

Book II. Nanci.

Chapter 1. Bouille.

Dimly visible, at Metz on the North-Eastern frontier, a certain brave Bouille, last refuge of Royalty in all straits and meditations of flight, has for many months hovered occasionally in our eye; some name or shadow of a brave Bouille: let us now, for a little, look fixedly at him, till he become a substance and person for us. The man himself is worth a glance; his position and procedure there, in these days, will throw light on many things.

For it is with Bouille as with all French Commanding Officers; only in a more emphatic degree. The grand National Federation, we already guess, was but empty sound, or worse: a last loudest universal Hep-hep-hurrah, with full bumpers, in that National Lapithae-feast of Constitution-making; as in loud denial of the palpably existing; as if, with hurrahings, you would shut out notice of the inevitable already knocking at the gates! Which new National bumper, one may say, can but deepen the drunkenness; and so, the louder it swears Brotherhood, will the sooner and the more surely lead to Cannibalism. Ah, under that fraternal shine and clangour, what a deep world of irreconcilable discords lie momentarily assuaged, damped down for one moment! Respectable military Federates have barely got home to their quarters; and the inflammablest, 'dying, burnt up with liquors, and kindness,' has not yet got extinct; the shine is hardly out of men's eyes, and still blazes filling all men's memories,—when your discords burst forth again very considerably darker than ever. Let us look at Bouille, and see how.

Bouille for the present commands in the Garrison of Metz, and far and wide over the East and North; being indeed, by a late act of Government with sanction of National Assembly, appointed one of our Four supreme Generals. Rochambeau and Mailly, men and Marshals of note in these days, though to us of small moment, are two of his colleagues; tough old babbling Luckner, also of small moment for us, will probably be the third. Marquis de Bouille is a determined Loyalist; not indeed disinclined to moderate reform, but resolute against immoderate. A man long suspect to Patriotism; who has more than once given the august Assembly trouble; who would not, for example, take the National Oath, as he was bound to do, but always put it off on this or the other pretext, till an autograph of Majesty requested him to do it as a favour. There, in this post of honour, yet of eminence and danger, he waits, in a silent centered manner; very dubious of the future. 'Alone,' as he says, or almost alone, of all the old military Notabilities, he has not emigrated; but thinks always, in atrabiliar moments, that there will be nothing for him too but to cross the marches. He might cross, say, to Treves or Coblenz where Exiled Princes will be one day ranking; or say, over into Luxemburg where old Broglie loiters and languishes. Or is there not the great dim Deep of European Diplomacy; where your Calonnes, your Breteuils are beginning to hover, dimly discernible?

With immeasurable confused outlooks and purposes, with no clear purpose but this of still trying to do His Majesty a service, Bouille waits; struggling what he can to keep his district loyal, his troops faithful, his garrisons furnished. He maintains, as yet, with his Cousin Lafayette, some thin diplomatic correspondence, by letter and messenger; chivalrous constitutional professions on the one side, military gravity and brevity on the other; which thin correspondence one can see growing ever the thinner and hollower, towards the verge of entire vacuity. (*Bouille, Memoires* (London, 1797), i. c. 8.)

A quick, choleric, sharply discerning, stubbornly endeavouring man; with suppressed-explosive resolution, with valour, nay headlong audacity: a man who was more in his place, lionlike defending those Windward Isles, or, as with military tiger-spring, clutching Nevis and Montserrat from the English,—than here in this suppressed condition, muzzled and fettered by diplomatic packthreads; looking out for a civil war, which may never arrive. Few years ago Bouille was to have led a French East-Indian Expedition, and reconquered or conquered Pondicherry and the Kingdoms of the Sun: but the whole world is suddenly changed, and he with it; Destiny willed it not in that way but in this.

Chapter 2. Arrears and Aristocrats.

Indeed, as to the general outlook of things, Bouille himself augurs not well of it. The French Army, ever since those old Bastille days, and earlier, has been universally in the questionablest state, and growing daily worse. Discipline, which is at all times a kind of miracle, and works by faith, broke down then; one sees not with that near prospect of recovering itself. The Gardes Francaises played a deadly game; but how they won it, and wear the prizes of it, all men know. In that general overturn, we saw the Hired Fighters refuse to fight. The very Swiss of Chateau-Vieux, which indeed is a kind of French Swiss, from Geneva and the Pays de Vaud, are understood to have declined. Deserters glided over; Royal-Allemand itself looked disconsolate, though stanch of purpose. In a word, we there saw Military Rule, in the shape of poor Besenval with that convulsive unmanageable Camp of his, pass two martyr days on the Champ-de-Mars; and then, veiling itself, so to speak, 'under the cloud of night,' depart 'down the left bank of the Seine,' to seek refuge elsewhere; this ground having clearly become too hot for it.

But what new ground to seek, what remedy to try? Quarters that were 'uninfected:' this doubtless, with judicious strictness of drilling, were the plan. Alas, in all quarters and places, from Paris onward to the remotest hamlet, is infection, is seditious contagion: inhaled, propagated by contact and converse, till the dullest soldier catch it! There is speech of men in uniform with men not in uniform; men in uniform read journals, and even write in them. (*See Newspapers of July, 1789* (in Hist. Parl. ii. 35), &c.) There are public petitions or remonstrances, private emissaries and associations; there is discontent, jealousy, uncertainty, sullen suspicious humour. The whole French Army, fermenting in dark heat, glooms ominous, boding good to no one.

So that, in the general social dissolution and revolt, we are to have this deepest and dimmest kind of it, a revolting soldiery? Barren, desolate to look upon is this same business of revolt under all its aspects; but how infinitely more so, when it takes the aspect of military mutiny! The very implement of rule and restraint, whereby all the rest was managed and held in order, has become precisely the frightfullest immeasurable implement of misrule; like the element of Fire, our indispensable all-ministering servant, when it gets the mastery, and becomes conflagration. Discipline we called a kind of miracle: in fact, is it not miraculous how one man moves hundreds of thousands; each unit of whom it may be loves him not, and singly fears him not, yet has to obey him, to go hither or go thither, to march and halt, to give death, and even to receive it, as if a Fate had spoken; and the word-of-command becomes, almost in the literal sense, a magic-word?

Which magic-word, again, if it be once forgotten; the spell of it once broken! The legions of assiduous ministering spirits rise on you now as menacing fiends; your free orderly arena becomes a tumult-place of the Nether Pit, and the hapless magician is rent limb from limb. Military mobs are mobs with muskets in their hands; and also with death hanging over their heads, for death is the penalty of

disobedience and they have disobeyed. And now if all mobs are properly frenzies, and work frenetically with mad fits of hot and of cold, fierce rage alternating so incoherently with panic terror, consider what your military mob will be, with such a conflict of duties and penalties, whirled between remorse and fury, and, for the hot fit, loaded fire-arms in its hand! To the soldier himself, revolt is frightful, and oftenest perhaps pitiable; and yet so dangerous, it can only be hated, cannot be pitied. An anomalous class of mortals these poor Hired Killers! With a frankness, which to the Moralists in these times seems surprising, they have sworn to become machines; and nevertheless they are still partly men. Let no prudent person in authority remind them of this latter fact; but always let force, let injustice above all, stop short clearly on this side of the rebounding-point! Soldiers, as we often say, do revolt: were it not so, several things which are transient in this world might be perennial.

Over and above the general quarrel which all sons of Adam maintain with their lot here below, the grievances of the French soldiery reduce themselves to two, First that their Officers are Aristocrats; secondly that they cheat them of their Pay. Two grievances; or rather we might say one, capable of becoming a hundred; for in that single first proposition, that the Officers are Aristocrats, what a multitude of corollaries lie ready! It is a bottomless ever-flowing fountain of grievances this; what you may call a general raw-material of grievance, wherefrom individual grievance after grievance will daily body itself forth. Nay there will even be a kind of comfort in getting it, from time to time, so embodied. Peculation of one's Pay! It is embodied; made tangible, made denounceable; exhalable, if only in angry words.

For unluckily that grand fountain of grievances does exist: Aristocrats almost all our Officers necessarily are; they have it in the blood and bone. By the law of the case, no man can pretend to be the pitifullest lieutenant of militia, till he have first verified, to the satisfaction of the Lion-King, a Nobility of four generations. Not Nobility only, but four generations of it: this latter is the improvement hit upon, in comparatively late years, by a certain War-minister much pressed for commissions. (*Dampmartin, Evenemens, i. 89.*) An improvement which did relieve the over-pressed War-minister, but which split France still further into yawning contrasts of Commonalty and Nobility, nay of new Nobility and old; as if already with your new and old, and then with your old, older and oldest, there were not contrasts and discrepancies enough;—the general clash whereof men now see and hear, and in the singular whirlpool, all contrasts gone together to the bottom! Gone to the bottom or going; with uproar, without return; going every where save in the Military section of things; and there, it may be asked, can they hope to continue always at the top? Apparently, not.

It is true, in a time of external Peace, when there is no fighting but only drilling, this question, How you rise from the ranks, may seem theoretical rather. But in reference to the Rights of Man it is continually practical. The soldier has sworn to be faithful not to the King only, but to the Law and the Nation. Do our commanders love the Revolution? ask all soldiers. Unhappily no, they hate it, and love the Counter-Revolution. Young epauletted men, with quality-blood in them, poisoned with quality-pride, do sniff openly, with indignation struggling to become contempt, at our Rights of Man, as at some newfangled cobweb, which shall be brushed down again. Old officers, more cautious, keep silent, with closed uncurled lips; but one guesses what is passing within. Nay who knows, how, under the plausiblest word of command, might lie Counter-Revolution itself, sale to Exiled Princes and the Austrian Kaiser: treacherous Aristocrats hoodwinking the small insight of us common men?—In such manner works that general raw-material of grievance; disastrous; instead of trust and reverence, breeding hate, endless suspicion, the impossibility of commanding and obeying. And now when this second more tangible grievance has articulated itself universally in the mind of the common man: Peculation of his Pay! Peculation of the despicablest sort does exist, and has long existed; but, unless

the new-declared Rights of Man, and all rights whatsoever, be a cobweb, it shall no longer exist.

The French Military System seems dying a sorrowful suicidal death. Nay more, citizen, as is natural, ranks himself against citizen in this cause. The soldier finds audience, of numbers and sympathy unlimited, among the Patriot lower-classes. Nor are the higher wanting to the officer. The officer still dresses and perfumes himself for such sad unemigrated soiree as there may still be; and speaks his woes,—which woes, are they not Majesty's and Nature's? Speaks, at the same time, his gay defiance, his firm-set resolution. Citizens, still more Citizenesses, see the right and the wrong; not the Military System alone will die by suicide, but much along with it. As was said, there is yet possible a deepest overturn than any yet witnessed: that deepest upturn of the black-burning sulphurous stratum whereon all rests and grows!

But how these things may act on the rude soldier-mind, with its military pedantries, its inexperience of all that lies off the parade-ground; inexperience as of a child, yet fierceness of a man and vehemence of a Frenchman! It is long that secret communings in mess-room and guard-room, sour looks, thousandfold petty vexations between commander and commanded, measure every where the weary military day. Ask Captain Dampmartin; an authentic, ingenious literary officer of horse; who loves the Reign of Liberty, after a sort; yet has had his heart grieved to the quick many times, in the hot South-Western region and elsewhere; and has seen riot, civil battle by daylight and by torchlight, and anarchy hatefuller than death. How insubordinate Troopers, with drink in their heads, meet Captain Dampmartin and another on the ramparts, where there is no escape or side-path; and make military salute punctually, for we look calm on them; yet make it in a snappish, almost insulting manner: how one morning they 'leave all their chamois shirts' and superfluous buffs, which they are tired of, laid in piles at the Captain's doors; whereat 'we laugh,' as the ass does, eating thistles: nay how they 'knot two forage-cords together,' with universal noisy cursing, with evident intent to hang the Quarter-master:—all this the worthy Captain, looking on it through the ruddy-and-sable of fond regretful memory, has flowingly written down. (*Dampmartin, Evenemens, i. 122-146.*) Men growl in vague discontent; officers fling up their commissions, and emigrate in disgust.

Or let us ask another literary Officer; not yet Captain; Sublieutenant only, in the Artillery Regiment La Fere: a young man of twenty-one; not unentitled to speak; the name of him is Napoleon Buonaparte. To such height of Sublieutenancy has he now got promoted, from Brienne School, five years ago; 'being found qualified in mathematics by La Place.' He is lying at Auxonne, in the West, in these months; not sumptuously lodged—'in the house of a Barber, to whose wife he did not pay the customary degree of respect;' or even over at the Pavilion, in a chamber with bare walls; the only furniture an indifferent 'bed without curtains, two chairs, and in the recess of a window a table covered with books and papers: his Brother Louis sleeps on a coarse mattress in an adjoining room.' However, he is doing something great: writing his first Book or Pamphlet,—eloquent vehement Letter to M. Matteo Buttafuoco, our Corsican Deputy, who is not a Patriot but an Aristocrat, unworthy of Deputyship. Joly of Dole is Publisher. The literary Sublieutenant corrects the proofs; 'sets out on foot from Auxonne, every morning at four o'clock, for Dole: after looking over the proofs, he partakes of an extremely frugal breakfast with Joly, and immediately prepares for returning to his Garrison; where he arrives before noon, having thus walked above twenty miles in the course of the morning.'

This Sublieutenant can remark that, in drawing-rooms, on streets, on highways, at inns, every where men's minds are ready to kindle into a flame. That a Patriot, if he appear in the drawing-room, or amid a group of officers, is liable enough to be discouraged, so great is the majority against him: but no sooner does he get into the street, or among the soldiers, than he feels again as if the whole Nation

were with him. That after the famous Oath, To the King, to the Nation and Law, there was a great change; that before this, if ordered to fire on the people, he for one would have done it in the King's name; but that after this, in the Nation's name, he would not have done it. Likewise that the Patriot officers, more numerous too in the Artillery and Engineers than elsewhere, were few in number; yet that having the soldiers on their side, they ruled the regiment; and did often deliver the Aristocrat brother officer out of peril and strait. One day, for example, 'a member of our own mess roused the mob, by singing, from the windows of our dining-room, O Richard, O my King; and I had to snatch him from their fury.' (*Norvins, Histoire de Napoleon, i. 47; Las Cases, Memoires translated into Hazlitt's Life of Napoleon, i. 23-31.*)

All which let the reader multiply by ten thousand; and spread it with slight variations over all the camps and garrisons of France. The French Army seems on the verge of universal mutiny.

Universal mutiny! There is in that what may well make Patriot Constitutionalism and an august Assembly shudder. Something behoves to be done; yet what to do no man can tell. Mirabeau proposes even that the Soldiery, having come to such a pass, be forthwith disbanded, the whole Two Hundred and Eighty Thousands of them; and organised anew. (*Moniteur, 1790. No. 233.*) Impossible this, in so sudden a manner! cry all men. And yet literally, answer we, it is inevitable, in one manner or another. Such an Army, with its four-generation Nobles, its Peculated Pay, and men knotting forage cords to hang their quartermaster, cannot subsist beside such a Revolution. Your alternative is a slow-pining chronic dissolution and new organization; or a swift decisive one; the agonies spread over years, or concentrated into an hour. With a Mirabeau for Minister or Governor the latter had been the choice; with no Mirabeau for Governor it will naturally be the former.

Chapter 3. Bouille at Metz.

To Bouille, in his North-Eastern circle, none of these things are altogether hid. Many times flight over the marches gleams out on him as a last guidance in such bewilderment: nevertheless he continues here: struggling always to hope the best, not from new organisation but from happy Counter-Revolution and return to the old. For the rest it is clear to him that this same National Federation, and universal swearing and fraternising of People and Soldiers, has done 'incalculable mischief.' So much that fermented secretly has hereby got vent and become open: National Guards and Soldiers of the line, solemnly embracing one another on all parade-fields, drinking, swearing patriotic oaths, fall into disorderly street-processions, constitutional unmilitary exclamations and hurrahings. On which account the Regiment Picardie, for one, has to be drawn out in the square of the barracks, here at Metz, and sharply harangued by the General himself; but expresses penitence. (*Bouille, Memoires, i. 113.*)

Far and near, as accounts testify, insubordination has begun grumbling louder and louder. Officers have been seen shut up in their mess-rooms; assaulted with clamorous demands, not without menaces. The insubordinate ringleader is dismissed with 'yellow furlough,' yellow infamous thing they call *cartouche jaune*: but ten new ringleaders rise in his stead, and the yellow *cartouche* ceases to be thought disgraceful. 'Within a fortnight,' or at furthest a month, of that sublime Feast of Pikes, the whole French Army, demanding Arrears, forming Reading Clubs, frequenting Popular Societies, is in a state which Bouille can call by no name but that of mutiny. Bouille knows it as few do; and speaks by dire experience. Take one instance instead of many.

It is still an early day of August, the precise date now undiscoverable, when Bouille, about to set out for the waters of Aix la Chapelle, is once more suddenly summoned to the barracks of Metz. The soldiers stand ranked in fighting order, muskets loaded, the officers all there on compulsion; and require, with many-voiced emphasis, to have their arrears paid. Picardie was penitent; but we see it has relapsed: the wide space bristles and lours with mere mutinous armed men. Brave Bouille advances to the nearest Regiment, opens his commanding lips to harangue; obtains nothing but querulous-indignant discordance, and the sound of so many thousand livres legally due. The moment is trying; there are some ten thousand soldiers now in Metz, and one spirit seems to have spread among them.

Bouille is firm as the adamant; but what shall he do? A German Regiment, named of Salm, is thought to be of better temper: nevertheless Salm too may have heard of the precept, Thou shalt not steal; Salm too may know that money is money. Bouille walks trustfully towards the Regiment de Salm, speaks trustful words; but here again is answered by the cry of forty-four thousand livres odd sous. A cry waxing more and more vociferous, as Salm's humour mounts; which cry, as it will produce no cash or promise of cash, ends in the wide simultaneous whirr of shouldered muskets, and a determined quick-time march on the part of Salm—towards its Colonel's house, in the next street, there to seize the colours and military chest. Thus does Salm, for its part; strong in the faith that meum is not tuum, that fair speeches are not forty-four thousand livres odd sous.

Unrestrainable! Salm tramps to military time, quick consuming the way. Bouille and the officers, drawing sword, have to dash into double quick pas-de-charge, or unmilitary running; to get the start; to station themselves on the outer staircase, and stand there with what of death-defiance and sharp steel they have; Salm truculently coiling itself up, rank after rank, opposite them, in such humour as we can fancy, which happily has not yet mounted to the murder-pitch. There will Bouille stand, certain at least of one man's purpose; in grim calmness, awaiting the issue. What the intrepidest of men and generals can do is done. Bouille, though there is a barricading picket at each end of the street, and death under his eyes, contrives to send for a Dragoon Regiment with orders to charge: the dragoon officers mount; the dragoon men will not: hope is none there for him. The street, as we say, barricaded; the Earth all shut out, only the indifferent heavenly Vault overhead: perhaps here or there a timorous householder peering out of window, with prayer for Bouille; copious Rascality, on the pavement, with prayer for Salm: there do the two parties stand;—like chariots locked in a narrow thoroughfare; like locked wrestlers at a dead-grip! For two hours they stand; Bouille's sword glittering in his hand, adamant resolution clouding his brows: for two hours by the clocks of Metz. Moody-silent stands Salm, with occasional clangour; but does not fire. Rascality from time to time urges some grenadier to level his musket at the General; who looks on it as a bronze General would; and always some corporal or other strikes it up.

In such remarkable attitude, standing on that staircase for two hours, does brave Bouille, long a shadow, dawn on us visibly out of the dimness, and become a person. For the rest, since Salm has not shot him at the first instant, and since in himself there is no variableness, the danger will diminish. The Mayor, 'a man infinitely respectable,' with his Municipals and tricolor sashes, finally gains entrance; remonstrates, perorates, promises; gets Salm persuaded home to its barracks. Next day, our respectable Mayor lending the money, the officers pay down the half of the demand in ready cash. With which liquidation Salm pacifies itself, and for the present all is hushed up, as much as may be. (*Bouille, i. 140-5.*)

Such scenes as this of Metz, or preparations and demonstrations towards such, are universal over France: Dampmartin, with his knotted forage-cords and piled chamois jackets, is at Strasburg in the

South-East; in these same days or rather nights, Royal Champagne is 'shouting Vive la Nation, au diable les Aristocrates, with some thirty lit candles,' at Hesdin, on the far North-West. "The garrison of Bitche," Deputy Rewbell is sorry to state, "went out of the town, with drums beating; deposed its officers; and then returned into the town, sabre in hand." (*Moniteur* (in Hist. Parl. vii. 29).) Ought not a National Assembly to occupy itself with these objects? Military France is everywhere full of sour inflammatory humour, which exhales itself fuliginously, this way or that: a whole continent of smoking flax; which, blown on here or there by any angry wind, might so easily start into a blaze, into a continent of fire!

Constitutional Patriotism is in deep natural alarm at these things. The august Assembly sits diligently deliberating; dare nowise resolve, with Mirabeau, on an instantaneous disbandment and extinction; finds that a course of palliatives is easier. But at least and lowest, this grievance of the Arrears shall be rectified. A plan, much noised of in those days, under the name 'Decree of the Sixth of August,' has been devised for that. Inspectors shall visit all armies; and, with certain elected corporals and 'soldiers able to write,' verify what arrears and peculations do lie due, and make them good. Well, if in this way the smoky heat be cooled down; if it be not, as we say, ventilated over-much, or, by sparks and collision somewhere, sent up!

Chapter 4. Arrears at Nanci.

We are to remark, however, that of all districts, this of Bouille's seems the inflammablest. It was always to Bouille and Metz that Royalty would fly: Austria lies near; here more than elsewhere must the disunited People look over the borders, into a dim sea of Foreign Politics and Diplomacies, with hope or apprehension, with mutual exasperation.

It was but in these days that certain Austrian troops, marching peaceably across an angle of this region, seemed an Invasion realised; and there rushed towards Stenai, with musket on shoulder, from all the winds, some thirty thousand National Guards, to inquire what the matter was. (*Moniteur, Seance du 9 Aout 1790.*) A matter of mere diplomacy it proved; the Austrian Kaiser, in haste to get to Belgium, had bargained for this short cut. The infinite dim movement of European Politics waved a skirt over these spaces, passing on its way; like the passing shadow of a condor; and such a winged flight of thirty thousand, with mixed cackling and crowing, rose in consequence! For, in addition to all, this people, as we said, is much divided: Aristocrats abound; Patriotism has both Aristocrats and Austrians to watch. It is Lorraine, this region; not so illuminated as old France: it remembers ancient Feudalisms; nay, within man's memory, it had a Court and King of its own, or indeed the splendour of a Court and King, without the burden. Then, contrariwise, the Mother Society, which sits in the Jacobins Church at Paris, has Daughters in the Towns here; shrill-tongued, driven acrid: consider how the memory of good King Stanislaus, and ages of Imperial Feudalism, may comport with this New acrid Evangel, and what a virulence of discord there may be! In all which, the Soldiery, officers on one side, private men on the other, takes part, and now indeed principal part; a Soldiery, moreover, all the hotter here as it lies the denser, the frontier Province requiring more of it.

So stands Lorraine: but the capital City, more especially so. The pleasant City of Nanci, which faded Feudalism loves, where King Stanislaus personally dwelt and shone, has an Aristocrat Municipality, and then also a Daughter Society: it has some forty thousand divided souls of population; and three large Regiments, one of which is Swiss Chateau-Vieux, dear to Patriotism ever since it refused fighting, or was thought to refuse, in the Bastille days. Here unhappily all evil influences seem to meet

concentered; here, of all places, may jealousy and heat evolve itself. These many months, accordingly, man has been set against man, Washed against Unwashed; Patriot Soldier against Aristocrat Captain, ever the more bitterly; and a long score of grudges has been running up.

Nameable grudges, and likewise unnameable: for there is a punctual nature in Wrath; and daily, were there but glances of the eye, tones of the voice, and minutest commissions or omissions, it will jot down somewhat, to account, under the head of sundries, which always swells the sum-total. For example, in April last, in those times of preliminary Federation, when National Guards and Soldiers were every where swearing brotherhood, and all France was locally federating, preparing for the grand National Feast of Pikes, it was observed that these Nanci Officers threw cold water on the whole brotherly business; that they first hung back from appearing at the Nanci Federation; then did appear, but in mere redingote and undress, with scarcely a clean shirt on; nay that one of them, as the National Colours flaunted by in that solemn moment, did, without visible necessity, take occasion to spit. (*Deux Amis*, v. 217.)

Small 'sundries as per journal,' but then incessant ones! The Aristocrat Municipality, pretending to be Constitutional, keeps mostly quiet; not so the Daughter Society, the five thousand adult male Patriots of the place, still less the five thousand female: not so the young, whiskered or whiskerless, four-generation Noblesse in epaulettes; the grim Patriot Swiss of Chateau-Vieux, effervescent infantry of Regiment du Roi, hot troopers of Mestre-de-Camp! Walled Nanci, which stands so bright and trim, with its straight streets, spacious squares, and Stanislaus' Architecture, on the fruitful alluvium of the Meurthe; so bright, amid the yellow cornfields in these Reaper-Months,—is inwardly but a den of discord, anxiety, inflammability, not far from exploding. Let Bouille look to it. If that universal military heat, which we liken to a vast continent of smoking flax, do any where take fire, his beard, here in Lorraine and Nanci, may the most readily of all get singed by it.

Bouille, for his part, is busy enough, but only with the general superintendence; getting his pacified Salm, and all other still tolerable Regiments, marched out of Metz, to southward towns and villages; to rural Cantonments as at Vic, Marsal and thereabout, by the still waters; where is plenty of horse-forage, sequestered parade-ground, and the soldier's speculative faculty can be stilled by drilling. Salm, as we said, received only half payment of arrears; naturally not without grumbling. Nevertheless that scene of the drawn sword may, after all, have raised Bouille in the mind of Salm; for men and soldiers love intrepidity and swift inflexible decision, even when they suffer by it. As indeed is not this fundamentally the quality of qualities for a man? A quality which by itself is next to nothing, since inferior animals, asses, dogs, even mules have it; yet, in due combination, it is the indispensable basis of all.

Of Nanci and its heats, Bouille, commander of the whole, knows nothing special; understands generally that the troops in that City are perhaps the worst. (*Bouille*, i. c. 9.) The Officers there have it all, as they have long had it, to themselves; and unhappily seem to manage it ill. 'Fifty yellow furloughs,' given out in one batch, do surely betoken difficulties. But what was Patriotism to think of certain light-fencing Fusileers 'set on,' or supposed to be set on, 'to insult the Grenadier-club,' considerate speculative Grenadiers, and that reading-room of theirs? With shoutings, with hootings; till the speculative Grenadier drew his side-arms too; and there ensued battery and duels! Nay more, are not swashbucklers of the same stamp 'sent out' visibly, or sent out presumably, now in the dress of Soldiers to pick quarrels with the Citizens; now, disguised as Citizens, to pick quarrels with the Soldiers? For a certain Roussiere, expert in fence, was taken in the very fact; four Officers (*presumably of tender years*) hounding him on, who thereupon fled precipitately! Fence-master

Roussiere, haled to the guardhouse, had sentence of three months' imprisonment: but his comrades demanded 'yellow furlough' for him of all persons; nay, thereafter they produced him on parade; capped him in paper-helmet inscribed, Iscariot; marched him to the gate of City; and there sternly commanded him to vanish for evermore.

On all which suspicions, accusations and noisy procedure, and on enough of the like continually accumulating, the Officer could not but look with disdainful indignation; perhaps disdainfully express the same in words, and 'soon after fly over to the Austrians.'

So that when it here as elsewhere comes to the question of Arrears, the humour and procedure is of the bitterest: Regiment Mestre-de-Camp getting, amid loud clamour, some three gold louis a-man,—which have, as usual, to be borrowed from the Municipality; Swiss Chateau-Vieux applying for the like, but getting instead instantaneous courrois, or cat-o'-nine-tails, with subsequent unsufferable hisses from the women and children; Regiment du Roi, sick of hope deferred, at length seizing its military chest, and marching it to quarters, but next day marching it back again, through streets all struck silent:—unordered paradings and clamours, not without strong liquor; objurgation, insubordination; your military ranked Arrangement going all (*as the Typographers say of set types, in a similar case*) rapidly to pie! (*Deux Amis, v. c. 8.*) Such is Nanci in these early days of August; the sublime Feast of Pikes not yet a month old.

Constitutional Patriotism, at Paris and elsewhere, may well quake at the news. War-Minister Latour du Pin runs breathless to the National Assembly, with a written message that 'all is burning, tout brule, tout presse.' The National Assembly, on spur of the instant, renders such Decret, and 'order to submit and repent,' as he requires; if it will avail any thing. On the other hand, Journalism, through all its throats, gives hoarse outcry, condemnatory, elegiac-applausive. The Forty-eight Sections, lift up voices; sonorous Brewer, or call him now Colonel Santerre, is not silent, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. For, meanwhile, the Nanci Soldiers have sent a Deputation of Ten, furnished with documents and proofs; who will tell another story than the 'all-is-burning' one. Which deputed Ten, before ever they reach the Assembly Hall, assiduous Latour du Pin picks up, and on warrant of Mayor Bailly, claps in prison! Most unconstitutionally; for they had officers' furloughs. Whereupon Saint-Antoine, in indignant uncertainty of the future, closes its shops. Is Bouille a traitor then, sold to Austria? In that case, these poor private sentinels have revolted mainly out of Patriotism?

New Deputation, Deputation of National Guardsmen now, sets forth from Nanci to enlighten the Assembly. It meets the old deputed Ten returning, quite unexpectedly unchanged; and proceeds thereupon with better prospects; but effects nothing. Deputations, Government Messengers, Orderlies at hand-gallops, Alarms, thousand-voiced Rumours, go vibrating continually; backwards and forwards,—scattering distraction. Not till the last week of August does M. de Malseigne, selected as Inspector, get down to the scene of mutiny; with Authority, with cash, and 'Decree of the Sixth of August.' He now shall see these Arrears liquidated, justice done, or at least tumult quashed.

Chapter 5. Inspector Malseigne.

Of Inspector Malseigne we discern, by direct light, that he is 'of Herculean stature;' and infer, with probability, that he is of truculent moustachioed aspect,—for Royalist Officers now leave the upper lip unshaven; that he is of indomitable bull-heart; and also, unfortunately, of thick bull-head.

On Tuesday the 24th of August, 1790, he opens session as Inspecting Commissioner; meets those 'elected corporals, and soldiers that can write.' He finds the accounts of Chateau-Vieux to be complex; to require delay and reference: he takes to haranguing, to reprimanding; ends amid audible grumbling. Next morning, he resumes session, not at the Townhall as prudent Municipals counselled, but once more at the barracks. Unfortunately Chateau-Vieux, grumbling all night, will now hear of no delay or reference; from reprimanding on his part, it goes to bullying,—answered with continual cries of "Jugez tout de suite, Judge it at once;" whereupon M. de Malseigne will off in a huff. But lo, Chateau Vieux, swarming all about the barrack-court, has sentries at every gate; M. de Malseigne, demanding egress, cannot get it, though Commandant Denoue backs him; can get only "Jugez tout de suite." Here is a nodus!

Bull-hearted M. de Malseigne draws his sword; and will force egress. Confused splutter. M. de Malseigne's sword breaks; he snatches Commandant Denoue's: the sentry is wounded. M. de Malseigne, whom one is loath to kill, does force egress,—followed by Chateau-Vieux all in disarray; a spectacle to Nanci. M. de Malseigne walks at a sharp pace, yet never runs; wheeling from time to time, with menaces and movements of fence; and so reaches Denoue's house, unhurt; which house Chateau-Vieux, in an agitated manner, invests,—hindered as yet from entering, by a crowd of officers formed on the staircase. M. de Malseigne retreats by back ways to the Townhall, flustered though undaunted; amid an escort of National Guards. From the Townhall he, on the morrow, emits fresh orders, fresh plans of settlement with Chateau-Vieux; to none of which will Chateau-Vieux listen: whereupon finally he, amid noise enough, emits order that Chateau-Vieux shall march on the morrow morning, and quarter at Sarre Louis. Chateau-Vieux flatly refuses marching; M. de Malseigne 'takes act,' due notarial protest, of such refusal,—if happily that may avail him.

This is end of Thursday; and, indeed, of M. de Malseigne's Inspectorship, which has lasted some fifty hours. To such length, in fifty hours, has he unfortunately brought it. Mestre-de-Camp and Regiment du Roi hang, as it were, fluttering: Chateau-Vieux is clean gone, in what way we see. Over night, an Aide-de-Camp of Lafayette's, stationed here for such emergency, sends swift emissaries far and wide, to summon National Guards. The slumber of the country is broken by clattering hoofs, by loud fraternal knockings; every where the Constitutional Patriot must clutch his fighting-gear, and take the road for Nanci.

And thus the Herculean Inspector has sat all Thursday, among terror-struck Municipals, a centre of confused noise: all Thursday, Friday, and till Saturday towards noon. Chateau-Vieux, in spite of the notarial protest, will not march a step. As many as four thousand National Guards are dropping or pouring in; uncertain what is expected of them, still more uncertain what will be obtained of them. For all is uncertainty, commotion, and suspicion: there goes a word that Bouille, beginning to bestir himself in the rural Cantonments eastward, is but a Royalist traitor; that Chateau-Vieux and Patriotism are sold to Austria, of which latter M. de Malseigne is probably some agent. Mestre-de-Camp and Roi flutter still more questionably: Chateau-Vieux, far from marching, 'waves red flags out of two carriages,' in a passionate manner, along the streets; and next morning answers its Officers: "Pay us, then; and we will march with you to the world's end!"

Under which circumstances, towards noon on Saturday, M. de Malseigne thinks it were good perhaps to inspect the ramparts,—on horseback. He mounts, accordingly, with escort of three troopers. At the gate of the city, he bids two of them wait for his return; and with the third, a trooper to be depended upon, he—gallops off for Luneville; where lies a certain Carabineer Regiment not yet in a mutinous state! The two left troopers soon get uneasy; discover how it is, and give the alarm. Mestre-de-Camp,

to the number of a hundred, saddles in frantic haste, as if sold to Austria; gallops out pellmell in chase of its Inspector. And so they spur, and the Inspector spurs; careering, with noise and jingle, up the valley of the River Meurthe, towards Luneville and the midday sun: through an astonished country; indeed almost their own astonishment.

What a hunt, Actaeon-like;—which Actaeon de Malseigne happily gains! To arms, ye Carabineers of Luneville: to chastise mutinous men, insulting your General Officer, insulting your own quarters;—above all things, fire soon, lest there be parleying and ye refuse to fire! The Carabineers fire soon, exploding upon the first stragglers of Mestre-de-Camp; who shrink at the very flash, and fall back hastily on Nanci, in a state not far from distraction. Panic and fury: sold to Austria without an if; so much per regiment, the very sums can be specified; and traitorous Malseigne is fled! Help, O Heaven; help, thou Earth,—ye unwashed Patriots; ye too are sold like us!

Effervescent Regiment du Roi primes its firelocks, Mestre-de-Camp saddles wholly: Commandant Denoue is seized, is flung in prison with a 'canvass shirt' (*sarreau de toile*) about him; Chateau-Vieux bursts up the magazines; distributes 'three thousand fusils' to a Patriot people: Austria shall have a hot bargain. Alas, the unhappy hunting-dogs, as we said, have hunted away their huntsman; and do now run howling and baying, on what trail they know not; nigh rabid!

And so there is tumultuous march of men, through the night; with halt on the heights of Flinval, whence Luneville can be seen all illuminated. Then there is parley, at four in the morning; and reparley; finally there is agreement: the Carabineers give in; Malseigne is surrendered, with apologies on all sides. After weary confused hours, he is even got under way; the Lunevillers all turning out, in the idle Sunday, to see such departure: home-going of mutinous Mestre-de-Camp with its Inspector captive. Mestre-de-Camp accordingly marches; the Lunevillers look. See! at the corner of the first street, our Inspector bounds off again, bull-hearted as he is; amid the slash of sabres, the crackle of musketry; and escapes, full gallop, with only a ball lodged in his buff-jerkin. The Herculean man! And yet it is an escape to no purpose. For the Carabineers, to whom after the hardest Sunday's ride on record, he has come circling back, 'stand deliberating by their nocturnal watch-fires;' deliberating of Austria, of traitors, and the rage of Mestre-de-Camp. So that, on the whole, the next sight we have is that of M. de Malseigne, on the Monday afternoon, faring bull-hearted through the streets of Nanci; in open carriage, a soldier standing over him with drawn sword; amid the 'furies of the women,' hedges of National Guards, and confusion of Babel: to the Prison beside Commandant Denoue! That finally is the lodging of Inspector Malseigne. (*Deux Amis*, v. 206-251; *Newspapers and Documents in Hist. Parl.* vii. 59-162.)

Surely it is time Bouille were drawing near. The Country all round, alarmed with watchfires, illuminated towns, and marching and rout, has been sleepless these several nights. Nanci, with its uncertain National Guards, with its distributed fusils, mutinous soldiers, black panic and redhot ire, is not a City but a Bedlam.

Chapter 6. Bouille at Nanci.

Haste with help, thou brave Bouille: if swift help come not, all is now verily 'burning;' and may burn,—to what lengths and breadths! Much, in these hours, depends on Bouille; as it shall now fare with him, the whole Future may be this way or be that. If, for example, he were to loiter dubitating,

and not come: if he were to come, and fail: the whole Soldiery of France to blaze into mutiny, National Guards going some this way, some that; and Royalism to draw its rapier, and Sansculottism to snatch its pike; and the Spirit of Jacobinism, as yet young, girt with sun-rays, to grow instantaneously mature, girt with hell-fire,—as mortals, in one night of deadly crisis, have had their heads turned gray!

Brave Bouille is advancing fast, with the old inflexibility; gathering himself, unhappily 'in small affluences,' from East, from West and North; and now on Tuesday morning, the last day of the month, he stands all concentrated, unhappily still in small force, at the village of Frouarde, within some few miles. Son of Adam with a more dubious task before him is not in the world this Tuesday morning. A weltering inflammable sea of doubt and peril, and Bouille sure of simply one thing, his own determination. Which one thing, indeed, may be worth many. He puts a most firm face on the matter: 'Submission, or unsparing battle and destruction; twenty-four hours to make your choice:' this was the tenor of his Proclamation; thirty copies of which he sent yesterday to Nanci:—all which, we find, were intercepted and not posted. (*Compare Bouille, Memoires, i. 153-176; Deux Amis, v. 251-271; Hist. Parl. ubi supra.*)

Nevertheless, at half-past eleven, this morning, seemingly by way of answer, there does wait on him at Frouarde, some Deputation from the mutinous Regiments, from the Nanci Municipals, to see what can be done. Bouille receives this Deputation, 'in a large open court adjoining his lodging:' pacified Salm, and the rest, attend also, being invited to do it,—all happily still in the right humour. The Mutineers pronounce themselves with a decisiveness, which to Bouille seems insolence; and happily to Salm also. Salm, forgetful of the Metz staircase and sabre, demands that the scoundrels 'be hanged' there and then. Bouille represses the hanging; but answers that mutinous Soldiers have one course, and not more than one: To liberate, with heartfelt contrition, Messieurs Denoue and de Malseigne; to get ready forthwith for marching off, whither he shall order; and 'submit and repent,' as the National Assembly has decreed, as he yesterday did in thirty printed Placards proclaim. These are his terms, unalterable as the decrees of Destiny. Which terms as they, the Mutineer deputies, seemingly do not accept, it were good for them to vanish from this spot, and even promptly; with him too, in few instants, the word will be, Forward! The Mutineer deputies vanish, not unpromptly; the Municipal ones, anxious beyond right for their own individualities, prefer abiding with Bouille.

Brave Bouille, though he puts a most firm face on the matter, knows his position full well: how at Nanci, what with rebellious soldiers, with uncertain National Guards, and so many distributed fusils, there rage and roar some ten thousand fighting men; while with himself is scarcely the third part of that number, in National Guards also uncertain, in mere pacified Regiments,—for the present full of rage, and clamour to march; but whose rage and clamour may next moment take such a fatal new figure. On the top of one uncertain billow, therewith to calm billows! Bouille must 'abandon himself to Fortune;' who is said sometimes to favour the brave. At half-past twelve, the Mutineer deputies having vanished, our drums beat; we march: for Nanci! Let Nanci bethink itself, then; for Bouille has thought and determined.

And yet how shall Nanci think: not a City but a Bedlam! Grim Chateau-Vieux is for defence to the death; forces the Municipality to order, by tap of drum, all citizens acquainted with artillery to turn out, and assist in managing the cannon. On the other hand, effervescent Regiment du Roi, is drawn up in its barracks; quite disconsolate, hearing the humour Salm is in; and ejaculates dolefully from its thousand throats: "La loi, la loi, Law, law!" Mestre-de-Camp blusters, with profane swearing, in mixed terror and furor; National Guards look this way and that, not knowing what to do. What a Bedlam-City: as many plans as heads; all ordering, none obeying: quiet none,—except the Dead, who sleep

underground, having done their fighting!

And, behold, Bouille proves as good as his word: 'at half-past two' scouts report that he is within half a league of the gates; rattling along, with cannon, and array; breathing nothing but destruction. A new Deputation, Municipals, Mutineers, Officers, goes out to meet him; with passionate entreaty for yet one other hour. Bouille grants an hour. Then, at the end thereof, no Denoue or Malseigne appearing as promised, he rolls his drums, and again takes the road. Towards four o'clock, the terror-struck Townsmen may see him face to face. His cannons rattle there, in their carriages; his vanguard is within thirty paces of the Gate Stanislaus. Onward like a Planet, by appointed times, by law of Nature! What next? Lo, flag of truce and chamade; conjuration to halt: Malseigne and Denoue are on the street, coming hither; the soldiers all repentant, ready to submit and march! Adamantine Bouille's look alters not; yet the word Halt is given: gladder moment he never saw. Joy of joys! Malseigne and Denoue do verily issue; escorted by National Guards; from streets all frantic, with sale to Austria and so forth: they salute Bouille, unscathed. Bouille steps aside to speak with them, and with other heads of the Town there; having already ordered by what Gates and Routes the mutineer Regiments shall file out.

Such colloquy with these two General Officers and other principal Townsmen, was natural enough; nevertheless one wishes Bouille had postponed it, and not stepped aside. Such tumultuous inflammable masses, tumbling along, making way for each other; this of keen nitrous oxide, that of sulphurous fire-damp,—were it not well to stand between them, keeping them well separate, till the space be cleared? Numerous stragglers of Chateau-Vieux and the rest have not marched with their main columns, which are filing out by the appointed Gates, taking station in the open meadows. National Guards are in a state of nearly distracted uncertainty; the populace, armed and unharmed, roll openly delirious,—betrayed, sold to the Austrians, sold to the Aristocrats. There are loaded cannon with lit matches among them, and Bouille's vanguard is halted within thirty paces of the Gate. Command dwells not in that mad inflammable mass; which smoulders and tumbles there, in blind smoky rage; which will not open the Gate when summoned; says it will open the cannon's throat sooner!—Cannonade not, O Friends, or be it through my body! cries heroic young Desilles, young Captain of Roi, clasping the murderous engine in his arms, and holding it. Chateau-Vieux Swiss, by main force, with oaths and menaces, wrench off the heroic youth; who undaunted, amid still louder oaths seats himself on the touch-hole. Amid still louder oaths; with ever louder clangour,—and, alas, with the loud crackle of first one, and then three other muskets; which explode into his body; which roll it in the dust,—and do also, in the loud madness of such moment, bring lit cannon-match to ready priming; and so, with one thunderous belch of grapeshot, blast some fifty of Bouille's vanguard into air!

Fatal! That sputter of the first musket-shot has kindled such a cannon-shot, such a death-blaze; and all is now redhot madness, conflagration as of Tophet. With demoniac rage, the Bouille vanguard storms through that Gate Stanislaus; with fiery sweep, sweeps Mutiny clear away, to death, or into shelters and cellars; from which latter, again, Mutiny continues firing. The ranked Regiments hear it in their meadow; they rush back again through the nearest Gates; Bouille gallops in, distracted, inaudible;—and now has begun, in Nanci, as in that doomed Hall of the Nibelungen, 'a murder grim and great.'

Miserable: such scene of dismal aimless madness as the anger of Heaven but rarely permits among men! From cellar or from garret, from open street in front, from successive corners of cross-streets on each hand, Chateau-Vieux and Patriotism keep up the murderous rolling-fire, on murderous not Unpatriotic fires. Your blue National Captain, riddled with balls, one hardly knows on whose side

fighting, requests to be laid on the colours to die: the patriotic Woman (*name not given, deed surviving*) screams to Chateau-Vieux that it must not fire the other cannon; and even flings a pail of water on it, since screaming avails not. (*Deux Amis*, v. 268.) Thou shalt fight; thou shalt not fight; and with whom shalt thou fight! Could tumult awaken the old Dead, Burgundian Charles the Bold might stir from under that Rotunda of his: never since he, raging, sank in the ditches, and lost Life and Diamond, was such a noise heard here.

Three thousand, as some count, lie mangled, gory; the half of Chateau-Vieux has been shot, without need of Court Martial. Cavalry, of Mestre-de-Camp or their foes, can do little. Regiment du Roi was persuaded to its barracks; stands there palpitating. Bouille, armed with the terrors of the Law, and favoured of Fortune, finally triumphs. In two murderous hours he has penetrated to the grand Squares, dauntless, though with loss of forty officers and five hundred men: the shattered remnants of Chateau-Vieux are seeking covert. Regiment du Roi, not effervescent now, alas no, but having effervesced, will offer to ground its arms; will 'march in a quarter of an hour.' Nay these poor effervesced require 'escort' to march with, and get it; though they are thousands strong, and have thirty ball-cartridges a man! The Sun is not yet down, when Peace, which might have come bloodless, has come bloody: the mutinous Regiments are on march, doleful, on their three Routes; and from Nanci rises wail of women and men, the voice of weeping and desolation; the City weeping for its slain who awaken not. These streets are empty but for victorious patrols.

Thus has Fortune, favouring the brave, dragged Bouille, as himself says, out of such a frightful peril, 'by the hair of the head.' An intrepid adamantine man this Bouille:—had he stood in old Broglie's place, in those Bastille days, it might have been all different! He has extinguished mutiny, and immeasurable civil war. Not for nothing, as we see; yet at a rate which he and Constitutional Patriotism considers cheap. Nay, as for Bouille, he, urged by subsequent contradiction which arose, declares coldly, it was rather against his own private mind, and more by public military rule of duty, that he did extinguish it, (*Bouille*, i. 175.)—immeasurable civil war being now the only chance. Urged, we say, by subsequent contradiction! Civil war, indeed, is Chaos; and in all vital Chaos, there is new Order shaping itself free: but what a faith this, that of all new Orders out of Chaos and Possibility of Man and his Universe, Louis Sixteenth and Two-Chamber Monarchy were precisely the one that would shape itself! It is like undertaking to throw deuce-ace, say only five hundred successive times, and any other throw to be fatal—for Bouille. Rather thank Fortune, and Heaven, always, thou intrepid Bouille; and let contradiction of its way! Civil war, conflagrating universally over France at this moment, might have led to one thing or to another thing: meanwhile, to quench conflagration, wheresoever one finds it, wheresoever one can; this, in all times, is the rule for man and General Officer.

But at Paris, so agitated and divided, fancy how it went, when the continually vibrating Orderlies vibrated thither at hand gallop, with such questionable news! High is the gratulation; and also deep the indignation. An august Assembly, by overwhelming majorities, passionately thanks Bouille; a King's autograph, the voices of all Loyal, all Constitutional men run to the same tenor. A solemn National funeral-service, for the Law-defenders slain at Nanci; is said and sung in the Champ de Mars; Bailly, Lafayette and National Guards, all except the few that protested, assist. With pomp and circumstance, with episcopal Calicoes in tricolor girdles, Altar of Fatherland smoking with cassolettes, or incense-kettles; the vast Champ-de-Mars wholly hung round with black mortcloth,—which mortcloth and expenditure Marat thinks had better have been laid out in bread, in these dear days, and given to the hungry living Patriot. (*Ami du Peuple in Hist. Parl., ubi supra.*) On the other hand, living Patriotism, and Saint-Antoine, which we have seen noisily closing its shops and such like, assembles now 'to the

number of forty thousand;' and, with loud cries, under the very windows of the thanking National Assembly, demands revenge for murdered Brothers, judgment on Bouille, and instant dismissal of War-Minister Latour du Pin.

At sound and sight of which things, if not War-Minister Latour, yet 'Adored Minister' Necker, sees good on the 3d of September 1790, to withdraw softly almost privily,—with an eye to the 'recovery of his health.' Home to native Switzerland; not as he last came; lucky to reach it alive! Fifteen months ago, we saw him coming, with escort of horse, with sound of clarion and trumpet: and now at Arcis-sur-Aube, while he departs unescorted soundless, the Populace and Municipals stop him as a fugitive, are not unlike massacring him as a traitor; the National Assembly, consulted on the matter, gives him free egress as a nullity. Such an unstable 'drift-mould of Accident' is the substance of this lower world, for them that dwell in houses of clay; so, especially in hot regions and times, do the proudest palaces we build of it take wings, and become Sahara sand-palaces, spinning many pillared in the whirlwind, and bury us under their sand!—

In spite of the forty thousand, the National Assembly persists in its thanks; and Royalist Latour du Pin continues Minister. The forty thousand assemble next day, as loud as ever; roll towards Latour's Hotel; find cannon on the porch-steps with flambeau lit; and have to retire elsewhere, and digest their spleen, or re-absorb it into the blood.

Over in Lorraine, meanwhile, they of the distributed fusils, ringleaders of Mestre-de-Camp, of Roi, have got marked out for judgment;—yet shall never get judged. Briefer is the doom of Chateau-Vieux. Chateau-Vieux is, by Swiss law, given up for instant trial in Court-Martial of its own officers. Which Court-Martial, with all brevity (*in not many hours*), has hanged some Twenty-three, on conspicuous gibbets; marched some Three-score in chains to the Galleys; and so, to appearance, finished the matter off. Hanged men do cease for ever from this Earth; but out of chains and the Galleys there may be resuscitation in triumph. Resuscitation for the chained Hero; and even for the chained Scoundrel, or Semi-scoundrel! Scottish John Knox, such World-Hero, as we know, sat once nevertheless pulling grim-taciturn at the oar of French Galley, 'in the Water of Lore;' and even flung their Virgin-Mary over, instead of kissing her,—as 'a pented bredd,' or timber Virgin, who could naturally swim. (*Knox's History of the Reformation, b. i.*) So, ye of Chateau-Vieux, tug patiently, not without hope!

But indeed at Nanci generally, Aristocracy rides triumphant, rough. Bouille is gone again, the second day; an Aristocrat Municipality, with free course, is as cruel as it had before been cowardly. The Daughter Society, as the mother of the whole mischief, lies ignominiously suppressed; the Prisons can hold no more; bereaved down-beaten Patriotism murmurs, not loud but deep. Here and in the neighbouring Towns, 'flattened balls' picked from the streets of Nanci are worn at buttonholes: balls flattened in carrying death to Patriotism; men wear them there, in perpetual memento of revenge. Mutineer Deserters roam the woods; have to demand charity at the musket's end. All is dissolution, mutual rancour, gloom and despair:—till National-Assembly Commissioners arrive, with a steady gentle flame of Constitutionalism in their hearts; who gently lift up the down-trodden, gently pull down the too uplifted; reinstate the Daughter Society, recall the Mutineer Deserter; gradually levelling, strive in all wise ways to smooth and soothe. With such gradual mild levelling on the one side; as with solemn funeral-service, Cassolettes, Courts-Martial, National thanks,—all that Officiality can do is done. The buttonhole will drop its flat ball; the black ashes, so far as may be, get green again.

This is the 'Affair of Nanci;' by some called the 'Massacre of Nanci;'—properly speaking, the unsightly wrong-side of that thrice glorious Feast of Pikes, the right-side of which formed a spectacle for the very gods. Right-side and wrong lie always so near: the one was in July, in August the other! Theatres, the theatres over in London, are bright with their pasteboard simulacrum of that 'Federation of the French People,' brought out as Drama: this of Nanci, we may say, though not played in any pasteboard Theatre, did for many months enact itself, and even walk spectrally—in all French heads. For the news of it fly pealing through all France; awakening, in town and village, in clubroom, messroom, to the utmost borders, some mimic reflex or imaginative repetition of the business; always with the angry questionable assertion: It was right; It was wrong. Whereby come controversies, duels, embitterment, vain jargon; the hastening forward, the augmenting and intensifying of whatever new explosions lie in store for us.

Meanwhile, at this cost or at that, the mutiny, as we say, is stilled. The French Army has neither burst up in universal simultaneous delirium; nor been at once disbanded, put an end to, and made new again. It must die in the chronic manner, through years, by inches; with partial revolts, as of Brest Sailors or the like, which dare not spread; with men unhappy, insubordinate; officers unhappier, in Royalist moustachioes, taking horse, singly or in bodies, across the Rhine: (*See Dampmartin, i. 249, &c. &c.*) sick dissatisfaction, sick disgust on both sides; the Army moribund, fit for no duty:—till it do, in that unexpected manner, Phoenix-like, with long throes, get both dead and newborn; then start forth strong, nay stronger and even strongest.

Thus much was the brave Bouille hitherto fated to do. Wherewith let him again fade into dimness; and at Metz or the rural Cantonments, assiduously drilling, mysteriously diplomatising, in scheme within scheme, hover as formerly a faint shadow, the hope of Royalty.

Revision #1

Created 9 August 2019 12:24:03 by Textpedia

Updated 9 August 2019 12:24:20 by Textpedia