

III.

A CORNER NOT DIPPED INTO THE STYX.

Was such a man in very deed a man? Could the servant of all men feel a personal affection? Was he not too much of a soul to possess a heart? That vast embrace, enfolding everything and everybody, could it be limited to one? Could Cimourdain love? We answer, yes.

In his youth, when he was a tutor in an almost princely family, he had a pupil, the son and heir of the house, whom he loved. It is easy to love a child. What is there that one cannot forgive a child? One forgives him for being a lord, a prince, a king. His innocent age and his weakness make one forget the crimes of his race and the arrogance of his rank. He is so little that one pardons him for being great, the slave forgives him for being the master. The old negro idolizes the white nursling. Cimourdain had conceived a passionate love for his pupil. Childhood is so ineffably charming, it absorbs all love. All the power of loving in Cimourdain's nature had, so to speak, concentrated itself upon that child; the heart, condemned to solitude, fed upon this sweet and innocent creature, which it loved with the combined tenderness of a father, a brother, a friend, and a creator. To him he was indeed a son,—not of the flesh, but of the soul; he was not his father, the author of his being, but he was his master, and this was his masterpiece. He had made a man of this little lord,—possibly a great man, who knows? Thus run our dreams. Without the knowledge of the family,—for does one require permission to create an intelligence, a well-directed will, and an upright character?—he had communicated to the young viscount, his pupil, all the advanced ideas that he himself held; he had inoculated him with the dread virus of his own virtue; he had infused into his veins his belief, his conscience, his ideal; into the brain of this aristocrat, as into a mould, he had poured the soul of the people. Mind seeks nourishment; intelligence is a breast. There is an analogy between the nurse who gives her milk and the tutor who gives his thought. Sometimes the tutor is more of a father than the actual father himself, just as the nurse is more like a mother than the natural mother. Cimourdain was closely bound to his pupil by the profound paternity of the soul. The very sight of the child touched him.

Let us add this: it was an easy matter to replace the father, since the child had none, he was an orphan; his father and mother were both dead; there was only a blind grandmother, and a great-uncle who did not live at home to watch over him. The grandmother died; the great-uncle, who was the head of the family, was a military man, a member of the high nobility, who held various appointments at Court; he avoided the old family dungeon, living at Versailles, changing his quarters with the

army, and leaving the orphan alone in the solitary castle. Thus the preceptor was the master in every sense of the word. Furthermore, let us add, Cimourdain had witnessed the birth of his pupil. When almost a baby, the child had a serious illness; during the crisis Cimourdain had watched over him night and day. The doctor prescribes, but it is the nurse who saves, and Cimourdain had saved the child. Not only was his pupil indebted to him for his instruction, his education, and his knowledge, he also owed him his convalescence and his health; over and above the development of his mind he owed him his very life. We worship those who are indebted to us for everything; hence Cimourdain worshipped the child.

In the course of time the natural separation between them took place. Having finished his education, Cimourdain was obliged to leave the child, who had now become a young man. With what cold and careless cruelty such separations are planned! How calmly do families discharge the tutor, who leaves his soul behind him with the child, and the nurse who leaves her heart's blood! Cimourdain, having received his salary and his dismissal, had left the higher for the lower sphere; the partition that separates the great from the little had closed once more. The young lord, an officer by birth, received a captain's commission at the outset, and had departed to join some garrison. The humble tutor, already a rebellious priest in his secret heart, had lost no time in returning to the obscure ground-floor of the church, among the inferior clergy, and thus lost sight of his pupil.

Revolution came. The recollection still brooding within him of that creature whom he had transformed into a man was by no means lost, although buried beneath the immense accumulation of public affairs.

It is a noble deed to model a statue and breathe into it the breath of life; but to mould an intelligence and inspire it with the spirit of truth is far nobler. Cimourdain was the Pygmalion of a soul.

The mind may possess its offspring.

The only being on earth whom he loved was this pupil,—child and orphan as he was. Is such a man vulnerable to the influence of any affection whatsoever? We shall see.

[1]A pan meaning a Turkish republic, and the republic expelled.—TR.



LE CABARET DE LA
RUE DU PAON

BOOK II.

THE POT-HOUSE OF THE RUE DU PAON

I.

MINOS, ÆACUS, AND RHADAMANTHUS.



In the Rue du Paon there was an ale-house called by courtesy a café, and in this café a back-room which has since become famous in history. It was there that from time to time those men, so powerful and so closely watched that they dared not venture to speak to one another in public, held their secret meetings.

It was there, on the 23d day of October, 1792, that the Mountain and the Gironde exchanged their famous kiss. There, too, Garat—although he does not admit it in his memoirs—came for information during that rueful night when, after having placed Clavière in safety in the Rue de Beaune, he stopped his carriage on the Pont-Royal to listen to the tocsin. On the 28th of June, 1793, in this back-room, three men were gathered around a table. Their chairs did not touch. Each man occupied one of the three sides of the table, leaving the fourth one vacant. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. Although it was still light in the street, the back-room was dark, and a lamp—a luxury in those times—hanging from the ceiling threw its light upon the table. The first of those men was pale, young, and grave, with thin lips and a cold unsympathetic expression. There was a nervous twitching in his cheek, which must have been a drawback to the act of smiling. He was powdered and gloved, and his well-brushed and carefully-buttoned light-blue coat fitted him without a wrinkle. He wore nankeen breeches, white stockings, a high cravat, a plaited shirt-frill, and silver buckles on his shoes. Of the two other men, one was, so to speak, a giant, the other a dwarf. The tall man was negligently dressed in a loose coat of scarlet, with his neck bare, and a half-untied cravat hanging carelessly below his shirt-frill; his waistcoat was unfastened for want of buttons; he wore top-boots; and his hair, although dishevelled and bristling, still showed signs of former dressing; his wig looked very much like a mane, and his face was marked by the small-pox. Between his eyebrows was a line betokening a fierce temper, and at the corner of his mouth another, rather suggestive of a kindly nature. His lips were thick, his teeth large; he had the fist of a porter, and flashing eyes. The short personage was a yellow-looking man, who when seated had the effect of one deformed. His head was thrown back, his eyes blood-shot; livid patches covered his face; a handkerchief was tied over his straight, greasy hair; no forehead to speak of, but a monstrous and terrible mouth. He wore long trousers, slippers, a waistcoat that seemed originally to have been made of white satin, and over it a loose jacket, in the folds of which a hard straight line revealed the presence of a poniard. The first of these men was Robespierre, the second Danton, the third Marat.

They were alone in this room. Before Danton stood a bottle of wine covered with dust,—reminding one of Luther's half pint of beer,—a cup of coffee before Marat, and papers were spread in front of Robespierre.

Near the papers stood one of those round, heavy, ridged, leaden inkstands, which will be remembered by all who were schoolboys at the beginning of this century, and a pen had been thrown down beside it. A large brass seal bearing the words "Palloy fecit," and representing an exact miniature model of the Bastille, rested upon these papers. A map of France lay outspread in the middle of the table. Outside the door stood

Marat's watchdog, one Laurent Basse, the same who was an agent at No. 18 Rue des Cordeliers, and who on the 13th of July, nearly a fortnight after this 28th of June, was to deal a blow with a chair upon the head of a woman named Charlotte Corday, who at this time was vaguely dreaming at Caen. Laurent Basse was the proof-carrier of "L'Ami du Peuple." On that evening, having been brought by his master to the café of the Rue du Paon, he was ordered to keep the room closed where Marat, Danton, and Robespierre were seated, and to admit no one, unless it were some person from the Committee of Public Safety, the Commune, or the Évêché.

Robespierre would not have it closed against Saint-Just, neither would Danton refuse admittance to Pache, or Marat to Gusman.

The subject of the conference, which had already lasted a long time, lay in the papers spread out on the table, which Robespierre had been reading aloud. The voices were gradually rising higher and higher. Something very like anger was developing between these three men. From without one could catch, from time to time, fragments of excited speech. In those days the custom of public tribunals seemed to have created a certain right to listen. It was at the time when the copying clerk, Fabricius Pâris, watched through the key-hole the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety; not an act of supererogation, be it observed, for it was this very Pâris who notified Danton on the night of the 31st of March, 1794. Laurent Basse had his ear at the door of the back-room in which Danton, Marat, and Robespierre were seated; he served Marat, but he belonged to the Évêché.

II.

MAGNA TESTANTUR VOCE PER UMBRAS.

Danton had just risen, pushing back his chair impetuously. "Listen!" he cried. "There is but one urgent business,—the Republic is in danger. I have but a single purpose, that is, to deliver France from the enemy. And to accomplish this, all means are fair. All! All! All! I have to deal with every form of danger. I employ every variety of expedient, and when all is to be feared, then I venture all. My thought is a lioness. No half measures, no squeamishness in revolution. Nemesis is not a haughty prude. Let us make ourselves terrible and likewise useful. Does the elephant stop to see where he puts his foot? Let us crush the enemy."

Robespierre replied mildly,—

"I am willing."

Then he added,—

"The question is, to learn the whereabouts of the enemy."

"He is without, and it is I who have driven him there," said Danton.

"He is within, and I am watching him," said Robespierre.

"I will drive him out again," replied Danton.

"One cannot so easily expel an internal enemy."

"What, then, is to be done?"

"He must be exterminated."

"I agree to that," said Danton, in his turn.

And he continued,—

"But I tell you he is outside, Robespierre."

"And I tell you that he is within, Danton."

"Robespierre, he is on the frontier."

"He is in the Vendée, Danton."

"Calm yourselves," remarked a third voice; "he is everywhere, and you are lost."

It was Marat who spoke.

Robespierre looked at Marat, and quietly retorted,—

"A truce to generalizations. Let us come to particulars. Here are the facts."

"Pedant!" growled Marat.

Placing his hand on the paper spread out before him, Robespierre continued:—

"I have just read you the despatches of Prieur de la Marne, and also communicated the information given by Gélambre. Listen, Danton; foreign war is as nothing compared with the dangers of civil war. A foreign war is like a scratch on the elbow, but civil war is an ulcer which eats away your liver. Here is the sum and substance of all that I have just read to you: the Vendée, which has hitherto been divided among many chiefs, is about to concentrate its forces. Henceforth it is to have one leader—"

"A sort of central brigand," muttered Danton.

"It is the man who landed near Pontorson on the 2d of June. You have seen what he is. Observe, that this landing was contemporary with the arrest of the representatives, Prieur de la Côte d'Or and Romme, at Bayeux, by that treacherous district of Calvados, which took place on the very same day, the 2d of June."

"And their transfer to the castle of Caen," said Danton.

Robespierre replied:—

"I will proceed to sum up the despatches. They are organizing the warfare of the forest on a vast scale. At the same time an English invasion is in preparation,—Vendeans and Englishmen; Brittany joining hands with Britain. The Hurons of Finistère speak the same language as the Topinambes of Cornwall. I showed you an intercepted letter of Puisaye, where he says that 'twenty thousand red coats distributed among the insurgents will be the means of raising one hundred thousand more.' When the peasant insurrection is fully organized, the English descent will take place. Here is the plan; follow it on the map." And putting his finger on the map, Robespierre continued:—

"The English have the choice of landing place, from Cancale to Paimpol. Craig would prefer the Bay of Saint-Brieuc, Cornwallis the Bay of Saint-Cast. But this is simply a matter of detail. The left shore of the Loire is guarded by the rebel Vendean army, and as to the twenty-eight miles of open country between Ancenis and Pontorson, forty Norman parishes have promised their assistance. The descent will be made at three points, Plérin, Iffiniac, and Pléneuf; from Plérin they will go to Saint-Brieuc, and from Pléneuf to Lamballe; on the second day they intend to reach Dinan, where there are nine hundred English prisoners, thus simultaneously occupying Saint-Jouan and Saint-Méen, where they are to leave the cavalry; on the third day two columns will march,—one to Jouan on Bédée, the other to Dinan on Becherel, a natural fortress, and where they propose to set up two batteries; on the fourth day they expect to be at Rennes, which is the key to Brittany. Whoever has Rennes is master of the situation. Rennes once taken, Châteauneuf and Saint-Malo are sure to fall. There are one million cartridges and fifty field-pieces at Rennes."

"Which they will sweep away," muttered Danton.

Robespierre continued:—

"To conclude. From Rennes three columns will descend, one upon Fougères, and the second and third upon Vitré and Redon. As the bridges are destroyed, the enemy will be provided, as has already been stated, with pontoons and planks, and they will also have guides for such places as are fordable by cavalry. From Fougères they will

diverge to Avranches, from Redon to Ancenis, from Vitré to Laval. Nantes will surrender, Brest likewise. Redon opens the way to Vilaine, as Fougères to Normandy and Vitré to Paris. In fifteen days they will have a brigand army of three hundred thousand men, and the whole of Brittany will belong to the King of France."

"You mean to the King of England," said Danton. "No, to the King of France," replied Robespierre, adding: "the King of France is worse; it takes fifteen days to expel a foreign foe, and eighteen hundred years to destroy a monarchy."

Danton, who had reseated himself with his elbows resting on the table, supported his head on his hands and remained buried in thought.

"You perceive the danger," said Robespierre. "Vitré opens for the English the way to Paris."

Raising his head, Danton brought his two clenched fists down upon the map as though it were an anvil.

"Robespierre, did not Verdun open the way to Paris for the Prussians?"

"What then?"

"Well, we will drive the English as we drove the Prussians."

And Danton rose again.

Robespierre placed his cold hand on Danton's burning wrist.

"Danton, Champagne did not take sides with the Prussians, as Brittany does with the English. Retaking Verdun was foreign war; but to recapture Vitré will be civil war."

And Robespierre murmured in a cold, sepulchral tone,—

"A serious difference."

Then he continued,—

"Sit down, Danton, and look at the map, instead of battering it with your fists."

But Danton was wholly carried away with his own ideas.

"Well, this goes beyond everything!" he exclaimed; "to be on the alert for a catastrophe in the west, when it is actually in the east! I grant you, Robespierre, that England looms up on the ocean; but Spain rises from behind the Pyrenees, Italy from the Alps, Germany from the Rhine, and the big Russian bear is behind them all. Robespierre, danger surrounds us like a circle, and we are in its centre. Coalition

abroad, treason at home. In the south, Servant holds the door of France ajar for the King of Spain; in the north, Dumouriez goes over to the enemy. However, he always threatened Holland less than Paris. Nerwinde has wiped out Jemmapes and Valmy. The philosopher Rabaut Saint-Étienne, a traitor, like the Protestant he is, corresponds with the courtier Montesquiou. The army is decimated. No battalion has now over four hundred men, and the brave regiment of Deux-Ponts is reduced to one hundred and fifty; the camp of Pamars has surrendered; Givet has but five hundred bags of flour left. We are falling back on Landau; Wurmser presses Kléber; Mayence makes a valiant defence; Condé yields ignobly, and Valenciennes likewise, but this in no way alters the fact that their defenders Féraud and Chancel are two heroes, not to mention Meunier, who defended Mayence; but all the others are betraying us. Dharville plays the traitor at Aix-la-Chapelle, Mouton at Brussels, Valence at Bréda, Neuilly at Limbourg, Miranda at Maëstricht; Stengel, Lanoue, Ligonier, Menou, Dillon, traitors all,—hideous coin of Dumouriez. Examples are needed. I am suspicious of Custine's countermarches. I am inclined to believe that he preferred the lucrative capture of Frankfort to the more useful one of Coblenz. Suppose that Frankfort is able to pay a war indemnity of four millions,—what is that in comparison with crushing a nest of Émigrés? I call it treason. Meunier died on the 13th of June, and Kléber is now alone. Meanwhile Brunswick gains strength and marches onward. He raises the German flag in every French place that he captures. The Margrave of Brandenburg is to-day the arbiter of Europe; he is pocketing our provinces; you will soon see him appropriating Belgium; one might think that we were working for Berlin; and if this continues, and we take no means to prevent it, the French Revolution will result in the aggrandizement of Potsdam. Its chief consequence will be the advancement of the little State of Frederick II., and we shall have killed the King of France for the benefit of the King of Prussia."



Here Danton, terrible in his wrath, burst into a fit of laughter, which made Marat smile.

"You have each your hobby. Yours, Danton, is Prussia, and yours, Robespierre, is the Vendée. I will also mention a few facts. You do not see the real danger which is centred in the cafés and the gaming-houses: the Café de Choiseul is Jacobin; the Café Patin, royalist; the Café Rendez-Vous attacks the National Guard, and the Café de la Porte Saint-Martin defends it; the Café de la Régence is opposed to Brissot, the Café Corazza favors him; the Café Procope swears by Diderot, and the Café du Théâtre Français by Voltaire; at the Rotonde they tear up the assignats; the Cafés Saint-Marceau are in a state of perfect fury; the Café Manouri is agitating the flour problem; at the Café de Foy there is a perpetual racket and brawling, and at the Perron the hornets of finance are buzzing. All this is a serious matter."



Danton no longer laughed, but Marat still continued to smile. The smile of a dwarf is worse than the laugh of a giant.

"Are you sneering, Marat?" growled Danton.



Marat twitched his hip convulsively,—that motion peculiar to himself which has been so often described,—and his smile died away.

"Ah, I recognize you, Citizen Danton. You are the man who in full convention called me 'that individual Marat.' Listen: I forgive you. We are in times when men play the fool. Sneering, did you say? What kind of a man do you think I am? I have denounced Chazot, Pétion, Kersaint, Mouton, Dufriche-Valazé, Ligonier, Menou, Banneville, Gensonné, Biron, Lidon, and Chambon. Was I wrong? I scented the treason of the traitor before the deed is done, and I find it useful to denounce the criminal in advance. It is my habit to say in the evening what the rest of you say the next day. I am the man who proposed to the Assembly a complete scheme for criminal legislation. What have I done up to the present moment? I asked to have the sections instructed that they might be disciplined for revolution; I had the seals of thirty-two boxes broken; I reclaimed the diamonds placed in the hands of Roland; I proved that the Brissotins had given to the Committee of General Safety blank warrants; I noted certain omissions in Lindet's report concerning the crimes of Capet; I voted for the execution of the tyrant in the course of twenty-four hours; I defended the battalions of Mauconseil and the Républicain; I prevented the reading of Narbonne's and Malouet's letters; I motioned in favor of the wounded soldiers; I caused the suppression of the Committee of Six; I foresaw the treason of Dumouriez in the affair of Mons; I demanded to have one hundred thousand relatives of the refugees taken as hostages

for the commissioners delivered to the enemy; I proposed to declare traitor any representative who crossed the frontier; I unmasked the faction of Roland in the disturbances at Marseilles; I insisted that a price should be set on the head of Égalité's son; I defended Bouchotte; I called for a nominal vote to expel Isnard from the chair.



It was I who instigated the declaration that Parisians had deserved well of their country; that is why Louvet calls me a dancing puppet, and why Finistère demands my expulsion. For this the city of Loudun wishes me to be exiled, and the city of Amiens proposes to muzzle me, Coburg requires my arrest, and Lecointe-Puiraveau suggests to the Convention that it would be well to pronounce me insane. Bah! Citizen Danton, why did you ask me to come to your Conventicle if you did not wish for my advice? Did I ask permission to belong to it? Far from it. I have no inclination for a tête-à-tête with such counter-revolutionists as Robespierre and yourself. However, I might have expected this. You have not understood me,—neither you nor Robespierre. Are there then no statesmen here? You need a spelling lesson in politics, and some one to dot your *i*'s for you. This is the meaning of what I told you,—you are both mistaken. The danger comes neither from London nor from Berlin, as you two believe. It is in Paris. It is in the absence of unity; in the right of every man to pull his own way, beginning with you yourselves; in the levelling of intellects; in the anarchy of will—"



"Anarchy!" interrupted Danton. "Who is it that causes anarchy if not yourself?"

Marat paid no attention.

"Robespierre, Danton, the danger is in this multitude of cafés, in these countless gaming-houses, this crowd of clubs,—Club des Noirs, Club des Fédérés, Club des Dames, Club des Impartiaux (which dates from Clermont-Tonnerre, and which was the Monarchical Club of 1790,—a social circle originated by the priest Claude Fauchet), the Club des Bonnets de Laine, founded by the journalist Prudhomme, etc.; without counting your Jacobin Club, Robespierre, and your Club of Cordeliers, Danton. The danger is in the famine that made the porte-sacs Blin hang François Denis, the baker of Palu market, to the lamp-post of the Hôtel de Ville, and likewise in the justice that hung porte-sacs Blin for hanging baker Denis. The danger lies in the depreciation of the currency. One day on the Rue du Temple an assignat of a hundred francs fell to the ground, and a passer-by, a man of the lower class, remarked, 'It is not worth while to pick it up.' The danger comes from the stock-brokers and the monopolists. Fine progress we have made when we hoist the black flag over the Hôtel de Ville! You have arrested Baron Trenck; but that is not sufficient. I want to see you wring the neck of that old prison intriguer. Do you think that the business is accomplished because the President of the Convention places a civic crown on the head of Labertèche, who received forty-one sabre-thrusts at Jemmapes, and of whom Chénier makes himself the showman? Comedies and idle shows! Ah, you take no heed of Paris! You are looking for danger at a distance, when it is close at hand. Of

what use are your police, Robespierre? You have your spies,—Payan in the Commune, Coffinhal at the Revolutionary Tribunal, David in the Committee of Public Safety, Couthon in the Committee of Public Well-being. You perceive that I am well informed. Now, then, learn this: The danger is hanging over your heads and rising beneath your feet. Conspiracies! conspiracies! conspiracies! The people passing along the streets read the papers to one another, and nod their heads significantly; six thousand men having no civic papers—the returned Émigrés, Muscadins, and Mathevons—are hidden in the cellars and garrets and in the wooden galleries of the Palais Royal; they are ranged in files in front of the bake-shops; women stand on the door-sills, and clasping their hands, cry, 'When shall we have peace?' It is of no use to close the doors of the Executive Committee against the public. Every word you utter is known; and as a proof, Robespierre, I will repeat the words you spoke last night to Saint-Just: 'Barbaroux's paunch grows apace; that will inconvenience him in his flight.' Danger, I tell you, lurks on every side, but chiefly in the centre. In Paris, while the ci-devants are weaving their plots the patriots go barefoot; the aristocrats arrested on the 9th of March are already released; the fine private horses that bespatter us with mud in the streets ought to be harnessed to the cannons on the frontier; a loaf of bread weighing four pounds is sold for three francs and twelve sous; indecent plays are given on the stage; and Robespierre will sooner or later send Danton to the guillotine."

"Phew!" exclaimed Danton.

Robespierre was attentively studying the map.

"What we need is a dictator!" cried Marat, fiercely. "You know, Robespierre, that I want a dictator."

Robespierre raised his head. "Yes, I know, Marat, it must be either you or I."

"I or you, you mean," retorted Marat.

"The dictatorship,—I advise you to try it!" grumbled Danton between his closed teeth.

Marat perceived Danton's frown.

"Stop," he said. "Let us make one last effort to come to an agreement. The situation is well worth it. Was there not an understanding for the 31st of May? The question of mutual agreement is even more important than Girondism, which is a matter of detail. There is a certain amount of truth in your statements; but truth itself, the whole truth, the real truth, lies in, I say, Federalism in the south, Royalism in the West, a deadly struggle between the Convention and the Commune in Paris, and on the frontier the backsliding of Custine and the treason of Dumouriez. What will be the result? The end

will be nothing less than dismemberment. And what do we require? Unity. Therein lies our salvation. But we have no time to lose. Paris must undertake the control of the Revolution. If we waste one hour, the Vendéans may be in Orleans to-morrow, and the Prussians in Paris. I grant one thing to you, Danton, and another to Robespierre. So be it. And the conclusion must be dictatorship. Let us, we three who represent the Revolution, grasp the dictatorship. We are the three heads of Cerberus. One is a talking head, and that is you, Robespierre; the second head does the roaring, and that is you, Danton—"

"And the other bites, and that is you, Marat," said Danton.

"All three bite," said Robespierre.

For a time there was silence; then this dialogue full of gloomy and violent utterances proceeded.

"Listen, Marat; people should know each other before they marry. How did you find out what I said to Saint-Just yesterday?"

"That is my affair, Robespierre."

"Marat!"

"It is my duty to gain information."

"Marat!"

"I like to know what is going on."

"Marat!"

"Robespierre, I know what you say to Saint-Just, as I know what Danton says to Lacroix; I know what happens on the quay of the Théatins, at the Hôtel Labriffe, a den frequented by the nymphs of the Emigration, as well as I know what is going on at the house of Thilles, near Gonesse, which now belongs to Valmerange, the former administrator of the postal service, where Maury and Cazalès were in the habit of going,—a house which Sieyès and Vergniaud have since frequented, and where at the present time a certain person goes once a week."

In saying a certain person, Marat looked significantly at Danton.

"If I had but two farthings' worth of power, this would be terrible," cried Danton.



"I know what you say, Robespierre," continued Marat, "just as I knew what was going on in the tower of the Temple when they were fattening Louis XVI.; and the wolf, the she-wolf, and the cubs, during the month of September alone, devoured eighty-six baskets of peaches. At that time the nation was starving. I know it, as I know that Roland was concealed in a lodging looking out on a back-yard, in the Rue de la Harpe; as I know that six hundred pikes used on the 14th of July were manufactured by Faure, the locksmith of the Duke of Orleans; as I know what they do at the house of Saint-Hilaire, the mistress of Sillery. On the days when there is to be a ball, old Sillery himself chinks the parquet floors of the yellow salon in the Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins; Buzot and Kersaint dined there; Saladin dined there on the 27th, and with whom do you guess, Robespierre? With your friend Lasource."

"Idle talk," muttered Robespierre; "Lasource is not my friend."

He added thoughtfully,—

"In the mean time there are eighteen manufactories of false assignats in London."

Marat went on in a voice calm but somewhat tremulous, an ominous sign with him,—

"You are the faction of the All-Importants. Yes, I know everything, in spite of what Saint-Just calls the silence of State—"

Marat emphasized this word, looked at Robespierre, and continued:—

"I know the conversation that takes place at your table on the days when Lebas invites David to eat the food prepared by his betrothed, Élisabeth Duplay, your future sister-in-law, Robespierre. I am the all-seeing eye of the people, and from the depths of my cave I observe. Yes, I hear, I see, and I know. You are contented with small things. You admire yourself. Robespierre shows himself off before his Madame de Chalabre, the daughter of the Marquis who played whist with Louis XV. on the evening of Damiens' execution. Yes, heads are carried high in these days. Saint-Just never unbends; Legendre is a scrupulous devotee to fashion, with his new frock-coat and white waistcoat, and a frill, that people may forget his apron. Robespierre imagines that history will be interested to know that he wore an olive-colored coat *à la Constitution*, and a sky-blue coat *à la Convention*. He hangs his portrait on every wall around his room—"

Robespierre interrupted him in a voice even more quiet than that of Marat himself:—

"And you drag yours through all the sewers, Marat."

They continued this conversation in tones whose very deliberation emphasized the violence of the attacks and retorts, and added a certain irony to the implied threats.

"Robespierre, you called those who are in favor of the abolition of monarchy the Don Quixotes of mankind."

"And you, Marat, after the 4th of August, in No. 559 of your 'Ami du Peuple,'—you see, I remember the number, a useful item,—you requested to have the titles of the nobles restored to them. You said: 'Once a Duke, always a Duke.'"

"Robespierre, in the session of the 7th of December you defended Roland's wife against Viard."

"Just as my brother defended you, Marat, when you were attacked at the Jacobins'. What does that prove? Nothing at all."

"Robespierre! we all know the cabinet at the Tuileries where you said to Garas: 'I am tired of the Revolution.'"

"Marat, in this very ale-house, on the 20th of October, you embraced Barbaroux."

"And you said to Buzot, Robespierre, 'What does the Republic signify?'"

"Marat, you invited three men from Marseilles to breakfast with you here in this ale-house."

"Robespierre, you go about escorted by a strong fellow from the market armed with a club."

"And you, Marat, on the eve of the 10th of August,—you asked Buzot to assist you in escaping to Marseilles disguised as a jockey."

"During the prosecutions of September you took good care to hide yourself, Robespierre."

"And you, Marat, were not backward in making a display of yourself."

"Robespierre, you flung the red cap on the ground."

"Yes, when a traitor hoisted it. Dumouriez defiles Robespierre."

"Robespierre, you refused to throw a veil over the head of Louis XVI. when Chateauxvieux' soldiers were passing."

"I did better than veil his head; I cut it off."

Danton interposed, but it was like pouring oil upon the flames.

"Robespierre, Marat, calm yourselves," he said. Marat did not like to be mentioned in the second place. He turned round.

"What affair is this of Danton?"

"What affair of mine? I will tell you. There must be no fratricides; we must have no strife between two men, both of whom serve the people. It is enough to have to deal with foreign and civil wars, and it would be too much if we were to have a family conflict. It is I who made the Revolution, and I do not choose to have it destroyed. This is why I feel called upon to interfere."

Marat replied, without raising his voice,—

"You had better be attending to the settlement of your own accounts."

"My accounts!" cried Danton. "Go ask for them in the passes of Argonne, in Champagne delivered, in Belgium conquered, in the armies where I have exposed my breast four times already to the grape-shot! Inquire in the Place de la Révolution, on the scaffold of the 21st of January, of the throne lying on the ground, of the guillotine, that widow—"

Here Marat broke forth, interrupting Danton,—

"The guillotine is a virgin who gives death unto men, but not life."

"What do you know about it? I will make her fruitful."

"We shall see."

And he smiled.

Danton saw the smile.

"Marat," he cried, "you are the man who prefers to hide; I am a man who rejoices in broad daylight, in the open air. I despise the life of a reptile. It would not suit me to be a woodlouse. You live in a cave; I live in the street. You hold no communication with mankind; the chance passer-by may see and speak with me."

"Handsome youth! Will you ascend to my abode?" growled Marat.

And no longer smiling, he continued in a peremptory tone:—

"Danton, give an account of the thirty-three thousand crowns cash, that were paid you by that Montmorin in the name of the king, under the pretext of indemnifying you for the post of solicitor of the Châtelet."

"I belonged to the 14th of July," said Danton, haughtily.

"And the Garde-meuble? And the crown diamonds?"

"I was also of the 6th of October."

"And the thefts of your *alter ego*, Lacroix, in Belgium?"

"I was of the 20th of June."

"And the loans to Montansier?"

"I influenced the people to bring about the return from Varennes."

"And the Opera House built with the money that you furnished?"

"I armed the sections of Paris."

"And the hundred thousand livres in secret funds of the Ministère de la Justice?"

"The 10th of August was my work."

"And the two millions secret expenses of the Assembly, a quarter of which fell to your share?"

"I arrested the progress of the enemy, and barred the road to the allied kings."

"Prostitute!" cried Marat.

Danton was terrible in his wrath.

"Yes," he cried; "you have spoken the word! I have sold my virtue, but I saved the world!"

Robespierre meanwhile continued to bite his nails. He could neither laugh nor smile. He possessed not the lightning-like laughter of Danton, nor the sting of Marat's smile.

Danton continued,—

"I am like the ocean: I have my flood and ebb. When the tide is low you can see the shoals; but at high tide you see only the waves."

"What one might call your froth," said Marat.

"My tempest, rather," replied Danton.

They both sprang to their feet, and Marat burst forth; the adder suddenly assumed the shape of a dragon.

"Ah, Robespierre! ah, Danton!" he exclaimed, "you will not listen to me. I tell you, you are lost! Your policy brings you up against a wall! Every issue is closed to you, and you go on committing deeds that will finally leave you with no outlet save that of the grave."

"In that lies the very essence of our greatness," said Danton, shrugging his shoulders.

Marat went on:—

"Danton, beware! Vergniaud has a wide mouth, thick lips, and frowning brows, like yourself. He is also pitted, like you and Mirabeau. Yet this did not prevent the 31st of May. Ah, you shrug your shoulders! A shrug of the shoulders has been known to cost a man his head. I tell you, Danton, your loud voice, your loose cravat, your top-boots, your late suppers, your ample pockets,—Louissette will have something to say about all that."

Louissette was Marat's pet name for the guillotine.

He continued:—

"And as for you, Robespierre, you are a Moderate; but that will avail you nothing. Go on; powder and dress your hair, brush your clothes, play the coxcomb, wear fine linen, be a model of propriety, frizzed and bedizened; sooner or later you will go to the Place de Grève; read Brunswick's proclamation, and make up your mind to be treated like the regicide Damiens, and you are arrayed in fine style to be drawn and quartered."

"Echo of Coblenz!" muttered Robespierre between his teeth.

"Robespierre, I echo no one. I am the cry of the whole world. Ah, you are young, both of you! How old are you, Danton? Thirty-four. And you, Robespierre? Thirty-three. Well, as for myself, I have lived from the beginning of time. I am the embodiment of the ancient misery of mankind. I am six thousand years old."

"That is true," replied Danton; "for six thousand years Cain has been preserved in hatred, like a toad in a stone. The stone breaks, and Cain leaps forth among men, to be known as Marat."

"Danton!" cried Marat; and a livid glare shone in his eyes.

"Well, what is it?" said Danton.

Thus conversed these three terrible men,—conflicting thunderbolts!

III.

A QUIVERING OF THE INMOST FIBRES.



The conversation ceased for a time. Each Titan betook himself to his own reflections.

Lions are disturbed by hydras. Robespierre had grown very pale, and Danton very much flushed. Both shuddered. Marat's wild glare had died out; calmness, imperious calmness, now rested on the face of that man, feared by those who were themselves objects of awe.

Danton felt himself conquered, but was unwilling to yield.

He continued,—

"Marat talks loudly of dictatorship and unity, possessing all the while a talent for destroying."

Robespierre opened his thin lips, and by way of supplementing Danton's speech remarked,—

"I agree with Anacharsis Cloots. Give me neither Roland nor Marat."

"And I," said Marat,— "I say neither Danton nor Robespierre."

He gazed steadily at the two men, and then added:

"Let me advise you, Danton. You are in love, and think of marrying again; let politics alone,—be wise."

And taking a step towards the door, he was about to take his departure, with the ominous salutation,—

"Farewell, gentlemen."

Danton and Robespierre shuddered.

At that moment a voice was heard at the farther end of the room, saying,—

"You are wrong, Marat."

All turned. During Marat's outbreak some one had entered, unperceived, through the door at the back of the room.

"Is that you, citizen Cimourdain?" said Marat "Good-day."

It was Cimourdain.

"I tell you that you are wrong, Marat," he repeated.

Marat turned green, which was his way of growing pale, and Cimourdain added:—

"You are useful, but Robespierre and Danton are indispensable. Why do you threaten them? Let us have union, citizens. The people wish us to be united."

This entrance was like a dash of cold water, or the arrival of a stranger upon the scene of a family quarrel; it produced a calming effect upon the surface, if it did not reach the depths.

Cimourdain advanced towards the table.

Both Danton and Robespierre knew him. They had often noticed, in the public tribunals of the Convention, this obscure but influential man, whom the people greeted with respect. Robespierre, however, always ceremonious, inquired,—

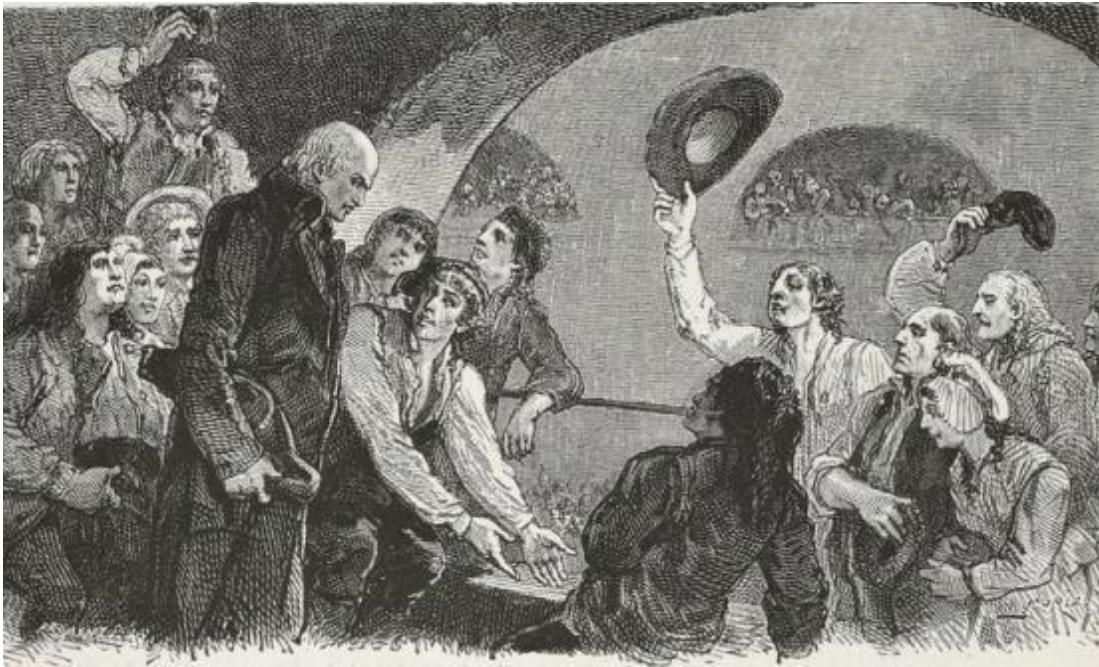
"How did you get in, citizen?"

"He belongs to the Évêché," replied Marat, in an unusually meek tone of voice.

Marat braved the Convention and led the Commune, but he feared the Évêché.

This is a law.

Mirabeau, in some mysterious far-away depth, is conscious of the existence of Robespierre. Marat, too, is aware of Hébert,—Hébert of Babeuf. So long as the subterranean strata remain quiet, the politician can move at his ease. But there is a sub-soil under the most revolutionary, and the boldest men will quail when they feel beneath their feet the movement which they themselves have started overhead.



To be able to distinguish between the disturbance that springs from covetousness and that which is founded on principle, to combat the one and to aid the other, constitutes the genius and merit of great revolutionists.

"Oh, citizen Cimourdain is not unwelcome," he said, as he extended his hand to Cimourdain, adding:

"Parbleu! Let us explain the situation to citizen Cimourdain. He comes in just in time. I represent the Mountain, Robespierre the Committee of Public Safety, Marat the Commune; and Cimourdain represents the Évêché. He will give us the casting vote."

"So be it," replied Cimourdain, in his serious and simple manner. "What is the subject under consideration?"

"The Vendée," replied Robespierre.

"The Vendée," echoed Cimourdain, then went on:

"There lies the great danger. If Revolution expires, the Vendée will have given it its death-blow. One Vendée is more to be feared than ten Germanys. If France is to be saved, we must destroy the Vendée."

These words won Robespierre to his side; but still the latter put the question,—

"Were you not formerly a priest?"

For the priestly aspect had not escaped his observation. He recognized in another what he had within himself.

"Yes, citizen," replied Cimourdain.

"What does that matter?" cried Danton. "When priests are good they are better than other men. In time of revolution priests are melted into citizens, just as bells are melted into sous and cannon. Danjou and Danon are both priests. Thomas Lindet is Bishop of Évreux. At the Convention, Robespierre, you sit side by side with Massieu, Bishop of Beauvais. The Vicar-General Vaugeois belonged to the Insurrection Committee of the 10th of August. Chabot is a capuchin. Dom Gerle devised the oath of the Tennis-Court. The Abbé Audran declared the National Assembly superior to the king; the Abbé Goutte asked the Legislature to remove the daïs from the chair of Louis XVI., and the Abbé Grégoire instigated the abolition of royalty."

"A motion seconded by the comedian Collot d'Herbois. They two did the business; the priest overturned the throne, the comedian deposed the king!"

"Let us return to the Vendée," said Robespierre.

"Well, what is it?" asked Cimourdain; "what is the Vendée doing now?"

"This," replied Robespierre. "It has found a leader; it will become terrible."

"Who is this leader, citizen Robespierre?"

"He is a ci-devant Marquis de Lantenac, who styles himself a Breton prince."

Cimourdain made a movement.

"I know him," he said. "I was chaplain at his house."

He reflected for a moment, and then continued:

"He was fond of women before he became active in military affairs."

"Like Biron, who was a Lauzun," said Danton. Cimourdain added thoughtfully,—

"Yes, formerly a man devoted to pleasure. He must be terrible."

"Frightful!" said Robespierre. "He burns villages, kills the wounded, massacres prisoners, and shoots women."

"Women?"

"Yes. Among others he ordered a woman to be shot who was the mother of three children. No one knows what became of the children. Moreover, he is really a leader. He understands the art of warfare."

"True," replied Cimourdain. "When he was in the Hanoverian war the soldiers used to say, 'Richelieu above, Lantenac below;' but the latter was the actual general. Ask your colleague Dussaulx about it."

Robespierre remained for a moment absorbed in thought; then the conversation between Cimourdain and himself was renewed.

"Well, citizen Cimourdain, this man is in the Vendée."

"How long since?"

"Three weeks ago."

"He must be outlawed."

"That has been done."

"A price must be set upon his head."

"That also has been done."

"A large sum of money must be offered for his capture."

"The offer has been made,"

"It must not be in assignats."

"Certainly not."

"But in gold."

"It has been so promised."

"And he must be guillotined."

"That shall be done."

"By whom?"

"By you!"

"By me?"

"Yes; you will be delegated by the Committee of Public Safety with ample powers."

"I accept," said Cimourdain.

Robespierre was rapid in his decisions,—a states-manlike quality. He took from the portfolio that lay before him a sheet of white paper, at the head of which the following words were printed: "French Republic, one and indivisible: Committee of Public Safety."

"I accept," continued Cimourdain. "Let the terrible encounter the terrible. Lantenac is ferocious; I will be equally so. It shall be war unto death with that man; I shall rid the Republic of him, if it be God's will."

He stopped, then continued,—

"I am a priest; I believe in God."

"God has grown antiquated," said Danton.

"I believe in God," repeated Cimourdain, unmoved.

Robespierre gloomily nodded his approval, and Cimourdain continued,—

"To whom shall I be delegated?"

Robespierre replied,—

"To the commandant of the exploring division sent against Lantenac. But I give you warning that he is a nobleman."

"That is another thing that excites my contempt," cried Danton. "A nobleman? Well, what of that? It is all the same whether a man be a priest or a nobleman; if he is a good man, he is excellent. Nobility is a prejudice; but we ought to deal impartially with it, granting both its merits and its demerits. Is not Saint-Just a nobleman, Robespierre? Florelle de Saint-Just,—parbleu! Anacharsis Cloots is a baron. Our friend Charles Hesse, who never misses a single session of the Cordeliers, is a prince, brother to the reigning Landgrave of Hesse-Rothembourg. Montaut, Marat's intimate friend, is Marquis de Montaut. In the revolutionary tribunal there is one juror Vilate, who is a priest, and another Leroy, Marquis de Montflabert. Both are trustworthy men."

"And you forget," added Robespierre, "the foreman of the revolutionary jury—"

"Antonelle!"

"Marquis Antonelle," corrected Robespierre.

"And that Dampierre, who was lately killed before Condé by the Republic," rejoined Danton, "was a nobleman; and Beaurepaire too, who blew his brains out rather than open the gates of Verdun to the Prussians."

"And in spite of all that," grumbled Marat, "on the day when Condorcet exclaimed, 'The Gracchi were nobles!' Danton cried out, 'All nobles are traitors,—beginning with Mirabeau, and ending with thee!'"

Here the serious voice of Cimourdain rose above the others:—

"Citizen Danton, citizen Robespierre, you may perhaps be justified in your confidence; but the nation distrusts, and it has reason to do so. When a priest is charged with the surveillance of a nobleman, the responsibility is a double one, and it is the duty of the priest to be inflexible."

"That is true," said Robespierre.

"And inexorable," added Cimourdain.

"Well said, citizen Cimourdain!" rejoined Robespierre. "It is a young man with whom you will have to deal, and you will have the advantage over him, from the fact that you are twice his age. He must be guided, but with the utmost discretion, that he may not suspect it. It seems that he has military ability; all reports are unanimous on that point. He forms part of a corps which has been detached from the army of the Rhine and sent into the Vendée. He has lately returned from the frontier, where he distinguished himself by his bravery and intelligence, and is now in command of the exploring division, which he handles like an expert. For fifteen days he has held the old

Marquis de Lantenac in check. He restrains him, and at the same time compels him to give way. He will end by forcing him to the sea and pitching him into it. Lantenac has the cunning of an old general, while his opponent possesses the boldness of a young captain. This young man has already won for himself enemies and detractors, who are envious of him. Adjutant-General Léchelle is jealous of him."

"This Léchelle wants to be commander-in-chief," interrupted Danton. "He has only a pun in his favor,—it needs a ladder to mount into a cart. Meanwhile, Charette defeats him."

"And he is not willing that any one else should defeat Lantenac," added Robespierre. "The misfortune of the Vendean war is the existence of these rivalries. Our soldiers are heroes led by inferior commanders. Chérin, a mere captain of hussars, enters Saumur with trumpets, playing *Ça ira*; he takes Saumur; he might go on and take Cholet, but having received no orders, he pauses. Every position of command in the Vendée ought to be reconstructed; the garrisons are scattered, the forces dispersed; an army that is scattered is paralyzed; it is like a rock crumbling into dust. Nothing but tents are left at Camp de Paramé. Between Tréguier and Dinan there are a hundred useless little encampments out of which a division could be formed to cover the entire coast. Léchelle, supported by Parrein, robs the northern coast under the pretext of protecting the southern, and thus exposes France to the English. Half a million of peasants in revolt, and a descent of England upon France,—such is Lantenac's plan. The young commander of the exploring column presses his resistless sword against Lantenac's loins, until he forces him to yield, and this without asking leave of Léchelle. Now, Léchelle is his chief, therefore he denounces him. Opinions are divided regarding this young man. Léchelle would like to have him shot, and Prieur de la Marne wishes to make him Adjutant-General."

"He seems to me to possess great qualities," observed Cimourdain.

"But he has one defect!"

This interruption came from Marat.

"And what is that?" asked Cimourdain.

"Clemency," replied Marat; and he went on: "He is firm in the assault, but after the victory he shows his weakness. He grants indulgences, he is too merciful and forgiving, he protects *religieuses* and nuns, he saves the wives and daughters of the aristocrats, he releases prisoners, and lets the priests go free."

"A grave fault," murmured Cimourdain.

"A crime, you would do better to call it," said Marat.

"Sometimes," said Danton.

"Often," said Robespierre.

"Almost always," insisted. Marat.

"Yes, when one has to deal with the enemies of one's country it may always be called a crime," said Cimourdain.

Marat turned towards the latter.

"And what then would you do with a Republican chief who would set a Royalist leader at liberty?" he inquired.

"I should agree with L chelle; I would have him shot."

"Or guillotined," said Marat.

"He might take his choice," said Cimourdain. Danton began to laugh.

"The one seems to me as good as the other."

"You are quite sure to have one or the other," muttered Marat; and averting his eyes from Danton, he fixed them again on Cimourdain.

"So, citizen Cimourdain, if you caught a Republican chief stumbling, you would have him beheaded?"

"Within twenty-four hours."

"Well," resumed Marat, "I agree with Robespierre; citizen Cimourdain must be sent as a delegate from the Committee of Public Safety to the commander of the exploring division of the coast army. What is this commander's name, by the way?"

Robespierre, beginning to turn over his papers, replied,—

"He is a ci-devant nobleman."

"It is an excellent plan to set a priest to guard a nobleman," said Danton. "Either one of them, singly and alone, I am inclined to distrust; but when taken together, I have no fear of them: they keep a mutual watch over each other, and go on very well."

The expression of indignation peculiar to Cimourdain's face grew more pronounced; but doubtless aware that the observation was based upon truth, he did not turn towards Danton as he lifted his severe voice.

"If the Republican commander intrusted to my care makes a false step, he will suffer the penalty of death."

Robespierre, with his eyes still resting on his portfolio, said:—

"Here is the name; the commander in charge of whom you will be placed, to conduct yourself in his regard at your own discretion, is a former Viscount called Gauvain."

Cimourdain turned pale.

"Gauvain!" he exclaimed.

Marat observed Cimourdain's pallor.

"The Viscount Gauvain!" repeated Cimourdain.

"Yes," said Robespierre.

"Well?" exclaimed Marat, gazing steadfastly at Cimourdain.

There was a brief silence, broken by Marat.

"Citizen Cimourdain, do you accept the appointment of commissioner delegate to the commander Gauvain, with the condition which you yourself have laid down? Is it agreed?"

"It is," replied Cimourdain, with increasing pallor.

Robespierre took the pen that lay beside him, and in his slow and regular handwriting traced four lines on the sheet of paper headed "Committee of Public Safety." After signing it, he passed the pen and paper to Danton, who signed; and the signature of Marat, who had not once removed his eyes from the pale face of Cimourdain, was added to the others.

Robespierre, taking back the sheet, dated it and gave it to Cimourdain, who read on it the following:—

YEAR II. OF THE REPUBLIC.

Full powers are granted to citizen Cimourdain, commissioner delegated from the Committee of Public Safety to the citizen Gauvain, in command of the exploring division of the army of the coast.

ROBESPIERRE.

DANTON.

MARAT.

And below the signatures: "June 29, 1793."

The revolutionary calendar, called the civil calendar, had no legal existence at that time, and was only adopted by the Convention on the 5th of October, 1793, in response to the proposition of Romme.

While Cimourdain was reading, Marat continued to watch him. Then, in a tone half-inaudible, as though speaking to himself, he said,—

"All this must be confirmed by a decree from the Convention, or by a special resolution of the Committee of Public Safety. Something still remains to be done."

"Citizen Cimourdain, where do you live?" asked Robespierre.

"Cour du Commerce."

"Indeed! Then you are a neighbor of mine. I live there also," said Danton.

Robespierre continued:—

"There is not a moment to lose. To-morrow you will receive your formal commission, signed by all the members of the Committee of Public Safety. This is a confirmation of the commission accrediting you specially to the acting representatives Philippeaux, Prieur de la Marne, Lecointre, Alquier, and others. We know you; your powers are unlimited. It rests with you to make Gauvain a general or send him to the scaffold. You will receive your commission to-morrow at three o'clock. When will you start?"

"At four o'clock," said Cimourdain; and they separated.

On returning home, Marat informed Simonne Évrard that he should go to the Convention to-morrow.



BOOK III.

THE CONVENTION.

I.

THE CONVENTION.

I.



We are approaching the summit.

The Convention is before our eyes, and in the presence of this lofty eminence the gaze grows steady.

Nothing more towering ever rose above the human horizon. There is but one Himalaya, but one Convention.

The Convention may perhaps be called the culminating point in history.

During its lifetime—an assembly actually lives—one did not realize what it was. Its supreme grandeur was not appreciated by its contemporaries, who were too much terrified to be dazzled. Mediocrities and moderate hills levy no severe tax on one's admiration; but the majestic inspires a holy horror, whether it be the majesty of genius or of a mountain, an assembly or a masterpiece. Too close proximity excites alarm; every peak seems exaggerated, the ascent is fatiguing, and one loses breath in climbing its sharp acclivities, misses his footing on the slopes, and is wounded by the cragged surfaces, which in themselves are beauties; the foaming torrent indicates the presence of the chasm, the summit is veiled in clouds; whether ascending or descending, it is equally frightful, hence one feels the influence of terror rather than of admiration,—a kind of aversion to grandeur, which is a strange enough sensation. While gazing on the abyss, one cannot always appreciate its sublimity; the monster is more evident than the miracle. It was thus that men first judged the Convention. The purblind undertook to fathom an abyss whose depths could only be sounded by the eagle.

To-day we behold it in the perspective outlining the granite profile of the French Revolution against the calm and tragic background of the far-away heavens.

II.

The 14th of July set the nation free.

The 10th of August hurled its thunderbolts.

The 21st of September founded a new era; for the 21st of September was the equinox, the equilibrium, *Libra*,—the balance-scales of Justice. According to the remark of Romme, the Republic was proclaimed beneath this sign of Equality and Justice,—heralded, so to speak, by a constellation.

The Convention is the first avatar of the people. It was the Convention that turned the new and glorious page, introducing the future of to-day.

Every idea requires a visible embodiment; every principle needs a habitation; a church means the four walls within which the Almighty has his dwelling-place; every dogma must have its temple. When the Convention became a fact, the first problem was to locate it.

At first it was established in the Manège, but afterwards at the Tuileries. Here they raised a platform and arranged scenery, painted in gray, by David; also, rows of benches and a square tribune; there were parallel pilasters, with massive plinths, and

long rectangular stems, and square enclosures, into which the multitude crowded, and which were called public tribunes; a Roman velarium, and Grecian draperies; and amid these right angles and straight lines the Convention was installed,—a tempest confined within geometrical limits. On the tribune the red cap was painted in gray. At first the Royalists ridiculed this gray *bonnet-rouge*, this artificial hall, this pasteboard monument, this sanctuary of papier-mâché, this pantheon of mud and spittle. How quickly it was destined to vanish! The pillars were made of barrel-staves, the arches of thin deal boards, the bas-reliefs were mastic, the entablature was of pine, the statues were of plaster, the marble was painted, the walls were of canvas; and in this provisional shelter France has recorded deeds that can never be forgotten.

During the early sessions of the Convention the walls of the Hall of the Manège were covered with the advertisements with which Paris swarmed at the time of the return from Varennes. On one might be read: "The King returns. Whoever applauds him will be chastised; whoever insults him will be hung." On another: "Peace. Keep your hats on your heads. He is about to pass before his judges." On another: "The King took aim at the nation, but his weapon hung fire. Now the nation has its turn." On another: "The law! the law!" It was within these walls that the Convention sat in judgment on Louis XVI.

At the Tuileries, now called the Palais National, where the Convention had held its sessions from the 10th of May, 1793, the Assembly Hall occupied the space between the Pavillon de l'Horloge, called Pavillon Unité, and the Pavillon Marsan, called Pavillon Liberté. The Pavillon de Flore was now called Pavillon-Égalité. The Assembly Hall was accessible by the grand staircase of Jean Bullant. The entire ground-floor of the palace below the first story, occupied by the Assembly, was a kind of long guardroom, littered with the luggage and camp-beds of the various troops mounting guard over the Convention. The Assembly had a special guard of honor, called "the Grenadiers of the Convention."

A tricolored ribbon divided the palace occupied by the Assembly from the garden where the people passed in and out.

III.

Let us finish our description of the Assembly Hall. Everything concerning this terrible place is of interest. The first object to attract one's attention on entering was a tall statue of Liberty, placed between two large windows. This hall, which was formerly the king's theatre, had now become the stage of Revolution. It was forty-two metres long, ten metres in width, and eleven in height. This elegant and superb hall built by Vigarani for the use of the courtiers was hidden beneath the rude timber-work which served to

support the weight of the people in '93. The only point of support upon which this timber-work of the public tribunes rested, was a single post, which well deserves honorable mention. This post consisted of one solid piece, ten metres in circumference, and few caryatides have done an equal amount of work; for years it bore the severe pressure of revolution. It has supported applause, enthusiasm, insult, clamors and tumults, the tremendous chaos of wrath, the fury of insurrection, and never given way beneath its burden. After the Convention it witnessed the council of the Ancients. On the 18th Brumaire it was relieved. At that time Percier replaced this wooden pillar by columns of marble that did not last so long.

An architect's ideal is sometimes peculiar; that of the architect of the Rue de Rivoli was the curved path of a cannon-ball in its flight; the architect of Carlsruhe conceived the ideal of a fan; and the conception of the architect who built the hall where the Convention established itself on the 10th of May, 1793, was apparently a huge bureau drawer, for it was long as well as high and flat. A great semicircle had been added to one of the long sides of the parallelogram; this was the amphitheatre with seats for the representatives, but neither tables nor desks; Garan-Coulon, who wrote a great deal, used to write, resting his paper on his knee; facing the benches was the tribune,—before it the bust of Lepelletier-Saint-Fargeau, and behind it the president's arm-chair. The head of the bust projected slightly above the edge of the tribune, which afterwards was the cause of its removal.

The amphitheatre consisted of nineteen semicircular benches, rising one above the other, some of which had been lengthened in order to fit into the corners, by means of other benches cut off for the purpose.

In the semicircle beneath, at the foot of the tribunal, were the places of the ushers, and on the other side of the tribune hung a placard nine feet high, set in a black wooden frame, and bearing on its two pages, separated by a kind of sceptre, the Declaration of the rights of man. On the other side was an empty space which was afterwards occupied by a similar frame, containing the Constitution of the year II., with the two pages separated by a sword. Above the tribune, over the head of the orator, from a deep loge divided into two compartments and filled with People, floated three immense tricolored banners, arranged in a horizontal position, resting on an altar upon which could be read the following words: "The Law." Behind this altar rose, like the sentinel of freedom of speech, an enormous Roman fasces as tall as a column. Two colossal statues, placed erect against the wall, faced the representatives,—Lycurgus on the president's right hand, Solon on his left, with Plato towering above the Mountain. The statues stood on simple wooden blocks, resting on

a long projecting cornice that encircled the hall, separating the people from the Assembly. The spectators leaned their elbows on this cornice.

The black wooden frame enclosing the proclamation of the Rights of Man reached to the cornice, interfering with the symmetry of the entablature,—an infraction of the straight line that made Chabot growl. "It is ugly," he said to Vadier.

The heads of the statues were decorated with wreaths of oak and laurel.

Green curtains, on which similar wreaths were painted in a deeper shade of the same color, fell in heavy folds from the surrounding cornice, draping the entire lower floor of the hall occupied by the Assembly. Above this drapery the wall was white and bare. In this wall, as if carved by a chisel, without moulding or ornament, were two stories of public tribunes, the square ones below, the round ones above; according to the rule—for the influence of Vitruvius was still acknowledged—the archivolts were superimposed upon the architraves. There were ten tribunes on each of the long sides of the hall, and two huge boxes at both ends; twenty-four in all. There sat the assembled crowd.

The spectators in the lower tribunes overflowed their bounds, grouping themselves on every projection along the cornice. A long iron bar, firmly fastened at the point of support, served as a rail to the upper tribunes, and protected the spectators from the pressure of the crowds that ascended the stairs. Once, however, a man who was pitched suddenly into the Assembly below escaped death by falling partly upon Massieu, Bishop of Beauvais; whereupon he exclaimed, "Really, a bishop has his use, then, after all!"

The hall of the Convention was large enough to contain two thousand persons, and on the days of insurrections even three thousand.

The Convention held two sessions,—one during the day and one in the evening.

The back of the president's chair was round, studded with gilt nails. His table was supported by four winged monsters with a single foot, who might have been supposed to have come forth from the Apocalypse to witness the Revolution. They seemed to have been unharnessed from Ezekiel's chariot to drag the tumbril of Samson.

On the president's table stood a huge bell, almost as large as a church-bell, a big copper inkstand, and a parchment portfolio, which contained the record of proceedings. The blood from many a severed head, borne aloft on the end of a pike, has dripped upon this table.

Nine steps led to the tribune. These steps were high, steep, and difficult of ascent; Gensonné once tripped in the act of mounting them. "It is like the staircase of a scaffold!" he said. "It is well to serve your apprenticeship!" cried Carrier.

In the corners of the hall, where the walls seemed rather bare, the architect had placed Roman fasces as ornaments, with the axe bound on the outside.

On the right and left of the tribune pedestals supported two candelabra twelve feet high, each bearing four pairs of Argand lamps. For each public box there was a similar candelabra; and on the pedestals of these candelabra circles were carved, which the people called "guillotine collars."

The seats of the Assembly, rising almost to the cornice of the tribunes, gave the representatives and the people an opportunity to chat with one another.

The exits of the tribunes opened into a labyrinth of corridors, often echoing with wild and tumultuous sounds.

The Convention, outgrowing the limits of the palace, at once overflowed into the neighboring hotels of Longueville and Coigny. If we may credit Lord Bradford's letter, it was to the Hôtel Coigny that the royal furniture was removed after the 10th of August. It took two entire months to empty the Tuileries.

The committees were lodged in the vicinity of the hall: those of legislation, agriculture, and commerce at the Pavillon-Égalité; those of the navy, the colonies, finance, assignats, and public safety, at the Pavillon Liberté; the Committee of War was at the Pavillon-Unité.

The lodgings of the Committee of General Safety were accessible to those of the Public Safety through a dark corridor, lighted night and day by a lantern,—a passage-way for the spies of all parties, who came and went, talking in whispers.

The bar of the Convention had been changed several times. Usually it was at the right hand of the president.

At both ends of the hall the two vertical partitions that shut off the concentric semicircles of the amphitheatre on the right hand and on the left, allowed space enough between partition and wall for two long and narrow passages closed at either end by square doors, which afforded entrance and exit.

A door opening upon the Terrasse des Feuillants, and leading directly into the hall, served for the admittance of the representatives.

This hall, ineffectually lighted during the day by windows, whose insufficient glimmer was replaced by livid torches when twilight fell, seemed ever shrouded in night. The lamplight sessions were lugubrious, the artificial light seeming really to increase rather than diminish the darkness. No man could see his neighbor; from all parts of the hall indistinct groups of faces seemed to be mocking each other. People passed one another without recognition. One day Laignelot, hastening to the tribune, jostled some one in the descending passage. "I beg pardon, Robespierre," he said. "For whom do you take me?" replied a hoarse voice. "Excuse me, Marat," said Laignelot.

Below, one tribune on either side of the president was reserved; for, strange to say, privileged spectators were admitted to the Convention. The draperies of these tribunes—the only ones thus adorned—were caught back to the middle of the architrave by golden cords and tassels. The tribunes of the people were bare. The general effect was stern, unconventional, and yet correct. The union of propriety and fierceness is the essence of a revolutionary life. The Hall of the Convention presented a perfect example of what artists have since called the "messidor architecture." It was at once massive and frail. The builders of that period mistook symmetry for beauty. The Renaissance had said its last word under Louis XV., and a reaction had set in. The standards of nobility and purity had been so exaggerated that that which was really noble had degenerated into insipidity, and purity itself had become inexpressibly wearisome. Prudery may exist in architecture. After the dazzling orgies of form and color of the eighteenth century, art had begun a system of diet, and allowed itself only a straight line. This style of improvement resulted in ugliness, and art was thereby reduced to a skeleton,—a phenomenal condition which is the drawback to this kind of wisdom and abstinence; the style is so strict that it becomes meagre. Apart from all political emotion, the mere sight of this architecture made one shiver. Dimly recalling the old theatre, with its garlanded boxes, its ceiling of azure and crimson, its chandelier and girandoles with their prismatic reflections glittering like diamonds, its dove-colored upholstery, the profusion of cupids and nymphs on its curtain and draperies,—all that royal and amorous idyl, painted, sculptured, and gilded, which once irradiated this gloomy place with its smile,—and then casting one's eyes upon these severe rectangular lines, cold and sharp as steel, made one think of Boucher guillotined by David.

IV.

He who looked upon the Assembly utterly forgot the hall. He who witnessed the drama was oblivious to the theatre. Nothing more misshapen and at the same time sublime. A crowd of heroes, a herd of cowards; wild beasts on the mountain, reptiles

in the swamp. There all those combatants, the ghosts of to-day, swarmed, elbowed each other, quarrelling, threatening, fighting, and living out their lives.

A convocation of Titans!



On the right the Gironde,—a legion of thinkers; on the left the Mountain,—a group of athletes. Here might be seen Brissot, to whom the keys of the Bastille had been delivered; Barbaroux, who ruled the Marseillais; Kervélégan, who had entire control of the battalion of Brest, quartered in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau; Gensonné, who had established the supremacy of representatives over generals; Gaudet, that man of ill-omen, to whom the Queen one evening at the Tuileries had shown the sleeping Dauphin: Gaudet kissed the child on the forehead, and beheaded the father; the chimerical Salles, who denounced the intrigues of the Mountain with Austria; Sillery, the cripple of the Right, and Couthon, the paralytic of the Left; Lause-Duperret, who, upon being called a "villain" by a certain journalist, invited him to dinner, saying, "Oh, 'villain' simply means a man whose opinions differ from our own;" Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, who began his almanac in 1790 with these words: "The Revolution is over;" Quinette, one of those who hastened the downfall of Louis XVI.; the Jansenist Camus, who compiled the civil constitution of the clergy, believed in the miracles of the deacon of Pâris, and prostrated himself every night before an image of Christ seven

feet high, nailed to his chamber wall; the priest Fauchet, who, together with Camille Desmoulins, was instrumental in bringing about the 14th of July; Isnard, guilty of saying, "Paris will be destroyed," at the very moment when Brunswick was saying, "Paris will be burned;" Jacob Dupont, who was the first man to proclaim himself "an atheist," and to whom Robespierre replied, "Atheism is aristocratic;" Lanjuinais, a stern, sagacious, and valiant Breton; Ducos, the Euryalus of Boyet-Fonfrède; Rebecqui, the Pylades of Barbaroux, who tendered his resignation because Robespierre had not as yet been guillotined; Richaud, who was opposed to the permanency of Sections; Lasource, who uttered the murderous apothegm, "Woe be unto grateful nations," and who at the foot of the scaffold was to contradict himself by those haughty words, flung to the members of the Mountain,— "We are dying because the nation slumbers; when it awakes your turn will come;" Biroteau, who in abolishing the inviolability of the crown unconsciously forged his own axe and reared his own scaffold; Charles Villatte, who shielded his conscience behind this protest: "I will not vote beneath the axe;" Louvet, the author of "Faublas," who was to end as a librarian at the Palais Royal, with Lodoïska at the desk; Mercier, the author of the "Tableau de Paris," who exclaimed, "Every king felt of his neck on the 21st of January;" Marec, who had the care of the "faction of ancient limits;" the journalist Carra, who at the foot of the scaffold said to the executioner: "It is provoking to die; I should like to have seen the result;" Vigée, who called himself a grenadier of the second battalion of Mayenne-et-Loire, and who when threatened by the public tribunes, cried, "I move that at the first murmur of the tribunes we all withdraw, and, sabre in hand, march upon Versailles;" Buzot, who was doomed to die of hunger, and Valazé, to fall by his own dagger; Condorcet, who was to die at Bourg-la-Reine, or Bourg-Égalité, as it was called at that time, betrayed by a volume of Horace that he carried in his pocket; Pétion, whose fate it was to be adored by the populace in 1792 and devoured by the wolves in 1794; and twenty more besides,—Pontécoulant, Marboz, Lidon, Saint-Martin, Dussaulx, the translator of Juvenal, who had made the Hanover campaign; Boileau, Bertrand, Lesterp-Beauvais, Lesage, Gomaine, Gardien, Mainvielle, Duplantier, Lacaze, Antiboul, and, foremost among them all, Barnave, whom men called Vergniaud.



On the other side, Antoine-Louis-Léon Florelle de Saint-Just, a youth of twenty-three, whose pallid face, low forehead, regular profile, and deep, mysterious eyes conveyed an impression of profound melancholy; Merlin de Thionville, whom the Germans called "Feuer-Teufel"—the fire-devil; Merlin de Douai, the guilty author of the Law of the Suspects; Soubrany, whom the Parisians, in the riot of the first Prairial, demanded for their general; the former curé, Lebon, who now held a sabre in the hand that had once sprinkled holy water; Billaud-Varennes, who foresaw the magistracy of the future, when arbitrators would take the place of judges; Fabre d'Églantine, who chanced upon the happy invention of the republican calendar, and Rouget de Lisle, the composer of the Marseillaise,—no second inspiration ever visited either of these two men; Manuel, the attorney of the Commune, who had said, "A dead king is no less a man;" Goujon, who marched into Tripstadt, Newstadt, and Spire, and who witnessed the flight of the Prussian army; Lacroix, a lawyer transformed into a general and made knight of Saint-Louis six days before August 10; Fréron-Thersite, son of Fréron Zoïle; Ruth, the inexorable searcher of the iron cupboard, predestined to a great republican suicide, who was to kill himself on the day of the death of the Republic; Fouché, with the soul of a demon and the face of a corpse; Camboulas, the friend of Père Duchesne, who used to say to Guillotin, "You belong to the Club of the Feuillants, but your daughter belongs to the Club of the Jacobins;" Jagot, who replied to those who pitied the nakedness of the prisoners in those savage words: "A prison is

a dress of stone;" Javogues, the frightful desecrator of the tombs of Saint-Denis; Osselin, himself a proscriber, who sheltered one of the proscribed, Madame Charry, in his own house; Bentabolle, who while presiding over the Assembly gave the tribunes the signal for applause or disapproval; the journalist Robert, Mademoiselle Kéralio's husband, who wrote: "Neither Robespierre nor Marat comes to my house; Robespierre is welcome to come whenever he chooses, Marat never;" Garan-Coulon, who, when Spain interceded on the occasion of the trial of Louis XVI., had haughtily requested that the Assembly should not condescend to read the letter of one king pleading for another; the bishop Grégoire, who in the earlier part of his career was worthy to have belonged to the primitive church, but who afterwards, during the period of the Empire, renounced his Republican principles; Amar, who said, "The whole earth condemns Louis XVI.; to whom then shall we appeal for judgment? To the planets;" Rouyer, who on the 21st of January opposed the firing of the cannon of the Pont-Neuf, saying, "A king's head ought to make no more noise in falling than the head of any other man;" Chénier, brother of the poet André; Vadier, one of those who placed a pistol on the tribune; Tanis, who used to say to Momoro, "I want Marat and Robespierre to embrace at my table."



Joseph Chénier.

David.

"Where do you live?" "At Charenton." "It would have surprised me had you said elsewhere," was Momoro's reply; Legendre, who was the butcher of the French Revolution, as Pride had been of the English Revolution. "Come and be slaughtered!" he cried to Lanjuinais. To which the latter replied: "First pass a decree that I am an ox, if you please;" Collot d'Herbois, that gloomy comedian, wearing, as it were, the antique mask with the double mouth, one of which said "Yes," while the other said "No," approving on the one hand and blaming on the other, defaming Carrier in Nantes and deifying Châlier in Lyons, sending Robespierre to the scaffold and Marat to the Pantheon; Génissieux, who asked that the penalty of death should be imposed on whosoever should be found wearing a medal that bore the inscription, "Louis XVI. martyred;" Léonard Bourdon, the schoolmaster, who had offered his house to the old man of Mount Jura; Topsent, the sailor; Goupilleau, the lawyer; Laurient Lecointre, merchant; Duhem, the doctor; Sergent, the sculptor; David, the artist; and Joseph Égalité, the prince; and others besides,—Lecointe Puiraveau, who called for a formal decree pronouncing Marat "insane;" Robert Lindet, the troublesome author of that devilfish whose head was the Committee of Public Safety, and whose twenty-one thousand arms embraced France in the shape of revolutionary committees; Leboeuf, on whom Girey-Dupré, in his "Noël des faux-Patriotes," wrote this line:—

"Leboeuf vit Legendre et beugla."

Thomas Paine, the benevolent American; Anacharsis Cloots, the millionaire, a German baron, who although an atheist was still a man of sincere purpose, and a follower of Hébert; the upright Lebas, a friend of the Duplays; Rovère, one of those men whom one occasionally meets, who indulge in wickedness for its own sake, a variety of amateur more common than we might imagine; Charlier, who wished to address aristocrats with the familiar "vous;" the elegiac and cruel Tallien, who was to bring about the 9th Thermidor out of pure love of it: Cambacérès, a lawyer, who finally became a prince; Carrier, another lawyer, who turned into a tiger; Laplanche, who once exclaimed, "I demand priority for the alarm-gun;" Thuriot, who wished the jurors of the Revolutionary Tribunal to vote aloud; Bourdon de l'Oise, who provoked Chambon to challenge him, denounced Paine, and in his turn was denounced by Hébert; Fayau, who proposed to despatch an incendiary army into the Vendée; Tavaux, who on the 13th of April acted as a sort of mediator between the Gironde and the Mountain; Vernier, who suggested that the leaders of the Gironde and the Mountain should be sent to serve as common soldiers; Rewbell, who shut himself up

in Mayence; Bourbotte, whose horse was killed under him at Saumur; Guimberteau and Jard-Panvilliers, the commanders of the army of the Cherbourg coast and that of La Rochelle; Lecarpentier, who was in charge of the squadron of Cancale; Roberjot, for whom the ambush of Rastadt was lying in wait; Prieur de la Marne, who wore in camp his former major's epaulettes; Levasseur de la Sarthe, who by a single word induced Serrent, commander of the Battalion of Saint-Armand, to kill himself; Reverchon, Maure, Bernard de Saintes, Charles Richard, Lequinio, and towering above them all a Mirabeau whom men called Danton.

Belonging to neither of these parties, and yet holding both in awe, rose the man Robespierre.



V.

Below crouched dismay, which may be noble, and fear, which cannot fail to be contemptible. Beneath all these passions, this heroism and devotion, this rage, might be seen the gloomy multitude of the anonymous. The shoals of the Assembly were called the Plain, comprising the entire floating element,—men who are in doubt, who hesitate, retreat, temporize, mistrustfully watching one another. The Mountain and the Gironde were the chosen few, the Plain was the crowd. The Plain was summed up and expressed in Sieyès.

Sieyès was a man of a naturally profound mind, full of chimerical projects. He had paused at the Third Estate, and had never been able to rise as high as the people. Certain minds are constituted to rest midway. Sieyès called Robespierre a tiger, who returned the compliment by calling him a mole. He was a philosopher who had attained prudence if not wisdom. He was a courtier, rather than the servant of the Revolution. He took a spade and went to work with the people in the Champs de Mars, hauling the same cart with Alexander de Beauharnais. He urged others to energetic labors which he never performed himself. He said to the Girondists: "Put the cannon on your own side." There are philosophers who are natural wrestlers, and they like Condorcet joined the party of Vergniaud, or like Camille Desmoulins that of Danton. There are philosophers who value their lives, and those who belonged to this class followed Sieyès.

The best vats have their dregs. Still lower even than the Plain was the Marsh, whose stagnation was hideous to look upon, revealing as it did transparent egotism. There shivered the timid in silent expectation. Nothing could be more wretched. Ignominious to the last degree, and yet feeling no shame, hiding their indignation, living in servitude, cherishing covert rebellion, possessed by a certain cynical terror, they had all the desperation peculiar to cowardice; they really preferred the Gironde, and yet they chose the Mountain; when the final result depended on them, they went over to the successful side; they surrendered Louis XVI. to Vergniaud, Danton to Robespierre, and Robespierre to Tallien. They put Marat in the pillory during his lifetime, and deified him after his death. They showed themselves the partisans of the very cause which they suddenly turned against. They seemed to possess an instinct for jostling the infirm. Since they had joined the cause with the understanding that it was a strong one, any sign of wavering seemed to them equivalent to treason. They were the majority, the power, and the fear. Hence springs the audacity of the base.

Hence the 31st of May, the 11th Germinal, the 9th Thermidor,—tragedies where dwarfs untied the knots of giants.

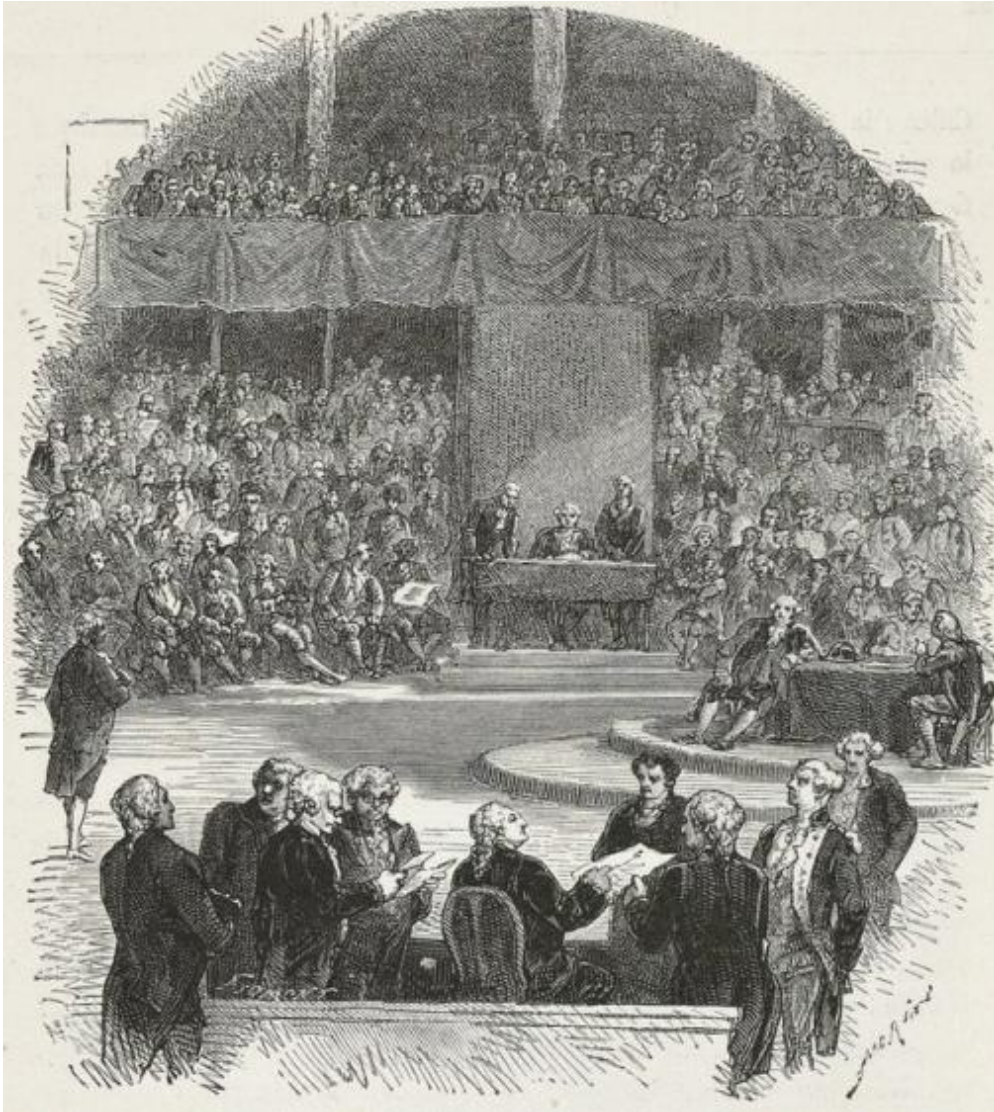
VI.

And among these passionate men were to be found others, fanciful dreamers. Utopia was there in all its varied forms,—from the warlike, which admitted the scaffold, to the mild, which would fain abolish the penalty of death; a spectre or an angel, according as one viewed it from the throne or from the side of the common people. Men eager for the fray stood face to face with others who were contented to brood over their dreams of peace. The brain of Carnot created fourteen armies while Jean Debry was revolving in his head a scheme of universal democratic federation. Amid this furious

eloquence, amid these howling and thundering voices, some men there were who preserved a fruitful silence. Lakanal was silent, preoccupied with his system for national public education; Lanthenas held his peace, absorbed in his plans for primary schools; Revellière-Lepaux was silent, dreaming of philosophy when it should attain the dignity of religion. Others busied themselves with matters of minor importance and the details of every-day life. Guyton-Morveau was interested in the improvement of the sanitary condition of hospitals; Maire in the abolishment of existing servitudes; Jean-Bon-Saint-André in the suppression of arrest and imprisonment for debt; Romme in Chappe's proposition; Dubœ in the filing of the archives; Coren-Fustier in the foundation of the Cabinet of Anatomy and the Museum of Natural History; Guyomard in the navigation of rivers and the damming of the Scheldt. Men were fanatical about art, even monomaniacs on the subject; on the 21st of January, at the very time when the head of monarchy was falling on the Place de la Révolution, Bézard, the representative of the Oise, went to see a picture of Rubens which had been found in a garret in the Rue Saint-Lazare. Artists, orators, and prophets, giants like Danton, and men as childlike as Cloots, gladiators and philosophers, were all straining for the same goal,—progress. Nothing disconcerted them. The greatness of the Convention consisted in its efforts to discover what degree of reality there might be in that which men call the impossible. At one end stood Robespierre with his eyes fixed upon the Law, and at the other Condorcet gazing with equal steadiness on Duty.



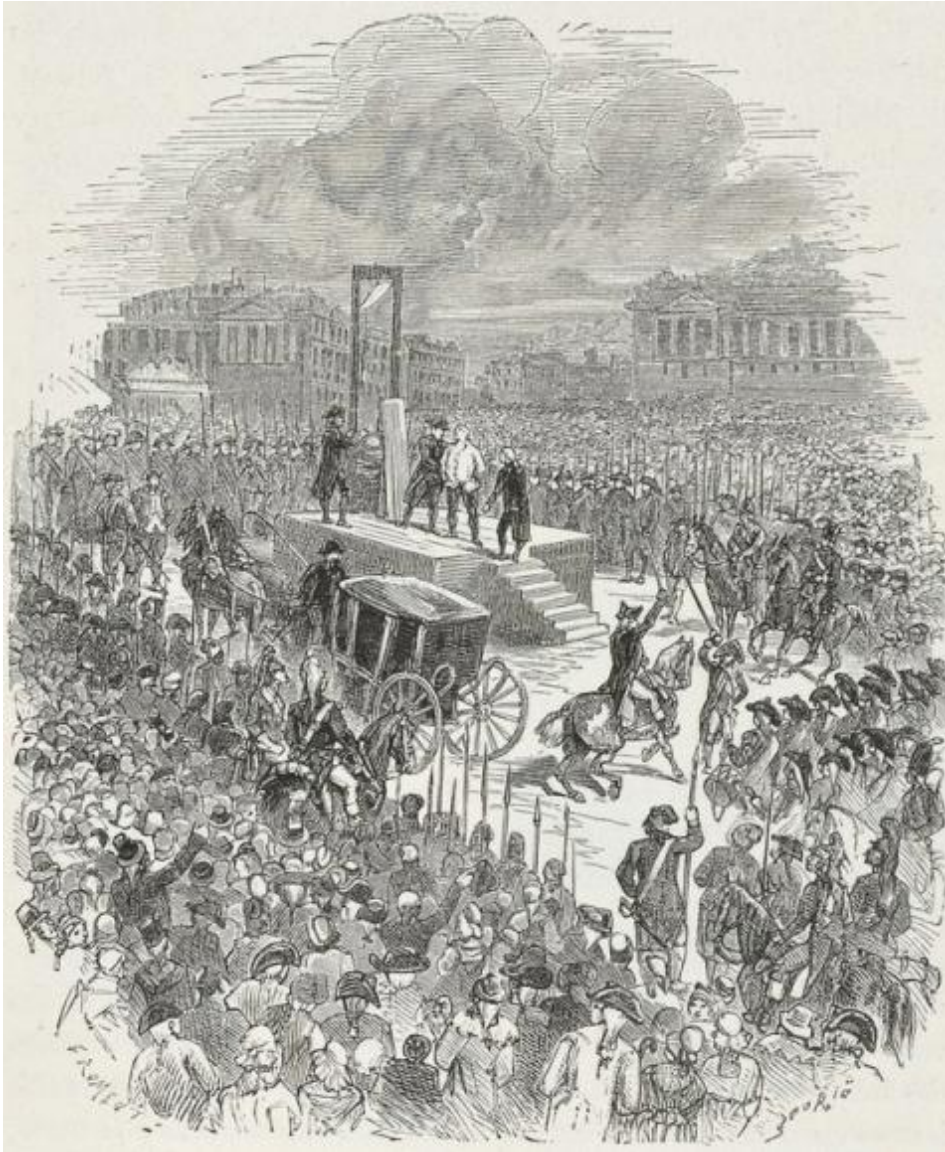
Condorcet was a man enlightened, but given to dreaming. Robespierre possessed executive ability; and sometimes, in the final crises of worn-out conditions, execution signifies extermination. Revolutions have two slopes,—the one ascending, the other descending,—whereon we meet at different stages each season in its turn, from the freezing to the flowery; and each zone produces men suited to the climate, from those who live under the hot rays of the sun, to those who dwell with the thunderbolt.



VII.

People pointed out to each other the bend in the left-hand passage, where Robespierre whispered to Clavière's friend Garat that terrible epigram, "Clavière a conspiré partout où il a respiré." In this same bend, well adapted for privacy and suppressed indignation, Fabre d'Églantine quarrelled with Romme, reproaching him for having disfigured his calendar by changing Fervidor into Thermidor. People pointed out the corner where, elbow to elbow, sat the seven representatives of Haute-Garonne, who, being the first called upon to pronounce their verdict upon Louis XVI., had thus answered, one after the other: Mailhe, "death;" Delmas, "death;" Projean, "death;" Calès, "death;" Ayral, "death;" Julien, "death;" Desaby, "death;"—eternal reverberation that fills all history, and since the birth of human justice has continued to send forth a funereal echo from the walls of the tribunal. Amid this stormy sea of

faces one man would point out to another the individuals whose tragic votes had caused that fearful din: Paganel, who cried, "Death. A king serves no purpose save by his death." Millaud, who said, "If death had never been known, we must to-day have invented it." Old Raffron du Trouillet, who exclaimed, "A speedy death!" Goupilleau, who cried, "The scaffold, at once. Delay but aggravates the pain of death." Sieyès, who with solemn brevity uttered the single word, "Death." Thuriot, who, rejecting the appeal to the people proposed by Buzot, said, "What! The primary assemblies! forty-four thousand tribunals! an endless trial! The head of Louis XVI. would have time to grow gray before it fell." Augustin-Bon-Robespierre, who exclaimed, after his brother, "I ignore that humanity which massacres the people and pardons despots! Death! The demand for a reprieve means a substitution of the appeal to tyrants for the appeal to the people." Foussedoire, who took the place of Bernardin-de-Saint-Pierre, saying, "The shedding of human blood is abhorrent to me; but the blood of a king is not human blood. Death!" Jean-Bon-Saint-André, who said, "No nation can be free until the tyrant dies." Lavicomterie, who expressed himself in this formula: "So long as the tyrant breathes, liberty is strangled. Death!" Châteauneuf-Randon, who cried, "The death of Louis the Last!" Guyardin, who suggested, "Let him be executed at the Barrière-Renversée." The Barrière-Renversée was the Barrière du Trône. Tellier, who said, "Let us forge a cannon of the calibre of Louis XVI.'s head, to fire upon the enemy." And among those inclined to mercy, Gentil was one, who said, "I vote for imprisonment. He who makes a Charles I. makes a Cromwell likewise." Bancal, who said, "Exile. I should like to see the first king of the earth sentenced to earn his living at a trade." Albouys, who said, "Exile. Let this living spectre wander round among the thrones." Zangiacomi, who said, "I vote for imprisonment; let us keep Capet alive for a scarecrow." Chaillon, who said, "Let him live! I do not approve of killing a man for Rome to canonize." While sentences like these fell one after the other from these severe lips, making their way into history, bedizened women in low-necked dresses sat in the boxes, and with list in hand counted the votes as they were given, pricking each name with a pin.



Where tragedy has entered in, horror and pity remain. To see the Convention, at whatsoever epoch of its reign, was to witness anew the judgment of the last of the Capets; the legend of the 21st of January seemed to be interwoven with all its acts; the formidable Assembly was composed of those men whose fatal breath put out the ancient torch of monarchy, which had burned for eighteen centuries; the decisive trial of all kings in the person of one seemed to be the starting-point of the great war which it waged against the past. At whatsoever session of the Convention one might be present, the shadow cast by the scaffold of Louis XVI. never failed to make itself evident. The spectators told each other about the resignations of Kersaint and Roland, and also about Duchâtel the deputy of the Deux-Sèvres, who, being ill, caused himself

to be carried to the Assembly, and on his death-bed voted against the execution of the king,—an act which excited Marat to laughter. People looked for the representative forgotten to-day, who, after a session that had lasted thirty-seven hours, overcome by fatigue, fell asleep on his bench, and being roused by the usher when his turn came to vote, half-opened his eyes, murmured, "Death," and fell asleep again.

At the time when the death-sentence of Louis XVI. was passed, Robespierre had eighteen months to live, Danton fifteen, Vergniaud nine, Marat five months and three weeks, and Lepelletier-Saint-Fargeau one day! Brief and terrible was the breath of life in those days.

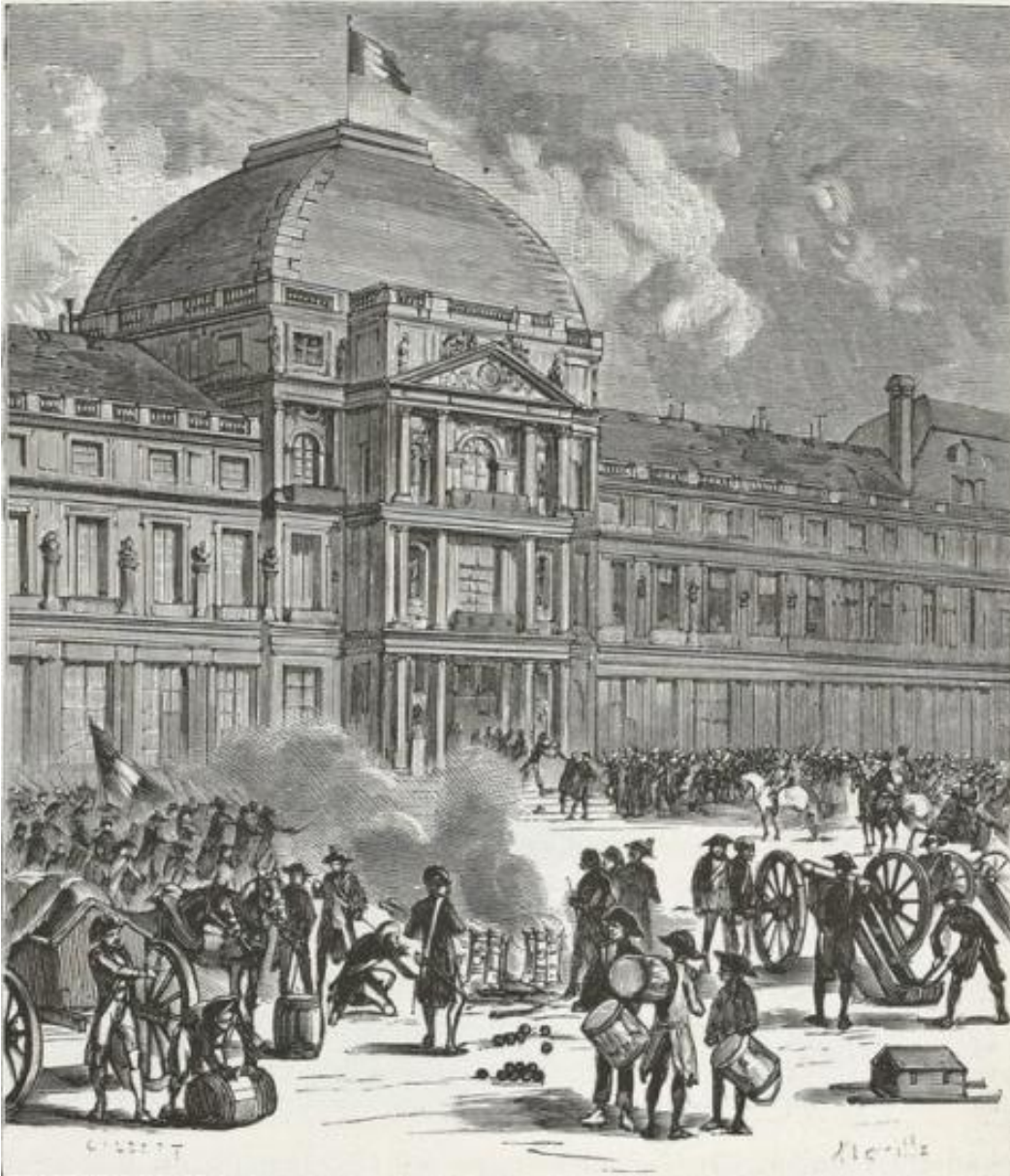
VIII.

The people had a window, opening on the Convention in the shape of the public tribunes, and when this window proved inadequate, they opened the door, and the street-population poured in upon the Assembly. The invasions of the crowd into this senate presented one of the most striking spectacles known to history. Generally these irruptions were amicable. The street fraternized with the curule chair. But friendship with a people who had once, in the course of three hours, taken the cannon of the Invalides and forty thousand muskets besides, was a somewhat formidable relationship. At every moment a procession interrupted the session. There were deputations admitted to the bar, petitions, expressions of respect, offerings. The pike of honor of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine was brought in, borne by women. The English offered twenty thousand pairs of shoes for our barefooted soldiers. "Citizen Arnoux," said the "Moniteur," "the curé of Aubignan, in command of the battalion of the Drôme, requests permission to march to the frontier, and begs that his parish may be kept for him." The delegates from the Sections came, bringing in wheelbarrows, dishes, patens, chalices, monstrances, heaps of gold, silver, and gilt, offerings to the country from this ragged crowd, who asked, as a reward, permission to dance the Carmagnole before the Convention.



Chenard, Narbonne, and Vallière came to sing stanzas in honor of the Mountain. The section of Mont-Blanc brought the bust of Lepelletier, and a woman placed a red cap on the head of the president, who embraced her; "the citoyennes of the section du Mail" strewed flowers "before the legislators;" the "pupils of the country," escorted by music, came to thank the Convention for having "paved the way for the prosperity of the century;" the women of the section of the Gardes-Françaises brought roses; the women of the section of the Champs-Élysées presented a crown of oak-leaves; the women of the section of the Temple came to the bar and took an oath "to wed only true Republicans;" the section of Molière presented a medal of Franklin which, by a formal decree, was suspended from the wreath of the statue of Liberty; the Foundlings, who had been declared the Children of the Republic, filed by, dressed in the national uniform; young girls of the ninety-third section came arrayed in long white gowns, and the next day the "Moniteur" contained this line: "The president receives a

bouquet from the innocent hands of a fair young girl." The orators saluted the crowds and sometimes flattered them, saying to the multitude; "Thou art infallible; thou art irreproachable; thou art sublime." The lower classes are childlike; they are fond of sugar-plums. Sometimes a riot would invade the Assembly, entering in a fury and departing pacified, like the Rhone flowing through Lake Lemane, which is muddy enough on its entrance, but flows out as blue as the sky.



If it continued turbulent, Henriot would now and then order his furnaces for heating the bullets to be brought up to the entrance of the Tuileries.

IX.

While this assembly was throwing off the shackles of revolution, it was also promoting civilization. It was a furnace, to be sure, but it was likewise a forge. In this caldron where terror was bubbling, progress also fermented. From that chaos of shadows and tempestuous whirlwind of clouds spread immense rays of light parallel with the eternal laws,—rays that have since rested on the horizon, forever visible in the sky of the nations, and which are called justice, tolerance, goodness, reason, truth, and love. The Convention proclaimed this grand axiom: "The liberty of one citizen ends where that of another begins;" thus summing up in two lines the essence of social science. It proclaimed the sanctity of the poor, as well as of the infirm in the persons of the blind, and of the mutes, whose guardianship had been assumed by the State; it honored maternity in the person of the girl-mother, whom it comforted and lifted up, childhood in the orphans adopted by the State, and innocence in the accused, who was indemnified by the government after his acquittal. It branded the traffic in blacks and abolished slavery. It proclaimed civil consolidation. It decreed gratuitous instruction. It organized national education by the establishment of the normal school in Paris, the central school in the cities, and the primary school in the communes. It founded conservatories and museums. It systematized the Code as well as the weights and measures, and the method of calculation by decimals. It established the finances of France upon a firm basis, and brought about an era of public credit after the long monarchical bankruptcy. It established communication by telegraph, it provided almshouses for old age and the improved hospitals for sickness; it gave the Polytechnic School to the cause of education, the Bureau of Longitude to science, and the Institute to the domain of human intellect. It was at once cosmopolitan and national. Of the eleven thousand two hundred and ten decrees issued by the Convention, the proportion of philanthropic as compared with the political was as two to one. It proclaimed universal morality to be the basis of society, and universal conscience the basis of the law. And it must be remembered that all these reforms—the abolition of slavery, the proclamation of universal brotherhood, the protection of humanity, the elevation of the human conscience, the law of labor changed into a privilege, thus transforming the burden into a comfort, the consolidation of the national wealth, the enlightenment and protection of children, the dissemination of knowledge and science, a light set upon all the mountain-tops, help proffered to the suffering, and the promulgation of all principle—were accomplished by the

Convention, with the Vendée gnawing like hydra at its entrails, and the kings of the world leaping like tigers upon its shoulders.



X.

Astonishing assembly! The human, the inhuman, and the superhuman,—every type in short might be found there. An epic accumulation of antagonisms,—Guillotins avoiding David, Bazire insulting Chabot, Gaudet mocking Saint-Just, Vergniaud despising Danton, Louvet attacking Robespierre, Buzot denouncing Égalité, Chambon branding Pache: all hating Marat. And how many more names might yet be registered! Armonville,—called Bonnet-Rouge, because at the sessions he invariably wore a Phrygian cap,—a friend of Robespierre, who demanded that the latter should be "guillotined after Louis XVI." to restore the equilibrium; Massieu, a colleague and counterpart of the kindly Lamourette, the bishop, destined to leave his name to a kiss; Lehardy du Morbihan, stigmatizing the priests of Brittany; Barère, the man of majorities, who presided when Louis XVI. appeared at the bar, and who bore the same relation to Paméla as Louvet to Lodoïska; the orator Daunou, who said, "Let us gain time;" Dubois-Crancé, who listened to Marat's whispered confidences; the Marquis de Châteauneuf; Laclos; Herault de Séchelle, who fell back before Henriot, crying, "Gunners, to your pieces!" Julien, who compared the Mountain to Thermopylæ; Gamon, who demanded that a public tribune should be reserved exclusively for women; Laloy, who awarded the honors of the session to Bishop Gobel, who came to the Convention to exchange his mitre for the red cap; Lecomte, who cried, "So we pay homage to the priest who unfrocks himself;" Féraud, whose head was saluted by Boissy-d'Anglas, leaving to history the solution of the query, "Did Boissy-d'Anglas salute the victim in the person of the head, or the assassins in the form of the pike?" the two brothers Duprat, one a member of the Mountain, the other a Girondist, who hated each other, as did the two brothers Chénier.



Many a word has been uttered in this tribune in moments of excitement which has sometimes unconsciously to the speaker aroused the fatal spirit of revolution, and so influenced the existing circumstances that a sense of discontent and passion

suddenly sprang to life. As if displeased with what they heard, events seemed to take offence at the words of men, and catastrophes were precipitated by human speech. The reverberation of a voice in the mountain is sufficient to start an avalanche. The utterance of one superfluous word may be followed by a landslide, which might not have happened had no word been spoken. One might almost fancy that events develop a certain irascibility.

Thus a mistaken word falling by chance from the lips of an orator cost Mme. Élisabeth her head.

Intemperance of language was the rule at the Convention. In the discussions threats flew back and forth, crossing one another, like sparks from a conflagration.

Pétion. "Come to the point, Robespierre."

Robespierre. "You are the point, Pétion. I shall come; you need have no fear."

A Voice. "Death to Marat!"

Marat. "When Marat dies, the city of Paris will be no more; and when Paris is gone, there is an end to the Republic."

Billaud-Varenes rose to say, "We wish to—"

Barère interrupted him: "You speak in the plural, like a king."

And another day:—

Philippeaux. "One of the members drew his sword upon me."

Audouin. "President, call the assassin to order."

The President. "Wait."

Panis. "President, I call you to order,"—a sally followed by an outburst of rude laughter.

Lecointre. "The Curé of Chant-de-Bout complains that his Bishop Fauchet forbids him to marry."

A Voice. "I see no reason why Fauchet, who has mistresses, should try to prevent other men from having wives."

Another Voice. "Priest, take to thyself a wife."

The tribunes mingled in the conversation, and said "Thou" to the members.

One day the representative Ruamps mounted to the tribune, and, one of his hips being much larger than the other, a spectator called out to him: "Turn that one towards the Right, since you have a cheek *à la David!*" Such were the liberties that the people took with the Convention. Once, however, during the uproar of the 11th of April, 1793, the president caused a disorderly person in the tribunes to be arrested.

One day, during a session at which the venerable Buonarotti was present, Robespierre had the floor, and spoke for two hours, never removing his eyes from Danton,—sometimes looking straight at him, which was unpleasant enough, but when he looked at him sideways, it was even more disagreeable. His thunders of eloquence were not without effect, ending by an indignant outburst full of ominous words: "We know the intriguers, and those who strive to corrupt, as well as those who are corrupted; we know the traitors also. They are present in this Assembly. They hear our voice, our eyes are upon them, and our gaze pursues them. Let them look above their heads, and they will discover the sword of the law; let them look into their conscience, and there behold their own infamy. Let them beware!" When Robespierre had finished, Danton, with his half-closed eyes turned upwards and one arm hanging over the back of his chair, threw himself back and began to hum,—

"Cadet Roussel fait des discours Qui ne sont pas longs quand ils sont courts."

Imprecations fell thick on every side,—"Conspirator!" "Assassin!" "Scoundrel!" "Seditious!"

"Moderate!" They denounced one another in the presence of the bust of Brutus standing there. Exclamations, insults, challenges! Angry glances interchanged, much shaking of fists, flashing of pistols and half-drawn daggers. An awful outblazing from the tribune. Some talked as if they were pushed up against the guillotine. Heads waved to and fro, frightened yet terrible. The multitude was like a volume of smoke blown all ways at once,—men of the Mountain, Girondists, Feuillantists, Moderates, Terrorists, Jacobins, Cordeliers, and the eighteen regicide priests.

All these men!—a mass of smoke driven about in every direction.

XI.

Spirits at the mercy of the wind,—but a wind of preternatural power!

It might be truthfully said, even of the chief among them, that to be a member of the Convention was like being a wave of the ocean. The impetus came from above. There was an inherent force in the Convention, which might be called a will,—not in the sense of an individual quality, but belonging to the Assembly as a body; and this will

was an idea, indomitable and boundless, which from the heavens above descended into the darkness below. Men called it Revolution, and wherever it passed, some men were overthrown and others exalted; one would be scattered like foam, while another was dashed to pieces against the rocks. It kept its goal well in mind as it drove the maelstrom before it. To impute revolution to men is like attributing the tides to the waves.

Revolution is a manifestation of the unknown. You may call it good or evil, according as you aspire to the future or cling to the past; but leave it to its authors. It would seem to be the joint product of great events and great individualities, but is in reality the result of events alone. Events plan the expenditures for which men pay the bills. Events dictate, men sign. The 14th of July was signed by Camille Desmoulins, the 10th of August by Danton, the 2d September by Marat, the 21st of September by Grégoire, and the 21st of January by Robespierre; but Desmoulins, Danton, Marat, Grégoire, and Robespierre are merely clerks. The majestic and mysterious compiler of those grand pages was Almighty God, wearing the mask of destiny. Robespierre believed in God,— he did indeed.

Revolution is one form of the eternal phenomenon that circumscribes us on all sides, and which we call Necessity.

In the presence of this mysterious complication of benefits and wretchedness rises the wherefore of history.

Because. This answer may be the reply of one who knows nothing, as well as that of one who knows all.

In the presence of these monstrous catastrophes which both devastate and revivify civilization, one hesitates to sit in judgment on the details. To blame or to praise men on account of the result is very much like praising or criticising the ciphers on account of the sum total. The inevitable is sure to happen; if the wind is to blow, it will blow, but the eternal serenity remains untouched by these blasts. Like the starlit sky above the tempest, truth and justice sit enthroned above all revolutions.

XII.

Such was this immeasurable Convention, like an intrenched encampment of the human race attacked simultaneously by all the powers of darkness; the camp-fires of an army of ideas besieged by its foes, an immense bivouac of human intellect on the slope of a precipice. Nothing in history can be compared to this Assembly, which contained within itself senate and people, conclave and street-crossing, Areopagus and public square, tribunal and accused.

The Convention always yielded to the wind; but this wind came from the mouth of the people, and it was the breath of God.

And to-day, after the lapse of eighty years, every time the Convention presents itself to the mind of any man whomsoever, whether philosopher or historian, he cannot but pause and meditate; since no man can be indifferent to that grand procession of shadows.



II.

MARAT IN THE GREEN-ROOM.

On the day following the interview in the Rue du Paon, Marat, according to the intention which he had announced to Simonne Évrard, went to the Convention.

There chanced to be present a certain marquis, Louis de Montaut, an admirer of Marat,—the same who afterwards presented to the Convention a decimal clock surmounted by a bust of Marat.

Just as Marat entered, Chabot approached Montaut. "Ci-devant—" he said.

Montaut looked up.

"Why do you call me ci-devant?"

"Because that's what you are."

"I?"

"Of course, since you were once a marquis."

"Never!"

"Nonsense!"

"My father was a soldier; my grandfather was a weaver."

"What folly is this, Montaut?"

"My name is not Montaut."

"What is it, then?"

"My name is Maribon."

"Very well," declared Chabot; "it is all one to me."

And he added, between his teeth,—

"Every man, nowadays, pretends that he is no marquis."

Marat stopped in the left-hand corridor and looked at Montaut and Chabot.

Whenever he came in, a murmur would pass through the crowd, but always at a respectful distance; it was quiet in his immediate vicinity. Marat paid no attention whatever. He scorned the croaking of the frogs.

In this dim shadow obscuring the lower benches, Conpé de l'Oise, Prunelle, Villars,— a bishop who afterwards became a member of the French Academy,—Boutroue, Petit, Plaichard, Bonet, Thibaudeau, Valdruche, pointed him out to one another.

"Look! There is Marat!"

"He is not ill, then?"

"Probably he is, since he is here in a dressing-gown."

"In a dressing-gown?"

"Certainly."

"What liberties he allows himself!"

"That he should dare to come to the Convention in such a garb!"

"Since he came one day crowned with laurels, he might be expected to appear in a dressing-gown."

"With his face of copper, and teeth of verdigris."

"His dressing-gown seems new."

"What is it made of?"

"A kind of rep."

"Striped?"

"Just see the lapels!"

"They are made of fur."

"Tiger-skin?"

"No, ermine."

"Imitation."

"He has stockings on."

"Remarkable!"

"And shoes with buckles."

"Silver buckles!"

"Camboulas' sabots will not soon forgive him that."

On the opposite benches they pretended not to see Marat, but continued to talk of other matters. Santhonax accosted Dussaulx.

"Have you heard, Dussaulx?"

"What?"

"The ci-devant Count de Brienne."

"The one who was at La Force with the ci-devant Duke de Villeroy?"

"Yes."

"I knew them both. What about them?"

"You know they were so frightened that they saluted all the red caps of the turnkeys, and one day refused to take a hand at *piquet* because a pack of cards with kings and queens was offered them."

"Well?"

"They were guillotined yesterday."

"Both of them?"

"Yes."

"Well, how did they behave in prison?"

"Like cowards!"

"And what sort of a figure did they cut on the scaffold?"

"Intrepid."

Whereupon Dussaulx exclaimed,—

"It's easier to die than to live."

Barère had begun to read a report on the subject of the Vendée. Nine hundred men from Morbihan had started with cannon to relieve Nantes. Redon was threatened by the peasants, and Paimboeuf had been attacked. A fleet was cruising in the vicinity of Maindrin to prevent invasions. From Ingrande to Maure the entire left bank of the Loire bristled with Royalist batteries. Three thousand peasants had taken possession of Pornic. They cried: "Vive les Anglais!" Barère read a letter from Santerre to the Convention ending with the following words:

"Seven thousand peasants attacked Vannes. We repulsed them, and they retreated, leaving four cannon in our hands."

"And how many prisoners?" interrupted a voice. Barère went on,—

"Postscript. We have no prisoners, because we have ceased to take them."^[1]

Marat, as usual, stood motionless, paying no attention to what was going on, apparently absorbed in deep preoccupation.

He held a paper in his hand, crumpling it between his fingers. Had it been unfolded, certain words in the handwriting of Momoro, in answer, no doubt, to some question of Marat, might have been read:—

"Nothing can be done in opposition to the supreme authority of the delegated commissioners, especially those of the Committee of Public Safety. Although Génissieux said in the session of May 6th, 'Each commissioner is more than a king,' it had no effect. Life and death are in their hands. Massade at Angers, Trullard at Saint-Amand, Nyon with General Marcé, Parrein in the army of the 'Sables,' Millier in the army of Niort, are all-powerful. The Jacobin Club has gone so far as to appoint Parrein brigadier-general. Circumstances excuse everything. A delegate of the Committee of Public Safety may hold in check a commander-in-chief."

Marat ceased crumpling the paper, put it in his pocket, and walked slowly towards Montaut and Chabot, who had continued their conversation and had not seen him enter.

Chabot was just saying,—

"Maribon, or Montaut, listen to this: I have just left the Committee of Public Safety."

"And what are they doing there?"

"They are setting a priest to watch a noble."

"Ah!"

"A noble like yourself—"

"I am not a noble," said Montaut.

"To be watched by a priest—"

"Like you."

"I am not a priest," said Chabot.

And both men began to laugh.

"Please give us a more definite account."

"Well, here is the tale: a priest, Cimourdain by name, has been delegated with full powers to a Viscount Gauvain, who is in command of the exploring division of the army of the coast. Now, the difficulty is, to prevent the nobleman from cheating and the priest from betraying."

"There will be no trouble about that. You have only to make death the third party."

"That is what I came for," said Marat They looked up.

"Good-day, Marat," said Chabot; "we seldom see you at our sessions."

"My doctor has ordered baths," replied Marat.

"Ah, you had better beware of baths," continued Chabot. "Seneca died in a bath."

Marat smiled.

"There is no Nero here, Chabot."

"I should say there was, since you are here," said a gruff voice.

It was Danton, who was passing on his way towards his seat.

Marat did not turn round.

He thrust his head in between the faces of Montaut and Chabot.

"Listen, I have come on serious business; one of us three must propose the draft of a decree to the Convention to-day."

"I am not the man," said Montaut. "They pay no attention to me; I am a marquis."

"Neither will they listen to me; I am a Capuchin," said Chabot.

"Nor to me, for I am Marat"

A silence ensued.

Marat, absorbed in his own thoughts, was not accessible to questions; still, Montaut ventured upon one.

"What decree would you like the Assembly to pass, Marat?"

"A decree inflicting the penalty of death on any military chief who allows a rebel prisoner to escape."

Chabot interposed.

"There is such a decree already; it was made a law at the end of April."

"That amounts to nothing whatever," said Marat. "Everywhere throughout the Vendée prisoners are helped to escape, and any man may shelter them with impunity."

"That is because the decree is no longer in force, Marat."

"It must be revived, Chabot."

"No doubt it needs to be revived."

"And to accomplish this we must address the Convention."

"There will be no need to do that, Marat; the Committee of Public Safety will suffice."

"The object will be attained," added Montaut, "if the Committee of Public Safety order the decree to be placarded in every Commune of the Vendée, and make two or three suitable examples."

"Of men in authority," rejoined Chabot. "Of the generals."

Marat mumbled between his teeth, "Yes, I suppose that will answer."

"Marat," continued Chabot, "go and say that to the Committee of Public Safety yourself."

Marat gazed steadily at him, which was not pleasant, even for a Chabot.

"Chabot," he said, "the Committee of Public Safety meets at Robespierre's house; I do not visit Robespierre."

"Then I will go myself," said Montaut.

"Very well," replied Marat.

The next day a mandate from the Committee of Public Safety was sent in all directions, ordering the authorities of the cities and villages of the Vendée not only to publish, but also strictly to execute, a decree awarding the penalty of death to all who were known to aid and abet the escape of brigands and rebel prisoners.

This decree was but the first step. The Convention was to go still farther than that. Several months later, on the 11th Brumaire, in the year II. (November, 1793), when Laval opened its gates to the Vendean fugitives, it decreed that every city that sheltered rebels should be demolished and destroyed.

The princes of Europe, on their side, in the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, suggested by the Émigrés and drawn up by the Marquis of Linnon, steward to the Duke of Orleans, declared that every Frenchman taken with arms in his hand should be shot, and if but a hair fell from the head of the king, Paris should be razed to the ground.

Cruelty against barbarity.

[\[1\]](#)Moniteur, vol. xix. p. 81.
