

Book VI. Thermidor.

Chapter 1. The Gods Are Athirst.

What then is this Thing, called La Revolution, which, like an Angel of Death, hangs over France, noyading, fusillading, fighting, gun-boring, tanning human skins? La Revolution is but so many Alphabetic Letters; a thing nowhere to be laid hands on, to be clapt under lock and key: where is it? what is it? It is the Madness that dwells in the hearts of men. In this man it is, and in that man; as a rage or as a terror, it is in all men. Invisible, impalpable; and yet no black Azrael, with wings spread over half a continent, with sword sweeping from sea to sea, could be a truer Reality.

To explain, what is called explaining, the march of this Revolutionary Government, be no task of ours. Men cannot explain it. A paralytic Couthon, asking in the Jacobins, 'what hast thou done to be hanged if the Counter-Revolution should arrive;' a sombre Saint-Just, not yet six-and-twenty, declaring that 'for Revolutionists there is no rest but in the tomb;' a seagreen Robespierre converted into vinegar and gall; much more an Amar and Vadier, a Collot and Billaud: to inquire what thoughts, predetermination or prevision, might be in the head of these men! Record of their thought remains not; Death and Darkness have swept it out utterly. Nay if we even had their thought, all they could have articulately spoken to us, how insignificant a fraction were that of the Thing which realised itself, which decreed itself, on signal given by them! As has been said more than once, this Revolutionary Government is not a self-conscious but a blind fatal one. Each man, enveloped in his ambient-atmosphere of revolutionary fanatic Madness, rushes on, impelled and impelling; and has become a blind brute Force; no rest for him but in the grave! Darkness and the mystery of horrid cruelty cover it for us, in History; as they did in Nature. The chaotic Thunder-cloud, with its pitchy black, and its tumult of dazzling jagged fire, in a world all electric: thou wilt not undertake to shew how that comported itself,—what the secrets of its dark womb were; from what sources, with what specialities, the lightning it held did, in confused brightness of terror, strike forth, destructive and self-destructive, till it ended? Like a Blackness naturally of Erebus, which by will of Providence had for once mounted itself into dominion and the Azure: is not this properly the nature of Sansculottism consummating itself? Of which Erebus Blackness be it enough to discern that this and the other dazzling fire-bolt, dazzling fire-torrent, does by small Volition and great Necessity, verily issue,—in such and such succession; destructive so and so, self-destructive so and so: till it end.

Royalism is extinct, 'sunk,' as they say, 'in the mud of the Loire;' Republicanism dominates without and within: what, therefore, on the 15th day of March, 1794, is this? Arrestment, sudden really as a bolt out of the Blue, has hit strange victims: Hebert Pere Duchene, Biblioplist Momoro, Clerk Vincent, General Ronsin; high Cordelier Patriots, redcapped Magistrates of Paris, Worshippers of Reason, Commanders of Revolutionary Army! Eight short days ago, their Cordelier Club was loud, and louder than ever, with Patriot denunciations. Hebert Pere Duchene had "held his tongue and his heart these two months, at sight of Moderates, Crypto-Aristocrats, Camilles, Scelerats in the Convention itself: but could not do it any longer; would, if other remedy were not, invoke the Sacred right of Insurrection." So spake Hebert in Cordelier Session; with vivats, till the roofs rang again. (*Moniteur, du 17 Ventose* (7th March) 1794.) Eight short days ago; and now already! They rub their eyes: it is no dream; they find themselves in the Luxembourg. Goose Gobel too; and they that burnt Churches! Chaumette himself, potent Procureur, Agent National as they now call it, who could

'recognise the Suspect by the very face of them,' he lingers but three days; on the third day he too is hurled in. Most chopfallen, blue, enters the National Agent this Limbo whither he has sent so many. Prisoners crowd round, jibing and jeering: "Sublime National Agent," says one, "in virtue of thy immortal Proclamation, lo there! I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect, we are suspect, ye are suspect, they are suspect!"

The meaning of these things? Meaning! It is a Plot; Plot of the most extensive ramifications; which, however, Barrere holds the threads of. Such Church-burning and scandalous masquerades of Atheism, fit to make the Revolution odious: where indeed could they originate but in the gold of Pitt? Pitt indubitably, as Preternatural Insight will teach one, did hire this Faction of Enrages, to play their fantastic tricks; to roar in their Cordeliers Club about Moderatism; to print their Pere Duchene; worship skyblue Reason in red nightcap; rob all Altars,—and bring the spoil to us!—

Still more indubitable, visible to the mere bodily sight, is this: that the Cordeliers Club sits pale, with anger and terror; and has 'veiled the Rights of Man,'—without effect. Likewise that the Jacobins are in considerable confusion; busy 'purging themselves, 's'epurant,' as, in times of Plot and public Calamity, they have repeatedly had to do. Not even Camille Desmoulins but has given offence: nay there have risen murmurs against Danton himself; though he bellowed them down, and Robespierre finished the matter by 'embracing him in the Tribune.'

Whom shall the Republic and a jealous Mother Society trust? In these times of temptation, of Preternatural Insight! For there are Factions of the Stranger, 'de l'etranger,' Factions of Moderates, of Enraged; all manner of Factions: we walk in a world of Plots; strings, universally spread, of deadly gins and falltraps, baited by the gold of Pitt! Cloutz, Speaker of Mankind so-called, with his Evidences of Mahometan Religion, and babble of Universal Republic, him an incorruptible Robespierre has purged away. Baron Cloutz, and Paine rebellious Needleman lie, these two months, in the Luxembourg; limbs of the Faction de l'etranger. Representative Phelippeaux is purged out: he came back from La Vendee with an ill report in his mouth against rogue Rossignol, and our method of warfare there. Recant it, O Phelippeaux, we entreat thee! Phelippeaux will not recant; and is purged out. Representative Fabre d'Eglantine, famed Nomenclator of Romme's Calendar, is purged out; nay, is cast into the Luxembourg: accused of Legislative Swindling 'in regard to monies of the India Company.' There with his Chabots, Bazires, guilty of the like, let Fabre wait his destiny. And Westermann friend of Danton, he who led the Marseillaise on the Tenth of August, and fought well in La Vendee, but spoke not well of rogue Rossignol, is purged out. Lucky, if he too go not to the Luxembourg. And your Prolys, Guzmans, of the Faction of the Stranger, they have gone; Peyreya, though he fled is gone, 'taken in the disguise of a Tavern Cook.' I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect!—

The great heart of Danton is weary of it. Danton is gone to native Arcis, for a little breathing time of peace: Away, black Arachne-webs, thou world of Fury, Terror, and Suspicion; welcome, thou everlasting Mother, with thy spring greenness, thy kind household loves and memories; true art thou, were all else untrue! The great Titan walks silent, by the banks of the murmuring Aube, in young native haunts that knew him when a boy; wonders what the end of these things may be.

But strangest of all, Camille Desmoulins is purged out. Couthon gave as a test in regard to Jacobin purgation the question, 'What hast thou done to be hanged if Counter-Revolution should arrive?' Yet Camille, who could so well answer this question, is purged out! The truth is, Camille, early in

December last, began publishing a new Journal, or Series of Pamphlets, entitled the *Vieux Cordelier*, Old Cordelier. Camille, not afraid at one time to 'embrace Liberty on a heap of dead bodies,' begins to ask now, Whether among so many arresting and punishing Committees there ought not to be a 'Committee of Mercy?' Saint-Just, he observes, is an extremely solemn young Republican, who 'carries his head as if it were a Saint-Sacrament; adorable Hostie, or divine Real-Presence! Sharply enough, this old Cordelier, Danton and he were of the earliest primary Cordeliers,—shoots his glittering war-shafts into your new Cordeliers, your Heberts, Momoros, with their brawling brutalities and despicabilities: say, as the Sun-god (*for poor Camille is a Poet*) shot into that Python Serpent sprung of mud.

Whereat, as was natural, the Hebertist Python did hiss and writhe amazingly; and threaten 'sacred right of Insurrection;'—and, as we saw, get cast into Prison. Nay, with all the old wit, dexterity, and light graceful poignancy, Camille, translating 'out of Tacitus, from the Reign of Tiberius,' pricks into the Law of the Suspect itself; making it odious! Twice, in the Decade, his wild Leaves issue; full of wit, nay of humour, of harmonious ingenuity and insight,—one of the strangest phenomenon of that dark time; and smite, in their wild-sparkling way, at various monstrosities, Saint-Sacrament heads, and Juggernaut idols, in a rather reckless manner. To the great joy of Josephine Beauharnais, and the other Five Thousand and odd Suspect, who fill the Twelve Houses of Arrest; on whom a ray of hope dawns! Robespierre, at first approbatory, knew not at last what to think; then thought, with his Jacobins, that Camille must be expelled. A man of true Revolutionary spirit, this Camille; but with the unwisest sallies; whom Aristocrats and Moderates have the art to corrupt! Jacobinism is in uttermost crisis and struggle: enmeshed wholly in plots, corruptibilities, neck-gins and baited falltraps of Pitt Ennemi du Genre Humain. Camille's First Number begins with 'O Pitt!'—his last is dated 15 Pluviose Year 2, 3d February 1794; and ends with these words of Montezuma's, 'Les dieux ont soif, The gods are athirst.'

Be this as it may, the Hebertists lie in Prison only some nine days. On the 24th of March, therefore, the Revolution Tumbrils carry through that Life-tumult a new cargo: Hebert, Vincent, Momoro, Ronsin, Nineteen of them in all; with whom, curious enough, sits Cloutz Speaker of Mankind. They have been massed swiftly into a lump, this miscellany of Nondescripts; and travel now their last road. No help. They too must 'look through the little window;' they too 'must sneeze into the sack,' *eternuer dans le sac*; as they have done to others so is it done to them. Sainte-Guillotine, meseems, is worse than the old Saints of Superstition; a man-devouring Saint? Cloutz, still with an air of polished sarcasm, endeavours to jest, to offer cheering 'arguments of Materialism;' he requested to be executed last, 'in order to establish certain principles,'—which Philosophy has not retained. General Ronsin too, he still looks forth with some air of defiance, eye of command: the rest are sunk in a stony paleness of despair. Momoro, poor Biblioplist, no Agrarian Law yet realised,—they might as well have hanged thee at Evreux, twenty months ago, when Girondin Buzot hindered them. Hebert Pere Duchene shall never in this world rise in sacred right of insurrection; he sits there low enough, head sunk on breast; Red Nightcaps shouting round him, in frightful parody of his Newspaper Articles, "Grand choler of the Pere Duchene!" Thus perish they; the sack receives all their heads. Through some section of History, Nineteen spectre-chimeras shall flit, speaking and gibbering; till Oblivion swallow them.

In the course of a week, the Revolutionary Army itself is disbanded; the General having become spectral. This Faction of Rabids, therefore, is also purged from the Republican soil; here also the baited falltraps of that Pitt have been wrenched up harmless; and anew there is joy over a Plot Discovered. The Revolution then is verily devouring its own children. All Anarchy, by the nature of it, is not only destructive but self-destructive.

Chapter 2. Danton, No Weakness.

Danton, meanwhile, has been pressingly sent for from Arcis: he must return instantly, cried Camille, cried Phelippeaux and Friends, who scented danger in the wind. Danger enough! A Danton, a Robespierre, chief-products of a victorious Revolution, are now arrived in immediate front of one another; must ascertain how they will live together, rule together. One conceives easily the deep mutual incompatibility that divided these two: with what terror of feminine hatred the poor seagreen Formula looked at the monstrous colossal Reality, and grew greener to behold him;—the Reality, again, struggling to think no ill of a chief-product of the Revolution; yet feeling at bottom that such chief-product was little other than a chief wind-bag, blown large by Popular air; not a man with the heart of a man, but a poor spasmodic incorruptible pedant, with a logic-formula instead of heart; of Jesuit or Methodist-Parson nature; full of sincere-cant, incorruptibility, of virulence, poltroonery; barren as the east-wind! Two such chief-products are too much for one Revolution.

Friends, trembling at the results of a quarrel on their part, brought them to meet. "It is right," said Danton, swallowing much indignation, "to repress the Royalists: but we should not strike except where it is useful to the Republic; we should not confound the innocent and the guilty."—"And who told you," replied Robespierre with a poisonous look, "that one innocent person had perished?"—"Quoi," said Danton, turning round to Friend Paris self-named Fabricius, Juryman in the Revolutionary Tribunal: "Quoi, not one innocent? What sayest thou of it, Fabricius!" (*Biographie de Ministres, para Danton.*)—Friends, Westermann, this Paris and others urged him to shew himself, to ascend the Tribune and act. The man Danton was not prone to shew himself; to act, or uproar for his own safety. A man of careless, large, hoping nature; a large nature that could rest: he would sit whole hours, they say, hearing Camille talk, and liked nothing so well. Friends urged him to fly; his Wife urged him: "Whither fly?" answered he: "If freed France cast me out, there are only dungeons for me elsewhere. One carries not his country with him at the sole of his shoe!" The man Danton sat still. Not even the arrestment of Friend Herault, a member of Salut, yet arrested by Salut, can rouse Danton.—On the night of the 30th of March, Juryman Paris came rushing in; haste looking through his eyes: A clerk of the Salut Committee had told him Danton's warrant was made out, he is to be arrested this very night! Entreaties there are and trepidation, of poor Wife, of Paris and Friends: Danton sat silent for a while; then answered, "Ils n'oseraient, They dare not;" and would take no measures. Murmuring "They dare not," he goes to sleep as usual.

And yet, on the morrow morning, strange rumour spreads over Paris City: Danton, Camille, Phelippeaux, Lacroix have been arrested overnight! It is verily so: the corridors of the Luxembourg were all crowded, Prisoners crowding forth to see this giant of the Revolution among them. "Messieurs," said Danton politely, "I hoped soon to have got you all out of this: but here I am myself; and one sees not where it will end."—Rumour may spread over Paris: the Convention clusters itself into groups; wide-eyed, whispering, "Danton arrested!" Who then is safe? Legendre, mounting the Tribune, utters, at his own peril, a feeble word for him; moving that he be heard at that Bar before indictment; but Robespierre frowns him down: "Did you hear Chabot, or Bazire? Would you have two weights and measures?" Legendre cowers low; Danton, like the others, must take his doom.

Danton's Prison-thoughts were curious to have; but are not given in any quantity: indeed few such remarkable men have been left so obscure to us as this Titan of the Revolution. He was heard to ejaculate: "This time twelvemonth, I was moving the creation of that same Revolutionary Tribunal. I crave pardon for it of God and man. They are all Brothers Cain: Brissot would have had me guillotined

as Robespierre now will. I leave the whole business in a frightful welter (*gachis epouvantable*): not one of them understands anything of government. Robespierre will follow me; I drag down Robespierre. O, it were better to be a poor fisherman than to meddle with governing of men."—Camille's young beautiful Wife, who had made him rich not in money alone, hovers round the Luxembourg, like a disembodied spirit, day and night. Camille's stolen letters to her still exist; stained with the mark of his tears. (*Aperçus sur Camille Desmoulins in Vieux Cordelier, Paris, 1825, pp. 1-29.*) "I carry my head like a Saint-Sacrament?" so Saint-Just was heard to mutter: "Perhaps he will carry his like a Saint-Dennis."

Unhappy Danton, thou still unhappier light Camille, once light Procureur de la Lanterne, ye also have arrived, then, at the Bourne of Creation, where, like Ulysses Polytlas at the limit and utmost Gades of his voyage, gazing into that dim Waste beyond Creation, a man does see the Shade of his Mother, pale, ineffectual;—and days when his Mother nursed and wrapped him are all-too sternly contrasted with this day! Danton, Camille, Herault, Westermann, and the others, very strangely massed up with Bazires, Swindler Chabots, Fabre d'Eglantines, Banker Freys, a most motley Batch, 'Fournee' as such things will be called, stand ranked at the Bar of Tinville. It is the 2d of April 1794. Danton has had but three days to lie in Prison; for the time presses.

What is your name? place of abode? and the like, Fouquier asks; according to formality. "My name is Danton," answers he; "a name tolerably known in the Revolution: my abode will soon be Annihilation (*dans le Neant*); but I shall live in the Pantheon of History." A man will endeavour to say something forcible, be it by nature or not! Herault mentions epigrammatically that he "sat in this Hall, and was detested of Parlementeers." Camille makes answer, "My age is that of the bon Sansculotte Jesus; an age fatal to Revolutionists." O Camille, Camille! And yet in that Divine Transaction, let us say, there did lie, among other things, the fatallest Reproof ever uttered here below to Worldly Right-honourableness; 'the highest Fact,' so devout Novalis calls it, 'in the Rights of Man.' Camille's real age, it would seem, is thirty-four. Danton is one year older.

Some five months ago, the Trial of the Twenty-two Girondins was the greatest that Fouquier had then done. But here is a still greater to do; a thing which tasks the whole faculty of Fouquier; which makes the very heart of him waver. For it is the voice of Danton that reverberates now from these domes; in passionate words, piercing with their wild sincerity, winged with wrath. Your best Witnesses he shivers into ruin at one stroke. He demands that the Committee-men themselves come as Witnesses, as Accusers; he "will cover them with ignominy." He raises his huge stature, he shakes his huge black head, fire flashes from the eyes of him,—piercing to all Republican hearts: so that the very Galleries, though we filled them by ticket, murmur sympathy; and are like to burst down, and raise the People, and deliver him! He complains loudly that he is classed with Chabots, with swindling Stockjobbers; that his Indictment is a list of platitudes and horrors. "Danton hidden on the Tenth of August?" reverberates he, with the roar of a lion in the toils: "Where are the men that had to press Danton to shew himself, that day? Where are these high-gifted souls of whom he borrowed energy? Let them appear, these Accusers of mine: I have all the clearness of my self-possession when I demand them. I will unmask the three shallow scoundrels," *les trois plats coquins*, Saint-Just, Couthon, Lebas, "who fawn on Robespierre, and lead him towards his destruction. Let them produce themselves here; I will plunge them into Nothingness, out of which they ought never to have risen." The agitated President agitates his bell; enjoins calmness, in a vehement manner: "What is it to thee how I defend myself?" cries the other: "the right of dooming me is thine always. The voice of a man speaking for his honour and his life may well drown the jingling of thy bell!" Thus Danton, higher and higher; till the lion voice of him 'dies away in his throat:' speech will not utter what is in that man. The Galleries murmur

ominously; the first day's Session is over.

O Tinville, President Herman, what will ye do? They have two days more of it, by strictest Revolutionary Law. The Galleries already murmur. If this Danton were to burst your mesh-work!—Very curious indeed to consider. It turns on a hair: and what a Hoitytoity were there, Justice and Culprit changing places; and the whole History of France running changed! For in France there is this Danton only that could still try to govern France. He only, the wild amorphous Titan;—and perhaps that other olive-complexioned individual, the Artillery Officer at Toulon, whom we left pushing his fortune in the South?

On the evening of the second day, matters looking not better but worse and worse, Fouquier and Herman, distraction in their aspect, rush over to Salut Public. What is to be done? Salut Public rapidly concocts a new Decree; whereby if men 'insult Justice,' they may be 'thrown out of the Debates.' For indeed, withal, is there not 'a Plot in the Luxembourg Prison?' Ci-devant General Dillon, and others of the Suspect, plotting with Camille's Wife to distribute assignats; to force the Prisons, overset the Republic? Citizen Laflotte, himself Suspect but desiring enfranchisement, has reported said Plot for us:—a report that may bear fruit! Enough, on the morrow morning, an obedient Convention passes this Decree. Salut rushes off with it to the aid of Tinville, reduced now almost to extremities. And so, Hors des Debats, Out of the Debates, ye insolents! Policemen do your duty! In such manner, with a deadlift effort, Salut, Tinville Herman, Leroi Dix-Aout, and all stanch jurymen setting heart and shoulder to it, the Jury becomes 'sufficiently instructed;' Sentence is passed, is sent by an Official, and torn and trampled on: Death this day. It is the 5th of April, 1794. Camille's poor Wife may cease hovering about this Prison. Nay let her kiss her poor children; and prepare to enter it, and to follow!—

Danton carried a high look in the Death-cart. Not so Camille: it is but one week, and all is so topsyturvied; angel Wife left weeping; love, riches, Revolutionary fame, left all at the Prison-gate; carnivorous Rabble now howling round. Palpable, and yet incredible; like a madman's dream! Camille struggles and writhes; his shoulders shuffle the loose coat off them, which hangs knotted, the hands tied: "Calm my friend," said Danton; "heed not that vile canaille (*laissez la cette vile canaille*).\" At the foot of the Scaffold, Danton was heard to ejaculate: "O my Wife, my well-beloved, I shall never see thee more then!"—but, interrupting himself: "Danton, no weakness!" He said to Herault-Sechelles stepping forward to embrace him: "Our heads will meet there," in the Headsman's sack. His last words were to Samson the Headsman himself: "Thou wilt shew my head to the people; it is worth shewing."

So passes, like a gigantic mass, of valour, ostentation, fury, affection and wild revolutionary manhood, this Danton, to his unknown home. He was of Arcis-sur-Aube; born of 'good farmer-people' there. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of Cant. No hollow Formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, ghastly to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man: with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself. He saved France from Brunswick; he walked straight his own wild road, whither it led him. He may live for some generations in the memory of men.

Chapter 3. The Tumbrils.

Next week, it is still but the 10th of April, there comes a new Nineteen; Chaumette, Gobel, Hebert's Widow, the Widow of Camille: these also roll their fated journey; black Death devours them. Mean Hebert's Widow was weeping, Camille's Widow tried to speak comfort to her. O ye kind Heavens,

azure, beautiful, eternal behind your tempests and Time-clouds, is there not pity for all! Gobel, it seems, was repentant; he begged absolution of a Priest; did as a Gobel best could. For Anaxagoras Chaumette, the sleek head now stript of its bonnet rouge, what hope is there? Unless Death were 'an eternal sleep?' Wretched Anaxagoras, God shall judge thee, not I.

Hebert, therefore, is gone, and the Hebertists; they that robbed Churches, and adored blue Reason in red nightcap. Great Danton, and the Dantonists; they also are gone. Down to the catacombs; they are become silent men! Let no Paris Municipality, no Sect or Party of this hue or that, resist the will of Robespierre and Salut. Mayor Pache, not prompt enough in denouncing these Pitts Plots, may congratulate about them now. Never so heartily; it skills not! His course likewise is to the Luxembourg. We appoint one Fleuriot-Lescot Interim-Mayor in his stead: an 'architect from Belgium,' they say, this Fleuriot; he is a man one can depend on. Our new Agent-National is Payan, lately Juryman; whose cynosure also is Robespierre.

Thus then, we perceive, this confusedly electric Erebus-cloud of Revolutionary Government has altered its shape somewhat. Two masses, or wings, belonging to it; an over-electric mass of Cordelier Rabids, and an under-electric of Dantonist Moderates and Clemency-men,—these two masses, shooting bolts at one another, so to speak, have annihilated one another. For the Erebus-cloud, as we often remark, is of suicidal nature; and, in jagged irregularity, darts its lightning withal into itself. But now these two discrepant masses being mutually annihilated, it is as if the Erebus-cloud had got to internal composure; and did only pour its hellfire lightning on the World that lay under it. In plain words, Terror of the Guillotine was never terrible till now. Systole, diastole, swift and ever swifter goes the Axe of Samson. Indictments cease by degrees to have so much as plausibility: Fouquier chooses from the Twelve houses of Arrest what he calls Batches, 'Fournees,' a score or more at a time; his Jurymen are charged to make feu de file, fire-filing till the ground be clear. Citizen Laflotte's report of Plot in the Luxembourg is verily bearing fruit! If no speakable charge exist against a man, or Batch of men, Fouquier has always this: a Plot in the Prison. Swift and ever swifter goes Samson; up, finally, to three score and more at a Batch! It is the highday of Death: none but the Dead return not.

O dusky d'Espremenil, what a day is this, the 22d of April, thy last day! The Palais Hall here is the same stone Hall, where thou, five years ago, stoodest perorating, amid endless pathos of rebellious Parlement, in the grey of the morning; bound to march with d'Agoust to the Isles of Hieres. The stones are the same stones: but the rest, Men, Rebellion, Pathos, Peroration, see! it has all fled, like a gibbering troop of ghosts, like the phantasms of a dying brain! With d'Espremenil, in the same line of Tumbrils, goes the mournfullest medley. Chapelier goes, ci-devant popular President of the Constituent; whom the Menads and Maillard met in his carriage, on the Versailles Road. Thouret likewise, ci-devant President, father of Constitutional Law-acts; he whom we heard saying, long since, with a loud voice, "The Constituent Assembly has fulfilled its mission!" And the noble old Malesherbes, who defended Louis and could not speak, like a grey old rock dissolving into sudden water: he journeys here now, with his kindred, daughters, sons and grandsons, his Lamoignons, Chateaubriands; silent, towards Death.—One young Chateaubriand alone is wandering amid the Natchez, by the roar of Niagara Falls, the moan of endless forests: Welcome thou great Nature, savage, but not false, not unkind, unmotherly; no Formula thou, or rapid jangle of Hypothesis, Parliamentary Eloquence, Constitution-building and the Guillotine; speak thou to me, O Mother, and sing my sick heart thy mystic everlasting lullaby-song, and let all the rest be far!—

Another row of Tumbrils we must notice: that which holds Elizabeth, the Sister of Louis. Her Trial was like the rest; for Plots, for Plots. She was among the kindest, most innocent of women. There sat

with her, amid four-and-twenty others, a once timorous Marchioness de Crussol; courageous now; expressing towards her the liveliest loyalty. At the foot of the Scaffold, Elizabeth with tears in her eyes, thanked this Marchioness; said she was grieved she could not reward her. "Ah, Madame, would your Royal Highness deign to embrace me, my wishes were complete!"—"Right willingly, Marquise de Crussol, and with my whole heart." (*Montgaillard, iv. 200.*) Thus they: at the foot of the Scaffold. The Royal Family is now reduced to two: a girl and a little boy. The boy, once named Dauphin, was taken from his Mother while she yet lived; and given to one Simon, by trade a Cordwainer, on service then about the Temple-Prison, to bring him up in principles of Sansculottism. Simon taught him to drink, to swear, to sing the carmagnole. Simon is now gone to the Municipality: and the poor boy, hidden in a tower of the Temple, from which in his fright and bewilderment and early decrepitude he wishes not to stir out, lies perishing, 'his shirt not changed for six months;' amid squalor and darkness, lamentably, (*Duchesse d'Angouleme, Captivite a la Tour du Temple, pp. 37-71.*)—so as none but poor Factory Children and the like are wont to perish, unlamented!

The Spring sends its green leaves and bright weather, bright May brighter than ever: Death pauses not. Lavoisier famed Chemist, shall die and not live: Chemist Lavoisier was Farmer-General Lavoisier too, and now 'all the Farmers-General are arrested;' all, and shall give an account of their monies and incomings; and die for 'putting water in the tobacco' they sold. (*Tribunal Revolutionnaire, du 8 Mai 1794, Moniteur, No. 231.*) Lavoisier begged a fortnight more of life, to finish some experiments: but "the Republic does not need such;" the axe must do its work. Cynic Chamfort, reading these Inscriptions of Brotherhood or Death, says "it is a Brotherhood of Cain:" arrested, then liberated; then about to be arrested again, this Chamfort cuts and slashes himself with frantic uncertain hand; gains, not without difficulty, the refuge of death. Condorcet has lurked deep, these many months; Argus-eyes watching and searching for him. His concealment is become dangerous to others and himself; he has to fly again, to skulk, round Paris, in thickets and stone-quarries. And so at the Village of Clamars, one bleared May morning, there enters a Figure, ragged, rough-bearded, hunger-stricken; asks breakfast in the tavern there. Suspect, by the look of him! "Servant out of place, sayest thou?" Committee-President of Forty-Sous finds a Latin Horace on him: "Art thou not one of those Ci-devants that were wont to keep servants? Suspect!" He is haled forthwith, breakfast unfinished, towards Bourg-la-Reine, on foot: he faints with exhaustion; is set on a peasant's horse; is flung into his damp prison-cell: on the morrow, recollecting him, you enter; Condorcet lies dead on the floor. They die fast, and disappear: the Notabilities of France disappear, one after one, like lights in a Theatre, which you are snuffing out.

Under which circumstances, is it not singular, and almost touching, to see Paris City drawn out, in the meek May nights, in civic ceremony, which they call 'Souper Fraternel, Brotherly Supper?' Spontaneous, or partially spontaneous, in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth nights of this May month, it is seen. Along the Rue Saint-Honore, and main Streets and Spaces, each Citoyen brings forth what of supper the stingy Maximum has yielded him, to the open air; joins it to his neighbour's supper; and with common table, cheerful light burning frequent, and what due modicum of cut-glasses and other garnish and relish is convenient, they eat frugally together, under the kind stars. (*Tableaux de la Revolution, para Soupers Fraternels; Mercier, ii. 150.*) See it O Night! With cheerfully pledged wine-cup, hobnobbing to the Reign of Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood, with their wives in best ribands, with their little ones romping round, the Citoyens, in frugal Love-feast, sit there. Night in her wide empire sees nothing similar. O my brothers, why is the reign of Brotherhood not come! It is come, it shall come, say the Citoyens frugally hobnobbing.—Ah me! these everlasting stars, do they not look down 'like glistening eyes, bright with immortal pity, over the lot of man!'—

One lamentable thing, however, is, that individuals will attempt assassination—of Representatives of the People. Representative Collot, Member even of Salut, returning home, 'about one in the morning,' probably touched with liquor, as he is apt to be, meets on the stairs, the cry "Scelerat!" and also the snap of a pistol: which latter flashes in the pan; disclosing to him, momentarily, a pair of truculent saucer-eyes, swart grim-clenched countenance; recognisable as that of our little fellow-lodger, Citoyen Amiral, formerly 'a clerk in the Lotteries!'; Collot shouts Murder, with lungs fit to awaken all the Rue Favart; Amiral snaps a second time; a second time flashes in the pan; then darts up into his apartment; and, after there firing, still with inadequate effect, one musket at himself and another at his captor, is clutched and locked in Prison. (*Riouffe*, p. 73; *Deux Amis*, xii. 298-302.) An indignant little man this Amiral, of Southern temper and complexion, of 'considerable muscular force.' He denies not that he meant to "purge France of a tyrant;" nay avows that he had an eye to the Incorruptible himself, but took Collot as more convenient!

Rumour enough hereupon; heaven-high congratulation of Collot, fraternal embracing, at the Jacobins, and elsewhere. And yet, it would seem the assassin-mood proves catching. Two days more, it is still but the 23d of May, and towards nine in the evening, Cecile Renault, Paper-dealer's daughter, a young woman of soft blooming look, presents herself at the Cabinet-maker's in the Rue Saint-Honore; desires to see Robespierre. Robespierre cannot be seen: she grumbles irreverently. They lay hold of her. She has left a basket in a shop hard by: in the basket are female change of raiment and two knives! Poor Cecile, examined by Committee, declares she "wanted to see what a tyrant was like:" the change of raiment was "for my own use in the place I am surely going to."—"What place?"—"Prison; and then the Guillotine," answered she.—Such things come of Charlotte Corday; in a people prone to imitation, and monomania! Swart choleric men try Charlotte's feat, and their pistols miss fire; soft blooming young women try it, and, only half-resolute, leave their knives in a shop.

O Pitt, and ye Faction of the Stranger, shall the Republic never have rest; but be torn continually by baited springs, by wires of explosive spring-guns? Swart Amiral, fair young Cecile, and all that knew them, and many that did not know them, lie locked, waiting the scrutiny of Tinville.

Chapter 4. Mumbo-Jumbo.

But on the day they call Decadi, New-Sabbath, 20 Prairial, 8th June by old style, what thing is this going forward, in the Jardin National, whilom Tuileries Garden?

All the world is there, in holydays clothes: (*Vilate*, *Causes Secretes de la Revolution de 9 Thermidor*.) foul linen went out with the Hebertists; nay Robespierre, for one, would never once countenance that; but went always elegant and frizzled, not without vanity even,—and had his room hung round with seagreen Portraits and Busts. In holyday clothes, we say, are the innumerable Citoyens and Citoyennes: the weather is of the brightest; cheerful expectation lights all countenances. Juryman Vilate gives breakfast to many a Deputy, in his official Apartment, in the Pavillon ci-devant of Flora; rejoices in the bright-looking multitudes, in the brightness of leafy June, in the auspicious Decadi, or New-Sabbath. This day, if it please Heaven, we are to have, on improved Anti-Chaumette principles: a New Religion.

Catholicism being burned out, and Reason-worship guillotined, was there not need of one? Incorruptible Robespierre, not unlike the Ancients, as Legislator of a free people will now also be Priest and Prophet. He has donned his sky-blue coat, made for the occasion; white silk waistcoat

broidered with silver, black silk breeches, white stockings, shoe-buckles of gold. He is President of the Convention; he has made the Convention decree, so they name it, decreter the 'Existence of the Supreme Being,' and likewise 'ce principe consolateur of the Immortality of the Soul.' These consolatory principles, the basis of rational Republican Religion, are getting decreed; and here, on this blessed Decadi, by help of Heaven and Painter David, is to be our first act of worship.

See, accordingly, how after Decree passed, and what has been called 'the scaggiest Prophetic Discourse ever uttered by man,'—Mahomet Robespierre, in sky-blue coat and black breeches, frizzled and powdered to perfection, bearing in his hand a bouquet of flowers and wheat-ears, issues proudly from the Convention Hall; Convention following him, yet, as is remarked, with an interval. Amphitheatre has been raised, or at least Monticule or Elevation; hideous Statues of Atheism, Anarchy and such like, thanks to Heaven and Painter David, strike abhorrence into the heart. Unluckily however, our Monticule is too small. On the top of it not half of us can stand; wherefore there arises indecent shoving, nay treasonous irreverent growling. Peace, thou Bourdon de l'Oise; peace, or it may be worse for thee!

The seagreen Pontiff takes a torch, Painter David handing it; mouths some other froth-rant of vocables, which happily one cannot hear; strides resolutely forward, in sight of expectant France; sets his torch to Atheism and Company, which are but made of pasteboard steeped in turpentine. They burn up rapidly; and, from within, there rises 'by machinery' an incombustible Statue of Wisdom, which, by ill hap, gets besmoked a little; but does stand there visible in as serene attitude as it can.

And then? Why, then, there is other Processioning, scraggy Discoursing, and—this is our Feast of the Etre Supreme; our new Religion, better or worse, is come!—Look at it one moment, O Reader, not two. The Shabbiest page of Human Annals: or is there, that thou wottest of, one shabbier? Mumbo-Jumbo of the African woods to me seems venerable beside this new Deity of Robespierre; for this is a conscious Mumbo-Jumbo, and knows that he is machinery. O seagreen Prophet, unhappiest of windbags blown nigh to bursting, what distracted Chimera among realities are thou growing to! This then, this common pitch-link for artificial fireworks of turpentine and pasteboard; this is the miraculous Aaron's Rod thou wilt stretch over a hag-ridden hell-ridden France, and bid her plagues cease? Vanish, thou and it!—"Avec ton Etre Supreme," said Billaud, "tu commences m'embeter: With thy Etre Supreme thou beginnest to be a bore to me." (*See Vilate, Causes Secretes. Vilate's Narrative is very curious; but is not to be taken as true, without sifting; being, at bottom, in spite of its title, not a Narrative but a Pleading.*)

Catherine Theot, on the other hand, 'an ancient serving-maid seventy-nine years of age,' inured to Prophecy and the Bastille from of old, sits, in an upper room in the Rue-de-Contrescarpe, poring over the Book of Revelations, with an eye to Robespierre; finds that this astonishing thrice-potent Maximilien really is the Man spoken of by Prophets, who is to make the Earth young again. With her sit devout old Marchionesses, ci-devant honourable women; among whom Old-Constituent Dom Gerle, with his addle head, cannot be wanting. They sit there, in the Rue-de-Contrescarpe; in mysterious adoration: Mumbo is Mumbo, and Robespierre is his Prophet. A conspicuous man this Robespierre. He has his volunteer Bodyguard of Tappe-durs, let us say Strike-sharps, fierce Patriots with feruled sticks; and Jacobins kissing the hem of his garment. He enjoys the admiration of many, the worship of some; and is well worth the wonder of one and all.

The grand question and hope, however, is: Will not this Feast of the Tuileries Mumbo-Jumbo be a sign perhaps that the Guillotine is to abate? Far enough from that! Precisely on the second day after it, Couthon, one of the 'three shallow scoundrels,' gets himself lifted into the Tribune; produces a bundle of papers. Couthon proposes that, as Plots still abound, the Law of the Suspect shall have extension, and Arrestment new vigour and facility. Further that, as in such case business is like to be heavy, our Revolutionary Tribunal too shall have extension; be divided, say, into Four Tribunals, each with its President, each with its Fouquier or Substitute of Fouquier, all labouring at once, and any remnant of shackle or dilatory formality be struck off: in this way it may perhaps still overtake the work. Such is Couthon's Decree of the Twenty-second Prairial, famed in those times. At hearing of which Decree the very Mountain gasped, awestruck; and one Ruamps ventured to say that if it passed without adjournment and discussion, he, as one Representative, "would blow his brains out." Vain saying! The Incorruptible knit his brows; spoke a prophetic fateful word or two: the Law of Prairial is Law; Ruamps glad to leave his rash brains where they are. Death, then, and always Death! Even so. Fouquier is enlarging his borders; making room for Batches of a Hundred and fifty at once;—getting a Guillotine set up, of improved velocity, and to work under cover, in the apartment close by. So that Salut itself has to intervene, and forbid him: "Wilt thou demoralise the Guillotine," asks Collot, reproachfully, "demoraliser le supplice!"

There is indeed danger of that; were not the Republican faith great, it were already done. See, for example, on the 17th of June, what a Batch, Fifty-four at once! Swart Amiral is here, he of the pistol that missed fire; young Cecile Renault, with her father, family, entire kith and kin; the widow of d'Espremeni; old M. de Sombreuil of the Invalides, with his Son,—poor old Sombreuil, seventy-three years old, his Daughter saved him in September, and it was but for this. Faction of the Stranger, fifty-four of them! In red shirts and smocks, as Assassins and Faction of the Stranger, they flit along there; red baleful Phantasmagory, towards the land of Phantoms.

Meanwhile will not the people of the Place de la Revolution, the inhabitants along the Rue Saint-Honore, as these continual Tumbrils pass, begin to look gloomy? Republicans too have bowels. The Guillotine is shifted, then again shifted; finally set up at the remote extremity of the South-East: (*Montgaillard, iv. 237.*) Suburbs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau it is to be hoped, if they have bowels, have very tough ones.

Chapter 5. The Prisons.

It is time now, however, to cast a glance into the Prisons. When Desmoulins moved for his Committee of Mercy, these Twelve Houses of Arrest held five thousand persons. Continually arriving since then, there have now accumulated twelve thousand. They are Ci-devants, Royalists; in far greater part, they are Republicans, of various Girondin, Fayetteish, Un-Jacobin colour. Perhaps no human Habitation or Prison ever equalled in squalor, in noisome horror, these Twelve Houses of Arrest. There exist records of personal experience in them *Memoires sur les Prisons*; one of the strangest Chapters in the *Biography of Man*.

Very singular to look into it: how a kind of order rises up in all conditions of human existence; and wherever two or three are gathered together, there are formed modes of existing together, habitudes, observances, nay gracefulnesses, joys! Citoyen Coitane will explain fully how our lean dinner, of herbs and carrion, was consumed not without politeness and place-aux-dames: how Seigneur and Shoeblack, Duchess and Doll-Tearsheet, flung pellmell into a heap, ranked themselves according to method: at

what hour 'the Citoyennes took to their needlework;' and we, yielding the chairs to them, endeavoured to talk gallantly in a standing posture, or even to sing and harp more or less. Jealousies, enmities are not wanting; nor flirtations, of an effective character.

Alas, by degrees, even needlework must cease: Plot in the Prison rises, by Citoyen Laflotte and Preternatural Suspicion. Suspicious Municipality snatches from us all implements; all money and possession, of means or metal, is ruthlessly searched for, in pocket, in pillow and paillasse, and snatched away; red-capped Commissaries entering every cell! Indignation, temporary desperation, at robbery of its very thimble, fills the gentle heart. Old Nuns shriek shrill discord; demand to be killed forthwith. No help from shrieking! Better was that of the two shiftily male Citizens, who, eager to preserve an implement or two, were it but a pipe-picker, or needle to darn hose with, determined to defend themselves: by tobacco. Swift then, as your fell Red Caps are heard in the Corridor rummaging and slamming, the two Citoyens light their pipes and begin smoking. Thick darkness envelops them. The Red Nightcaps, opening the cell, breathe but one mouthful; burst forth into chorus of barking and coughing. "Quoi, Messieurs," cry the two Citoyens, "You don't smoke? Is the pipe disagreeable! Est-ce que vous ne fumez pas?" But the Red Nightcaps have fled, with slight search: "Vous n'aimez pas la pipe?" cry the Citoyens, as their door slams-to again. (*Maison d'Arret de Port-Libre, par Coittant, &c. Memoires sur les Prisons, ii.*) My poor brother Citoyens, O surely, in a reign of Brotherhood, you are not the two I would guillotine!

Rigour grows, stiffens into horrid tyranny; Plot in the Prison getting ever riper. This Plot in the Prison, as we said, is now the stereotype formula of Tinville: against whomsoever he knows no crime, this is a ready-made crime. His Judgment-bar has become unspeakable; a recognised mockery; known only as the wicket one passes through, towards Death. His Indictments are drawn out in blank; you insert the Names after. He has his moutons, detestable traitor jackalls, who report and bear witness; that they themselves may be allowed to live,—for a time. His Fournees, says the reproachful Collot, 'shall in no case exceed three-score;' that is his maximum. Nightly come his Tumbrils to the Luxembourg, with the fatal Roll-call; list of the Fournee of to-morrow. Men rush towards the Grate; listen, if their name be in it? One deep-drawn breath, when the name is not in: we live still one day! And yet some score or scores of names were in. Quick these; they clasp their loved ones to their heart, one last time; with brief adieu, wet-eyed or dry-eyed, they mount, and are away. This night to the Conciergerie; through the Palais misnamed of Justice, to the Guillotine to-morrow.

Recklessness, defiant levity, the Stoicism if not of strength yet of weakness, has possessed all hearts. Weak women and Ci-devants, their locks not yet made into blond perukes, their skins not yet tanned into breeches, are accustomed to 'act the Guillotine' by way of pastime. In fantastic mummary, with towel-turbans, blanket-ermine, a mock Sanhedrim of Judges sits, a mock Tinville pleads; a culprit is doomed, is guillotined by the oversetting of two chairs. Sometimes we carry it farther: Tinville himself, in his turn, is doomed, and not to the Guillotine alone. With blackened face, hirsute, horned, a shaggy Satan snatches him not unshrieking; shews him, with outstretched arm and voice, the fire that is not quenched, the worm that dies not; the monotony of Hell-pain, and the What hour? answered by, It is Eternity! (*Montgaillard, iv. 218; Riouffe, p. 273.*)

And still the Prisons fill fuller, and still the Guillotine goes faster. On all high roads march flights of Prisoners, wending towards Paris. Not Ci-devants now; they, the noisy of them, are mown down; it is Republicans now. Chained two and two they march; in exasperated moments, singing their Marseillaise. A hundred and thirty-two men of Nantes for instance, march towards Paris, in these same days: Republicans, or say even Jacobins to the marrow of the bone; but Jacobins who had not approved

Noyading. (*Voyage de Cent Trente-deux Nantais, Prisons, ii. 288-335.*) Vive la Republique rises from them in all streets of towns: they rest by night, in unutterable noisome dens, crowded to choking; one or two dead on the morrow. They are wayworn, weary of heart; can only shout: Live the Republic; we, as under horrid enchantment, dying in this way for it!

Some Four Hundred Priests, of whom also there is record, ride at anchor, 'in the roads of the Isle of Aix,' long months; looking out on misery, vacuity, waste Sands of Oleron and the ever-moaning brine. Ragged, sordid, hungry; wasted to shadows: eating their unclean ration on deck, circularly, in parties of a dozen, with finger and thumb; beating their scandalous clothes between two stones; choked in horrible miasmata, closed under hatches, seventy of them in a berth, through night; so that the 'aged Priest is found lying dead in the morning, in the attitude of prayer!' (*Relation de ce qu'ont souffert pour la Religion les Pretres deportes en 1794, dans la rade de l'île d'Aix, Prisons, ii. 387-485.*)—How long, O Lord!

Not forever; no. All Anarchy, all Evil, Injustice, is, by the nature of it, dragon's-teeth; suicidal, and cannot endure.

Chapter 6. To Finish the Terror.

It is very remarkable, indeed, that since the Etre-Supreme Feast, and the sublime continued harangues on it, which Billaud feared would become a bore to him, Robespierre has gone little to Committee; but held himself apart, as if in a kind of pet. Nay they have made a Report on that old Catherine Theot, and her Regenerative Man spoken of by the Prophets; not in the best spirit. This Theot mystery they affect to regard as a Plot; but have evidently introduced a vein of satire, of irreverent banter, not against the Spinster alone, but obliquely against her Regenerative Man! Barrere's light pen was perhaps at the bottom of it: read through the solemn snuffling organs of old Vadier of the Surete Generale, the Theot Report had its effect; wrinkling the general Republican visage into an iron grin. Ought these things to be?

We note further that among the Prisoners in the Twelve Houses of Arrest, there is one whom we have seen before. Senhora Fontenai, born Cabarus, the fair Proserpine whom Representative Tallien Pluto-like did gather at Bourdeaux, not without effect on himself! Tallien is home, by recall, long since, from Bourdeaux; and in the most alarming position. Vain that he sounded, louder even than ever, the note of Jacobinism, to hide past shortcomings: the Jacobins purged him out; two times has Robespierre growled at him words of omen from the Convention Tribune. And now his fair Cabarus, hit by denunciation, lies Arrested, Suspect, in spite of all he could do!—Shut in horrid pinfold of death, the Senhora smuggles out to her red-gloomy Tallien the most pressing entreaties and conjurings: Save me; save thyself. Seest thou not that thy own head is doomed; thou with a too fiery audacity; a Dantonist withal; against whom lie grudges? Are ye not all doomed, as in the Polyphemus Cavern; the fawningest slave of you will be but eaten last!—Tallien feels with a shudder that it is true. Tallien has had words of omen, Bourdon has had words, Freron is hated and Barras: each man 'feels his head if it yet stick on his shoulders.'

Meanwhile Robespierre, we still observe, goes little to Convention, not at all to Committee; speaks nothing except to his Jacobin House of Lords, amid his bodyguard of Tappe-durs. These 'forty-days,' for we are now far in July, he has not shewed face in Committee; could only work there by his three shallow scoundrels, and the terror there was of him. The Incorruptible himself sits apart; or is seen

stalking in solitary places in the fields, with an intensely meditative air; some say, 'with eyes red-spotted,' (*Deux Amis*, xii. 347-73.) fruit of extreme bile: the lamentablest seagreen Chimera that walks the Earth that July! O hapless Chimera; for thou too hadst a life, and a heart of flesh,—what is this the stern gods, seeming to smile all the way, have led and let thee to! Art not thou he who, few years ago, was a young Advocate of promise; and gave up the Arras Judgeship rather than sentence one man to die?—

What his thoughts might be? His plans for finishing the Terror? One knows not. Dim vestiges there flit of Agrarian Law; a victorious Sansculottism become Landed Proprietor; old Soldiers sitting in National Mansions, in Hospital Palaces of Chambord and Chantilly; peace bought by victory; breaches healed by Feast of Etre Supreme;—and so, through seas of blood, to Equality, Frugality, worksome Blessedness, Fraternity, and Republic of the virtues! Blessed shore, of such a sea of Aristocrat blood: but how to land on it? Through one last wave: blood of corrupt Sansculottists; traitorous or semi-traitorous Conventionals, rebellious Talliens, Billauds, to whom with my Etre Supreme I have become a bore; with my Apocalyptic Old Woman a laughing-stock!—So stalks he, this poor Robespierre, like a seagreen ghost through the blooming July. Vestiges of schemes flit dim. But what his schemes or his thoughts were will never be known to man.

New Catacombs, some say, are digging for a huge simultaneous butchery. Convention to be butchered, down to the right pitch, by General Henriot and Company: Jacobin House of Lords made dominant; and Robespierre Dictator. (*Deux Amis*, xii. 350-8.) There is actually, or else there is not actually, a List made out; which the Hairdresser has got eye on, as he frizzled the Incorruptible locks. Each man asks himself, Is it I?

Nay, as Tradition and rumour of Anecdote still convey it, there was a remarkable bachelor's dinner one hot day at Barrere's. For doubt not, O Reader, this Barrere and others of them gave dinners; had 'country-house at Clichy,' with elegant enough sumptuosities, and pleasures high-rouged! (*See Vilate*.) But at this dinner we speak of, the day being so hot, it is said, the guests all stript their coats, and left them in the drawing-room: whereupon Carnot glided out; groped in Robespierre's pocket; found a list of Forty, his own name among them; and tarried not at the wine-cup that day!—Ye must bestir yourselves, O Friends; ye dull Frogs of the Marsh, mute ever since Girondism sank under, even ye now must croak or die! Councils are held, with word and beck; nocturnal, mysterious as death. Does not a feline Maximilien stalk there; voiceless as yet; his green eyes red-spotted; back bent, and hair up? Rash Tallien, with his rash temper and audacity of tongue; he shall bell the cat. Fix a day; and be it soon, lest never!

Lo, before the fixed day, on the day which they call Eighth of Thermidor, 26th July 1794, Robespierre himself reappears in Convention; mounts to the Tribune! The biliary face seems clouded with new gloom; judge whether your Talliens, Bourdons listened with interest. It is a voice bodeful of death or of life. Long-winded, unmelodious as the screech-owl's, sounds that prophetic voice: Degenerate condition of Republican spirit; corrupt moderatism; Surete, Salut Committees themselves infected; back-sliding on this hand and on that; I, Maximilien, alone left incorruptible, ready to die at a moment's warning. For all which what remedy is there? The Guillotine; new vigour to the all-healing Guillotine: death to traitors of every hue! So sings the prophetic voice; into its Convention sounding-board. The old song this: but to-day, O Heavens! has the sounding-board ceased to act? There is not resonance in this Convention; there is, so to speak, a gasp of silence; nay a certain grating of one knows not what!—Lecointre, our old Draper of Versailles, in these questionable circumstances, sees nothing he can do so safe as rise, 'insidiously' or not insidiously, and move, according to established

wont, that the Robespierre Speech be 'printed and sent to the Departments.' Hark: gratings, even of dissonance! Honourable Members hint dissonance; Committee-Members, inculpated in the Speech, utter dissonance; demand 'delay in printing.' Ever higher rises the note of dissonance; inquiry is even made by Editor Freron: "What has become of the Liberty of Opinions in this Convention?" The Order to print and transmit, which had got passed, is rescinded. Robespierre, greener than ever before, has to retire, foiled; discerning that it is mutiny, that evil is nigh.

Mutiny is a thing of the fatallest nature in all enterprises whatsoever; a thing so incalculable, swift-frightful; not to be dealt with in fright. But mutiny in a Robespierre Convention, above all,—it is like fire seen sputtering in the ship's powder-room! One death-defiant plunge at it, this moment, and you may still tread it out: hesitate till next moment,—ship and ship's captain, crew and cargo are shivered far; the ship's voyage has suddenly ended between sea and sky. If Robespierre can, to-night, produce his Henriot and Company, and get his work done by them, he and Sansculottism may still subsist some time; if not, probably not. Oliver Cromwell, when that Agitator Serjeant stepped forth from the ranks, with plea of grievances, and began gesticulating and demonstrating, as the mouthpiece of Thousands expectant there,—discerned, with those truculent eyes of his, how the matter lay; plucked a pistol from his holsters; blew Agitator and Agitation instantly out. Noll was a man fit for such things.

Robespierre, for his part, glides over at evening to his Jacobin House of Lords; unfolds there, instead of some adequate resolution, his woes, his uncommon virtues, incorruptibilities; then, secondly, his rejected screech-owl Oration;—reads this latter over again; and declares that he is ready to die at a moment's warning. Thou shalt not die! shouts Jacobinism from its thousand throats. "Robespierre, I will drink the hemlock with thee," cries Painter David, "Je boirai la cigue avec toi;"—a thing not essential to do, but which, in the fire of the moment, can be said.

Our Jacobin sounding-board, therefore, does act! Applauses heaven-high cover the rejected Oration; fire-eyed fury lights all Jacobin features: Insurrection a sacred duty; the Convention to be purged; Sovereign People under Henriot and Municipality; we will make a new June-Second of it: to your tents, O Israel! In this key pipes Jacobinism; in sheer tumult of revolt. Let Tallien and all Opposition men make off. Collot d'Herbois, though of the supreme Salut, and so lately near shot, is elbowed, bullied; is glad to escape alive. Entering Committee-room of Salut, all dishevelled, he finds sleek sombre Saint-Just there, among the rest; who in his sleek way asks, "What is passing at the Jacobins?"—"What is passing?" repeats Collot, in the unhistrionic Cambyzes' vein: "What is passing? Nothing but revolt and horrors are passing. Ye want our lives; ye shall not have them." Saint-Just stutters at such Cambyzes'-oratory; takes his hat to withdraw. That report he had been speaking of, Report on Republican Things in General we may say, which is to be read in Convention on the morrow, he cannot shew it them this moment: a friend has it; he, Saint-Just, will get it, and send it, were he once home. Once home, he sends not it, but an answer that he will not send it; that they will hear it from the Tribune to-morrow.

Let every man, therefore, according to a well-known good-advice, 'pray to Heaven, and keep his powder dry!' Paris, on the morrow, will see a thing. Swift scouts fly dim or invisible, all night, from Surete and Salut; from conclave to conclave; from Mother Society to Townhall. Sleep, can it fall on the eyes of Talliens, Frerons, Collots? Puissant Henriot, Mayor Fleuriot, Judge Coffinhal, Procureur Payan, Robespierre and all the Jacobins are getting ready.

Chapter 7. Go Down To.

Tallien's eyes beamed bright, on the morrow, Ninth of Thermidor 'about nine o'clock,' to see that the Convention had actually met. Paris is in rumour: but at least we are met, in Legal Convention here; we have not been snatched seriatim; treated with a Pride's Purge at the door. "Allons, brave men of the Plain," late Frogs of the Marsh! cried Tallien with a squeeze of the hand, as he passed in; Saint-Just's sonorous organ being now audible from the Tribune, and the game of games begun.

Saint-Just is verily reading that Report of his; green Vengeance, in the shape of Robespierre, watching nigh. Behold, however, Saint-Just has read but few sentences, when interruption rises, rapid crescendo; when Tallien starts to his feet, and Billaud, and this man starts and that,—and Tallien, a second time, with his: "Citoyens, at the Jacobins last night, I trembled for the Republic. I said to myself, if the Convention dare not strike the Tyrant, then I myself dare; and with this I will do it, if need be," said he, whisking out a clear-gleaming Dagger, and brandishing it there: the Steel of Brutus, as we call it. Whereat we all bellow, and brandish, impetuous acclaim. "Tyranny; Dictatorship! Triumvirat!" And the Salut Committee-men accuse, and all men accuse, and uproar, and impetuously acclaim. And Saint-Just is standing motionless, pale of face; Couthon ejaculating, "Triumvir?" with a look at his paralytic legs. And Robespierre is struggling to speak, but President Thuriot is jingling the bell against him, but the Hall is sounding against him like an Aeolus-Hall: and Robespierre is mounting the Tribune-steps and descending again; going and coming, like to choke with rage, terror, desperation:—and mutiny is the order of the day! (*Moniteur*, Nos. 311, 312; *Debats*, iv. 421-42; *Deux Amis*, xii. 390-411.)

O President Thuriot, thou that wert Elector Thuriot, and from the Bastille battlements sawest Saint-Antoine rising like the Ocean-tide, and hast seen much since, sawest thou ever the like of this? Jingle of bell, which thou jinglest against Robespierre, is hardly audible amid the Bedlam-storm; and men rage for life. "President of Assassins," shrieks Robespierre, "I demand speech of thee for the last time!" It cannot be had. "To you, O virtuous men of the Plain," cries he, finding audience one moment, "I appeal to you!" The virtuous men of the Plain sit silent as stones. And Thuriot's bell jingles, and the Hall sounds like Aeolus's Hall. Robespierre's frothing lips are grown 'blue;' his tongue dry, cleaving to the roof of his mouth. "The blood of Danton chokes him," cry they. "Accusation! Decree of Accusation!" Thuriot swiftly puts that question. Accusation passes; the incorruptible Maximilien is decreed Accused.

"I demand to share my Brother's fate, as I have striven to share his virtues," cries Augustin, the Younger Robespierre: Augustin also is decreed. And Couthon, and Saint-Just, and Lebas, they are all decreed; and packed forth,—not without difficulty, the Ushers almost trembling to obey. Triumvirat and Company are packed forth, into Salut Committee-room; their tongue cleaving to the roof of their mouth. You have but to summon the Municipality; to cashier Commandant Henriot, and launch Arrest at him; to regular formalities; hand Tinville his victims. It is noon: the Aeolus-Hall has delivered itself; blows now victorious, harmonious, as one irresistible wind.

And so the work is finished? One thinks so; and yet it is not so. Alas, there is yet but the first-act finished; three or four other acts still to come; and an uncertain catastrophe! A huge City holds in it so many confusions: seven hundred thousand human heads; not one of which knows what its neighbour is doing, nay not what itself is doing.—See, accordingly, about three in the afternoon, Commandant Henriot, how instead of sitting cashiered, arrested, he gallops along the Quais, followed by Municipal Gendarmes, 'trampling down several persons!' For the Townhall sits deliberating, openly insurgent: Barriers to be shut; no Gaoler to admit any Prisoner this day;—and Henriot is galloping towards the Tuileries, to deliver Robespierre. On the Quai de la Ferraille, a young Citoyen, walking with his

wife, says aloud: "Gendarmes, that man is not your Commandant; he is under arrest." The Gendarmes strike down the young Citoyen with the flat of their swords. (*Precis des evenemens du Neuf Thermidor, par C.A. Meda, ancien Gendarme, Paris, 1825.*)

Representatives themselves (*as Merlin the Thionviller*) who accost him, this puissant Henriot flings into guardhouses. He bursts towards the Tuileries Committee-room, "to speak with Robespierre:" with difficulty, the Ushers and Tuileries Gendarmes, earnestly pleading and drawing sabre, seize this Henriot; get the Henriot Gendarmes persuaded not to fight; get Robespierre and Company packed into hackney-coaches, sent off under escort, to the Luxembourg and other Prisons. This then is the end? May not an exhausted Convention adjourn now, for a little repose and sustenance, 'at five o'clock'?

An exhausted Convention did it; and repented it. The end was not come; only the end of the second-act. Hark, while exhausted Representatives sit at victuals,—tocsin bursting from all steeples, drums rolling, in the summer evening: Judge Coffinhal is galloping with new Gendarmes to deliver Henriot from Tuileries Committee-room; and does deliver him! Puissant Henriot vaults on horseback; sets to haranguing the Tuileries Gendarmes; corrupts the Tuileries Gendarmes too; trots off with them to Townhall. Alas, and Robespierre is not in Prison: the Gaoler shewed his Municipal order, durst not on pain of his life, admit any Prisoner; the Robespierre Hackney-coaches, in confused jangle and whirl of uncertain Gendarmes, have floated safe—into the Townhall! There sit Robespierre and Company, embraced by Municipals and Jacobins, in sacred right of Insurrection; redacting Proclamations; sounding tocsins; corresponding with Sections and Mother Society. Is not here a pretty enough third-act of a natural Greek Drama; catastrophe more uncertain than ever?

The hasty Convention rushes together again, in the ominous nightfall: President Collot, for the chair is his, enters with long strides, paleness on his face; claps on his hat; says with solemn tone: "Citoyens, armed Villains have beset the Committee-rooms, and got possession of them. The hour is come, to die at our post!" "Oui," answer one and all: "We swear it!" It is no rhodomontade, this time, but a sad fact and necessity; unless we do at our posts, we must verily die! Swift therefore, Robespierre, Henriot, the Municipality, are declared Rebels; put *Hors la Loi*, Out of Law. Better still, we appoint Barras Commandant of what Armed-Force is to be had; send Missionary Representatives to all Sections and quarters, to preach, and raise force; will die at least with harness on our back.

What a distracted City; men riding and running, reporting and hearsaying; the Hour clearly in travail,—child not to be named till born! The poor Prisoners in the Luxembourg hear the rumour; tremble for a new September. They see men making signals to them, on skylights and roofs, apparently signals of hope; cannot in the least make out what it is. (*Memoires sur les Prisons, ii. 277.*) We observe however, in the eventide, as usual, the Death-tumbrils faring South-eastward, through Saint-Antoine, towards their Barrier du Trone. Saint-Antoine's tough bowels melt; Saint-Antoine surrounds the Tumbrils; says, It shall not be. O Heavens, why should it! Henriot and Gendarmes, scouring the streets that way, bellow, with waved sabres, that it must. Quit hope, ye poor Doomed! The Tumbrils move on.

But in this set of Tumbrils there are two other things notable: one notable person; and one want of a notable person. The notable person is Lieutenant-General Loiserolles, a nobleman by birth, and by nature; laying down his life here for his son. In the Prison of Saint-Lazare, the night before last, hurrying to the Grate to hear the Death-list read, he caught the name of his son. The son was asleep at the moment. "I am Loiserolles," cried the old man: at Tinville's bar, an error in the Christian name is

little; small objection was made. The want of the notable person, again, is that of Deputy Paine! Paine has sat in the Luxembourg since January; and seemed forgotten; but Fouquier had pricked him at last. The Turnkey, List in hand, is marking with chalk the outer doors of to-morrow's Fournée. Paine's outer door happened to be open, turned back on the wall; the Turnkey marked it on the side next him, and hurried on: another Turnkey came, and shut it; no chalk-mark now visible, the Fournée went without Paine. Paine's life lay not there.—

Our fifth-act, of this natural Greek Drama, with its natural unities, can only be painted in gross; somewhat as that antique Painter, driven desperate, did the foam! For through this blessed July night, there is clangour, confusion very great, of marching troops; of Sections going this way, Sections going that; of Missionary Representatives reading Proclamations by torchlight; Missionary Legendre, who has raised force somewhere, emptying out the Jacobins, and flinging their key on the Convention table: "I have locked their door; it shall be Virtue that re-opens it." Paris, we say, is set against itself, rushing confused, as Ocean-currents do; a huge Mahlstrom, sounding there, under cloud of night. Convention sits permanent on this hand; Municipality most permanent on that. The poor Prisoners hear tocsin and rumour; strive to bethink them of the signals apparently of hope. Meek continual Twilight streaming up, which will be Dawn and a To-morrow, silvers the Northern hem of Night; it wends and wends there, that meek brightness, like a silent prophecy, along the great Ring-Dial of the Heaven. So still, eternal! And on Earth all is confused shadow and conflict; dissidence, tumultuous gloom and glare; and Destiny as yet shakes her doubtful urn.

About three in the morning, the dissident Armed-Forces have met. Henriot's Armed Force stood ranked in the Place de Greve; and now Barras's, which he has recruited, arrives there; and they front each other, cannon bristling against cannon. Citoyens! cries the voice of Discretion, loudly enough, Before coming to bloodshed, to endless civil-war, hear the Convention Decree read: 'Robespierre and all rebels Out of Law!'—Out of Law? There is terror in the sound: unarmed Citoyens disperse rapidly home; Municipal Cannoneers range themselves on the Convention side, with shouting. At which shout, Henriot descends from his upper room, far gone in drink as some say; finds his Place de Greve empty; the cannons' mouth turned towards him; and, on the whole,—that it is now the catastrophe!

Stumbling in again, the wretched drunk-sobered Henriot announces: "All is lost!" "Miserable! it is thou that hast lost it," cry they: and fling him, or else he flings himself, out of window: far enough down; into masonwork and horror of cesspool; not into death but worse. Augustin Robespierre follows him; with the like fate. Saint-Just called on Lebas to kill him: who would not. Couthon crept under a table; attempting to kill himself; not doing it.—On entering that Sanhedrim of Insurrection, we find all as good as extinct; undone, ready for seizure. Robespierre was sitting on a chair, with pistol shot blown through, not his head, but his under jaw; the suicidal hand had failed. (*Meda. p. 384.*) Meda asserts that it was he who, with infinite courage, though in a lefthanded manner, shot Robespierre. Meda got promoted for his services of this night; and died General and Baron. Few credited Meda (*in what was otherwise incredible.*) With prompt zeal, not without trouble, we gather these wretched Conspirators; fish up even Henriot and Augustin, bleeding and foul; pack them all, rudely enough, into carts; and shall, before sunrise, have them safe under lock and key. Amid shoutings and embracings.

Robespierre lay in an anteroom of the Convention Hall, while his Prison-escort was getting ready; the mangled jaw bound up rudely with bloody linen: a spectacle to men. He lies stretched on a table, a deal-box his pillow; the sheath of the pistol is still clenched convulsively in his hand. Men bully him, insult him: his eyes still indicate intelligence; he speaks no word. 'He had on the sky-blue coat he had got made for the Feast of the Etre Supreme'—O reader, can thy hard heart hold out against that? His

trousers were nankeen; the stockings had fallen down over the ankles. He spake no word more in this world.

And so, at six in the morning, a victorious Convention adjourns. Report flies over Paris as on golden wings; penetrates the Prisons; irradiates the faces of those that were ready to perish: turnkeys and moutons, fallen from their high estate, look mute and blue. It is the 28th day of July, called 10th of Thermidor, year 1794.

Fouquier had but to identify; his Prisoners being already Out of Law. At four in the afternoon, never before were the streets of Paris seen so crowded. From the Palais de Justice to the Place de la Revolution, for thither again go the Tumbrils this time, it is one dense stirring mass; all windows crammed; the very roofs and ridge-tiles budding forth human Curiosity, in strange gladness. The Death-tumbrils, with their motley Batch of Outlaws, some Twenty-three or so, from Maximilien to Mayor Fleuriot and Simon the Cordwainer, roll on. All eyes are on Robespierre's Tumbril, where he, his jaw bound in dirty linen, with his half-dead Brother, and half-dead Henriot, lie shattered; their 'seventeen hours' of agony about to end. The Gendarmes point their swords at him, to shew the people which is he. A woman springs on the Tumbril; clutching the side of it with one hand; waving the other Sibyl-like; and exclaims: "The death of thee gladdens my very heart, m'enivre de joie;" Robespierre opened his eyes; "Scelerat, go down to Hell, with the curses of all wives and mothers!"—At the foot of the scaffold, they stretched him on the ground till his turn came. Lifted aloft, his eyes again opened; caught the bloody axe. Samson wrenched the coat off him; wrenched the dirty linen from his jaw: the jaw fell powerless, there burst from him a cry;—hideous to hear and see. Samson, thou canst not be too quick!

Samson's work done, there burst forth shout on shout of applause. Shout, which prolongs itself not only over Paris, but over France, but over Europe, and down to this Generation. Deservedly, and also undeservedly. O unhappiest Advocate of Arras, wert thou worse than other Advocates? Stricter man, according to his Formula, to his Credo and his Cant, of probities, benevolences, pleasures-of-virtue, and such like, lived not in that age. A man fitted, in some luckier settled age, to have become one of those incorruptible barren Pattern-Figures, and have had marble-tablets and funeral-sermons! His poor landlord, the Cabinetmaker in the Rue Saint-Honore, loved him; his Brother died for him. May God be merciful to him, and to us.

This is end of the Reign of Terror; new glorious Revolution named of Thermidor; of Thermidor 9th, year 2; which being interpreted into old slave-style means 27th of July, 1794. Terror is ended; and death in the Place de la Revolution, were the 'Tail of Robespierre' once executed; which service Fouquier in large Batches is swiftly managing.