

Book VI. Consolidation.

Chapter 1. Make the Constitution.

Here perhaps is the place to fix, a little more precisely, what these two words, French Revolution, shall mean; for, strictly considered, they may have as many meanings as there are speakers of them. All things are in revolution; in change from moment to moment, which becomes sensible from epoch to epoch: in this Time-World of ours there is properly nothing else but revolution and mutation, and even nothing else conceivable. Revolution, you answer, means speedier change. Whereupon one has still to ask: How speedy? At what degree of speed; in what particular points of this variable course, which varies in velocity, but can never stop till Time itself stops, does revolution begin and end; cease to be ordinary mutation, and again become such? It is a thing that will depend on definition more or less arbitrary.

For ourselves we answer that French Revolution means here the open violent Rebellion, and Victory, of disimprisoned Anarchy against corrupt worn-out Authority: how Anarchy breaks prison; bursts up from the infinite Deep, and rages uncontrollable, immeasurable, enveloping a world; in phasis after phasis of fever-frenzy;—'till the frenzy burning itself out, and what elements of new Order it held (*since all Force holds such*) developing themselves, the Uncontrollable be got, if not reimprisoned, yet harnessed, and its mad forces made to work towards their object as sane regulated ones. For as Hierarchies and Dynasties of all kinds, Theocracies, Aristocracies, Autocracies, Strumpetocracies, have ruled over the world; so it was appointed, in the decrees of Providence, that this same Victorious Anarchy, Jacobinism, Sansculottism, French Revolution, Horrors of French Revolution, or what else mortals name it, should have its turn. The 'destructive wrath' of Sansculottism: this is what we speak, having unhappily no voice for singing.

Surely a great Phenomenon: nay it is a transcendental one, overstepping all rules and experience; the crowning Phenomenon of our Modern Time. For here again, most unexpectedly, comes antique Fanaticism in new and newest vesture; miraculous, as all Fanaticism is. Call it the Fanaticism of 'making away with formulas, de humer les formulas.' The world of formulas, the formed regulated world, which all habitable world is,—must needs hate such Fanaticism like death; and be at deadly variance with it. The world of formulas must conquer it; or failing that, must die execrating it, anathematising it;—can nevertheless in nowise prevent its being and its having been. The Anathemas are there, and the miraculous Thing is there.

Whence it cometh? Whither it goeth? These are questions! When the age of Miracles lay faded into the distance as an incredible tradition, and even the age of Conventionalities was now old; and Man's Existence had for long generations rested on mere formulas which were grown hollow by course of time; and it seemed as if no Reality any longer existed but only Phantasms of realities, and God's Universe were the work of the Tailor and Upholsterer mainly, and men were buckram masks that went about becking and grimacing there,—on a sudden, the Earth yawns asunder, and amid Tartarean smoke, and glare of fierce brightness, rises SANSCULOTTISM, many-headed, fire-breathing, and asks: What think ye of me? Well may the buckram masks start together, terror-struck; 'into expressive well-concerted groups!' It is indeed, Friends, a most singular, most fatal thing. Let whosoever is but buckram and a phantasm look to it: ill verily may it fare with him; here methinks he cannot much

longer be. Wo also to many a one who is not wholly buckram, but partially real and human! The age of Miracles has come back! 'Behold the World-Phoenix, in fire-consummation and fire-creation; wide are her fanning wings; loud is her death-melody, of battle-thunders and falling towns; skyward lashes the funeral flame, enveloping all things: it is the Death-Birth of a World!'

Whereby, however, as we often say, shall one unspeakable blessing seem attainable. This, namely: that Man and his Life rest no more on hollowness and a Lie, but on solidity and some kind of Truth. Welcome, the beggarliest truth, so it be one, in exchange for the royallest sham! Truth of any kind breeds ever new and better truth; thus hard granite rock will crumble down into soil, under the blessed skyey influences; and cover itself with verdure, with fruitage and umbrage. But as for Falsehood, which in like contrary manner, grows ever falser,—what can it, or what should it do but de cease, being ripe; decompose itself, gently or even violently, and return to the Father of it,—too probably in flames of fire?

Sansculottism will burn much; but what is incombustible it will not burn. Fear not Sansculottism; recognise it for what it is, the portentous, inevitable end of much, the miraculous beginning of much. One other thing thou mayest understand of it: that it too came from God; for has it not been? From of old, as it is written, are His goings forth; in the great Deep of things; fearful and wonderful now as in the beginning: in the whirlwind also He speaks! and the wrath of men is made to praise Him.—But to gauge and measure this immeasurable Thing, and what is called account for it, and reduce it to a dead logic-formula, attempt not! Much less shalt thou shriek thyself hoarse, cursing it; for that, to all needful lengths, has been already done. As an actually existing Son of Time, look, with unspeakable manifold interest, oftenest in silence, at what the Time did bring: therewith edify, instruct, nourish thyself, or were it but to amuse and gratify thyself, as it is given thee.

Another question which at every new turn will rise on us, requiring ever new reply is this: Where the French Revolution specially is? In the King's Palace, in his Majesty's or her Majesty's managements, and maltreatments, cabals, imbecilities and woes, answer some few:—whom we do not answer. In the National Assembly, answer a large mixed multitude: who accordingly seat themselves in the Reporter's Chair; and therefrom noting what Proclamations, Acts, Reports, passages of logic-fence, bursts of parliamentary eloquence seem notable within doors, and what tumults and rumours of tumult become audible from without,—produce volume on volume; and, naming it History of the French Revolution, contentedly publish the same. To do the like, to almost any extent, with so many Filed Newspapers, Choix des Rapports, Histoires Parlementaires as there are, amounting to many horseloads, were easy for us. Easy but unprofitable. The National Assembly, named now Constituent Assembly, goes its course; making the Constitution; but the French Revolution also goes its course.

In general, may we not say that the French Revolution lies in the heart and head of every violent-speaking, of every violent-thinking French Man? How the Twenty-five Millions of such, in their perplexed combination, acting and counter-acting may give birth to events; which event successively is the cardinal one; and from what point of vision it may best be surveyed: this is a problem. Which problem the best insight, seeking light from all possible sources, shifting its point of vision whithersoever vision or glimpse of vision can be had, may employ itself in solving; and be well content to solve in some tolerably approximate way.

As to the National Assembly, in so far as it still towers eminent over France, after the manner of a car-borne Carroccio, though now no longer in the van; and rings signals for retreat or for advance,—it is

and continues a reality among other realities. But in so far as it sits making the Constitution, on the other hand, it is a fatuity and chimera mainly. Alas, in the never so heroic building of Montesquieu-Mably card-castles, though shouted over by the world, what interest is there? Occupied in that way, an august National Assembly becomes for us little other than a Sanhedrim of pedants, not of the gerund-grinding, yet of no fruitfuller sort; and its loud debates and recriminations about Rights of Man, Right of Peace and War, Veto suspensif, Veto absolu, what are they but so many Pedant's-curses, 'May God confound you for your Theory of Irregular Verbs!'

A Constitution can be built, Constitutions enough a la Sieyes: but the frightful difficulty is that of getting men to come and live in them! Could Sieyes have drawn thunder and lightning out of Heaven to sanction his Constitution, it had been well: but without any thunder? Nay, strictly considered, is it not still true that without some such celestial sanction, given visibly in thunder or invisibly otherwise, no Constitution can in the long run be worth much more than the waste-paper it is written on? The Constitution, the set of Laws, or prescribed Habits of Acting, that men will live under, is the one which images their Convictions,—their Faith as to this wondrous Universe, and what rights, duties, capabilities they have there; which stands sanctioned therefore, by Necessity itself, if not by a seen Deity, then by an unseen one. Other laws, whereof there are always enough ready-made, are usurpations; which men do not obey, but rebel against, and abolish, by their earliest convenience.

The question of questions accordingly were, Who is it that especially for rebellers and abolishers, can make a Constitution? He that can image forth the general Belief when there is one; that can impart one when, as here, there is none. A most rare man; ever as of old a god-missioned man! Here, however, in defect of such transcendent supreme man, Time with its infinite succession of merely superior men, each yielding his little contribution, does much. Force likewise (*for, as Antiquarian Philosophers teach, the royal Sceptre was from the first something of a Hammer, to crack such heads as could not be convinced*) will all along find somewhat to do. And thus in perpetual abolition and reparation, rending and mending, with struggle and strife, with present evil and the hope and effort towards future good, must the Constitution, as all human things do, build itself forward; or unbuild itself, and sink, as it can and may. O Sieyes, and ye other Committeemen, and Twelve Hundred miscellaneous individuals from all parts of France! What is the Belief of France, and yours, if ye knew it? Properly that there shall be no Belief; that all formulas be swallowed. The Constitution which will suit that? Alas, too clearly, a No-Constitution, an Anarchy;—which also, in due season, shall be vouchsafed you.

But, after all, what can an unfortunate National Assembly do? Consider only this, that there are Twelve Hundred miscellaneous individuals; not a unit of whom but has his own thinking-apparatus, his own speaking-apparatus! In every unit of them is some belief and wish, different for each, both that France should be regenerated, and also that he individually should do it. Twelve Hundred separate Forces, yoked miscellaneously to any object, miscellaneously to all sides of it; and bid pull for life!

Or is it the nature of National Assemblies generally to do, with endless labour and clangour, Nothing? Are Representative Governments mostly at bottom Tyrannies too! Shall we say, the Tyrants, the ambitious contentious Persons, from all corners of the country do, in this manner, get gathered into one place; and there, with motion and counter-motion, with jargon and hubbub, cancel one another, like the fabulous Kilkenny Cats; and produce, for net-result, zero;—the country meanwhile governing or guiding itself, by such wisdom, recognised or for most part unrecognised, as may exist in individual heads here and there?—Nay, even that were a great improvement: for, of old, with their Guelf Factions and Ghibelline Factions, with their Red Roses and White Roses, they were wont to cancel the whole country as well. Besides they do it now in a much narrower cockpit; within the four walls of their

Assembly House, and here and there an outpost of Hustings and Barrel-heads; do it with tongues too, not with swords:—all which improvements, in the art of producing zero, are they not great? Nay, best of all, some happy Continents (*as the Western one, with its Savannahs, where whosoever has four willing limbs finds food under his feet, and an infinite sky over his head*) can do without governing.—What Sphinx-questions; which the distracted world, in these very generations, must answer or die!

Chapter 2. The Constituent Assembly.

One thing an elected Assembly of Twelve Hundred is fit for: Destroying. Which indeed is but a more decided exercise of its natural talent for Doing Nothing. Do nothing, only keep agitating, debating; and things will destroy themselves.

So and not otherwise proved it with an august National Assembly. It took the name, Constituent, as if its mission and function had been to construct or build; which also, with its whole soul, it endeavoured to do: yet, in the fates, in the nature of things, there lay for it precisely of all functions the most opposite to that. Singular, what Gospels men will believe; even Gospels according to Jean Jacques! It was the fixed Faith of these National Deputies, as of all thinking Frenchmen, that the Constitution could be made; that they, there and then, were called to make it. How, with the toughness of Old Hebrews or Ishmaelite Moslem, did the otherwise light unbelieving People persist in this their *Credo quia impossibile*; and front the armed world with it; and grow fanatic, and even heroic, and do exploits by it! The Constituent Assembly's Constitution, and several others, will, being printed and not manuscript, survive to future generations, as an instructive well-nigh incredible document of the Time: the most significant Picture of the then existing France; or at lowest, Picture of these men's Picture of it.

But in truth and seriousness, what could the National Assembly have done? The thing to be done was, actually as they said, to regenerate France; to abolish the old France, and make a new one; quietly or forcibly, by concession or by violence, this, by the Law of Nature, has become inevitable. With what degree of violence, depends on the wisdom of those that preside over it. With perfect wisdom on the part of the National Assembly, it had all been otherwise; but whether, in any wise, it could have been pacific, nay other than bloody and convulsive, may still be a question.

Grant, meanwhile, that this Constituent Assembly does to the last continue to be something. With a sigh, it sees itself incessantly forced away from its infinite divine task, of perfecting 'the Theory of Irregular Verbs,'—to finite terrestrial tasks, which latter have still a significance for us. It is the cynosure of revolutionary France, this National Assembly. All work of Government has fallen into its hands, or under its control; all men look to it for guidance. In the middle of that huge Revolt of Twenty-five millions, it hovers always aloft as Carroccio or Battle-Standard, impelling and impelled, in the most confused way; if it cannot give much guidance, it will still seem to give some. It emits pacificatory Proclamations, not a few; with more or with less result. It authorises the enrolment of National Guards,—lest Brigands come to devour us, and reap the unripe crops. It sends missions to quell 'effervescences;' to deliver men from the Lanterne. It can listen to congratulatory Addresses, which arrive daily by the sackful; mostly in King Cambyzes' vein: also to Petitions and complaints from all mortals; so that every mortal's complaint, if it cannot get redressed, may at least hear itself complain. For the rest, an august National Assembly can produce Parliamentary Eloquence; and appoint Committees. Committees of the Constitution, of Reports, of Researches; and of much else:

which again yield mountains of Printed Paper; the theme of new Parliamentary Eloquence, in bursts, or in plenteous smooth-flowing floods. And so, from the waste vortex whereon all things go whirling and grinding, Organic Laws, or the similitude of such, slowly emerge.

With endless debating, we get the Rights of Man written down and promulgated: true paper basis of all paper Constitutions. Neglecting, cry the opponents, to declare the Duties of Man! Forgetting, answer we, to ascertain the Rights of Man;—one of the fatalest omissions!—Nay, sometimes, as on the Fourth of August, our National Assembly, fired suddenly by an almost preternatural enthusiasm, will get through whole masses of work in one night. A memorable night, this Fourth of August: Dignitaries temporal and spiritual; Peers, Archbishops, Parlement-Presidents, each outdoing the other in patriotic devotedness, come successively to throw their (*untenable*) possessions on the 'altar of the fatherland.' With louder and louder vivats, for indeed it is 'after dinner' too,—they abolish Tithes, Seignorial Dues, Gabelle, excessive Preservation of Game; nay Privilege, Immunity, Feudalism root and branch; then appoint a Te Deum for it; and so, finally, disperse about three in the morning, striking the stars with their sublime heads. Such night, unforeseen but for ever memorable, was this of the Fourth of August 1789. Miraculous, or semi-miraculous, some seem to think it. A new Night of Pentecost, shall we say, shaped according to the new Time, and new Church of Jean Jacques Rousseau? It had its causes; also its effects.

In such manner labour the National Deputies; perfecting their Theory of Irregular Verbs; governing France, and being governed by it; with toil and noise;—cutting asunder ancient intolerable bonds; and, for new ones, assiduously spinning ropes of sand. Were their labours a nothing or a something, yet the eyes of all France being reverently fixed on them, History can never very long leave them altogether out of sight.

For the present, if we glance into that Assembly Hall of theirs, it will be found, as is natural, 'most irregular.' As many as 'a hundred members are on their feet at once;' no rule in making motions, or only commencements of a rule; Spectators' Gallery allowed to applaud, and even to hiss; (*Arthur Young, i. 111.*) President, appointed once a fortnight, raising many times no serene head above the waves. Nevertheless, as in all human Assemblages, like does begin arranging itself to like; the perennial rule, *Ubi homines sunt modi sunt*, proves valid. Rudiments of Methods disclose themselves; rudiments of Parties. There is a Right Side (*Cote Droit*), a Left Side (*Cote Gauche*); sitting on M. le President's right hand, or on his left: the *Cote Droit* conservative; the *Cote Gauche* destructive. Intermediate is Anglomaniac Constitutionalism, or Two-Chamber Royalism; with its Mouniers, its Lallys,—fast verging towards nonentity. Preeminent, on the Right Side, pleads and perorates Cazales, the Dragoon-captain, eloquent, mildly fervent; earning for himself the shadow of a name. There also blusters Barrel-Mirabeau, the Younger Mirabeau, not without wit: dusky d'Espremenil does nothing but sniff and ejaculate; might, it is fondly thought, lay prostrate the Elder Mirabeau himself, would he but try, (*Biographie Universelle, para D'Espremenil* (by Beaulieu).)—which he does not. Last and greatest, see, for one moment, the Abbe Maury; with his jesuitic eyes, his impassive brass face, 'image of all the cardinal sins.' Indomitable, unquenchable, he fights jesuitico-rhetorically; with toughest lungs and heart; for Throne, especially for Altar and Tithes. So that a shrill voice exclaims once, from the Gallery: "Messieurs of the Clergy, you have to be shaved; if you wriggle too much, you will get cut." (*Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquans, ii. 519.*)

The Left side is also called the d'Orleans side; and sometimes derisively, the Palais Royal. And yet, so confused, real-imaginary seems everything, 'it is doubtful,' as Mirabeau said, 'whether d'Orleans himself belong to that same d'Orleans Party.' What can be known and seen is, that his moon-visage

does beam forth from that point of space. There likewise sits seagreen Robespierre; throwing in his light weight, with decision, not yet with effect. A thin lean Puritan and Precisian; he would make away with formulas; yet lives, moves, and has his being, wholly in formulas, of another sort. 'Peuple,' such according to Robespierre ought to be the Royal method of promulgating laws, 'Peuple, this is the Law I have framed for thee; dost thou accept it?'—answered from Right Side, from Centre and Left, by inextinguishable laughter. (*Moniteur*, No. 67 (in Hist.Parl.)) Yet men of insight discern that the Seagreen may by chance go far: "this man," observes Mirabeau, "will do somewhat; he believes every word he says."

Abbe Sieyes is busy with mere Constitutional work: wherein, unluckily, fellow-workmen are less pliable than, with one who has completed the Science of Polity, they ought to be. Courage, Sieyes nevertheless! Some twenty months of heroic travail, of contradiction from the stupid, and the Constitution shall be built; the top-stone of it brought out with shouting,—say rather, the top-paper, for it is all Paper; and thou hast done in it what the Earth or the Heaven could require, thy utmost. Note likewise this Trio; memorable for several things; memorable were it only that their history is written in an epigram: 'whatsoever these Three have in hand,' it is said, 'Duport thinks it, Barnave speaks it, Lameth does it.' (*See Toulangeon*, i. c. 3.)

But royal Mirabeau? Conspicuous among all parties, raised above and beyond them all, this man rises more and more. As we often say, he has an eye, he is a reality; while others are formulas and eye-glasses. In the Transient he will detect the Perennial, find some firm footing even among Paper-vortexes. His fame is gone forth to all lands; it gladdened the heart of the crabbed old Friend of Men himself before he died. The very Postilions of inns have heard of Mirabeau: when an impatient Traveller complains that the team is insufficient, his Postilion answers, "Yes, Monsieur, the wheelers are weak; but my mirabeau (*main horse*), you see, is a right one, mais mon mirabeau est excellent." (*Dumont, Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 255.)

And now, Reader, thou shalt quit this noisy Discrepancy of a National Assembly; not (*if thou be of humane mind*) without pity. Twelve Hundred brother men are there, in the centre of Twenty-five Millions; fighting so fiercely with Fate and with one another; struggling their lives out, as most sons of Adam do, for that which profiteth not. Nay, on the whole, it is admitted further to be very dull. "Dull as this day's Assembly," said some one. "Why date, Pourquoi dater?" answered Mirabeau.

Consider that they are Twelve Hundred; that they not only speak, but read their speeches; and even borrow and steal speeches to read! With Twelve Hundred fluent speakers, and their Noah's Deluge of vociferous commonplace, unattainable silence may well seem the one blessing of Life. But figure Twelve Hundred pamphleteers; droning forth perpetual pamphlets: and no man to gag them! Neither, as in the American Congress, do the arrangements seem perfect. A Senator has not his own Desk and Newspaper here; of Tobacco (*much less of Pipes*) there is not the slightest provision. Conversation itself must be transacted in a low tone, with continual interruption: only 'pencil Notes' circulate freely; 'in incredible numbers to the foot of the very tribune.' (*See Dumont* (pp. 159-67); *Arthur Young, &c.*)—Such work is it, regenerating a Nation; perfecting one's Theory of Irregular Verbs!

Chapter 3. The General Overturn.

Of the King's Court, for the present, there is almost nothing whatever to be said. Silent, deserted are these halls; Royalty languishes forsaken of its war-god and all its hopes, till once the Oeil-de-Boeuf

rally again. The sceptre is departed from King Louis; is gone over to the Salles des Menus, to the Paris Townhall, or one knows not whither. In the July days, while all ears were yet deafened by the crash of the Bastille, and Ministers and Princes were scattered to the four winds, it seemed as if the very Valets had grown heavy of hearing. Besenval, also in flight towards Infinite Space, but hovering a little at Versailles, was addressing his Majesty personally for an Order about post-horses; when, lo, 'the Valet in waiting places himself familiarly between his Majesty and me,' stretching out his rascal neck to learn what it was! His Majesty, in sudden choler, whirled round; made a clutch at the tongs: 'I gently prevented him; he grasped my hand in thankfulness; and I noticed tears in his eyes.' (*Besenval*, iii. 419.)

Poor King; for French Kings also are men! Louis Fourteenth himself once clutched the tongs, and even smote with them; but then it was at Louvois, and Dame Maintenon ran up.—The Queen sits weeping in her inner apartments, surrounded by weak women: she is 'at the height of unpopularity;' universally regarded as the evil genius of France. Her friends and familiar counsellors have all fled; and fled, surely, on the foolishhest errand. The Chateau Polignac still frowns aloft, on its 'bold and enormous' cubical rock, amid the blooming champaigns, amid the blue girdling mountains of Auvergne: (*Arthur Young*, i. 165.) but no Duke and Duchess Polignac look forth from it; they have fled, they have 'met Necker at Bale;' they shall not return. That France should see her Nobles resist the Irresistible, Inevitable, with the face of angry men, was unhappy, not unexpected: but with the face and sense of pettish children? This was her peculiarity. They understood nothing; would understand nothing. Does not, at this hour, a new Polignac, first-born of these Two, sit reflective in the Castle of Ham; (*A.D.* 1835.) in an astonishment he will never recover from; the most confused of existing mortals?

King Louis has his new Ministry: mere Popularities; Old-President Pompignan; Necker, coming back in triumph; and other such. (*Montgaillard*, ii. 108.) But what will it avail him? As was said, the sceptre, all but the wooden gilt sceptre, has departed elsewhither. Volition, determination is not in this man: only innocence, indolence; dependence on all persons but himself, on all circumstances but the circumstances he were lord of. So troublous internally is our Versailles and its work. Beautiful, if seen from afar, resplendent like a Sun; seen near at hand, a mere Sun's-Atmosphere, hiding darkness, confused ferment of ruin!

But over France, there goes on the indisputablest 'destruction of formulas;' transaction of realities that follow therefrom. So many millions of persons, all gyved, and nigh strangled, with formulas; whose Life nevertheless, at least the digestion and hunger of it, was real enough! Heaven has at length sent an abundant harvest; but what profits it the poor man, when Earth with her formulas interposes? Industry, in these times of Insurrection, must needs lie dormant; capital, as usual, not circulating, but stagnating timorously in nooks. The poor man is short of work, is therefore short of money; nay even had he money, bread is not to be bought for it. Were it plotting of Aristocrats, plotting of d'Orleans; were it Brigands, preternatural terror, and the clang of Phoebus Apollo's silver bow,—enough, the markets are scarce of grain, plentiful only in tumult. Farmers seem lazy to thresh;—being either 'bribed;' or needing no bribe, with prices ever rising, with perhaps rent itself no longer so pressing. Neither, what is singular, do municipal enactments, 'That along with so many measures of wheat you shall sell so many of rye,' and other the like, much mend the matter. Dragoons with drawn swords stand ranked among the corn-sacks, often more dragoons than sacks. (*Arthur Young*, i. 129, &c.) Meal-mobs abound; growing into mobs of a still darker quality.

Starvation has been known among the French Commonalty before this; known and familiar. Did we not see them, in the year 1775, presenting, in sallow faces, in wretchedness and raggedness, their

Petition of Grievances; and, for answer, getting a brand-new Gallows forty feet high? Hunger and Darkness, through long years! For look back on that earlier Paris Riot, when a Great Personage, worn out by debauchery, was believed to be in want of Blood-baths; and Mothers, in worn raiment, yet with living hearts under it, 'filled the public places' with their wild Rachel-cries,—stilled also by the Gallows. Twenty years ago, the Friend of Men (*preaching to the deaf*) described the Limousin Peasants as wearing a pain-stricken (*souffre-douleur*) look, a look past complaint, 'as if the oppression of the great were like the hail and the thunder, a thing irremediable, the ordinance of Nature.' (*Fils Adoptif: Memoires de Mirabeau*, i. 364-394.) And now, if in some great hour, the shock of a falling Bastille should awaken you; and it were found to be the ordinance of Art merely; and remediable, reversible!

Or has the Reader forgotten that 'flood of savages,' which, in sight of the same Friend of Men, descended from the mountains at Mont d'Or? Lank-haired haggard faces; shapes rawboned, in high sabots; in woollen jupes, with leather girdles studded with copper-nails! They rocked from foot to foot, and beat time with their elbows too, as the quarrel and battle which was not long in beginning went on; shouting fiercely; the lank faces distorted into the similitude of a cruel laugh. For they were darkened and hardened: long had they been the prey of excise-men and tax-men; of 'clerks with the cold spurt of their pen.' It was the fixed prophecy of our old Marquis, which no man would listen to, that 'such Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along too far, would end by the General Overturn, the Culbute Generale!'

No man would listen, each went his thoughtless way;—and Time and Destiny also travelled on. The Government by Blind-man's-buff, stumbling along, has reached the precipice inevitable for it. Dull Drudgery, driven on, by clerks with the cold dastard spurt of their pen, has been driven—into a Communion of Drudges! For now, moreover, there have come the strangest confused tidings; by Paris Journals with their paper wings; or still more portentous, where no Journals are, (*See Arthur Young*, i. 137, 150, &c.) by rumour and conjecture: Oppression not inevitable; a Bastille prostrate, and the Constitution fast getting ready! Which Constitution, if it be something and not nothing, what can it be but bread to eat?

The Traveller, 'walking up hill bridle in hand,' overtakes 'a poor woman;' the image, as such commonly are, of drudgery and scarcity; 'looking sixty years of age, though she is not yet twenty-eight.' They have seven children, her poor drudge and she: a farm, with one cow, which helps to make the children soup; also one little horse, or garron. They have rents and quit-rents, Hens to pay to this Seigneur, Oat-sacks to that; King's taxes, Statute-labour, Church-taxes, taxes enough;—and think the times inexpressible. She has heard that somewhere, in some manner, something is to be done for the poor: "God send it soon; for the dues and taxes crush us down (*nous ecrasent*)!" (*Ibid.* i. 134.)

Fair prophecies are spoken, but they are not fulfilled. There have been Notables, Assemblages, turnings out and comings in. Intriguing and manoeuvring; Parliamentary eloquence and arguing, Greek meeting Greek in high places, has long gone on; yet still bread comes not. The harvest is reaped and garnered; yet still we have no bread. Urged by despair and by hope, what can Drudgery do, but rise, as predicted, and produce the General Overturn?

Fancy, then, some Five full-grown Millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces (*figures haves*); in woollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths, and high sabots,—starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings, their washed Upper-Classes, after long unreviewed centuries, virtually this question:

How have ye treated us; how have ye taught us, fed us, and led us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer sky. This is the feeding and leading we have had of you: EMPTINESS,—of pocket, of stomach, of head, and of heart. Behold there is nothing in us; nothing but what Nature gives her wild children of the desert: Ferocity and Appetite; Strength grounded on Hunger. Did ye mark among your Rights of Man, that man was not to die of starvation, while there was bread reaped by him? It is among the Might of Man.

Seventy-two Chateaus have flamed aloft in the Maconnais and Beaujolais alone: this seems the centre of the conflagration; but it has spread over Dauphine, Alsace, the Lyonnais; the whole South-East is in a blaze. All over the North, from Rouen to Metz, disorder is abroad: smugglers of salt go openly in armed bands: the barriers of towns are burnt; toll-gatherers, tax-gatherers, official persons put to flight. 'It was thought,' says Young, 'the people, from hunger, would revolt;' and we see they have done it. Desperate Lackalls, long prowling aimless, now finding hope in desperation itself, everywhere form a nucleus. They ring the Church bell by way of tocsin: and the Parish turns out to the work. (*See Hist. Parl. ii. 243-6.*) Ferocity, atrocity; hunger and revenge: such work as we can imagine!

Ill stands it now with the Seigneur, who, for example, 'has walled up the only Fountain of the Township;' who has ridden high on his chartier and parchments; who has preserved Game not wisely but too well. Churches also, and Canonries, are sacked, without mercy; which have shorn the flock too close, forgetting to feed it. Wo to the land over which Sansculottism, in its day of vengeance, tramps roughshod,—shod in sabots! Highbred Seigneurs, with their delicate women and little ones, had to 'fly half-naked,' under cloud of night; glad to escape the flames, and even worse. You meet them at the tables-d'hote of inns; making wise reflections or foolish that 'rank is destroyed;' uncertain whither they shall now wend. (*See Young, i. 149, &c.*) The metayer will find it convenient to be slack in paying rent. As for the Tax-gatherer, he, long hunting as a biped of prey, may now get hunted as one; his Majesty's Exchequer will not 'fill up the Deficit,' this season: it is the notion of many that a Patriot Majesty, being the Restorer of French Liberty, has abolished most taxes, though, for their private ends, some men make a secret of it.

Where this will end? In the Abyss, one may prophecy; whither all Delusions are, at all moments, travelling; where this Delusion has now arrived. For if there be a Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live for ever. The very Truth has to change its vesture, from time to time; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them, and Heaven's Chancery itself; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour. 'The sign of a Grand Seigneur being landlord,' says the vehement plain-spoken Arthur Young, 'are wastes, landes, deserts, ling: go to his residence, you will find it in the middle of a forest, peopled with deer, wild boars and wolves. The fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. To see so many millions of hands, that would be industrious, all idle and starving: Oh, if I were legislator of France, for one day, I would make these great lords skip again!' (*Arthur Young, i. 12, 48, 84, &c.*) O Arthur, thou now actually beholdest them skip:—wilt thou grow to grumble at that too?

For long years and generations it lasted, but the time came. Featherbrain, whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate: there remained but that method. Consider it, look at it! The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed Seigneur, delicately lounging in the Oeil-de-Boeuf, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law: such an arrangement must end. Ought it? But, O most fearful is such an ending! Let those, to whom God, in His great mercy, has granted time and space, prepare another and milder one.

To women it is a matter of wonder that the Seigneurs did not do something to help themselves; say, combine, and arm: for there were a 'hundred and fifty thousand of them,' all violent enough. Unhappily, a hundred and fifty thousand, scattered over wide Provinces, divided by mutual ill-will, cannot combine. The highest Seigneurs, as we have seen, had already emigrated,—with a view of putting France to the blush. Neither are arms now the peculiar property of Seigneurs; but of every mortal who has ten shillings, wherewith to buy a secondhand firelock.

Besides, those starving Peasants, after all, have not four feet and claws, that you could keep them down permanently in that manner. They are not even of black colour; they are mere Unwashed Seigneurs; and a Seigneur too has human bowels!—The Seigneurs did what they could; enrolled in National Guards; fled, with shrieks, complaining to Heaven and Earth. One Seigneur, famed Memmay of Quincey, near Vesoul, invited all the rustics of his neighbourhood to a banquet; blew up his Chateau and them with gunpowder; and instantaneously vanished, no man yet knows whither. (*Hist. Parl. ii. 161.*) Some half dozen years after, he came back; and demonstrated that it was by accident.

Nor are the authorities idle: though unluckily, all Authorities, Municipalities and such like, are in the uncertain transitionary state; getting regenerated from old Monarchic to new Democratic; no Official yet knows clearly what he is. Nevertheless, Mayors old or new do gather Marechaussees, National Guards, Troops of the line; justice, of the most summary sort, is not wanting. The Electoral Committee of Macon, though but a Committee, goes the length of hanging, for its own behoof, as many as twenty. The Prevot of Dauphine traverses the country 'with a movable column,' with tipstaves, gallows-ropes; for gallows any tree will serve, and suspend its culprit, or 'thirteen' culprits.

Unhappy country! How is the fair gold-and-green of the ripe bright Year defaced with horrid blackness: black ashes of Chateaus, black bodies of gibbeted Men! Industry has ceased in it; not sounds of the hammer and saw, but of the tocsin and alarm-drum. The sceptre has departed, whither one knows not;—breaking itself in pieces: here impotent, there tyrannous. National Guards are unskilful, and of doubtful purpose; Soldiers are inclined to mutiny: there is danger that they two may quarrel, danger that they may agree. Strasburg has seen riots: a Townhall torn to shreds, its archives scattered white on the winds; drunk soldiers embracing drunk citizens for three days, and Mayor Dietrich and Marshal Rochambeau reduced nigh to desperation. (*Arthur Young, i. 141.*—*Dampmartin: Evenemens qui se sont passes sous mes yeux, i. 105-127.*)

Through the middle of all which phenomena, is seen, on his triumphant transit, 'escorted,' through Befort for instance, 'by fifty National Horsemen and all the military music of the place,'—M. Necker, returning from Bale! Glorious as the meridian; though poor Necker himself partly guesses whither it is leading. (*Biographie Universelle, para Necker* (by Lally-Tollendal).) One highest culminating day, at the Paris Townhall; with immortal vivats, with wife and daughter kneeling publicly to kiss his hand; with Besenval's pardon granted,—but indeed revoked before sunset: one highest day, but then lower days, and ever lower, down even to lowest! Such magic is in a name; and in the want of a name. Like some enchanted Mambrino's Helmet, essential to victory, comes this 'Saviour of France;' beshouted, becymballed by the world:—alas, so soon, to be disenchanting, to be pitched shamefully over the lists as a Barber's Bason! Gibbon 'could wish to shew him' (*in this ejected, Barber's-Bason state*) to any man of solidity, who were minded to have the soul burnt out of him, and become a caput mortuum, by Ambition, unsuccessful or successful. (*Gibbon's Letters.*)

Another small phasis we add, and no more: how, in the Autumn months, our sharp-tempered Arthur has been 'pestered for some days past,' by shot, lead-drops and slugs, 'rattling five or six times into my chaise and about my ears;' all the mob of the country gone out to kill game! (*Young, i. 176.*) It is even so. On the Cliffs of Dover, over all the Marches of France, there appear, this autumn, two Signs on the Earth: emigrant flights of French Seigneurs; emigrant winged flights of French Game! Finished, one may say, or as good as finished, is the Preservation of Game on this Earth; completed for endless Time. What part it had to play in the History of Civilisation is played plaudite; exeat!

In this manner does Sansculottism blaze up, illustrating many things;—producing, among the rest, as we saw, on the Fourth of August, that semi-miraculous Night of Pentecost in the National Assembly; semi miraculous, which had its causes, and its effects. Feudalism is struck dead; not on parchment only, and by ink; but in very fact, by fire; say, by self-combustion. This conflagration of the South-East will abate; will be got scattered, to the West, or elsewhere: extinguish it will not, till the fuel be all done.

Chapter 4. In Queue.

If we look now at Paris, one thing is too evident: that the Baker's shops have got their Queues, or Tails; their long strings of purchasers, arranged in tail, so that the first come be the first served,—were the shop once open! This waiting in tail, not seen since the early days of July, again makes its appearance in August. In time, we shall see it perfected by practice to the rank almost of an art; and the art, or quasi-art, of standing in tail become one of the characteristics of the Parisian People, distinguishing them from all other Peoples whatsoever.

But consider, while work itself is so scarce, how a man must not only realise money; but stand waiting (*if his wife is too weak to wait and struggle*) for half days in the Tail, till he get it changed for dear bad bread! Controversies, to the length, sometimes of blood and battery, must arise in these exasperated Queues. Or if no controversy, then it is but one accordant Pange Lingua of complaint against the Powers that be. France has begun her long Curriculum of Hungering, instructive and productive beyond Academic Curriculums; which extends over some seven most strenuous years. As Jean Paul says, of his own Life, 'to a great height shall the business of Hungering go.'

Or consider, in strange contrast, the jubilee Ceremonies; for, in general, the aspect of Paris presents these two features: jubilee ceremonials and scarcity of victual. Processions enough walk in jubilee; of Young Women, decked and dizened, their ribands all tricolor; moving with song and tabor, to the Shrine of Sainte Genevieve, to thank her that the Bastille is down. The Strong Men of the Market, and the Strong Women, fail not with their bouquets and speeches. Abbe Fauchet, famed in such work (*for Abbe Lefevre could only distribute powder*) blesses tricolor cloth for the National Guard; and makes it a National Tricolor Flag; victorious, or to be victorious, in the cause of civil and religious liberty all over the world. Fauchet, we say, is the man for Te-Deums, and public Consecrations;—to which, as in this instance of the Flag, our National Guard will 'reply with volleys of musketry,' Church and Cathedral though it be; (*See Hist. Parl. iii. 20; Mercier, Nouveau Paris, &c.*) filling Notre Dame with such noisiest fuliginous Amen, significant of several things.

On the whole, we will say our new Mayor Bailly; our new Commander Lafayette, named also 'Scipio-Americanus,' have bought their preferment dear. Bailly rides in gilt state-coach, with beefeaters and sumptuosity; Camille Desmoulins, and others, sniffing at him for it: Scipio bestrides the 'white

charger,' and waves with civic plumes in sight of all France. Neither of them, however, does it for nothing; but, in truth, at an exorbitant rate. At this rate, namely: of feeding Paris, and keeping it from fighting. Out of the City-funds, some seventeen thousand of the utterly destitute are employed digging on Montmartre, at tenpence a day, which buys them, at market price, almost two pounds of bad bread;—they look very yellow, when Lafayette goes to harangue them. The Townhall is in travail, night and day; it must bring forth Bread, a Municipal Constitution, regulations of all kinds, curbs on the Sansculottic Press; above all, Bread, Bread.

Purveyors prowl the country far and wide, with the appetite of lions; detect hidden grain, purchase open grain; by gentle means or forcible, must and will find grain. A most thankless task; and so difficult, so dangerous,—even if a man did gain some trifle by it! On the 19th August, there is food for one day. (*See Bailly, Memoires, ii. 137-409.*) Complaints there are that the food is spoiled, and produces an effect on the intestines: not corn but plaster-of-Paris! Which effect on the intestines, as well as that 'smarting in the throat and palate,' a Townhall Proclamation warns you to disregard, or even to consider as drastic-beneficial. The Mayor of Saint-Denis, so black was his bread, has, by a dyspeptic populace, been hanged on the Lanterne there. National Guards protect the Paris Corn-Market: first ten suffice; then six hundred. (*Hist. Parl. ii. 421.*) Busy are ye, Bailly, Brissot de Warville, Condorcet, and ye others!

For, as just hinted, there is a Municipal Constitution to be made too. The old Bastille Electors, after some ten days of psalmodying over their glorious victory, began to hear it asked, in a splenetic tone, Who put you there? They accordingly had to give place, not without moanings, and audible growlings on both sides, to a new larger Body, specially elected for that post. Which new Body, augmented, altered, then fixed finally at the number of Three Hundred, with the title of Town Representatives (*Representans de la Commune*), now sits there; rightly portioned into Committees; assiduous making a Constitution; at all moments when not seeking flour.

And such a Constitution; little short of miraculous: one that shall 'consolidate the Revolution'! The Revolution is finished, then? Mayor Bailly and all respectable friends of Freedom would fain think so. Your Revolution, like jelly sufficiently boiled, needs only to be poured into shapes, of Constitution, and 'consolidated' therein? Could it, indeed, contrive to cool; which last, however, is precisely the doubtful thing, or even the not doubtful!

Unhappy friends of Freedom; consolidating a Revolution! They must sit at work there, their pavilion spread on very Chaos; between two hostile worlds, the Upper Court-world, the Nether Sansculottic one; and, beaten on by both, toil painfully, perilously,—doing, in sad literal earnest, 'the impossible.'

Chapter 5. The Fourth Estate.

Pamphleteering opens its abysmal throat wider and wider: never to close more. Our Philosophes, indeed, rather withdraw; after the manner of Marmontel, 'retiring in disgust the first day.' Abbe Raynal, grown gray and quiet in his Marseilles domicile, is little content with this work; the last literary act of the man will again be an act of rebellion: an indignant Letter to the Constituent Assembly; answered by 'the order of the day.' Thus also Philosophe Morellet puckers discontented brows; being indeed threatened in his benefices by that Fourth of August: it is clearly going too far. How astonishing that those 'haggard figures in woollen jupes' would not rest as satisfied with Speculation, and victorious Analysis, as we!

Alas, yes: Speculation, Philosophism, once the ornament and wealth of the saloon, will now coin itself into mere Practical Propositions, and circulate on street and highway, universally; with results! A Fourth Estate, of Able Editors, springs up; increases and multiplies; irrepressible, incalculable. New Printers, new Journals, and ever new (*so prurient is the world*), let our Three Hundred curb and consolidate as they can! Loustalot, under the wing of Prudhomme dull-blustering Printer, edits weekly his *Revolutions de Paris*; in an acrid, emphatic manner. Acrid, corrosive, as the spirit of sloes and copperas, is Marat, Friend of the People; struck already with the fact that the National Assembly, so full of Aristocrats, 'can do nothing,' except dissolve itself, and make way for a better; that the Townhall Representatives are little other than babblers and imbeciles, if not even knaves. Poor is this man; squalid, and dwells in garrets; a man unlovely to the sense, outward and inward; a man forbid;—and is becoming fanatical, possessed with fixed-idea. Cruel lusus of Nature! Did Nature, O poor Marat, as in cruel sport, knead thee out of her leavings, and miscellaneous waste clay; and fling thee forth stepdamelike, a Distraction into this distracted Eighteenth Century? Work is appointed thee there; which thou shalt do. The Three Hundred have summoned and will again summon Marat: but always he croaks forth answer sufficient; always he will defy them, or elude them; and endure no gag.

Carra, 'Ex-secretary of a decapitated Hospodar,' and then of a Necklace-Cardinal; likewise pamphleteer, Adventurer in many scenes and lands,—draws nigh to Mercier, of the *Tableau de Paris*; and, with foam on his lips, proposes an *Annales Patriotiques*. The *Moniteur* goes its prosperous way; Barrere 'weeps,' on Paper as yet loyal; Rivarol, Royou are not idle. Deep calls to deep: your Domine *Salvum Fac Regem* shall awaken *Pange Lingua*; with an *Ami-du-Peuple* there is a King's-Friend Newspaper, *Ami-du-Roi*. Camille Desmoulins has appointed himself *Procureur-General de la Lanterne*, Attorney-General of the Lamp-iron; and pleads, not with atrocity, under an atrocious title; editing weekly his brilliant *Revolutions of Paris and Brabant*. Brilliant, we say: for if, in that thick murk of Journalism, with its dull blustering, with its fixed or loose fury, any ray of genius greet thee, be sure it is Camille's. The thing that Camille teaches he, with his light finger, adorns: brightness plays, gentle, unexpected, amid horrible confusions; often is the word of Camille worth reading, when no other's is. Questionable Camille, how thou glitterest with a fallen, rebellious, yet still semi-celestial light; as is the star-light on the brow of Lucifer! Son of the Morning, into what times and what lands, art thou fallen!

But in all things is good;—though not good for 'consolidating *Revolutions*.' Thousand wagon-loads of this Pamphleteering and Newspaper matter, lie rotting slowly in the Public Libraries of our Europe. Snatched from the great gulf, like oysters by bibliomaniac pearl-divers, there must they first rot, then what was pearl, in Camille or others, may be seen as such, and continue as such.

Nor has public speaking declined, though Lafayette and his Patrols look sour on it. Loud always is the *Palais Royal*, loudest the *Cafe de Foy*; such a miscellany of Citizens and Citizenesses circulating there. 'Now and then,' according to Camille, 'some Citizens employ the liberty of the press for a private purpose; so that this or the other Patriot finds himself short of his watch or pocket-handkerchief!' But, for the rest, in Camille's opinion, nothing can be a livelier image of the Roman Forum. 'A Patriot proposes his motion; if it finds any supporters, they make him mount on a chair, and speak. If he is applauded, he prospers and redacts; if he is hissed, he goes his ways.' Thus they, circulating and perorating. Tall shaggy Marquis Saint-Huruge, a man that has had losses, and has deserved them, is seen eminent, and also heard. 'Bellowing' is the character of his voice, like that of a Bull of Bashan; voice which drowns all voices, which causes frequently the hearts of men to leap. Cracked or half-cracked is this tall Marquis's head; uncracked are his lungs; the cracked and the uncracked shall alike avail him.

Consider further that each of the Forty-eight Districts has its own Committee; speaking and motioning continually; aiding in the search for grain, in the search for a Constitution; checking and spurring the poor Three Hundred of the Townhall. That Danton, with a 'voice reverberating from the domes,' is President of the Cordeliers District; which has already become a Goshen of Patriotism. That apart from the 'seventeen thousand utterly necessitous, digging on Montmartre,' most of whom, indeed, have got passes, and been dismissed into Space 'with four shillings,'—there is a strike, or union, of Domestics out of place; who assemble for public speaking: next, a strike of Tailors, for even they will strike and speak; further, a strike of Journeymen Cordwainers; a strike of Apothecaries: so dear is bread. (*Histoire Parlementaire*, ii. 359, 417, 423.) All these, having struck, must speak; generally under the open canopy; and pass resolutions;—Lafayette and his Patrols watching them suspiciously from the distance.

Unhappy mortals: such tugging and lugging, and throttling of one another, to divide, in some not intolerable way, the joint Felicity of man in this Earth; when the whole lot to be divided is such a 'feast of shells!'—Diligent are the Three Hundred; none equals Scipio Americanus in dealing with mobs. But surely all these things bode ill for the consolidating of a Revolution.

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