why his heading such a procession, as president of the assembly, and however magnificently clad, should have stirred the jealousy of his colleagues. But some of them, it is alleged, were greatly humiliated

CHAP.
XLI.

that he should walk before them, and they taunted him in consequence:* with such puerile envy were actuated men who scrupled at no crime, and yet apparently had no purpose in mounting the rounds of ambition's ladder over each other's heads.

Light as were such taunts, they were menacing to Robespierre, who had no real support but in popular opinion, and in the respect which the convention and committees had hitherto shown towards him. Careful as he had been to concentrate power in a few faithful hands, he had not succeeded. The abolition of the different ministries had given increased power to the committee of general surety, which, though subordinate to that of public safety, still retained important functions. And Robespierre found it difficult to awe and master both committees at once. That he should not have retained the attachment of Billaud and of Collot is conceivable. They bid more loudly than he for the favour of the populace. But that he could not have kept Barère true to him is to be wondered at. Barère, who from fear had redeemed his original moderation by the adoption of all the cruelty and extravagance of the Mountain, and who, with the true instinct of the rat, would have followed the leader who promised best to triumph and to stand, † even he now deserted Robespierre for the alliance of Collot and Billaud. Robespierre, in the committee, could depend upon St. Just ‡ and Couthon alone. It was a formid-

* Robespierre's note on Bourdon de l'Oise. For the effect made on his colleagues by his speech or conduct on that occasion, see the *Mémoires de Barère*.

† What seems chiefly to have exasperated the Robespierres against Barère was his having taken part with Carnot and defended him.

The younger Robespierre accordingly took the opportunity of threatening that he would certainly include him in the next 31st of May; meaning in the next proscription and revolution. *Mémoires de Barère*.

‡ "St. Just ne servait Robespierre que pour le renvoyer à son tour, et regner à lui seul."—Carnot.

able triumvirate, could it have concealed its views, or accomplished them by other than open announcement. But they had so often succeeded, notably in the case of Danton, to crush their enemies by audacity, that they pursued the same plan at present.

In a day or two after the *fête* of the Supreme Being, Couthon, in the name of the committee of public safety, but without its sanction, proposed a law for reorganising the revolutionary tribunal, and extending its powers. Moral proofs of guilt, without any other testimony, were declared sufficient. Conspirators were allowed no counsel. Repealing at the same time all former laws on the subject, it virtually cancelled that clause which ordained that no member of the convention should be committed to arrest and trial without a decree of the convention itself. This had been procured even in the case of Danton. But since his fall the members, even of the Mountain, had entered into an agreement to sanction no more such trials, or such ostracism, as no devotion to the republic, or as even no complicity in terror or in murder, could save one from the caprice of Robespierre and St. Just.

Couthon had no sooner read the decree than a motion was made to adjourn it. Robespierre insisted on an immediate vote. Bourdon deprecated it. Barère was for a brief adjournment of three days. But Robespierre prevailed. The decree was not only passed, but the committee of public safety was prolonged for another term. On the following day, the 11th of June, Bourdon de l'Oise reproduced his objections. The convention, he declared, could not have meant to deliver up its members, without debate, defence, or sanction, to the revolutionary tribunal. This was voted to be the law, and the principal clause of Couthon's decree was thus annulled. He and Robespierre were indignant, and, whilst denying that they had any intention of depriving

CHAP.
XLI.

the members of the convention of their legal guarantees, denounced Bourdon for his opposition. He had spoken the language, they said, of Pitt and Coburg. Robespierre declared himself against those who sought to become heads of parties, and a fierce dispute ensued between him on one side, Bourdon and Tallien on the other.

The malignant purpose of Robespierre was evident. His destined victims had full warning, and they spared no pains to hurt him. There was at this time a woman named Theot, who, though nearly 70 years of age, imagined herself, like Johanna Southcote, destined to give birth to a Messiah. She professed profound reverence for Robespierre, and the latter had given her high priest, an ex-Carthusian monk, Dom Gerle, a certificate of civism. This was enough to insinuate the connexion of Robespierre with the prophetess and her sect. Vadier, of the committee of general surety, drew up a report, exposing the whole imposture. Although Robespierre was not mentioned, he was evidently implicated in the opinion of those present. Yet, though he was president of the convention that day, he could neither stop nor discredit the report. The convention showed its satisfaction by shouts of ridicule. At the Jacobins the report, when read, was received with the silence of indignation. All that Robespierre could do was to smother it by a fierce attack upon the Duke of York.

He at the same time responded to such acts of enmity by blows equally deadly. Fouché, who had ridiculed his Deism, was denounced at the Jacobins by Robespierre, and turned out of the club. He aroused a not more insidious, but a more inveterate, enemy in Tallien, by signing the order to arrest Madame Fontenay, the future wife of that proconsul, celebrated for her beauty. Tallien lost no time in getting together those who were threatened by Robespierre, and who in self-preservation were prompted to anticipate him, and strike down the

tyrant ere he could succeed in immolating them. Robespierre on his side had no friends, but such as were calculated to do him harm. Couthon was but a blind follower, St. Just a character more unbending and repulsive than Robespierre himself. It ought not to have been difficult for the latter to have secured the adherence of Collot d'Herbois, who to the last expressed his respect for his former leader. Barère, too, would have been an adroit intermediary. Instead of conciliating, Robespierre attacked him personally in the Jacobins, and sent that personage home in a fit of despair. "This Robespierre is insatiable," exclaimed Barère. "If a man does not yield up everything, he breaks with him altogether. If he merely asked for the sacrifice of the remaining Dantonists, Thuriot, Geoffroy, Rivière, Lecointre, Panis, Cambon, and Monestier, we might come to an understanding. Nay, if he insisted on the death of Tallien, Bourdon de l'Oise, Legendre, Fréron, it would be intelligible. But Duval, Andoin, Leonard, Bourdon, Vadier, Vouland—we could not give them up."* The latter were members of the committee of general surety, who, if sacrificed, would place the rest of his colleagues at Robespierre's mercy.

The person whom Barère's indignation thus put in possession of the list of the proscribed noted down the names, and they became circulated. After making or insinuating such a demand, Robespierre naturally withdrew from the meeting of the committees, and merely attended to the duties of his police bureau. St. Just then returned, but his presence was worse than Robespierre's absence, since he openly declared that the crisis demanded a dictator, a concentration of powers being absolutely necessary, and that Robespierre was the man to wield them. Such a demand aroused opposition and horror. Carnot defied St. Just, who

* Villate.

CHAP.
XLI.

threatened him with the guillotine. That instrument, indeed, was made to work with fearful activity. The tribunal in one day condemned one hundred and fifty. Of the thousands of unfortunate *suspects* in prison, the ruling powers selected a host of noble names, especially of women. Persons of birth or letters were their chosen victims.* Robespierre's friends adduce the increased number of victims during Robespierre's secession from the committees as a proof that he was more humane than his colleagues; but Carnot attests that neither his activity nor his influence were diminished during that time.

On the 5th thermidor (July 23), there was a meeting of the members of the two committees, called, according to Barère, by Robespierre. The latter commenced by proposing the establishment of four revolutionary tribunals. He was asked if that was all. St. Just took upon him to answer by pointing out the necessity of fresh energy on the part of the government. At present everything was in disorder. The only remedy was in the concentration of authority. Pressed to explain what he meant, St. Just demanded the dictatorship for Robespierre, and that it should be moved on the morrow in the convention.† The proposal, heard in silence, was set aside by the two committees. Barère was charged with the drawing up a report for the morrow. In it he denounced and scouted the threat that was in so many mouths, of another 31st of May being about to be visited on the

* "On the 2nd and 3rd thermidor," says Fouquier Tinville in his defence, "the committee ordered the arrest and trial *à l'instant* of 478 individuals. Robespierre's complicity in these acts of cruelty is not only asserted by Carnot, but Fouquier declared, that Dumas and Coffinhal, presidents of the revolutionary tribunal, used to go every

morning to Robespierre's house to consult with him."—Réponse de Fouquier. Croker Collection. "Robespierre n'a jamais été plus absolu dans les comités que pendant les 4 décades de sa retraite. Il signait quoique absent. Jamais il nous est venu tant d'arrêtés de sa part."—Opinion de Carnot.

† Mémoires de Barère.

convention. It would triumph over such machinations, and the committees, by the action of their police, would humble those vulgar conspirators who tried to advance under the shelter of a great name, meaning that of Robespierre.

Notwithstanding these words of peace, the enemies of Robespierre prepared for war, or at least for defence, seeing that the dictator did not pardon them, but persisted in his projects of vengeance. The mayor, Payen, on the other hand, incited Robespierre to act. The committee, to cut the ground from under both, ordered out of Paris one half of the revolutionary force. It consisted of 48 companies of artillery, one at the disposal of each section. Carnot had previously attempted to displace a corps of 1600 men on the frontier, with the view, probably, of their marching on Paris. At last, on the 8th thermidor (July 26), Robespierre determined to make a solemn appeal to the convention. He defended himself against the accusation of seeking to immolate a large portion of that assembly, as also against that which arraigned him as a dictator.

“They call me tyrant; were I so, they would grovel at my feet. I would gorge them with gold, ensure them all the impunity of crime, and they would be satisfied. But how can a man become a tyrant without a faction? and I have no faction save the convention.” Robespierre denounced a conspiracy, the old double conspiracy of the *enragés* and the *indulgents*, of Hébert and of Danton. What gave them power was, that the counter-revolution was triumphant in the government and in the committees. It prevailed in foreign affairs, in the army, the finance, and even in religion. Atheism once more raised its head. But this speech was his testament, and he would formally contradict the doctrine of Chaumette that death was eternal sleep. He held it to be the commencement of immortality.

The first impression made by this oration was

CHAP.
XLI.

favourable. Barère, the decided enemy of Robespierre, demanded that it should be printed; and sent to the provinces, added Couthon. Both proposals were voted. But Bourdon, Vadier, Cambon, afterwards rose to protest; and at last so did Billaud-Varennes. Panis put the pointed question of "how many members of the convention Robespierre really intended to proscribe. My head is, it seems, in danger; and Robespierre is said to have drawn up a list." This personage, thus directly charged, did not reply frankly. He would not retract, he said. He had neither flattered nor calumniated any one. After a reply so unsatisfactory, the convention seemed disinclined to order the impression of the discourse, or at least the distribution of it to the provinces. Charlier proposed to refer it to the committee, Robespierre was indignant. "Then name those whom you would accuse," was the exclamation. He would not; and consequently the assembly revoked its vote ordering the printing of the speech.*

Such a termination of a sitting, in which Robespierre had occupied the tribune, and delivered one of his most careful and significant speeches, should have sufficiently convinced him that he could no longer command the majority even of that mutilated chamber. He hastened to the Jacobins, read over his speech to them, eliciting their loudest applause. It was his testament, he repeated; he had lost the confidence of the convention, and must fall. Payen and Henriot said that there was no cause for despair, they would march on the convention. "You may thus save liberty," rejoined Robespierre, "as ye did on the 31st of May. If ye fail, I shall drink the cup of hemlock with calm." "We will drink it with you," exclaimed the Jacobins. Collot, Billaud, and Tallien were witnesses of the scene. When Couthon proposed the expulsion from the club of the enemies of Robespierre, despite the remonstrances of the two terrorists,

* Moniteur. Réponse de Billaud.

this was voted and both were ejected. Collot was even assailed by blows and threatened by poignards.* The more furious Jacobins, especially the president of the revolutionary tribunal, proposed to follow up what was done by collecting a force, and instantly marching upon the committees then assembled. Robespierre would not hear of it. He still had hopes of the convention, and the morrow was time enough for any insurrection.

Collot and Billaud retreated to the committee, where they found St. Just. They charged him with having in his pocket the report which was to denounce them on the morrow. Would he show it? St. Just declined, and they continued to fear the worst. They proposed arresting Henriot and Payen, but the presence of St. Just, and subsequently that of Couthon, paralysed them.

Tallien was more active. Menaced in his own person, as well as in that of the beautiful woman to whom he was attached, he spent night and morning in encouraging such of the revolutionists as dreaded Robespierre. He at the same time represented to the old members of the constituent, Boissy D'Anglas and others, who occupied the right benches of the assembly, that now was the opportunity for striking down Robespierre. They liked and trusted Tallien and Billaud as little as they did the tyrant himself, but to strike him down was at least to put an end to the daily despatches of from 50 to 100 victims for the guillotine.†

The assembly met towards mid-day. St. Just at once occupied the tribune and unfolded his report, whilst Tallien and those who expected to be denounced in it took their places opposite. St. Just's document, though it alluded to Billaud and others, yet openly denounced none, and concluded with an ambiguous, not a sanguinary, decree. Had he communicated it the previous day,

* Réponse de Billaud.

† Mémoires de Durand de Maillane.
See Memoirs of Barère, letter of

Lecointre, and the numerous printed documents to be found in the Croker Collection, vols. marked Robespierre.

CHAP.
XLI.

he might have avoided the storm. As it was, he had not uttered two sentences when it burst forth. Tallien sprang to the tribune, and said, that neither St. Just nor Robespierre had any longer a right to speak in the name of the committee. There was a division in it, a plot to destroy others—a mystery, in fact, to be cleared up.

Billaud then rushed to the tribune to recount the scene of the previous evening at the Jacobins, where it was proposed to massacre the convention. It would now perish inevitably if it showed any weakness. He concluded by exclaiming “Down with the tyrants,” a cry which the whole assembly echoed. Pale with emotion and rage, Robespierre mounted the steps to the tribune, to grasp the opportunity to speak, and reply to Billaud. But the president Thuriot refused him the permission, and the assembly supported the president. Each effort of Robespierre to speak was drowned in the cry of “*Down with the tyrant.*”

Tallien occupied the tribune before him, and congratulated the assembly, that the veil was torn aside. There was a list of proscribed, there was an intended 31st of May, there was a conspiracy avowed the night before at the Jacobins, where the army of the new Cromwell was already forming. To prevent its action, Tallien demanded the arrest of Henriot and his staff, and that the sitting should be permanent until the sword of the law should have restored safety to the revolution. The arrest of others was then demanded. But not a word of Robespierre. Barère led the attention of the assembly to quite irrelevant matters, as if he desired to allow Robespierre to escape. Vadier, however, again turned the debate upon the tyrant. And Tallien at last entered upon a fierce denunciation of his crimes. Robespierre again and again besought the Mountain to hear him. He hoped to cajole the pure Montagnards. None listened. “President of assassins,” said Robespierre, addressing the chair in utter exhaustion, “for

the last time I ask permission to speak." "The blood of Danton stifles him," observed Tallien. "Ha! you regret Danton," was the reply; "why did you not defend him?" There remained but to order the arrest and accusation of Robespierre. Neither Billaud nor Tallien ventured it. But proposed by an obscure member, Louchet, the arrest of the triumvirate, Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon, was voted. The brother of Robespierre and Lebas desired to be included in the decree. Their demand was granted. After some hesitation the triumvirs descended to the bar, and were ordered to be conveyed to different prisons.

Notwithstanding the vigour thus shown by the convention and the chiefs of the reaction, they were far from following it up. The council-general of the *commune* met, almost as numerous as the convention, and did not shrink from a complete adhesion to Robespierre. They summoned the sections, and one-half adhered to them, with—what was all important—three companies of artillery, which mustered in the Place de Grève. A military commander of conduct and skill might, in the first instance, have given them the victory. But Henriot became inebriated, and merely galloped furiously through the streets. He met, in the Faubourg St. Antoine, the carts bearing the victims to the guillotine. The crowd had stopped them, on hearing of the arrest of Robespierre, but the ruffian in authority, with drawn sabre, repelled their interference, and obliged the carts to resume their fatal journey. Riding down the Rue St. Honoré, Henriot was perceived by two deputies, who ordered him to be seized. They brought him to the committee of public safety, where they found Billaud and Barère. The deputies proposed that he should be tried by court-martial and executed instantly. The committeemen dared but to keep him in confinement, from whence he was soon liberated by the troops of the *commune*. All the arrested deputies were similarly liberated. The

CHAP.
XLI.

two Robespierres, Couthon, and St. Just, joined the council at the Hôtel de Ville.

When the convention met for its evening sitting, the members were informed that the municipality was in insurrection, headed by the proscribed members; that a large sectional force occupied the Place de Grève; and that Henriot, restored to liberty and command, was preparing to attack the convention. However late, urgent and important measures were taken. Certain deputies were commissioned to proceed to the sections, such as had not adhered to the *commune*, and claim their support. Two important suburbs, the Faubourgs St. Antoine and St. Marceau, hesitated; the former had been disgusted by the daily passage of carts of from fifty to a hundred victims for the guillotine. The absence of these, the most energetic of the Parisian population, discouraged those who had declared for the *commune*; and when Henriot brought them and their guns in front of the Tuileries, they refused to fire.

The members had shown signal courage at the critical moment. Collot took the chair, and each member his seat, to abide bravely the assault. The disobedience of Hénriot's gunners saved them, and allowed time for the forces of the friendly sections to come to their guard and rescue. The convention passed votes, declaring its enemies of the *commune hors la loi*. And this was forthwith proclaimed in the streets.

The triumvirate at the Hôtel de Ville showed no such vigour. Indeed the *commune* was more benumbed than inspired by their presence. Had one or any of them descended to the Place, and even harangued the cannoniers of the sections, they might at least have kept them to their post of defence. But whilst Barras, the commander appointed by the convention, and Bourdon, marched at the head of the friendly sections upon the Hôtel de Ville, its defenders, panic-stricken that Robespierre should be *hors la loi*, dispersed. Henriot an-

nounced the fatal fact to the assembled insurrectionists above. Coffinhal immediately flung the drunken commandant out of the window. The grand saloon, where the council sat, was soon broken into by the invaders. Two shots were instantly heard. Lebas had blown out his brains with the one, Robespierre had his jaw broken by the other. More than one person boasted to have fired the shot. But from the nature of the wound, which was not fatal, it was more probably an attempt at suicide on the part of Robespierre himself. St. Just had a poignard, but he allowed himself to be captured, as did Couthon. The younger Robespierre had flung himself from a window. All were brought to the apartments of the committee of public safety, where Robespierre's wound was dressed, and were thence transferred to the Conciergerie, to the number of twenty-one. The triumvirs and their followers were identified on the following day at the revolutionary tribunal by Fouquier Tinville, and thence led straight to the guillotine, brought back for the occasion from the gate of St. Antoine to the Place de la Révolution. Loud acclamations of satisfaction from the crowd followed each fall of the axe.*

With Robespierre expired what has been so significantly called the Reign of Terror. The enormous subversion of society, the subjection of the lives, properties, and even ideas of the middle class, as well as all above it, to the rabble and their chiefs, could not have been accomplished or maintained except by general terror, nor that terror rendered universal save by daily holocausts of human victims. Had such a system been invented and put in activity solely by ruffians, it could not have borne up against the general disgust. But Robespierre lent it the support and sanction of a grave, philosophic, and upright character. And whilst others could merely defend terror as expedient, Robespierre made it one of

* Courtois' Rapport sur le 9 Méda. Lecointre à la Convention thermidor. Récits de Dulac et de Nationale. Mémoires de Barère, &c.

CHAP.
XII.

the attributes of *his* Supreme Being, and caused it to be respected as a religion. His virtues were as fatal to his kind as were his vices. His austerity and integrity gave more impulse to spoliation and murder than the corrupt morals or greedy passions of so many of his brother terrorists.

Yet even in our days Robespierre has his admirers, and terror has found apologists even amongst very conservative French writers. That the country succeeded in resisting foreign invasion, and thus avoided not only the loss or division of territory, but the reimposition of old shackles, burdens, and oppressions, is attributed to the salutary effects of terror. All its excesses, and even the blood which it spilled, are considered to be condoned by its supposed efficiency in saving the revolution, whilst Pitt, in his efforts to preserve English monarchy and society by a somewhat severe legislation, is denounced by these same writers as a treacherous and intolerable tyrant. An able and a liberal French writer* has, however, amply shown, that all the elements and means of defence, and even conquest, existed independent of terror, and triumphed, not by its aid, but in its despite. Benjamin Constant depicts the *terror* as springing into life by the destruction of the Girondists, and swelling to its gigantic dimensions on their tombs. It would be impossible to attribute the victory of Hondschoote, the reduction of Toulon, or the submission of the Vendéans to terror. For the terrorists contributed largely to the difficulties in the way of victory. The multitude forced into the field were always the first to run; and Carnot, when he brought overwhelming masses upon weak points of the enemy, did so by the rapid transport of real and veteran soldiers from point to point, not by the attack of a tumultuous or revolutionary army. Indeed, during the actual period of the terror, the French were rather

* Benjamin Constant, *De la Terreur*.

the menacing than the menaced party in the field. The forced retreat of the Duke of York from Ostend, and of the Austro-Prussians on the more eastern frontier, had altogether changed the aspect of the war. And in 1794 the allies stood on their defence instead of threatening invasion. In the middle of June, Jourdan at the head of the French army passed the Sambre, with the intention of capturing Charleroi, as he had already done Ypres. The Prince of Orange, opposed to him, attacked his enemies gallantly on the 16th, and compelled them to repress the river.

At that time no French general could repose under a recent defeat. Jourdan again advanced, invested Charleroi, and pressed the siege so vigorously that he was master of the town ere the Prince of Coburg came to its deliverance. When the two armies, some 80,000 strong on either side, fought the battle of Fleurus on the 26th of June, the French lines were in advance of Charleroi, which was in their possession, a fact of which Coburg was not aware. He ordered a general attack to prevent its capture. The Austrians, as on the 16th, had the advantage at the commencement of the battle, driving in their antagonists at almost all points, compelling the French commanders, Kleber, Marceau, and Jourdan himself, to make prodigious efforts of activity and valour to rally their men. In the midst of the combat the Austrians perceived that what they fought for was lost. Charleroi had surrendered. Still it behoved them to remain masters of the field, for if the French could not be definitively repulsed, Brussels and Belgium were theirs. The combat continued most fierce at a village called Lambussart, which was frequently taken and retaken, and which if the French lost they must have again re-passed the Sambre. Marceau succeeded in holding it, and the Prince of Coburg beat a retreat. The occupation of Brussels by the French was the result of this

CHAP.
XLI.

victory. Belgium was once more theirs, its frontier fortresses surrendering one after the other.*

Thus the evaporation of the sole remaining pretext for terror preceded, and no doubt contributed to, the fall of the system and its chief supporters. Yet certain members of the governing committee, who had worked the defeat of Robespierre, had no intention of putting an end to tyranny. Not only were Billaud and Collot of this opinion, but Barère adhered to it. The convention, however, in electing members to fill the places in the committee left void, chose Dantonists, such as Tallien and Thuriot, whilst Carrier and the extreme terrorists, Fouquier-Tinville, Lebon, and others, were placed under arrest and ordered for trial. The revolutionary tribunal was remodelled, and the terrorist laws connected with it repealed. The prisons were ordered to be opened for all those not detained for causes set down in the list of *suspects*. These were, heaven knows, sufficiently arbitrary and severe. Yet thousands of prisoners were set free. Legendre principally flung open the doors, and the capital resounded with rejoicing; fathers, mothers, brothers, children embracing their long immured relatives, whom they had never hoped to behold again. Protests were not wanting. The remaining members of the Mountain denounced a sweeping measure of clemency, and demanded the re-incarceration of many who had been liberated. Tallien showed admirable address in combating the extravagance of the two parties, and bringing them to neutralise each other. One was for publishing lists of prisoners, the other for publishing a list of their accusers. Tallien showed the danger. Taken together, they were civil war, and he moved and carried the rejection of both. He had been a cruel proconsul at Bordeaux, after having been secretary of the Paris *commune* during the epoch of popular

* Jourdan's own account of the battle of Fleurus is given by Louis Blanc, t. xi. Levasseur was also present at the battle.—See his Mémoires.

insurrection, and was said to love wealth and pleasure as much as Danton. But whatever his morals, or his political antecedents, he principally shook off the reign of terror, overthrew Robespierre, and prevented either the remaining terrorists from continuing their execrable rule or their enemies, republican or royalist, from rushing into premature and dangerous reaction. To obviate tyranny, the administration of the police was taken altogether from the committee of public safety, and given to that of public surety. Different committees undertook different ministries, diplomacy and war remaining the sole attributes of the chief or governing body of twelve.

Tallien, however, made one great mistake. He allowed the Jacobin club, which had been closed, to resume its sittings after a nominal and unsuccessful epuration. From other revolutionary and sectional bodies the Robespierrites were expelled, but they kept their hold over the Jacobins, which soon became once more the headquarters of an ultra-revolutionary party. It had, however, no longer the terror at its command, and consequently was unable to silence or proscribe its natural opponents. These composed all who had suffered by the extravagance of the revolution in the deaths of their relatives, and in their own properties and prospects. They declared against the *maximum* and the requisitions, as well as against arbitrary arrests and the guillotine, the one indeed not being possible to maintain without the other. Robert Lindet was charged with drawing up a report and preparing a decree to remedy some of the worst inconveniences of the terrorist system. It was a feeble palliation, but still was welcomed.

At the same time a premature attempt on the part of the moderate reactionists to bring such men as Collot and Billaud to trial created much noise and agitation, but was defeated. Lecointre was the accuser. As politician or orator he commanded little respect. His attack alarmed all the members of the Mountain, even those of

CHAP.
XLI.

it, and there were many, who had redescended from it into the Plain, and occupied once more the centre of the assembly.* The accusation was set aside, but the movement towards moderation was evident, when Billaud and Collot, as well as Barère, were replaced at the committee of public safety, now renewed every month. Tallien also withdrew from the committee after an attempt to assassinate him, which fortunately inflicted but a wound in the shoulder.†

No doubt it was the arm of some furious Montagnard which had dealt the blow. The fear and the exasperation of the fallen party knew no bounds. Eliminated from government place, and threatened in the convention, their position in the capital was most insecure. But in the provinces the reaction against them was menacing and more serious. As Lyons and Bordeaux, which had risen in behalf of the moderates, were compelled to bow the neck before the terrorists of the capital, so now, when these were stricken down, the provinces resumed a Girondist, if not a royalist, attitude. Commissaries for the convention came no longer to establish revolutionary committees, but to disperse them, and replace the persecutors in the municipal offices by the persecuted. Such changes could not be effected without a struggle. The patriots, as the ultra-revolutionists did not fail to style themselves, resisted. The Jacobin clubs all over the country received encouragement from that of Paris, which itself resumed courage, and once more ventured to complain to the convention of the persecutions directed against the patriots. This audacity produced agitation, and almost an *émeute*. But it was no longer the mob rising to exaggerate the ideas of the revolution, but the young men of the middle classes, who insulted in the Palais Royal all who professed themselves, or were known to be, Jacobins. The reaction in the press was similar to that in the streets. Reduced to silence during

* Levasscur. Dussaulx, fragment.

† Moniteur.

the terror, the thermidorians had set it free, chiefly to make use of it themselves against the terrorists, whom they denounced. The agitation was increased by the prosecutions which the provinces now commenced against those who had oppressed and massacred their population. Nantes especially clamoured against Carrier. But what alarmed and enraged the Jacobins even more than this was the proposal made in the convention to restore to their seats the seventy-three deputies who had protested against the expulsion of the Girondists, as well as the survivors of the Gironde itself, and for whose heads the Hébertists had incessantly asked. The debates on this question raised a fierce quarrel, even the moderate Cambaceres taking the opportunity to accuse Tallien.*

The latter, indeed, was in a difficult position. Denounced, and indeed expelled from the Jacobins, his chief support must necessarily be in the newly-formed or re-formed centre of the convention. But many of these had concurred in the expulsion of the Gironde. Cambon was of the number. Others, whilst denouncing Robespierre, professed a reverence for Marat. Tallien, to conciliate them, went so far as to sanction the transference of the remains of this personage to the Pantheon. He was also obliged to pass an encomium on the revolution of the 31st of May, whilst exerting himself to restore to the convention those whom that revolution had proscribed. These vacillations of the thermidorians encouraged the Jacobins, in whose tribune Billaud-Varennes himself reappeared to denounce the reaction. "The aristocrats were liberated," he complained, "whilst the patriots were arrested and prosecuted. But their awakening would be that of the lion." The governing committees hesitated to repress this daring. But the anti-terrorist youth of Paris, the *jeunesse dorée*, as they were called, began to surround the hall of the Jacobins

* Moniteur. Lefvasseur.

CHAP.
XII.

during the evening sitting, with the intention of insulting, if they could not silence, the members. They threw stones at the windows and into the hall; and when the Jacobins came forth to resist, they met with harsh treatment. The women who frequented the galleries, the furies of the *guillotine*, as they were called, experienced even more severe usage. When they could be caught in the courts, they were flogged, and their lamentations increased the ire and terror of the Jacobins. These series of tumults and disorders, repeated for several nights, gave the governing committee full pretext to intervene. They were not very severe against the young men, who were the original cause of the tumult, whilst they closed the club of the Jacobins, locked the doors, and solemnly deposited the keys on the table of the convention (Nov. 11, 1794). Thus was extinguished the great focus of popular agitation. If the Jacobins were thus put down, it was less the reaction of the youth of the middle classes than the disgust and weariness of the people themselves with the revolution. What destroyed Robespierre was the lukewarmness and desertion of the faubourgs. The same indifference weighed down the arms of the terrorists who survived, who could not prevail or live without a populace almost in insurrection, and who, not having this to inflate their cause, naturally collapsed and fell.

The execution of Carrier followed, and the surviving Girondists, as well as the seventy-three expelled for having favoured them, resumed their seats in the convention. Such an increase to the moderate, if not reactionary, party accelerated the passing of reparatory measures, such as the removal of sequestration, and the annulment of confiscations. The relatives of the victims of the revolution were allowed to inherit, and a number of *émigrés* took the opportunity of returning to their country, not without hopes of being one day restored to their property. The inevitable result was the resuscitation

of the royalist party, which was as threatening to such men as Tallien, and even to the members of the Gironde, as these were to the terrorists. The re-appearance of the royalists was a new element of discord, which vastly augmented the difficulties and responsibility of the government.

Along with the press and with the expression of middle-class sentiment in the streets reappeared what in France is always influential—society. Female receptions were held, the saloons of Madame Tallien became famous, and she who presided was of course denounced by the Jacobins as all that was vile. Madame de Staël, too, returned and reopened her mansion. The beauty of Madame Récamier vied with the genius of her rival. The theatres, too, came again into vogue, and balls were the rage. The link between the members of this new and gay society was the circumstance of all having lost relatives on the scaffold. It was boasted as an honour. The university opened its schools at the same time, and the long pent-up tide of intellectual instincts and amusements flowed again. In the midst of this resuscitated world, such personages and such countenances as those of Billaud and Collot could not be at home. Those owls of darkness shrieked at the return of light. Already the busts of Marat were everywhere broken, and his remains transferred from the Pantheon to the sewer. In March the report inculpatory of Billaud, Collot, and Barère, was read in the convention. *

Amidst all these symptoms of anti-revolutionary tendency, there still remained one fearful and permanent source of disquiet and sedition. This was famine. The reign of terror, with its *maximum* and its requisitions, had so totally paralysed all supply that Paris was as much starved after a fertile year as after a barren harvest. The *maximum* had been repealed in

* Mémoires de Thibaudau. Periodicals of the time.

CHAP.
XLI.

January, but had brought no remedy. The terrorists, of course, attributed the increased famine to the repeal of their favourite law, and the cessation of the terror. This was a dangerous argument with the people of the faubourgs, who, however disgusted with blood, were still to be aroused by hunger. Moreover, the Jacobins and sectionists, that lower class which had lived by the revolution and its daily pay, driven from their old haunts, and with neither section nor *commune* to salary them, had retreated to the popular faubourgs, tried to found clubs there, and having failed, gathered in the cafés and other places of public resort, and laboured to revive the fervour and the terror of the first years of the revolution. To awaken the old enthusiasm was indeed impossible. But when it was preached to the working classes that the old *commune* and the committee of public safety had supplied Paris by means of terror far better than the thermidorians, there was some truth in the statement. Farmers, no longer in dread of the guillotine, kept back their corn. The country people would neither furnish provisions nor horses to transport them but for due payment. The Parisians were again subjected to the ration; and although the working classes were allotted a larger portion, they grumbled. The fugitive Jacobins told them that if the constitution, that of 1793, improvised by Héroult, was promulgated and acted upon, it would bring back an energetic government friendly to the people. The Jacobins were in haste to get up an insurrection and profit by it; for Collot, Billaud, and Barère, had just been placed in arrest and ordered for trial.

On the 17th of March, a crowd of *faubouriens* collected around the convention. A deputation was admitted to the bar, and instantly raised the cry of "*Bread! bread!*" They behaved very tumultuously, and were with difficulty got rid of and made to disperse. Three days later they returned to the charge. The

turbulent had forgotten, as is often the case, the demand they had been charged to make. On the 21st, therefore, they returned to make the special demand of the constitution of 1793. The president Thibaudeau observed in reply to the petitioners, that he knew better than to mistake such insidious politicians for the sincere and robust patriots of the faubourgs. They were supported, however, by the more violent Mountaineers of the assembly, when he, who generally rose in critical moments, Tallien, observed, that it was the men of the Mountain, the Jacobins, who had carefully shut up the constitution of 1793 in a box. Then raising his voice above a host of murmurs, Tallien said that he did not desire to keep the constitution buried. Let it rather be brought to life. But it could not be promulgated at once, nor put in force until accompanied by the laws and details which would enable it to work. He proposed a commission to undertake this latter task, and made the motion that the present government should be maintained until the definitive constitution and government had been completed and organised. This decision being made known outside the assembly augmented the antagonism which then existed. The anti-revolutionary youth and the Jacobin mob had both mustered on the present occasion, fought, and maltreated each other. At one time the Jacobins had the better, at another the *jeunesse dorée*. But the assembly was in some danger from the former. The moment was most opportune for Sieyès, the mole of the revolution, as Robespierre called him;* who had again found his activity and voice, and who proposed a law greatly strengthening the government and the convention. Seditious cries were severely punished; if concerted, with death. Those who attacked the convention were *hors la loi*. Any members of the convention who deserted the assembly were declared to be without

* Mémoire de Barère.

CHAP.
XLI.

authority. The several great bells of the capital were ordered to be dismantled, save one over the palace of the legislature itself. At the sound of that tocsin, the forces of the section were to hasten to the defence of the convention. It was provided, moreover, that, if the assembly suffered violence, the supplementary members should meet at Châlons, and form a new convention. Tallien insisted that this law should be discussed and passed at once amidst "the clamours of the cut-throats without." It was so; and the anti-revolutionists thus sustained a defeat instead of achieving a triumph.

The police law of Sieyès was soon called into effect. The debates respecting the culpability of the terrorists greatly added to the public excitement, whilst famine increased instead of diminishing. On the 1st of April the convention was again invaded by crowds, in which women largely predominated. Bold men incited them, and under their guidance the women forced their way into the assembly, occupying its benches, crying out "Bread!" and stopping all deliberations. After a long tumult, the mob found a spokesman in one Vaneck, a leader in the sections. He ascended the tribune, harangued the deputies, and demanded the return of the *régime* which had delivered the poor from the domination of the rich. The greater portion of existing discontent was depicted in these words. During the revolutionary years the poor man was the lord, the rich the victims and prey of the prison and police. The reverse of this had taken place since thermidor, and disgusted the lower class. Vaneck expressed these sentiments, and the Mountaineers applauded. Yet all they could demand was the liberation of the patriots, Billaud and Collot first. Fortunately no vote could be passed amidst the tumult, and the sitting of the convention was virtually suspended, until weary with fatigue and hunger, and threatened by the arrival of the sectional forces, the crowd evacuated the hall of the

assembly. There immediately arose a cry for the punishment of those guilty of such an outrage to the convention, and such menaces to its members. The insurgents had demanded the heads of Tallien and Fréron. When the Montagnards exclaimed, that Pitt and the *émigrés* were the suborners of what had just taken place, Dumont said, that the aim of the insurrection had been simply to release Billaud, Collot, and Barère; let us punish them. This proposal was greedily caught at, and the three, with Vadier, were condemned to *déportation*, and ordered to be despatched to Brest for this purpose. Chales, Choudieux, and Foussedoire, who had shown sympathy with the mob, were ordered to be arrested also. Word was brought at the moment that the deputy Auguis had been arrested in the street, and that another, named Penières, had been wounded. On this the assembly conferred the military command of Paris upon General Pichegru. Leonard Bourdon, Duhem, and Huguet were added to the list of those to be arrested. The sitting was not suspended till the ensuing morning.*

Such a result of their turbulence exasperated the would-be revolutionists. They had hoped to save Collot and Billaud, and had but precipitated their condemnation. Learning that their transference to Brest was to be carried out immediately, a portion of the mob awaited the passage of the carriages bearing the *déportés* through the Champs Élysées. The populace succeeded in their first attack, and dispersed the gendarmes, but instead of withdrawing with the prisoners to their faubourg, they took possession of the posts at the gate, and obtained cannon to defend it. Fortunately some of the best disposed of the sections who had mustered on that day were joined by bands of the reactionary youth, General Pichegru coming to assume the command.

* Mémoire de Thibaudeau, de Levasseur, et le Moniteur, journées des 12 et 13 germinal.

CHAP.
XLI.

Under his head they marched boldly on to the insurgents at the head of the Champs Élysées, stood the discharge of their guns, and then rushed upon the post. It was carried in an instant; Collot and his friends made to re-enter their carriage, and proceed at full speed towards the deportation to which they were condemned. Pichegru, like a true soldier, resolved not to leave his task unfinished. He forthwith marched with his victorious troops into the Faubourg St. Antoine, dispersed the force that the sections had there collected, and was able the next day to present himself to the assembly with the assurance that the capital was completely tranquil, and the sedition put down. In addition to the deputies already under arrest, and sent to Ham, the convention, on the motion of Tallien, ordained that of Cambon, Thuriot, and Lecointre, all of whom, though enemies of Robespierre, had rallied to the Mountain since his death, as well as of Crassous, Lesage, Maignet, Heutz, Levasseur, and Granet. More important than even these arrests was the disarmament of the popular party throughout the kingdom, as well as in the capital, decreed by the convention and executed by the municipal assemblies, all now composed of respectable citizens and anti-terrorists. Thus was the party of the revolution for revolution's sake stricken down by repeated enactments. Events and insurrections fomented the cause and the pretexts for each act of reaction and punishment. In the ascent of the revolution from its commencement until thermidor, every event told in its favour and developed its power. From that time forwards events had always the contrary result, terminating, no matter what ideas or persons originated them, in favour of the triumph of order and humanity over anarchy and bloodshed.

But who was Pichegru, the general that aided in the triumph of the convention and the thermidorians over the insurrectionists of *germinal*? He commanded in

1794 one of the divisions of the French army which took possession of Belgium, and drove the allies behind the Rhine. In October he was opposite to Nimeguen, and attacked it from the south, while the Duke of York was encamped on the other side. The garrison of Nimeguen itself was reduced to 3,000 Dutch soldiers, not sufficient to prevent the French from becoming masters of the town. The Stadtholder, in fact, recalled them. Soon after a frost of considerable severity converted the rivers, which protected Holland, into solid ice, and Pichegru had naught to do but pass them with his army. There were of English, Dutch, and Austrian soldiers plenty to have defended Holland, had they a commander of spirit to make resistance and fight a battle. But the Duke of York had retired, the Prince of Orange was incapable, and whilst the enemies withdrew in every direction, Pichegru and his army entered Amsterdam on the 19th January, 1795, and completed the conquest of Holland.*

Whilst the enemies of the French Republic thus made such a miserable defence in Holland, they resumed their plans of offence and invasion in La Vendée. The noble chiefs of the original insurrection had almost all perished. La Rochejacquelein was no more. Charette and Stofflet, the plebeian leaders, had been reduced to inaction. And the great lenity of the thermidorians gave a fair excuse to the royalists of the region to submit, which was destruction to the hope of the French emigrants in England as well as to Pitt. They besought him to resuscitate the spirit of La Vendée, whither they offered to proceed. Pitt listened to them, and resolved on one more effort to keep alive French rebellion in the West.†

An expedition was fitted out in the middle of 1794, and some 3,000 French royalists were despatched to invade a republic whose armies were victorious everywhere, and to whom the formation of an army of 40,000 or

* Jomini, Toulougeon.

† Mémoires de Puisaye.

CHAP.
XLI.

50,000 men, under an able general, was perfectly facile. In fact the command in Brittany was given by the convention to Hoche, with ample forces. The emigrant band, brought by an English fleet, was thus merely victims thrown into a lion's mouth. The French fleet, under Villaret, strove to interrupt the expedition, but was severely handled by the British under Lord Bridport, and obliged to fly, losing three men-of-war. The *émigré* force, under the Marquis de Puisaye, landed at Quiberon on the 27th of June. They were soon joined by four or five thousand Chouans under Georges Cadoudal and other chiefs, who but ill agreed with Puisaye, whilst Puisaye himself was on as bad terms with the Count d'Hervilly, second in command.

A principal element of success was a simultaneous rising of the Vendéans. But the chiefs of these, Charette and Stofflet, were not inclined to enter upon a new insurrection until they at least heard of the success of the expedition. This was never doomed to come. The Chouan force was first put forward by Puisaye, but d'Hervilly, distrusting such irregular partisans, would not co-operate with them or advance. The expedition was thus confined to the island of Quiberon, of which it had got possession of the fort. Puisaye then imagined the project of sending the Chouans to attack Hoche in the rear at a given day, whilst he himself, with the expeditionary army, should attack in front. But by this time Hoche commanded a force far superior to that which attacked him. Neither were the efforts made simultaneously. Puisaye came with the expeditionary army almost alone to assault Hoche in his camp, and was necessarily beaten. D'Hervilly was badly wounded. The republican general was thus able to drive the royalists back upon the island, and after a time capture their fort. This was accomplished by a surprise at night, the sudden discomfiture demoralising the expeditionary army. Hoche was no sooner master of the fort than he advanced

to the attack of the royalist army, which was much diminished, and which had no hope of safety but in the English fleet. That was kept aloof by the severity of the weather. Those who could escape did so in whatever embarkation they could find. The rest were shot down; about one thousand surrendering. There was no mention of conditions. Hoche could not grant them to *émigrés*. And the unfortunate survivors and captives were shot without mercy. Such was the ill-judged expedition which Sheridan and the English opposition so severely denounced.

However successful abroad, the thermidorian government found every kind of difficulty and danger beset them at home. To recover the body politic and social from the total paralysis with which the *terror* had stricken it was a work of time. So long accustomed to do everything from compulsion, the Frenchman, as soon as the latter was withdrawn, seemed to lose all motive of exertion. The conscripts would not go to the army, nor the farmer to market, nor the trader to buy commodities of any kind. The government, which had hitherto supplied Paris, very insufficiently indeed, even although it had terror at command, was unable to perform that duty when dread had evaporated. Every village and every town was in want of bread and fuel, and seized on what was passing to Paris, instead of furthering the transport. The government continued to pay largely as well as to feed, but the money it gave was worthless. The assignat was but one-tenth to one-twelfth of its nominal value. Scheme upon scheme was imagined and proposed to sustain its value. To reduce it to its current worth was to kill it outright. To make the public pay taxes in coin, whilst the state paid in paper, was impossible. The only class that seemed to live on it were the traffickers in the rise or fall. The manipulation of the wretched paper money seemed the only industry. Still there was an unusual display of wealth

CHAP.
XLI.

and even luxury in the capital, which dangerously contrasted with the wants of the poor, who were without bread, fuel, or coin.

Then there was no leading spirit in the government. Tallien, so superior in critical moments, and amidst the conflicting passions of an assembly, did not possess the same influence in the council of the executive, of which each of the numerous members formed his own theory, instead of contributing to the efficiency of government. It was complained that the disarmament of the insurrectionists had been far from complete, the supply of food not well organised, though the troops were employed to enforce it. Above all, no efficient means were provided for the protection of order and of the assembly against fresh tumults. A vote had been passed for the organisation of the sectional force in a national guard, but no steps were taken to realise it. Several members, especially Thibaudeau, insisted on the necessity of giving more unity and concentration to the government, and appointing a committee of public safety of fewer and more energetic members. But the precedent was feared, and the reorganisation of the executive was deferred till a new constitution should have been prepared. For this a commission, consisting of men of all parties, was named.

The early part of May was marked by corn and bread riots. The execution of Fouquier Tinville and the most rabid jurymen and judges did not awe the revolutionists. The reduction of the daily ration of bread to two ounces was a state of things that rendered men reckless even of the guillotine. All the ultra-revolutionists, indignant and alarmed at the execution of Fouquier, met, held councils, and determined to get up an insurrection more serious and better supported than that of March. They made scarcely any secret of it, publishing their sentiments beforehand, and demanding the constitution of 1793, with the deposition of the present government, and the immediate punishment of its members.

The marvel is, that on the morning of a known and announced insurrection neither the government nor its supporters seem to have taken any due precaution. The population of the faubourgs were in motion before daylight, and surrounded the convention at an early hour, whilst but a few of the armed sections mustered on hearing the news of the assembly being actually invaded. The deputies met at about 11 o'clock, and found the galleries filled with women, the furies of the guillotine. Their vociferations prevented the deputies from being heard, and the president in consequence gave authority and orders to an officer to clear the tribunes. Procuring some young men with horsewhips, and a few soldiers to support them, this officer soon drove the women howling from the galleries. But in the meantime the mob attacked one of the side doors of the assembly, and bursting it open filled in an instant the open space in the midst with a mob ill armed but furious, and with women crying out "Bread! bread!"*

At the sight of this invasion of the assembly by one door, the small sectionary force, which defended the great entrance by the bar, entered the hall to repel the aggressors, who withdrew, the women first. But the hall was scarcely freed of their presence when another mob arrived and burst into it as before; this too was repelled, its chief captured and sent off to the committees. A third time, towards two o'clock, the mob again broke in. Feraud, a young deputy, had flung himself before them saying, that they should walk over his body in order to enter. This did not prevent them advancing. When some of the people a short time after threatened the president, Feraud again interfered, and in a scuffle at the foot of the tribune, a pistol-shot was fired, and fatally wounded him. The body was instantly dragged out and decapitated, the name of Feraud having been probably, as M. Louis Blanc suggests, mistaken for

* The Moniteur, Beaulieu, Levasseur, Thibaudeau.

CHAP.
XLI.

that of Fréron, the most obnoxious of the thermidorians. The head soon reappeared upon a pike, and was thrust into the face of the president, Boissy d'Anglas. He saluted the terrible symbol of revolution.

The death of Feraud was no doubt accidental. The most hated of the conventionalists were for hours at the mercy of the mob, and none thought of imbruing his hands in blood. One indeed proposed, that the list of members should be called over, in order to recognise the *coquins*. But it was not insisted on. The Montagnard deputies at last undertook to regularise the tumult—and to collect the members in the centre, whilst the people partly withdrew and partly occupied the benches round, when divers motions were made and of course voted. The first was the liberation of the patriots from prison and accusation. The next was the restoration of their arms to the people. It was forbidden to use flour except in making bread. The nomination of a new committee of public safety was decreed; then the arrest of all journalists, and the abolition of the pain of death, except for *émigrés* and the forgers of assignats. The most important motion was that of Duquesnoy, to appoint four members to replace instantly the committees. This was carried, and Duquesnoy himself, with Prieur de la Marne, Bourbette, and Duroi, were nominated.

Hitherto the governing committees had remained quiescent. Afraid to attempt to put down the population by force, they awaited, in hopes that the insurrection would pass off in smoke like that of germinal. But the motion of Duquesnoy showed the contrary. They, therefore, determined to act. The sections, which hitherto held back, were summoned at all risks to advance.* Legendre and another member were sent to

* The sections of Lepelletier and La Butte aux Moulins, congratulating the convention after its victory, said they had been in communica-

tion with the neighbouring sections, whilst the convention was underdurance, to march to its succour.

tell the convention in the name of the committee to remain firm, and bid the people evacuate the assembly. Hootings met this bold announcement. And Duquesnoy instantly moved to suspend the government and arrest its members. The four who had been appointed proceeded—it was now midnight—to execute this decree. They were met at the bar by Legendre, at the head of the sectionist forces just summoned. Prieur asked by what right they were entering the convention. "I have no orders to receive from you," replied Raffet, the commander of the forces. "Help, *sans-culottes!* To our aid!" cried Prieur.

This was an appeal to civil war made by the Montagnards. The sectionist force answered by advancing with fixed bayonets, before the points of which the populace fled, and once more evacuated the hall. No sooner was it free, after having had for so many hours the knife on its throat, than the most moderate broke forth in cries of vengeance upon those who had so nearly restored the reign of terror and the mob. The most furious was Thibaudeau, a moderate man. He asked how it was that the members who had shown themselves accomplices of the disorder were still allowed to retain their seats. Tallien then raised his voice to second the motion. The blood of Feraud, he said, demanded vengeance. Accordingly the four members who had been appointed to supersede the government were arrested and afterwards formally accused. To their names were added those of Romme, Soubrany, Goujon, Albitte, Rhul, and several others, who, if not privy to the insurrection, certainly sympathised with and lent their aid to the mob, in their attempt to annihilate convention and government. The insurrection was not over. If the mob had been beaten late at night out of the assembly, it was that the insurgents of the faubourgs had most of them returned home to bed. When they arose the next morning and found their cause lost, and the

CHAP.
XLI.

Montagnards arrested, they mustered again and marched to the Carrousel. The sections which held for the convention did the same. And for some hours the population of the eastern district of Paris stood in arms facing those of the west.* Both sides shrunk from such a conflict of brethren. The officers of those who came to defend the convention went through the ranks of their antagonists and persuaded them that the dispute was an idle one, that the convention and its committee could best give them bread, and prepare for them a new constitution. There was no chief or commander, no Henriot or Pache, to keep the *faubouriens* true to their purpose. These were talked over, and consented to return to their districts.

The morning of the next day passed off tranquilly, but in the evening, as the authorities were proceeding to the execution of Quinet, found guilty of having carried the head of Feraud upon a bayonet, the populace rose in tumult, and liberated the criminal. The committees had by this time brought to Paris some 8,000 of regular troops. And it was resolved to march against the faubourg. About 1,200 of the reactionary youth, the *jeunesse dorée*, thought fit to act as vanguard, and advanced up the Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine. But surrounded on all sides, and menaced by the artillery which they could not take, they were obliged to beat a hasty retreat. They were allowed to escape. But when General Menou approached with almost an army, and was going to bombard the faubourg, it submitted, and the insurgent sections gave up their cannon.

The renewal of resistance greatly increased the anger and vindictiveness of the convention. Numbers more were arrested. Robert Lindet, David, Jean Bon-St.-André, and many of the commissaries in the provinces. All were ordered for trial before courts-martial. Collot, Billaud, and Barère, instead of being embarked, were

* Beaulieu's *Essais historiques*. Aubry's Report.

ordered to be kept back, and brought before the tribunal of the Charente for treason. The military court of Paris, thought less sanguinary than the old revolutionary tribunal, still denounced and sent to the guillotine all those convicted of being paramount in the late insurrection. Of the eight Montagnard deputies accused, the commission condemned three of those who had accepted the post of the executive (Priour had fled), and three others who had heartily joined in the counter-revolution. Although the mildest of their party, who had lived through the terror without being its instruments, they allowed themselves to be carried away at the last critical moment, into what certainly was treason, and what would have been a resuscitation of the late sanguinary *régime*. Their death greatly added to the commiseration felt for them by their friends. As they were led down the stairs of the Conciergerie, Romme, Goujon, and Duquesnoy stabbed themselves mortally one after the other with a pair of scissors. Bourbotte and Soubrany did not fully succeed in their attempt at suicide, and were drawn faint and bleeding to the guillotine.*

These men must have felt that they were the last of the Mountain, of the Holy Mountain, as its admirers did not scruple to call it; and their aim, no doubt, was to perish in a way that glorified their cause as well as themselves. Their execution, accompanied as it was by similar successes and vengeance over and upon the *sans-culottes* of the provinces, especially of Toulon, put an end to that party not only in legislative assemblies but amongst the populace. The people of Paris had indeed been long weary of revolution, and its miserable result. Still famine and incitement prompted them to make another trial, badly organised, feebly supported, and despairingly abandoned. It was six years from the time when the Parisian women marched upon Versailles to

* Account in the *Moniteur*.

CHAP.
XLI.

humble the king until their last insurrection, when they were whipped out of the tribunes of the convention. They had gained little but six years' starvation. As to the generation of that day, massacring and massacred, few probably survived. Yet they had got all they asked. A republic, equality, the sweeping away of every class from above them, still they found that others, not they, had taken the upper places. Contractors and money jobbers, proconsuls and functionaries, generals and commissaries, maintained the same ascendancy that men of birth had done, without being less arbitrary or less insolent. As to means of life and material condition, people were reduced to rations of two ounces of bread per day. It was time for the popular dream to vanish, and for democracy, at least the democracy of the lowest ranks, to become defunct.

If the working classes thus gained nothing by the revolution, a fact which was brought home to them by some writers in their interest, who reproached them with not having operated a division of property when they could, the middle class began to derive sensible advantages from the great subversion. They had suffered more indeed than the people during the incandescence of the revolution, with its *maximum*, its requisitions, and its vindictive blows against the *bourgeoisie*. But the revolution of thermidor set them free from these extortions and this tyranny, whilst finally it opened to *them* that division of property which was denied to the boor. The assignats were at the last gasp, when Bourdon de l'Oise proposed that all the confiscated property, the lands and houses of the *émigrés*, and other outlaws, including those of church and state, should be purchasable at three times the prices of 1790, payable in assignats. But this was far lower than the prices of 1790, paid in money. This financial measure, which raised the value of its paper money for the state, enabled the middle class, agriculturist as well as commercial, to become

proprietors everywhere, and rendered the members of them so deeply interested in the maintenance of the revolution that a return to royalty became impossible.

The throwing of this weight into the scale of the revolution was important, for the tide began to set strongly in favour of royalism. Under the tolerance of the thermidorians, the royalists resuscitated and the *émigrés* returned, and in many regions this was done for the purpose of organising vengeance, rather than of recovering ascendancy. In the country around Lyons, for example, or rather between it and the Alps, bands were formed for the express purpose of exterminating the patriots. On one occasion a reactionary tumult took place in Lyons itself, and all the revolutionists, at the time in prison, were Septembrised and put to the sword. In Paris, where the thermidorians had extinguished Jacobins and Mountain, there was no room for such reprisals. But there the royalist reaction came to threaten the government. It had shown itself strong in the sections and in the kind of national guard which they formed. Of these it was only the wealthier citizens who were at once equipped and organised as *grénadiers* and *chasseurs*,* those forming the *basses* or poorer *compagnies* not being in haste to get enrolled. The former strongly favoured reaction, if not royalism, and clamoured against such ultra-revolutionists as Pache and Fouché being allowed to remain at liberty. Lebon, at their instance, was ordered for trial.

The chief hope of the royalists was in the new constitution, although those of the committee, charged with preparing it, were more monarchic than *Bourbonien*.† There prevailed in it much difference of opinion; Daunou and Baudin were for two consuls, Lanjuinais and others for one—to be called president. Louvet objected that a Bourbon might be one day chosen president. In the end they decided on proposing five directors with full

* Thibaudeau, Mémoires. † Ibid.

CHAP.
XLI.

executive rights, save those of concluding treaties or declaring war. The committee was unanimous in recommending two chambers. The word senate sounding too aristocratic, they adopted the title of council of ancients, which, with 500 deputies of the lower chamber, was to constitute the legislature, each to be renewed every year by one-third. The lower chamber alone was to have the initiative of laws, and was to be elected by double suffrage. It was less upon the changes in the constitution that the royalists reckoned as upon the total dissolution of the convention, and the political extinction of its remaining members. These, it was thought, constituted the revolution. A totally new legislation would be open to new interests and ideas.

But if the royalists hoped this, the conventionalists, implicated in the great acts of the revolution, feared it. And they decided, that, although the convention should cease, two-thirds of the members of the Cinq Cents should be conventionalists, so that the new assembly should contain but one-third of new men. This decision, taken towards the end of August, filled all those who meditated or tended to royalism with disgust. Up to that moment the thermidorians and the old members of the plain, the seventy-three who had been ejected and restored, occupied together the benches of the right side. Now a schism broke out between them, the thermidorians accusing them of seeking to bring back royalty, they accusing the thermidorians of seeking to perpetuate the revolution, and a semi-terror.

It is difficult to conceive how the royalists of that time could hope to come by their ends. Had the unfortunate son of Louis the Sixteenth survived, there could have been entertained a project for placing him on the throne under the guardianship of men attached to the revolution. An accord upon this basis might have been hopeless, but was not impossible. But the young Dauphin had succumbed to ill-treatment, confinement,

and neglect. He was left by the tigers of the *commune* and the convention to pine away in filth, solitude, and despondency. The slow torture by which he died is too painful to contemplate, painful to think, that, after thermidor, he was not allowed the fresh air and care which might have restored him. Louis the Seventeenth, as he was called, died in June 1795, soon after the famous days of prairial, his death scarcely noticed.* For the Bourbon heir then to ascend the throne, he must have been recalled from the camp of the *émigrés* and their allies, an act which must have implied a restoration of all that had been overthrown in 1789.

Although the party opposed to the convention were honoured or stigmatised by the appellation of royalists, few in all probability contemplated such a restoration. But the anti-conventional feeling was strong amongst the better, and even amongst the intellectual classes. Superiority in the press, which had passed with the first blush of freedom from the Mountain to the thermidorians, now quitted them for the reactionists. This is conceivable, the convention, its faults and its crimes, forming too broad a target not to be struck by every missile. Not only was the press royalist, but the noisy portion of the opinion of the metropolis, manifesting itself in its headquarters, the Palais Royal. There where Camille Desmoulins first raised the standard of revolution, now the young frequenters of cafés as boldly preached counter-revolution or royalty.† This party did not shrink from showing its strength, and its tendencies, even at the bar of the assembly. There the younger Lacretelle presented a petition against the decrees of fructidor, ordaining the maintenance of the two-thirds, telling the conventionalists “to merit the choice of the people, instead of commanding it.” The centre of this antagonism to the convention, and to the perpetuation of its members and

* Louis XVII., par Beauchene. de vendémiaire. Beaulieu. Periodicals of the day.

† Real, Essai sur les journées

de vendémiaire. Beaulieu. Periodicals of the day.

CHAP.
XLI.

influence, was the section of the quarter of Lepelletier, that which might be called the *haute commerce*. This body took the lead, and though consisting of the rich and the reactionists, adopted precisely the same measures with which similar assemblies had inaugurated the reign of terror. It proposed that each section should name a delegate, and that the delegates should meet to form a kind of metropolitan parliament. The convention forbade this, but the sections persisted at least in collecting their votes against the decrees of fructidor. These in the meantime were received and sanctioned zealously in the provinces and at the armies. So that on the 23rd of September the convention was able to declare that the new decree as well as the constitution had been adopted by a large majority of the country. The élections for the new assembly were ordered to take place in October.

The Paris sections, or the better classes in them, were sorely mortified. Yet they could not have thought of proceeding to the length of insurrection if the interested agents of royalist reaction had not crept amongst them, incited and facilitated the means. The *émigrés* had returned in numbers; Chouans and Vendéans crowded to the capital. They hoped to take vengeance on the convention, by leading the middle and citizen class to the assault. As for the Parisian populace, it was disarmed, indifferent, and had in fact given in its resignation, and stood up merely to regard the struggle between the thermidorians and royalists.

It commenced on the day of the 3rd of October, 11 vendémiaire, when the sections of the Odeon met to choose its electors. They were anticipating the day fixed by the convention, and it was therefore illegal. The assembly, then occupied in celebrating a *fête* in honour of the Girondists, was informed of it. Tallien insisted that the *fête* should proceed and the ceremony too. "Let us pay tribute to the manes of Vergniaud," said he, "ere

we march to combat the hordes of Charette." A decree was afterwards passed forbidding the electoral meeting. But the authorities sent to announce and enforce this were surrounded by the crowd, their torches put out, and themselves obliged to retreat. When this was known, some of the hotter patriots, those especially who had been previously inculpated and imprisoned, came to offer their services to the convention. It accepted the offer, and gave them arms. Hereat the municipal bodies complained that the assembly was re-arming the *sans-culottes*. The sections declared themselves *en rebellion*, and that of Lepelletier *en permanence* as well. It held its sittings in the Convent of the Filles St. Thomas, then situated on the present Place de la Bourse. General Menou marched to disperse and disarm them. Finding this a far more difficult task than he supposed, the general contented himself with getting their verbal promise to withdraw, and retreated himself. They continued notwithstanding to sit and to act. The committee immediately dismissed Menou,* and gave the command nominally to Barras, he being a deputy, but really to Napoleon Bonaparte.

This officer, sent away from Toulon by Aubry, as too revolutionary, and appointed to be general of infantry in La Vendée, where there was nothing to do, lingered in Paris, and was employed in August at the topographic office of the committee of public safety, to fill in some degree the void left by Carnot. In this capacity Bonaparte wrote the despatches of the war department to the French generals commanding in Italy. His talents were therefore well known and appreciated, and on the 6th of October the committee appointed him second in command to Barras. † He immediately proceeded to take his measures. His plan was to remain on the defensive, the number of sectionists far exceeding

* Napoleon acquits Menou of any imbecility in this.

† Correspondance de Napoléon, t. i. Fréron, Pièces justificatives.

CHAP.
XLI.

that of his troops. But they had no cannon, whilst he secured, from the camp of Sablons and elsewhere, all the artillery possible. The sections were not idle on their part. Their 40,000 men were under arms, and a Vendean, Danican, was appointed their commander. He took precisely the resolves which Bonaparte had foreseen and desired. A portion of the sectional army was to advance on the Tuileries by the Pont Neuf, the rest by the Rue St. Honoré. There was no Rue de Rivoli then. The way from the Rue St. Honoré to the Tuileries was through the narrow Rue Dauphin, opposite the church of St. Roch. Bonaparte occupied it with his guns. Almost the entire day of the 13th vendémiaire (October 5, 1795) had been passed in negotiations, or rather in recriminations. Neither side would yield. And at last, after four o'clock in the afternoon, the sections determined on attacking. They did so by the Rue St. Nicaise, the Rue de l'Échelle, in both of which they succeeded in advancing. But from the Rue du Dauphin they encountered such a storm of grape-shot that they were obliged to give way, and take refuge in the church. Bonaparte advanced as they retreated, and pointing his guns in both directions, swept the Rue St. Honoré, and rendered idle the two other attacks. Having thus dispersed the principal force of the assailants, he turned his attention to that advancing from the other side of the quay, the columns of which were even more at the mercy of his guns. They were cannonaded with still greater facility and effect. A few tried to defend themselves in houses adjoining the Rue St. Honoré; others farther eastward, beyond the Palais Royal, tried to throw up barricades. But a few discharges of cannon silenced and scattered both. Before morning even the vestiges of the attempted revolution had disappeared with the two hundred dead.* The sections were subdued and disarmed. Royalism had vanished.

* Report of Barras, that of Merlin. Real Dannicaeu. Memorial de St. Helene.

Bonaparte, about the 23rd of October, was appointed general-in-chief of the army of the interior, it being evident that Barras would be one of the new directors. The government was lenient to their enemies, but two or three perishing on the scaffold. This very leniency gave rise to a serious schism. Since the fall of Robespierre, the thermidorians and the restored members of the convention had occupied together the benches of the right. But when Tallien and his friends perceived that serious ideas of restoring royalty were entertained by those near them, he broke off and retired to the left side of the convention. At a dinner where the parties used to meet in amity, Legendre reproached Lanjuinais with the silence and indifference of him and his friends during the insurrection of the sections. The latter, in answering, very unjustly applied the word massacre to the deaths of the few royalists who had perished on that day. Tallien at this lost all temper; apostrophised his fellow-guests as royalists, and declared his intention of at once denouncing them to the convention.* Although Tallien's anger was appeased for the moment, he brooded over it, and a future day fulfilled his threat and denounced in the convention Lanjuinais, La Rivière, and the others who leaned towards royalism. Although the fears of the convention had been aroused by the seizure of royalist agents and the publication of their projects, still the assembly felt that on the eve of the expiration of its power, it was idle and imprudent to re-commence proscription. It set aside Tallien's motion, therefore, by the order of the day. But the thermidorian was not satisfied. He foresaw, or thought he foresaw, royalism predominant under the coming constitution, and both revolution and revolutionists proscribed. Terrified and agitated, Tallien turned his efforts to prolonging the reign of the convention, and inciting it to strike a blow ere it expired. It was not to be done. There were men of sense

* Thibaudeau.

CHAP.
XLI.

and moderation, and especially Thibaudeau, who took the lead, and who, though certainly not royalist, saw the danger of relapsing into the terror before the unreal spectre of the resuscitated monarchy. He defeated the efforts and manœuvres of Tallien, who was obliged himself to come forward and propose a decree of amnesty rather than proscription. One of its clauses was the abolition of the pain of death, whenever peace should be concluded. On the 24th of October, 1795, the 4th of brumaire, the year 4, the convention declared its mission terminated and its session over.

With the convention may be said to have expired the revolution. There was no lower class to bring up from the depths of society than that which had dominated and rioted until it had exploded from its own violence. There was no more work for it to do, no more substance for it to devour. The upper classes had disappeared. Their movable wealth had been seized and squandered, landed property had been distributed, for the most part, to those incapable of cultivating it. Land became as worthless for the moment as paper money, since the state seized all the produce. The result was famine, produced by the suspension of all industry, all labour, all exchangeable value. Terror had for a time given galvanic impulse to producer and vender. With its cessation their arms fell. Corn or wheaten bread disappeared in consequence, save from the great towns, where, in Paris for example, each citizen was doled a daily ration of from two to four ounces of bread. The provinces were fed with chestnuts or oatmeal. As to meat, it not only grew as scarce as corn, but the stock disappeared, and offered no hopes of replenishment. All the convention could propose was a patriotic *carême*, or fast; the population was told to be satisfied with bread and water amidst all the blessings that the revolution had brought them.

What were these? Great undoubtedly, what the con-

stituent assembly had decreed—the abrogation of the unfounded privileges of birth and the monstrous prerogatives of the crown, with the equality of all citizens before the law, if law of any kind had been established. All the blood spilled in the revolution, such men as Cousin have declared to be well spilled, in exchange for such inestimable boons. But were these secured? Under the convention the privileges of the *sans-culottes* were far more onerous and iniquitous than ever had been those of the aristocracy. Under the government which succeeded, functionaries, civil and military, took the place of the aristocracy, and were quite as oppressive, entrenching themselves behind privileges equally unjust. Even to this day the royal or imperial functionary is not amenable to the same tribunal as the private man, but is judged by his order, just as was the noble of the *ancien régime*.

The glory of the convention in the eyes of its compatriots is, to have repelled the national enemies, and so saved the revolution. Nothing less than the terror, they think, could have repulsed foreign armies and put down domestic insurrection. Terror, however, as history tells, threw as many obstacles as facilities in the way of military success. The first attacks of the enemies were repelled without the influence of the terror, why not the last? We do not see why Carnot could not have “organised victory” in concert with a Vergniaud or a Danton, as well as with Robespierre and St. Just.

The convention showed energy certainly, but it was brutal energy, inflicting a greater degree of misery and oppression upon the whole mass of the people than perhaps ever befell a country, and this, it is alleged, to prevent the invasion of France and the reduction of Paris by the Dukes of Coburg, Brunswick, and York. No military writer of the period considers these commanders as capable, or even as desirous, of such an

CHAP.
XLI.

achievement. Prussian armies were soon withdrawn from the field ; and Austria alone, aided by the puny efforts of England on the Continent, was certainly not to be feared. Even had the Germans and English entered Paris in 1794, as they did twenty years later, they would not have dreamed of either dividing France, of restoring the ancient monarchy, or even of abrogating any of the great and valuable acquisitions of 1789. That the convention saved either France or its revolution is but an empty and mendacious boast.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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