

# Book I. September.

## Chapter 1. The Improvised Commune.

Ye have roused her, then, ye Emigrants and Despots of the world; France is roused; long have ye been lecturing and tutoring this poor Nation, like cruel uncalled-for pedagogues, shaking over her your ferulas of fire and steel: it is long that ye have pricked and fillipped and affrighted her, there as she sat helpless in her dead cerements of a Constitution, you gathering in on her from all lands, with your armaments and plots, your invadings and truculent bullyings;—and lo now, ye have pricked her to the quick, and she is up, and her blood is up. The dead cerements are rent into cobwebs, and she fronts you in that terrible strength of Nature, which no man has measured, which goes down to Madness and Tophet: see now how ye will deal with her!

This month of September, 1792, which has become one of the memorable months of History, presents itself under two most diverse aspects; all of black on the one side, all of bright on the other.

Whatsoever is cruel in the panic frenzy of Twenty-five million men, whatsoever is great in the simultaneous death-defiance of Twenty-five million men, stand here in abrupt contrast, near by one another. As indeed is usual when a man, how much more when a Nation of men, is hurled suddenly beyond the limits. For Nature, as green as she looks, rests everywhere on dread foundations, were we farther down; and Pan, to whose music the Nymphs dance, has a cry in him that can drive all men distracted.

Very frightful it is when a Nation, rending asunder its Constitutions and Regulations which were grown dead cerements for it, becomes transcendental; and must now seek its wild way through the New, Chaotic,—where Force is not yet distinguished into Bidden and Forbidden, but Crime and Virtue welter unseparated,—in that domain of what is called the Passions; of what we call the Miracles and the Portents! It is thus that, for some three years to come, we are to contemplate France, in this final Third Volume of our History. Sansculottism reigning in all its grandeur and in all its hideousness: the Gospel (*God's Message*) of Man's Rights, Man's mights or strengths, once more preached irrefragably abroad; along with this, and still louder for the time, and fearfulest Devil's-Message of Man's weaknesses and sins;—and all on such a scale, and under such aspect: cloudy 'death-birth of a world;' huge smoke-cloud, streaked with rays as of heaven on one side; girt on the other as with hell-fire! History tells us many things: but for the last thousand years and more, what thing has she told us of a sort like this? Which therefore let us two, O Reader, dwell on willingly, for a little; and from its endless significance endeavour to extract what may, in present circumstances, be adapted for us.

It is unfortunate, though very natural, that the history of this Period has so generally been written in hysterics. Exaggeration abounds, execration, wailing; and, on the whole, darkness. But thus too, when foul old Rome had to be swept from the Earth, and those Northmen, and other horrid sons of Nature, came in, 'swallowing formulas' as the French now do, foul old Rome screamed execratively her loudest; so that, the true shape of many things is lost for us. Attila's Huns had arms of such length that they could lift a stone without stooping. Into the body of the poor Tatars execrative Roman History intercalated an alphabetic letter; and so they continue Ta-r-tars, of fell Tartarean nature, to this day. Here, in like manner, search as we will in these multi-form innumerable French Records, darkness too frequently covers, or sheer distraction bewilders. One finds it difficult to imagine that the Sun shone in

this September month, as he does in others. Nevertheless it is an indisputable fact that the Sun did shine; and there was weather and work,—nay, as to that, very bad weather for harvest work! An unlucky Editor may do his utmost; and after all, require allowances.

He had been a wise Frenchman, who, looking, close at hand, on this waste aspect of a France all stirring and whirling, in ways new, untried, had been able to discern where the cardinal movement lay; which tendency it was that had the rule and primary direction of it then! But at forty-four years' distance, it is different. To all men now, two cardinal movements or grand tendencies, in the September whirl, have become discernible enough: that stormful effluence towards the Frontiers; that frantic crowding towards Townhouses and Council-halls in the interior. Wild France dashes, in desperate death-defiance, towards the Frontiers, to defend itself from foreign Despots; crowds towards Townhalls and Election Committee-rooms, to defend itself from domestic Aristocrats. Let the Reader conceive well these two cardinal movements; and what side-currents and endless vortexes might depend on these. He shall judge too, whether, in such sudden wreckage of all old Authorities, such a pair of cardinal movements, half-frantic in themselves, could be of soft nature? As in dry Sahara, when the winds waken, and lift and winnow the immensity of sand! The air itself (*Travellers say*) is a dim sand-air; and dim looming through it, the wonderfulest uncertain colonnades of Sand-Pillars rush whirling from this side and from that, like so many mad Spinning-Dervishes, of a hundred feet in stature; and dance their huge Desert-waltz there!—

Nevertheless in all human movements, were they but a day old, there is order, or the beginning of order. Consider two things in this Sahara-waltz of the French Twenty-five millions; or rather one thing, and one hope of a thing: the Commune (*Municipality*) of Paris, which is already here; the National Convention, which shall in few weeks be here. The Insurrectionary Commune, which improvising itself on the eve of the Tenth of August, worked this ever-memorable Deliverance by explosion, must needs rule over it,—till the Convention meet. This Commune, which they may well call a spontaneous or 'improvised' Commune, is, for the present, sovereign of France. The Legislative, deriving its authority from the Old, how can it now have authority when the Old is exploded by insurrection? As a floating piece of wreck, certain things, persons and interests may still cleave to it: volunteer defenders, riflemen or pikemen in green uniform, or red nightcap (*of bonnet rouge*), defile before it daily, just on the wing towards Brunswick; with the brandishing of arms; always with some touch of Leonidas-eloquence, often with a fire of daring that threatens to outherd Herod,—the Galleries, 'especially the Ladies, never done with applauding.' (*Moore's Journal*, i. 85.) Addresses of this or the like sort can be received and answered, in the hearing of all France: the Salle de Manège is still useful as a place of proclamation. For which use, indeed, it now chiefly serves. Vergniaud delivers spirit-stirring orations; but always with a prophetic sense only, looking towards the coming Convention. "Let our memory perish," cries Vergniaud, "but let France be free!"—whereupon they all start to their feet, shouting responsive: "Yes, yes, perisse notre memoire, pourvu que la France soit libre!" (*Hist. Parl.* xvii. 467.) Disfrocked Chabot abjures Heaven that at least we may "have done with Kings;" and fast as powder under spark, we all blaze up once more, and with waved hats shout and swear: "Yes, nous le jurons; plus de roi!" (*Ibid.* xvii. 437.) All which, as a method of proclamation, is very convenient.

For the rest, that our busy Brissots, rigorous Rolands, men who once had authority and now have less and less; men who love law, and will have even an Explosion explode itself, as far as possible, according to rule, do find this state of matters most unofficial unsatisfactory,—is not to be denied. Complaints are made; attempts are made: but without effect. The attempts even recoil; and must be desisted from, for fear of worse: the sceptre is departed from this Legislative once and always. A poor

Legislative, so hard was fate, had let itself be hand-gyved, nailed to the rock like an Andromeda, and could only wail there to the Earth and Heavens; miraculously a winged Perseus (*or Improvised Commune*) has dawned out of the void Blue, and cut her loose: but whether now is it she, with her softness and musical speech, or is it he, with his hardness and sharp falchion and aegis, that shall have casting vote? Melodious agreement of vote; this were the rule! But if otherwise, and votes diverge, then surely Andromeda's part is to weep,—if possible, tears of gratitude alone.

Be content, O France, with this Improvised Commune, such as it is! It has the implements, and has the hands: the time is not long. On Sunday the twenty-sixth of August, our Primary Assemblies shall meet, begin electing of Electors; on Sunday the second of September (*may the day prove lucky!*) the Electors shall begin electing Deputies; and so an all-healing National Convention will come together. No *marc d'argent*, or distinction of Active and Passive, now insults the French Patriot: but there is universal suffrage, unlimited liberty to choose. Old-constituents, Present-Legislators, all France is eligible. Nay, it may be said, the flower of all the Universe (*de l'Univers*) is eligible; for in these very days we, by act of Assembly, 'naturalise' the chief Foreign Friends of humanity: Priestley, burnt out for us in Birmingham; Klopstock, a genius of all countries; Jeremy Bentham, useful Jurisconsult; distinguished Paine, the rebellious Needleman;—some of whom may be chosen. As is most fit; for a Convention of this kind. In a word, Seven Hundred and Forty-five unshackled sovereigns, admired of the universe, shall replace this hapless impotency of a Legislative,—out of which, it is likely, the best members, and the Mountain in mass, may be re-elected. Roland is getting ready the Salles des Cent Suisses, as preliminary rendezvous for them; in that void Palace of the Tuileries, now void and National, and not a Palace, but a Caravansera.

As for the Spontaneous Commune, one may say that there never was on Earth a stranger Town-Council. Administration, not of a great City, but of a great Kingdom in a state of revolt and frenzy, this is the task that has fallen to it. Enrolling, provisioning, judging; devising, deciding, doing, endeavouring to do: one wonders the human brain did not give way under all this, and reel. But happily human brains have such a talent of taking up simply what they can carry, and ignoring all the rest; leaving all the rest, as if it were not there! Whereby somewhat is verily shifted for; and much shifts for itself. This Improvised Commune walks along, nothing doubting; promptly making front, without fear or flurry, at what moment soever, to the wants of the moment. Were the world on fire, one improvised tricolor Municipal has but one life to lose. They are the elixir and chosen-men of Sansculottic Patriotism; promoted to the forlorn-hope; unspeakable victory or a high gallows, this is their meed. They sit there, in the Townhall, these astonishing tricolor Municipals; in Council General; in Committee of Watchfulness (*de Surveillance, which will even become de Salut Public, of Public Salvation*), or what other Committees and Sub-committees are needful;—managing infinite Correspondence; passing infinite Decrees: one hears of a Decree being 'the ninety-eighth of the day.' Ready! is the word. They carry loaded pistols in their pocket; also some improvised luncheon by way of meal. Or indeed, by and by, *traiteurs* contract for the supply of repasts, to be eaten on the spot,—too lavishly, as it was afterwards grumbled. Thus they: girt in their tricolor sashes; Municipal note-paper in the one hand, fire-arms in other. They have their Agents out all over France; speaking in townhouses, market-places, highways and byways; agitating, urging to arm; all hearts tingling to hear. Great is the fire of Anti-Aristocrat eloquence: nay some, as Bibliopolic Momoro, seem to hint afar off at something which smells of Agrarian Law, and a surgery of the oversworn dropsical strong-box itself;—whereat indeed the bold Bookseller runs risk of being hanged, and Ex-Constituent Buzot has to smuggle him off. (*Memoires de Buzot* (Paris, 1823), p. 88.)

Governing Persons, were they never so insignificant intrinsically, have for most part plenty of Memoir-writers; and the curious, in after-times, can learn minutely their goings out and comings in: which, as men always love to know their fellow-men in singular situations, is a comfort, of its kind. Not so, with these Governing Persons, now in the Townhall! And yet what most original fellow-man, of the Governing sort, high-chancellor, king, kaiser, secretary of the home or the foreign department, ever shewed such a phasis as Clerk Tallien, Procureur Manuel, future Procureur Chaumette, here in this Sand-waltz of the Twenty-five millions, now do? O brother mortals,—thou Advocate Panis, friend of Danton, kinsman of Santerre; Engraver Sergent, since called Agate Sergent; thou Huguenin, with the tocsin in thy heart! But, as Horace says, they wanted the sacred memoir-writer (*sacro vate*); and we know them not. Men bragged of August and its doings, publishing them in high places; but of this September none now or afterwards would brag. The September world remains dark, fuliginous, as Lapland witch-midnight;—from which, indeed, very strange shapes will evolve themselves.

Understand this, however: that incorruptible Robespierre is not wanting, now when the brunt of battle is past; in a stealthy way the seagreen man sits there, his feline eyes excellent in the twilight. Also understand this other, a single fact worth many: that Marat is not only there, but has a seat of honour assigned him, a tribune particuliere. How changed for Marat; lifted from his dark cellar into this luminous 'peculiar tribune!' All dogs have their day; even rabid dogs. Sorrowful, incurable Philoctetes Marat; without whom Troy cannot be taken! Hither, as a main element of the Governing Power, has Marat been raised. Royalist types, for we have 'suppressed' innumerable Durosoys, Royous, and even clapt them in prison,—Royalist types replace the worn types often snatched from a People's-Friend in old ill days. In our 'peculiar tribune' we write and redact: Placards, of due monitory terror; Amis-du-Peuple (*now under the name of Journal de la Republique*); and sit obeyed of men. 'Marat,' says one, 'is the conscience of the Hotel-de-Ville.' Keeper, as some call it, of the Sovereign's Conscience;—which surely, in such hands, will not lie hid in a napkin!

Two great movements, as we said, agitate this distracted National mind: a rushing against domestic Traitors, a rushing against foreign Despots. Mad movements both, restrainable by no known rule; strongest passions of human nature driving them on: love, hatred; vengeful sorrow, braggart Nationality also vengeful,—and pale Panic over all! Twelve Hundred slain Patriots, do they not, from their dark catacombs there, in Death's dumb-shew, plead (*O ye Legislators*) for vengeance? Such was the destructive rage of these Aristocrats on the ever-memorable Tenth. Nay, apart from vengeance, and with an eye to Public Salvation only, are there not still, in this Paris (*in round numbers*) 'thirty thousand Aristocrats,' of the most malignant humour; driven now to their last trump-card?—Be patient, ye Patriots: our New High Court, 'Tribunal of the Seventeenth,' sits; each Section has sent Four Jurymen; and Danton, extinguishing improper judges, improper practices wheresoever found, is 'the same man you have known at the Cordeliers.' With such a Minister of Justice shall not Justice be done?—Let it be swift then, answers universal Patriotism; swift and sure!—

One would hope, this Tribunal of the Seventeenth is swifter than most. Already on the 21st, while our Court is but four days old, Collenot d'Angremont, 'the Royal enlister' (*crimp, embaucheur*) dies by torch-light. For, lo, the great Guillotine, wondrous to behold, now stands there; the Doctor's Idea has become Oak and Iron; the huge cyclopean axe 'falls in its grooves like the ram of the Pile-engine,' swiftly snuffing out the light of men?' 'Mais vous, Gualches, what have you invented?' This?—Poor old Laporte, Intendant of the Civil List, follows next; quietly, the mild old man. Then Durosoy, Royalist Placarder, 'cashier of all the Anti-Revolutionists of the interior:' he went rejoicing; said that a Royalist like him ought to die, of all days on this day, the 25th or Saint Louis's Day. All these have been tried, cast,—the Galleries shouting approval; and handed over to the Realised Idea, within a

week. Besides those whom we have acquitted, the Galleries murmuring, and have dismissed; or even have personally guarded back to Prison, as the Galleries took to howling, and even to menacing and elbowing. (*Moore's Journal*, i. 159-168.) Languid this Tribunal is not.

Nor does the other movement slacken; the rushing against foreign Despots. Strong forces shall meet in death-grip; drilled Europe against mad undrilled France; and singular conclusions will be tried.—Conceive therefore, in some faint degree, the tumult that whirls in this France, in this Paris! Placards from Section, from Commune, from Legislative, from the individual Patriot, flame monitory on all walls. Flags of Danger to Fatherland wave at the Hotel-de-Ville; on the Pont Neuf—over the prostrate Statues of Kings. There is universal enlisting, urging to enlist; there is tearful-boastful leave-taking; irregular marching on the Great North-Eastern Road. Marseillaise sing their wild To Arms, in chorus; which now all men, all women and children have learnt, and sing chorally, in Theatres, Boulevards, Streets; and the heart burns in every bosom: Aux Armes! Marchons!—Or think how your Aristocrats are skulking into covert; how Bertrand-Moleville lies hidden in some garret 'in Aubry-le-boucher Street, with a poor surgeon who had known me;' Dame de Stael has secreted her Narbonne, not knowing what in the world to make of him. The Barriers are sometimes open, oftenest shut; no passports to be had; Townhall Emissaries, with the eyes and claws of falcons, flitting watchful on all points of your horizon! In two words: Tribunal of the Seventeenth, busy under howling Galleries; Prussian Brunswick, 'over a space of forty miles,' with his war-tumbrils, and sleeping thunders, and Briarean 'sixty-six thousand' (*See Toulangeon, Hist. de France. ii. c. 5.*) right-hands,—coming, coming!

O Heavens, in these latter days of August, he is come! Durosoy was not yet guillotined when news had come that the Prussians were harrying and ravaging about Metz; in some four days more, one hears that Longwi, our first strong-place on the borders, is fallen 'in fifteen hours.' Quick, therefore, O ye improvised Municipals; quick, and ever quicker!—The improvised Municipals make front to this also. Enrolment urges itself; and clothing, and arming. Our very officers have now 'wool epaulettes;' for it is the reign of Equality, and also of Necessity. Neither do men now monsieur and sir one another; citizen (*citizen*) were suitabler; we even say thou, as 'the free peoples of Antiquity did:' so have Journals and the Improvised Commune suggested; which shall be well.

Infinitely better, meantime, could we suggest, where arms are to be found. For the present, our Citoyens chant chorally To Arms; and have no arms! Arms are searched for; passionately; there is joy over any musket. Moreover, entrenchments shall be made round Paris: on the slopes of Montmartre men dig and shovel; though even the simple suspect this to be desperate. They dig; Tricolour sashes speak encouragement and well-speed-ye. Nay finally 'twelve Members of the Legislative go daily,' not to encourage only, but to bear a hand, and delve: it was decreed with acclamation. Arms shall either be provided; or else the ingenuity of man crack itself, and become fatuity. Lean Beaumarchais, thinking to serve the Fatherland, and do a stroke of trade, in the old way, has commissioned sixty thousand stand of good arms out of Holland: would to Heaven, for Fatherland's sake and his, they were come! Meanwhile railings are torn up; hammered into pikes: chains themselves shall be welded together, into pikes. The very coffins of the dead are raised; for melting into balls. All Church-bells must down into the furnace to make cannon; all Church-plate into the mint to make money. Also behold the fair swan-bevies of Citoyennes that have alighted in Churches, and sit there with swan-neck,—sewing tents and regimentals! Nor are Patriotic Gifts wanting, from those that have aught left; nor stingily given: the fair Villaumes, mother and daughter, Milliners in the Rue St.-Martin, give 'a silver thimble, and a coin of fifteen sous (*sevenpence halfpenny*),' with other similar effects; and offer, at least the mother does, to mount guard. Men who have not even a thimble, give a thimbleful,—were it but of invention. One

Citoyen has wrought out the scheme of a wooden cannon; which France shall exclusively profit by, in the first instance. It is to be made of staves, by the coopers;—of almost boundless calibre, but uncertain as to strength! Thus they: hammering, scheming, stitching, founding, with all their heart and with all their soul. Two bells only are to remain in each Parish,—for tocsin and other purposes.

But mark also, precisely while the Prussian batteries were playing their briskest at Longwi in the North-East, and our dastardly Lavergne saw nothing for it but surrender,—south-westward, in remote, patriarchal La Vendee, that sour ferment about Nonjuring Priests, after long working, is ripe, and explodes: at the wrong moment for us! And so we have 'eight thousand Peasants at Chatillon-sur-Sevre,' who will not be ballotted for soldiers; will not have their Curates molested. To whom Bonchamps, Laroche-jaquelins, and Seigneurs enough, of a Royalist turn, will join themselves; with Stofflets and Charettes; with Heroes and Chouan Smugglers; and the loyal warmth of a simple people, blown into flame and fury by theological and seignorial bellows! So that there shall be fighting from behind ditches, death-volley bursts out of thickets and ravines of rivers; huts burning, feet of the pitiful women hurrying to refuge with their children on their back; seedfields fallow, whitened with human bones;—'eighty thousand, of all ages, ranks, sexes, flying at once across the Loire,' with wail borne far on the winds: and, in brief, for years coming, such a suite of scenes as glorious war has not offered in these late ages, not since our Albigenes and Crusadings were over,—save indeed some chance Palatinate, or so, we might have to 'burn,' by way of exception. The 'eight thousand at Chatillon' will be got dispelled for the moment; the fire scattered, not extinguished. To the dints and bruises of outward battle there is to be added henceforth a deadlier internal gangrene.

This rising in La Vendee reports itself at Paris on Wednesday the 29th of August;—just as we had got our Electors elected; and, in spite of Brunswick's and Longwi's teeth, were hoping still to have a National Convention, if it pleased Heaven. But indeed, otherwise, this Wednesday is to be regarded as one of the notablest Paris had yet seen: gloomy tidings come successively, like Job's messengers; are met by gloomy answers. Of Sardinia rising to invade the South-East, and Spain threatening the South, we do not speak. But are not the Prussians masters of Longwi (*treacherously yielded, one would say*); and preparing to besiege Verdun? Clairfait and his Austrians are encompassing Thionville; darkening the North. Not Metz-land now, but the Clermontais is getting harried; flying hulans and huzzars have been seen on the Chalons Road, almost as far as Sainte-Menehould. Heart, ye Patriots, if ye lose heart, ye lose all!

It is not without a dramatic emotion that one reads in the Parliamentary Debates of this Wednesday evening 'past seven o'clock,' the scene with the military fugitives from Longwi. Wayworn, dusty, disheartened, these poor men enter the Legislative, about sunset or after; give the most pathetic detail of the frightful pass they were in:—Prussians billowing round by the myriad, volcanically spouting fire for fifteen hours: we, scattered sparse on the ramparts, hardly a cannoneer to two guns; our dastard Commandant Lavergne no where shewing face; the priming would not catch; there was no powder in the bombs,—what could we do? "Mourir! Die!" answer prompt voices; (*Hist. Parl. xvii. 148.*) and the dusty fugitives must shrink elsewhither for comfort.—Yes, Mourir, that is now the word. Be Longwi a proverb and a hissing among French strong-places: let it (*says the Legislative*) be obliterated rather, from the shamed face of the Earth;—and so there has gone forth Decree, that Longwi shall, were the Prussians once out of it, 'be rased,' and exist only as ploughed ground.

Nor are the Jacobins milder; as how could they, the flower of Patriotism? Poor Dame Lavergne, wife of the poor Commandant, took her parasol one evening, and escorted by her Father came over to the Hall of the mighty Mother; and 'reads a memoir tending to justify the Commandant of Longwi.'

Lafarge, President, makes answer: "Citoyenne, the Nation will judge Lavergne; the Jacobins are bound to tell him the truth. He would have ended his course there (*termine sa carriere*), if he had loved the honour of his country." (*Ibid. xix. 300.*)

## Chapter 2. Danton.

But better than raising of Longwi, or rebuking poor dusty soldiers or soldiers' wives, Danton had come over, last night, and demanded a Decree to search for arms, since they were not yielded voluntarily. Let 'Domiciliary visits,' with rigour of authority, be made to this end. To search for arms; for horses,—Aristocratism rolls in its carriage, while Patriotism cannot trail its cannon. To search generally for munitions of war, 'in the houses of persons suspect,'—and even, if it seem proper, to seize and imprison the suspect persons themselves! In the Prisons, their plots will be harmless; in the Prisons, they will be as hostages for us, and not without use. This Decree the energetic Minister of Justice demanded, last night, and got; and this same night it is to be executed; it is being executed, at the moment when these dusty soldiers get saluted with Mourir. Two thousand stand of arms, as they count, are foraged in this way; and some four hundred head of new Prisoners; and, on the whole, such a terror and damp is struck through the Aristocrat heart, as all but Patriotism, and even Patriotism were it out of this agony, might pity. Yes, Messieurs! if Brunswick blast Paris to ashes, he probably will blast the Prisons of Paris too: pale Terror, if we have got it, we will also give it, and the depth of horrors that lie in it; the same leaky bottom, in these wild waters, bears us all.

One can judge what stir there was now among the 'thirty thousand Royalists:' how the Plotters, or the accused of Plotting, shrank each closer into his lurking-place,—like Bertrand Moleville, looking eager towards Longwi, hoping the weather would keep fair. Or how they dressed themselves in valet's clothes, like Narbonne, and 'got to England as Dr. Bollman's famulus:' how Dame de Stael bestirred herself, pleading with Manuel as a Sister in Literature, pleading even with Clerk Tallien; a pray to nameless chagrins! (*De Stael, Considerations sur la Revolution, ii. 67-81.*) Royalist Peltier, the Pamphleteer, gives a touching Narrative (*not deficient in height of colouring*) of the terrors of that night. From five in the afternoon, a great City is struck suddenly silent; except for the beating of drums, for the tramp of marching feet; and ever and anon the dread thunder of the knocker at some door, a Tricolor Commissioner with his blue Guards (*black-guards!*) arriving. All Streets are vacant, says Peltier; beset by Guards at each end: all Citizens are ordered to be within doors. On the River float sentinel barges, lest we escape by water: the Barriers hermetically closed. Frightful! The sun shines; serenely westering, in smokeless mackerel-sky: Paris is as if sleeping, as if dead:—Paris is holding its breath, to see what stroke will fall on it. Poor Peltier! Acts of Apostles, and all jocundity of Leading-Articles, are gone out, and it is become bitter earnest instead; polished satire changed now into coarse pike-points (*hammered out of railing*); all logic reduced to this one primitive thesis, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!—Peltier, dolefully aware of it, ducks low; escapes unscathed to England; to urge there the inky war anew; to have Trial by Jury, in due season, and deliverance by young Whig eloquence, world-celebrated for a day.

Of 'thirty thousand,' naturally, great multitudes were left unmolested: but, as we said, some four hundred, designated as 'persons suspect,' were seized; and an unspeakable terror fell on all. Wo to him who is guilty of Plotting, of Anticivism, Royalism, Feuillantism; who, guilty or not guilty, has an enemy in his Section to call him guilty! Poor old M. de Cazotte is seized, his young loved Daughter with him, refusing to quit him. Why, O Cazotte, wouldst thou quit romancing, and Diable Amoureux, for such reality as this? Poor old M. de Sombreuil, he of the Invalides, is seized: a man seen askance,

by Patriotism ever since the Bastille days: whom also a fond Daughter will not quit. With young tears hardly suppressed, and old wavering weakness rousing itself once more—O my brothers, O my sisters!

The famed and named go; the nameless, if they have an accuser. Necklace Lamotte's Husband is in these Prisons (*she long since squelched on the London Pavements*); but gets delivered. Gross de Morande, of the Courier de l'Europe, hobbles distractedly to and fro there: but they let him hobble out; on right nimble crutches;—his hour not being yet come. Advocate Maton de la Varenne, very weak in health, is snatched off from mother and kin; Tricolor Rossignol (*journeyman goldsmith and scoundrel lately, a risen man now*) remembers an old Pleading of Maton's! Jourgniac de Saint-Meard goes; the brisk frank soldier: he was in the Mutiny of Nancy, in that 'effervescent Regiment du Roi,'—on the wrong side. Saddest of all: Abbe Sicard goes; a Priest who could not take the Oath, but who could teach the Deaf and Dumb: in his Section one man, he says, had a grudge at him; one man, at the fit hour, launches an arrest against him; which hits. In the Arsenal quarter, there are dumb hearts making wail, with signs, with wild gestures; he their miraculous healer and speech-bringer is rapt away.

What with the arrestments on this night of the Twenty-ninth, what with those that have gone on more or less, day and night, ever since the Tenth, one may fancy what the Prisons now were. Crowding and Confusion; jostle, hurry, vehemence and terror! Of the poor Queen's Friends, who had followed her to the Temple and been committed elsewhere to Prison, some, as Governess de Tourzelle, are to be let go: one, the poor Princess de Lamballe, is not let go; but waits in the strong-rooms of La Force there, what will betide further.

Among so many hundreds whom the launched arrest hits, who are rolled off to Townhall or Section-hall, to preliminary Houses of detention, and hurled in thither, as into cattle-pens, we must mention one other: Caron de Beaumarchais, Author of Figaro; vanquisher of Maupeou Parlements and Goetzman helldogs; once numbered among the demigods; and now—? We left him in his culminant state; what dreadful decline is this, when we again catch a glimpse of him! 'At midnight' (*it was but the 12th of August yet*), 'the servant, in his shirt,' with wide-staring eyes, enters your room:—Monsieur, rise; all the people are come to seek you; they are knocking, like to break in the door! 'And they were in fact knocking in a terrible manner (*d'une facon terrible*). I fling on my coat, forgetting even the waistcoat, nothing on my feet but slippers; and say to him'—And he, alas, answers mere negatory incoherences, panic interjections. And through the shutters and crevices, in front or rearward, the dull street-lamps disclose only streetfuls of haggard countenances; clamorous, bristling with pikes: and you rush distracted for an outlet, finding none;—and have to take refuge in the crockery-press, down stairs; and stand there, palpitating in that imperfect costume, lights dancing past your key-hole, tramp of feet overhead, and the tumult of Satan, 'for four hours and more!' And old ladies, of the quarter, started up (*as we hear next morning*); rang for their Bonnes and cordial-drops, with shrill interjections: and old gentlemen, in their shirts, 'leapt garden-walls;' flying, while none pursued; one of whom unfortunately broke his leg. (*Beaumarchais' Narrative, Memoires sur les Prisons* (Paris, 1823), i. 179-90.) Those sixty thousand stand of Dutch arms (*which never arrive*), and the bold stroke of trade, have turned out so ill!—

Beaumarchais escaped for this time; but not for the next time, ten days after. On the evening of the Twenty-ninth he is still in that chaos of the Prisons, in saddest, wrestling condition; unable to get justice, even to get audience; 'Panis scratching his head' when you speak to him, and making off. Nevertheless let the lover of Figaro know that Procureur Manuel, a Brother in Literature, found him, and delivered him once more. But how the lean demigod, now shorn of his splendour, had to lurk in barns, to roam over harrowed fields, panting for life; and to wait under eavesdrops, and sit in darkness



'on the Boulevard amid paving-stones and boulders,' longing for one word of any Minister, or Minister's Clerk, about those accursed Dutch muskets, and getting none,—with heart fuming in spleen, and terror, and suppressed canine-madness: alas, how the swift sharp hound, once fit to be Diana's, breaks his old teeth now, gnawing mere whinstones; and must 'fly to England;' and, returning from England, must creep into the corner, and lie quiet, toothless (*moneyless*),—all this let the lover of Figaro fancy, and weep for. We here, without weeping, not without sadness, wave the withered tough fellow-mortal our farewell. His Figaro has returned to the French stage; nay is, at this day, sometimes named the best piece there. And indeed, so long as Man's Life can ground itself only on artificiality and aridity; each new Revolt and Change of Dynasty turning up only a new stratum of dry rubbish, and no soil yet coming to view,—may it not be good to protest against such a Life, in many ways, and even in the Figaro way?

## Chapter 3. Dumouriez.

Such are the last days of August, 1792; days gloomy, disastrous, and of evil omen. What will become of this poor France? Dumouriez rode from the Camp of Maulde, eastward to Sedan, on Tuesday last, the 28th of the month; reviewed that so-called Army left forlorn there by Lafayette: the forlorn soldiers gloomed on him; were heard growling on him, "This is one of them, ce b—e la, that made War be declared." (*Dumouriez, Memoires, ii. 383.*) Unpromising Army! Recruits flow in, filtering through Depot after Depot; but recruits merely: in want of all; happy if they have so much as arms. And Longwi has fallen basely; and Brunswick, and the Prussian King, with his sixty thousand, will beleague Verdun; and Clairfait and Austrians press deeper in, over the Northern marches: 'a hundred and fifty thousand' as fear counts, 'eighty thousand' as the returns shew, do hem us in; Cimmerian Europe behind them. There is Castries-and-Broglie chivalry; Royalist foot 'in red facing and nankeen trousers;' breathing death and the gallows.

And lo, finally! at Verdun on Sunday the 2d of September 1792, Brunswick is here. With his King and sixty thousand, glittering over the heights, from beyond the winding Meuse River, he looks down on us, on our 'high citadel' and all our confectionery-ovens (*for we are celebrated for confectionery*) has sent courteous summons, in order to spare the effusion of blood!—Resist him to the death? Every day of retardation precious? How, O General Beaurepaire (*asks the amazed Municipality*) shall we resist him? We, the Verdun Municipals, see no resistance possible. Has he not sixty thousand, and artillery without end? Retardation, Patriotism is good; but so likewise is peaceable baking of pastry, and sleeping in whole skin.—Hapless Beaurepaire stretches out his hands, and pleads passionately, in the name of country, honour, of Heaven and of Earth: to no purpose. The Municipals have, by law, the power of ordering it;—with an Army officered by Royalism or Crypto-Royalism, such a Law seemed needful: and they order it, as pacific Pastrycooks, not as heroic Patriots would,—To surrender! Beaurepaire strides home, with long steps: his valet, entering the room, sees him 'writing eagerly,' and withdraws. His valet hears then, in a few minutes, the report of a pistol: Beaurepaire is lying dead; his eager writing had been a brief suicidal farewell. In this manner died Beaurepaire, wept of France; buried in the Pantheon, with honourable pension to his Widow, and for Epitaph these words, He chose Death rather than yield to Despots. The Prussians, descending from the heights, are peaceable masters of Verdun.

And so Brunswick advances, from stage to stage: who shall now stay him,—covering forty miles of country? Foragers fly far; the villages of the North-East are harried; your Hessian forager has only 'three sous a day:' the very Emigrants, it is said, will take silver-plate,—by way of revenge. Clermont,

Sainte-Menehould, Varennes especially, ye Towns of the Night of Spurs; tremble ye! Procureur Sausse and the Magistracy of Varennes have fled; brave Boniface Le Blanc of the Bras d'Or is to the woods: Mrs. Le Blanc, a young woman fair to look upon, with her young infant, has to live in greenwood, like a beautiful Bessy Bell of Song, her bower thatched with rushes;—catching premature rheumatism. (*Helen Maria Williams, Letters from France* (London, 1791-93), iii. 96.) Clermont may ring the tocsin now, and illuminate itself! Clermont lies at the foot of its Cow (*or Vache, so they name that Mountain*), a prey to the Hessian spoiler: its fair women, fairer than most, are robbed: not of life, or what is dearer, yet of all that is cheaper and portable; for Necessity, on three half-pence a-day, has no law. At Saint-Menehould, the enemy has been expected more than once,—our Nationals all turning out in arms; but was not yet seen. Post-master Drouet, he is not in the woods, but minding his Election; and will sit in the Convention, notable King-taker, and bold Old-Dragoon as he is.

Thus on the North-East all roams and runs; and on a set day, the date of which is irrecoverable by History, Brunswick 'has engaged to dine in Paris,'—the Powers willing. And at Paris, in the centre, it is as we saw; and in La Vendee, South-West, it is as we saw; and Sardinia is in the South-East, and Spain is in the South, and Clairfait with Austria and sieged Thionville is in the North;—and all France leaps distracted, like the winnowed Sahara waltzing in sand-colonnades! More desperate posture no country ever stood in. A country, one would say, which the Majesty of Prussia (*if it so pleased him*) might partition, and clip in pieces, like a Poland; flinging the remainder to poor Brother Louis,—with directions to keep it quiet, or else we will keep it for him!

Or perhaps the Upper Powers, minded that a new Chapter in Universal History shall begin here and not further on, may have ordered it all otherwise? In that case, Brunswick will not dine in Paris on the set day; nor, indeed, one knows not when!—Verily, amid this wreckage, where poor France seems grinding itself down to dust and bottomless ruin, who knows what miraculous salient-point of Deliverance and New-life may have already come into existence there; and be already working there, though as yet human eye discern it not! On the night of that same twenty-eighth of August, the unpromising Review-day in Sedan, Dumouriez assembles a Council of War at his lodgings there. He spreads out the map of this forlorn war-district: Prussians here, Austrians there; triumphant both, with broad highway, and little hinderance, all the way to Paris; we, scattered helpless, here and here: what to advise? The Generals, strangers to Dumouriez, look blank enough; know not well what to advise,—if it be not retreating, and retreating till our recruits accumulate; till perhaps the chapter of chances turn up some leaf for us; or Paris, at all events, be sacked at the latest day possible. The Many-counselled, who 'has not closed an eye for three nights,' listens with little speech to these long cheerless speeches; merely watching the speaker that he may know him; then wishes them all good-night;—but beckons a certain young Thouvenot, the fire of whose looks had pleased him, to wait a moment. Thouvenot waits: Voila, says Polymetis, pointing to the map! That is the Forest of Argonne, that long stripe of rocky Mountain and wild Wood; forty miles long; with but five, or say even three practicable Passes through it: this, for they have forgotten it, might one not still seize, though Clairfait sits so nigh? Once seized;—the Champagne called the Hungry (*or worse, Champagne Pouilleuse*) on their side of it; the fat Three Bishoprics, and willing France, on ours; and the Equinox-rains not far;—this Argonne 'might be the Thermopylae of France!' (*Dumouriez, ii. 391.*)

O brisk Dumouriez Polymetis with thy teeming head, may the gods grant it!—Polymetis, at any rate, folds his map together, and flings himself on bed; resolved to try, on the morrow morning. With astucity, with swiftness, with audacity! One had need to be a lion-fox, and have luck on one's side.

## Chapter 4. September in Paris.

At Paris, by lying Rumour which proved prophetic and veridical, the fall of Verdun was known some hours before it happened. It is Sunday the second of September; handiwork hinders not the speculations of the mind. Verdun gone (*though some still deny it*); the Prussians in full march, with gallows-ropes, with fire and faggot! Thirty thousand Aristocrats within our own walls; and but the merest quarter-tithe of them yet put in Prison! Nay there goes a word that even these will revolt. Sieur Jean Julien, wagoner of Vaugirard, (*Moore, i. 178.*) being set in the Pillory last Friday, took all at once to crying, That he would be well revenged ere long; that the King's Friends in Prison would burst out; force the Temple, set the King on horseback; and, joined by the unimprisoned, ride roughshod over us all. This the unfortunate wagoner of Vaugirard did bawl, at the top of his lungs: when snatched off to the Townhall, he persisted in it, still bawling; yesternight, when they guillotined him, he died with the froth of it on his lips. (*Hist. Parl. xvii. 409.*) For a man's mind, padlocked to the Pillory, may go mad; and all men's minds may go mad; and 'believe him,' as the frenetic will do, 'because it is impossible.'

So that apparently the knot of the crisis, and last agony of France is come? Make front to this, thou Improvised Commune, strong Danton, whatsoever man is strong! Readers can judge whether the Flag of Country in Danger flapped soothing or distractively on the souls of men, that day.

But the Improvised Commune, but strong Danton is not wanting, each after his kind. Huge Placards are getting plastered to the walls; at two o'clock the stormbell shall be sounded, the alarm-cannon fired; all Paris shall rush to the Champ-de-Mars, and have itself enrolled. Unarmed, truly, and undrilled; but desperate, in the strength of frenzy. Haste, ye men; ye very women, offer to mount guard and shoulder the brown musket: weak clucking-hens, in a state of desperation, will fly at the muzzle of the mastiff, and even conquer him,—by vehemence of character! Terror itself, when once grown transcendental, becomes a kind of courage; as frost sufficiently intense, according to Poet Milton, will burn.—Danton, the other night, in the Legislative Committee of General Defence, when the other Ministers and Legislators had all opined, said, It would not do to quit Paris, and fly to Saumur; that they must abide by Paris; and take such attitude as would put their enemies in fear,—faire peur; a word of his which has been often repeated, and reprinted—in italics. (*Biographie des Ministres* (Bruxelles, 1826), p. 96.)

At two of the clock, Beaurepaire, as we saw, has shot himself at Verdun; and over Europe, mortals are going in for afternoon sermon. But at Paris, all steeples are clangouring not for sermon; the alarm-gun booming from minute to minute; Champ-de-Mars and Fatherland's Altar boiling with desperate terror-courage: what a miserere going up to Heaven from this once Capital of the Most Christian King! The Legislative sits in alternate awe and effervescence; Vergniaud proposing that Twelve shall go and dig personally on Montmartre; which is decreed by acclaim.

But better than digging personally with acclaim, see Danton enter;—the black brows clouded, the colossus-figure tramping heavy; grim energy looking from all features of the rugged man! Strong is that grim Son of France, and Son of Earth; a Reality and not a Formula he too; and surely now if ever, being hurled low enough, it is on the Earth and on Realities that he rests. "Legislators!" so speaks the stentor-voice, as the Newspapers yet preserve it for us, "it is not the alarm-cannon that you hear: it is the pas-de-charge against our enemies. To conquer them, to hurl them back, what do we require? Il nous faut de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace, To dare, and again to dare, and without end to dare!" (*Moniteur in Hist. Parl. xvii. 347.*)—Right so, thou brawny Titan; there is

nothing left for thee but that. Old men, who heard it, will still tell you how the reverberating voice made all hearts swell, in that moment; and braced them to the sticking-place; and thrilled abroad over France, like electric virtue, as a word spoken in season.

But the Commune, enrolling in the Champ-de-Mars? But the Committee of Watchfulness, become now Committee of Public Salvation; whose conscience is Marat? The Commune enrolling enrolls many; provides Tents for them in that Mars'-Field, that they may march with dawn on the morrow: praise to this part of the Commune! To Marat and the Committee of Watchfulness not praise;—not even blame, such as could be meted out in these insufficient dialects of ours; expressive silence rather! Lone Marat, the man forbid, meditating long in his Cellars of refuge, on his Stylites Pillar, could see salvation in one thing only: in the fall of 'two hundred and sixty thousand Aristocrat heads.' With so many score of Naples Bravoës, each a dirk in his right-hand, a muff on his left, he would traverse France, and do it. But the world laughed, mocking the severe-benevolence of a People's-Friend; and his idea could not become an action, but only a fixed-idea. Lo, now, however, he has come down from his Stylites Pillar, to a Tribune particuliere; here now, without the dirks, without the muffs at least, were it not grown possible,—now in the knot of the crisis, when salvation or destruction hangs in the hour!

The Ice-Tower of Avignon was noised of sufficiently, and lives in all memories; but the authors were not punished: nay we saw Jourdan Coupe-tete, borne on men's shoulders, like a copper Portent, 'traversing the cities of the South.'—What phantasms, squalid-horrid, shaking their dirk and muff, may dance through the brain of a Marat, in this dizzy pealing of tocsin-miserere, and universal frenzy, seek not to guess, O Reader! Nor what the cruel Billaud 'in his short brown coat was thinking;' nor Sergeant, not yet Agate-Sergeant; nor Panis the confident of Danton;—nor, in a word, how gloomy Orcus does breed in her gloomy womb, and fashion her monsters, and prodigies of Events, which thou seest her visibly bear! Terror is on these streets of Paris; terror and rage, tears and frenzy: tocsin-miserere pealing through the air; fierce desperation rushing to battle; mothers, with streaming eyes and wild hearts, sending forth their sons to die. 'Carriage-horses are seized by the bridle,' that they may draw cannon; 'the traces cut, the carriages left standing.' In such tocsin-miserere, and murky bewilderment of Frenzy, are not Murder, Ate, and all Furies near at hand? On slight hint, who knows on how slight, may not Murder come; and, with her snaky-sparkling hand, illuminate this murk!

How it was and went, what part might be premeditated, what was improvised and accidental, man will never know, till the great Day of Judgment make it known. But with a Marat for keeper of the Sovereign's Conscience—And we know what the ultima ratio of Sovereigns, when they are driven to it, is! In this Paris there are as many wicked men, say a hundred or more, as exist in all the Earth: to be hired, and set on; to set on, of their own accord, unhired.—And yet we will remark that premeditation itself is not performance, is not surety of performance; that it is perhaps, at most, surety of letting whosoever wills perform. From the purpose of crime to the act of crime there is an abyss; wonderful to think of. The finger lies on the pistol; but the man is not yet a murderer: nay, his whole nature staggering at such consummation, is there not a confused pause rather,—one last instant of possibility for him? Not yet a murderer; it is at the mercy of light trifles whether the most fixed idea may not yet become unfixed. One slight twitch of a muscle, the death flash bursts; and he is it, and will for Eternity be it;—and Earth has become a penal Tartarus for him; his horizon girdled now not with golden hope, but with red flames of remorse; voices from the depths of Nature sounding, Wo, wo on him!

Of such stuff are we all made; on such powder-mines of bottomless guilt and criminality, 'if God restrained not; as is well said,—does the purest of us walk. There are depths in man that go the length

of lowest Hell, as there are heights that reach highest Heaven;—for are not both Heaven and Hell made out of him, made by him, everlasting Miracle and Mystery as he is?—But looking on this Champ-de-Mars, with its tent-buildings, and frantic enrolments; on this murky-simmering Paris, with its crammed Prisons (*supposed about to burst*), with its tocsin-miserere, its mothers' tears, and soldiers' farewell shoutings,—the pious soul might have prayed, that day, that God's grace would restrain, and greatly restrain; lest on slight hest or hint, Madness, Horror and Murder rose, and this Sabbath-day of September became a Day black in the Annals of Men.—

The tocsin is pealing its loudest, the clocks inaudibly striking Three, when poor Abbe Sicard, with some thirty other Nonjurant Priests, in six carriages, fare along the streets, from their preliminary House of Detention at the Townhall, westward towards the Prison of the Abbaye. Carriages enough stand deserted on the streets; these six move on,—through angry multitudes, cursing as they move. Accursed Aristocrat Tartuffes, this is the pass ye have brought us to! And now ye will break the Prisons, and set Capet Veto on horseback to ride over us? Out upon you, Priests of Beelzebub and Moloch; of Tartuffery, Mammon, and the Prussian Gallows,—which ye name Mother-Church and God! Such reproaches have the poor Nonjurants to endure, and worse; spoken in on them by frantic Patriots, who mount even on the carriage-steps; the very Guards hardly refraining. Pull up your carriage-blinds!—No! answers Patriotism, clapping its horny paw on the carriage blind, and crushing it down again. Patience in oppression has limits: we are close on the Abbaye, it has lasted long: a poor Nonjurant, of quicker temper, smites the horny paw with his cane; nay, finding solacement in it, smites the unkempt head, sharply and again more sharply, twice over,—seen clearly of us and of the world. It is the last that we see clearly. Alas, next moment, the carriages are locked and blocked in endless raging tumults; in yells deaf to the cry for mercy, which answer the cry for mercy with sabre-thrusts through the heart. (*Felemhesi* (anagram for Mehee Fils), *La Verite tout entiere, sur les vrais auteurs de la journee du 2 Septembre 1792* (reprinted in Hist. Parl. xviii. 156-181), p. 167.) The thirty Priests are torn out, are massacred about the Prison-Gate, one after one,—only the poor Abbe Sicard, whom one Moton a watchmaker, knowing him, heroically tried to save, and secrete in the Prison, escapes to tell;—and it is Night and Orcus, and Murder's snaky-sparkling head has risen in the murk!—

From Sunday afternoon (*exclusive of intervals, and pauses not final*) till Thursday evening, there follow consecutively a Hundred Hours. Which hundred hours are to be reckoned with the hours of the Bartholomew Butchery, of the Armagnac Massacres, Sicilian Vespers, or whatsoever is savagest in the annals of this world. Horrible the hour when man's soul, in its paroxysm, spurns asunder the barriers and rules; and shews what dens and depths are in it! For Night and Orcus, as we say, as was long prophesied, have burst forth, here in this Paris, from their subterranean imprisonment: hideous, dim, confused; which it is painful to look on; and yet which cannot, and indeed which should not, be forgotten.

The Reader, who looks earnestly through this dim Phantasmagory of the Pit, will discern few fixed certain objects; and yet still a few. He will observe, in this Abbaye Prison, the sudden massacre of the Priests being once over, a strange Court of Justice, or call it Court of Revenge and Wild-Justice, swiftly fashion itself, and take seat round a table, with the Prison-Registers spread before it;—Stanislas Maillard, Bastille-hero, famed Leader of the Menads, presiding. O Stanislas, one hoped to meet thee elsewhere than here; thou shifty Riding-Usher, with an inkling of Law! This work also thou hadst to do; and then—to depart for ever from our eyes. At La Force, at the Chatelet, the Conciergerie, the like Court forms itself, with the like accompaniments: the thing that one man does other men can do. There are some Seven Prisons in Paris, full of Aristocrats with conspiracies;—nay not even Bicetre and Salpetriere shall escape, with their Forgers of Assignats: and there are seventy times seven hundred

Patriot hearts in a state of frenzy. Scoundrel hearts also there are; as perfect, say, as the Earth holds,—if such are needed. To whom, in this mood, law is as no-law; and killing, by what name soever called, is but work to be done.

So sit these sudden Courts of Wild-Justice, with the Prison-Registers before them; unwonted wild tumult howling all round: the Prisoners in dread expectancy within. Swift: a name is called; bolts jingle, a Prisoner is there. A few questions are put; swiftly this sudden Jury decides: Royalist Plotter or not? Clearly not; in that case, Let the Prisoner be enlarged With Vive la Nation. Probably yea; then still, Let the Prisoner be enlarged, but without Vive la Nation; or else it may run, Let the prisoner be conducted to La Force. At La Force again their formula is, Let the Prisoner be conducted to the Abbaye.—"To La Force then!" Volunteer bailiffs seize the doomed man; he is at the outer gate; 'enlarged,' or 'conducted,'—not into La Force, but into a howling sea; forth, under an arch of wild sabres, axes and pikes; and sinks, hewn asunder. And another sinks, and another; and there forms itself a piled heap of corpses, and the kennels begin to run red. Fancy the yells of these men, their faces of sweat and blood; the crueller shrieks of these women, for there are women too; and a fellow-mortal hurled naked into it all! Jourgniac de Saint Meard has seen battle, has seen an effervescent Regiment du Roi in mutiny; but the bravest heart may quail at this. The Swiss Prisoners, remnants of the Tenth of August, 'clasped each other spasmodically,' and hung back; grey veterans crying: "Mercy Messieurs; ah, mercy!" But there was no mercy. Suddenly, however, one of these men steps forward. He had a blue frock coat; he seemed to be about thirty, his stature was above common, his look noble and martial. "I go first," said he, "since it must be so: adieu!" Then dashing his hat sharply behind him: "Which way?" cried he to the Brigands: "Shew it me, then." They open the folding gate; he is announced to the multitude. He stands a moment motionless; then plunges forth among the pikes, and dies of a thousand wounds.' (*Felemhesi, La Verite tout entiere* (ut supra), p. 173.)

Man after man is cut down; the sabres need sharpening, the killers refresh themselves from wine jugs. Onward and onward goes the butchery; the loud yells wearying down into bass growls. A sombre-faced, shifting multitude looks on; in dull approval, or dull disapproval; in dull recognition that it is Necessity. 'An Anglais in drab greatcoat' was seen, or seemed to be seen, serving liquor from his own dram-bottle;—for what purpose, 'if not set on by Pitt,' Satan and himself know best! Witty Dr. Moore grew sick on approaching, and turned into another street. (*Moore's Journal, i. 185-195.*)—Quick enough goes this Jury-Court; and rigorous. The brave are not spared, nor the beautiful, nor the weak. Old M. de Montmorin, the Minister's Brother, was acquitted by the Tribunal of the Seventeenth; and conducted back, elbowed by howling galleries; but is not acquitted here. Princess de Lamballe has lain down on bed: "Madame, you are to be removed to the Abbaye." "I do not wish to remove; I am well enough here." There is a need-be for removing. She will arrange her dress a little, then; rude voices answer, "You have not far to go." She too is led to the hell-gate; a manifest Queen's-Friend. She shivers back, at the sight of bloody sabres; but there is no return: Onwards! That fair hindhead is cleft with the axe; the neck is severed. That fair body is cut in fragments; with indignities, and obscene horrors of moustachio grands-levres, which human nature would fain find incredible,—which shall be read in the original language only. She was beautiful, she was good, she had known no happiness. Young hearts, generation after generation, will think with themselves: O worthy of worship, thou king-descended, god-descended and poor sister-woman! why was not I there; and some Sword Balmung, or Thor's Hammer in my hand? Her head is fixed on a pike; paraded under the windows of the Temple; that a still more hated, a Marie-Antoinette, may see. One Municipal, in the Temple with the Royal Prisoners at the moment, said, "Look out." Another eagerly whispered, "Do not look." The circuit of the Temple is guarded, in these hours, by a long stretched tricolor riband: terror enters, and the clangour of infinite tumult: hitherto not regicide, though that too may come.

But it is more edifying to note what thrillings of affection, what fragments of wild virtues turn up, in this shaking asunder of man's existence, for of these too there is a proportion. Note old Marquis Cazotte: he is doomed to die; but his young Daughter clasps him in her arms, with an inspiration of eloquence, with a love which is stronger than very death; the heart of the killers themselves is touched by it; the old man is spared. Yet he was guilty, if plotting for his King is guilt: in ten days more, a Court of Law condemned him, and he had to die elsewhere; bequeathing his Daughter a lock of his old grey hair. Or note old M. de Sombreuil, who also had a Daughter:—My Father is not an Aristocrat; O good gentlemen, I will swear it, and testify it, and in all ways prove it; we are not; we hate Aristocrats! "Wilt thou drink Aristocrats' blood?" The man lifts blood (*if universal Rumour can be credited*) (Dulaure: *Esquisses Historiques des principaux evenemens de la Revolution*, ii. 206 (*cited in Montgaillard*, iii. 205.)); the poor maiden does drink. "This Sombreuil is innocent then!" Yes indeed,—and now note, most of all, how the bloody pikes, at this news, do rattle to the ground; and the tiger-yells become bursts of jubilee over a brother saved; and the old man and his daughter are clasped to bloody bosoms, with hot tears, and borne home in triumph of *Vive la Nation*, the killers refusing even money! Does it seem strange, this temper of theirs? It seems very certain, well proved by Royalist testimony in other instances; (*Bertrand-Moleville, Mem. Particuliers*, ii.213, &c. &c.) and very significant.

## Chapter 5. A Trilogy.

As all Delineation, in these ages, were it never so Epic, 'speaking itself and not singing itself,' must either found on Belief and provable Fact, or have no foundation at all (*nor except as floating cobweb any existence at all*),—the Reader will perhaps prefer to take a glance with the very eyes of eye-witnesses; and see, in that way, for himself, how it was. Brave Jourgniac, innocent Abbe Sicard, judicious Advocate Maton, these, greatly compressing themselves, shall speak, each an instant. Jourgniac's Agony of Thirty-eight hours went through 'above a hundred editions,' though intrinsically a poor work. Some portion of it may here go through above the hundred-and-first, for want of a better.

'Towards seven o'clock' (*Sunday night, at the Abbaye; for Jourgniac goes by dates*): 'We saw two men enter, their hands bloody and armed with sabres; a turnkey, with a torch, lighted them; he pointed to the bed of the unfortunate Swiss, Reding. Reding spoke with a dying voice. One of them paused; but the other cried *Allons donc*; lifted the unfortunate man; carried him out on his back to the street. He was massacred there.

'We all looked at one another in silence, we clasped each other's hands. Motionless, with fixed eyes, we gazed on the pavement of our prison; on which lay the moonlight, checkered with the triple stanchions of our windows.

'Three in the morning: They were breaking-in one of the prison-doors. We at first thought they were coming to kill us in our room; but heard, by voices on the staircase, that it was a room where some Prisoners had barricaded themselves. They were all butchered there, as we shortly gathered.

'Ten o'clock: The Abbe Lenfant and the Abbe de Chapt-Rastignac appeared in the pulpit of the Chapel, which was our prison; they had entered by a door from the stairs. They said to us that our end was at hand; that we must compose ourselves, and receive their last blessing. An electric movement, not to be defined, threw us all on our knees, and we received it. These two whitehaired old men, blessing us from their place above; death hovering over our heads, on all hands environing us; the moment is

never to be forgotten. Half an hour after, they were both massacred, and we heard their cries.' ( *Journiac Saint-Meard, Mon Agonie de Trente-huit heures, reprinted in Hist. Parl. xviii. 103-135.* )—Thus Journiac in his Agony in the Abbaye.

But now let the good Maton speak, what he, over in La Force, in the same hours, is suffering and witnessing. This Resurrection by him is greatly the best, the least theatrical of these Pamphlets; and stands testing by documents:

'Towards seven o'clock,' on Sunday night, 'prisoners were called frequently, and they did not reappear. Each of us reasoned in his own way, on this singularity: but our ideas became calm, as we persuaded ourselves that the Memorial I had drawn up for the National Assembly was producing effect.

'At one in the morning, the grate which led to our quarter opened anew. Four men in uniform, each with a drawn sabre and blazing torch, came up to our corridor, preceded by a turnkey; and entered an apartment close to ours, to investigate a box there, which we heard them break up. This done, they stepped into the gallery, and questioned the man Cuissa, to know where Lamotte (*Necklace's Widower*) was. Lamotte, they said, had some months ago, under pretext of a treasure he knew of, swindled a sum of three-hundred livres from one of them, inviting him to dinner for that purpose. The wretched Cuissa, now in their hands, who indeed lost his life this night, answered trembling, That he remembered the fact well, but could not tell what was become of Lamotte. Determined to find Lamotte and confront him with Cuissa, they rummaged, along with this latter, through various other apartments; but without effect, for we heard them say: "Come search among the corpses then: for, nom de Dieu! we must find where he is."

'At this time, I heard Louis Bardy, the Abbe Bardy's name called: he was brought out; and directly massacred, as I learnt. He had been accused, along with his concubine, five or six years before, of having murdered and cut in pieces his own Brother, Auditor of the Chambre des Comptes at Montpellier; but had by his subtlety, his dexterity, nay his eloquence, outwitted the judges, and escaped.

'One may fancy what terror these words, "Come search among the corpses then," had thrown me into. I saw nothing for it now but resigning myself to die. I wrote my last-will; concluding it by a petition and adjuration, that the paper should be sent to its address. Scarcely had I quitted the pen, when there came two other men in uniform; one of them, whose arm and sleeve up to the very shoulder, as well as the sabre, were covered with blood, said, He was as weary as a hodman that had been beating plaster.

'Baudin de la Chenaye was called; sixty years of virtues could not save him. They said, "A l'Abbaye:" he passed the fatal outer-gate; gave a cry of terror, at sight of the heaped corpses; covered his eyes with his hands, and died of innumerable wounds. At every new opening of the grate, I thought I should hear my own name called, and see Rossignol enter.

'I flung off my nightgown and cap; I put on a coarse unwashed shirt, a worn frock without waistcoat, an old round hat; these things I had sent for, some days ago, in the fear of what might happen.

'The rooms of this corridor had been all emptied but ours. We were four together; whom they seemed to have forgotten: we addressed our prayers in common to the Eternal to be delivered from this peril.



'Baptiste the turnkey came up by himself, to see us. I took him by the hands; I conjured him to save us; promised him a hundred louis, if he would conduct me home. A noise coming from the grates made him hastily withdraw.

'It was the noise of some dozen or fifteen men, armed to the teeth; as we, lying flat to escape being seen, could see from our windows: "Up stairs!" said they: "Let not one remain." I took out my penknife; I considered where I should strike myself,'—but reflected 'that the blade was too short,' and also 'on religion.'

Finally, however, between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, enter four men with bludgeons and sabres!—'to one of whom Gerard my comrade whispered, earnestly, apart. During their colloquy I searched every where for shoes, that I might lay off the Advocate pumps (*pantoufles de Palais*) I had on,' but could find none.—'Constant, called le Sauvage, Gerard, and a third whose name escapes me, they let clear off: as for me, four sabres were crossed over my breast, and they led me down. I was brought to their bar; to the Personage with the scarf, who sat as judge there. He was a lame man, of tall lank stature. He recognised me on the streets, and spoke to me seven months after. I have been assured that he was son of a retired attorney, and named Chepy. Crossing the Court called Des Nourrices, I saw Manuel haranguing in tricolor scarf.' The trial, as we see, ends in acquittal and resurrection. (*Maton de la Varenne, Ma Resurrection in Hist. Parl. xviii. 135-156.*)

Poor Sicard, from the violon of the Abbaye, shall say but a few words; true-looking, though tremulous. Towards three in the morning, the killers bethink them of this little violon; and knock from the court. 'I tapped gently, trembling lest the murderers might hear, on the opposite door, where the Section Committee was sitting: they answered gruffly that they had no key. There were three of us in this violon; my companions thought they perceived a kind of loft overhead. But it was very high; only one of us could reach it, by mounting on the shoulders of both the others. One of them said to me, that my life was usefuller than theirs: I resisted, they insisted: no denial! I fling myself on the neck of these two deliverers; never was scene more touching. I mount on the shoulders of the first, then on those of the second, finally on the loft; and address to my two comrades the expression of a soul overwhelmed with natural emotions. (*Abbe Sicard: Relation adressee a un de ses amis, Hist. Parl. xviii. 98-103.*)

The two generous companions, we rejoice to find, did not perish. But it is time that Jourgniac de Saint-Meard should speak his last words, and end this singular trilogy. The night had become day; and the day has again become night. Jourgniac, worn down with uttermost agitation, has fallen asleep, and had a cheering dream: he has also contrived to make acquaintance with one of the volunteer bailiffs, and spoken in native Provencal with him. On Tuesday, about one in the morning, his Agony is reaching its crisis.

'By the glare of two torches, I now descried the terrible tribunal, where lay my life or my death. The President, in grey coats, with a sabre at his side, stood leaning with his hands against a table, on which were papers, an inkstand, tobacco-pipes and bottles. Some ten persons were around, seated or standing; two of whom had jackets and aprons: others were sleeping stretched on benches. Two men, in bloody shirts, guarded the door of the place; an old turnkey had his hand on the lock. In front of the President, three men held a Prisoner, who might be about sixty' (*or seventy: he was old Marshal Maille, of the Tuileries and August Tenth*). 'They stationed me in a corner; my guards crossed their sabres on my breast. I looked on all sides for my Provencal: two National Guards, one of them drunk, presented some appeal from the Section of Croix Rouge in favour of the Prisoner; the Man in Grey answered:

"They are useless, these appeals for traitors." Then the Prisoner exclaimed: "It is frightful; your judgment is a murder." The President answered; "My hands are washed of it; take M. Maille away." They drove him into the street; where, through the opening of the door, I saw him massacred.

"The President sat down to write; registering, I suppose, the name of this one whom they had finished; then I heard him say: "Another, A un autre!"

'Behold me then haled before this swift and bloody judgment-bar, where the best protection was to have no protection, and all resources of ingenuity became null if they were not founded on truth. Two of my guards held me each by a hand, the third by the collar of my coat. "Your name, your profession?" said the President. "The smallest lie ruins you," added one of the judges,— "My name is Jourgniac Saint-Meard; I have served, as an officer, twenty years: and I appear at your tribunal with the assurance of an innocent man, who therefore will not lie."—"We shall see that," said the President: "Do you know why you are arrested?"—"Yes, Monsieur le President; I am accused of editing the Journal De la Cour et de la Ville. But I hope to prove the falsity"—

But no; Jourgniac's proof of the falsity, and defence generally, though of excellent result as a defence, is not interesting to read. It is long-winded; there is a loose theatricality in the reporting of it, which does not amount to unverity, yet which tends that way. We shall suppose him successful, beyond hope, in proving and disproving; and skip largely,—to the catastrophe, almost at two steps.

"But after all," said one of the Judges, "there is no smoke without kindling; tell us why they accuse you of that."—"I was about to do so"—Jourgniac does so; with more and more success.

"Nay," continued I, "they accuse me even of recruiting for the Emigrants!" At these words there arose a general murmur. "O Messieurs, Messieurs," I exclaimed, raising my voice, "it is my turn to speak; I beg M. le President to have the kindness to maintain it for me; I never needed it more."—"True enough, true enough," said almost all the judges with a laugh: "Silence!"

'While they were examining the testimonials I had produced, a new Prisoner was brought in, and placed before the President. "It was one Priest more," they said, "whom they had ferreted out of the Chapelle." After very few questions: "A la Force!" He flung his breviary on the table: was hurled forth, and massacred. I reappeared before the tribunal.

"You tell us always," cried one of the judges, with a tone of impatience, "that you are not this, that you are not that: what are you then?"—"I was an open Royalist."—There arose a general murmur; which was miraculously appeased by another of the men, who had seemed to take an interest in me: "We are not here to judge opinions," said he, "but to judge the results of them." Could Rousseau and Voltaire both in one, pleading for me, have said better?—"Yes, Messieurs," cried I, "always till the Tenth of August, I was an open Royalist. Ever since the Tenth of August that cause has been finished. I am a Frenchman, true to my country. I was always a man of honour."

"My soldiers never distrusted me. Nay, two days before that business of Nanci, when their suspicion of their officers was at its height, they chose me for commander, to lead them to Luneville, to get back the prisoners of the Regiment Mestre-de-Camp, and seize General Malseigne." Which fact there is, most luckily, an individual present who by a certain token can confirm.

'The President, this cross-questioning being over, took off his hat and said: "I see nothing to suspect in this man; I am for granting him his liberty. Is that your vote?" To which all the judges answered: "Oui, oui; it is just!"'

And there arose vivats within doors and without; 'escort of three,' amid shoutings and embracings: thus Jourgniac escaped from jury-trial and the jaws of death. (*Mon Agonie* (ut supra), *Hist. Parl.* xviii. 128.) Maton and Sicard did, either by trial, and no bill found, lank President Chepy finding 'absolutely nothing;' or else by evasion, and new favour of Moton the brave watchmaker, likewise escape; and were embraced, and wept over; weeping in return, as they well might.

Thus they three, in wondrous trilogy, or triple soliloquy; uttering simultaneously, through the dread night-watches, their Night-thoughts,—grown audible to us! They Three are become audible: but the other 'Thousand and Eighty-nine, of whom Two Hundred and Two were Priests,' who also had Night-thoughts, remain inaudible; choked for ever in black Death. Heard only of President Chepy and the Man in Grey!—

## Chapter 6. The Circular.

But the Constituted Authorities, all this while? The Legislative Assembly; the Six Ministers; the Townhall; Santerre with the National Guard?—It is very curious to think what a City is. Theatres, to the number of some twenty-three, were open every night during these prodigies: while right-arms here grew weary with slaying, right-arms there are twiddledeeing on melodious catgut; at the very instant when Abbe Sicard was clambering up his second pair of shoulders, three-men high, five hundred thousand human individuals were lying horizontal, as if nothing were amiss.

As for the poor Legislative, the sceptre had departed from it. The Legislative did send Deputation to the Prisons, to the Street-Courts; and poor M. Dusaulx did harangue there; but produced no conviction whatsoever: nay, at last, as he continued haranguing, the Street-Court interposed, not without threats; and he had to cease, and withdraw. This is the same poor worthy old M. Dusaulx who told, or indeed almost sang (*though with cracked voice*), the Taking of the Bastille,—to our satisfaction long since. He was wont to announce himself, on such and on all occasions, as the Translator of Juvenal. "Good Citizens, you see before you a man who loves his country, who is the Translator of Juvenal," said he once.—"Juvenal?" interrupts Sansculottism: "who the devil is Juvenal? One of your sacres Aristocrates? To the Lanterne!" From an orator of this kind, conviction was not to be expected. The Legislative had much ado to save one of its own Members, or Ex-Members, Deputy Journeau, who chanced to be lying in arrest for mere Parliamentary delinquencies, in these Prisons. As for poor old Dusaulx and Company, they returned to the Salle de Manège, saying, "It was dark; and they could not see well what was going on." (*Moniteur, Debate of 2nd September, 1792.*)

Roland writes indignant messages, in the name of Order, Humanity, and the Law; but there is no Force at his disposal. Santerre's National Force seems lazy to rise; though he made requisitions, he says,—which always dispersed again. Nay did not we, with Advocate Maton's eyes, see 'men in uniform,' too, with their 'sleeves bloody to the shoulder?' Petion goes in tricolor scarf; speaks "the austere language of the law:" the killers give up, while he is there; when his back is turned, recommence. Manuel too in scarf we, with Maton's eyes, transiently saw haranguing, in the Court called of Nurses, Cour des Nourrices. On the other hand, cruel Billaud, likewise in scarf, 'with that small puce coat and black wig we are used to on him,' (*Mehee, Fils ut supra, in Hist. Parl.* xviii. p.

189.) audibly delivers, 'standing among corpses,' at the Abbaye, a short but ever-memorable harangue, reported in various phraseology, but always to this purpose: "Brave Citizens, you are extirpating the Enemies of Liberty; you are at your duty. A grateful Commune, and Country, would wish to recompense you adequately; but cannot, for you know its want of funds. Whoever shall have worked (*travaille*) in a Prison shall receive a draft of one louis, payable by our cashier. Continue your work." (*Montgaillard, iii. 191.*)—The Constituted Authorities are of yesterday; all pulling different ways: there is properly not Constituted Authority, but every man is his own King; and all are kinglets, belligerent, allied, or armed-neutral, without king over them.

'O everlasting infamy,' exclaims Montgaillard, 'that Paris stood looking on in stupor for four days, and did not interfere!' Very desirable indeed that Paris had interfered; yet not unnatural that it stood even so, looking on in stupor. Paris is in death-panic, the enemy and gibbets at its door: whosoever in Paris has the heart to front death finds it more pressing to do it fighting the Prussians, than fighting the killers of Aristocrats. Indignant abhorrence, as in Roland, may be here; gloomy sanction, premeditation or not, as in Marat and Committee of Salvation, may be there; dull disapproval, dull approval, and acquiescence in Necessity and Destiny, is the general temper. The Sons of Darkness, 'two hundred or so,' risen from their lurking-places, have scope to do their work. Urged on by fever-frenzy of Patriotism, and the madness of Terror;—urged on by lucre, and the gold louis of wages? Nay, not lucre: for the gold watches, rings, money of the Massacred, are punctually brought to the Townhall, by Killers sans-indispensables, who higggle afterwards for their twenty shillings of wages; and Sergeant sticking an uncommonly fine agate on his finger (*fully meaning to account for it*), becomes Agate-Sergeant. But the temper, as we say, is dull acquiescence. Not till the Patriotic or Frenetic part of the work is finished for want of material; and Sons of Darkness, bent clearly on lucre alone, begin wrenching watches and purses, brooches from ladies' necks 'to equip volunteers,' in daylight, on the streets,—does the temper from dull grow vehement; does the Constable raise his truncheon, and striking heartily (*like a cattle-driver in earnest*) beat the 'course of things' back into its old regulated drove-roads. The Garde-Meuble itself was surreptitiously plundered, on the 17th of the Month, to Roland's new horror; who anew bestirs himself, and is, as Sieyes says, 'the veto of scoundrels,' Roland veto des coquins. (*Helen Maria Williams, iii. 27.*)—

This is the September Massacre, otherwise called 'Severe Justice of the People.' These are the Septemberers (*Septembriseurs*); a name of some note and lucency,—but lucency of the Nether-fire sort; very different from that of our Bastille Heroes, who shone, disputable by no Friend of Freedom, as in heavenly light-radiance: to such phasis of the business have we advanced since then! The numbers massacred are, in Historical fantasy, 'between two and three thousand;' or indeed they are 'upwards of six thousand,' for Peltier (*in vision*) saw them massacring the very patients of the Bicetre Madhouse 'with grape-shot;' nay finally they are 'twelve thousand' and odd hundreds,—not more than that. (*See Hist. Parl. xvii. 421, 422.*) In Arithmetical ciphers, and Lists drawn up by accurate Advocate Maton, the number, including two hundred and two priests, three 'persons unknown,' and 'one thief killed at the Bernardins,' is, as above hinted, a Thousand and Eighty-nine,—no less than that.

A thousand and eighty-nine lie dead, 'two hundred and sixty heaped carcasses on the Pont au Change' itself;—among which, Robespierre pleading afterwards will 'nearly weep' to reflect that there was said to be one slain innocent. (*Moniteur of 6th November, Debate of 5th November, 1793.*) One; not two, O thou seagreen Incorruptible? If so, Themis Sansculotte must be lucky; for she was brief!—In the dim Registers of the Townhall, which are preserved to this day, men read, with a certain sickness of heart, items and entries not usual in Town Books: 'To workers employed in preserving the salubrity of the air in the Prisons, and persons 'who presided over these dangerous operations,' so much,—in various

items, nearly seven hundred pounds sterling. To carters employed to 'the Burying-grounds of Clamart, Montrouge, and Vaugirard,' at so much a journey, per cart; this also is an entry. Then so many francs and odd sous 'for the necessary quantity of quick-lime!' (*Etat des sommes payees par la Commune de Paris, Hist. Parl. xviii. 231.*) Carts go along the streets; full of stript human corpses, thrown pellmell; limbs sticking up:—seest thou that cold Hand sticking up, through the heaped embrace of brother corpses, in its yellow paleness, in its cold rigour; the palm opened towards Heaven, as if in dumb prayer, in expostulation de profundis, Take pity on the Sons of Men!—Mercier saw it, as he walked down 'the Rue Saint-Jacques from Montrouge, on the morrow of the Massacres:' but not a Hand; it was a Foot,—which he reckons still more significant, one understands not well why. Or was it as the Foot of one spurning Heaven? Rushing, like a wild diver, in disgust and despair, towards the depths of Annihilation? Even there shall His hand find thee, and His right-hand hold thee,—surely for right not for wrong, for good not evil! 'I saw that Foot,' says Mercier; 'I shall know it again at the great Day of Judgment, when the Eternal, throned on his thunders, shall judge both Kings and Septemberers.' (*Mercier, Nouveau Paris, vi. 21.*)

That a shriek of inarticulate horror rose over this thing, not only from French Aristocrats and Moderates, but from all Europe, and has prolonged itself to the present day, was most natural and right. The thing lay done, irrevocable; a thing to be counted besides some other things, which lie very black in our Earth's Annals, yet which will not erase therefrom. For man, as was remarked, has transcendentalisms in him; standing, as he does, poor creature, every way 'in the confluence of Infinitudes;' a mystery to himself and others: in the centre of two Eternities, of three Immensities,—in the intersection of primeval Light with the everlasting dark! Thus have there been, especially by vehement tempers reduced to a state of desperation, very miserable things done. Sicilian Vespers, and 'eight thousand slaughtered in two hours,' are a known thing. Kings themselves, not in desperation, but only in difficulty, have sat hatching, for year and day (*nay De Thou says, for seven years*), their Bartholomew Business; and then, at the right moment, also on an Autumn Sunday, this very Bell (*they say it is the identical metal*) of St. Germain l'Auxerrois was set a-pealing—with effect. (*9th to 13th September, 1572, Dulaure, Hist. de Paris, iv. 289.*) Nay the same black boulder-stones of these Paris Prisons have seen Prison-massacres before now; men massacring countrymen, Burgundies massacring Armagnacs, whom they had suddenly imprisoned, till as now there are piled heaps of carcasses, and the streets ran red;—the Mayor Petion of the time speaking the austere language of the law, and answered by the Killers, in old French (*it is some four hundred years old*): "Maugre bieu, Sire,—Sir, God's malison on your justice, your pity, your right reason. Cursed be of God whoso shall have pity on these false traitorous Armagnacs, English; dogs they are; they have destroyed us, wasted this realm of France, and sold it to the English." (*Dulaure, iii. 494.*) And so they slay, and fling aside the slain, to the extent of 'fifteen hundred and eighteen, among whom are found four Bishops of false and damnable counsel, and two Presidents of Parlement.' For though it is not Satan's world this that we live in, Satan always has his place in it (*underground properly*); and from time to time bursts up. Well may mankind shriek, inarticulately anathematising as they can. There are actions of such emphasis that no shrieking can be too emphatic for them. Shriek ye; acted have they.

Shriek who might in this France, in this Paris Legislative or Paris Townhall, there are Ten Men who do not shriek. A Circular goes out from the Committee of Salut Public, dated 3rd of September 1792; directed to all Townhalls: a State-paper too remarkable to be overlooked. 'A part of the ferocious conspirators detained in the Prisons,' it says, 'have been put to death by the People; and it,' the Circular, 'cannot doubt but the whole Nation, driven to the edge of ruin by such endless series of treasons, will make haste to adopt this means of public salvation; and all Frenchmen will cry as the men of Paris: We go to fight the enemy, but we will not leave robbers behind us, to butcher our wives and children.' To

which are legibly appended these signatures: Panis, Sergeant; Marat, Friend of the People; (*Hist. Parl. xvii. 433.*) with Seven others;—carried down thereby, in a strange way, to the late remembrance of Antiquarians. We remark, however, that their Circular rather recoiled on themselves. The Townhalls made no use of it; even the distracted Sansculottes made little; they only howled and bellowed, but did not bite. At Rheims 'about eight persons' were killed; and two afterwards were hanged for doing it. At Lyons, and a few other places, some attempt was made; but with hardly any effect, being quickly put down.

Less fortunate were the Prisoners of Orleans; was the good Duke de la Rochefoucault. He journeying, by quick stages, with his Mother and Wife, towards the Waters of Forges, or some quieter country, was arrested at Gisors; conducted along the streets, amid effervescing multitudes, and killed dead 'by the stroke of a paving-stone hurled through the coach-window.' Killed as a once Liberal now Aristocrat; Protector of Priests, Suspender of virtuous Petitions, and his unfortunate Hot-grown-cold, detestable to Patriotism. He dies lamented of Europe; his blood spattering the cheeks of his old Mother, ninety-three years old.

As for the Orleans Prisoners, they are State Criminals: Royalist Ministers, Delessarts, Montmorins; who have been accumulating on the High Court of Orleans, ever since that Tribunal was set up. Whom now it seems good that we should get transferred to our new Paris Court of the Seventeenth; which proceeds far quicker. Accordingly hot Fournier from Martinique, Fournier l'Americain, is off, missioned by Constituted Authority; with stanch National Guards, with Lazouski the Pole; sparingly provided with road-money. These, through bad quarters, through difficulties, perils, for Authorities cross each other in this time,—do triumphantly bring off the Fifty or Fifty-three Orleans Prisoners, towards Paris; where a swifter Court of the Seventeenth will do justice on them. (*Ibid. xvii. 434.*) But lo, at Paris, in the interim, a still swifter and swiftest Court of the Second, and of September, has instituted itself: enter not Paris, or that will judge you!—What shall hot Fournier do? It was his duty, as volunteer Constable, had he been a perfect character, to guard those men's lives never so Aristocratic, at the expense of his own valuable life never so Sansculottic, till some Constituted Court had disposed of them. But he was an imperfect character and Constable; perhaps one of the more imperfect.

Hot Fournier, ordered to turn thither by one Authority, to turn thither by another Authority, is in a perplexing multiplicity of orders; but finally he strikes off for Versailles. His Prisoners fare in tumbrils, or open carts, himself and Guards riding and marching around: and at the last village, the worthy Mayor of Versailles comes to meet him, anxious that the arrival and locking up were well over. It is Sunday, the ninth day of the month. Lo, on entering the Avenue of Versailles, what multitudes, stirring, swarming in the September sun, under the dull-green September foliage; the Four-rowed Avenue all humming and swarming, as if the Town had emptied itself! Our tumbrils roll heavily through the living sea; the Guards and Fournier making way with ever more difficulty; the Mayor speaking and gesturing his persuasivest; amid the inarticulate growling hum, which grows ever the deeper even by hearing itself growl, not without sharp yelpings here and there:—Would to God we were out of this strait place, and wind and separation had cooled the heat, which seems about igniting here!

And yet if the wide Avenue is too strait, what will the Street de Surintendance be, at leaving of the same? At the corner of Surintendance Street, the compressed yelpings became a continuous yell: savage figures spring on the tumbril-shafts; first spray of an endless coming tide! The Mayor pleads, pushes, half-desperate; is pushed, carried off in men's arms: the savage tide has entrance, has mastery.

Amid horrid noise, and tumult as of fierce wolves, the Prisoners sink massacred,—all but some eleven, who escaped into houses, and found mercy. The Prisons, and what other Prisoners they held, were with difficulty saved. The stript clothes are burnt in bonfire; the corpses lie heaped in the ditch on the morrow morning. (*Pieces officielles relatives au massacre des Prisonniers a Versailles in Hist. Parl. xviii. 236-249.*) All France, except it be the Ten Men of the Circular and their people, moans and rages, inarticulately shrieking; all Europe rings.

But neither did Danton shriek; though, as Minister of Justice, it was more his part to do so. Brawny Danton is in the breach, as of stormed Cities and Nations; amid the Sweep of Tenth-of-August cannon, the rustle of Prussian gallows-ropes, the smiting of September sabres; destruction all round him, and the rushing-down of worlds: Minister of Justice is his name; but Titan of the Forlorn Hope, and *Enfant Perdu* of the Revolution, is his quality,—and the man acts according to that. "We must put our enemies in fear!" Deep fear, is it not, as of its own accord, falling on our enemies? The Titan of the Forlorn Hope, he is not the man that would swiftest of all prevent its so falling. Forward, thou lost Titan of an *Enfant Perdu*; thou must dare, and again dare, and without end dare; there is nothing left for thee but that! "Que mon nom soit fletri, Let my name be blighted:" what am I? The Cause alone is great; and shall live, and not perish.—So, on the whole, here too is a swallower of Formulas; of still wider gulp than Mirabeau: this Danton, Mirabeau of the Sansculottes. In the September days, this Minister was not heard of as co-operating with strict Roland; his business might lie elsewhere,—with Brunswick and the Hotel-de-Ville. When applied to by an official person, about the Orleans Prisoners, and the risks they ran, he answered gloomily, twice over, "Are not these men guilty?"—When pressed, he 'answered in a terrible voice,' and turned his back. (*Biographie des Ministres, p. 97.*) Two Thousand slain in the Prisons; horrible if you will: but Brunswick is within a day's journey of us; and there are Five-and twenty Millions yet, to slay or to save. Some men have tasks,—frightfuller than ours! It seems strange, but is not strange, that this Minister of Moloch-Justice, when any suppliant for a friend's life got access to him, was found to have human compassion; and yielded and granted 'always;' 'neither did one personal enemy of Danton perish in these days.' (*Ibid. p. 103.*)

To shriek, we say, when certain things are acted, is proper and unavoidable. Nevertheless, articulate speech, not shrieking, is the faculty of man: when speech is not yet possible, let there be, with the shortest delay, at least—silence. Silence, accordingly, in this forty-fourth year of the business, and eighteen hundred and thirty-sixth of an 'Era called Christian as *lucus a non*,' is the thing we recommend and practise. Nay, instead of shrieking more, it were perhaps edifying to remark, on the other side, what a singular thing Customs (*in Latin, Mores*) are; and how fitly the Virtue, *Vir-tus*, Manhood or Worth, that is in a man, is called his Morality, or Customariness. Fell Slaughter, one the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with Laws of War; and is Customary and Moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride,—which do thou nowise blame. While, see! so long as it is but dressed in hodden or russet; and Revolution, less frequent than War, has not yet got its Laws of Revolution, but the hodden or russet individuals are Uncustomary—O shrieking beloved brother blockheads of Mankind, let us close those wide mouths of ours; let us cease shrieking, and begin considering!

## Chapter 7. September in Argonne.

Plain, at any rate, is one thing: that the fear, whatever of fear those Aristocrat enemies might need, has been brought about. The matter is getting serious then! Sansculottism too has become a Fact, and

seems minded to assert itself as such? This huge mooncalf of Sansculottism, staggering about, as young calves do, is not mockable only, and soft like another calf; but terrible too, if you prick it; and, through its hideous nostrils, blows fire!—Aristocrats, with pale panic in their hearts, fly towards covert; and a light rises to them over several things; or rather a confused transition towards light, whereby for the moment darkness is only darker than ever. But, What will become of this France? Here is a question! France is dancing its desert-waltz, as Sahara does when the winds waken; in whirlblasts twenty-five millions in number; waltzing towards Townhalls, Aristocrat Prisons, and Election Committee-rooms; towards Brunswick and the Frontiers;—towards a New Chapter of Universal History; if indeed it be not the *Finis*, and winding-up of that!

In Election Committee-rooms there is now no dubiety; but the work goes bravely along. The Convention is getting chosen,—really in a decisive spirit; in the Townhall we already date First year of the Republic. Some Two hundred of our best Legislators may be re-elected, the Mountain bodily: Robespierre, with Mayor Petion, Buzot, Curate Gregoire, Rabaut, some three score Old-Constituents; though we once had only 'thirty voices.' All these; and along with them, friends long known to Revolutionary fame: Camille Desmoulins, though he stutters in speech; Manuel, Tallien and Company; Journalists Gorsas, Carra, Mercier, Louvet of Faublas; Cloodt Speaker of Mankind; Collot d'Herbois, tearing a passion to rags; Fabre d'Eglantine, speculative Pamphleteer; Legendre the solid Butcher; nay Marat, though rural France can hardly believe it, or even believe that there is a Marat except in print. Of Minister Danton, who will lay down his Ministry for a Membership, we need not speak. Paris is fervent; nor is the Country wanting to itself. Barbaroux, Rebecqui, and fervid Patriots are coming from Marseilles. Seven hundred and forty-five men (*or indeed forty-nine, for Avignon now sends Four*) are gathering: so many are to meet; not so many are to part!

Attorney Carrier from Aurillac, Ex-Priest Lebon from Arras, these shall both gain a name. Mountainous Auvergne re-elects her Romme: hardy tiller of the soil, once Mathematical Professor; who, unconscious, carries in petto a remarkable New Calendar, with Messidors, Pluvioses, and such like;—and having given it well forth, shall depart by the death they call Roman. Sieyes old-Constituent comes; to make new Constitutions as many as wanted: for the rest, peering out of his clear cautious eyes, he will cower low in many an emergency, and find silence safest. Young Saint-Just is coming, deputed by Aisne in the North; more like a Student than a Senator: not four-and-twenty yet; who has written Books; a youth of slight stature, with mild mellow voice, enthusiast olive-complexion, and long dark hair. Feraud, from the far valley D'Aure in the folds of the Pyrenees, is coming; an ardent Republican; doomed to fame, at least in death.

All manner of Patriot men are coming: Teachers, Husbandmen, Priests and Ex-Priests, Traders, Doctors; above all, Talkers, or the Attorney-species. Man-midwives, as Levasseur of the Sarthe, are not wanting. Nor Artists: gross David, with the swoln cheek, has long painted, with genius in a state of convulsion; and will now legislate. The swoln cheek, choking his words in the birth, totally disqualifies him as orator; but his pencil, his head, his gross hot heart, with genius in a state of convulsion, will be there. A man bodily and mentally swoln-cheeked, disproportionate; flabby-large, instead of great; weak withal as in a state of convulsion, not strong in a state of composure: so let him play his part. Nor are naturalised Benefactors of the Species forgotten: Priestley, elected by the Orne Department, but declining: Paine the rebellious Needleman, by the Pas de Calais, who accepts.

Few Nobles come, and yet not none. Paul Francois Barras, 'noble as the Barrases, old as the rocks of Provence;' he is one. The reckless, shipwrecked man: flung ashore on the coast of the Maldives long ago, while sailing and soldiering as Indian Fighter; flung ashore since then, as hungry Parisian



Pleasure-hunter and Half-pay, on many a Circe Island, with temporary enchantment, temporary conversion into beasthood and hoghood;—the remote Var Department has now sent him hither. A man of heat and haste; defective in utterance; defective indeed in any thing to utter; yet not without a certain rapidity of glance, a certain swift transient courage; who, in these times, Fortune favouring, may go far. He is tall, handsome to the eye, 'only the complexion a little yellow;' but 'with a robe of purple with a scarlet cloak and plume of tricolor, on occasions of solemnity,' the man will look well. (*Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquans, para Barras.*) Lepelletier Saint-Fargeau, Old-Constituent, is a kind of noble, and of enormous wealth; he too has come hither:—to have the Pain of Death abolished? Hapless Ex-Parlementeer! Nay, among our Sixty Old-Constituents, see Philippe d'Orleans a Prince of the Blood! Not now d'Orleans: for, Feudalism being swept from the world, he demands of his worthy friends the Electors of Paris, to have a new name of their choosing; whereupon Procureur Manuel, like an antithetic literary man, recommends Equality, Egalite. A Philippe Egalite therefore will sit; seen of the Earth and Heaven.

Such a Convention is gathering itself together. Mere angry poultry in moulting season; whom Brunswick's grenadiers and cannoneers will give short account of. Would the weather only mend a little! (*Bertrand-Moleville, Memoires, ii. 225.*)

In vain, O Bertrand! The weather will not mend a whit:—nay even if it did? Dumouriez Polymetis, though Bertrand knows it not, started from brief slumber at Sedan, on that morning of the 29th of August; with stealthiness, with promptitude, audacity. Some three mornings after that, Brunswick, opening wide eyes, perceives the Passes of the Argonne all seized; blocked with felled trees, fortified with camps; and that it is a most shifty swift Dumouriez this, who has outwitted him!

The manoeuvre may cost Brunswick 'a loss of three weeks,' very fatal in these circumstances. A Mountain-wall of forty miles lying between him and Paris: which he should have preoccupied;—which how now to get possession of? Also the rain it raineth every day; and we are in a hungry Champagne Pouilleuse, a land flowing only with ditch-water. How to cross this Mountain-wall of the Argonne; or what in the world to do with it?—there are marchings and wet splashings by steep paths, with sackerments and guttural interjections; forcings of Argonne Passes,—which unhappily will not force. Through the woods, volleying War reverberates, like huge gong-music, or Moloch's kettledrum, borne by the echoes; swoln torrents boil angrily round the foot of rocks, floating pale carcasses of men. In vain! Islettes Village, with its church-steeple, rises intact in the Mountain-pass, between the embosoming heights; your forced marchings and climbings have become forced slidings, and tumblings back. From the hill-tops thou seest nothing but dumb crags, and endless wet moaning woods; the Clermont Vache (*huge Cow that she is*) disclosing herself (*See Helen Maria Williams. Letters, iii. 79-81.*) at intervals; flinging off her cloud-blanket, and soon taking it on again, drowned in the pouring Heaven. The Argonne Passes will not force: by must skirt the Argonne; go round by the end of it.

But fancy whether the Emigrant Seigneurs have not got their brilliancy dulled a little; whether that 'Foot Regiment in red-facings with nankeen trousers' could be in field-day order! In place of gasconading, a sort of desperation, and hydrophobia from excess of water, is threatening to supervene. Young Prince de Ligne, son of that brave literary De Ligne the Thundergod of Dandies, fell backwards; shot dead in Grand-Pre, the Northmost of the Passes: Brunswick is skirting and rounding, laboriously, by the extremity of the South. Four days; days of a rain as of Noah,—without fire, without food! For fire you cut down green trees, and produce smoke; for food you eat green grapes, and produce colic, pestilential dysentery, (*Greek*). And the Peasants assassinate us, they do not join us;

shrill women cry shame on us, threaten to draw their very scissors on us! O ye hapless dulled-bright Seigneurs, and hydrophobic splashed Nankeens;—but O, ten times more, ye poor sackermement-ing ghastly-visaged Hessians and Hulans, fallen on your backs; who had no call to die there, except compulsion and three-halfpence a-day! Nor has Mrs. Le Blanc of the Golden Arm a good time of it, in her bower of dripping rushes. Assassinating Peasants are hanged; Old-Constituent Honourable members, though of venerable age, ride in carts with their hands tied; these are the woes of war.

Thus they; sprawling and wriggling, far and wide, on the slopes and passes of the Argonne;—a loss to Brunswick of five-and-twenty disastrous days. There is wriggling and struggling; facing, backing, and right-about facing; as the positions shift, and the Argonne gets partly rounded, partly forced:—but still Dumouriez, force him, round him as you will, sticks like a rooted fixture on the ground; fixture with many hinges; wheeling now this way, now that; shewing always new front, in the most unexpected manner: nowise consenting to take himself away. Recruits stream up on him: full of heart; yet rather difficult to deal with. Behind Grand-Pre, for example, Grand-Pre which is on the wrong-side of the Argonne, for we are now forced and rounded,—the full heart, in one of those wheelings and shewings of new front, did as it were overset itself, as full hearts are liable to do; and there rose a shriek of *saue qui peut*, and a death-panic which had nigh ruined all! So that the General had to come galloping; and, with thunder-words, with gesture, stroke of drawn sword even, check and rally, and bring back the sense of shame; (*Dumouriez, Memoires, iii. 29.*)—nay to seize the first shriekers and ringleaders; 'shave their heads and eyebrows,' and pack them forth into the world as a sign. Thus too (*for really the rations are short, and wet camping with hungry stomach brings bad humour*) there is like to be mutiny. Whereupon again Dumouriez 'arrives at the head of their line, with his staff, and an escort of a hundred huzzars. He had placed some squadrons behind them, the artillery in front; he said to them: "As for you, for I will neither call you citizens, nor soldiers, nor my men (*ni mes enfans*), you see before you this artillery, behind you this cavalry. You have dishonoured yourselves by crimes. If you amend, and grow to behave like this brave Army which you have the honour of belonging to, you will find in me a good father. But plunderers and assassins I do not suffer here. At the smallest mutiny I will have you shivered in pieces (*hacher en pieces*). Seek out the scoundrels that are among you, and dismiss them yourselves; I hold you responsible for them." (*Ibid., Memoires iii. 55.*)

Patience, O Dumouriez! This uncertain heap of shriekers, mutineers, were they once drilled and inured, will become a phalanxed mass of Fighters; and wheel and whirl, to order, swiftly like the wind or the whirlwind: tanned mustachio-figures; often barefoot, even bare-backed; with sinews of iron; who require only bread and gunpowder: very Sons of Fire, the adroitest, hastiest, hottest ever seen perhaps since Attila's time. They may conquer and overrun amazingly, much as that same Attila did;—whose Attila's-Camp and Battlefield thou now seest, on this very ground; (*Helen Maria Williams, iii. 32.*) who, after sweeping bare the world, was, with difficulty, and days of tough fighting, checked here by Roman Aetius and Fortune; and his dust-cloud made to vanish in the East again!—

Strangely enough, in this shrieking Confusion of a Soldiery, which we saw long since fallen all suicidally out of square in suicidal collision,—at Nanci, or on the streets of Metz, where brave Bouille stood with drawn sword; and which has collided and ground itself to pieces worse and worse ever since, down now to such a state: in this shrieking Confusion, and not elsewhere, lies the first germ of returning Order for France! Round which, we say, poor France nearly all ground down suicidally likewise into rubbish and Chaos, will be glad to rally; to begin growing, and new-shaping her inorganic dust: very slowly, through centuries, through Napoleons, Louis Philippes, and other the like media and phases,—into a new, infinitely preferable France, we can hope!—

These wheelings and movements in the region of the Argonne, which are all faithfully described by Dumouriez himself, and more interesting to us than Hoyle's or Philidor's best Game of Chess, let us, nevertheless, O Reader, entirely omit;—and hasten to remark two things: the first a minute private, the second a large public thing. Our minute private thing is: the presence, in the Prussian host, in that war-game of the Argonne, of a certain Man, belonging to the sort called Immortal; who, in days since then, is becoming visible more and more, in that character, as the Transitory more and more vanishes; for from of old it was remarked that when the Gods appear among men, it is seldom in recognisable shape; thus Admetus' neatherds give Apollo a draught of their goatskin whey-bottle (*well if they do not give him strokes with their ox-rungs*), not dreaming that he is the Sungod! This man's name is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He is Herzog Weimar's Minister, come with the small contingent of Weimar; to do insignificant unmilitary duty here; very irrerecognizable to nearly all! He stands at present, with drawn bridle, on the height near Saint-Menehould, making an experiment on the 'cannon-fever;' having ridden thither against persuasion, into the dance and firing of the cannon-balls, with a scientific desire to understand what that same cannon-fever may be: 'The sound of them,' says he, 'is curious enough; as if it were compounded of the humming of tops, the gurgling of water and the whistle of birds. By degrees you get a very uncommon sensation; which can only be described by similitude. It seems as if you were in some place extremely hot, and at the same time were completely penetrated by the heat of it; so that you feel as if you and this element you are in were perfectly on a par. The eyesight loses nothing of its strength or distinctness; and yet it is as if all things had got a kind of brown-red colour, which makes the situation and the objects still more impressive on you.' (*Goethe, Campagne in Frankreich, Werke, xxx. 73.*)

This is the cannon-fever, as a World-Poet feels it.—A man entirely irrerecognisable! In whose irrerecognisable head, meanwhile, there verily is the spiritual counterpart (*and call it complement*) of this same huge Death-Birth of the World; which now effectuates itself, outwardly in the Argonne, in such cannon-thunder; inwardly, in the irrerecognisable head, quite otherwise than by thunder! Mark that man, O Reader, as the memorablest of all the memorable in this Argonne Campaign. What we say of him is not dream, nor flourish of rhetoric; but scientific historic fact; as many men, now at this distance, see or begin to see.

But the large public thing we had to remark is this: That the Twentieth of September, 1792, was a raw morning covered with mist; that from three in the morning Sainte-Menehould, and those Villages and homesteads we know of old were stirred by the rumble of artillery-wagons, by the clatter of hoofs, and many footed tramp of men: all manner of military, Patriot and Prussian, taking up positions, on the Heights of La Lune and other Heights; shifting and shoving,—seemingly in some dread chess-game; which may the Heavens turn to good! The Miller of Valmy has fled dusty under ground; his Mill, were it never so windy, will have rest to-day. At seven in the morning the mist clears off: see Kellermann, Dumouriez' second in command, with 'eighteen pieces of cannon,' and deep-serried ranks, drawn up round that same silent Windmill, on his knoll of strength; Brunswick, also, with serried ranks and cannon, glooming over to him from the height of La Lune; only the little brook and its little dell now parting them.

So that the much-longed-for has come at last! Instead of hunger and dysentery, we shall have sharp shot; and then!—Dumouriez, with force and firm front, looks on from a neighbouring height; can help only with his wishes, in silence. Lo, the eighteen pieces do bluster and bark, responsive to the bluster of La Lune; and thunder-clouds mount into the air; and echoes roar through all dells, far into the depths of Argonne Wood (*deserted now*); and limbs and lives of men fly dissipated, this way and that. Can Brunswick make an impression on them? The dull-bright Seigneurs stand biting their thumbs:

these Sansculottes seem not to fly like poultry! Towards noontide a cannon-shot blows Kellermann's horse from under him; there bursts a powder-cart high into the air, with knell heard over all: some swaggering and swaying observable;—Brunswick will try! "Camarades," cries Kellermann, "Vive la Patria! Allons vaincre pour elle, Let us conquer." "Live the Fatherland!" rings responsive, to the welkin, like rolling-fire from side to side: our ranks are as firm as rocks; and Brunswick may recross the dell, ineffectual; regain his old position on La Lune; not unbattered by the way. And so, for the length of a September day,—with bluster and bark; with bellow far echoing! The cannonade lasts till sunset; and no impression made. Till an hour after sunset, the few remaining Clocks of the District striking Seven; at this late time of day Brunswick tries again. With not a whit better fortune! He is met by rock-ranks, by shouts of Vive la Patrie; and driven back, not unbattered. Whereupon he ceases; retires 'to the Tavern of La Lune;' and sets to raising a redoute lest he be attacked!

Verily so: ye dulled-bright Seigneurs, make of it what ye may. Ah, and France does not rise round us in mass; and the Peasants do not join us, but assassinate us: neither hanging nor any persuasion will induce them! They have lost their old distinguishing love of King, and King's-cloak,—I fear, altogether; and will even fight to be rid of it: that seems now their humour. Nor does Austria prosper, nor the siege of Thionville. The Thionvillers, carrying their insolence to the epigrammatic pitch, have put a Wooden Horse on their walls, with a bundle of hay hung from him, and this Inscription: 'When I finish my hay, you will take Thionville.' (*Hist. Parl. xix. 177.*) To such height has the frenzy of mankind risen.

The trenches of Thionville may shut: and what though those of Lille open? The Earth smiles not on us, nor the Heaven; but weeps and blears itself, in sour rain, and worse. Our very friends insult us; we are wounded in the house of our friends: "His Majesty of Prussia had a greatcoat, when the rain came; and (*contrary to all known laws*) he put it on, though our two French Princes, the hope of their country, had none!" To which indeed, as Goethe admits, what answer could be made? (*Goethe, xxx. 49.*)—Cold and Hunger and Affront, Colic and Dysentery and Death; and we here, cowering redouted, most unredoubtable, amid the 'tattered corn-shocks and deformed stubble,' on the splashy Height of La Lune, round the mean Tavern de La Lune!—

This is the Cannonade of Valmy; wherein the World-Poet experimented on the cannon-fever; wherein the French Sansculottes did not fly like poultry. Precious to France! Every soldier did his duty, and Alsatian Kellermann (*how preferable to old Luckner the dismissed!*) began to become greater; and Egalite Fils, Equality Junior, a light gallant Field-Officer, distinguished himself by intrepidity:—it is the same intrepid individual who now, as Louis-Philippe, without the Equality, struggles, under sad circumstances, to be called King of the French for a season.

## Chapter 8. Exeunt.

But this Twentieth of September is otherwise a great day. For, observe, while Kellermann's horse was flying blown from under him at the Mill of Valmy, our new National Deputies, that shall be a NATIONAL CONVENTION, are hovering and gathering about the Hall of the Hundred Swiss; with intent to constitute themselves!

On the morrow, about noontide, Camus the Archivist is busy 'verifying their powers;' several hundreds of them already here. Whereupon the Old Legislative comes solemnly over, to merge its old ashes Phoenix-like in the body of the new;—and so forthwith, returning all solemnly back to the Salle de

Manege, there sits a National Convention, Seven Hundred and Forty-nine complete, or complete enough; presided by Petion;—which proceeds directly to do business. Read that reported afternoon's-debate, O Reader; there are few debates like it: dull reporting Moniteur itself becomes more dramatic than a very Shakespeare. For epigrammatic Manuel rises, speaks strange things; how the President shall have a guard of honour, and lodge in the Tuileries:—rejected. And Danton rises and speaks; and Collot d'Herbois rises, and Curate Gregoire, and lame Couthon of the Mountain rises; and in rapid Meliboean stanzas, only a few lines each, they propose motions not a few: That the corner-stone of our new Constitution is Sovereignty of the People; that our Constitution shall be accepted by the People or be null; further that the People ought to be avenged, and have right Judges; that the Imposts must continue till new order; that Landed and other Property be sacred forever; finally that 'Royalty from this day is abolished in France:'—Decreed all, before four o'clock strike, with acclamation of the world! (*Hist. Parl. xix. 19.*) The tree was all so ripe; only shake it and there fall such yellow cart-loads.

And so over in the Valmy Region, as soon as the news come, what stir is this, audible, visible from our muddy heights of La Lune? (*Williams, iii. 71.*) Universal shouting of the French on their opposite hillside; caps raised on bayonets; and a sound as of Republique; Vive la Republique borne dubious on the winds!—On the morrow morning, so to speak, Brunswick slings his knapsacks before day, lights any fires he has; and marches without tap of drum. Dumouriez finds ghastly symptoms in that camp; 'latrines full of blood!' (*1st October, 1792; Dumouriez, iii. 73.*) The chivalrous King of Prussia, for he as we saw is here in person, may long rue the day; may look colder than ever on these dulled-bright Seigneurs, and French Princes their Country's hope;—and, on the whole, put on his great-coat without ceremony, happy that he has one. They retire, all retire with convenient despatch, through a Champagne trodden into a quagmire, the wild weather pouring on them; Dumouriez through his Kellermanns and Dillons pricking them a little in the hinder parts. A little, not much; now pricking, now negotiating: for Brunswick has his eyes opened; and the Majesty of Prussia is a repentant Majesty.

Nor has Austria prospered, nor the Wooden Horse of Thionville bitten his hay; nor Lille City surrendered itself. The Lille trenches opened, on the 29th of the month; with balls and shells, and redhot balls; as if not trenches but Vesuvius and the Pit had opened. It was frightful, say all eye-witnesses; but it is ineffectual. The Lillers have risen to such temper; especially after these news from Argonne and the East. Not a Sans-indispensables in Lille that would surrender for a King's ransom. Redhot balls rain, day and night; 'six-thousand,' or so, and bombs 'filled internally with oil of turpentine which splashes up in flame;'—mainly on the dwellings of the Sansculottes and Poor; the streets of the Rich being spared. But the Sansculottes get water-pails; form quenching-regulations, "The ball is in Peter's house!" "The ball is in John's!" They divide their lodging and substance with each other; shout Vive la Republique; and faint not in heart. A ball thunders through the main chamber of the Hotel-de-Ville, while the Commune is there assembled: "We are in permanence," says one, coldly, proceeding with his business; and the ball remains permanent too, sticking in the wall, probably to this day. (*Bombardement de Lille in Hist. Parl. xx. 63-71.*)

The Austrian Archduchess (*Queen's Sister*) will herself see red artillery fired; in their over-haste to satisfy an Archduchess 'two mortars explode and kill thirty persons.' It is in vain; Lille, often burning, is always quenched again; Lille will not yield. The very boys deftly wrench the matches out of fallen bombs: 'a man clutches a rolling ball with his hat, which takes fire; when cool, they crown it with a bonnet rouge.' Memorable also be that nimble Barber, who when the bomb burst beside him, snatched up a shred of it, introduced soap and lather into it, crying, "Voila mon plat a barbe, My new shaving-dish!" and shaved 'fourteen people' on the spot. Bravo, thou nimble Shaver; worthy to shave old

spectral Redcloak, and find treasures!—On the eighth day of this desperate siege, the sixth day of October, Austria finding it fruitless, draws off, with no pleasurable consciousness; rapidly, Dumouriez tending thitherward; and Lille too, black with ashes and smoulder, but jubilant skyhigh, flings its gates open. The Plat a barbe became fashionable; 'no Patriot of an elegant turn,' says Mercier several years afterwards, 'but shaves himself out of the splinter of a Lille bomb.'

Quid multa, Why many words? The Invaders are in flight; Brunswick's Host, the third part of it gone to death, staggers disastrous along the deep highways of Champagne; spreading out also into 'the fields, of a tough spongy red-coloured clay;—like Pharaoh through a Red Sea of mud,' says Goethe; 'for he also lay broken chariots, and riders and foot seemed sinking around.' (*Campagne in Frankreich*, p. 103.) On the eleventh morning of October, the World-Poet, struggling Northwards out of Verdun, which he had entered Southwards, some five weeks ago, in quite other order, discerned the following Phenomenon and formed part of it:

'Towards three in the morning, without having had any sleep, we were about mounting our carriage, drawn up at the door; when an insuperable obstacle disclosed itself: for there rolled on already, between the pavement-stones which were crushed up into a ridge on each side, an uninterrupted column of sick-wagons through the Town, and all was trodden as into a morass. While we stood waiting what could be made of it, our Landlord the Knight of Saint-Louis pressed past us, without salutation.' He had been a Calonne's Notable in 1787, an Emigrant since; had returned to his home, jubilant, with the Prussians; but must now forth again into the wide world, 'followed by a servant carrying a little bundle on his stick.

'The activity of our alert Lisieux shone eminent; and, on this occasion too, brought us on: for he struck into a small gap of the wagon-row; and held the advancing team back till we, with our six and our four horses, got intercalated; after which, in my light little coachlet, I could breathe freer. We were now under way; at a funeral pace, but still under way. The day broke; we found ourselves at the outlet of the Town, in a tumult and turmoil without measure. All sorts of vehicles, few horsemen, innumerable foot-people, were crossing each other on the great esplanade before the Gate. We turned to the right, with our Column, towards Estain, on a limited highway, with ditches at each side. Self-preservation, in so monstrous a press, knew now no pity, no respect of aught. Not far before us there fell down a horse of an ammunition-wagon: they cut the traces, and let it lie. And now as the three others could not bring their load along, they cut them also loose, tumbled the heavy-packed vehicle into the ditch; and, with the smallest retardation, we had to drive on, right over the horse, which was just about to rise; and I saw too clearly how its legs, under the wheels, went crashing and quivering.

'Horse and foot endeavoured to escape from the narrow laborious highway into the meadows: but these too were rained to ruin; overflowed by full ditches, the connexion of the footpaths every where interrupted. Four gentlemanlike, handsome, well-dressed French soldiers waded for a time beside our carriage; wonderfully clean and neat: and had such art of picking their steps, that their foot-gear testified no higher than the ancle to the muddy pilgrimage these good people found themselves engaged in.

'That under such circumstances one saw, in ditches, in meadows, in fields and crofts, dead horses enough, was natural to the case: by and by, however, you found them also flayed, the fleshy parts even cut away; sad token of the universal distress.

'Thus we fared on; every moment in danger, at the smallest stoppage on our own part, of being ourselves tumbled overboard; under which circumstances, truly, the careful dexterity of our Lisieux could not be sufficiently praised. The same talent shewed itself at Estain; where we arrived towards noon; and descried, over the beautiful well-built little Town, through streets and on squares, around and beside us, one sense-confusing tumult: the mass rolled this way and that; and, all struggling forward, each hindered the other. Unexpectedly our carriage drew up before a stately house in the market-place; master and mistress of the mansion saluted us in reverent distance.' Dexterous Lisieux, though we knew it not, had said we were the King of Prussia's Brother!

'But now, from the ground-floor windows, looking over the whole market-place, we had the endless tumult lying, as it were, palpable. All sorts of walkers, soldiers in uniform, marauders, stout but sorrowing citizens and peasants, women and children, crushed and jostled each other, amid vehicles of all forms: ammunition-wagons, baggage-wagons; carriages, single, double, and multiplex; such hundredfold miscellany of teams, requisitioned or lawfully owned, making way, hitting together, hindering each other, rolled here to right and to left. Horned-cattle too were struggling on; probably herds that had been put in requisition. Riders you saw few; but the elegant carriages of the Emigrants, many-coloured, lackered, gilt and silvered, evidently by the best builders, caught your eye. (See *Hermann and Dorothea* (also by Goethe), *Buch Kalliope*.)

'The crisis of the strait however arose further on a little; where the crowded market-place had to introduce itself into a street,—straight indeed and good, but proportionably far too narrow. I have, in my life, seen nothing like it: the aspect of it might perhaps be compared to that of a swollen river which has been raging over meadows and fields, and is now again obliged to press itself through a narrow bridge, and flow on in its bounded channel. Down the long street, all visible from our windows, there swelled continually the strangest tide: a high double-seated travelling-coach towered visible over the flood of things. We thought of the fair Frenchwomen we had seen in the morning. It was not they, however, it was Count Haugwitz; him you could look at, with a kind of sardonic malice, rocking onwards, step by step, there.' (*Campagne in Frankreich, Goethe's Werke* (Stuttgart, 1829), xxx. 133-137.)

In such untriumphant Procession has the Brunswick Manifesto issued! Nay in worse, 'in Negotiation with these miscreants,'—the first news of which produced such a revulsion in the Emigrant nature, as put our scientific World-Poet 'in fear for the wits of several.' There is no help: they must fare on, these poor Emigrants, angry with all persons and things, and making all persons angry, in the hapless course they struck into. Landlord and landlady testify to you, at tables-d'hote, how insupportable these Frenchmen are: how, in spite of such humiliation, of poverty and probable beggary, there is ever the same struggle for precedence, the same forwardness, and want of discretion. High in honour, at the head of the table, you with your own eyes observe not a Seigneur but the automaton of a Seigneur, fallen into dotage; still worshipped, reverently waited on, and fed. In miscellaneous seats, is a miscellany of soldiers, commissaries, adventurers; consuming silently their barbarian victuals. 'On all brows is to be read a hard destiny; all are silent, for each has his own sufferings to bear, and looks forth into misery without bounds.' One hasty wanderer, coming in, and eating without ungraciousness what is set before him, the landlord lets off almost scot-free. "He is," whispered the landlord to me, "the first of these cursed people I have seen condescend to taste our German black bread." (*Ibid.* 152.) (*Ibid.* 210-12.)

And Dumouriez is in Paris; lauded and feasted; paraded in glittering saloons, floods of beautifullest blond-dresses and broadcloth-coats flowing past him, endless, in admiring joy. One night,

nevertheless, in the splendour of one such scene, he sees himself suddenly apostrophised by a squalid unjoyful Figure, who has come in uninvited, nay despite of all lackeys; an unjoyful Figure! The Figure is come "in express mission from the Jacobins," to inquire sharply, better then than later, touching certain things: "Shaven eyebrows of Volunteer Patriots, for instance?" Also "your threats of shivering in pieces?" Also, "why you have not chased Brunswick hotly enough?" Thus, with sharp croak, inquires the Figure.—"Ah, c'est vous qu'on appelle Marat, You are he they call Marat!" answers the General, and turns coldly on his heel. (*Dumouriez*, iii. 115.—*Marat's account*, *In the Debats des Jacobins and Journal de la Republique* (Hist. Parl. xix. 317-21), *agrees to the turning on the heel, but strives to interpret it differently.*)—"Marat!" The blonde-gowns quiver like aspens; the dress-coats gather round; Actor Talma (*for it is his house*), and almost the very chandelier-lights, are blue: till this obscene Spectrum, or visual Appearance, vanish back into native Night.

General Dumouriez, in few brief days, is gone again, towards the Netherlands; will attack the Netherlands, winter though it be. And General Montesquiou, on the South-East, has driven in the Sardinian Majesty; nay, almost without a shot fired, has taken Savoy from him, which longs to become a piece of the Republic. And General Custine, on the North-East, has dashed forth on Spires and its Arsenal; and then on Electoral Mentz, not uninvited, wherein are German Democrats and no shadow of an Elector now:—so that in the last days of October, Frau Forster, a daughter of Heyne's, somewhat democratic, walking out of the Gate of Mentz with her Husband, finds French Soldiers playing at bowls with cannon-balls there. Forster trips cheerfully over one iron bomb, with "Live the Republic!" A black-bearded National Guard answers: "Elle vivra bien sans vous, It will probably live independently of you!" (*Johann Georg Forster's Briefwechsel* (Leipzig, 1829), i. 88.)

---

Revision #1

Created 9 August 2019 12:26:14 by Textpedia

Updated 9 August 2019 12:26:38 by Textpedia