

# **A Residence in France During the Years 1792, 1793, 1794 and 1795, Part I. 1792 eBook**

## **A Residence in France During the Years 1792, 1793, 1794 and 1795, Part I. 1792**

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# Page 1

**Produced by Mary Munarin and David Widger**

A residence in France,  
*during the years*  
1792, 1793, 1794, and 1795;

*Described in A series of letters*  
*from an English lady;*  
With General And Incidental Remarks  
On The French Character And Manners.

Prepared for the Press  
By John Gifford, Esq.  
Author of the History of France, Letter to Lord  
Lauderdale, Letter to the Hon. T. Erskine, &c.

Second Edition.

*Plus je vis l'Etranger plus j'aimai ma Patrie.* —Du Belloy.

London: Printed for T. N. Longman, Paternoster Row. 1797.

1792

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE EDITOR.

The following Letters were submitted to my inspection and judgement by the Author, of whose principles and abilities I had reason to entertain a very high opinion. How far my judgement has been exercised to advantage in enforcing the propriety of introducing them to the public, that public must decide. To me, I confess, it appeared, that a series of important facts, tending to throw a strong light on the internal state of France, during the most important period of the Revolution, could neither prove uninteresting to the general reader, nor indifferent to the future historian of that momentous epoch; and I conceived, that the opposite and judicious reflections of a well-formed and well-cultivated mind, naturally arising out of events within the immediate scope of its own observation, could not in the smallest degree diminish the interest which, in my apprehension, they are calculated to excite. My advice upon this occasion was farther influenced by another consideration. Having traced, with minute attention, the progress of the revolution, and the conduct of its advocates, I had remarked the extreme affiduity employed (as well by translations of the most violent productions of the Gallic press, as by original compositions,) to introduce and propagate, in foreign countries, those pernicious principles which have already sapped the foundation of social order, destroyed the happiness of millions, and spread desolation and ruin over the finest



country in Europe. I had particularly observed the incredible efforts exerted in England, and, I am sorry to say, with too much success, for the base purpose of giving a false colour to every action of the persons exercising the powers of government in France; and I had marked, with indignation, the atrocious attempt to strip vice of its deformity, to dress crime in the garb of virtue, to decorate slavery with the symbols of freedom, and give to folly the attributes of wisdom. I had seen, with extreme concern, men, whom the lenity, mistaken lenity, I must call it, of our government had rescued from punishment, if not from ruin, busily engaged in this scandalous



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traffic, and, availing themselves of their extensive connections to diffuse, by an infinite variety of channels, the poison of democracy over their native land. In short, I had seen the British press, the grand palladium of British liberty, devoted to the cause of Gallic licentiousness, that mortal enemy of all freedom, and even the pure stream of British criticism diverted from its natural course, and polluted by the pestilential vapours of Gallic republicanism. I therefore deemed it essential, by an exhibition of well-authenticated facts, to correct, as far as might be, the evil effects of misrepresentation and error, and to defend the empire of truth, which had been assailed by a host of foes.

My opinion of the principles on which the present system of government in France was founded, and the war to which those principles gave rise, have been long since submitted to the public. Subsequent events, far from invalidating, have strongly confirmed it. In all the public declarations of the Directory, in their domestic polity, in their conduct to foreign powers, I plainly trace the prevalence of the same principles, the same contempt for the rights and happiness of the people, the same spirit of aggression and aggrandizement, the same eagerness to overturn the existing institutions of neighbouring states, and the same desire to promote “the universal revolution of Europe,” which marked the conduct of *Brissot, le Brun, desmoulins, Robespierre*, and their disciples. Indeed, what stronger instance need be adduced of the continued prevalence of these principles, than the promotion to the supreme rank in the state, of two men who took an active part in the most atrocious proceedings of the Convention at the close of 1792, and at the commencement of the following year?

In all the various constitutions which have been successively adopted in that devoted country, the welfare of the people has been wholly disregarded, and while they have been amused with the shadow of liberty, they have been cruelly despoiled of the substance. Even on the establishment of the present constitution, the one which bore the nearest resemblance to a rational system, the freedom of election, which had been frequently proclaimed as the very corner-stone of liberty, was shamefully violated by the legislative body, who, in their eagerness to perpetuate their own power, did not scruple to destroy the principle on which it was founded. Nor is this the only violation of their own principles. A French writer has aptly observed, that “En revolution comme en morale, ce n’est que le premier pas qui coute:” thus the executive, in imitation of the legislative body, seem disposed to render their power perpetual. For though it be expressly declared by the 137th article of the 6th title of their present constitutional code, that the “Directory shall be partially renewed by the election of a new member every year,” no step towards such election has been taken, although

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the time prescribed by the law is elapsed.—In a private letter from Paris now before me, written within these few days, is the following observation on this very circumstance: “The constitution has received another blow. The month of Vendemiaire is past, and our Directors still remain the same. Hence we begin to drop the appalation of Directory, and substitute that of the Cinqvir, who are more to be dreaded for their power, and more to be detested for their crimes, than the Decemvir of ancient Rome.” The same letter also contains a brief abstract of the state of the metropolis of the French republic, which is wonderfully characteristic of the attention of the government to the welfare and happiness of its inhabitants!

“The reign of misery and of crime seems to be perpetuated in this distracted capital: suicides, pillage, and assassinations, are daily committed, and are still suffered to pass unnoticed. But what renders our situation still more deplorable, is the existence of an innumerable band of spies, who infest all public places, and all private societies. More than a hundred thousand of these men are registered on the books of the modern SARTINE; and as the population of Paris, at most, does not exceed six hundred thousand souls, we are sure to find in six individuals one spy. This consideration makes me shudder, and, accordingly, all confidence, and all the sweets of social intercourse, are banished from among us. People salute each other, look at each other, betray mutual suspicions, observe a profound silence, and part. This, in few words, is an exact description of our modern republican parties. It is said, that poverty has compelled many respectable persons, and even state-creditors, to enlist under the standard of COCHON, (the Police Minister,) because such is the honourable conduct of our sovereigns, that they pay their spies in specie—and their soldiers, and the creditors of the state, in paper.—Such is the morality, such the justice, such are the republican virtues, so loudly vaunted by our good and dearest friends, our pensioners—the Gazetteers of England and Germany!”

There is not a single abuse, which the modern reformers reprobated so loudly under the ancient system, that is not magnified, in an infinite degree, under the present establishment. For one Lettre de Cachet issued during the mild reign of *Louis* the Sixteenth, a thousand Mandats d’Arret have been granted by the tyrannical demagogues of the revolution; for one Bastile which existed under the Monarchy, a thousand Maisons de Detention have been established by the Republic. In short, crimes of every denomination, and acts of tyranny and injustice, of every kind, have multiplied, since the abolition of royalty, in a proportion which sets all the powers of calculation at defiance.

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It is scarcely possible to notice the present situation of France, without adverting to the circumstances of the *war*, and to the attempt now making, through the medium of negotiation, to bring it to a speedy conclusion. Since the publication of my Letter to a Noble Earl, now destined to chew the cud of disappointment in the vale of obscurity, I have been astonished to hear the same assertions advance, by the members and advocates of that party whose merit is said to consist in the violence of their opposition to the measures of government, on the origin of the war, which had experienced the most ample confutation, without the assistance of any additional reason, and without the smallest attempt to expose the invalidity of those proofs which, in my conception, amounted nearly to mathematical demonstration, and which I had dared them, in terms the most pointed, to invalidate. The question of aggression before stood on such high ground, that I had not the presumption to suppose it could derive an accession of strength from any arguments which I could supply; but I was confident, that the authentic documents which I offered to the public would remove every intervening object that tended to obstruct the fight of inattentive observers, and reflect on it such an additional light as would flash instant conviction on the minds of all. It seems, I have been deceived; but I must be permitted to suggest, that men who persist in the renewal of assertions, without a single effort to controvert the proofs which have been adduced to demonstrate their fallacy, cannot have for their object the establishment of truth—which ought, exclusively, to influence the conduct of public characters, whether writers or orators.

With regard to the negotiation, I can derive not the smallest hopes of success from a contemplation of the past conduct, or of the present principles, of the government of France. When I compare the projects of aggrandizement openly avowed by the French rulers, previous to the declaration of war against this country, with the exorbitant pretensions advanced in the arrogant reply of the Executive Directory to the note presented by the British Envoy at Basil in the month of February, 1796, and with the more recent observations contained in their official note of the 19th of September last, I cannot think it probable that they will accede to any terms of peace that are compatible with the interest and safety of the Allies. Their object is not so much the establishment as the extension of their republic.

As to the danger to be incurred by a treaty of peace with the republic of France, though it has been considerably diminished by the events of the war, it is still unquestionably great. This danger principally arises from a pertinacious adherence, on the part of the Directory, to those very principles which were adopted by the original promoters of the abolition of Monarchy in France. No greater proof of such adherence need

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be required than their refusal to repeal those obnoxious decrees (passed in the months of November and December, 1792,) which created so general and so just an alarm throughout Europe, and which excited the reprobation even of that party in England, which was willing to admit the equivocal interpretation given to them by the Executive Council of the day. I proved, in the Letter to a Noble Earl before alluded to, from the very testimony of the members of that Council themselves, as exhibited in their official instructions to one of their confidential agents, that the interpretation which they had assigned to those decrees, in their communications with the British Ministry, was a base interpretation, and that they really intended to enforce the decrees, to the utmost extent of their possible operation, and, by a literal construction thereof, to encourage rebellion in every state, within the reach of their arms or their principles. Nor have the present government merely forborne to repeal those destructive laws—they have imitated the conduct of their predecessors, have actually put them in execution wherever they had the ability to do so, and have, in all respects, as far as related to those decrees, adopted the precise spirit and principles of the faction which declared war against England. Let any man read the instructions of the Executive Council to PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD, their Commissary in the Netherlands, in 1792 and 1793, and an account of the proceedings in the Low Countries consequent thereon, and then examine the conduct of the republican General, BOUNAPARTE, in Italy—who must necessarily act from the instructions of the Executive Directory—and he will be compelled to acknowledge the justice of my remark, and to admit that the latter actuated by the same pernicious desire to overturn the settled order of society, which invariably marked the conduct of the former.

“It is an acknowledged fact, that every revolution requires a provisional power to regulate its disorganizing movements, and to direct the methodical demolition of every part of the ancient social constitution.— Such ought to be the revolutionary power.

“To whom can such power belong, but to the French, in those countries into which they may carry their arms? Can they with safety suffer it to be exercised by any other persons? It becomes the French republic, then, to assume this kind of guardianship over the people whom she awakens to Liberty!\*

*\* Considerations Generales fur l’Esprit et les Principes du Decret du 15 Decembre.*

Such were the Lacedaemonian principles avowed by the French government in 1792, and such is the Lacedaimonian policy\* pursued by the French government in 1796! It cannot then, I conceive, be contended, that a treaty with a government still professing principles which have been repeatedly proved to be subversive of all social order, which have been acknowledged by their parents to have for their object the methodical demolition of existing constitutions, can be concluded without danger or risk. That

danger, I admit, is greatly diminished, because the power which was destined to carry into execution those gigantic projects which constituted its object, has, by the operations of the war, been considerably curtailed. They well may exist in equal force, but the ability is no longer the same.

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*Machiavel* justly observes, that it was the narrow policy of the Lacedaemonians always to destroy the ancient constitution, and establish their own form of government, in the counties and cities which they subdued.

But though I maintain the existence of danger in a Treaty with the Republic of France, unless she previously repeal the decrees to which I have adverted, and abrogate the acts to which they have given birth, I by no means contend that it exists in such a degree as to justify a determination, on the part of the British government, to make its removal the sine qua non of negotiation, or peace. Greatly as I admire the brilliant endowments of Mr. *Burke*, and highly as I respect and esteem him for the manly and decisive part which he has taken, in opposition to the destructive anarchy of republican France, and in defence of the constitutional freedom of Britain; I cannot either agree with him on this point, or concur with him in the idea that the restoration of the Monarchy of France was ever the object of the war. That the British Ministers ardently desired that event, and were earnest in their endeavours to promote it, is certain; not because it was the object of the war, but because they considered it as the best means of promoting the object of the war, which was, and is, the establishment of the safety and tranquillity of Europe, on a solid and permanent basis. If that object can be attained, and the republic exist, there is nothing in the past conduct and professions of the British Ministers, that can interpose an obstacle to the conclusion of peace. Indeed, in my apprehension, it would be highly impolitic in any Minister, at the commencement of a war, to advance any specific object, that attainment of which should be declared to be the sine qua non of peace. If mortals could arrogate to themselves the attributes of the Deity, if they could direct the course of events, and controul the chances of war, such conduct would be justifiable; but on no other principle, I think, can its defence be undertaken. It is, I grant, much to be lamented, that the protection offered to the friends of monarchy in France, by the declaration of the 29th of October, 1793, could not be rendered effectual: as far as the offer went it was certainly obligatory on the party who made it; but it was merely conditional—restricted, as all similar offers necessarily must be, by the ability to fulfil the obligation incurred.

In paying this tribute to truth, it is not my intention to retract, in the smallest degree, the opinion I have ever professed, that the restoration of the ancient monarchy of France would be the best possible means not only of securing the different states of Europe from the dangers of republican anarchy, but of promoting the real interests, welfare, and happiness of the French people themselves. The reasons on which this opinion is founded I have long since explained; and the intelligence which I have since received from France, at different times, has convinced me that a very great proportion of her inhabitants concur in the sentiment.

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The miseries resulting from the establishment of a republican system of government have been severely felt, and deeply deplored; and I am fully persuaded, that the subjects and tributaries of France will cordially subscribe to the following observation on republican freedom, advanced by a writer who had deeply studied the genius of republics: *"Di tutte le fervitu dure, quella e durissima, che ti sottomette ad una repubblica; l'una, perche e la piu durabile, e manco si puo sperarne d'ufare: L'altra perche il fine della repubblica e enervare ed indebolire, debolire, per accrescere il corpo suo, tutti gli altri corpi.\*"*

*John Gifford.* London, Nov. 12, 1796.

\* *Discorsi di Nicoli Machiavelli*, Lib. ii. p. 88.

P.S. Since I wrote the preceding remarks, I have been given to understand, that by a decree, subsequent to the completion of the constitutional code, the first partial renewal of the Executive Directory was deferred till the month of March, 1799; and that, therefore, in this instance, the present Directory cannot be accused of having violated the constitution. But the guilt is only to be transferred from the Directory to the Convention, who passed that decree, as well as some others, in contradiction to a positive constitutional law.-----Indeed, the Directory themselves betrayed no greater delicacy with regard to the observance of the constitution, or M. *Barras* would never have taken his seat among them; for the constitution expressly says, (and this positive provision was not even modified by any subsequent mandate of the Convention,) that no man shall be elected a member of the Directory who has not completed his fortieth year—whereas it is notorious that *Barras* had not this requisite qualification, having been born in the year 1758!

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I avail myself of the opportunity afforded me by the publication of a Second Edition to notice some insinuations which have been thrown out, tending to question the authenticity of the work. The motives which have induced the author to withhold from these Letters the sanction of her name, relate not to herself, but to some friends still remaining in France, whose safety she justly conceives might be affected by the disclosure. Acceding to the force and propriety of these motives, yet aware of the suspicions to which a recital of important facts, by an anonymous writer, would naturally be exposed, and sensible, also, that a certain description of critics would gladly avail themselves of any opportunity for discouraging the circulation of a work which contained principles hostile to their own; I determined to prefix my name to the publication. By so doing, I conceived that I stood pledged for its authenticity; and the matter has certainly been put in a proper light by an able and respectable critic, who has observed that "Mr. *Gifford* stands between the writer and the public," and that "his name and character are the guarantees for the authenticity of the Letters."



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This is precisely the situation in which I meant to place myself— precisely the pledge which I meant to give. The Letters are exactly what they profess to be; the production of a Lady's pen, and written in the very situations which they describe.—The public can have no grounds for suspecting my veracity on a point in which I can have no possible interest in deceiving them; and those who know me will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I have a mind superior to the arts of deception, and that I am incapable of sanctioning an imposition, for any purpose, or from any motives whatever. Thus much I deemed it necessary to say, as well from a regard for my own character, and from a due attention to the public, as from a wish to prevent the circulation of the work from being subjected to the impediments arising from the prevalence of a groundless suspicion.

I naturally expected, that some of the preceding remarks would excite the resentment and draw down the vengeance of those persons to whom they evidently applied. The contents of every publication are certainly a fair subject for criticism; and to the fair comments of real critics, however repugnant to the sentiments I entertain, or the doctrine I seek to inculcate, I shall ever submit without murmur or reproach. But, when men, assuming that respectable office, openly violate all the duties attached to it, and, sinking the critic in the partizan, make a wanton attack on my veracity, it becomes proper to repel the injurious imputation; and the same spirit which dictates submission to the candid award of an impartial judge, prescribes indignation and scorn at the cowardly attacks of a secret assassin.

April 14, 1797.

## RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

### DEDICATION

To The *right Hon. Edmund Burke*.

*Sir,*

It is with extreme diffidence that I offer the following pages to Your notice; yet as they describe circumstances which more than justify Your own prophetic reflections, and are submitted to the public eye from no other motive than a love of truth and my country, I may, perhaps, be excused for presuming them to be not altogether unworthy of such a distinction.

While Your puny opponents, if opponents they may be called, are either sunk into oblivion, or remembered only as associated with the degrading cause they attempted to support, every true friend of mankind, anticipating the judgement of posterity, views with





esteem and veneration the unvarying Moralist, the profound Politician, the indefatigable Servant of the Public, and the warm Promoter of his country's happiness.

To this universal testimony of the great and good, permit me, Sir, to join my humble tribute; being, with the utmost respect, *sir*,

Your obedient Servant, *the author*. Sept. 12, 1796.

## PREFACE

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After having, more than once, in the following Letters, expressed opinions decidedly unfavourable to female authorship, when not justified by superior talents, I may, by now producing them to the public, subject myself to the imputation either of vanity or inconsistency; and I acknowledge that a great share of candour and indulgence must be possessed by readers who attend to the apologies usually made on such occasions: yet I may with the strictest truth alledge, that I should never have ventured to offer any production of mine to the world, had I not conceived it possible that information and reflections collected and made on the spot, during a period when France exhibited a state, of which there is no example in the annals of mankind, might gratify curiosity without the aid of literary embellishment; and an adherence to truth, I flattered myself, might, on a subject of this nature, be more acceptable than brilliancy of thought, or elegance of language. The eruption of a volcano may be more scientifically described and accounted for by the philosopher; but the relation of the illiterate peasant who beheld it, and suffered from its effects, may not be less interesting to the common hearer.

Above all, I was actuated by the desire of conveying to my countrymen a just idea of that revolution which they have been incited to imitate, and of that government by which it has been proposed to model our own.

Since these pages were written, the Convention has nominally been dissolved, and a new constitution and government have succeeded, but no real change of principle or actors has taken place; and the system, of which I have endeavoured to trace the progress, must still be considered as existing, with no other variations than such as have been necessarily produced by the difference of time and circumstances. The people grew tired of massacres en masse, and executions en detail: even the national fickleness operated in favour of humanity; and it was also discovered, that however a spirit of royalism might be subdued to temporary inaction, it was not to be eradicated, and that the sufferings of its martyrs only tended to propagate and confirm it. Hence the scaffolds flow less frequently with blood, and the barbarous prudence of *Camille desmoulins*' guillotine economique has been adopted. But exaction and oppression are still practised in every shape, and justice is not less violated, nor is property more secure, than when the former was administered by revolutionary tribunals, and the latter was at the disposition of revolutionary armies.

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The error of supposing that the various parties which have usurped the government of France have differed essentially from each other is pretty general; and it is common enough to hear the revolutionary tyranny exclusively associated with the person of *Robespierre*, and the thirty-first of May, 1793, considered as the epoch of its introduction. Yet whoever examines attentively the situation and politics of France, from the subversion of the Monarchy, will be convinced that all the principles of this monstrous government were established during the administration of the Brissotins, and that the factions which succeeded, from Danton and Robespierre to Sieyes and Barras, have only developed them, and reduced them to practice. The revolution of the thirty-first of May, 1793, was not a contest for system but for power—that of July the twenty-eighth, 1794, (9th Thermidor,) was merely a struggle which of two parties should sacrifice the other—that of October the fifth, 1795, (13th Vendemiaire,) a war of the government against the people. But in all these convulsions, the primitive doctrines of tyranny and injustice were watched like the sacred fire, and have never for a moment been suffered to languish.

It may appear incredible to those who have not personally witnessed this phenomenon, that a government detested and despised by an immense majority of the nation, should have been able not only to resist the efforts of so many powers combined against it, but even to proceed from defence to conquest, and to mingle surprize and terror with those sentiments of contempt and abhorrence which it originally excited.

That wisdom or talents are not the sources of this success, may be deduced from the situation of France itself. The armies of the republic have, indeed, invaded the territories of its enemies, but the desolation of their own country seems to increase with every triumph—the genius of the French government appears powerful only in destruction, and inventive only in oppression—and, while it is endowed with the faculty of spreading universal ruin, it is incapable of promoting the happiness of the smallest district under its protection. The unrestrained pillage of the conquered countries has not saved France from multiplied bankruptcies, nor her state-creditors from dying through want; and the French, in the midst of their external prosperity, are often distinguished from the people whom their armies have been subjugated, only by a superior degree of wretchedness, and a more irregular despotism.

With a power excessive and unlimited, and surpassing what has hitherto been possessed by any Sovereign, it would be difficult to prove that these democratic despots have effected any thing either useful or beneficent. Whatever has the appearance of being so will be found, on examination, to have for its object some purpose of individual interest or personal vanity. They manage the armies, they embellish Paris, they purchase the friendship of some states and the neutrality of others; but if there be any real patriots in France, how little do they appreciate these useless triumphs, these pilfered museums, and these fallacious negotiations, when they behold the population of their country diminished, its commerce annihilated, its wealth dissipated, its morals corrupted, and its liberty destroyed—

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“Thus, on deceitful Aetna’s Flow’ry side  
Unfading verdure glads the roving eye,  
While secret flames with unextinguish’d rage  
Insatiate on her wafted entrails prey,  
And melt her treach’rous beauties into ruin.”

Those efforts which the partizans of republicanism admire, and which even well-disposed persons regard as prodigies, are the simple and natural result of an unprincipled despotism, acting upon, and disposing of, all the resources of a rich, populous, and enslaved nation. *“Il devient aise d’etre habile lorsqu’on s’est delivre des scrupules et des loix, de tout honneur et de toute justice, des droits de ses semblables, et des devoirs de l’autorite—a ce degre d’independance la plupart des obstacles qui modifient l’activite humaine disparaissent; l’on parait avoir du talent lorsqu’on n’a que de l’impudence, et l’abus de la force passe pour energie.\*”*

\* “Exertions of ability become easy, when men have released themselves from the scruples of conscience, the restraints of law, the ties of honour, the bonds of justice, the claims of their fellow creatures, and obedience to their superiors:—at this point of independence, most of the obstacles which modify human activity disappear; impudence is mistaken for talents; and the abuse of power passes for energy.”

The operations of all other governments must, in a great measure, be restrained by the will of the people, and by established laws; with them, physical and political force are necessarily separate considerations: they have not only to calculate what can be borne, but what will be submitted to; and perhaps France is the first country that has been compelled to an exertion of its whole strength, without regard to any obstacle, natural, moral, or divine. It is for want of sufficiently investigating and allowing for this moral and political latitudinarianism of our enemies, that we are apt to be too precipitate in censuring the conduct of the war; and, in our estimation of what has been done, we pay too little regard to the principles by which we have been directed. An honest man could scarcely imagine the means we have had to oppose, and an Englishman still less conceive that they would have been submitted to: for the same reason that the Romans had no law against parricide, till experience had evinced the possibility of the crime.

In a war like the present, advantage is not altogether to be appreciated by military superiority. If, as there is just ground for believing, our external hostilities have averted an internal revolution, what we have escaped is of infinitely more importance to us than what we could acquire. Commerce and conquest, compared to this, are secondary objects; and the preservation of our liberties and our constitution is a more solid blessing than the commerce of both the Indies, or the conquest of nations.

Should the following pages contribute to impress this salutary truth on my countrymen, my utmost ambition will be gratified; persuaded, that a sense of the miseries they have avoided, and of the happiness they enjoy, will be their best incentive, whether they may

have to oppose the arms of the enemy in a continuance of the war, or their more dangerous machinations on the restoration of peace.

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I cannot conclude without noticing my obligations to the Gentleman whose name is prefixed to these volumes; and I think it at the same time incumbent on me to avow, that, in having assisted the author, he must not be considered as sanctioning the literary imperfections of the work. When the subject was first mentioned to him, he did me the justice of supposing, that I was not likely to have written any thing, the general tendency of which he might disapprove; and when, on perusing the manuscript, he found it contain sentiments dissimilar to his own, he was too liberal to require a sacrifice of them as the condition of his services.—I confess that previous to my arrival in France in 1792, I entertained opinions somewhat more favourable to the principle of the revolution than those which I was led to adopt at a subsequent period. Accustomed to regard with great justice the British constitution as the standard of known political excellence, I hardly conceived it possible that freedom or happiness could exist under any other: and I am not singular in having suffered this prepossession to invalidate even the evidence of my senses. I was, therefore, naturally partial to whatever professed to approach the object of my veneration. I forgot that governments are not to be founded on imitations or theories, and that they are perfect only as adapted to the genius, manners, and disposition of the people who are subject to them. Experience and maturer judgement have corrected my error, and I am perfectly convinced, that the old monarchical constitution of France, with very slight meliorations, was every way better calculated for the national character than a more popular form of government.

A critic, though not very severe, will discover many faults of style, even where the matter may not be exceptionable. Besides my other deficiencies, the habit of writing is not easily supplied, and, as I despaired of attaining excellence, and was not solicitous about degrees of mediocrity, I determined on conveying to the public such information as I was possessed of, without alteration or ornament. Most of these Letters were written exactly in the situation they describe, and remain in their original state; the rest were arranged according as opportunities were favourable, from notes and diaries kept when “the times were hot and feverish,” and when it would have been dangerous to attempt more method. I forbear to describe how they were concealed either in France or at my departure, because I might give rise to the persecution and oppression of others. But, that I may not attribute to myself courage which I do not possess, nor create doubts of my veracity, I must observe, that I seldom ventured to write till I was assured of some certain means of conveying my papers to a person who could safely dispose of them.

As a considerable period has elapsed since my return, it may not be improper to add, that I took some steps for the publication of these Letters so early as July, 1795. Certain difficulties, however, arising, of which I was not aware, I relinquished my design, and should not have been tempted to resume it, but for the kindness of the Gentleman whose name appears as the Editor.

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Sept. 12, 1796.

### A RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

May 10, 1792.

I am every day more confirmed in the opinion I communicated to you on my arrival, that the first ardour of the revolution is abated.—The bridal days are indeed past, and I think I perceive something like indifference approaching. Perhaps the French themselves are not sensible of this change; but I who have been absent two years, and have made as it were a sudden transition from enthusiasm to coldness, without passing through the intermediate gradations, am forcibly struck with it. When I was here in 1790, parties could be scarcely said to exist—the popular triumph was too complete and too recent for intolerance and persecution, and the Noblesse and Clergy either submitted in silence, or appeared to rejoice in their own defeat. In fact, it was the confusion of a decisive conquest—the victors and the vanquished were mingled together; and the one had not leisure to exercise cruelty, nor the other to meditate revenge. Politics had not yet divided society; nor the weakness and pride of the great, with the malice and insolence of the little, thinned the public places. The politics of the women went no farther than a few couplets in praise of liberty, and the patriotism of the men was confined to an habit de garde nationale, the device of a button, or a nocturnal revel, which they called mounting guard.—Money was yet plenty, at least silver, (for the gold had already begun to disappear,) commerce in its usual train, and, in short, to one who observes no deeper than myself, every thing seemed gay and flourishing—the people were persuaded they were happier; and, amidst such an appearance of content, one must have been a cold politician to have examined too strictly into the future. But all this, my good brother, is in a great measure subsided; and the disparity is so evident, that I almost imagine myself one of the seven sleepers—and, like them too, the coin I offer is become rare, and regarded more as medals than money. The playful distinctions of Aristocrate and Democrate are degenerated into the opprobrium and bitterness of Party—political dissensions pervade and chill the common intercourse of life—the people are become gross and arbitrary, and the higher classes (from a pride which those who consider the frailty of human nature will allow for) desert the public amusements, where they cannot appear but at the risk of being the marked objects of insult.—The politics of the women are no longer innoxious—their political principles form the leading trait of their characters; and as you know we are often apt to supply by zeal what we want in power, the ladies are far from being the most tolerant partizans on either side.—The national uniform, which contributed so much to the success of the revolution, and stimulated the patriotism of the young men, is become general; and the task of mounting guard, to which it subjects the wearer, is now a serious and troublesome duty.—To finish my observations, and my contrast, no Specie whatever is to be seen; and the people, if they still idolize their new form of government, do it at present with great sobriety—the Vive la nation! seems now rather the effect of habit

than of feeling; and one seldom hears any thing like the spontaneous and enthusiastic sounds I formerly remarked.



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I have not yet been here long enough to discover the causes of this change; perhaps they may lie too deep for such an observer as myself: but if (as the causes of important effects sometimes do) they lie on the surface, they will be less liable to escape me, than an observer of more pretensions. Whatever my remarks are, I will not fail to communicate them—the employment will at least be agreeable to me, though the result should not be satisfactory to you; and as I shall never venture on any reflection, without relating the occurrence that gave rise to it, your own judgement will enable you to correct the errors of mine.

I was present yesterday at a funeral service, performed in honour of General Dillon. This kind of service is common in Catholic countries, and consists in erecting a cenotaph, ornamented with numerous lights, flowers, crosses, &c. The church is hung with black, and the mass is performed the same as if the body were present. On account of General Dillon's profession, the mass yesterday was a military one. It must always, I imagine, sound strange to the ears of a Protestant, to hear nothing but theatrical music on these occasions, and indeed I could never reconcile myself to it; for if we allow any effect to music at all, the train of thought which should inspire us with respect for the dead, and reflections on mortality, is not likely to be produced by the strains in which Dido bewails Eneas, or in which Armida assails the virtue of Rinaldo.—I fear, that in general the air of an opera reminds the belle of the Theatre where she heard it—and, by a natural transition, of the beau who attended her, and the dress of herself and her neighbours. I confess, this was nearly my own case yesterday, on hearing an air from "Sargines;" and had not the funeral oration reminded me, I should have forgotten the unfortunate event we were celebrating, and which, for some days before, when undistracted by this pious ceremony, I had dwelt on with pity and horror.\*

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\* At the first skirmish between the French and Austrians near Lisle, a general panic seized the former, and they retreated in disorder to Lisle, crying "*Sauve qui peut, & nous fomnes (sic) trahis.*"—"Let every one shift for himself—we are betrayed." The General, after in vain endeavouring to rally them, was massacred at his return on the great square.—My pen falters, and refuses to describe the barbarities committed on the lifeless hero. Let it suffice, perhaps more than suffice, to say, that his mutilated remains were thrown on a fire, which these savages danced round, with yells expressive of their execrable festivity. A young Englishman, who was so unfortunate as to be near the spot, was compelled to join in this outrage to humanity.—The same day a gentleman, the intimate friend of our acquaintance, Mad. \_\_\_\_\_, was walking (unconscious what had happened) without the gate which leads to Douay, and was met by the flying ruffians on their return; immediately

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on seeing him they shouted, "*Voila encore un Aristocrate!*" and massacred him on the spot.

—Independent of any regret for the fate of Dillon, who is said to have been a brave and good officer, I am sorry that the first event of this war should be marked by cruelty and licentiousness.—Military discipline has been much relaxed since the revolution, and from the length of time since the French have been engaged in a land war, many of the troops must be without that kind of courage which is the effect of habit. The danger, therefore, of suffering them to alledge that they are betrayed, whenever they do not choose to fight, and to excuse their own cowardice by ascribing treachery to their leaders, is incalculable.—Above all, every infraction of the laws in a country just supposing itself become free, cannot be too severely repressed. The National Assembly have done all that humanity could suggest—they have ordered the punishment of the assassins, and have pensioned and adopted the General's children. The orator expatiated both on the horror of the act and its consequences, as I should have thought, with some ingenuity, had I not been assured by a brother orator that the whole was "execrable." But I frequently remark, that though a Frenchman may suppose the merit of his countrymen to be collectively superior to that of the whole world, he seldom allows any individual of them to have so large a portion as himself.—Adieu: I have already written enough to convince you I have neither acquired the Gallomania, nor forgotten my friends in England; and I conclude with a wish *a propos* to my subject—that they may long enjoy the rational liberty they possess and so well deserve.—Yours.

May, 1792.

You, my dear \_\_\_\_\_, who live in a land of pounds, shillings, and pence, can scarcely form an idea of our embarrassments through the want of them.

'Tis true, these are petty evils; but when you consider that they happen every day, and every hour, and that, if they are not very serious, they are very frequent, you will rejoice in the splendour of your national credit, which procures you all the accommodation of paper currency, without diminishing the circulation of specie. Our only currency here consists of assignats of 5 livres, 50, 100, 200, and upwards: therefore in making purchases, you must accommodate your wants to the value of your assignat, or you must owe the shopkeeper, or the shopkeeper must owe you; and, in short, as an old woman assured me to-day, "C'est de quoi faire perdre la tete," and, if it lasted long, it would be the death of her. Within these few days, however, the municipalities have attempted to



remedy the inconvenience, by creating small paper of five, ten, fifteen, and twenty sols, which they give in exchange for assignats of five livres; but the number they are allowed to issue is limited, and the demand for them so great, that the accommodation is inadequate to the difficulty of procuring it. On the days on which this paper (which is

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called *billets de confiance*) is issued, the Hotel de Ville is besieged by a host of women collected from all parts of the district—Peasants, small shopkeepers, fervant maids, and though last, not least formidable—fishwomen. They usually take their stand two or three hours before the time of delivery, and the interval is employed in discussing the news, and execrating paper money. But when once the door is opened, a scene takes place which bids defiance to language, and calls for the pencil of a Hogarth. Babel was, I dare say, comparatively to this, a place of retreat and silence. Clamours, revilings, contentions, tearing of hair, and breaking of heads, generally conclude the business; and, after the loss of half a day's time, some part of their clothes, and the expence of a few bruises, the combatants retire with small bills to the value of five, or perhaps ten livres, as the whole resource to carry on their little commerce for the ensuing week. I doubt not but the paper may have had some share in alienating the minds of the people from the revolution. Whenever I want to purchase any thing, the vender usually answers my question by another, and with a rueful kind of tone inquires, “*En papier, madame?*”—and the bargain concludes with a melancholy reflection on the hardness of the times.

The decrees relative to the priests have likewise occasioned much dissension; and it seems to me impolitic thus to have made religion the standard of party. The high mass, which is celebrated by a priest who has taken the oaths, is frequented by a numerous, but, it must be confessed, an ill-drest and ill-scented congregation; while the low mass, which is later, and which is allowed the nonjuring clergy, has a gayer audience, but is much less crouded.—By the way, I believe many who formerly did not much disturb themselves about religious tenets, have become rigid Papists since an adherence to the holy see has become a criterion of political opinion. But if these separatists are bigoted and obstinate, the conventionalists on their side are ignorant and intolerant.

I enquired my way to-day to the Rue de l'Hopital. The woman I spoke to asked me, in a menacing tone, what I wanted there. I replied, which was true, that I merely wanted to pass through the street as my nearest way home; upon which she lowered her voice, and conducted me very civilly.—I mentioned the circumstance on my return, and found that the nuns of the hospital had their mass performed by a priest who had not taken the oaths, and that those who were suspected of going to attend it were insulted, and sometimes ill treated. A poor woman, some little time ago, who conceived perhaps that her salvation might depend on exercising her religion in the way she had been accustomed to, persisted in going, and was used by the populace with such a mixture of barbarity and indecency, that her life was despaired of. Yet this is the age and the

country of Philosophers.—Perhaps you will begin to think Swift's sages, who only amused themselves with endeavouring to propagate sheep without wool, not so contemptible. I am almost convinced myself, that when a man once piques himself on being a philosopher, if he does no mischief you ought to be satisfied with him.

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We passed last Sunday with Mr. de \_\_\_\_'s tenants in the country. Nothing can equal the avidity of these people for news. We sat down after dinner under some trees in the village, and Mr. de \_\_\_\_ began reading the Gazette to the farmers who were about us. In a few minutes every thing that could hear (for I leave understanding the pedantry of a French newspaper out of the question) were his auditors. A party at quoits in one field, and a dancing party in another, quitted their amusements, and listened with undivided attention. I believe in general the farmers are the people most contented with the revolution, and indeed they have reason to be so; for at present they refuse to sell their corn unless for money, while they pay their rent in assignats; and farms being for the most part on leases, the objections of the landlord to this kind of payment are of no avail. Great encouragement is likewise held out to them to purchase national property, which I am informed they do to an extent that may for some time be injurious to agriculture; for in their eagerness to acquire land, they deprive themselves of cultivating it. They do not, like our crusading ancestors, "sell the pasture to buy the horse," but the horse to buy the pasture; so that we may expect to see in many places large farms in the hands of those who are obliged to neglect them.

A great change has happened within the last year, with regard to landed property—so much has been sold, that many farmers have had the opportunity of becoming proprietors. The rage of emigration, which the approach of war, pride, timidity, and vanity are daily increasing, has occasioned many of the Noblesse to sell their estates, which, with those of the Crown and the Clergy, form a large mass of property, thrown as it were into general circulation. This may in future be beneficial to the country, but the present generation will perhaps have to purchase (and not cheaply) advantages they cannot enjoy. A philanthropist may not think of this with regret; and yet I know not why one race is preferable to another, or why an evil should be endured by those who exist now, in order that those who succeed may be free from it.—I would willingly plant a million of acorns, that another age might be supplied with oaks; but I confess, I do not think it quite so pleasant for us to want bread, in order that our descendants may have a superfluity.

I am half ashamed of these selfish arguments; but really I have been led to them through mere apprehension of what I fear the people may have yet to endure, in consequence of the revolution.

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I have frequently observed how little taste the French have for the country, and I believe all my companions, except Mr. de \_\_\_\_\_, who took (as one always does) an interest in surveying his property, were heartily ennuyes with our little excursion.--Mad. De \_\_\_\_\_, on her arrival, took her post by the farmer's fire-side, and was out of humour the whole day, inasmuch as our fare was homely, and there was nothing but rustics to see or be seen by. That a plain dinner should be a serious affair, you may not wonder; but the last cause of distress, perhaps you will not conclude quite so natural at her years. All that can be said about it is, that she is a French woman, who rouges, and wears lilac ribbons, at seventy-four. I hope, in my zeal to obey you, my reflections will not be too voluminous.—For the present I will be warned by my conscience, and add only, that I am, Yours.

June 10, 1792.

You observe, with some surprize, that I make no mention of the Jacobins—the fact is, that until now I have heard very little about them. Your English partizans of the revolution have, by publishing their correspondence with these societies, attributed a consequence to them infinitely beyond what they have had pretensions to:—a prophet, it is said, is not honoured in his own country—I am sure a Jacobin is not. In provincial towns these clubs are generally composed of a few of the lowest tradesmen, who have so disinterested a patriotism, as to bestow more attention on the state than on their own shops; and as a man may be an excellent patriot without the aristocratic talents of reading and writing, they usually provide a secretary or president, who can supply these deficiencies—a country attorney, a *Pere de l'oratoire*, or a disbanded capuchin, is in most places the candidate for this office. The clubs often assemble only to read the newspapers; but where they are sufficiently in force, they make motions for “fetes,” censure the municipalities, and endeavour to influence the elections of the members who compose them.—That of Paris is supposed to consist of about six thousand members; but I am told their number and influence are daily increasing, and that the National Assembly is more subservient to them than it is willing to acknowledge—yet, I believe, the people at large are equally adverse to the Jacobins, who are said to entertain the chimerical project of forming a republic, and to the Aristocrates, who wish to restore the ancient government. The party in opposition to both these, who are called the *Feuillans*,\* have the real voice of the people with them, and knowing this, they employ less art than their opponents, have no point of union, and perhaps may finally be undermined by intrigue, or even subdued by violence.

*They derive this appellation, as the Jacobins do theirs, from the convent at which they hold their meetings.*

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You seem not to comprehend why I include vanity among the causes of emigration, and yet I assure you it has had no small share in many of them. The gentry of the provinces, by thus imitating the higher noblesse, imagine they have formed a kind of a common cause, which may hereafter tend to equalize the difference of ranks, and associate them with those they have been accustomed to look up to as their superiors. It is a kind of ton among the women, particularly to talk of their emigrated relations, with an accent more expressive of pride than regret, and which seems to lay claim to distinction rather than pity.

I must now leave you to contemplate the boasted misfortunes of these belles, that I may join the card party which forms their alleviation.— Adieu.

June 24, 1792.

You have doubtless learned from the public papers the late outrage of the Jacobins, in order to force the King to consent to the formation of an army at Paris, and to sign the decree for banishing the nonjuring Clergy. The newspapers will describe to you the procession of the Sans-Culottes, the indecency of their banners, and the disorders which were the result— but it is impossible for either them or me to convey an idea of the general indignation excited by these atrocities. Every well-meaning person is grieved for the present, and apprehensive for the future: and I am not without hope, that this open avowal of the designs of the Jacobins, will unite the Constitutionals and Aristocrates, and that they will join their efforts in defence of the Crown, as the only means of saving both from being overwhelmed by a faction, who are now become too daring to be despised. Many of the municipalities and departments are preparing to address they King, on the fortitude he displayed in this hour of insult and peril.—I know not why, but the people have been taught to entertain a mean opinion of his personal courage; and the late violence will at least have the good effect of undeceiving them. It is certain, that he behaved on this occasion with the utmost coolness; and the Garde Nationale, whose hand he placed on his heart, attested that it had no unusual palpitation.

That the King should be unwilling to sanction the raising an army under the immediate auspice of the avowed enemies of himself, and of the constitution he has sworn to protect, cannot be much wondered at; and those who know the Catholic religion, and consider that this Prince is devout, and that he has reason to suspect the fidelity of all who approach him, will wonder still less that he refuses to banish a class of men, whose influence is extensive, and whose interest it is to preserve their attachment to him.



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These events have thrown a gloom over private societies; and public amusements, as I observed in a former letter, are little frequented; so that, on the whole, time passes heavily with a people who, generally speaking, have few resources in themselves. Before the revolution, France was at this season a scene of much gaiety. Every village had alternately a sort of Fete, which nearly answers to our Wake—but with this difference, that it was numerously attended by all ranks, and the amusement was dancing, instead of wrestling and drinking. Several small fields, or different parts of a large one, were provided with music, distinguished by flags, and appropriated to the several classes of dancers—one for the peasants, another for the bourgeois, and a third for the higher orders. The young people danced beneath the ardour of a July sun, while the old looked on and regaled themselves with beer, cyder, and gingerbread. I was always much pleased with this village festivity: it gratified my mind more than select and expensive amusements, because it was general, and within the power of all who chose to partake of it; and the little distinction of rank which was preserved, far from diminishing the pleasure of any, added, I am certain, to the freedom of all. By mixing with those only of her own class, the Paysanne\* was spared the temptation of envying the pink ribbons of the Bourgeoise, who in her turn was not disturbed by an immediate rivalry with the sash and plumes of the provincial belle. But this custom is now much on the decline. The young women avoid occasions where an inebriated soldier may offer himself as her partner in the dance, and her refusal be attended with insult to herself, and danger to those who protect her; and as this licence is nearly as offensive to the decent Bourgeoise as to the female of higher condition, this sort of fete will most probably be entirely abandoned.

*The head-dress of the French \_Paysanne\_ is uniformly a small cap, without ribbon or ornament of any kind, except in that part of Normandy which is called the \_Pays de Caux,\_ where the Paysannes wear a particular kind of head dress, ornamented with silver.*

The people here all dance much better than those of the same rank in England; but this national accomplishment is not instinctive: for though few of the laborious class have been taught to read, there are scarcely any so poor as not to bestow three livres for a quarter's instruction from a dancing master; and with this three months' noviciate they become qualified to dance through the rest of their lives.

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The rage for emigration, and the approach of the Austrians, have occasioned many restrictions on travelling, especially near the seacoast of frontiers. No person can pass through a town without a passport from the municipality he resides in, specifying his age, the place of his birth, his destination, the height of his person, and the features of his face. The Marquis de C\_\_\_\_\_ entered the town yesterday, and at the gate presented his passport as usual; the guard looked at the passport, and in a high tone demanded his name, whence he came, and where he was going. M. de C\_\_\_\_\_ referred him to the passport, and suspecting the man could not read, persisted in refusing to give a verbal account of himself, but with much civility pressed the perusal of the passport; adding, that if it was informal, Monsieur might write to the municipality that granted it. The man, however, did not approve of the jest, and took the Marquis before the municipality, who sentenced him to a month's imprisonment for his pleasantry.

The French are becoming very grave, and a bon-mot will not now, as formerly, save a man's life.—I do not remember to have seen in any English print an anecdote on this subject, which at once marks the levity of the Parisians, and the wit and presence of mind of the Abbe Maury.—At the beginning of the revolution, when the people were very much incensed against the Abbe, he was one day, on quitting the Assembly, surrounded by an enraged mob, who seized on him, and were hurrying him away to execution, amidst the universal cry of *a la lanterne! a la lanterne!* The Abbe, with much coolness and good humour, turned to those nearest him, "*Eh bien mes amis et quand je serois a la lanterne, en verriez vous plus clair?*" Those who held him were disarmed, the bon-mot flew through the croud, and the Abbe escaped while they were applauding it.—I have nothing to offer after this trait which is worthy of succeeding it, but will add that I am always Yours.

July 24, 1792.

Our revolution aera has passed tranquilly in the provinces, and with less turbulence at Paris than was expected. I consign to the Gazette-writers those long descriptions that describe nothing, and leave the mind as unsatisfied as the eye. I content myself with observing only, that the ceremony here was gay, impressive, and animating. I indeed have often remarked, that the works of nature are better described than those of art. The scenes of nature, though varied, are uniform; while the productions of art are subject to the caprices of whim, and the vicissitudes of taste. A rock, a wood, or a valley, however the scenery may be diversified, always conveys a perfect and distinct image to the mind; but a temple, an altar, a palace, or a pavilion, requires a detail, minute even to tediousness, and which, after all, gives but an imperfect notion of the object. I have as often read descriptions of the Vatican, as of the Bay of Naples; yet I recollect little of the former, while the latter seems almost familiar to me.—Many are strongly impressed with the scenery of Milton's Paradise, who have but confused ideas of the splendour of Pandemonium. The descriptions, however, are equally minute, and the poetry of both is beautiful.

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But to return to this country, which is not absolutely a Paradise, and I hope will not become a Pandemonium—the ceremony I have been alluding to, though really interesting, is by no means to be considered as a proof that the ardour for liberty increases: on the contrary, in proportion as these fetes become more frequent, the enthusiasm which they excite seems to diminish. “For ever mark, Lucilius, when Love begins to sicken and decline, it useth an enforced ceremony.” When there were no foederations, the people were more united. The planting trees of liberty seems to have damped the spirit of freedom; and since there has been a decree for wearing the national colours, they are more the marks of obedience than proofs of affection.—I cannot pretend to decide whether the leaders of the people find their followers less warm than they were, and think it necessary to stimulate them by these shows, or whether the shows themselves, by too frequent repetition, have rendered the people indifferent about the objects of them.—Perhaps both these suppositions are true. The French are volatile and material; they are not very capable of attachment to principles. External objects are requisite for them, even in a slight degree; and the momentary enthusiasm that is obtained by affecting their senses subsides with the conclusion of a favourite air, or the end of a gaudy procession.

The Jacobin party are daily gaining ground; and since they have forced a ministry of their own on the King, their triumph has become still more insolent and decisive.—A storm is said to be hovering over us, which I think of with dread, and cannot communicate with safety—“Heaven square the trial of those who are implicated, to their proportioned strength!”—Adieu.

August 4, 1792.

I must repeat to you, that I have no talent for description; and, having seldom been able to profit by the descriptions of others, I am modest enough not willingly to attempt one myself. But, as you observe, the ceremony of a foederation, though familiar to me, is not so to my English friends; I therefore obey your commands, though certain of not succeeding so as to gratify your curiosity in the manner you too partially expect.

The temple where the ceremony was performed, was erected in an open space, well chosen both for convenience and effect. In a large circle on this spot, twelve posts, between fifty and sixty feet high, were placed at equal distances, except one larger, opening in front by way of entrance. On each alternate post were fastened ivy, laurel, &c. so as to form a thick body which entirely hid the support. These greens were then shorn (in the manner you see in old fashioned gardens) into the form of Doric columns, of dimensions proportioned to their height. The intervening posts were covered with white cloth, which was so artificially folded, as exactly to resemble fluted pillars—from the bases of which ascended spiral wreaths of flowers. The whole was connected at top by a bold festoon of foliage, and the capital of each column was surmounted by a vase of white lilies. In the middle of this temple was placed an altar, hung round with

lilies, and on it was deposited the book of the constitution. The approach to the altar was by a large flight of steps, covered with beautiful tapestry.

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All this having been arranged and decorated, (a work of several days,) the important aera was ushered in by the firing of cannon, ringing of bells, and an appearance of bustle and hilarity not to be seen on any other occasion. About ten, the members of the district, the municipality, and the judges in their habits of ceremony, met at the great church, and from thence proceeded to the altar of liberty. The troops of the line, the Garde Nationale of the town, and of all the surrounding communes, then arrived, with each their respective music and colours, which (reserving one only of the latter to distinguish them in the ranks) they planted round the altar. This done, they retired, and forming a circle round the temple, left a large intermediate space free. A mass was then celebrated with the most perfect order and decency, and at the conclusion were read the rights of man and the constitution. The troops, Garde Nationale, &c. were then addressed by their respective officers, the oath to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the King, was administered: every sword was drawn, and every hat waved in the air; while all the bands of music joined in the favorite strain of *ca ira*.— This was followed by crowning, with the civic wreaths hung round the altar, a number of people, who during the year had been instrumental in saving the lives of their fellow-citizens that had been endangered by drowning or other accidents. This honorary reward was accompanied by a pecuniary one, and a fraternal embrace from all the constituted bodies. But this was not the gravest part of the ceremony. The magistrates, however upright, were not all graceful, and the people, though they understood the value of the money, did not that of the civic wreaths, or the embraces; they therefore looked vacant enough during this part of the business, and grinned most facetiously when they began to examine the appearance of each other in their oaken crowns, and, I dare say, thought the whole comical enough.—This is one trait of national pedantry. Because the Romans awarded a civic wreath for an act of humanity, the French have adopted the custom; and decorate thus a soldier or a sailor, who never heard of the Romans in his life, except in extracts from the New Testament at mass.

But to return to our fete, of which I have only to add, that the magistrates departed in the order they observed in coming, and the troops and Garde Nationale filed off with their hats in the air, and with universal acclamations, to the sound of *ca ira*.—Things of this kind are not susceptible of description. The detail may be uninteresting, while the general effect may have been impressive. The spirit of the scene I have been endeavouring to recall seems to have evaporated under my pen; yet to the spectator it was gay, elegant, and imposing. The day was fine, a brilliant sun glittered on the banners, and a gentle breeze gave them motion; while the satisfied countenances of the people added spirit and animation to the whole.

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I must remark to you, that devots, and determined aristocrates, ever attend on these occasions. The piety of the one is shocked at a mass by a priest who has taken the oaths, and the pride of the other is not yet reconciled to confusion of ranks and popular festivities. I asked a woman who brings us fruit every day, why she had not come on the fourteenth as usual. She told me she did not come to the town, *"a cause de la foederation"*—*"Vous etes aristocrate donc?"*—*"Ah, mon Dieu non—ce n'est pas que je suis aristocrate, ou democrate, mais que je suis Chretienne.\*"*

*"On account of the foederation."*—*"You are an aristocrate then, I suppose?"*—*Lord, no! It is not because I am an aristocrate, or a democrate, but because I am a Christian."*

This is an instance, among many others I could produce, that our legislators have been wrong, in connecting any change of the national religion with the revolution. I am every day convinced, that this and the assignats are the great causes of the alienation visible in many who were once the warmest patriots.—Adieu: do not envy us our fetes and ceremonies, while you enjoy a constitution which requires no oath to make you cherish it: and a national liberty, which is felt and valued without the aid of extrinsic decoration.—Yours.

August 15.

The consternation and horror of which I have been partaker, will more than apologize for my silence. It is impossible for any one, however unconnected with the country, not to feel an interest in its present calamities, and to regret them. I have little courage to write even now, and you must pardon me if my letter should bear marks of the general depression. All but the faction are grieved and indignant at the King's deposition; but this grief is without energy, and this indignation silent. The partizans of the old government, and the friends of the new, are equally enraged; but they have no union, are suspicious of each other, and are sinking under the stupor of despair, when they should be preparing for revenge.—It would not be easy to describe our situation during the last week. The ineffectual efforts of La Fayette, and the violences occasioned by them, had prepared us for something still more serious. On the ninth, we had a letter from one of the representatives for this department, strongly expressive of his apprehensions for the morrow, but promising to write if he survived it. The day, on which we expected news, came, but no post, no papers, no diligence, nor any means of information. The succeeding night we sat up, expecting letters by the post: still, however, none arrived; and the courier only passed hastily through, giving no detail, but that Paris was *a feu et a sang*.\*

\* All fire and slaughter.

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At length, after passing two days and nights in this dreadful suspense, we received certain intelligence which even exceeded our fears.—It is needless to repeat the horrors that have been perpetrated. The accounts must, ere now, have reached you. Our representative, as he seemed to expect, was so ill treated as to be unable to write: he was one of those who had voted the approval of La Fayette's conduct—all of whom were either massacred, wounded, or intimidated; and, by this means, a majority was procured to vote the deposition of the King. The party allow, by their own accounts, eight thousand persons to have perished on this occasion; but the number is supposed to be much more considerable. No papers are published at present except those whose editors, being members of the Assembly, and either agents or instigators of the massacres, are, of course, interested in concealing or palliating them.---Mr. De \_\_\_\_\_ has just now taken up one of these atrocious journals, and exclaims, with tears starting from his eyes, "*On a abattu la statue d'Henri quatre!\**"

*"They have destroyed the statue of Henry the Fourth."*

The sacking of Rome by the Goths offers no picture equal to the licentiousness and barbarity committed in a country which calls itself the most enlightened in Europe.—But, instead of recording these horrors, I will fill up my paper with the Choeur Bearnais.

*Choeur Bearnais.*

"Un troubadour Bearnais,  
"Le yeux inouides de larmes,  
"A ses montagnards  
"Chantoit ce refrein source d'alarmes—  
"Louis le fils d'Henri  
"Est prisonnier dans Paris!  
"Il a tremble pour les jours  
"De sa compagne cherie  
"Qui n'a troube de secours  
"Que dans sa propre energie;  
"Elle suit le fils d'Henri  
"Dans les prisons de Paris.

"Quel crime ont ils donc commis  
"Pour etre enchaines de meme?  
"Du peuple ils sont les amis,  
"Le peuple veut il qu'on l'aime,  
"Quand il met le fils d'Henri  
"Dans les prisons de Paris?

"Le Dauphin, ce fils cheri,  
"Qui seul fait notre esperance,



“De pleurs sera donc nourri;  
“Les Berceaux qu’on donne en France  
“Aux enfans de notre Henri  
“Sont les prisons de Paris.

“Il a vu couler le sang  
“De ce garde fidele,  
“Qui vient d’offrir en mourant  
“Aux Francais un beau modele;  
Mais Louis le fils d’Henri  
“Est prisonnier dans Paris.

“Il n’est si triste appareil  
“Qui du respect nous degage,  
“Les feux ardents du Soleil  
“Savent percer le nuage:  
“Le prisonnier de Paris  
“Est toujours le fils d’Henri.



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“Français, trop ingrats Français  
“Rendez le Roi à sa compagne;  
“C’est le bien du Bearnais,  
“C’est l’enfant de la Montagne:  
“Le bonheur qu’avoit Henri  
“Nous l’affarons à Louis.

“Chez vous l’homme a de ses droits  
“Recouvre le noble usage,  
“Et vous opprimez vos rois,  
“Ah! quel injuste partage!  
“Le peuple est libre, et Louis  
“Est prisonnier dans Paris.

“Au pied de ce monument  
“Où le bon Henri respire  
“Pourquoi l’airain foudroyant?  
“Ah l’on veut qu’Henri conspire  
“Lui même contre son fils  
“Dans les prisons de Paris.” \_

It was published some time ago in a periodical work, (written with great spirit and talents,) called “The Acts of the Apostles,” and, I believe, has not yet appeared in England. The situation of the King gives a peculiar interest to these stanzas, which, merely as a poetical composition, are very beautiful. I have often attempted to translate them, but have always found it impossible to preserve the effect and simplicity of the original. They are set to a little plaintive air, very happily characteristic of the words.

Perhaps I shall not write to you again from hence, as we depart for A\_\_\_\_\_ on Tuesday next. A change of scene will dissipate a little the seriousness we have contracted during the late events. If I were determined to indulge grief or melancholy, I would never remove from the spot where I had formed the resolution. Man is a proud animal even when oppressed by misfortune. He seeks for his tranquility in reason and reflection; whereas, a post-chaise and four, or even a hard-trotting horse, is worth all the philosophy in the world.—But, if, as I observed before, a man be determined to resist consolation, he cannot do better than stay at home, and reason and philosophize.

Adieu:—the situation of my friends in this country makes me think of England with pleasure and respect; and I shall conclude with a very homely couplet, which, after all the fashionable liberality of modern travellers, contains a great deal of truth:

“Amongst mankind  
“We ne’er shall find  
“The worth we left at home.”

Yours, &c.

August 22, 1792.

The hour is past, in which, if the King’s friends had exerted themselves, they might have procured a movement in his favour. The people were at first amazed, then grieved; but the national philosophy already begins to operate, and they will sink into indifference, till again awakened by some new calamity. The leaders of the faction do not, however, entirely depend either on the supineness of their adversaries, or the

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submission of the people. Money is distributed amongst the idle and indigent, and agents are nightly employed in the public houses to comment on newspapers, written for the purpose to blacken the King and exalt the patriotism of the party who have dethroned him. Much use has likewise been made of the advances of the Prussians towards Champagne, and the usual mummery of ceremony has not been wanting. Robespierre, in a burst of extemporaneous energy, previously studied, has declared the country in danger. The declaration has been echoed by all the departments, and proclaimed to the people with much solemnity. We were not behind hand in the ceremonial of the business, though, somehow, the effect was not so serious and imposing as one could have wished on such an occasion. A smart flag, with the words "Citizens, the country is in danger," was prepared; the judges and the municipality were in their costume, the troops and Garde Nationale under arms, and an orator, surrounded by his cortege, harangued in the principal parts of the town on the text of the banner which waved before him.

All this was very well; but, unfortunately, in order to distinguish the orator amidst the croud, it was determined he should harangue on horseback. Now here arose a difficulty which all the ardour of patriotism was not able to surmount. The French are in general but indifferent equestrians; and it so happened that, in our municipality, those who could speak could not ride, and those who could ride could not speak. At length, however, after much debating, it was determined that arms should yield to the gown, or rather, the horse to the orator—with this precaution, that the monture should be properly secured, by an attendant to hold the bridle. Under this safeguard, the rhetorician issued forth, and the first part of the speech was performed without accident; but when, by way of relieving the declaimer, the whole military band began to flourish *ca ira*, the horse, even more patriotic than his rider, curvetted and twisted with so much animation, that however the spectators might be delighted, the orator was far from participating in their satisfaction. After all this, the speech was to be finished, and the silence of the music did not immediately tranquillize the animal. The orator's eye wandered from the paper that contained his speech, with wistful glances toward the mane; the fervor of his indignation against the Austrians was frequently calmed by the involuntary strikings he was obliged to submit to; and at the very crisis of the emphatic declaration, he seemed much less occupied by his country's danger than his own. The people, who were highly amused, I dare say, conceived the whole ceremony to be a rejoicing, and at every repetition that the country was in danger, joined with great glee in the chorus of *ca ira*.\*

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*The oration consisted of several parts, each ending with a kind of burden of \_"Citoyens, la patri est en danger;"\_ and the arrangers of the ceremony had not selected appropriate music: so that the band, who had been accustomed to play nothing else on public occasions, struck up \_ca ira\_ at every declaration that the country was in danger!*

Many of the spectators, I believe, had for some time been convinced of the danger that threatened the country, and did not suppose it much increased by the events of the war; others were pleased with a show, without troubling themselves about the occasion of it; and the mass, except when roused to attention by their favourite air, or the exhibitions of the equestrian orator, looked on with vacant stupidity. —This tremendous flag is now suspended from a window of the Hotel de Ville, where it is to remain until the inscription it wears shall no longer be true; and I heartily wish, the distresses of the country may not be more durable than the texture on which they are proclaimed.

Our journey is fixed for to-morrow, and all the morning has been passed in attendance for our passports.—This affair is not so quickly dispatched as you may imagine. The French are, indeed, said to be a very lively people, but we mistake their volubility for vivacity; for in their public offices, their shops, and in any transaction of business, no people on earth can be more tedious—they are slow, irregular, and loquacious; and a retail English Quaker, with all his formalities, would dispose of half his stock in less time than you can purchase a three sols stamp from a brisk French Commis. You may therefore conceive, that this official portraiture of so many females was a work of time, and not very pleasant to the originals. The delicacy of an Englishman may be shocked at the idea of examining and registering a lady's features one after another, like the articles of a bill of lading; but the cold and systematic gallantry of a Frenchman is not so scrupulous.—The officer, however, who is employed for this purpose here, is civil, and I suspected the infinity of my nose, and the acuteness of Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s chin, might have disconcerted him; but he extricated himself very decently. My nose is enrolled in the order of aquilines, and the old lady's chin pared off to a "*menton un peu pointu*.—["A longish chin.]

The carriages are ordered for seven to-morrow. Recollect, that seven females, with all their appointments, are to occupy them, and then calculate the hour I shall begin increasing my distance from England and my friends. I shall not do it without regret; yet perhaps you will be less inclined to pity me than the unfortunate wights who are to escort us. A journey of an hundred miles, with French horses, French carriages, French harness, and such an unreasonable female charge, is, I confess, in great humility, not to be ventured on without a most determined patience.—I shall write to you on our arrival at Arras; and am, till then, at all times, and in all places, Yours.

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Hesdin.

We arrived here last night, notwithstanding the difficulties of our first setting out, in tolerable time; but I have gained so little in point of repose, that I might as well have continued my journey. We are lodged at an inn which, though large and the best in the town, is so disgustingly filthy, that I could not determine to undress myself, and am now up and scribbling, till my companions shall be ready. Our embarkation will, I foresee, be a work of time and labour; for my friend, Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_, besides the usual attendants on a French woman, a femme de chambre and a lap-dog, travels with several cages of canary-birds, some pots of curious exotics, and a favourite cat; all of which must be disposed of so as to produce no intestine commotions during the journey. Now if you consider the nature of these fellow-travellers, you will allow it not so easy a matter as may at first be supposed, especially as their fair mistress will not allow any of them to be placed in any other carriage than her own.—A fray happened yesterday between the cat and the dog, during which the birds were overset, and the plants broken. Poor M. de \_\_\_\_\_, with a sort of rueful good nature, separated the combatants, restored order, and was obliged to purchase peace by charging himself with the care of the aggressor.

I should not have dwelt so long on these trifling occurrences, but that they are characteristic. In England, this passion for animals is chiefly confined to old maids, but here it is general. Almost every woman, however numerous her family, has a nursery of birds, an angola, and two or three lap-dogs, who share her cares with her husband and children. The dogs have all romantic names, and are enquired after with so much solicitude when they do not make one in a visit, that it was some time before I discovered that Nina and Rosine were not the young ladies of the family. I do not remember to have seen any husband, however master of his house in other respects, daring enough to displace a favourite animal, even though it occupied the only vacant fauteuil.

The entrance into Artois from Picardy, though confounded by the new division, is sufficiently marked by a higher cultivation, and a more fertile soil. The whole country we have passed is agreeable, but uniform; the roads are good, and planted on each side with trees, mostly elms, except here and there some rows of poplar or apple. The land is all open, and sown in divisions of corn, carrots, potatoes, tobacco, and poppies of which last they make a coarse kind of oil for the use of painters. The country is entirely flat, and the view every where bounded by woods interspersed with villages, whose little spires peeping through the trees have a very pleasing effect.

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The people of Artois are said to be highly superstitious, and we have already passed a number of small chapels and crosses, erected by the road side, and surrounded by tufts of trees. These are the inventions of a mistaken piety; yet they are not entirely without their use, and I cannot help regarding them with more complacency than a rigid Protestant might think allowable. The weary traveller here finds shelter from a mid-day sun, and solaces his mind while he reposes his body. The glittering equipage rolls by—he recalls the painful steps he has past, anticipates those which yet remain, and perhaps is tempted to repine; but when he turns his eye on the cross of Him who has promised a recompence to the sufferers of this world, he checks the sigh of envy, forgets the luxury which excited it, and pursues his way with resignation. The Protestant religion proscribes, and the character of the English renders unnecessary, these sensible objects of devotion; but I have always been of opinion, that the levity of the French in general would make them incapable of persevering in a form of worship equally abstracted and rational. The Spaniards, and even the Italians, might abolish their crosses and images, and yet preserve their Christianity; but if the French ceased to be bigots, they would become atheists.

This is a small fortified town, though not of strength to offer any resistance to artillery. Its proximity to the frontier, and the dread of the Austrians, make the inhabitants very patriotic. We were surrounded by a great croud of people on our arrival, who had some suspicion that we were emigrating; however, as soon as our passports were examined and declared legal, they retired very peaceably.

The approach of the enemy keeps up the spirit of the people, and, notwithstanding their dissatisfaction at the late events, they have not yet felt the change of their government sufficiently to desire the invasion of an Austrian army.—Every village, every cottage, hailed us with the cry of *Vive la nation!* The cabaret invites you to drink beer *a la nation*, and offers you lodging *a la nation*—the chandler's shop sells you snuff and hair powder *a la nation*—and there are even patriotic barbers whose signs inform you, that you may be shaved and have your teeth drawn *a la nation!* These are acts of patriotism one cannot reasonably object to; but the frequent and tedious examination of one's passports by people who can't read, is not quite so inoffensive, and I sometimes lose my patience. A very vigilant *Garde Nationale* yesterday, after spelling my passport over for ten minutes, objected that it was not a good one. I maintained that it was; and feeling a momentary importance at the recollection of my country, added, in an assuring tone, "*Et d'ailleurs je suis Anglaise et par consequent libre d'aller ou bon me semble.\**" The man stared, but admitted my argument, and we passed on.

*"Besides, I am a native of England, and, consequently, have a right to go where I please."*

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My room door is half open, and gives me a prospect into that of Mad. de L\_\_\_\_, which is on the opposite side of the passage. She has not yet put on her cap, but her grey hair is profusely powdered; and, with no other garments than a short under petticoat and a corset, she stands for the edification of all who pass, putting on her rouge with a stick and a bundle of cotton tied to the end of it.—All travellers agree in describing great indelicacy to the French women; yet I have seen no accounts which exaggerate it, and scarce any that have not been more favourable than a strict adherence to truth might justify. This inattractive part of the female national character is not confined to the lower or middling classes of life; and an English woman is as likely to be put to the blush in the boudoir of a Marquise, as in the shop of the Grisette, which serves also for her dressing-room.

If I am not too idle, or too much amused, you will soon be informed of my arrival at Arras; but though I should neglect to write, be persuaded I shall never cease to be, with affection and esteem, Yours, &c.

Arras, August, 1792.

The appearance of Arras is not busy in proportion to its population, because its population is not equal to its extent; and as it is a large, without being a commercial, town, it rather offers a view of the tranquil enjoyment of wealth, than of the bustle and activity by which it is procured. The streets are mostly narrow and ill paved, and the shops look heavy and mean; but the hotels, which chiefly occupy the low town, are large and numerous. What is called la Petite Place, is really very large, and small only in comparison with the great one, which, I believe, is the largest in France. It is, indeed, an immense quadrangle—the houses are in the Spanish form, and it has an arcade all round it. The Spaniards, by whom it was built, forgot, probably, that this kind of shelter would not be so desirable here as in their own climate. The manufacture of tapestry, which a single line of Shakespeare has immortalized, and associated with the mirthful image of his fat Knight, has fallen into decay. The manufacturers of linen and woollen are but inconsiderable; and one, which existed till lately, of a very durable porcelain, is totally neglected. The principal article of commerce is lace, which is made here in great quantities. The people of all ages, from five years old to seventy, are employed in this delicate fabrick. In fine weather you will see whole streets lined with females, each with her cushion on her lap. The people of Arras are uncommonly dirty, and the lacemakers do not in this matter differ from their fellow-citizens; yet at the door of a house, which, but for the surrounding ones, you would suppose the common receptacle of all the filth in the vicinage, is often seated a female artizan, whose fingers are forming a point of unblemished whiteness. It is inconceivable how fast the bobbins move under their



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hands; and they seem to bestow so little attention on their work, that it looks more like the amusement of idleness than an effort of industry. I am no judge of the arguments of philosophers and politicians for and against the use of luxury in a state; but if it be allowable at all, much may be said in favour of this pleasing article of it. Children may be taught to make it at a very early age, and they can work at home under the inspection of their parents, which is certainly preferable to crouding them together in manufactories, where their health is injured, and their morals are corrupted.

By requiring no more implements than about five shillings will purchase, a lacemaker is not dependent on the shopkeeper, nor the head of a manufactory. All who choose to work have it in their own power, and can dispose of the produce of their labour, without being at the mercy of an avaricious employer; for though a tolerable good workwoman can gain a decent livelihood by selling to the shops, yet the profit of the retailer is so great, that if he rejected a piece of lace, or refused to give a reasonable price for it, a certain sale would be found with the individual consumer: and it is a proof of the independence of this employ, that no one will at present dispose of their work for paper, and it still continues to be paid for in money. Another argument in favour of encouraging lace-making is, that it cannot be usurped by men: you may have men-milliners, men-mantuumakers, and even ladies' valets, but you cannot well fashion the clumsy and inflexible fingers of man to lace-making. We import great quantities of lace from this country, yet I imagine we might, by attention, be enabled to supply other countries, instead of purchasing abroad ourselves. The art of spinning is daily improving in England; and if thread sufficiently fine can be manufactured, there is no reason why we should not equal our neighbours in the beauty of this article. The hands of English women are more delicate than those of the French; and our climate is much the same as that of Brussels, Arras, Lisle, &c. where the finest lace is made.

The population of Arras is estimated at about twenty-five thousand souls, though many people tell me it is greater. It has, however, been lately much thinned by emigration, suppression of convents, and the decline of trade, occasioned by the absence of so many rich inhabitants.—The Jacobins are here become very formidable: they have taken possession of a church for their meetings, and, from being the ridicule, are become the terror of all moderate people.



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Yesterday was appointed for taking the new oath of liberty and equality. I did not see the ceremony, as the town was in much confusion, and it was deemed unsafe to be from home. I understand it was attended only by the very refuse of the people, and that, as a gallanterie analogue, the President of the department gave his arm to Madame Duchene, who sells apples in a cellar, and is Presidente of the Jacobin club. It is, however, reported to-day, that she is in disgrace with the society for her condescension; and her parading the town with a man of forty thousand livres a year is thought to be too great a compliment to the aristocracy of riches; so that *Mons. Le President's* political gallantry has availed him nothing. He has debased and made himself the ridicule of the Aristocrates and Constitutionals, without paying his court, as he intended, to the popular faction. I would always wish it to happen so to those who offer up incense to the mob. As human beings, as one's fellow creatures, the poor and uninformed have a claim to our affection and benevolence, but when they become legislators, they are absurd and contemptible tyrants.—*A propos*—we were obliged to acknowledge this new sovereignty by illuminating the house on the occasion; and this was not ordered by nocturnal vociferation as in England, but by a regular command from an officer deputed for that purpose.

I am concerned to see the people accustomed to take a number of incompatible oaths with indifference: it neither will nor can come to any good; and I am ready to exclaim with Juliet—"Swear not at all." Or, if ye must swear, quarrel not with the Pope, that your consciences may at least be relieved by dispensations and indulgences.

To-morrow we go to Lisle, notwithstanding the report that it has already been summoned to surrender. You will scarcely suppose it possible, yet we find it difficult to learn the certainty of this, at the distance of only thirty miles: but communication is much less frequent and easy here than in England. I am not one of those "unfortunate women who delight in war;" and, perhaps, the sight of this place, so famous for its fortifications, will not be very amusing to me, nor furnish much matter of communication for my friends; but I shall write, if it be only to assure you that I am not made prize of by the Austrians. Yours, &c.

Lisle, August, 1792.

You restless islanders, who are continually racking imagination to perfect the art of moving from one place to another, and who can drop asleep in a carriage and wake at an hundred mile distance, have no notion of all the difficulties of a day's journey here. In the first place, all the horses of private persons have been taken for the use of the army, and those for hire are constantly employed in going to the camp—hence, there is a difficulty in procuring horses. Then a French carriage is never in order, and in France a job is not to be done just when you want it—so

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that there is often a difficulty in finding vehicles. Then there is the difficulty of passports, and the difficulty of gates, if you want to depart early. Then the difficulties of patching harness on the road, and, above all, the inflexible *sang froid* of drivers. All these things considered, you will not wonder that we came here a day after we intended, and arrived at night, when we ought to have arrived at noon. —The carriage wanted a trifling repair, and we could get neither passports nor horses. The horses were gone to the army—the municipality to the club—and the blacksmith was employed at the barracks in making a patriotic harangue to the soldiers.—But we at length surmounted all these obstacles, and reached this place last night.

The road between Arras and Lisle is equally rich with that we before passed, but is much more diversified. The plain of Lens is not such a scene of fertility, that one forgets it has once been that of war and carnage. We endeavoured to learn in the town whereabouts the column was erected that commemorates that famous battle, [1648.] but no one seemed to know any thing of the matter. One who, we flattered ourselves, looked more intelligent than the rest, and whom we supposed might be an attorney, upon being asked for this spot,—(where, added Mr. de \_\_\_\_\_, by way of assisting his memory, *"le Prince de Conde s'est battu si bien,"*) —replied, *"Pour la bataille je n'en sais rien, mais pour le Prince de Conde il y a deja quelque tems qu'il est emigre—on le dit a Coblentz."*\* After this we thought it in vain to make any farther enquiry, and continued our walk about the town.

*"Where the Prince of Conde fought so gallantly."—"As to the battle I know nothing about the matter; but for the Prince of Conde he emigrated some time since—they say he is at Coblentz."*

Mr. P\_\_\_\_, who, according to French custom, had not breakfasted, took a fancy to stop at a baker's shop and buy a roll. The man bestowed so much more civility on us than our two sols were worth, that I observed, on quitting the shop, I was sure he must be an Aristocrate. Mr. P\_\_\_\_, who is a warm Constitutionalist, disputed the justice of my inference, and we agreed to return, and learn the baker's political principles. After asking for more rolls, we accosted him with the usual phrase, "Et vous, Monsieur, vous etes bon patriote?"—"Ah, mon Dieu, oui, (replied he,) *il faut bien l'etre a present."*\*

*"And you, Sir, are without doubt, a good patriot?"—"Oh Lord, Sir, yes; one's obliged to be so, now-a-days."*

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Mr. P\_\_\_\_ admitted the man's tone of voice and countenance as good evidence, and acknowledged I was right.—It is certain that the French have taken it into their heads, that coarseness of manners is a necessary consequence of liberty, and that there is a kind of leze nation in being too civil; so that, in general, I think I can discover the principles of shopkeepers, even without the indications of a melancholy mien at the assignats, or lamentations on the times.

The new doctrine of primeval equality has already made some progress. At a small inn at Carvin, where, upon the assurance that they had every thing in the world, we stopped to dine, on my observing they had laid more covers than were necessary, the woman answered, "Et les domestiques, ne dinent ils pas?"—"And, pray, are the servants to have no dinner?"

We told her not with us, and the plates were taken away; but we heard her muttering in the kitchen, that she believed we were aristocrates going to emigrate. She might imagine also that we were difficult to satisfy, for we found it impossible to dine, and left the house hungry, notwithstanding there was "every thing in the world" in it.

On the road between Carvin and Lisle we saw Dumouriez, who is going to take the command of the army, and has now been visiting the camp of Maulde. He appears to be under the middle size, about fifty years of age, with a brown complexion, dark eyes, and an animated countenance. He was not originally distinguished either by birth or fortune, and has arrived at his present situation by a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, by great and various talents, much address, and a spirit of intrigue. He is now supported by the prevailing party; and, I confess, I could not regard with much complacence a man, whom the machinations of the Jacobins had forced into the ministry, and whose hypocritical and affected resignation has contributed to deceive the people, and ruin the King.

Lisle has all the air of a great town, and the mixture of commercial industry and military occupation gives it a very gay and populous appearance. The Lillois are highly patriotic, highly incensed against the Austrians, and regard the approaching siege with more contempt than apprehension. I asked the servant who was making my bed this morning, how far the enemy was off. "*Une lieue et demie, ou deux lieues, a moins qu'ils ne soient plus avances depuis hier,*"\* replied she, with the utmost indifference.—I own, I did not much approve of such a vicinage, and a view of the fortifications (which did not make the less impression, because I did not understand them,) was absolutely necessary to raise my drooping courage.

*"A league and a half, or two leagues; unless, indeed, they have advanced since yesterday."*



This morning was dedicated to visiting the churches, citadel, and Collisee (a place of amusement in the manner of our Vauxhall); but all these things have been so often described by much abler pens, that I cannot modestly pretend to add any thing on the subject.

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In the evening we were at the theatre, which is large and handsome; and the constant residence of a numerous garrison enables it to entertain a very good set of performers:—their operas in particular are extremely well got up. I saw *Zemire et Azor* given better than at Drury Lane.—In the farce, which was called *Le Francois a Londres*, was introduced a character they called that of an Englishman, (Jack Roastbeef,) who pays his addresses to a nobleman's daughter, in a box coate, a large hat slouched over his eyes, and an oaken trowel in his hand—in short, the whole figure exactly resembling that of a watchman. His conversation is gross and sarcastic, interlarded with oaths, or relieved by fits of sullen taciturnity—such a lover as one may suppose, though rich, and the choice of the lady's father, makes no impression; and the author has flattered the national vanity by making the heroine give the preference to a French marquis. Now there is no doubt but nine-tenths of the audience thought this a good portraiture of the English character, and enjoyed it with all the satisfaction of conscious superiority.—The ignorance that prevails with regard to our manners and customs, among a people so near us, is surprizing. It is true, that the noblesse who have visited England with proper recommendations, and have been introduced to the best society, do us justice: the men of letters also, who, from party motives, extol every thing English, have done us perhaps more than justice. But I speak of the French in general; not the lower classes only, but the gentry of the provinces, and even those who in other respects have pretensions to information. The fact is, living in England is expensive: a Frenchman, whose income here supports him as a gentleman, goes over and finds all his habits of oeconomy insufficient to keep him from exceeding the limits he had prescribed to himself. His decent lodging alone costs him a great part of his revenue, and obliges him to be strictly parsimonious of the rest. This drives him to associate chiefly with his own countrymen, to dine at obscure coffee-houses, and pay his court to opera-dancers. He sees, indeed, our theatres, our public walks, the outside of our palaces, and the inside of churches: but this gives him no idea of the manners of the people in superior life, or even of easy fortune. Thus he goes home, and asserts to his untravelled countrymen, that our King and nobility are ill lodged, our churches mean, and that the English are barbarians, who dine without soup, use no napkin, and eat with their knives.—I have heard a gentleman of some respectability here observe, that our usual dinner was an immense joint of meat half drest, and a dish of vegetables scarcely drest at all.—Upon questioning him, I discovered he had lodged in St. Martin's Lane, had likewise boarded at a country attorney's of the lowest class, and dined at an ordinary at Margate.

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Some few weeks ago the Marquis de P\_\_\_\_ set out from Paris in the diligence, and accompanied by his servant, with a design of emigrating. Their only fellow-traveller was an Englishman, whom they frequently addressed, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with; but he either remained silent, or gave them to understand he was entirely ignorant of the language. Under this persuasion the Marquis and his valet freely discussed their affairs, arranged their plan of emigration, and expressed, with little ceremony, their political opinions.—At the end of their journey they were denounced by their companion, and conducted to prison. The magistrate who took the information mentioned the circumstance when I happened to be present. Indignant at such an act in an Englishman, I enquired his name. You will judge of my surprize, when he assured me it was the English Ambassador. I observed to him, that it was not common for our Ambassadors to travel in stage-coaches: this, he said, he knew; but that having reason to suspect the Marquis, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur had had the goodness to have him watched, and had taken this journey on purpose to detect him. It was not without much reasoning, and the evidence of a lady who had been in England long enough to know the impossibility of such a thing, that I would justify Lord G\_\_\_\_ from this piece of complaisance to the Jacobins, and convince the worthy magistrate he had been imposed upon: yet this man is the Professor of Eloquence at a college, is the oracle of the Jacobin society; and may perhaps become a member of the Convention. This seems so almost incredibly absurd, that I should fear to repeat it, were it not known to many besides myself; but I think I may venture to pronounce, from my own observation, and that of others, whose judgement, and occasions of exercising it, give weight to their opinions, that the generality of the French who have read a little are mere pedants, nearly unacquainted with modern nations, their commercial and political relation, their internal laws, characters, or manners. Their studies are chiefly confined to Rollin and Plutarch, the deistical works of Voltaire, and the visionary politics of Jean Jaques. Hence they amuse their hearers with allusions to Caesar and Lycurgus, the Rubicon, and Thermopylae. Hence they pretend to be too enlightened for belief, and despise all governments not founded on the Contrat Social, or the Profession de Foi.—They are an age removed from the useful literature and general information of the middle classes in their own country—they talk familiarly of Sparta and Lacedemon, and have about the same idea of Russia as they have of Caffraria. Yours.

Lisle.

“Married to another, and that before those shoes were old with which she followed my poor father to the grave.”—There is scarcely any circumstance, or situation, in which, if one’s memory were good, one should not be mentally quoting Shakespeare. I have just now been whispering the above, as I passed the altar of liberty, which still remains on the Grande Place. But “a month, a little month,” ago, on this altar the French swore to maintain the constitution, and to be faithful to the law and the King; yet this constitution is no more, the laws are violated, the King is dethroned, and the altar is now only a monument of levity and perjury, which they have not feeling enough to remove.

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The Austrians are daily expected to besiege this place, and they may destroy, but they will not take it. I do not, as you may suppose, venture to speak so decisively in a military point of view—I know as little as possible of the excellencies of Vauban, or the adequacy of the garrison; but I draw my inference from the spirit of enthusiasm which prevails among the inhabitants of every class—every individual seems to partake of it: the streets resound with patriotic acclamations, patriotic songs, war, and defiance.—Nothing can be more animating than the theatre. Every allusion to the Austrians, every song or sentence, expressive of determined resistance, is followed by bursts of assent, easily distinguishable not to be the effort of party, but the sentiment of the people in general. There are, doubtless, here, as in all other places, party dissensions; but the threatened siege seems at least to have united all for their common defence: they know that a bomb makes no distinction between Feuillans, Jacobins, or Aristocrates, and neither are so anxious to destroy the other, when it is only to be done at such a risk to themselves. I am even willing to hope that something better than mere selfishness has a share in their uniting to preserve one of the finest, and, in every sense, one of the most interesting, towns in France.

Lisle, Saturday.

We are just on our departure for Arras, where, I fear, we shall scarcely arrive before the gates are shut. We have been detained here much beyond our time, by a circumstance infinitely shocking, though, in fact, not properly a subject of regret. One of the assassins of General Dillon was this morning guillotined before the hotel where we are lodged.—I did not, as you will conclude, see the operation; but the mere circumstance of knowing the moment it was performed, and being so near it, has much unhinged me. The man, however, deserved his fate, and such an example was particularly necessary at this time, when we are without a government, and the laws are relaxed. The mere privation of life is, perhaps, more quickly effected by this instrument than by any other means; but when we recollect that the preparation for, and apprehension of, death, constitute its greatest terrors; that a human hand must give motion to the Guillotine as well as to the axe; and that either accustoms a people, already sanguinary, to the sight of blood, I think little is gained by the invention. It was imagined by a *Mons.* Guillotin, a physician of Paris, and member of the Constituent Assembly. The original design seems not so much to spare pain to the criminal, as obloquy to the executioner. I, however, perceive little difference between a man's directing a Guillotine, or tying a rope; and I believe the people are of the same opinion. They will never see any thing but a *bourreau* [executioner] in the man whose province it is to execute the sentence of the laws, whatever name he may be called by, or whatever instrument he may make use of.—I have concluded this letter with a very unpleasant subject, but my pen is guided by circumstances, and I do not invent, but communicate.—Adieu. Yours, &c.



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Arras, September 1, 1792.

Had I been accompanied by an antiquary this morning, his sensibility would have been severely exercised; for even I, whose respect for antiquity is not scientific, could not help lamenting the modern rage for devastation which has seized the French. They are removing all “the time-honoured figures” of the cathedral, and painting its massive supporters in the style of a ball-room. The elaborate uncouthness of ancient sculpture is not, indeed, very beautiful; yet I have often fancied there was something more simply pathetic in the awkward effigy of an hero kneeling amidst his trophies, or a regal pair with their supplicating hands and surrounding offspring, than in the graceful figures and poetic allegories of the modern artist. The humble intreaty to the reader to “pray for the soule of the departed,” is not very elegant—yet it is better calculated to recall the wanderings of morality, than the flattering epitaph, a Fame hovering in the air, or the suspended wreath of the remunerating angel.—But I moralize in vain—the rage of these new Goths is inexorable: they seem solicitous to destroy every vestige of civilization, lest the people should remember they have not always been barbarians.

After obtaining an order from the municipality, we went to see the gardens and palace of the Bishop, who has emigrated. The garden has nothing very remarkable, but is large and well laid out, according to the old style. It forms a very agreeable walk, and, when the Bishop possessed it, was open for the enjoyment of the inhabitants, but it is now shut up and in disorder. The house is plain, and substantially furnished, and exhibits no appearance of unbecoming luxury. The whole is now the property of the nation, and will soon be disposed of.—I could not help feeling a sensation of melancholy as we walked over the apartments. Every thing is marked in an inventory, just as left; and an air of arrangement and residence leads one to reflect, that the owner did not imagine at his departure he was quitting it perhaps for ever. I am not partial to the original emigrants, yet much may be said for the Bishop of Arras. He was pursued by ingratitude, and marked for persecution. The Robespierres were young men whom he had taken from a mean state, had educated, and patronized. The revolution gave them an opportunity of displaying their talents, and their talents procured them popularity. They became enemies to the clergy, because their patron was a Bishop; and endeavoured to render their benefactor odious, because the world could not forget, nor they forgive, how much they were indebted to him.—Vice is not often passive; nor is there often a medium between gratitude for benefits, and hatred to the author of them. A little mind is hurt by the remembrance of obligation—begins by forgetting, and, not uncommonly, ends by persecuting.

We dined and passed the afternoon from home to-day. After dinner our hostess, as usual, proposed cards; and, as usual in French societies, every one assented: we waited, however, some time, and no cards came—till, at length, conversation-parties were formed, and they were no longer thought of. I have since learned, from one of the young women of the house, that the butler and two footmen had all betaken themselves to clubs and Guinguettes,\* and the cards, counters, &c. could not be obtained.

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\* Small public houses in the vicinity of large towns, where the common people go on Sundays and festivals to dance and make merry.

This is another evil arising from the circumstances of the times. All people of property have begun to bury their money and plate, and as the servants are often unavoidably privy to it, they are become idle and impertinent—they make a kind of commutation of diligence for fidelity, and imagine that the observance of the one exempts them from the necessity of the other. The clubs are a constant receptacle for idleness; and servants who think proper to frequent them do it with very little ceremony, knowing that few whom they serve would be imprudent enough to discharge them for their patriotism in attending a Jacobin society. Even servants who are not converts to the new principle cannot resist the temptation of abusing a little the power which they acquire from a knowledge of family affairs. Perhaps the effect of the revolution has not, on the whole, been favourable to the morals of the lower class of people; but this shall be the subject of discussion at some future period, when I shall have had farther opportunities of judging.

We yesterday visited the Oratoire, a seminary for education, which is now suppressed. The building is immense, and admirably calculated for the purpose, but is already in a state of dilapidation; so that, I fear, by the time the legislature has determined what system of instruction shall be substituted for that which has been abolished, the children (as the French are fond of examples from the ancients) will take their lessons, like the Greeks, in the open air; and, in the mean while, become expert in lying and thieving, like the Spartans.

The Superior of the house is an immoderate revolutionist, speaks English very well, and is a great admirer of our party writers. In his room I observed a vast quantity of English books, and on his chimney stood what he called a patriotic clock, the dial of which was placed between two pyramids, on which were inscribed the names of republican authors, and on the top of one was that of our countryman, Mr. Thomas Paine—whom, by the way, I understand you intended to exhibit in a much more conspicuous and less tranquil situation. I assure you, though you are ungrateful on your side of the water, he is in high repute here—his works are translated— all the Jacobins who can read quote, and all who can't, admire him; and possibly, at the very moment you are sentencing him to an installment in the pillory, we may be awarding him a triumph.—Perhaps we are both right. He deserves the pillory, from you for having endeavoured to destroy a good constitution—and the French may with equal reason grant him a triumph, as their constitution is likely to be so bad, that even Mr. Thomas Paine's writings may make it better!

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Our house is situated within view of a very pleasant public walk, where I am daily amused with a sight of the recruits at their exercise. This is not quite so regular a business as the drill in the Park. The exercise is often interrupted by disputes between the officer and his élèves—some are for turning to the right, others to the left, and the matter is not unfrequently adjusted by each going the way that seemeth best unto himself. The author of the "*Actes des Apotres*" [The Acts of the Apostles] cites a Colonel who reprimanded one of his corps for walking ill—"Eh Dicentre, (replied the man,) *comment veux tu que je marche bien quand tu as fait mes souliers trop etroits.*"\* but this is no longer a pleasantry—such circumstances are very common. A Colonel may often be tailor to his own regiment, and a Captain operated on the heads of his whole company, in his civil capacity, before he commands them in his military one.

*"And how the deuce can you expect me to march well, when you have made my shoes too tight?"*

The walks I have just mentioned have been extremely beautiful, but a great part of the trees have been cut down, and the ornamental parts destroyed, since the revolution—I know not why, as they were open to the poor as well as the rich, and were a great embellishment to the low town. You may think it strange that I should be continually dating some destruction from the aera of the revolution—that I speak of every thing demolished, and of nothing replaced. But it is not my fault—"If freedom grows destructive, I must paint it:" though I should tell you, that in many streets where convents have been sold, houses are building with the materials on the same site.—This is, however, not a work of the nation, but of individuals, who have made their purchases cheap, and are hastening to change the form of their property, lest some new revolution should deprive them of it.—Yours, &c.

Arras, September.

Nothing more powerfully excites the attention of a stranger on his first arrival, than the number and wretchedness of the poor at Arras. In all places poverty claims compulsion, but here compassion is accompanied by horror—one dares not contemplate the object one commiserates, and charity relieves with an averted eye. Perhaps with Him, who regards equally the forlorn beggar stretched on the threshold, consumed by filth and disease, and the blooming beauty who avoids while she succours him, the offering of humanity scarcely expiates the involuntary disgust; yet such is the weakness of our nature, that there exists a degree of misery against which one's senses are not proof, and benevolence itself revolts at the appearance of the poor of Arras.—These are not the cold and fastidious reflections of an unfeeling mind—they are not made without pain: nor have I often felt the want of riches and consequence so much as in my incapacity to promote

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some means of permanent and substantial remedy for the evils I have been describing. I have frequently enquired the cause of this singular misery, but can only learn that it always has been so. I fear it is, that the poor are without energy, and the rich without generosity. The decay of manufactures since the last century must have reduced many families to indigence. These have been able to subsist on the refuse of luxury, but, too supine for exertion, they have sought for nothing more; while the great, discharging their consciences with the superfluity of what administered to their pride, fostered the evil, instead of endeavouring to remedy it. But the benevolence of the French is not often active, nor extensive; it is more frequently a religious duty than a sentiment. They content themselves with affording a mere existence to wretchedness; and are almost strangers to those enlightened and generous efforts which act beyond the moment, and seek not only to relieve poverty, but to banish it. Thus, through the frigid and indolent charity of the rich, the misery which was at first accidental is perpetuated, beggary and idleness become habitual, and are transmitted, like more fortunate inheritances, from one generation to another.—This is not a mere conjecture—I have listened to the histories of many of these unhappy outcasts, who were more than thirty years old, and they have all told me, they were born in the state in which I beheld them, and that they did not remember to have heard that their parents were in any other. The National Assembly profess to effectuate an entire regeneration of the country, and to eradicate all evils, moral, physical, and political. I heartily wish the numerous and miserable poor, with which Arras abounds, may become one of the first objects of reform; and that a nation which boasts itself the most polished, the most powerful, and the most philosophic in the world, may not offer to the view so many objects shocking to humanity.

The citadel of Arras is very strong, and, as I am told, the chef d'oeuvre of Vauban; but placed with so little judgement, that the military call it *la belle inutile* [the useless beauty]. It is now uninhabited, and wears an appearance of desolation—the commandant and all the officers of the ancient government having been forced to abandon it; their houses also are much damaged, and the gardens entirely destroyed. —I never heard that this popular commotion had any other motive than the general war of the new doctrines on the old.

I am sorry to see that most of the volunteers who go to join the army are either old men or boys, tempted by extraordinary pay and scarcity of employ. A cobbler who has been used to rear canary-birds for Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_, brought us this morning all the birds he was possessed of, and told us he was going to-morrow to the frontiers. We asked him why, at his age, he should think of joining the army. He said, he had already served, and that there were a few months unexpired of the time that would entitle him to his pension.—“Yes; but in the mean while you may get killed; and then of what service will your claim to a pension be?”—“*N'ayez pas peur, Madame—Je me menagerai bien—on ne se bat pas pour ces gueux la comme pour son Roi.*”\*

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\* "No fear of that, Madam—I'll take good care of myself: a man does not fight for such beggarly rascals as these as he would for his King."

M. de \_\_\_\_ is just returned from the camp of Maulde, where he has been to see his son. He says, there is great disorder and want of discipline, and that by some means or other the common soldiers abound more in money,

and game higher, than their officers. There are two young women, inhabitants of the town of St. Amand, who go constantly out on all skirmishing parties, exercise daily with the men, and have killed several of the enemy. They are both pretty—one only sixteen, the other a year or two older. Mr. de \_\_\_\_ saw them as they were just returning from a reconnoitring party. Perhaps I ought to have been ashamed after this recital to decline an invitation from Mr. de R\_\_\_\_'s son to dine with him at the camp; but I cannot but feel that I am an extreme coward, and that I should eat with no appetite in sight of an Austrian army. The very idea of these modern Camillas terrifies me—their creation seems an error of nature.\*

\* Their name was Fernig; they were natives of St. Amand, and of no remarkable origin. They followed Dumouriez into Flanders, where they signalized themselves greatly, and became Aides-de-Camp to that General. At the time of his defection, one of them was shot by a soldier, whose regiment she was endeavouring to gain over. Their house having been razed by the Austrians at the beginning of the war, was rebuilt at the expence of the nation; but, upon their participation in Dumouriez' treachery, a second decree of the Assembly again levelled it with the ground.

Our host, whose politeness is indefatigable, accompanied us a few days ago to St. Eloy, a large and magnificent abbey, about six miles from Arras. It is built on a terrace, which commands the surrounding country as far as Douay; and I think I counted an hundred and fifty steps from the house to the bottom of the garden, which is on a level with the road. The cloisters are paved with marble, and the church neat and beautiful beyond description. The iron work of the choir imitates flowers and foliage with so much taste and delicacy, that (but for the colour) one would rather suppose it to be soil, than any durable material.—The monks still remain, and although the decree has passed for their suppression, they cannot suppose it will take place. They are mostly old men, and, though I am no friend to these institutions, they were so polite and hospitable that I could not help wishing they were permitted, according to the design of the first Assembly, to die in their habitations— especially as the situation of St. Eloy renders the building useless for any other purpose.--A friend of Mr. de \_\_\_\_ has a charming country-house near the abbey, which he has been obliged to deny himself the enjoyment of, during the greatest part of the summer; for whenever the family return to Arras, their

persons and their carriage are searched at the gate, as strictly as though they were smugglers just arrived from the coast, under the pretence that they may assist the religious of St. Eloy in securing some of their property, previous to the final seizure.

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I observe, in walking the streets here, that the common people still retain much of the Spanish cast of features: the women are remarkably plain, and appear still more so by wearing faals. The faal is about two ells of black silk or stuff, which is hung, without taste or form, on the head, and is extremely unbecoming: but it is worn only by the lower class, or by the aged and devotees.

I am a very voluminous correspondent, but if I tire you, it is a proper punishment for your insincerity in desiring me to continue so. I have heard of a governor of one of our West India islands who was universally detested by its inhabitants, but who, on going to England, found no difficulty in procuring addresses expressive of approbation and esteem. The consequence was, he came back and continued governor for life.—Do you make the application of my anecdote, and I shall persevere in scribbling.—Every Yours.

Arras.

It is not fashionable at present to frequent any public place; but as we are strangers, and of no party, we often pass our evenings at the theatre. I am fond of it—not so much on account of the representation, as of the opportunity which it affords for observing the dispositions of the people, and the bias intended to be given them. The stage is now become a kind of political school, where the people are taught hatred to Kings, Nobility, and Clergy, according as the persecution of the moment requires; and, I think, one may often judge from new pieces the meditated sacrifice. A year ago, all the sad catalogue of human errors were personified in Counts and Marquisses; they were not represented as individuals whom wealth and power had made something too proud, and much too luxurious, but as an order of monsters, whose existence, independently of their characters, was a crime, and whose hereditary possessions alone implied a guilt, not to be expiated but by the forfeiture of them. This, you will say, was not very judicious; and that by establishing a sort of incompatibility of virtue with titular distinctions, the odium was transferred from the living to the dead—from those who possessed these distinctions to those who instituted them. But, unfortunately, the French were disposed to find their noblesse culpable, and to reject every thing which tended to excuse or favour them. The hauteur of the noblesse acted as a fatal equivalent to every other crime; and many, who did not credit other imputations, rejoiced in the humiliation of their pride. The people, the rich merchants, and even the lesser gentry, all eagerly concurred in the destruction of an order that had disdained or excluded them; and, perhaps, of all the innovations which have taken place, the abolition of rank has excited the least interest.



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It is now less necessary to blacken the noblesse, and the compositions of the day are directed against the Throne, the Clergy, and Monastic Orders. All the tyrants of past ages are brought from the shelves of faction and pedantry, and assimilated to the mild and circumscribed monarchs of modern Europe. The doctrine of popular sovereignty is artfully instilled, and the people are stimulated to exert a power which they must implicitly delegate to those who have duped and misled them. The frenzy of a mob is represented as the sublimest effort of patriotism; and ambition and revenge, usurping the title of national justice, immolate their victims with applause. The tendency of such pieces is too obvious; and they may, perhaps, succeed in familiarizing the minds of the people to events which, a few months ago, would have filled them with horror. There are also numerous theatrical exhibitions, preparatory to the removal of the nuns from their convents, and to the banishment of the priests. Ancient prejudices are not yet obliterated, and I believe some pains have been taken to justify these persecutions by calumny. The history of our dissolution of the monasteries has been ransacked for scandal, and the bigotry and biases of all countries are reduced into abstracts, and exposed on the stage. The most implacable revenge, the most refined malice, the extremes of avarice and cruelty, are wrought into tragedies, and displayed as acting under the mask of religion and the impunity of a cloister; while operas and farces, with ridicule still more successful, exhibit convents as the abode of licentiousness, intrigue, and superstition.

These efforts have been sufficiently successful—not from the merit of the pieces, but from the novelty of the subject. The people in general were strangers to the interior of convents: they beheld them with that kind of respect which is usually produced in uninformed minds by mystery and prohibition. Even the monastic habit was sacred from dramatic uses; so that a representation of cloisters, monks, and nuns, their costumes and manners, never fails to attract the multitude.—But the same cause which renders them curious, makes them credulous. Those who have seen no farther than the Grille, and those who have been educated in convents, are equally unqualified to judge of the lives of the religious; and their minds, having no internal conviction or knowledge of the truth, easily become the converts of slander and falsehood.

I cannot help thinking, that there is something mean and cruel in this procedure. If policy demand the sacrifice, it does not require that the victims should be rendered odious; and if it be necessary to dispossess them of their habitations, they ought not, at the moment they are thrown upon the world, to be painted as monsters unworthy of its pity or protection. It is the cowardice of the assassin, who murders before he dares to rob.



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This custom of making public amusements subservient to party, has, I doubt not, much contributed to the destruction of all against whom it has been employed; and theatrical calumny seems to be always the harbinger of approaching ruin to its object; yet this is not the greatest evil which may arise from these insidious politics—they are equally unfavourable both to the morals and taste of the people; the first are injured beyond calculation, and the latter corrupted beyond amendment. The orders of society, which formerly inspired respect or veneration, are now debased and exploded; and mankind, once taught to see nothing but vice and hypocrisy in those whom they had been accustomed to regard as models of virtue, are easily led to doubt the very existence of virtue itself: they know not where to turn for either instruction or example; no prospect is offered to them but the dreary and uncomfortable view of general depravity; and the individual is no longer encouraged to struggle with vicious propensities, when he concludes them irresistibly inherent in his nature. Perhaps it was not possible to imagine principles at once so seductive and ruinous as those now disseminated. How are the morals of the people to resist a doctrine which teaches them that the rich only can be criminal, and that poverty is a substitute for virtue—that wealth is holden by the sufferance of those who do not possess it—and that he who is the frequenter of a club, or the applauder of a party, is exempt from the duties of his station, and has a right to insult and oppress his fellow citizens? All the weaknesses of humanity are flattered and called to the aid of this pernicious system of revolutionary ethics; and if France yet continue in a state of civilization, it is because Providence has not yet abandoned her to the influence of such a system.

Taste is, I repeat it, as little a gainer by the revolution as morals. The pieces which were best calculated to form and refine the minds of the people, all abound with maxims of loyalty, with respect for religion, and the subordinations of civil society. These are all prohibited; and are replaced by fustian declamations, tending to promote anarchy and discord —by vulgar and immoral farces, and insidious and flattering panegyrics on the vices of low life. No drama can succeed that is not supported by the faction; and this support is to be procured only by vilifying the Throne, the Clergy, and Noblesse. This is a succedaneum for literary merit, and those who disapprove are menaced into silence; while the multitude, who do not judge but imitate, applaud with their leaders—and thus all their ideas become vitiated, and imbibe the corruption of their favourite amusement.

I have dwelt on this subject longer than I intended; but as I would not be supposed prejudiced nor precipitate in my assertions, I will, by the first occasion, send you some of the most popular farces and tragedies: you may then decide yourself upon the tendency; and, by comparing the dispositions of the French before, and within, the last two years, you may also determine whether or not my conclusions are warranted by fact. Adieu.—Yours.

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Arras.

Our countrymen who visit France for the first time—their imaginations filled with the epithets which the vanity of one nation has appropriated, and the indulgence of the other sanctioned—are astonished to find this “land of elegance,” this refined people, extremely inferior to the English in all the arts that minister to the comfort and accommodation of life. They are surprized to feel themselves starved by the intrusion of all the winds of heaven, or smothered by volumes of smoke—that no lock will either open or shut—that the drawers are all immoveable—and that neither chairs nor tables can be preserved in equilibrium. In vain do they inquire for a thousand conveniences which to them seem indispensable; they are not to be procured, or even their use is unknown: till at length, after a residence in a score of houses, in all of which they observe the same deficiencies, they begin to grow sceptical, to doubt the pretended superiority of France, and, perhaps for the first time, do justice to their own unassuming country. It must however, be confessed, that if the chimnies smoke, they are usually surrounded by marble—that the unstable chair is often covered with silk—and that if a room be cold, it is plentifully decked with gilding, pictures, and glasses.—In short, a French house is generally more showy than convenient, and seldom conveys that idea of domestic comfort which constitutes the luxury of an Englishman.

I observe, that the most prevailing ornaments here are family portraits: almost every dwelling, even among the lower kind of tradesmen, is peopled with these ensigns of vanity; and the painters employed on these occasions, however deficient in other requisites of their art, seem to have an unfortunate knack at preserving likenesses. Heads powdered even whiter than the originals, laced waistcoats, enormous lappets, and countenances all ingeniously disposed so as to smile at each other, encumber the wainscot, and distress the unlucky visitor, who is obliged to bear testimony to the resemblance. When one sees whole rooms filled with these figures, one cannot help reflecting on the goodness of Providence, which thus distributes self-love, in proportion as it denies those gifts that excite the admiration of others.

You must not understand what I have said on the furniture of French houses as applying to those of the nobility or people of extraordinary fortunes, because they are enabled to add the conveniences of other countries to the luxuries of their own. Yet even these, in my opinion, have not the uniform elegance of an English habitation: there is always some disparity between the workmanship and the materials—some mixture of splendour and clumsiness, and a want of what the painters call keeping; but the houses of the gentry, the lesser noblesse, and merchants, are, for the most part, as I have described—abounding in silk, marble, glasses, and pictures; but ill finished, dirty, and deficient in articles of real use.—I should, however, notice, that genteel people are cleaner here than in the interior parts of the kingdom. The floors are in general of oak, or sometimes of brick; but they are always rubbed bright, and have not that filthy appearance which so often disgusts one in French houses.

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The heads of the lower classes of people are much disturbed by these new principles of universal equality. We enquired of a man we saw near a coach this morning if it was hired. "Monsieur—(quoth he—then checking himself suddenly,)—no, I forgot, I ought not to say Monsieur, for they tell me I am equal to any body in the world: yet, after all, I know not well if this may be true; and as I have drunk out all I am worth, I believe I had better go home and begin work again to-morrow." This new disciple of equality had, indeed, all the appearance of having sacrificed to the success of the cause, and was then recovering from a dream of greatness which he told us had lasted two days.

Since the day of taking the new oath we have met many equally elevated, though less civil. Some are undoubtedly paid, but others will distress their families for weeks by this celebration of their new discoveries, and must, after all, like our intoxicated philosopher, be obliged to return "to work again to-morrow."

I must now bid you adieu—and, in doing so, naturally turn my thoughts to that country where the rights of the people consist not of sterile and metaphysic declarations, but of real defence and protection. May they for ever remain uninterrupted by the devastating chimeras of their neighbours; and if they seek reform, may it be moderate and permanent, acceded to reason, and not extorted by violence!—Yours, &c.

September 2, 1792.

We were so much alarmed at the theatre on Thursday, that I believe we shall not venture again to amuse ourselves at the risk of a similar occurrence. About the middle of the piece, a violent outcry began from all parts of the house, and seemed to be directed against our box; and I perceived Madame Duchene, the Presidente of the Jacobins, heading the legions of Paradise with peculiar animation. You may imagine we were not a little terrified. I anxiously examined the dress of myself and my companions, and observing nothing that could offend the affected simplicity of the times, prepared to quit the house. A friendly voice, however, exerting itself above the clamour, informed us that the offensive objects were a cloak and a shawl which hung over the front of the box.—You will scarcely suppose such grossness possible among a civilized people; but the fact is, our friends are of the proscribed class, and we were insulted because in their society.—I have before noticed, that the guards which were stationed in the theatre before the revolution are now removed, and a municipal officer, made conspicuous by his scarf, is placed in the middle front box, and, in case of any tumult, is empowered to call in the military to his assistance.

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We have this morning been visiting two objects, which exhibit this country in very different points of view—as the seat of wealth, and the abode of poverty. The first is the abbey of St. Vaast, a most superb pile, now inhabited by monks of various orders, but who are preparing to quit it, in obedience to the late decrees. Nothing impresses one with a stronger idea of the influence of the Clergy, than these splendid edifices. We see them reared amidst the solitude of deserts, and in the gaiety and misery of cities; and while they cheer the one and embellish the other, they exhibit, in both, monuments of indefatigable labour and immense wealth.—The facade of St. Vaast is simple and striking, and the cloisters and every other part of the building are extremely handsome. The library is supposed to be the finest in France, except the King's, but is now under the seal of the nation. A young monk, who was our Cicerone, told us he was sorry it was not in his power to show it. *"Et nous, Monsieur, nous sommes faches aussi."*—["And we are not less sorry than yourself, Sir."]

Thus, with the aid of significant looks, and gestures of disapprobation, an exchange of sentiments took place, without a single expression of treasonable import: both parties understood perfectly well, that in regretting that the library was inaccessible, each included all the circumstances which attended it.—A new church was building in a style worthy of the convent—I think, near four hundred feet long; but it was discontinued at the suppression of the religious orders, and will now, of course, never be finished.

From this abode of learned ease and pious indolence Mr. de \_\_\_\_ conducted us to the Mont de Piete, a national institution for lending money to the poor on pledges, (at a moderate interest,) which, if not redeemed within a year, are sold by auction, and the overplus, if there remain any, after deducting the interest, is given to the owner of the pledge. Thousands of small packets are deposited here, which, to the eye of affluence, might seem the very refuse of beggary itself.—I could not reflect without an heart-ache, on the distress of the individual, thus driven to relinquish his last covering, braving cold to satisfy hunger, and accumulating wretchedness by momentary relief. I saw, in a lower room, groupes of unfortunate beings, depriving themselves of different parts of their apparel, and watching with solicitude the arbitrary valuations; others exchanging some article of necessity for one of a still greater—some in a state of intoxication, uttering execrations of despair; and all exhibiting a picture of human nature depraved and miserable.—While I was viewing this scene, I recalled the magnificent building we had just left, and my first emotions were those of regret and censure. When we only feel, and have not leisure to reflect, we are indignant that vast sums should be expended on sumptuous edifices, and that the poor should live

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in vice and want; yet the erection of St. Vaast must have maintained great numbers of industrious hands; and perhaps the revenues of the abbey may not, under its new possessors, be so well employed. When the offerings and the tributes to religion are the support of the industrious poor, it is their best appropriation; and he who gives labour for a day, is a more useful benefactor than he who maintains in idleness for two. —I could not help wishing that the poor might no longer be tempted by the facility of a resource, which perhaps, in most instances, only increases their distress.—It is an injudicious expedient to palliate an evil, which great national works, and the encouragement of industry and manufactures, might eradicate.\*

\* In times of public commotion people frequently send their valuable effects to the Mont de Piete, not only as being secure by its strength, but as it is respected by the people, who are interested in its preservation.

—With these reflections I concluded mental peace with the monks of St. Vaast, and would, had it depended upon me, have readily comprized the finishing their great church in the treaty.

The Primary Assemblies have already taken place in this department. We happened to enter a church while the young Robespierre was haranguing to an audience, very little respectable either in numbers or appearance. They were, however, sufficiently unanimous, and made up in noisy applause what they wanted in other respects. If the electors and elected of other departments be of the same complexion with those of Arras, the new Assembly will not, in any respect, be preferable to the old one. I have reproached many of the people of this place, who, from their education and property, have a right to take an interest in the public affairs, with thus suffering themselves to be represented by the most desperate and worthless individuals of the town. Their defence is, that they are insulted and overpowered if they attend the popular meetings, and by electing "*les gueux et les scelerats pour deputes*,"\* they send them to Paris, and secure their own local tranquillity.

\* The scrubs and scoundrels for deputies.

—The first of these assertions is but too true, yet I cannot but think the second a very dangerous experiment. They remove these turbulent and needy adventurers from the direction of a club to that of government, and procure a partial relief by contributing to the general ruin.

Paris is said to be in extreme fermentation, and we are in some anxiety for our friend M. P\_\_\_\_, who was to go there from Montmorency last week.

I shall not close my letter till I have heard from him.

September 4.

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I resume my pen after a sleepless night, and with an oppression of mind not to be described. Paris is the scene of proscription and massacres. The prisoners, the clergy, the noblesse, all that are supposed inimical to public faction, or the objects of private revenge, are sacrificed without mercy. We are here in the utmost terror and consternation—we know not the end nor the extent of these horrors, and every one is anxious for himself or his friends. Our society consists mostly of females, and we do not venture out, but hover together like the fowls of heaven, when warned by a vague yet instinctive dread of the approaching storm. We tremble at the sound of voices in the street, and cry, with the agitation of Macbeth, “there’s knocking at the gate.” I do not indeed envy, but I most sincerely regret, the peace and safety of England.—I have no courage to add more, but will enclose a hasty translation of the letter we received from M. P\_\_\_\_, by last night’s post. Humanity cannot comment upon it without shuddering. —Ever Yours, &c.

“Rue St. Honore, Sept. 2, 1792.

“In a moment like this, I should be easily excused a breach of promise in not writing; yet when I recollect the apprehension which the kindness of my amiable friends will feel on my account, I determine, even amidst the danger and desolation that surround me, to relieve them.—Would to Heaven I had nothing more alarming to communicate than my own situation! I may indeed suffer by accident; but thousands of wretched victims are at this moment marked for sacrifice, and are massacred with an execrable imitation of rule and order: a ferocious and cruel multitude, headed by chosen assassins, are attacking the prisons, forcing the houses of the noblesse and priests, and, after a horrid mockery of judicial condemnation, execute them on the spot. The tocsin is rung, alarm guns are fired, the streets resound with fearful shrieks, and an undefinable sensation of terror seizes on one’s heart. I feel that I have committed an imprudence in venturing to Paris; but the barriers are now shut, and I must abide the event. I know not to what these proscriptions tend, or if all who are not their advocates are to be their victims; but an ungovernable rage animates the people: many of them have papers in their hands that seem to direct them to their objects, to whom they hurry in crouds with an eager and savage fury.—I have just been obliged to quit my pen. A cart had stopped near my lodgings, and my ears were assailed by the groans of anguish, and the shouts of frantic exultation. Uncertain whether to descend or remain, I, after a moment’s deliberation, concluded it would be better to have shown myself than to have appeared to avoid it, in case the people should enter the house, and therefore went down with the best show of courage I could assume.—I will draw a veil over the scene that presented itself—nature revolts, and my fair friends would shudder at the



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detail. Suffice it to say, that I saw cars, loaded with the dead and dying, and driven by their yet ensanguined murderers; one of whom, in a tone of exultation, cried, 'Here is a glorious day for France!' I endeavoured to assent, though with a faltering voice, and, as soon as they were passed escaped to my room. You may imagine I shall not easily recover the shock I received.—At this moment they say, the enemy are retreating from Verdun. At any other time this would have been desirable, but at present one knows not what to wish for. Most probably, the report is only spread with the humane hope of appeasing the mob. They have already twice attacked the Temple; and I tremble lest this asylum of fallen majesty should ere morning, be violated.

“Adieu—I know not if the courier will be permitted to depart; but, as I believe the streets are not more unsafe than the houses, I shall make an attempt to send this. I will write again in a few days. If to-morrow should prove calm, I shall be engaged in enquiring after the fate of my friends.--I beg my respects to *Mons. And Mad. de* \_\_\_\_; and entreat you all to be as tranquil as such circumstances will permit.—You may be certain of hearing any news that can give you pleasure immediately. I have the honour to be,” &c. &c.

Arras, September, 1792.

You will in future, I believe, find me but a dull correspondent. The natural timidity of my disposition, added to the dread which a native of England has of any violation of domestic security, renders me unfit for the scenes I am engaged in. I am become stupid and melancholy, and my letters will partake of the oppression of my mind.

At Paris, the massacres at the prisons are now over, but those in the streets and in private houses still continue. Scarcely a post arrives that does not inform M. de \_\_\_\_ of some friend or acquaintance being sacrificed. Heaven knows where this is to end!

We had, for two days, notice that, pursuant to a decree of the Assembly, commissioners were expected here at night, and that the tocsin would be rung for every body to deliver up their arms. We did not dare go to bed on either of these nights, but merely lay down in our robes de chambre, without attempting to sleep. This dreaded business is, however, past. Parties of the Jacobins paraded the streets yesterday morning, and disarmed all they thought proper. I observed they had lists in their hands, and only went to such houses as have an external appearance of property. Mr. de \_\_\_\_, who has been in the service thirty years, delivered his arms to a boy, who behaved to him with the utmost insolence, whilst we sat trembling and almost senseless with fear the whole time they remained in the house; and could I give you an idea of their appearance, you would think my terror very justifiable. It is, indeed, strange and alarming, that all who have property should be deprived of the means of defending either that or their lives, at a moment when Paris is giving an example of tumult and assassination to every other





part of the kingdom. Knowing no good reason for such procedure, it is very natural to suspect a bad one.—I think, on many accounts, we are more exposed here than at \_\_\_\_\_, and as soon as we can procure horses we shall depart.—The following is the translation of our last letter from Mr. P\_\_\_\_\_.



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"I promised my kind friends to write as soon as I should have any thing satisfactory to communicate: but, alas! I have no hope of being the harbinger of any thing but circumstances of a very different tendency. I can only give you details of the horrors I have already generally described. Carnage has not yet ceased; and is only become more cool and more discriminating. All the mild characteristics annihilated; and a frantic cruelty, which is dignified with the name of patriotism, has usurped every faculty, and banished both reason and mercy.

"Mons. \_\_\_\_, whom I have hitherto known by reputation, as an upright, and even humane man, had a brother shut up, with a number of other priests, at the Carmes; and, by his situation and connections, he has such influence as might, if exerted, have preserved the latter. The unfortunate brother knowing this, found means, while hourly expecting his fate, to convey a note to Mr. \_\_\_\_, begging he would immediately release, and procure him an asylum. The messenger returned with an answer, that *Mons. \_\_\_\_* had no relations in the enemies of his country!

"A few hours after, the massacres at the Carmes took place.—One Panis,\* who is in the Comité de Surveillance, had, a few days previous to these dreadful events, become, I know not on what occasion, the depositary of a large sum of money belonging to a gentleman of his section.

\* Panis has since figured on various occasions. He is a member of the Convention, and was openly accused of having been an accomplice in the robbery of the Garde Meuble.

"A secret and frivolous denunciation was made the pretext for throwing the owner of the money into prison, where he remained till September, when his friends, recollecting his danger, flew to the Committee and applied for his discharge. Unfortunately, the only member of the Committee present was Panis. He promised to take measures for an immediate release.—Perhaps he kept his word, but the release was cruel and final—the prison was attacked, and the victim heard of no more.—You will not be surprized at such occurrences when I tell you that G\_\_\_\_,\* whom you must remember to have heard of as a Jacobin at \_\_\_\_, is President of the Committee above mentioned—yes, an assassin is now the protector of the public safety, and the commune of Paris the patron of a criminal who has merited the gibbet.

\* G\_\_\_\_ was afterwards elected (doubtless by a recommendation of the Jacobins) Deputy for the department of Finisterre, to which he was sent Commissioner by the Convention. On account of some unwarrantable proceedings, and of some words that escaped him, which



gave rise to a suspicion that he was privy to the robbery of the Garde Meuble, he was arrested by the municipality of Quimper Corentin, of which place he is a native. The Jacobins applied for his discharge, and for the punishment of the municipality; but the Convention, who at that time rarely took any decisive measures,

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ordered G\_\_\_\_ to be liberated, but evaded the other part of the petition which tended to revenge him. The affair of the Garde Meuble, was, however, again brought forward; but, most probably, many of the members had reasons for not discussing too nearly the accusation against G\_\_\_\_; and those who were not interested in suppressing it, were too weak or too timid to pursue it farther.

“—I know not if we are yet arrived at the climax of woe and iniquity, but Brissot, Condorcet, Rolland, &c. and all those whose principles you have reprobated as violent and dangerous, will now form the moderate side of the Assembly. Perhaps even those who are now the party most dreaded, may one day give place to yet more desperate leaders, and become in their turn our best alternative. What will then be the situation of France? Who can reflect without trembling at the prospect?—It is not yet safe to walk the streets decently dressed; and I have been obliged to supply myself with trowsers, a jacket, coloured neckcloths, and coarse linen, which I take care to soil before I venture out.

“The Agrarian law is now the moral of Paris, and I had nearly lost my life yesterday by tearing a placard written in support of it. I did it imprudently, not supposing I was observed; and had not some people, known as Jacobins, come up and interfered in my behalf, the consequence might have been fatal.—It would be difficult, and even impossible, to attempt a description of the manners of the people of Paris at this moment: the licentiousness common to great cities is decency compared with what prevails in this; it has features of a peculiar and striking description, and the general expression is that of a monstrous union of opposite vices. Alternately dissolute and cruel, gay and vindictive, the Parisian vaunts amidst debauchery the triumph of assassination, and enlivens his midnight orgies by recounting the sufferings of the massacred aristocrats: women, whose profession it is to please, assume the *bonnet rouge* [red cap], and affect, as a means of seduction, an intrepid and ferocious courage.—I cannot yet learn if *Mons. S\_\_\_\_*’s sister be alive; her situation about the Queen makes it too doubtful; but endeavour to give him hope—many may have escaped whose fears still detain them in concealment. People of the first rank now inhabit garrets and cellars, and those who appear are disguised beyond recollection; so that I do not despair of the safety of some, who are now thought to have perished.— I am, as you may suppose, in haste to leave this place, and I hope to return to Montmorency tomorrow; but every body is soliciting passports. The Hotel de Ville is besieged, and I have already attended two days without success.—I beg my respectful homage to Monsieur and Madame de \_\_\_\_; and I have the honour to be, with esteem, the affectionate servant of my friends in general.

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“L\_\_\_\_.”

You will read M. L\_\_\_\_’s letter with all the grief and indignation we have already felt, and I will make no comment on it, but to give you a slight sketch of the history of Guermeur, whom he mentions as being President of the Committee of Surveillance.—In the absence of a man, whom he called his friend, he seduced his wife, and eloped with her: the husband overtook them, and fell in the dispute which ensued; when Guermeur, to avoid being taken by the officers of justice, abandoned his companion to her fate, and escaped alone. After a variety of adventures, he at length enlisted himself as a grenadier in the regiment of Dillon. With much assurance, and talents cultivated above the situation in which he appeared, he became popular amongst his fellow-soldiers, and the military impunity, which is one effect of the revolution, cast a veil over his former guilt, or rather indeed enabled him to defy the punishment annexed to it. When the regiment was quartered at \_\_\_\_\_, he frequented and harangued at the Jacobin club, perverted the minds of the soldiers by seditious addresses, till at length he was deemed qualified to quit the character of a subordinate incendiary, and figure amongst the assassins at Paris. He had hitherto, I believe, acted without pay, for he was deeply in debt, and without money or clothes; but a few days previous to the tenth of August, a leader of the Jacobins supplied him with both, paid his debts, procured his discharge, and sent him to Paris. What intermediate gradations he may have passed through, I know not; but it is not difficult to imagine the services that have advanced him to his present situation.—It would be unsafe to risk this letter by the post, and I close it hastily to avail myself of a present conveyance.—I remain, Yours, &c.

Arras, September 14, 1792.

The camp of Maulde is broken up, and we deferred our journey, that we might pass a day at Douay with M. de \_\_\_\_\_’s son. The road within some miles of that place is covered with corn and forage, the immediate environs are begun to be inundated, and every thing wears the appearance of impending hostility. The town is so full of troops, that without the interest of our military friends we should scarcely have procured a lodging. All was bustle and confusion, the enemy are very near, and the French are preparing to form a camp under the walls. Amidst all this, we found it difficult to satisfy our curiosity in viewing the churches and

pictures: some of the former are shut, and the latter concealed; we therefore contented ourselves with seeing the principal ones.

The town-house is a very handsome building, where the Parliament was holden previous to the revolution, and where all the business of the department of the North is now transacted.—In the council-chamber, which is very elegantly carved, was also a picture of the present King. They were, at the very moment of our entrance, in the act of displacing it.

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We asked the reason, and were told it was to be cut in pieces, and portions sent to the different popular societies.—I know not if our features betrayed the indignation we feared to express, but the man who seemed to have directed this disposal of the portrait, told us we were not English if we saw it with regret. I was not much delighted with such a compliment to our country, and was glad to escape without farther comment.

The manners of the people seem every where much changed, and are becoming gross and inhuman. While we were walking on the ramparts, I happened to have occasion to take down an address, and with the paper and pencil in my hand turned out of the direct path to observe a chapel on one side of it. In a moment I was alarmed by the cries of my companions, and beheld the musquet of the centinel pointed at me, and M. de \_\_\_\_\_ expostulating with him. I am not certain if he supposed I was taking a plan of the fortifications, and meant really more than a threat; but I was sufficiently frightened, and shall not again approach a town wall with pencils and paper.

M. de \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the only six officers of his regiment who have not emigrated. With an indignation heated by the works of modern philosophers into an enthusiastic love of republican governments, and irritated by the contempt and opposition he has met with from those of this own class who entertain different principles, he is now become almost a fanatic. What at first was only a political opinion is now a religious tenet; and the moderate sectary has acquired the obstinacy of a martyr, and, perhaps, the spirit of persecution. At the beginning of the revolution, the necessity of deciding, a youthful ardour for liberty, and the desire of preserving his fortune, probably determined him to become a patriot; and pride and resentment have given stability to notions which might otherwise have fluctuated with circumstances, or yielded to time. This is but too general the case: the friends of rational reform, and the supporters of the ancient monarchy, have too deeply offended each other for pardon or confidence; and the country perhaps will be sacrificed by the mutual desertions of those most concerned in its preservation. Actuated only by selfishness and revenge, each party willingly consents to the ruin of its opponents. The Clergy, already divided among themselves, are abandoned by the Noblesse—the Noblesse are persecuted by the commercial interest—and, in short, the only union is amongst the Jacobins; that is, amongst a few weak persons who are deceived, and a banditti who betray and profit by their “patriotism.”



I was led to these reflections by my conversation with Mr. de L\_\_\_\_ and his companions. I believe they do not approve of the present extremes, yet they expressed themselves with the utmost virulence against the aristocrates, and would hear neither of reconciliation nor palliation. On the other hand, these dispositions were not altogether unprovoked—the



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young men had been persecuted by their relations, and banished the society of their acquaintance; and their political opinions had acted as an universal proscription. There were even some against whom the doors of the parental habitation were shut.—These party violences are terrible; and I was happy to perceive that the reciprocal claims of duty and affection were not diminished by them, either in M. de \_\_\_\_\_, or his son. He, however, at first refused to come to A\_\_\_\_\_, because he suspected the patriotism of our society. I pleaded, as an inducement, the beauty of Mad. G\_\_\_\_\_, but he told me she was an aristocrate. It was at length, however, determined, that he should dine with us last Sunday, and that all visitors should be excluded. He was prevented coming by being ordered out with a party the day we left him; and he has written to us in high spirits, to say, that, besides fulfilling his object, he had returned with fifty prisoners.

We had a very narrow escape in coming home—the Hulans were at the village of \_\_\_\_\_, an hour after we passed through it, and treated the poor inhabitants, as they usually do, with great inhumanity.—Nothing has alienated the minds of the people so much as the cruelties of these troops—they plunder and ill treat all they encounter; and their avarice is even less insatiable than their barbarity. How hard is it, that the ambition of the Chiefs, and the wickedness of faction, should thus fall upon the innocent cottager, who perhaps is equally a stranger to the names of the one, and the principles of the other!

The public papers will now inform you, that the French are at liberty to obtain a divorce on almost any pretext, or even on no pretext at all, except what many may think a very good one—mutual agreement. A lady of our acquaintance here is become a republican in consequence of the decree, and probably will very soon avail herself of it; but this conduct, I conceive, will not be very general.

Much has been said of the gallantry of the French ladies, and not entirely without reason; yet, though sometimes inconstant wives, they are, for the most part, faithful friends—they sacrifice the husband without forsaking him, and their common interest is always promoted with as much zeal as the most inviolable attachment could inspire. Mad. de C\_\_\_\_\_, whom we often meet in company, is the wife of an emigrant, and is said not to be absolutely disconsolate at his absence; yet she is indefatigable in her efforts to supply him with money: she even risks her safety by her solicitude, and has just now prevailed on her favourite admirer to hasten his departure for the frontiers, in order to convey a sum she has with much difficulty been raising. Such instances are, I believe,

not very rare; and as a Frenchman usually prefers his interest to every thing else, and is not quite so unaccommodating as an Englishman, an amicable arrangement takes place, and one seldom hears of a separation.

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The inhabitants of Arras, with all their patriotism, are extremely averse from the assignats; and it is with great reluctance that they consent to receive them at two-thirds of their nominal value. This discredit of the paper money has been now two months at a stand, and its rise or fall will be determined by the success of the campaign.—I bid you adieu for the last time from hence. We have already exceeded the proposed length of our visit, and shall set out for St. Omer to-morrow.—Yours.

St. Omer, September, 1792.

I am confined to my room by a slight indisposition, and, instead of accompanying my friends, have taken up my pen to inform you that we are thus far safe on our journey.—Do not, because you are surrounded by a protecting element, smile at the idea of travelling forty or fifty miles in safety. The light troops of the Austrian army penetrate so far, that none of the roads on the frontier are entirely free from danger. My female companions were alarmed the whole day—the young for their baggage, and the old for themselves.

The country between this and Arras has the appearance of a garden cultivated for the common use of its inhabitants, and has all the fertility and beauty of which a flat surface is susceptible. Bethune and Aire I should suppose strongly fortified. I did not fail, in passing through the former, to recollect with veneration the faithful minister of Henry the Fourth. The misfortunes of the descendant of Henry, whom Sully\* loved, and the state of the kingdom he so much cherished, made a stronger impression on me than usual, and I mingled with the tribute of respect a sentiment of indignation.

\* Maximilien de Bethune, Duc de Sully.

What perverse and malignant influence can have excited the people either to incur or to suffer their present situation? Were we not well acquainted with the arts of factions, the activity of bad men, and the effect of their union, I should be almost tempted to believe this change in the French supernatural. Less than three years ago, the name of Henri Quatre was not uttered without enthusiasm. The piece that transmitted the slightest anecdotes of his life was certain of success—the air that celebrated him was listened to with delight—and the decorations of beauty, when associated with the idea of this gallant Monarch, became more irresistible.\*

\* At this time it was the prevailing fashion to call any new inventions of female dress after his name, and to decorate the ornamental parts of furniture with his resemblance.

Yet Henry the Fourth is now a tyrant—his pictures and statues are destroyed, and his memory is execrated!—Those who have reduced the French to this are, doubtless, base and designing intriguers; yet I cannot acquit the people, who are thus wrought on, of unfeelingness and levity.—England has had its revolutions; but the names of Henry

the Fifth and Elizabeth were still revered: and the regal monuments, which still exist, after all the vicissitudes of our political principles, attest the mildness of the English republicans.

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The last days of our stay at Arras were embittered by the distress of our neighbour and acquaintance, Madame de B\_\_\_\_. She has lost two sons under circumstances so affecting, that I think you will be interested in the relation.—The two young men were in the army, and quartered at Perpignan, at a time when some effort of counter-revolution was said to be intended. One of them was arrested as being concerned, and the other surrendered himself prisoner to accompany his brother.—When the High Court at Orleans was instituted for trying state-prisoners, those of Perpignan were ordered to be conducted there, and the two B\_\_\_\_'s, chained together, were taken with the rest. On their arrival at Orleans, their gaoler had mislaid the key that unlocked their fetters, and, not finding it immediately, the young men produced one, which answered the purpose, and released themselves. The gaoler looked at them with surprize, and asked why, with such a means in their power, they had not escaped in the night, or on the road. They replied, because they were not culpable, and had no reason for avoiding a trial that would manifest their innocence. Their heroism was fatal. They were brought, by a decree of the Convention, from Orleans to Versailles, (on their way to Paris,) where they were met by the mob, and massacred.

Their unfortunate mother is yet ignorant of their fate; but we left her in a state little preferable to that which will be the effect of certainty. She saw the decree for transporting the prisoners from Orleans, and all accounts of the result have been carefully concealed from her; yet her anxious and enquiring looks at all who approach her, indicate but too well her suspicion of the truth.--Mons. de \_\_\_\_'s situation is indescribable. Informed of the death of his sons, he is yet obliged to conceal his sufferings, and wear an appearance of tranquillity in the presence of his wife. Sometimes he escapes, when unable to contain his emotions any longer, and remains at M. de \_\_\_\_'s till he recovers himself. He takes no notice of the subject of his grief, and we respect it too much to attempt to console him. The last time I asked him after Madame de \_\_\_\_, he told me her spirits were something better, and, added he, in a voice almost suffocated, "She is amusing herself with working neckcloths for her sons!"—When you reflect that the massacres at Paris took place on the second and third of September, and that the decree was passed to bring the prisoners from Orleans (where they were in safety) on the tenth, I can say nothing that will add to the horror of this transaction, or to your detestation of its cause. Sixty-two, mostly people of high rank, fell victims to this barbarous policy: they were brought in a fort of covered waggons, and were murdered in heaps without being taken out.\*

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\* Perhaps the reader will be pleased at a discovery, which it would have been unsafe to mention when made, or in the course of this correspondence. The two young men here alluded to arrived at Versailles, chained together, with their fellow-prisoners. Surprise, perhaps admiration, had diverted the gaoler's attention from demanding the key that opened their padlock, and it was still in their possession. On entering Versailles, and observing the crowd preparing to attack them, they divested themselves of their fetters, and of every other incumbrance. In a few moments their carriages were surrounded, their companions at one end were already murdered, and themselves slightly wounded; but the confusion increasing, they darted amidst the crowd, and were in a moment undistinguishable. They were afterwards taken under the protection of an humane magistrate, who concealed them for some time, and they are now in perfect security. They were the only two of the whole number that escaped.

September, 1792.

We passed a country so barren and uninteresting yesterday, that even a professional traveller could not have made a single page of it. It was, in every thing, a perfect contrast to the rich plains of Artois— unfertile, neglected vallies and hills, miserable farms, still more miserable cottages, and scarcely any appearance of population. The only place where we could refresh the horses was a small house, over the door of which was the pompous designation of Hotel d'Angleterre. I know not if this be intended as a ridicule on our country, or as an attraction to our countrymen, but I, however, found something besides the appellation which reminded me of England, and which one does not often find in houses of a better outside; for though the rooms were small, and only two in number, they were very clean, and the hostess was neat and civil. The Hotel d'Angleterre, indeed, was not luxuriously supplied, and the whole of our repast was eggs and tea, which we had brought with us.—In the next room to that we occupied were two prisoners chained, whom the officers were conveying to Arras, for the purpose of better security. The secret history of this business is worth relating, as it marks the character of the moment, and the ascendancy which the Jacobins are daily acquiring.

These men were apprehended as smugglers, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, and committed to the gaol at \_\_\_\_\_. A few days after, a young girl, of bad character, who has much influence at the club, made a motion, that the people, in a body, should demand the release of the prisoners. The motion was carried, and the Hotel de Ville assailed by a formidable troop of sailors, fish-women, &c.—The municipality refused to comply, the Garde Nationale was called out, and, on the mob persisting, fired over their heads, wounded a few, and the rest dispersed of themselves.—Now you must understand, the latent motive of all this was

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two thousand livres promised to one of the Jacobin leaders, if he succeeded in procuring the men their liberty.—I do not advance this merely on conjecture. The fact is well known to the municipality; and the decent part of it would willingly have expelled this man, who is one of their members, but that they found themselves too weak to engage in a serious quarrel with the Jacobins.—One cannot reflect, without apprehension, that any society should exist which can oppose the execution of the laws with impunity, or that a people, who are little sensible of realities, should be thus abused by names. They suffer, with unfeeling patience, a thousand enormities—yet blindly risk their liberties and lives to promote the designs of an adventurer, because he harangues at a club, and calls himself a patriot.—I have just received advice that my friends have left Lausanne, and are on their way to Paris. Our first plan of passing the winter there will be imprudent, if not impracticable, and we have concluded to take a house for the winter six months at Amiens, Chantilly, or some place which has the reputation of being quiet. I have already ordered enquiries to be made, and shall set out with Mrs. \_\_\_\_ in a day or two for Amiens. I may, perhaps, not write till our return; but shall not cease to be, with great truth.—Yours, &c.

Amiens, 1792.

The departement de la Somme has the reputation of being a little aristocratic. I know not how far this be merited, but the people are certainly not enthusiasts. The villages we passed on our road hither were very different from those on the frontiers—we were hailed by no popular sounds, no cries of *Vive la nation!* except from here and there some ragged boy in a red cap, who, from habit, associated this salutation with the appearance of a carriage. In every place where there are half a dozen houses is planted an unthriving tree of liberty, which seems to wither under the baneful influence of the *bonnet rouge*. [The red cap.] This Jacobin attribute is made of materials to resist the weather, and may last some time; but the trees of liberty, being planted unseasonably, are already dead. I hope this will not prove emblematic, and that the power of the Jacobins may not outlive the freedom of the people.

The Convention begin their labours under disagreeable auspices. A general terror seems to have seized on the Parisians, the roads are covered with carriages, and the inns filled with travellers. A new regulation has just taken place, apparently intended to check this restless spirit. At Abbeville, though we arrived late and were fatigued, we were taken to the municipality, our passports collated with our persons, and at the inn we were obliged to insert in a book our names, the place of our birth, from whence we



came, and where we were going. This, you will say, has more the features of a mature Inquisition, than a new-born Republic; but the French have different notions of liberty from yours, and take these things very quietly.—At Flixecourt we eat out of pewter spoons, and the people told us, with much inquietude, that they had sold their plate, in expectation of a decree of the Convention to take it from them. This decree, however, has not passed, but the alarm is universal, and does not imply any great confidence in the new government.



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I have had much difficulty in executing my commission, and have at last fixed upon a house, of which I fear my friends will not approve; but the panic which depopulates Paris, the bombardment of Lisle, and the tranquillity which has hitherto prevailed here, has filled the town, and rendered every kind of habitation scarce, and extravagantly dear: for you must remark, that though the Amienois are all aristocrats, yet when an intimidated sufferer of the same party flies from Paris, and seeks an asylum amongst them, they calculate with much exactitude what they suppose necessity may compel him to give, and will not take a livre less.—The rent of houses and lodgings, like the national funds, rises and falls with the public distresses, and, like them, is an object of speculation: several persons to whom we were addressed were extremely indifferent about letting their houses, alledging as a reason, that if the disorders of Paris should increase, they had no doubt of letting them to much greater advantage.

We were at the theatre last night—it was opened for the first time since France has been declared a republic, and the Jacobins vociferated loudly to have the fleur de lys, and other regal emblems, effaced. Obedience was no sooner promised to this command, than it was succeeded by another not quite so easily complied with—they insisted on having the Marsellois Hymn sung. In vain did the manager, with a ludicrous sort of terror, declare, that there were none of his company who had any voice, or who knew either the words of the music of the hymn in question. "*C'est egal, il faut chanter,*" ["No matter for that, they must sing."] resounded from all the patriots in the house. At last, finding the thing impossible, they agreed to a compromise; and one of the actors promised to sing it on the morrow, as well as the trifling impediment of having no voice would permit him.—You think your galleries despotic when they call for an epilogue that is forgotten, and the actress who should speak it is undrest; or when they insist upon enlivening the last acts of Jane Shore with Roast Beef! What would you think if they would not dispense with a hornpipe on the tight-rope by Mrs. Webb? Yet, bating the danger, I assure you, the audience of Amiens was equally unreasonable. But liberty at present seems to be in an undefined state; and until our rulers shall have determined what it is, the matter will continue to be settled as it is now—by each man usurping as large a portion of tyranny as his situation will admit of. He who submits without repining to his district, to his municipality, or even to the club, domineers at the theatre, or exercises in the street a manual censure on aristocratic apparel.\*

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*It was common at this time to insult women in the streets if dressed too well, or in colours the people chose to call aristocratic. I was myself nearly thrown down for having on a straw bonnet with green ribbons.*

Our embarrassment for small change is renewed: many of the communes who had issued bills of five, ten, and fifteen sols, repayable in assignats, are become bankrupts, which circumstance has thrown such a discredit on all this kind of nominal money, that the bills of one town will not pass at another. The original creation of these bills was so limited, that no town had half the number requisite for the circulation of its neighbourhood; and this decrease, with the distrust that arises from the occasion of it, greatly adds to the general inconvenience.

The retreat of the Prussian army excites more surprize than interest, and the people talk of it with as much indifference as they would of an event that had happened beyond the Ganges. The siege of Lisle takes off all attention from the relief of Thionville—not on account of its importance, but on account of its novelty.—I remain, Yours, &c.

Abbeville, September, 1792.

We left Amiens early yesterday morning, but were so much delayed by the number of volunteers on the road, that it was late before we reached Abbeville. I was at first somewhat alarmed at finding ourselves surrounded by so formidable a cortege; they however only exacted a declaration of our political principles, and we purchased our safety by a few smiles, and exclamations of vive la nation! There were some hundreds of these recruits much under twenty; but the poor fellows, exhilarated by their new uniform and large pay, were going gaily to decide their fate by that hazard which puts youth and age on a level, and scatters with indiscriminating hand the cypress and the laurel.

At Abbeville all the former precautions were renewed—we underwent another solemn identification of our persons at the Hotel de Ville, and an abstract of our history was again enregistered at the inn. One would really suppose that the town was under apprehensions of a siege, or, at least, of the plague. My “paper face” was examined as suspiciously as though I had had the appearance of a travestied Achilles; and M\_\_\_\_’s, which has as little expression as a Chinese painting, was elaborately scrutinized by a Dogberry in spectacles, who, perhaps, fancied she had the features of a female Machiavel. All this was done with an air of importance sufficiently ludicrous, when contrasted with the object; but we met with no incivility, and had nothing to complain of but a little additional fatigue, and the delay of our dinner.

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We stopped to change horses at Bernay, and I soon perceived our landlady was a very ardent patriot. In a room, to which we waded at great risk of our clothes, was a representation of the siege of the Bastille, and prints of half a dozen American Generals, headed by Mr. Thomas Paine. On descending, we found our hostess exhibiting a still more forcible picture of curiosity than Shakspeare's blacksmith. The half-demolished repast was cooling on the table, whilst our postilion retailed the Gazette, and the pigs and ducks were amicably grazing together on whatever the kitchen produced. The affairs of the Prussians and Austrians were discussed with entire unanimity, but when these politicians, as is often the case, came to adjust their own particular account, the conference was much less harmonious. The postilion offered a ten sols billet, which the landlady refused: one persisted in its validity, the other in rejecting it—till, at last, the patriotism of neither could endure this proof, and peace was concluded by a joint execration of those who invented this fichu papier—“Sorry paper.”

At \_\_\_\_ we met our friend, Mad. de \_\_\_\_, with part of her family and an immense quantity of baggage. I was both surprized and alarmed at such an apparition, and found, on enquiry, that they thought themselves unsafe at Arras, and were going to reside near M. de \_\_\_\_'s estate, where they were better known. I really began to doubt the prudence of our establishing ourselves here for the winter. Every one who has it in his power endeavours to emigrate, even those who till now have been zealous supporters of the revolution.—Distrust and apprehension seem to have taken possession of every mind. Those who are in towns fly to the country, while the inhabitant of the isolated chateau takes refuge in the neighbouring town. Flocks of both aristocrates and patriots are trembling and fluttering at the foreboding storm, yet prefer to abide its fury, rather than seek shelter and defence together. I, however, flatter myself, that the new government will not justify this fear; and as I am certain my friends will not return to England at this season, I shall not endeavour to intimidate or discourage them from their present arrangement. We shall, at least, be enabled to form some idea of a republican constitution, and I do not, on reflection, conceive that any possible harm can happen to us.

October, 1792.

I shall not date from this place again, intending to quit it as soon as possible. It is disturbed by the crouds from the camps, which are broken up, and the soldiers are extremely brutal and insolent. So much are the people already familiarized with the unnatural depravity of manners that begins to prevail, that the wife of the Colonel of a

battalion now here walks the streets in a red cap, with pistols at her girdle, boasting of the numbers she has destroyed at the massacres in August and September.

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The Convention talk of the King's trial as a decided measure; yet no one seems to admit even the possibility that such an act can be ever intended. A few believe him culpable, many think him misled, and many acquit him totally: but all agree, that any violation of his person would be an atrocity disgraceful to the nation at large.—The fate of Princes is often disastrous in proportion to their virtues. The vanity, selfishness, and bigotry of Louis the Fourteenth were flattered while he lived, and procured him the appellation of Great after his death. The greatest military talents that France has given birth to seemed created to earn laurels, not for themselves, but for the brow of that vain-glorious Monarch. Industry and Science toiled but for his gratification, and Genius, forgetting its dignity, willingly received from his award the same it has since bestowed.

Louis the Fifteenth, who corrupted the people by his example, and ruined them by his expence, knew no diminution of the loyalty, whatever he might of the affection, of his people, and ended his days in the practice of the same vices, and surrounded by the same luxury, in which he had passed them.

Louis the Sixteenth, to whom scarcely his enemies ascribe any vices, for its outrages against whom faction finds no excuse but in the facility of his nature—whose devotion is at once exemplary and tolerant—who, in an age of licentiousness, is remarkable for the simplicity of his manners—whose amusements were liberal or inoffensive—and whose concessions to his people form a striking contrast with the exactions of his predecessors.—Yes, the Monarch I have been describing, and, I think, not partially, has been overwhelmed with sorrow and indignities—his person has been degraded, that he might be despoiled of his crown, and perhaps the sacrifice of his crown may be followed by that of his life. When we thus see the punishment of guilt accumulated on the head of him who has not participated in it, and vice triumph in the security that should seem the lot of innocence, we can only adduce new motives to fortify ourselves in this great truth of our religion—that the chastisement of the one, and reward of the other, must be looked for beyond the inflictions or enjoyments of our present existence.

I do not often moralize on paper, but there are moments when one derives one's best consolation from so moralizing; and this easy and simple justification of Providence, which refers all that appears inconsistent here to the retribution of a future state, is pointed out less as the duty than the happiness of mankind. This single argument of religion solves every difficulty, and leaves the mind in fortitude and peace; whilst the pride of sceptical philosophy traces whole volumes, only to establish the doubts, and nourish the despair, of its disciples.

Adieu. I cannot conclude better than with these reflections, at a time when disbelief is something too fashionable even amongst our countrymen.—Yours, &c.

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Amiens, October, 1792.

I arrived here the day on which a ball was given to celebrate the return of the volunteers who had gone to the assistance of Lisle.\*

*The bombardment of Lisle commenced on the twenty-ninth of September, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and continued, almost without interruption, until the sixth of October. Many of the public buildings, and whole quarters of the town, were so much damaged or destroyed, that the situation of the streets were scarcely distinguishable. The houses which the fire obliged their inhabitants to abandon, were pillaged by barbarians, more merciless than the Austrians themselves. Yet, amidst these accumulated horrors, the Lillois not only preserved their courage, but their presence of mind: the rich incited and encouraged the poor; those who were unable to assist with their labour, rewarded with their wealth: the men were employed in endeavouring to extinguish the fire of the buildings, or in preserving their effects; while women and children snatched the opportunity of extinguishing the fuzes of the bombs as soon as they fell, at which they became very daring and dexterous. During the whole of this dreadful period, not one murmur, not one proposition to surrender, was heard from any party.*

—The Convention decreed, amidst the wildest enthusiasm of applause, that Lisle had deserved well of the country.

—Forty-two thousand five hundred balls were fired, and the damages were estimated at forty millions of livres.

The French, indeed, never refuse to rejoice when they are ordered; but as these festivities are not spontaneous effusions, but official ordinances, and regulated with the same method as a tax or recruitment, they are of course languid and uninteresting. The whole of their hilarity seems to consist in the movement of the dance, in which they are by no means animated; and I have seen, even among the common people, a cotillion performed as gravely and as mechanically as the ceremonies of a Chinese court.—I have always thought, with Sterne, that we were mistaken in supposing the French a gay nation. It is true, they laugh much, have great gesticulation, and are extravagantly fond of dancing: but the laugh is the effect of habit, and not of a risible sensation; the gesture is not the agitation of the mind operating upon the body, but constitutional volatility; and their love of dancing is merely the effect of a happy climate, (which, though mild, does not enervate,) and that love of action which usually accompanies mental vacancy, when it is not counteracted by heat, or other physical causes.

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I know such an opinion, if publicly avowed, would be combated as false and singular; yet I appeal to those who have at all studied the French character, not as travellers, but by a residence amongst them, for the support of my opinion. Every one who understands the language, and has mixed much in society, must have made the same observations.—See two Frenchmen at a distance, and the vehemence of their action, and the expression of their features, shall make you conclude they are discussing some subject, which not only interests, but delights them. Enquire, and you will find they were talking of the weather, or the price of a waistcoat!—In England you would be tempted to call in a peace-officer at the loud tone and menacing attitudes with which two people here very amicably adjust a bargain for five livres.—In short, we mistake that for a mental quality which, in fact, is but a corporeal one; and, though the French may have many good and agreeable points of character, I do not include gaiety among the number.

I doubt very much of my friends will approve of their habitation. I confess I am by no means satisfied with it myself; and, with regard to pecuniary consideration, my engagement is not an advantageous one. —Madame Dorval, of whom I have taken the house, is a character very common in France, and over which I was little calculated to have the ascendant. Officiously polite in her manners, and inflexibly attentive to her interest, she seemingly acquiesces in every thing you propose. You would even fancy she was solicitous to serve you; yet, after a thousand gracious sentiments, and as many implied eulogiums on her liberality and generosity, you find her return, with unrelenting perseverance, to some paltry proposition, by which she is to gain a few livres; and all this so civilly, so sentimentally, and so determinedly, that you find yourself obliged to yield, and are duped without being deceived.

The lower class have here, as well as on your side of the water, the custom of attributing to Ministers and Governments some connection with, or controul over, the operations of nature. I remarked to a woman who brings me fruit, that the grapes were bad and dear this year—*"Ah! mon Dieu, oui, ils ne murrissent pas. Il me semble que tout va mal depuis qu'on a invente la nation."* ["Ah! Lord, they don't ripen now.—For my part, I think nothing has gone well since the nation was first invented."]

I cannot, like the imitators of Sterne, translate a chapter of sentiment from every incident that occurs, or from every physiognomy I encounter; yet, in circumstances like the present, the mind, not usually observing, is tempted to comment.—I was in a milliner's shop to-day, and took notice on my entering, that its mistress was, whilst at her work, learning the *Marseillois* Hymn. [A patriotic air, at this time highly popular.] Before I had concluded my purchase, an officer came in to prepare her for the reception of four volunteers, whom she was to lodge the two ensuing nights. She assented, indeed, very graciously, (for a French woman never loses the command of her features,) but a moment after, the *Marseillois*, which lay on the counter, was thrown aside in a pet, and I dare say she will not resume her patriotic taste, nor be reconciled to the revolution, until some days after the volunteers shall have changed their quarters.



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This quartering of troops in private houses appears to me the most grievous and impolitic of all taxes; it adds embarrassment to expence, invades domestic comfort, and conveys such an idea of military subjection, that I wonder any people ever submits to it, or any government ever ventures to impose it.

I know not if the English are conscious of their own importance at this moment, but it is certain they are the centre of the hopes and fears of all parties, I might say of all Europe. The aristocrates wait with anxiety and solicitude a declaration of war, whilst their opponents regard such an event as pregnant with distress, and even as the signal of their ruin. The body of the people of both parties are averse from increasing the number of their enemies; but as the Convention may be directed by other motives than the public wish, it is impossible to form any conclusion on the subject. I am, of course, desirous of peace, and should be so from selfishness, if I were not from philanthropy, as a cessation of it at this time would disconcert all our plans, and oblige us to seek refuge at \_\_\_\_\_, which has just all that is necessary for our happiness, except what is most desirable—a mild and dry atmosphere.— Yours, &c.

Amiens, November, 1792.

The arrival of my friends has occasioned a short suspension of my correspondence: but though I have been negligent, I assure you, my dear brother, I have not been forgetful; and this temporary preference of the ties of friendship to those of nature, will be excused, when you consider our long separation.

My intimacy with Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ began when I first came to this country, and at every subsequent visit to the continent it has been renewed and increased into that rational kind of attachment, which your sex seldom allow in ours, though you yourselves do not abound in examples of it. Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ is one of those characters which are oftener loved than admired—more agreeable than handsome—good-natured, humane, and unassuming—and with no mental pretensions beyond common sense tolerably well cultivated. The shades of this portraiture are an extreme of delicacy, bordering on fastidiousness—a trifle of hauteur, not in manners, but disposition—and, perhaps, a tincture of affectation. These foibles are, however, in a great degree, constitutional: she is more an invalid than myself; and ill health naturally increases irritability, and renders the mind less disposed to bear with inconveniencies; we avoid company at first, through a sense of our infirmities, till this timidity becomes habitual, and settles almost into aversion.—The valetudinarian, who is obliged to fly the world, in time fancies herself above it, and ends by supposing there is some superiority in differing from other people. Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ is one of the best men existing—well bred and well



informed; yet, without its appearing to the common observer, he is of a very singular and original turn of mind. He is most exceedingly nervous,

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and this effect of his physical construction has rendered him so susceptible, that he is continually agitated and hurt by circumstances which others pass by unnoticed. In other respects he is a great lover of exercise, fond of domestic life, reads much, and has an aversion from bustle of all kind.

The banishment of the Priests, which in many instances was attended with circumstances of peculiar atrocity, has not yet produced those effects which were expected from it, and which the promoters of the measure employed as a pretext for its adoption. There are indeed now no masses said but by the Constitutional Clergy; but as the people are usually as ingenious in evading laws as legislators are in forming them, many persons, instead of attending the churches, which they think profaned by priests who have taken the oaths, flock to church-yards, chapels, or other places, once appropriated to religious worship, but in disuse since the revolution, and of course not violated by constitutional masses. The cemetery of St. Denis, at Amiens, though large, is on Sundays and holidays so crowded, that it is almost difficult to enter it. Here the devotees flock in all weathers, say their mass, and return with the double satisfaction of having preserved their allegiance to the Pope, and risked persecution in a cause they deem meritorious. To say truth, it is not very surprising that numbers should be prejudiced against the constitutional clergy. Many of them are, I doubt not, liberal and well-meaning men, who have preferred peace and submission to theological warfare, and who might not think themselves justified in opposing their opinion to a national decision: yet are there also many of profligate lives, who were never educated for the profession, and whom the circumstances of the times have tempted to embrace it as a trade, which offered subsistence without labour, and influence without wealth, and which at once supplied a veil for licentiousness, and the means of practising it. Such pastors, it must be confessed, have little claim to the confidence or respect of the people; and that there are such, I do not assert, but on the most credible information. I will only cite two instances out of many within my own knowledge.

P\_\_\_\_n, bishop of St. Omer, was originally a priest of Arras, of vicious character, and many of his ordinations have been such as might be expected from such a patron.—A man of Arras, who was only known for his vicious pursuits, and who had the reputation of having accelerated the death of his wife by ill treatment, applied to P\_\_\_\_n to marry him a second time. The good Bishop, preferring the interest of his friend to the salvation of his flock, advised him to relinquish the project of taking a wife, and offered to give him a cure. The proposal was accepted on the spot, and this pious associate of the Reverend P\_\_\_\_n was

immediately invested with the direction of the consciences, and the care of the morals, of an extensive parish.

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Acts of this nature, it is to be imagined, were pursued by censure and ridicule; but the latter was not often more successful than on the following occasion:—Two young men, whose persons were unknown to the bishop, one day procured an audience, and requested he would recommend them to some employment that would procure them the means of subsistence. This was just a time when the numerous vacancies that had taken place were not yet supplied, and many livings were unfilled for want of candidates. The Bishop, who was unwilling that the nonjuring priests should have the triumph of seeing their benefices remain vacant, fell into the snare, and proposed their taking orders. The young men expressed their joy at the offer; but, after looking confusedly on each other, with some difficulty and diffidence, confessed their lives had been such as to preclude them from the profession, which, but for this impediment, would have satisfied them beyond their hopes. The Bishop very complaisantly endeavoured to obviate these objections, while they continued to accuse themselves of all the sins in the decalogue; but the Prelate at length observing he had ordained many worse, the young men smiled contemptuously, and, turning on their heels, replied, that if priests were made of worse men than they had described themselves to be, they begged to be excused from associating with such company.

Dumouriez, Custine, Biron, Dillon, &c. are doing wonders, in spite of the season; but the laurel is an ever-green, and these heroes gather it equally among the snows of the Alps, and the fogs of Belgium. If we may credit the French papers too, what they call the cause of liberty is not less successfully propagated by the pen than the sword. England is said to be on the eve of a revolution, and all its inhabitants, except the King and Mr. Pitt, become Jacobins. If I did not believe “the wish was father to the thought,” I should read these assertions with much inquietude, as I have not yet discovered the excellencies of a republican form of government sufficiently to make me wish it substituted for our own.—It should seem that the Temple of Liberty, as well as the Temple of Virtue, is placed on an ascent, and that as many inflexions and retrogradations occur in endeavouring to attain it. In the ardour of reaching these difficult acclivities, a fall sometimes leaves us lower than the situation we first set out from; or, to speak without a figure, so much power is exercised by our leaders, and so much submission exacted from the people, that the French are in danger of becoming habituated to a despotism which almost sanctifies the errors of their ancient monarchy, while they suppose themselves in the pursuit of a degree of freedom more sublime and more absolute than has been enjoyed by any other nation.—Attempts at political as well as moral perfection, when carried beyond the limits compatible with a social state, or the weakness of our natures, are likely to end in a depravity which moderate governments and rational ethics would have prevented.

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The debates of the Convention are violent and acrimonious. Robespierre has been accused of aspiring to the Dictatorship, and his defence was by no means calculated to exonerate him from the charge. All the chiefs reproach each other with being the authors of the late massacres, and each succeeds better in fixing the imputation on his neighbour, than in removing it from himself. General reprobation, personal invectives, and long speeches, are not wanting; but every thing which tends to examination and enquiry is treated with much more delicacy and composure: so that I fear these first legislators of the republic must, for the present, be content with the reputation they have assigned each other, and rank amongst those who have all the guilt, but want the courage, of assassins.

I subjoin an extract from a newspaper, which has lately appeared.\*

*Extract from \_The Courier de l'Egalite\_,\_ November, 1792:*

“There are discontented people who still venture to obtrude their sentiments on the public. One of them, in a public print, thus expresses himself—

'I assert, that the newspapers are sold and devoted to falsehood. At this price they purchase the liberty of appearing; and the exclusive privilege they enjoy, as well as the contradictory and lying assertions they all contain, prove the truth of what I advance. They are all preachers of liberty, yet never was liberty so shamefully outraged—of respect for property, and property was at no time so little held sacred—of personal security, yet when were there committed so many massacres? and, at the very moment I am writing, new ones are premeditated. They call vehemently for submission, and obedience to the laws, but the laws had never less influence; and while our compliance with such as we are even ignorant of is exacted, it is accounted a crime to execute those in force. Every municipality has its own arbitrary code—every battalion, every private soldier, exercises a sovereignty, a most absolute despotism; and yet the Gazettes do not cease to boast the excellence of such a government. They have, one and all, attributed the massacres of the tenth of August and the second of September, and the days following each, to a popular fermentation. The monsters! they have been careful not to tell us, that each of these horrid scenes (at the prisons, at La Force, at the Abbaye, &c. &c.) was presided by municipal officers in their scarfs, who pointed out the victims, and gave the signal for the assassination. It was (continue the Journals) the error of an irritated people—and yet their magistrates were at the head of it: it was a momentary error; yet this error of a moment continued during six whole days of the coolest reflection—it was only at the close of the seventh that Petion made his appearance, and affected to persuade the people to desist. The assassins left off only from fatigue, and at this moment they are preparing

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to begin again. The Journals do not tell us that the chief of these *Scelerats* [We have no term in the English language that conveys an adequate meaning for this word—it seems to express the extreme of human wickedness and atrocity.] employed subordinate assassins, whom they caused to be clandestinely murdered in their turn, as though they hoped to destroy the proof of their crime, and escape the vengeance that awaits them. But the people themselves were accomplices in the deed, for the Garde Nationale gave their assistance,” &c. &c.

In spite of the murder of so many journalists, and the destruction of the printing-offices, it treats the September business so freely, that the editor will doubtless soon be silenced. Admitting these accusations to be unfounded, what ideas must the people have of their magistrates, when they are credited? It is the prepossession of the hearer that gives authenticity to fiction; and such atrocities would neither be imputed to, nor believed of, men not already bad.—Yours, &c.

December, 1792.

Dear Brother,

All the public prints still continue strongly to insinuate, that England is prepared for an insurrection, and Scotland already in actual rebellion: but I know the character of our countrymen too well to be persuaded that they have adopted new principles as easily as they would adopt a new mode, or that the visionary anarchists of the French government can have made many proselytes among an humane and rational people. For many years we were content to let France remain the arbitress of the lighter departments of taste: lately she has ceded this province to us, and England has dictated with uncontested superiority. This I cannot think very strange; for the eye in time becomes fatigued by elaborate finery, and requires only the introduction of simple elegance to be attracted by it. But if, while we export fashions to this country, we should receive in exchange her republican systems, it would be a strange revolution indeed; and I think, in such a commerce, we should be far from finding the balance in our favour. I have, in fact, little solicitude about these diurnal falsehoods, though I am not altogether free from alarm as to their tendency. I cannot help suspecting it is to influence the people to a belief that such dispositions exist in England as preclude the danger of a war, in case it should be thought necessary to sacrifice the King.

I am more confirmed in this opinion, from the recent discovery, with the circumstances attending it, of a secret iron chest at the Tuilleries. The man who had been employed to construct this recess, informs the minister, Rolland; who, instead of communicating the matter to the Convention, as it was very natural he should do on an occasion of so much importance, and requiring it to be opened in the presence of proper witnesses, goes privately himself, takes the papers found into his own possession, and then makes an application

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for a committee to examine them. Under these suspicious and mysterious appearances, we are told that many letters, &c. are found, which inculpate the King; and perhaps the fate of this unfortunate Monarch is to be decided by evidence not admissible with justice in the case of the obscurest malefactor. Yet Rolland is the hero of a party who call him, par excellence, the virtuous Rolland! Perhaps you will think, with me, that this epithet is misapplied to a man who has risen, from an obscure situation to that of first Minister, without being possessed of talents of that brilliant or prominent class which sometimes force themselves into notice, without the aid of wealth or the support of patronage.

Rolland was inspector of manufactories in this place, and afterwards at Lyons; and I do not go too far in advancing, that a man of very rigid virtue could not, from such a station, have attained so suddenly the one he now possesses. Virtue is of an unvarying and inflexible nature: it disdains as much to be the flatterer of mobs, as the adulator of Princes: yet how often must he, who rises so far above his equals, have stooped below them? How often must he have sacrificed both his reason and his principles? How often have yielded to the little, and opposed the great, not from conviction, but interest? For in this the meanest of mankind resemble the most exalted; he bestows not his confidence on him who resists his will, nor subscribes to the advancement of one whom he does not hope to influence.—I may almost venture to add, that more dissimulation, meaner concessions, and more tortuous policy, are requisite to become the idol of the people, than are practised to acquire and preserve the favour of the most potent Monarch in Europe. The French, however, do not argue in this manner, and Rolland is at present very popular, and his popularity is said to be greatly supported by the literary talents of his wife.

I know not if you rightly understand these party distinctions among a set of men whom you must regard as united in the common cause of establishing a republic in France, but you have sometimes had occasion to remark in England, that many may amicably concur in the accomplishment of a work, who differ extremely about the participation of its advantages; and this is already the case with the Convention. Those who at present possess all the power, and are infinitely the strongest, are wits, moralists, and philosophers by profession, having Brissot, Rolland, Petion, Concorcet, &c. at their head; their opponents are adventurers of a more desperate cast, who make up by violence what they want in numbers, and are led by Robespierre, Danton, Chabot, &c. &c. The only distinction of these parties is, I believe, that the first are vain and systematical hypocrites, who have originally corrupted the minds of the people by visionary and insidious doctrines, and now maintain their superiority by artifice and intrigue: their opponents, equally wicked, and more daring, justify that turpitude which the others seek to disguise, and appear almost as bad as they are. The credulous people are duped by both; while the cunning of the one, and the vehemence of the other, alternately prevail.—But something too much of politics, as my design is in

general rather to mark their effect on the people, than to enter on more immediate discussions.



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Having been at the Criminal Tribunal to-day, I now recollect that I have never yet described to you the costume of the French Judges.—Perhaps when I have before had occasion to speak of it, your imagination may have glided to Westminster Hall, and depicted to you the scarlet robes and voluminous wigs of its respectable magistrates: but if you would form an idea of a magistrate here, you must bring your mind to the abstraction of Crambo, and figure to yourself a Judge without either gown, wig, or any of those venerable appendages. Nothing indeed can be more becoming or gallant, than this judicial accoutrement—it is black, with a silk cloak of the same colour, in the Spanish form, and a round hat, turned up before, with a large plume of black feathers. This, when the magistrate happens to be young, has a very theatrical and romantic appearance; but when it is worn by a figure a little Esopian, or with a large bushy perriwig, as I have sometimes seen it, the effect is still less awful; and a stranger, on seeing such an apparition in the street, is tempted to suppose it a period of jubilee, and that the inhabitants are in masquerade.

It is now the custom for all people to address each other by the appellation of Citizen; and whether you are a citizen or not—whether you inhabit Paris, or are a native of Peru—still it is an indication of aristocracy, either to exact, or to use, any other title. This is all congruous with the system of the day: the abuses are real, the reform is imaginary. The people are flattered with sounds, while they are losing in essentials. And the permission to apply the appellation of Citizen to its members, is but a poor compensation for the despotism of a department or a municipality.

In vain are the people flattered with a chimerical equality—it cannot exist in a civilized state, and if it could exist any where, it would not be in France. The French are habituated to subordination—they naturally look up to something superior—and when one class is degraded, it is only to give place to another.

—The pride of the noblesse is succeeded by the pride of the merchant—the influence of wealth is again realized by cheap purchases of the national domains—the abandoned abbey becomes the delight of the opulent trader, and replaces the demolished chateau of the feudal institution. Full of the importance which the commercial interest is to acquire under a republic, the wealthy man of business is easily reconciled to the oppression of the superior classes, and enjoys, with great dignity, his new elevation. The counting-house of a manufacturer of woollen cloth is as inaccessible as the boudoir of a Marquis; while the flowered brocade gown and well-powdered curls of the former offer a much more imposing exterior than the chintz robe de chambre and dishevelled locks of the more affable man of fashion.

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I have read, in some French author, a maxim to this effect:—"Act with your friends as though they should one day be your enemies;" and the existing government seems amply to have profited by the admonition of their country-man: for notwithstanding they affirm, that all France supports, and all England admires them, this does not prevent their exercising a most vigilant inquisition over the inhabitants of both countries.—It is already sagaciously hinted, that Mr. Thomas Paine may be a spy, and every householder who receives a lodger or visitor, and every proprietor who lets a house, is obliged to register the names of those he entertains, or who are his tenants, and to become responsible for their conduct. This is done at the municipality, and all who thus venture to change their residence, of whatever age, sex, or condition, must present themselves, and submit to an examination. The power of the municipalities is indeed very great; and as they are chiefly selected from the lower class of shop-keepers, you may conclude that their authority is not exercised with much politeness or moderation.

The timid or indolent inhabitant of London, whose head has been filled with the Bastilles and police of the ancient government, and who would as soon have ventured to Constantinople as to Paris, reads, in the debates of the Convention, that France is now the freest country in the world, and that strangers from all corners of it flock to offer their adorations in this new Temple of Liberty. Allured by these descriptions, he resolves on the journey, willing, for once in his life, to enjoy a taste of the blessing in sublimite, which he now learns has hitherto been allowed him only in the gross element.—He experiences a thousand impositions on landing with his baggage at Calais, but he submits to them without murmuring, because his countrymen at Dover had, on his embarkation, already kindly initiated him into this science of taxing the inquisitive spirit of travellers. After inscribing his name, and rewarding the custom-house officers for rummaging his portmanteau, he determines to amuse himself with a walk about the town. The first centinel he encounters stops him, because he has no cockade: he purchases one at the next shop, (paying according to the exigency of the case,) and is suffered to pass on. When he has settled his bill at the Auberge "a l'Angloise," and emagines he has nothing to do but to pursue his journey, he finds he has yet to procure himself a passport. He waits an hour and an half for an officer, who at length appears, and with a rule in one hand, and a pen in the other, begins to measure the height, and take an inventory of the features of the astonished stranger. By the time this ceremony is finished, the gates are shut, and he can proceed no farther, till the morrow. He departs early, and is awakened twice on the road to Boulogne to produce his passport: still, however, he keeps his temper, concluding, that the new light has not

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yet made its way to the frontiers, and that these troublesome precautions may be necessary near a port. He continues his route, and, by degrees, becomes habituated to this regimen of liberty; till, perhaps, on the second day, the validity of his passport is disputed, the municipality who granted it have the reputation of aristocracy, or the whole is informal, and he must be content to wait while a messenger is dispatched to have it rectified, and the officers establish the severity of their patriotism at the expence of the stranger.

Our traveller, at length, permitted to depart, feels his patience wonderfully diminished, execrates the regulations of the coast, and the ignorance of small towns, and determines to stop a few days and observe the progress of freedom at Ameins. Being a large commercial place, he here expects to behold all the happy effects of the new constitution; he congratulates himself on travelling at a period when he can procure information, and discuss his political opinions, unannoyed by fears of state prisons, and spies of the police. His landlord, however, acquaints him, that his appearance at the Town House cannot be dispensed with—he attends three or four different hours of appointment, and is each time sent away, (after waiting half an hour with the valets de ville in the antichamber,) and told that the municipal officers are engaged. As an Englishman, he has little relish for these subordinate sovereigns, and difficult audiences—he hints at the next coffee-house that he had imagined a stranger might have rested two days in a free country, without being measured, and questioned, and without detailing his history, as though he were suspected of desertion; and ventures on some implied comparison between the ancient “Monsieur le Commandant,” and the modern “Citoyen Maire.”—To his utter astonishment he finds, that though there are no longer emissaries of the police, there are Jacobin informers; his discourse is reported to the municipality, his business in the town becomes the subject of conjecture, he is concluded to be “*un homme sans aveu*,” [One that can’t give a good account of himself.] and arrested as “suspect;” and it is not without the interference of the people to whom he may have been recommended at Paris, that he is released, and enabled to continue his journey.

At Paris he lives in perpetual alarm. One night he is disturbed by a visite domiciliaire, another by a riot—one day the people are in insurrection for bread, and the next murdering each other at a public festival; and our country-man, even after making every allowance for the confusion of a recent change, thinks himself very fortunate if he reaches England in safety, and will, for the rest of his life, be satisfied with such a degree of liberty as is secured to him by the constitution of his own country.

You see I have no design of tempting you to pay us a visit; and, to speak the truth, I think those who are in England will show their wisdom by remaining there. Nothing but the state of Mrs. D\_\_\_\_’s health, and her dread of the sea at this time of the year, detains us; for every day subtracts from my courage, and adds to my apprehensions.

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—Yours, &c.