

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

A Residence in France During the Years 1792, 1793, 1794 and 1795, Part IV., 1795

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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.

1795

Amiens, Jan. 23, 1795.

Nothing proves more that the French republican government was originally founded on principles of despotism and injustice, than the weakness and anarchy which seem to accompany every deviation from these principles. It is strong to destroy and weak to protect: because, deriving its support from the power of the bad and the submission of the timid, it is deserted or opposed by the former when it ceases to plunder or oppress — while the fears and habits of the latter still prevail, and render them as unwilling to defend a better system as they have been to resist the worst possible.

The reforms that have taken place since the death of Robespierre, though not sufficient for the demands of justice, are yet enough to relax the strength of the government; and the Jacobins, though excluded from authority, yet influence by the turbulence of their chiefs in the Convention, and the recollection of their past tyranny—against the return of which the fluctuating politics of the Assembly offer no security. The Committees of Public Welfare and General Safety (whose members were intended, according to the original institution, to be removed monthly) were, under Robespierre, perpetual; and the union they preserved in certain points, however unfavourable to liberty, gave a vigour to the government, of which from its conformation it should appear to have been incapable. It is now discovered, that an undefined power, not subject to the restriction

of fixed laws, cannot remain long in the same hands without producing tyranny. A fourth part of the Members of these Committees are, therefore, now changed every month; but this regulation, more advantageous to the Convention than the people, keeps alive animosities, stimulates ambition, and retains the country in anxiety and suspense; for no one can guess this month what system may be adopted the next—and the admission of two or three new Jacobin members would be sufficient to excite an universal alarm.

We watch these renewals with a solicitude inconceivable to those who study politics as they do a new opera, and have nothing to apprehend from the personal characters of Ministers; and our hopes and fears vary according as the members elected are Moderates, Doubtfuls, or decided Mountaineers.*

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* For instance, Carnot, whose talents in the military department obliged the Convention (even if they had not been so disposed) to forget his compliances with Robespierre, his friendship for Barrere and Collot, and his eulogiums on Carrier.

—This mixture of principles, which intrigue, intimidation, or expediency, occasions in the Committees, is felt daily; and if the languor and versatility of the government be not more apparent, it is that habits of submission still continue, and that the force of terror operates in the branches, though the main spring be relaxed. Were armies to be raised, or means devised to pay them now, it could not be done; though, being once put in motion, they continue to act, and the requisitions still in a certain degree supply them.

The Convention, while they have lost much of their real power, have also become more externally contemptible than ever. When they were overawed by the imposing tone of their Committees, they were tolerably decent; but as this restraint has worn off, the scandalous tumult of their debates increases, and they exhibit whatever you can imagine of an assemblage of men, most of whom are probably unacquainted with those salutary forms which correct the passions, and soften the intercourse of polished society. They question each other's veracity with a frankness truly democratic, and come fraternally to "Touchstone's seventh remove" at once, without passing any of the intermediate progressions. It was but lately that one Gaston advanced with a stick in full assembly to thresh Legendre; and Cambon and Duhem are sometimes obliged to be holden by the arms and legs, to prevent their falling on Tallien and Freron. I described scenes of this nature to you at the opening of the Convention; but I assure you, the silent meditations of the members under Robespierre have extremely improved them in that species of eloquence, which is not susceptible of translation or transcription. We may conclude, that these licences are inherent to a perfect democracy; for the greater the number of representatives, and the nearer they approach to the mass of the people, the less they will be influenced by aristocratic ceremonials. We have, however, no interest in disputing the right of the Convention to use violence and lavish abuse amongst themselves; for, perhaps, these scenes form the only part of their journals which does not record or applaud some real mischief.

The French, who are obliged to celebrate so many aeras of revolution, who have demolished Bastilles and destroyed tyrants, seem at this moment to be in a political infancy, struggling against despotism, and emerging from ignorance and barbarity. A person unacquainted with the promoters and objects of the revolution, might be apt to enquire for what it had been undertaken, or what had been gained by it, when all the manufactured eloquence of Tallien is vainly exerted to obtain some limitation of arbitrary imprisonment—when Freron harangues with equal labour and as little success in behalf of the liberty of the press; while Gregoire pleads for freedom of worship, Echasseriaux for that of commerce, and all the sections of Paris for that of election.*

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* It is to be observed, that in these orations all the decrees passed by the Convention for the destruction of commerce and religion, are ascribed to the influence of Mr. Pitt.—
“La libertedes cultes existe en Turquie, elle n'existe point en France. Le peuple y est prive d'un droit donc on jouit dans les etats despotiques memes, sous les regences de Maroc et d'Algers. Si cet etat de choses doit perseverer, ne parlons plus de l'inquisition, nous en avons perdu le droit, car la liberte des cultes n'est que dans les decrets, et la persecution tiraille toute la France.

“Cette impression intolerante aurait elle ete (suggeree) par le cabinet de St. James?”

“In Turkey the liberty of worship is admitted, though it does not exist in France. Here the people are deprived of a right common to the most despotic governments, not even excepting those of Algiers and Morocco.—If things are to continue in this state, let us say no more about the Inquisition, we have no right, for religious liberty is to be found only in our decrees, while, in truth, the whole country is exposed to persecution.

“May not these intolerant notions have been suggested by the Cabinet of St. James?”

Gregoire's Report on the Liberty of Worship.

—Thus, after so many years of suffering, and such a waste of whatever is most valuable, the civil, religious, and political privileges of this country depend on a vote of the Convention.

The speech of Gregoire, which tended to restore the Catholic worship, was very ill received by his colleagues, but every where else it is read with avidity and applause; for, exclusive of its merit as a composition, the subject is of general interest, and there are few who do not wish to have the present puerile imitations of Paganism replaced by Christianity. The Assembly listened to this tolerating oration with impatience, passed to the order of the day, and called loudly for Decades, with celebrations in honour of “the liberty of the world, posterity, stoicism, the republic, and the hatred of tyrants!” But the people, who understand nothing of this new worship, languish after the saints of their ancestors, and think St. Francois d'Assise, or St. Francois de Sales, at least as likely to afford them spiritual consolation, as Carmagnoles, political homilies, or pasteboard goddesses of liberty.

The failure of Gregoire is far from operating as a discouragement to this mode of thinking; for such has been the intolerance of the last year, that his having even ventured to suggest a declaration in favour of free worship, is deemed a sort of triumph to the pious which has revived their hopes. Nothing is talked of but the restoration of churches, and reinstalment of priests—the shops are already open on the Decade, and

the decrees of the Convention, which make a principal part of the republican service, are now read only to a few idle children or bare walls.

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[When the bell toll'd on the Decade, the people used to say it was for La messe du Diable—The Devil's mass.]—My maid told me this morning, as a secret of too much importance for her to retain, that she had the promise of being introduced to a good priest, (un bon pretre, for so the people entitle those who have never conformed,) to receive her confession at Easter; and the fetes of the new calendar are now jested on publicly with very little reverence.

The Convention have very lately decreed themselves an increase of pay, from eighteen to thirty-six livres. This, according to the comparative value of assignats, is very trifling; but the people, who have so long been flattered with the ideas of partition and equality, and are now starving, consider it as a great deal, and much discontent is excited, which however evaporates, as usual, in the national talent for bon mots. The augmentation, though an object of popular jealousy, is most likely valued by the leading members only as it procures them an ostensible means of living; for all who have been on missions, or had any share in the government, have, like Falstaff, "hid their honour in their necessities," and have now resources they desire to profit by, but cannot decently avow.

The Jacobin party have in general opposed this additional eighteen livres, with the hope of casting an odium on their adversaries; but the people, though they murmur, still prefer the Moderates, even at the expence of paying the difference. The policy of some Deputies who have acquired too much, or the malice of others who have acquired nothing, has frequently proposed, that every member of the Convention should publish an account of his fortune before and since the revolution. An enthusiastic and acclamatory decree of assent has always ensued; but somehow prudence has hitherto cooled this warmth before the subsequent debate, and the resolution has never yet been carried into effect.

The crimes of Maignet, though they appear to occasion but little regret in his colleagues, have been the source of considerable embarrassment to them. When he was on mission in the department of Vaucluse, besides numberless other enormities, he caused the whole town of Bedouin to be burnt, a part of its inhabitants to be guillotined, and the rest dispersed, because the tree of liberty was cut down one dark night, while they were asleep.*

* Maignet's order for the burning of Bedouin begins thus: "Liberte, egalite, au nom du peuple Francais!" He then states the offence of the inhabitants in suffering the tree of liberty to be cut down, institutes a commission for trying them, and proceeds—"It is hereby ordered, that as soon as the principal criminals are executed, the national agent shall notify to the remaining inhabitants not confined, that they are enjoined to evacuate their dwellings, and take out their effects in twenty-four hours; at the expiration of which he is to commit the town to the flames, and leave no vestige of a building standing. Farther, it is forbidden to erect any building on the spot in future, or to cultivate the soil."

“Done at Avignon, the 17th Floreal.”

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The decree of the Convention to the same effect passed about the 1st of Floreal. Merlin de Douai, (Minister of Justice in 1796,) Legendre, and Bourdon de l'Oise, were the zealous defenders of Maignet on this occasion.

—Since the Assembly have thought it expedient to disavow these revolutionary measures, the conduct of Maignet has been denounced, and the accusations against him sent to a commission to be examined. For a long time no report was made, till the impatience of Rovere, who is Maignet's personal enemy, rendered a publication of the result dispensable. They declared they found no room for censure or farther proceedings. This decision was at first strongly reprobated by the Moderates; but as it was proved, in the course of the debate, that Maignet was authorized, by an express decree of the Convention, to burn Bedouin, and guillotine its inhabitants, all parties soon agreed to consign the whole to oblivion.

Our clothes, &c. are at length entirely released from sequestration, and the seals taken off. We are indebted for this act of justice to the intrigues of Tallien, whose belle Espagnole is considerably interested. Tallien's good fortune is so much envied, that some of the members were little enough to move, that the property of the Spanish Bank of St. Charles (in which Madame T——'s is included) should be excepted from the decree in favour of foreigners. The Convention were weak enough to accede; but the exception will, doubtless, be over-ruled.

The weather is severe beyond what it has been in my remembrance. The thermometer was this morning at fourteen and a half. It is, besides, potentially cold, and every particle of air is like a dart.—I suppose you contrive to keep yourselves warm in England, though it is not possible to do so here. The houses are neither furnished nor put together for the climate, and we are fanned by these congealing winds, as though the apertures which admit them were designed to alleviate the ardours of an Italian sun.

The satin hangings of my room, framed on canvas, wave with the gales lodged behind them every second. A pair of "silver cupids, nicely poised on their brands," support a wood fire, which it is an occupation to keep from extinguishing; and all the illusion of a gay orange-grove portrayed on the tapestry at my feet, is dissipated by a villainous chasm of about half an inch between the floor and the skirting-boards. Then we have so many corresponding windows, supernumerary doors, "and passages that lead to nothing," that all our English ingenuity in comfortable arrangement is baffled.—When the cold first became so insupportable, we attempted to live entirely in the eating-room, which is warmed by a poele, or German stove, but the kind of heat it emits is so depressive and relaxing to those who are not inured to it, that we are again returned to our large chimney and wood-fire.—The French depend more on the warmth of their clothing, than the comfort of their houses. They are all wadded and furred as though they were going on a sledge party, and the men, in this respect, are more delicate than the ladies: but whether it be the consequence of these precautions, or from any other

cause, I observe they are, in general, without excepting even the natives of the Southern provinces, less sensible of cold than the English.

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Amiens, Jan. 30, 1795.

Delacroix, author of "*Les Constitutions Politiques de l'Europe*," [The Political Constitutions of Europe.] has lately published a work much read, and which has excited the displeasure of the Assembly so highly, that the writer, by way of preliminary criticism, has been arrested. The book is intitled "*Le Spectateur Francais pendant la Revolution*." [The French Spectator during the Revolution.] It contains many truths, and some speculations very unfavourable both to republicanism and its founders. It ventures to doubt the free acceptance of the democratic constitution, proposes indirectly the restoration of the monarchy, and dilates with great composure on a plan for transporting to America all the Deputies who voted for the King's death. The popularity of the work, still more than its principles, has contributed to exasperate the Assembly; and serious apprehensions are entertained for the fate of Delacroix, who is ordered for trial to the Revolutionary Tribunal.

It would astonish a superficial observer to see with what avidity all forbidden doctrines are read. Under the Church and Monarchy, a deistical or republican author might sometimes acquire proselytes, or become the favourite amusement of fashionable or literary people; but the circulation of such works could be only partial, and amongst a particular class of readers: whereas the treason of the day, which comprises whatever favours Kings or religion, is understood by the meanest individual, and the temptation to these prohibited enjoyments is assisted both by affection and prejudice.—An almanack, with a pleasantry on the Convention, or a couplet in behalf of royalism, is handed mysteriously through half a town, and a *brochure* [A pamphlet.] of higher pretensions, though on the same principles, is the very *bonne bouche* of our political *gourmands*. [Gluttons.]

There is, in fact, no liberty of the press. It is permitted to write against Barrere or the Jacobins, because they are no longer in power; but a single word of disrespect towards the Convention is more certain of being followed by a Lettre de Cachet, than a volume of satire on any of Louis the Fourteenth's ministers would have been formerly. The only period in which a real freedom of the press has existed in France were those years of the late King's reign immediately preceding the revolution; and either through the contempt, supineness, or worse motives, of those who should have checked it, it existed in too great a degree: so that deists and republicans were permitted to corrupt the people, and undermine the government without restraint.*

* It is well known that Calonne encouraged libels on the Queen, to obtain credit for his zeal in suppressing them; and the culpable vanity of Necker made him but too willing to raise his own reputation on the wreck of that of an unsuspecting and unfortunate Monarch.

After the fourteenth of July 1789, political literature became more subject to mobs and the lanterne, than ever it had been to Ministers and Bastilles; and at the tenth of August 1792, every vestige of the liberty of the press disappeared.*—

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* “What impartial man among us must not be forced to acknowledge, that since the revolution it has become dangerous for any one, I will not say to attack the government, but to emit opinions contrary to those which the government has adopted.” Discours de Jean Bon St. Andre sur la Liberte de la Presse, 30th April, 1795. A law was passed on the first of May, 1795, a short time after this letter was written, making it transportation to vilify the National Representation, either by words or writing; and if the offence were committed publicly, or among a certain number of people, it became capital.

—Under the Brissotins it was fatal to write, and hazardous to read, any work which tended to exculpate the King, or to censure his despotism, and the massacres that accompanied and followed it.*—

* I appeal for the confirmation of this to every person who resided in France at that period.

—During the time of Robespierre the same system was only transmitted to other hands, and would still prevail under the Moderates, if their tyranny were not circumscribed by their weakness. It was some time before I ventured to receive Freron’s *Orateur du Peuple* by the post. Even pamphlets written with the greatest caution are not to be procured without difficulty in the country; and this is not to be wondered at when we recollect how many people have lost their lives through a subscription to a newspaper, or the possession of some work, which, when they purchased it, was not interdicted.

As the government has lately assumed a more civilized cast, it was expected that the anniversary of the King’s death would not have been celebrated. The Convention, however, determined otherwise; and their musical band was ordered to attend as usual on occasions of festivity. The leader of the band had perhaps sense and decency enough to suppose, that if such an event could possibly be justified, it never could be a subject of rejoicing, and therefore made choice of melodies rather tender than gay. But this Lydian mood, far from having the mollifying effect attributed to it by Scriblerus, threw several Deputies into a rage; and the conductor was reprimanded for daring to insult the ears of the legislature with strains which seemed to lament the tyrant. The affrighted musician begged to be heard in his defence; and declaring he only meant, by the adoption of these gentle airs, to express the tranquillity and happiness enjoyed under the republican constitution, struck off *Ca Ira*.

When the ceremony was over, one Brival proposed, that the young King should be put to death; observing that instead of the many useless crimes which had been committed, this ought to have had the preference. The motion was not seconded; but the Convention, in order to defeat the purposes of the royalists, who, they say, increase in number, have ordered the Committees to consider of some way of sending this poor child out of the country.

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When I reflect on the event which these men have so indecently commemorated, and the horrors which succeeded it, I feel something more than a detestation for republicanism. The undefined notions of liberty imbibed from poets and historians, fade away—my reverence for names long consecrated in our annals abates—and the sole object of my political attachment is the English constitution, as tried by time and undeformed by the experiments of visionaries and impostors. I begin to doubt either the sense or honesty of most of those men who are celebrated as the promoters of changes of government which have chiefly been adopted rather with a view to indulge a favourite theory, than to relieve a people from any acknowledged oppression. A wise or good man would distrust his judgment on a subject so momentous, and perhaps the best of such reformers were but enthusiasts. Shaftesbury calls enthusiasm an honest passion; yet we have seen it is a very dangerous one: and we may perhaps learn, from the example of France, not to venerate principles which we do not admire in practice.*

* I do not imply that the French Revolution was the work of enthusiasts, but that the enthusiasm of Rousseau produced a horde of Brissots, Marats, Robespierres, &c. who speculated on the affectation of it. The Abbe Sieyes, whose views were directed to a change of Monarchs, not a dissolution of the monarchy, and who in promoting a revolution did not mean to found a republic, has ventured to doubt both the political genius of Rousseau, and the honesty of his sectaries. These truths from the Abbe are not the less so for our knowing they would not be avowed if it answered his purpose to conceal them.—*"Helas! un ecrivain justement celebre qui seroit mort de douleur s'il avoit connu ses disciples; un philosophe aussi parfait de sentiment que foible de vues, n'a-t-il pas dans ses pages eloquentes, riches en detail, pauvre au fond, confondu lui-meme les principes de l'art social avec les commencemens de la societe humaine? Que dire si l'on voyoit dans un autre genre de mechaniques, entreprendre le radoub ou la construction d'un vaisseau de ligne avec la seule theorie, avec les seules ressources des Sauvages dans la construction de leurs Pirogues!"*—"Alas! has not a justly-celebrated writer, who would have died with grief, could he have known what disciples he was destined to have;—a philosopher as perfect in sentiment as feeble in his views, —confounded, in his eloquent pages—pages which are as rich in matter as poor in substance—the principles of the social system with the commencement of human society? What should we say to a mechanic of a different description, who should undertake the repair or construction of a ship of the line, without any practical knowledge of the art, on mere theory, and with no other resources than those which the savage employs in the construction of his canoe?"

Notices sur la Vie de Sieyes.

What had France, already possessed of a constitution capable of rendering her prosperous and happy, to do with the adoration of Rousseau's speculative systems? Or why are the English encouraged in a traditional respect for the manes of republicans, whom, if living, we might not improbably consider as factious and turbulent fanatics?*

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* The prejudices of my countrymen on this subject are respectable, and I know I shall be deemed guilty of a species of political sacrilege. I attack not the tombs of the dead, but the want of consideration for the living; and let not those who admire republican principles in their closets, think themselves competent to censure the opinions of one who has been watching their effects amidst the disasters of a revolution.

Our slumbers have for some time been patriotically disturbed by the danger of Holland; and the taking of the Maestricht nearly caused me a jaundice: but the French have taught us philosophy—and their conquests appear to afford them so little pleasure, that we ourselves hear of them with less pain. The Convention were indeed, at first, greatly elated by the dispatches from Amsterdam, and imagined they were on the eve of dictating to all Europe: the churches were ordered to toll their only bell, and the gasconades of the bulletin were uncommonly pompous—but the novelty of the event has now subsided, and the conquest of Holland excites less interest than the thaw. Public spirit is absorbed by private necessities or afflictions; people who cannot procure bread or firing, even though they have money to purchase it, are little gratified by reading that a pair of their Deputies lodged in the Stadtholder's palace; and the triumphs of the republic offer no consolation to the families which it has pillaged or dismembered.

The mind, narrowed and occupied by the little cares of hunting out the necessities of life, and evading the restraints of a jealous government, is not susceptible of that lively concern in distant and general events which is the effect of ease and security; and all the recent victories have not been able to sooth the discontents of the Parisians, who are obliged to shiver whole hours at the door of a baker, to buy, at an extravagant price, a trifling portion of bread.

* “Chacun se concentre aujourd'hui dans sa famille et calcule ses ressources.”—“The attention of every one now is confined to his family, and to the calculation of his resources.” Discours de Lindet.

“Accable du soin d'être, et du travail de vivre.”—“Overwhelmed with the care of existence, and the labour of living.”
St. Lambert

—The impression of these successes is, I am persuaded, also diminished by considerations to which the philosopher of the day would allow no influence; yet by their assimilation with the Deputies and Generals whose names are so obscure as to escape the memory, they cease to inspire that mixed sentiment which is the result of national pride and personal affection. The name of a General or an Admiral serves as the epitome of an historical relation, and suffices to recall all his glories, and all his services; but this sort of enthusiasm is entirely repelled by an account that the citizens Gillet and Jourbert, two representatives heard of almost for the first time, have taken possession of Amsterdam.

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I enquired of a man who was sawing wood for us this morning, what the bells clattered for last night. *"L'on m'a dit (answered he) que c'est pour quelque ville que quelque general de la republique a prise. Ah! ca nous avancera beaucoup; la paix et du pain, je crois, sera mieux notre affaire que toutes ces conquetes."* ["They say its for some town or other, that some general or other has taken.—Ah! we shall get a vast deal by that—a peace and bread, I think, would answer our purpose better than all these victories."] I told him he ought to speak with more caution. *"Mourir pour mourir, [One death's as good as another.] (says he, half gaily,) one may as well die by the Guillotine as be starved. My family have had no bread these two days, and because I went to a neighbouring village to buy a little corn, the peasants, who are jealous that the town's people already get too much of the farmers, beat me so that I am scarce able to work."**—

** "L'interet et la criminelle avarice ont fomenté et entretenu des germes de division entre les citoyens des villes et ceux des campagnes, entre les cultivateurs, les artisans et les commercans, entre les citoyens des departemens et districts, et meme des communes voisines. On a voulu s'isoler de toutes parts."
Discours de Lindet.*

"Self-interest and a criminal avarice have fomented and kept alive the seeds of division between the inhabitants of the towns and those of the country, between the farmer, the mechanic, and the trader—the like has happened between adjoining towns and districts—an universal selfishness, in short, has prevailed." Lindet's Speech.

This picture, drawn by a Jacobin Deputy, is not flattering to republican fraternization.

—It is true, the wants of the lower classes are afflicting. The whole town has, for some weeks, been reduced to a nominal half pound of bread a day for each person—I say nominal, for it has repeatedly happened, that none has been distributed for three days together, and the quantity diminished to four ounces; whereas the poor, who are used to eat little else, consume each, in ordinary times, two pounds daily, on the lowest calculation.

We have had here a brutal vulgar-looking Deputy, one Florent-Guyot, who has harangued upon the virtues of patience, and the magnanimity of suffering hunger for the good of the republic. This doctrine has, however, made few converts; though we learn, from a letter of Florent-Guyot's to the Assembly, that the Amienois are excellent patriots, and that they starve with the best grace possible.

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You are to understand, that the Representatives on mission, who describe the inhabitants of all the towns they visit as glowing with republicanism, have, besides the service of the common cause, views of their own, and are often enabled by these fictions to administer both to their interest and their vanity. They ingratiate themselves with the aristocrats, who are pleased at the imputation of principles which may secure them from persecution—they see their names recorded on the journals; and, finally, by ascribing these civic dispositions to the power of their own eloquence, they obtain the renewal of an itinerant delegation—which, it may be presumed, is very profitable.

Beauvais, March 13, 1795.

I have often, in the course of these letters, experienced how difficult it is to describe the political situation of a country governed by no fixed principles, and subject to all the fluctuations which are produced by the interests and passions of individuals and of parties. In such a state conclusions are necessarily drawn from daily events, minute facts, and an attentive observation of the opinions and dispositions of the people, which, though they leave a perfect impression on the mind of the writer, are not easily conveyed to that of the reader. They are like colours, the various shades of which, though discriminated by the eye, cannot be described but in general terms.

Since I last wrote, the government has considerably improved in decency and moderation; and though the French enjoy as little freedom as their almost sole Allies, the Algerines, yet their terror begins to wear off— and, temporizing with a despotism they want energy to destroy, they rejoice in the suspension of oppressions which a day or an hour may renew. No one pretends to have any faith in the Convention; but we are tranquil, if not secure—and, though subject to a thousand arbitrary details, incompatible with a good government, the political system is doubtless meliorated. Justice and the voice of the people have been attended to in the arrest of Collot, Barrere, and Billaud, though many are of opinion that their punishment will extend no farther; for a trial, particularly that of Barrere, who is in the secret of all factions, would expose so many revolutionary mysteries and patriotic reputations, that there are few members of the Convention who will not wish it evaded; they probably expect, that the seclusion, for some months, of the persons of the delinquents will appease the public vengeance, and that this affair may be forgotten in the bustle of more recent events.—If there had been any doubt of the crimes of these men, the publication of Robespierre's papers would have removed them; and, exclusive of their value when considered as a history of the times, these papers form one of the most curious and humiliating monuments of human debasement, and human depravity, extant.*

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* The Report of Courtois on Robespierre's papers, though very able, is an instance of the pedantry I have often remarked as so peculiar to the French, even when they are not deficient in talents. It seems to be an abstract of all the learning, ancient and modern, that Courtois was possessed of. I have the book before me, and have selected the following list of persons and allusions; many of which are indeed of so little use or ornament to their stations in this speech, that one would have thought even a republican requisition could not have brought them there: "Sampson, Dalila, Philip, Athens, Sylla, the Greeks and Romans, Brutus, Lycurgus, Persepolis, Sparta, Pulcheria, Cataline, Dagon, Anicius, Nero, Babel, Tiberius, Caligula, Augustus, Antony, Lepidus, the Manicheans, Bayle and Galileo, Anitus, Socrates, Demosthenes, Eschinus, Marius, Busiris, Diogenes, Caesar, Cromwell, Constantine, the Labarum, Domitius, Machiavel, Thraseas, Cicero, Cato, Aristophanes, Riscius, Sophocles, Euripides, Tacitus, Sydney, Wisnou, Possidonius, Julian, Argus, Pompey, the Teutates, Gainas, Areadius, Sinon, Asmodeus, Salamanders, Anicetus, Atreus, Thyestus, Cesonius, Barca and Oreb, Omar and the Koran, Ptolomy Philadelphus, Arimanes, Gengis, Themuginus, Tigellinus, Adrean, Cacus, the Fates, Minos and Rhadamanthus," &c. &c. Rapport de Courtois su les Papiers de Robespierre.

After several skirmishes between the Jacobins and Muscadins, the bust of Marat has been expelled from the theatres and public places of Paris, and the Convention have ratified this popular judgment, by removing him also from their Hall and the Pantheon. But reflecting on the frailty of our nature, and the levity of their countrymen, in order to obviate the disorders these premature beatifications give rise to, they have decreed that no patriot shall in future be Pantheonized until ten years after his death. This is no long period; yet revolutionary reputations have hitherto scarcely survived as many months, and the puerile enthusiasm which is adopted, not felt, has been usually succeeded by a violence and revenge equally irrational.

It has lately been discovered that Condorcet is dead, and that he perished in a manner singularly awful. Travelling under a mean appearance, he stopped at a public house to refresh himself, and was arrested in consequence of having no passport. He told the people who examined him he was a servant, but a Horace, which they found about him, leading to a suspicion that he was of a superior rank, they determined to take him to the next town. Though already exhausted, he was obliged to walk some miles farther, and, on his arrival, he was deposited in a prison, where he was forgotten, and starved to death.

Thus, perhaps at the moment the French were apotheosing an obscure demagogue, the celebrated Condorcet expired, through the neglect of a gaoler; and now, the coarse and ferocious Marat, and the more refined, yet more pernicious, philosopher, are both involved in one common obloquy.

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What a theme for the moralist!—Perhaps the gaoler, whose brutal carelessness terminated the days of Condorcet, extinguished his own humanity in the torrent of that revolution of which Condorcet himself was one of the authors; and perhaps the death of a sovereign, whom Condorcet assisted in bringing to the scaffold, might have been this man's first lesson in cruelty, and have taught him to set little value on the lives of the rest of mankind.—The French, though they do not analyse seriously, speak of this event as a just retribution, which will be followed by others of a similar nature. *"Quelle mort,"* ["What an end."] says one—*"Elle est affreuse,"* (says another,) *mais il etoit cause que bien d'autres ont peri aussi.*"—"Ils periront tous, et tant mieux," ["'Twas dreadful—but how many people have perished by his means."—"They'll all share the same fate, and so much the better."] reply twenty voices; and this is the only epitaph on Condorcet.

The pretended revolution of the thirty-first of May, 1792, which has occasioned so much bloodshed, and which I remember it dangerous not to hallow, though you did not understand why, is now formally erased from among the festivals of the republic; but this is only the triumph of party, and a signal that the remains of the Brissotines are gaining ground.

A more conspicuous and a more popular victory has been obtained by the royalists, in the trial and acquittal of Delacroix. The jury had been changed after the affair of Carrier, and were now better composed; though the escape of Delacroix is more properly to be attributed to the intimidating favour of the people. The verdict was received with shouts of applause, repeated with transport, and Delacroix, who had so patriotically projected to purify the Convention, by sending more than half its members to America, was borne home on the shoulders of an exulting populace.

Again the extinction of the war in La Vendee is officially announced; and it is certain that the chiefs are now in treaty with government. Such a peace only implies, that the country is exhausted, for it suffices to have read the treatment of these unhappy people to know that a reconciliation can neither be sincere nor permanent. But whatever may be the eventual effect of this negotiation, it has been, for the present, the means of wresting some unwilling concessions from the Assembly in favour of a free exercise of religion. No arrangement could ever be proposed to the Vendean, which did not include a toleration of Christianity; and to refuse that to patriots and republicans, which was granted to rebels and royalists, was deemed at this time neither reasonable nor politic. A decree is therefore passed, authorizing people, if they can overcome all the annexed obstacles, to worship God in they way they have been accustomed to.

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The public hitherto, far from being assured or encouraged by this decree, appear to have become more timid and suspicious; for it is conceived in so narrow and paltry a spirit, and expressed in such malignant and illusive terms, that it can hardly be said to intend an indulgence. Of twelve articles of an act said to be concessive, eight are prohibitory and restrictive; and a municipal officer, or any other person “in place or office,” may controul at his pleasure all religious celebrations. The cathedrals and parish churches yet standing were seized on by the government at the introduction of the Goddesses of Reason, and the decree expressly declares that they shall not be restored or appropriated to their original uses. Individuals, who have purchased chapels or churches, hesitate to sell or let them, lest they should, on a change of politics, be persecuted as the abettors of fanaticism; so that the long-desired restoration of the Catholic worship makes but very slow progress.*—

* This decree prohibits any parish, community, or body of people collectively, from hiring or purchasing a church, or maintaining a clergyman: it also forbids ringing a bell, or giving any other public notice of Divine Service, or even distinguishing any building by external signs of its being dedicated to religion.

—A few people, whose zeal overpowers their discretion, have ventured to have masses at their own houses, but they are thinly attended; and on asking any one if they have yet been to this sort of conventicle, the reply is, “*On new sait pas trop ce que le decret veut dire; il faut voir comment cela tournera.*” [“One cannot rightly comprehend the decree—it will be best to wait and see how things go.”] Such a distrust is indeed very natural; for there are two subjects on which an inveterate hatred is apparent, and which are equally obnoxious to all systems and all parties in the Assembly—I mean Christianity and Great Britain. Every day produces harangues against the latter; and Boissy d’Anglas has solemnly proclaimed, as the directing principle of the government, that the only negotiation for peace shall be a new boundary described by the Northern conquests of the republic; and this modest diplomatic is supported by arguments to prove, that the commerce of England cannot be ruined on any other terms.*

* “How (exclaims the sagacious Bourdon de l’Oise) can you hope to ruin England, if you do not keep possession of the three great rivers.” (The Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt.)

The debates of the Convention increase in variety and amusement. Besides the manual exercises of the members, the accusations and retorts of unguarded choler, disclose to us many curious truths which a politic unanimity might conceal. Saladin, who was a stipendiary of the Duke of Orleans, and whose reputation would not grace any other assembly, is transformed into a Moderate, and talks of virtue and

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crime; while Andre Dumont, to the great admiration of his private biographists, has been signing a peace with the Duke of Tuscany.—Our republican statesmen require to be viewed in perspective: they appear to no advantage in the foreground. Dumont would have made “a good pantler, he would have chipp’d bread well;” or, like Scrub, he might have “drawn warrants, or drawn beer,”—but I should doubt if, in a transaction of this nature, the Dukedom of Tuscany was ever before so assorted; and if the Duke were obliged to make this peace, he may well say, “necessity doth make us herd with strange companions.”

Notwithstanding the Convention still detests Christianity, utters anathemas against England, and exhibits daily scenes of indecent discussion and reviling, it is doubtless become more moderate on the whole; and though this moderation be not equal to the people’s wishes, it is more than sufficient to exasperate the Jacobins, who call the Convention the Senate of Coblentz, and are perpetually endeavouring to excite commotions. The belief is, indeed, general, that the Assembly contains a strong party of royalists; yet, though this may be true in a degree, I fear the impulse which has been given by the public opinion, is mistaken for a tendency in the Convention itself. But however, this may be, neither the imputations of the Jacobins, nor the hopes of the people, have been able to oppose the progress of a sentiment which, operating on a character like that of the French, is more fatal to a popular body than even hatred or contempt. The long duration of this disastrous legislature has excited an universal weariness; the guilt of particular members is now less discussed than the insignificance of the whole assemblage; and the epithets corrupt, worn out, hackneyed, and everlasting, [Tare, use, banal, and eternal.] have almost superseded those of rogues and villains.

The law of the maximum has been repealed some time, and we now procure necessities with much greater facility; but the assignats, no longer supported by violence, are rapidly diminishing in credit—so that every thing is dear in proportion. We, who are more than indemnified by the rise of exchange in our favour, are not affected by these progressive augmentations in the price of provisions. It would, however, be erroneous and unfeeling to judge of the situation of the French themselves from such a calculation.

People who have let their estates on leases, or have annuities on the Hotel de Ville, &c. receive assignats at par, and the wages of the labouring poor are still comparatively low. What was five years ago a handsome fortune, now barely supplies a decent maintenance; and smaller incomes, which were competencies at that period, are now almost insufficient for existence. A workman, who formerly earned twenty-five sols a day, has at present three livres; and you give a sempstress thirty sols, instead of ten: yet meat, which was only five or six sols when wages was twenty-five, is now from fifty sols to three livres the pound, and every other article in the same or a higher

proportion. Thus, a man's daily wages, instead of purchasing four or five pounds of meat, as they would have done before the revolution, now only purchase one.

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It grieves me to see people whom I have known at their ease, obliged to relinquish, in the decline of life, comforts to which they were accustomed at a time when youth rendered indulgence less necessary; yet every day points to the necessity of additional oeconomy, and some little convenience or enjoyment is retrenched—and to those who are not above acknowledging how much we are the creatures of habit, a dish of coffee, or a glass of liqueur, &c. will not seem such trifling privations. It is true, these are, strictly speaking, luxuries; so too are most things by comparison—

“O reason not the need: our basest beggars
“Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
“Allow not nature more than nature needs,
“Man’s life is cheap as beast’s.”

If the wants of one class were relieved by these deductions from the enjoyments of another, it might form a sufficient consolation; but the same causes which have banished the splendor of wealth and the comforts of mediocrity, deprive the poor of bread and raiment, and enforced parsimony is not more generally conspicuous than wretchedness.

The frugal tables of those who were once rich, have been accompanied by relative and similar changes among the lower classes; and the suppression of gilt equipages is so far from diminishing the number of wooden shoes, that for one pair of sabots which were seen formerly, there are now ten. The only Lucullus’s of the day are a swarm of adventurers who have escaped from prisons, or abandoned gaming-houses, to raise fortunes by speculating in the various modes of acquiring wealth which the revolution has engendered.—These, together with the numberless agents of government enriched by more direct pillage, live in coarse luxury, and dissipate with careless profusion those riches which their original situations and habits have disqualified them from converting to a better use.

Although the circumstances of the times have necessitated a good deal of domestic oeconomy among people who live on their fortunes, they have lately assumed a gayer style of dress, and are less averse from frequenting public amusements. For three years past, (and very naturally,) the gentry have openly murmured at the revolution; and they now, either convinced of the impolicy of such conduct, terrified by their past sufferings, or, above all, desirous of proclaiming their triumph over the Jacobins, are every where reviving the national taste for modes and finery. The attempt to reconcile these gaieties with prudence, has introduced some contrasts in apparel whimsical enough, though our French belles adopt them with much gravity.

In consequence of the disorders in the South of France, and the interruption of commerce by sea, soap is not only dear, but sometimes difficult to purchase at any rate. We have ourselves paid equal to five livres a pound in money. Hence we have white wigs* and grey stockings, medallions and gold chains with coloured handkerchiefs

and discoloured tuckers, and chemises de Sappho, which are often worn till they rather remind one of the pious Queen Isabel, than the Greek poetess.

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* Vilate, in his pamphlet on the secret causes of the revolution of the ninth Thermidor, relates the following anecdote of the origin of the perukes blondes. "The caprice of a revolutionary female who, on the fete in celebration of the Supreme Being, covered her own dark hair with a tete of a lighter colour, having excited the jealousy of La Demahe, one of Barrere's mistresses, she took occasion to complain to him of this coquetry, by which she thought her own charms eclipsed. Barrere instantly sent for Payen, the national agent, and informed him that a new counter-revolutionary sect had started up, and that its partizans distinguished themselves by wearing wigs made of light hair cut from the heads of the guillotined aristocrats. He therefore enjoined Payen to make a speech at the municipality, and to thunder against this new mode. The mandate was, of course, obeyed; and the women of rank, who had never before heard of these wigs, were both surprized and alarmed at an imputation so dangerous. Barrere is said to have been highly amused at having thus solemnly stopped the progress of a fashion, only because it displeased one of his female favourites.—I perfectly remember Payen's oration against this coeiffure, and every woman in Paris who had light hair, was, I doubt not, intimidated." This pleasantry of Barrere's proves with what inhuman levity the government sported with the feelings of the people. At the fall of Robespierre, the peruque blonde, no longer subject to the empire of Barrere's favourites, became a reigning mode.

—Madame Tallien, who is supposed occasionally to dictate decrees to the Convention, presides with a more avowed and certain sway over the realms of fashion; and the Turkish draperies that may float very gracefully on a form like hers, are imitated by rotund sesquipedal Fatimas, who make one regret even the tight lacings and unnatural diminishings of our grandmothers.

I came to Beauvais a fortnight ago with the Marquise. Her long confinement has totally ruined her health, and I much fear she will not recover. She has an aunt lives here, and we flattered ourselves she might benefit by change of air—but, on the contrary, she seems worse, and we propose to return in the course of a week to Amiens.

I had a good deal of altercation with the municipality about obtaining a passport; and when they at last consented, they gave me to understand I was still a prisoner in the eye of the law, and that I was indebted to them for all the freedom I enjoyed. This is but too true; for the decree constituting the English hostages for the Deputies at Toulon has never been repealed—

"Ah, what avails it that from slavery far,
"I drew the breath of life in English air?"
Johnson.

Yet is it a consolation, that the title by which I was made an object of mean vengeance is the one I most value.*

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* An English gentleman, who was asked by a republican Commissary, employed in examining the prisons, why he was there, replied, "Because I have not the misfortune to be a Frenchman!"

This is a large manufacturing town, and the capital of the department of l'Oise. Its manufactories now owe their chief activity to the requisitions for supplying cloth to the armies. Such commerce is by no means courted; and if people were permitted, as they are in most countries, to trade or let it alone, it would soon decline.—The choir of the cathedral is extremely beautiful, and has luckily escaped republican devastation, though there seems to exist no hope that it will be again restored to the use of public worship. Your books will inform you, that Beauvais was besieged in 1472 by the Duke of Burgundy, with eighty thousand men, and that he failed in the attempt. Its modern history is not so fortunate. It was for some time harassed by a revolutionary army, whose exactions and disorders being opposed by the inhabitants, a decree of the Convention declared the town in a state of rebellion; and this ban, which operates like the Papal excommunications three centuries ago, and authorizes tyranny of all kinds, was not removed until long after the death of Robespierre.—Such a specimen of republican government has made the people cautious, and abundant in the exteriors of patriotism. Where they are sure of their company, they express themselves without reserve, both on the subject of their legislators and the miseries of the country; but intercourse is considerably more timid here than at Amiens.

Two gentlemen dined with us yesterday, whom I know to be zealous royalists, and, as they are acquainted, I made no scruple of producing an engraving which commemorates mysteriously the death of the King, and which I had just received from Paris by a private conveyance. They looked alarmed, and affected not to understand it; and, perceiving I had done wrong, I replaced the print without farther explanation: but they both called this evening, and reproached me separately for thus exposing their sentiments to each other.—This is a trifling incident, yet perhaps it may partly explain the great aenigma why no effectual resistance is made to a government which is secretly detested. It has been the policy of all the revolutionists, from the Lameths and La Fayette down to Brissot and Robespierre, to destroy the confidence of society; and the calamities of last year, now aiding the system of spies and informers, occasion an apprehension and distrust which impede union, and check every enterprize that might tend to restore the freedom of the country.—Yours, &c.

Amiens, April 12, 1795.

Instead of commenting on the late disorders at Paris, I subjoin the translation of a letter just received by Mrs. D----- from a friend, whose information, we have reason to believe, is as exact as can possibly be obtained in the chaos of little intrigues which now comprise the whole

science of French politics.

“Paris, April 9.

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“Though I know, my good friend, you are sufficiently versed in the technicals of our revolution not to form an opinion of occurrences from the language in which they are officially described, yet I cannot resist the favourable opportunity of Mad. -----’s return, to communicate such explanations of the late events as their very ambiguous appearance may render necessary even to you.

“I must begin by informing you, that the proposed decree of the Convention to dissolve themselves and call a new Assembly, was a mere coquetry. Harassed by the struggles of the Jacobins, and alarmed at the symptoms of public weariness and disgust, which became every day more visible, they hoped this feint might operate on the fears of the people of Paris, and animate them to a more decided support against the efforts of the common enemy, as well as tend to reconcile them to a farther endurance of a representation from which they did not disguise their wishes to be released. An opportunity was therefore seized on, or created, when our allowance of bread had become unusually short, and the Jacobins unusually turbulent, to bring forward this project of renovating the legislature. But in politics, as well as love, such experiments are dangerous. Far from being received with regret, the proposition excited universal transport; and it required all the diligence of the agents of government to insinuate effectually, that if Paris were abandoned by the Convention at this juncture, it would not only become a prey to famine, but the Jacobins would avail themselves of the momentary disorder to regain their power, and renew their past atrocities.

“A conviction that we in reality derive our scanty supplies from exertions which would not be made, were they not necessary to restrain the popular ill humour, added to an habitual apprehension of the Clubs,* assisted this manoeuvre; and a few of the sections were, in consequence, prevailed on to address our Representatives, and to request they would remain at their post.—

* Paris had been long almost entirely dependent on the government for subsistence, so that an insurrection could always be procured by withholding the usual supply. The departments were pillaged by requisitions, and enormous sums sent to the neutral countries to purchase provisions, that the capital might be maintained in dependence and good humour. The provisions obtained by these means were distributed to the shopkeepers, who had instructions to retail them to the idle and disorderly, at about a twentieth part of the original cost, and no one could profit by this regulation, without first receiving a ticket from the Committee of his section. It was lately asserted in the Convention, and not disavowed, that if the government persisted in this sort of traffic, the annual loss attending the article of corn alone would amount to fifty millions sterling. The reduction of the sum in question

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into English money is made on a presumption that the French government did not mean (were it to be avoided) to commit an act of bankruptcy, and redeem their paper at less than par. Reckoning, however, at the real value of assignats when the calculation was made, and they were then worth perhaps a fifth of their nominal value, the government was actually at the expence of ten millions sterling a year, for supplying Paris with a very scanty portion of bread! The sum must appear enormous, but the speculation under such a government must be incalculable; and when it is recollected that all neutral ships bringing cargoes for the republic must have been insured at an immense premium, or perhaps eventually purchased by the French, and that very few could reach their destination, we may conclude that such as did arrive cost an immoderate sum.

—“The insurrection that immediately succeeded was at first the effect of a similar scheme, and it ended in a party contention, in which the people, as usual, were neuter.

“The examination into the conduct of Barrere, Collot, &c. had been delayed until it seemed rather a measure destined to protect than to bring them to punishment; and the impatience which was every where expressed on the subject, sufficiently indicated the necessity, or at least the prudence, of hastening their trial. Such a process could not be ventured on but at the risk of involving the whole Convention in a labyrinth of crimes, inconsistencies, and ridicule, and the delinquents already began to exonerate themselves by appealing to the vote of solemn approbation passed in their favour three months after the death of Robespierre had restored the Assembly to entire freedom.

“The only means of extrication from this dilemma, appeared to be that of finding some pretext to satisfy the public vengeance, without hazarding the scandal of a judicial exposure. Such a pretext it was not difficult to give rise to: a diminished portion of bread never fails to produce tumultuous assemblages, that are easily directed, though not easily suppressed; and crowds of this description, agitated by real misery, were excited (as we have every reason to suppose) by hired emissaries to assail the Convention with disorderly clamours for bread. This being attributed to the friends of the culprits, decrees were opportunely introduced and passed for transporting them untried out of the republic, and for arresting most of the principal Jacobin members as their partizans.

“The subsequent disturbances were less artificial; for the Jacobins, thus rendered desperate, attempted resistance; but, as they were unsuccessful, their efforts only served their adversaries as an excuse for arresting several of the party who had escaped the former decrees.

“Nothing, I assure you, can with less truth be denominated popular movements, than many of these scenes, which have, notwithstanding, powerfully influenced the fate of our country. A revolt, or insurrection, is often only an affair of intrigue and arrangement; and the desultory violences of the suburbs of St. Antoine, or of the market women, are

regulated by the same Committee and cabals that direct our campaigns and treaties. The common distresses of the people are continually drawing them together; and, when thus collected, their credulity renders them the ready instruments of any prevailing faction.

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“Our recent disorders afforded a striking proof of this. I was myself the Cicerone of a country friend on the day the Convention was first assailed. The numbers who crowded into the hall were at first considerable, yet they exhibited no signs of hostility, and it was evident they were brought there for some purpose of which they were themselves ignorant. When asked their intentions, they vociferated 'Du pain! Du pain!'—Bread, Bread; and, after occupying the seats of the Deputies for a short time, quietly withdrew.

“That this insurrection was originally factitious, and devised for the purpose I have mentioned, is farther corroborated by the sudden appearance of Pichegru and other officers, who seemed brought expressly to protect the departure of the obnoxious trio, in case it should be opposed either by their friends or enemies. It is likewise to be remarked, that Barrere and the rest were stopped at the gates of Paris by the same mob who were alledged to have risen in their favour, and who, instead of endeavouring to rescue them, brought them back to the Committee of General Safety, on a supposition that they had escaped from prison.—The members of the moderate party, who were detained in some of the sections, sustained no ill treatment whatever, and were released on being claimed by their colleagues, which could scarcely have happened, had the mob been under the direction of the Jacobins, or excited by them.—In short, the whole business proved that the populace were mere agents, guided by no impulse of their own, except hunger, and who, when left to themselves, rather impeded than promoted the designs of both factions.

“You must have been surprized to see among the list of members arrested, the name of Laurent Lecointre; but he could never be pardoned for having reduced the Convention to the embarrassing necessity of prosecuting Robespierre's associates, and he is now secured, lest his restless Quixotism should remind the public, that the pretended punishment of these criminals is in fact only a scandalous impunity.

“We are at present calm, but our distress for bread is intolerable, and the people occasionally assail the pastry-cooks' shops; which act of hostility is called, with more pleasantry than truth or feeling, '*La guerre du pain bis contre la brioche*.' [The war of brown bread against cakes.]—God knows, it is not the quality of bread, but the scarcity of it which excites these discontents.

“The new arithmetic* is more followed, and more interesting, than ever, though our hopes are all vague, and we neither guess how or by whom they are to be fulfilled.

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* This was a mysterious way of expressing that the royalists were still gaining ground. It alluded to a custom which then prevailed, of people asking each other in the street, and sometimes even assailing the Deputies, with the question of "How much is eight and a half and eight and a half?"—By which was understood Louis the Seventeenth.

"I have done every thing that depends on me to obtain your passports without success, and I still advise you to come to Paris and solicit them in person. Your departure, in happier times, would be a subject of regret, at present I shall both envy and congratulate you when you are enabled to quit a country which promises so little security or satisfaction.

"We receive, at this moment, the two loaves. My sister joins me in acknowledgments, and expresses her fears that you must suffer by your kindness, though it is truly acceptable—for I have been several days under arms, and have had no time to make my usual excursions in search of bread.

"Yours, &c."

The proposed dissolution of the Assembly alluded to in the beginning of *Mons. -----*'s letter, occasioned here a more general rejoicing than even the fall of the Jacobin club, and, not being influenced by the motives suggested to the Parisians, we were sincerely disappointed when we found the measure postponed. The morning this news arrived, we walked

about the town till dinner, and in every street people were collected in groupes, and engaged in eager discussion. An acquaintance whom we happened to meet, instead of the usual salutations, exclaimed "*Nous viola quittes, ils s'en vont les brigands*" ["At length we are quit of them—the rogues are going about their business."]; and I observed several recontres of this sort, where people skipped and caracoled, as though unable to contain their satisfaction. Nothing was talked of but *Le Petit* [An endearing appellation given to the young King by those who would not venture to mention his name.], and the new elections; and I remarked with pleasure, that every one agreed in the total exclusion of all the present Deputies.

Two mornings after we had been indulging in these agreeable visions, we learned that the Convention, purely from a patriotic desire of serving their country, had determined not to quit their post. We were at this time in extreme want of bread, the distribution not exceeding a quarter of a pound per day; and numbers who are at their ease in other respects, could not obtain any. This, operating perhaps with the latent ill humour occasioned by so unwelcome a declaration of perseverance on the part of their



Representatives, occasioned a violent ferment among the people, and on the second of this month they were in open revolt; the magazine of corn for the use of the army was besieged, the national colours were insulted, and Blaux, a Deputy who is here on mission, was dragged from the Hotel de Ville, and obliged by the enraged populace to cry "Vive le Roi!" These disorders continued till the next day, but were at length appeased by a small distribution of flour from the magazine.

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In the debates of the Convention the whole is ascribed to the Jacobins, though it is well known they have no influence here; and I wish you to attend to this circumstance more particularly, as it proves what artifices are used to conceal the real sentiments of the people. I, and every inhabitant of Amiens, can attest that this revolt, which was declared in the Assembly to have been instigated by the partizans of the Jacobins, was, as far as it had any decided political character, an effervescence of royalism.

At Rouen, Abbeville, and other places, the trees of liberty, (or, rather, the trees of the republic,) have been cut down, the tri-coloured flag torn, and the cry of "Vive le Roi!" was for some time predominant; yet the same misrepresentation was had recourse to, and all these places were asserted to have espoused the cause of that party to which they are most repugnant.

I acknowledge that the chief source of these useless excesses is famine, and that it is for the most part the lower classes only who promote them; but the same cause and the same description of people were made the instruments for bringing about the revolution, and the poor seek now, as they did in 1789, a remedy for their accumulated sufferings in a change of government. The mass of mankind are ever more readily deluded by hope than benefited by experience; and the French, being taught by the revolutionists to look for that relief from changes of government which such changes cannot afford, now expect that the restoration of the monarchy will produce plenty, as they were before persuaded that the first efforts to subvert it would banish want.

We are now tolerably quiet, and should seriously think of going to Paris, were we not apprehensive that some attempt from the Jacobins to rescue their chiefs, may create new disturbances. The late affair appears to have been only a retaliation of the thirty-first of May, 1792; and the remains of the Girondists have now proscribed the leaders of the Mountaineers, much in the same way as they were then proscribed themselves.—Yours.

Amiens, May 9, 1795.

Whilst all Europe is probably watching with solicitude the progress of the French arms, and the variations of their government, the French themselves, almost indifferent to war and politics, think only of averting the horrors of famine. The important news of the day is the portion of bread which is to be distributed; and the siege of Mentz, or the treaty with the King of Prussia, are almost forgotten, amidst enquiries about the arrival of corn, and anxiety for the approach of harvest. The same paper that announces the surrender of towns, and the success of battles, tells us that the poor die in the streets of Paris, or are driven to commit suicide, through want. We have no longer to contend with avaricious speculations, but a real scarcity; and detachments of the National Guard, reinforced by cannon, often search the adjacent

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villages several days successively without finding a single septier of corn. The farmers who have yet been able to conceal any, refuse to dispose of it for assignats; and the poor, who have neither plate nor money, exchange their best clothes or linen for a loaf, or a small quantity of flour. Our gates are sometimes assailed by twenty or thirty people, not to beg money, but bread; and I am frequently accosted in the street by women of decent appearance, who, when I offer them assignats, refuse them, saying, "We have enough of this sorry paper—it is bread we want."—If you are asked to dine, you take your bread with you; and you travel as though you were going a voyage—for there are not many inns on the road where you can expect to find bread, or indeed provisions of any kind.

Having procured a few six-livre pieces, we were enabled to purchase a small supply of corn, though by no means enough for our consumption, so that we are obliged to oeconomise very rigidly. Mr. D----- and the servants eat bread made with three-parts bran to one of flour. The little provision we possess is, however, a great embarrassment to us, for we are not only subject to domiciliary visits, but continually liable to be pillaged by the starving poor around us; and we are often under the necessity of passing several meals without bread, because we dare not send the wheat to be ground, nor bake except at night. While the last operation is performing, the doors are carefully shut, the bell rings in vain, and no guest is admitted till every vestige of it is removed.—All the breweries have seals put upon the doors, and severe penal laws are issued against converting barley to any other purpose than the making of bread. If what is allowed us were composed only of barley, or any other wholesome grain, we should not repine; but the distribution at present is a mixture of grown wheat, peas, rye, &c. which has scarcely the resemblance of bread.

I was asked to-day, by some women who had just received their portion, and in an accent of rage and despair that alarmed me, whether I thought such food fit for a human creature.—We cannot alleviate this misery, and are impatient to escape from the sight of it. If we can obtain passports to go from hence to Paris, we hope there to get a final release, and a permission to return to England.

My friend Madame de la F----- has left us, and I fear is only gone home to die. Her health was perfectly good when we were first arrested, though vexation, more than confinement, has contributed to undermine it. The revolution had, in various ways, diminished her property; but this she would have endured with patience, had not the law of successions involved her in difficulties which appeared every day more interminable, and perplexed her mind by the prospect of a life of litigation and uncertainty. By this law, all inheritances, donations, or bequests, since the fourteenth of July 1789, are annulled and subjected to a

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general partition among the nearest relatives. In consequence, a large estate of the Marquise's, as well as another already sold, are to be accounted for, and divided between a variety of claimants. Two of the number being emigrants, the republic is also to share; and as the live stock, furniture, farming utensils, and arrears, are included in this absurd and iniquitous regulation, the confusion and embarrassment which it has occasioned are indescribable.

Though an unlucky combination of circumstances has rendered such a law particularly oppressive to Madame de la F-----, she is only one of an infinite number who are affected by it, and many of whom may perhaps be still greater sufferers than herself. The Constituent Assembly had attempted to form a code that might counteract the spirit of legal disputation, for which the French are so remarkable; but this single decree will give birth to more processes than all the *pandects*, *canons*, and *droits feodaux*, accumulated since the days of Charlemagne; and I doubt, though one half the nation were lawyers, whether they might not find sufficient employment in demalgamating the property of the other half.

This mode of partition, in itself ill calculated for a rich and commercial people, and better adapted to the republic of St. Marino than to that of France, was introduced under pretext of favouring the system of equality; and its transition from absurdity to injustice, by giving it a retroactive effect, was promoted to accommodate the "virtuous" Herault de Sechelles, who acquired a considerable addition of fortune by it. The Convention are daily beset with petitions from all parts on this subject; but their followers and themselves being somewhat in the style of Falstaff's regiment—"younger sons of younger brothers," they seem determined, as they usually are, to square their notions of justice by what is most conducive to their own interest.

An apprehension of some attempt from the Jacobins, and the discontents which the scarcity of bread give rise to among the people, have produced a private order from the Committees of government for arming and re-organizing the National Guard.*

* Though I have often had occasion to use the term National Guard, it is to be understood only as citizens armed for some temporary purpose, whose arms were taken from them as soon as that service was performed. The *Garde Nationale*, as a regular institution, had been in a great measure suppressed since the summer of 1793, and those who composed it gradually disarmed. The usual service of mounting guard was still continued, but the citizens, with very few exceptions, were armed only with

pikes, and even those were not entrusted to their own care, each delivering up his arms when he retired more exactly than if it were an article of capitulation with a successful enemy.

—I remember, in 1789 and 1790, when this popular militia was first instituted, every one, either from policy or inclination, appeared eager to promote it; and nothing was discussed but military fetes, balls, exercise, and uniforms. These patriotic levities have now entirely vanished, and the business proceeds with languor and difficulty. One dreads the present expence, another future persecution, and all are solicitous to find cause for exemption.

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This reluctance, though perhaps to be regretted, is in a great measure justifiable. Where the lives and fortunes of a whole nation are dependent on the changes of party, obscurity becomes the surest protection, and those who are zealous now, may be the first sacrifices hereafter. Nor is it encouraging to arm for the defence of the Convention, which is despised, or to oppose the violence of a populace, who, however misguided, are more objects of compassion than of punishment.

Fouquier Tinville, with sixteen revolutionary Judges and Jurymen, have been tried and executed, at the moment when the instigators of their crimes, Billaud-Varennes, Collot, &c. were sentenced by the Convention to a banishment, which is probably the object of their wishes. This Tinville and his accomplices, who condemned thousands with such ferocious gaiety, beheld the approach of death themselves with a mixture of rage and terror, that even cowardice and guilt do not always exhibit. It seems an awful dispensation of Providence, that they who were inhuman enough to wish to deprive their victims of the courage which enabled them to submit to their fate with resignation, should in their last moments want that courage, and die despairing, furious, and uttering imprecations, which were returned by the enraged multitude.*

—Yours, &c.

* Some of the Jurymen were in the habit of taking caricatures of the prisoners while they condemned them. Among the papers of the Revolutionary Tribunal were found blank sentences, which were occasionally sent to the Committee of Public Safety, to be filled up with the names of those intended to be sacrificed.—The name of one of the Jurymen executed on this occasion was Leroi, but being a very ardent republican, he had changed it for that of Citizen Tenth of August.

Amiens, May 26, 1795.

Our journey to Paris has been postponed by the insurrection which occurred on the first and second of Prairial, (20th and 21st of May,) and which was not like that of Germinal, fabricated—but a real and violent attempt of the Jacobins to regain their power. Of this event it is to be remarked, that the people of Paris were at first merely spectators, and that the Convention were at length defended by the very classes which they have so long oppressed under the denomination of aristocrats. For several hours the Assembly was surrounded, and in the power of its enemies; the head of Ferraud, a deputy, was borne in triumph to the hall;* and but for the impolitic precipitation of the Jacobins, the present government might have been destroyed.

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* The head of Ferraud was placed on a pole, and, after being paraded about the Hall, stationed opposite the President. It is impossible to execrate sufficiently this savage triumph; but similar scenes had been applauded on the fourteenth of July and the fifth and sixth of October 1789; and the Parisians had learned, from the example of the Convention themselves, that to rejoice in the daily sacrifice of fifty or sixty people, was an act of patriotism. As to the epithets of Coquin, Scelerats, Voleurs, &c. which were now bestowed on the Assembly, they were only what the members were in the constant habit of applying to each other. The assassin of Ferraud being afterwards taken and sentenced to the Guillotine, was rescued by the mob at the place of execution, and the inhabitants of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine were in revolt for two days on this occasion, nor would they give him up until abandoned by the cannoneers of their party.—It is singular, and does no honour to the revolutionary school, or the people of Paris, that Madame Elizabeth, Malsherbes, Cecile Renaud, and thousands of others, should perish innocently, and that the only effort of this kind should be exerted in favour of a murderer who deserved even a worse death.

The contest began, as usual, by an assemblage of females, who forced themselves into the national palace, and loudly clamoured for immediate supplies of bread. They then proceeded to reproach the Convention with having robbed them of their liberty, plundered the public treasure, and finally reduced the country to a state of famine.*

* People.—"*Nous vous demandons ce que vous avez fait de nos tresors et de notre liberte?*"—"We want to know what you have done with our treasure and our liberty?"

President.—"*Citoyens, vous etes dans le sein de la Convention Nationale.*"—"Citizens, I must remind you that you are in the presence of the National Convention."

People.—"*Du pain, du pain, Coquin—Qu'as tu fait de notre argent? Pas tant de belles phrases, mais du pain, du pain, il n'y a point ici de conspirateurs—nous demandons du pain parceque nous avons saim.*"—"Bread, bread, rogue!—what have you done with our money?—Fine speeches won't do—'tis bread we want.—There are no conspirators among us—we only ask for bread, because we are hungry."

See Debates of the Convention.

—It was not easy either to produce bread, or refute these charges, and the Deputies of the moderate party remained silent and overpowered, while the Jacobins encouraged the mob, and began to head them openly. The Parisians, however interested in the result of this struggle, appeared to behold it with indifference, or at least with inactivity. Ferraud had already been massacred in endeavouring to repel the croud, and the Convention was abandoned to outrage and insult; yet no effectual attempt had been made in their defence, until the Deputies of the Mountain prematurely avowed their

designs, and moved for a repeal of all the doctrines since the death of Robespierre—for the reincarceration of suspected persons—and, in fine, for an absolute revival of the whole revolutionary system.

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The avowal of these projects created an immediate alarm among those on whom the massacre of Ferraud, and the dangers to which the Assembly was exposed, had made no impression. The dismay became general; and in a few hours the aristocrats themselves collected together a force sufficient to liberate the Assembly,* and wrest the government from the hands of the Jacobins.—

* This is stated as a ground of reproach by the Jacobins, and is admitted by the Convention. Andre Dumont, who had taken so active a part in supporting Robespierre's government, was yet on this occasion defended and protected the whole day by a young man whose father had been guillotined.

—This defeat ended in the arrest of all who had taken a part against the now triumphant majority; and there are, I believe, near fifty of them in custody, besides numbers who contrived to escape.*

* Among those implicated in this attempt to revive the revolutionary government was Carnot, and the decree of arrest would have been carried against him, had it not been suggested that his talents were necessary in the military department. All that remained of Robespierre's Committees, Jean Bon St. Andre, Robert Lindet, and Prieur, were arrested. Carnot alone was excepted; and it was not disguised that his utility, more than any supposed integrity, procured him the exemption.

That the efforts of this more sanguinary faction have been checked, is doubtless a temporary advantage; yet those who calculate beyond the moment see only the perpetuation of anarchy, in a habit of expelling one part of the legislature to secure the government of the other; nor can it be denied, that the freedom of the representative body has been as much violated by the Moderates in the recent transactions, as by the Jacobins on the thirty-first of May 1793. The Deputies of the Mountain have been proscribed and imprisoned, rather as partizans than criminals; and it is the opinion of many, that these measures, which deprive the Convention of such a portion of its members, attach as much illegality to the proceedings of the rest, as the former violences of Robespierre and his faction.*

* The decrees passed by the Jacobin members during their few hours triumph cannot be defended; but the whole Convention had long acquiesced in them, and the precise time when they were to cease was certainly a matter of opinion. The greater part of these members were accused of no active violence, nor could they have been arrested on any principles but that of being rivals to a faction stronger than themselves.

—It is true, the reigning party may plead in their justification that they only inflict what they would themselves have suffered, had the Jacobins prevailed; and this is an additional proof of the weakness and instability of a form of government which is incapable of resisting opposition, and which knows no medium between yielding to its adversaries, and destroying them.

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In a well organized constitution, it is supposed that a liberal spirit of party is salutary. Here they dispute the alternatives of power and emolument, or prisons and guillotines; and the sole result to the people is the certainty of being sacrificed to the fears, and plundered by the rapacity of either faction which may chance to acquire the superiority. — Had the government any permanent or inherent strength, a party watching its errors, and eager to attack them, might, in time, by these perpetual collisions, give birth to some principles of liberty and order. But, as I have often had occasion to notice, this species of republicanism is in itself so weak, that it cannot exist except by a constant recurrence to the very despotism it professes to exclude. Hence it is jealous and suspicious, and all opposition to it is fatal; so that, to use an argument somewhat similar to Hume's on the liberty of the press in republics, the French possess a sort of freedom which does not admit of enjoyment; and, in order to boast that they have a popular constitution, are obliged to support every kind of tyranny.*

* Hume observes, that absolute monarchies and republics nearly approach; for the excess of liberty in the latter renders such restraints necessary as to make them in practice resemble the former.

The provinces take much less interest in this event, than in one of a more general and personal effect, though not apparently of equal importance. A very few weeks ago, the Convention asseverated, in the usual acclamatory style, that they would never even listen to a proposal for diminishing the value, or stopping the currency, of any description of assignats. Their oaths are not, indeed, in great repute, yet many people were so far deceived, as to imagine that at least the credit of the paper would not be formally destroyed by those who had forced its circulation. All of a sudden, and without any previous notice, a decree was issued to suppress the corsets, (or assignats of five livres,) bearing the King's image;* and as these were very numerous, and chiefly in the hands of the lower order of people, the consternation produced by this measure was serious and unusual.—

* The opinion that prevailed at this time that a restoration of the monarchy was intended by the Convention, had rendered every one solicitous to amass assignats issued during the late King's reign. Royal assignats of five livres were exchanged for six, seven, and eight livres of the republican paper.

—There cannot be a stronger proof of the tyranny of the government, or of the national propensity to submission, than the circumstance of making it penal to refuse one day, what, by the same authority, is rendered valueless the next—and that notwithstanding this, the remaining assignats are still received under all the probability of their experiencing a similar fate.

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Paris now offers an interval of tranquillity which we mean to avail ourselves of, and shall, in a day or two, leave this place with the hope of procuring passports for England. The Convention affect great moderation and gratitude for their late rescue; and the people, persuaded in general that the victorious party are royalists, wait with impatience some important change, and expect, if not an immediate restoration of the monarchy, at least a free election of new Representatives, which must infallibly lead to it. With this hope, which is the first that has long presented itself to this harassed country, I shall probably bid it adieu; but a visit to the metropolis will be too interesting for me to conclude these papers, without giving you the result of my observations.

—Yours. &c.

Paris, June 3, 1795.

We arrived here early on Saturday, and as no stranger coming to Paris, whether a native of France, or a foreigner, is suffered to remain longer than three days without a particular permission, our first care was to present ourselves to the Committee of the section where we lodge, and, on giving proper security for our good conduct, we have had this permission extended to a Decade.

I approached Paris with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension, as though I expected the scenes which had passed in it, and the moral changes it had undergone, would be every where visible; but the gloomy ideas produced by a visit to this metropolis, are rather the effect of mental association than external objects. Palaces and public buildings still remain; but we recollect that they are become the prisons of misfortune, or the rewards of baseness. We see the same hotels, but their owners are wandering over the world, or have expired on the scaffold. Public places are not less numerous, nor less frequented; but, far from inspiring gaiety, we behold them with regret and disgust, as proofs of the national levity and want of feeling.

I could almost wish, for the credit of the French character, to have found some indications that the past was not so soon consigned to oblivion. It is true, the reign of Robespierre and his sanguinary tribunal are execrated in studied phrases; yet is it enough to adopt humanity as a mode, to sing the *Revel du Peuple* in preference to the *Marseillois*, or to go to a theatre with a well-powdered head, instead of cropped locks a la Jacobin? But the people forget, that while they permitted, and even applauded, the past horrors, they were also accessary to them, and if they rejoice at their termination, their sensibility does not extend to compunction; they cast their sorrows away, and think it sufficient to exhibit their reformation in dressing and dancing—

“Yet hearts refin’d their sadden’d tint retain,
“The sigh is pleasure, and the jest is pain.”
Sheridan.

French refinements are not, however, of this poetical kind.*

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* This too great facility of the Parisians has been commented upon by an anonymous writer in the following terms:

“At Paris, where more than fifty victims were dragged daily to the scaffold, the theatres never failed to overflow, and that on the Place de la Revolution was not the least frequented. The public, in their way every evening to the Champs Ellisees, continued uninterruptedly to cross the stream of blood that deluged this fatal spot with the most dreadful indifference; and now, though these days of horror are scarcely passed over our heads, one would suppose them ages removed—so little are we sensible that we are dancing, as it were, on a platform of dead bodies. Well may we say, respecting those events which have not reached ourselves—

‘Le malheur Qui n’est plus, n’a jamais existe.’

But if we desire earnestly that the same misfortunes should not return, we must keep them always present in our recollection.”

The practice of the government appears to depart every day more widely from its professions; and the moderate harangues of the tribune are often succeeded by measures as arbitrary as those which are said to be exploded.—Perhaps the Convention begin to perceive their mistake in supposing that they can maintain a government against the inclination of the people, without the aid of tyranny. They expected at the same time that they decried Robespierre, to retain all the power he possessed. Hence, their assumed principles and their conduct are generally at variance; and, divided between despotism and weakness, they arrest the printers of pamphlets and newspapers one day, and are obliged to liberate them the next.—They exclaim publicly against the system of terror, yet secretly court the assistance of its agents.—They affect to respect the liberty of the press, yet every new publication has to defend itself against the whole force of the government, if it happen to censure a single member of the reigning party.—Thus, the *Memoirs of Dumouriez* had circulated nearly through all Europe, yet it was not without much risk, and after a long warfare, that they were printed in France.*

On this subject the government appears sometimes to have adopted the maxim—that prevention is better than punishment; for, in several instances, they seized on manuscripts, and laid embargoes on the printers’ presses, where they only suspected that a work which they might disapprove was intended to be published.

I know not if it be attributable to these political inconsistencies that the calm which has succeeded the late disorders is little more than external. The minds of the people are uncommonly agitated, and every one expresses either hope or apprehension of some impending event. The royalists, amidst their ostensible persecutions, are particularly elated; and I have been told, that many conspicuous revolutionists already talk of emigration.

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I am just returned from a day's ramble, during which I have met with various subjects of unpleasant meditation. About dinner-time I called on an old Chevalier de St. Louis and his lady, who live in the Fauxbourg St. Germain. When I knew them formerly, they had a handsome annuity on the Hotel de Ville, and were in possession of all the comforts necessary to their declining years. To-day the door was opened by a girl of dirty appearance, the house looked miserable, the furniture worn, and I found the old couple over a slender meal of soup maigre and eggs, without wine or bread. Our revolutionary adventures, as is usual on all meetings of this kind, were soon communicated; and I learned, that almost before they knew what was passing around them, Monsieur du G-----'s forty years' service, and his croix, had rendered him suspected, and that he and his wife were taken from their beds at midnight and carried to prison. Here they consumed their stock of ready money, while a guard, placed in their house, pillaged what was moveable, and spoiled what could not be pillaged. Soon after the ninth of Thermidor they were released, but they returned to bare walls, and their annuity, being paid in assignats, now scarcely affords them a subsistence.--Monsieur du G----- is near seventy, and Madame is become helpless from a nervous complaint, the effect of fear and confinement; and if this depreciation of the paper should continue, these poor people may probably die of absolute want.

I dined with a relation of the Marquise's, and in the afternoon we called by appointment on a person who is employed by the Committee of National Domains, and who has long promised my friend to facilitate the adjustment of some of the various claims which the government has on her property. This man was originally a valet to the brother of the Marquise: at the revolution he set up a shop, became a bankrupt, and a furious Jacobin, and, in the end, a member of a Revolutionary Committee. In the last capacity he found means to enrich himself, and intimidate his creditors so as to obtain a discharge of his debts, without the trouble of paying them.*

* "It was common for men in debt to procure themselves to be made members of a revolutionary committee, and then force their creditors to give them a receipt in full, under the fear of being imprisoned."

Clauzel's Report, Oct. 13, 1794.

I am myself acquainted with an old lady, who was confined four months, for having asked one of these patriots for three hundred livres which he owed her.

—Since the dissolution of the Committees, he has contrived to obtain the situation I have mentioned, and now occupies superb apartments in an hotel, amply furnished with the proofs of his official dexterity, and the perquisites of patriotism.

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The humiliating vicissitudes occasioned by the revolution induced Madame de la F----- to apply to this democratic *parvenu*, [Upstart.] whose office at present gives him the power, and whose former obligations to her family (by whom he was brought up) she hoped would add the disposition, to serve her.—The gratitude she expected has, however, ended only in delays and disappointments, and the sole object of my commission was to get some papers which she had entrusted to him out of his possession.

When we enquired if the Citizen was at home, a servant, not in livery, informed us Monsieur was dressing, but that if we would walk in, he would let Monsieur know we were there. We passed through a dining parlour, where we saw the remains of a dessert, coffee, &c. and were assailed by the odours of a plentiful repast. As we entered the saloon, we heard the servant call at the door of an adjoining parlour, "*Monsieur, voici deux Citoyennes et un Citoyen qui vous demandent.*" ["Sir, here are two female citizens and one male citizen enquiring for you."] When Monsieur appeared, he apologized with an air of graciousness for the impossibility he had been under of getting my friend's affairs arranged—protested he was *accable* [Oppressed..]—that he had scarcely an instant at his own disposal—that *enfin* the responsibility of people in office was so terrible, and the fatigue so *assommante*, [Overpowering.] that nothing but the purest *civism*, and a heart *penetre de l'amour de la patrie*, [Penetrated with the love of his country.] could enable him to persevere in the task imposed on him. As for the papers we required, he would endeavour to find them, though his cabinet was really so filled with petitions and certificates of all sorts, *que des malheureux lui avoient addresses*, [Addressed to him by unfortunate people.] that it would not be very easy to find them at present; and, with this answer, which we should have smiled at from M. de Choiseul or Sartine, we were obliged to be satisfied. We then talked of the news of the day, and he lamented that the aristocrats were still restless and increasing in number, and that notwithstanding the efforts of the Convention to diffuse a spirit of philosophy, it was too evident there was yet much fanaticism among the people.

As we rose to depart, Madame entered, dressed for visiting, and decorated with bracelets on her wrists and above her elbows, medallions on her waists and neck, and, indeed, finery wherever it could possibly be bestowed. We observed her primitive condition of a waiting-woman still operated, and that far from affecting the language of her husband, she retained a great deference for rank, and was solicitous to insinuate that she was secretly of a superior way of thinking. As we left the room together, she made advances to an acquaintance with my companions (who were people of condition); and having occasion to speak to a person at the door, as she uttered the word *Citoyen* she looked at us with an expression which she intended should imply the contempt and reluctance with which she made use of it.

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I have in general remarked, that the republicans are either of the species I have just been describing, waiters, jockies, gamblers, bankrupts, and low scribblers, living in great splendour, or men taken from laborious professions, more sincere in their principles, more ignorant and brutal—and who dissipate what they have gained in gross luxury, because they have been told that elegance and delicacy are worthy only of Sybarites, and that the Greeks and Romans despised both. These patriots are not, however, so uninformed, nor so disinterested, as to suppose they are to serve their country without serving themselves; and they perfectly understand, that the rich are their legal patrimony, and that it is enjoined them by their mission to pillage royalists and aristocrats.*

—Yours.

* Garat observes, it was a maxim of Danton, "*Que ceux qui faisaient les affaires de la republique devaient aussi faire les leurs*," that who undertook the care of the republic should also take care of themselves. This tenet, however, seems common to the friends of both.

Paris, June 6, 1795.

I had scarcely concluded my last, when I received advice of the death of Madame de la F-----; and though I have, almost from the time we quitted the Providence, thought she was declining, and that such an event was probable, it has, nevertheless, both shocked and grieved me.

Exclusively of her many good and engaging qualities, which were reasonable objects of attachment, Madame de la F----- was endeared to me by those habits of intimacy that often supply the want of merit, and make us adhere to our early friendships, even when not sanctioned by our maturer judgment. Madame de la F----- never became entirely divested of the effects of a convent education; but if she retained a love of trifling amusements, and a sort of infantine gaiety, she likewise continued pious, charitable, and strictly attentive not only to the duties, but to the decorum, essential in the female character and merits of this sort are, I believe, now more rare than those in which she might be deemed deficient.

I was speaking of her this morning to a lady of our acquaintance, who acquiesced in my friendly eulogiums, but added, in a tone of superiority, "*C'étoit pourtant une petite femme bien minutieuse*—she always put me out of patience with her birds and her flowers, her levees of poor people, and her persevering industry in frivolous projects." My friend was, indeed, the most feminine creature in the world, and this is a flippancy



literary lady, who talks in raptures of the Greeks and Romans, calls Rousseau familiarly Jean Jaques, frisks through the whole circle of science at the Lyceum, and has an utter contempt both for personal neatness and domestic oeconomy. How would Madame de Sevigne wonder, could she behold one of these modern belles esprits, with which her country, as well as England, abounds? In our

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zeal for reforming the irregular orthography and housewifely penmanship of the last century, we are all become readers, and authors, and critics. I do not assert, that the female mind is too much cultivated, but that it is too generally so; and that we encourage a taste for attainments not always compatible with the duties and occupations of domestic life. No age has, I believe, produced so many literary ladies as the present;* yet I cannot learn that we are at all improved in morals, or that domestic happiness is more universal than when, instead of writing sonnets to dew-drops or daisies,** we copied prayers and recipes, in spelling similar to that of Stowe or Hollingshed.

* Let me not be supposed to undervalue the female authors of the present day. There are some who, uniting great talents with personal worth, are justly entitled to our respect and admiration. The authoress of "Cecilia," or the Miss Lees, cannot be confounded with the proprietors of all the Castles, Forests, Groves, Woods, Cottages, and Caverns, which are so alluring in the catalogue of a circulating library.** Mrs. Smith's beautiful Sonnets have produced sonnetteers for every object in nature, visible or invisible; and her elegant translations of Petrarch have procured the Italian bard many an English dress that he would have been ashamed to appear in.

—We seem industrious to make every branch of education a vehicle for inspiring a premature taste for literary amusements; and our old fashioned moral adages in writing-books are replaced by scraps from "Elegant Extracts," while print-work and embroidery represent scenes from poems or novels. I allow, that the subjects formerly portrayed by the needle were not picturesque, yet, the tendency considered, young ladies might as well employ their silk or pencils in exhibiting Daniel in the lions' den, or Joseph and his brethren, as Sterne's Maria, or Charlotte and Werter.

You will forgive this digression, which I have been led into on hearing the character of Madame de la F----- depreciated, because she was only gentle and amiable, and did not read Plutarch, nor hold literary assemblies. It is, in truth, a little amende I owe her memory, for I may myself have sometimes estimated her too lightly, and concluded my own pursuits more rational than hers, when possibly they were only different. Her death has left an impression on my mind, which the turbulence of Paris is not calculated to soothe; but the short time we have to stay, and the number of people I must see, oblige me to conquer both my regret and my indolence, and to pass a great part of the day in running from place to place.

I have been employed all this morning in executing some female commissions, which, of course, led me to milliners, mantua-makers, &c. These people now recommend fashions by saying one thing is invented by Tallien's wife, and another by Merlin de



Thionville, or some other Deputy's mistress; and the genius of these elegantes has contrived, by a mode of dressing the hair which lengthens the neck, and by robes with an inch of waist, to give their countrywomen an appearance not much unlike that of a Bar Gander.

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I saw yesterday a relation of Madame de la F-----, who is in the army, and whom I formerly mentioned as having met when we passed through Dourlens. He was for some months suspended, and in confinement, but is now restored to his rank, and ordered on service. He asked me if I ever intended to visit France again. I told him I had so little reason to be satisfied with my treatment, that I did not imagine I should.—“Yes, (returned he,) but if the republic should conquer Italy, and bring all its treasures to Paris, as has lately been suggested in the Convention, we shall tempt you to return, in spite of yourself.”*

The project of pillaging Italy of its most valuable works of art was suggested by the philosophic Abbe Gregoire, a constitutional Bishop, as early as September 1794, because, as he alledged, the chefs d'ouvres of the Greek republic ought not to embellish a country of slaves.

—I told him, I neither doubted their intending such a scheme, nor the possibility of its success, though it was not altogether worthy of philosophers and republicans to wage war for Venus's and Appollos, and to sacrifice the lives of one part of their fellow-citizens, that the rest might be amused with pictures and statues.—“That's not our affair (says Monsieur de -----). Soldiers do not reason. And if the Convention should have a fancy to pillage the Emperor of China's palace, I see no remedy but to set sail with the first fair wind,”—“I wish, (said his sister, who was the only person present,) instead of being under such orders, you had escaped from the service.” “Yes, (returned the General quickly,) and wander about Europe like Dumouriez, suspected and despised by all parties.” I observed, Dumouriez was an adventurer, and that on many accounts it was necessary to guard against him. He said, he did not dispute the necessity or even the justice of the conduct observed towards him, but that nevertheless I might be assured it had operated as an effectual check to those who might, otherwise, have been tempted to follow Dumouriez's example; “And we have now (added he, in a tone between gaiety and despair,) no alternative but obedience or the guillotine.”—I have transcribed the substance of this conversation, as it confirms what I have frequently been told, that the fate of Dumouriez, however merited, is one great cause why no desertion of importance has since taken place.

I was just now interrupted by a noise and shouting near my window, and could plainly distinguish the words Scipio and Solon uttered in a tone of taunt and reproach. Not immediately comprehending how Solon or Scipio could be introduced in a fray at Paris, I dispatched Angelique to make enquiry; and at her return I learned that a croud of boys were following a shoemaker of the neighbourhood, who, while he was member of a revolutionary Committee, had chosen to unite in his person the glories of both Rome and Greece, of the sword and gown, and had taken unto himself

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the name of Scipio Solon. A decree of the Convention some weeks since enjoined all such heroes and sages to resume their original appellations, and forbade any person, however ardent his patriotism, to distinguish himself by the name of Brutus, Timoleon, or any other but that which he derived from his Christian parents. The people, it seems, are not so obedient to the decree as those whom it more immediately concerns; and as the above-mentioned Scipio Solon had been detected in various larcenies, he is not allowed to quit his shop without being reproached with his thefts, and his Greek and Roman appellations.

—I am, &c.

Paris, June 8, 1795.

Yesterday being Sunday, and to-day the Decade, we have had two holidays successively, though, since the people have been more at liberty to manifest their opinions, they give a decided preference to the Christian festival over that of the republic.*

* This was only at Paris, where the people, from their number, are less manageable, and of course more courageous. In the departments, the same cautious timidity prevailed, and appeared likely to continue.

—They observe the former from inclination, and the latter from necessity; so that between the performance of their religious duties, and the sacrifice to their political fears, a larger portion of time will be deducted from industry than was gained by the suppression of the Saints' days. The Parisians, however, seem to acquiesce very readily in this compromise, and the philosophers of the Convention, who have so often declaimed against the idleness occasioned by the numerous fetes of the old calendar, obstinately persist in the adoption of a new one, which increases the evil they pretend to remedy.

If the people are to be taken from their labour for such a number of days, it might as well be in the name of St. Genevieve or St. Denis, as of the Decade, and the Saints'-days have at least this advantage, that the forenoons are passed in churches; whereas the republican festivals, dedicated one to love, another to stoicism, and so forth, not conveying any very determinate idea, are interpreted to mean only an obligation to do nothing, or to pass some supernumerary hours at the cabaret. [Alehouse.]

I noticed with extreme pleasure yesterday, that as many of the places of public worship as are permitted to be open were much crowded, and that religion appears to have survived the loss of those exterior allurements which might be supposed to have rendered it peculiarly attractive to the Parisians. The churches at present, far from



being splendid, are not even decent, the walls and windows still bear traces of the Goths (or, if you will, the philosophers,) and in some places service is celebrated amidst piles of farage, sacks, casks, or lumber appertaining to the government—who, though they have by their own confession the disposal of half the metropolis, choose the churches in preference for such purposes.*

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* It has frequently been asserted in the Convention, that by emigrations, banishments, and executions, half Paris had become the property of the public.

—Yet these unseemly and desolate appearances do not prevent the attendance of congregations more numerous, and, I think, more fervent, than were usual when the altars shone with the offerings of wealth, and the walls were covered with the more interesting decorations of pictures and tapestry.

This it is not difficult to account for. Many who used to perform these religious duties with negligence, or indifference, are now become pious, and even enthusiastic—and this not from hypocrisy or political contradiction, but from a real sense of the evils of irreligion, produced by the examples and conduct of those in whom such a tendency has been most remarkable.—It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that did Christianity require an advocate, a more powerful one need not be found, than in a retrospect of the crimes and sufferings of the French since its abolition.

Those who have made fortunes by the revolution (for very few have been able to preserve them) now begin to exhibit equipages; and they hope to render the people blind to this departure from their visionary systems of equality, by foregoing the use of arms and liveries—as if the real difference between the rich and the poor was not constituted rather by essential accommodation, than extrinsic embellishments, which perhaps do not gratify the eyes of the possessor a second time, and are, probably of all branches of luxury, the most useful. The livery of servants can be of very little importance, whether morally or politically considered—it is the act of maintaining men in idleness, who might be more profitably employed, that makes the keeping a great number exceptionable; nor is a man more degraded by going behind a carriage with a hat and feather, than with a bonnet de police, or a plain beaver; but he eats just as much, and earns just as little, equipped as a Carmagnole, as though glittering in the most superb gala suit.*

* In their zeal to imitate the Roman republicans, the French seem to forget that a political consideration very different from the love of simplicity, or an idea of the dignity of man, made the Romans averse from distinguishing their slaves by any external indication. They were so numerous that it was thought impolitic to furnish them with such means of knowing their own strength in case of a revolt.

The marks of service cannot be more degrading than service itself; and it is the mere chicane of philosophy to extend reform only to cuffs and collars, while we do not dispense with the services annexed to them. A valet who walks the street in his powdering jacket, disdains a livery as much as the fiercest republican, and with as much reason—for there is no more difference between domestic occupation performed in one coat or another, than there is between the party-coloured habit and the jacket.

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If the luxury of carriages be an evil, it must be because the horses employed in them consume the produce of land which might be more beneficially cultivated: but the gilding, fringe, salamanders, and lions, in all their heraldic positions, afford an easy livelihood to manufacturers and artisans, who might not be capable of more laborious occupations.

I believe it will generally be found, that most of the republican reforms are of this description—calculated only to impose on the people, and disguising, by frivolous prohibitions, their real inutility. The affectation of simplicity in a nation already familiarized with luxury, only tends to divert the wealth of the rich to purposes which render it more destructive. Vanity and ostentation, when they are excluded from one means of gratification, will always seek another; and those who, having the means, cannot distinguish themselves by ostensible splendour, will often do so by domestic profusion.*

* “Sectaries (says Walpole in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, speaking of the republicans under Cromwell) have no ostensible enjoyments; their pleasures are private, comfortable and gross. The arts of civilized society are not calculated for men who mean to rise on the ruins of established order.” Judging by comparison, I am persuaded these observations are yet more applicable to the political, than the religious opinions of the English republicans of that period; for, in these respects, there is no difference between them and the French of the present day, though there is a wide one between an Anabaptist and the disciples of Boulanger and Voltaire.

—Nor can it well be disputed, that a gross luxury is more pernicious than an elegant one; for the former consumes the necessaries of life wantonly, while the latter maintains numerous hands in rendering things valuable by the workmanship which are little so in themselves.

Every one who has been a reflecting spectator of the revolution will acknowledge the justice of these observations. The agents and retainers of government are the general monopolizers of the markets, and these men, who are enriched by speculation, and are on all occasions retailing the cant phrases of the Convention, on the *pureté des mœurs républicains, et la luxe de la ci-devant Noblesse*, [The purity of republican manners, and the luxury of the ci-devant Noblesse.] exhibit scandalous exceptions to the national habits of oeconomy, at a time too when others more deserving are often compelled to sacrifice even their essential accommodations to a more rigid compliance with them.*

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* Lindet, in a report on the situation of the republic, declares, that since the revolution the consumption of wines and every article of luxury has been such, that very little has been left for exportation. I have selected the following specimens of republican manners, from many others equally authentic, as they may be of some utility to those who would wish to estimate what the French have gained in this respect by a change of government. "In the name of the French people the Representatives sent to Commune Affranchie (Lyons) to promote the felicity of its inhabitants, order the Committee of Sequestration to send them immediately two hundred bottles of the best wine that can be procured, also five hundred bottles of claret, of prime quality, for their own table. For this purpose the commission are authorized to take of the sequestration, wherever the above wine can be found.

Done at Commune Affranchie, thirteenth Nivose, second year.
(Signed) "Albitte,
"Fouche,
"Deputies of the National Convention."

Extract of a denunciation of Citizen Boismartin against Citizen Laplanche, member of the National Convention:

"The twenty-fourth of Brumaire, in the second year of the republic, the Administrators of the district of St. Lo gave orders to the municipality over which I at that time presided, to lodge the Representative of the people, Laplanche, and General Siphert, in the house of Citizen Lemonnier, who was then under arrest at Thorigni. In introducing one of the founders of the republic, and a French General, into this hospitable mansion, we thought to put the property of our fellow-citizen under the safeguard of all the virtues; but, alas, how were we mistaken! They had no sooner entered the house, than the provisions of every sort, the linen, clothes, furniture, trinkets, books, plate, carriages, and even title-deeds, all disappeared; and, as if they purposely insulted our wretchedness, while we were reduced to the sad necessity of distributing with a parsimonious hand a few ounces of black bread to our fellow-citizens, the best bread, pillaged from Citizen Lemonnier, was lavished by buckets full to the horses of General Siphert, and the Representative Laplanche.—The Citizen Lemonnier, who is seventy years of age, having now recovered his liberty, which he never deserved to lose, finds himself so entirely despoiled, that he is at present obliged to live at an inn; and, of property to the amount of sixty thousand livres, he has nothing left but a single spoon, which he took with him when carried to one of the Bastilles in the department de la Manche."

The chief defence of Laplanche consisted in allegations that the said Citizen Lemonnier was rich, and a royalist, and that he had found emblems of royalism and fanaticism about the house.

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At the house of one of our common friends, I met -----, and so little did I imagine that he had escaped all the revolutionary perils to which he had been exposed, that I could almost have supposed myself in the regions of the dead, or that he had been permitted to quit them, for his being alive scarcely seemed less miraculous or incredible. As I had not seen him since 1792, he gave me a very interesting detail of his adventures, and his testimony corroborates the opinion generally entertained by those who knew the late King, that he had much personal courage, and that he lost his crown and his life by political indecision, and an humane, but ill-judged, unwillingness to reduce his enemies by force. He assured me, the Queen might have been conveyed out of France previous to the tenth of August, if she would have agreed to leave the King and her children behind; that she had twice consulted him on the subject; but, persisting in her resolution not to depart unaccompanied by her family, nothing practicable could be devised, and she determined to share their fate.*

* The gentleman here alluded to has great talents, and is particularly well acquainted with some of the most obscure and disastrous periods of the French revolution. I have reason to believe, whenever it is consistent with his own safety, he will, by a genuine relation, expose many of the popular falsehoods by which the public have been misled.

This, as well as many other instances of tenderness and heroism, which distinguished the Queen under her misfortunes, accord but ill with the vices imputed to her; and were not such imputations encouraged to serve the cause of faction, rather than that of morality, these inconsistencies would have been interpreted in her favour, and candour have palliated or forgotten the levities of her youth, and remembered only the sorrows and the virtues by which they were succeeded.

I had, in compliance with your request on my first arrival in France, made a collection of prints of all the most conspicuous actors in the revolution; but as they could not be secreted so easily as other papers, my fears overcame my desire of obliging you, and I destroyed them successively, as the originals became proscribed or were sacrificed. Desirous of repairing my loss, I persuaded some friends to accompany me to a shop, kept by a man of whom they frequently purchased, and whom, as his principles were known to them, I might safely ask for the articles I wanted. He shook his head, while he ran over my list, and then told me, that having preferred his safety to his property, he had disposed of his prints in the same way I had disposed of mine. "At the accession of a new party, (continued he,) I always prepare for a domiciliary visit, clear my windows and shelves of the exploded heads, and replace them by those of their rivals. Nay, I assure you, since the revolution, our trade is become as precarious as that of a gamester. The Constitutionalists,

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indeed, held out pretty well, but then I was half ruined by the fall of the Brissotins; and, before I could retrieve a little by the Hebertists and Dantonists, the too were out of fashion.”— “Well, but the Robespierrians—you must have gained by them?”—“Why, true; Robespierre and Marat, and Chalier, answered well enough, because the royalists generally placed them in their houses to give themselves an air of patriotism, yet they are gone after the rest.—Here, however, (says he, taking down an engraving of the Abbe Sieyes,) is a piece of merchandize that I have kept through all parties, religions, and constitutions—*et le voila encore a la mode*, [“And now you see him in fashion again.”] mounted on the wrecks, and supported by the remnants of both his friends and enemies. *Ah! c’est un fin matois.*” [“Ah! He’s a knowing one.”]

This conversation passed in a gay tone, though the man added, very seriously, that the instability of popular factions, and their intolerance towards each other, had obliged him to destroy to the amount of some thousand livres, and that he intended, if affairs did not change, to quit business.

Of all the prints I enquired for, I only got Barrere, Sieyes, and a few others of less note. Your last commissions I have executed more successfully, for though the necessities of life are almost unpurchaseable, articles of taste, books, perfumery, &c. are cheaper than ever. This is unfortunately the reverse of what ought to be the case, but the augmentation in the price of provisions is to be accounted for in various ways, and that things of the description I allude to do not bear a price in proportion is doubtless to be attributed to the present poverty of those who used to be the purchasers of them; while the people who are become rich under the new government are of a description to seek for more substantial luxuries than books and essences.—I should however observe, that the venders of any thing not perishable, and who are not forced to sell for their daily subsistence, are solicitous to evade every demand for any article which is to be paid for in assignats.

I was looking at some trinkets in a shop at the Palais Royal, and on my asking the mistress of it if the ornaments were silver, she smiled significantly, and replied, she had nothing silver nor gold in the shop, but if I chose to purchase *en espece*, she would show me whatever I desired: “*Mais pour le papier nous n’en avons que trop.*” [“In coin, but for paper we have already too much of it.”]

Many of the old shops are nearly empty, and the little trade which yet exists is carried on by a sort of adventurers who, without being bred to any one trade, set up half a dozen, and perhaps disappear three months afterwards. They are, I believe, chiefly men who have speculated on the assignats, and as soon as they have turned their capital in a mercantile way a short time, become apprehensive of the paper, realize it, and retire; or, becoming bankrupts by some unlucky monopoly, begin a new career of patriotism.

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There is, properly speaking, no money in circulation, yet a vast quantity is bought and sold. Annuitants, possessors of moderate landed property, &c., finding it impossible to subsist on their incomes, are forced to have recourse to the little specie they have reserved, and exchange it for paper. Immense sums in coin are purchased by the government, to make good the balance of their trade with the neutral countries for provisions, so that I should suppose, if this continue a few months, very little will be left in the country.

One might be tempted to fancy there is something in the atmosphere of Paris which adapts the minds of its inhabitants to their political situation. They talk of the day appointed for a revolt a fortnight before, as though it were a fete, and the most timid begin to be inured to a state of agitation and apprehension, and to consider it as a natural vicissitude that their lives should be endangered periodically.

A commission has been employed for some time in devising another new constitution, which is to be proposed to the Assembly on the thirteenth of this month; and on that day, it is said, an effort is to be made by the royalists. They are certainly very numerous, and the interest taken in the young King is universal. In vain have the journalists been forbidden to cherish these sentiments, by publishing details concerning him: whatever escapes the walls of his prison is circulated in impatient whispers, and requires neither printing nor gazettes à la main to give it publicity.*

* Under the monarchy people disseminated anecdotes or intelligence which they did not think it safe to print, by means of these written gazettes.—I doubt if any one would venture to have recourse to them at present.

—The child is reported to be ill, and in a kind of stupefaction, so as to sit whole days without speaking or moving: this is not natural at his age, and must be the consequence of neglect, or barbarous treatment.

The Committees of Government, and indeed most of the Convention who have occasionally appeared to give tacit indications of favouring the royalists, in order to secure their support against the Jacobins, having now crushed the latter, begin to be seriously alarmed at the projects of the former.—Sevestre, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, has announced that a formidable insurrection may be expected on the twenty-fifth of Prairial, (thirteenth June,) the Deputies on mission are ordered to return, and the Assembly propose to die under the ruins of the republic. They have, notwithstanding, judged it expedient to fortify these heroic dispositions by the aid of a military force, and a large number of regular troops are in Paris and the environs. We shall certainly depart before this menacing epoch: the application for our passports was made on our first arrival, and Citizen Liebault, Principal of the Office for Foreign Affairs, who is really very civil, has promised them in a day or two.

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Our journey here was, in fact, unnecessary; but we have few republican acquaintance, and those who are called aristocrats do not execute commission of this kind zealously, nor without some apprehensions of committing themselves.—You will wonder that I find time to write to you, nor do I pretend to assume much merit from it. We have not often courage to frequent public places in the evening, and, when we do, I continually dread some unlucky accident: either a riot between the Terrorists and Muscadins, within, or a military investment without. The last time we were at the theatre, a French gentleman, who was our escort, entered into a trifling altercation with a rude vulgar-looking man, in the box, who seemed to speak in a very authoritative tone, and I know not how the matter might have ended, had not a friend in the next box silenced our companion, by conveying a penciled card, which informed him the person he was disputing with was a Deputy of the Convention. We took an early opportunity of retreating, not perfectly at ease about the consequences which might ensue from Mr. ----- having ventured to differ in opinion from a Member of the Republican Legislature. Since that time we have passed our evenings in private societies, or at home; and while Mr. D----- devours new pamphlets, and Mrs. D----- and the lady we lodge with recount their mutual sufferings at Arras and St. Pelagie, I take the opportunity of writing.

—Adieu.

Paris, June 12, 1795.

The hopes and fears, plots and counterplots, of both royalists and republicans, are now suspended by the death of the young King. This event was announced on Tuesday last, and since that time the minds and conversation of the public have been entirely occupied by it. Latent suspicion, and regret unwillingly suppressed, are every where visible; and, in the fond interest taken in this child's life, it seems to be forgotten that it is the lot of man "to pass through nature to eternity," and that it was possible for him to die without being sacrificed by human malice.

All that has been said and written on original equality has not yet persuaded the people that the fate of Kings is regulated only by the ordinary dispensations of Providence; and they seem to persist in believing, that royalty, if it has not a more fortunate pre-eminence, is at least distinguished by an unusual portion of calamities.

When we recollect the various and absurd stories which have been propagated and believed at the death of Monarchs or their offspring, without even a single ground either political or physical to justify them, we cannot now wonder, when so many circumstances of every kind tend to excite suspicion, that the public opinion should be influenced, and attribute the death of the King to poison. The child is allowed to have been of a lively disposition, and, even long after his seclusion from his family, to have frequently amused himself by singing at the window of his prison, until the interest he was observed to create in those who listened under it, occasioned an order to prevent him. It is therefore extraordinary, that he should lately have appeared in a state of

stupefaction, which is by no means a symptom of the disorder he is alledged to have died of, but a very common one of opiates improperly administered.*

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* In order to account in some way for the state in which the young King had lately appeared, it was reported that he had been in the habit of drinking strong liquors to excess. Admitting this to be true, they must have been furnished for him, for he could have no means of procuring them.—It is not inapposite to record, that on a petition being formerly presented to the legislature from the Jacobin societies, praying that the “son of the tyrant” might be put to death, an honourable mention in the national bulletin was unanimously decreed!!!

Though this presumption, if supported by the evidence of external appearances, may seem but of little weight; when combined with others, of a moral and political nature, it becomes of considerable importance. The people, long amused by a supposed design of the Convention to place the Dauphin on the throne, were now become impatient to see their wishes realized; or, they hoped that a renewal of the representative body, which, if conducted with freedom, must infallibly lead to the accomplishment of this object, would at least deliver them from an Assembly which they considered as exhausted in talents and degraded in reputation.—These dispositions were not attempted to be concealed; they were manifested on all occasions: and a general and successful effort in favour of the Royal Prisoner was expected to take place on the thirteenth.*

* That there were such designs, and such expectations on the part of the people, is indubitable. The following extract, written and signed by one of the editors of the *Moniteur*, is sufficiently expressive of the temper of the public at this period; and I must observe here, that the *Moniteur* is to be considered as nearly equivalent to an official paper, and is always supposed to express the sense of government, by whom it is supported and paid, whatever party or system may happen to prevail: *“Les esperances les plus folles se manifestent de toutes parts.— C’est a qui jettera plus promptement le masque—on dirait, a lire les ecrits qui paraissent, a entendre les conversations des gens qui se croient dans les confidences, que c’en est fait de la republique: la Convention, secondee, poussee meme par le zele et l’energie des bons citoyens a remporte une grande victoire sur les Terroristes, sur les successeurs de Robespierre, il semble qu’elle n’ait plus qu’a proclamer la royaute. Ce qui donne lieu a toutes les conjectures plus ou moins absurdes aux quelles chacun se livre, c’est l’approche du 25 Prairial.”* (13th June, the day on which the new constitution was to be presented).

“The most extravagant hopes, and a general impatience to throw off the mask are manifested on all sides.—To witness the publications that appear, and to hear what is said by those who believe themselves in the secret, one would suppose that it was all over

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with the republic.—The Convention seconded, impelled even, by the good citizens, has gained a victory over the Terrorists and the successors of Robespierre, and now it should seem that nothing remained to be done by to proclaim royalty—what particularly gives rise to these absurdities, which exist more or less in the minds of all, is the approach of the 25th Prairial.”

Moniteur, June 6, 1795.

Perhaps the majority of the Convention, under the hope of securing impunity for their past crimes, might have yielded to the popular impulse; but the government is no longer in the hands of those men who, having shared the power of Robespierre before they succeeded him, might, as Rabaut St. Etienne expressed himself, “be wearied of their portion of tyranny.”*

* -“Je suis las de la portion de tyrannie que j’exerce.”——“I am weary of the portion of tyranny which I exercise.”

Rabaut de St. Etienne

—The remains of the Brissotins, with their newly-acquired authority, have vanity, interest, and revenge, to satiate; and there is no reason to suppose that a crime, which should favour these views, would, in their estimation, be considered otherwise than venial. To these are added Sieyes, Louvet, &c. men not only eager to retain their power, but known to have been of the Orleans faction, and who, if they are royalists, are not loyalists, and the last persons to whose care a son of Louis the Sixteenth ought to have been intrusted.

At this crisis, then, when the Convention could no longer temporize with the expectations it raised—when the government was divided between one party who had deposed the King to gratify their own ambition, and another who had lent their assistance in order to facilitate the pretensions of an usurper—and when the hopes of the country were anxiously fixed on him, died Louis the Seventeenth. At an age which, in common life, is perhaps the only portion of our existence unalloyed by misery, this innocent child had suffered more than is often the lot of extended years and mature guilt. He lived to see his father sent to the scaffold—to be torn from his mother and family—to drudge in the service of brutality and insolence—and to want those cares and necessities which are not refused even to the infant mendicant, whose wretchedness contributes to the support of his parents.*

* It is unnecessary to remind the reader, that the Dauphin had been under the care of one Simon, a shoemaker, who employed him to clean his (Simon's) shoes, and in any other drudgery of which his close confinement admitted.

—When his death was announced to the Convention, Sevestre, the reporter, acknowledged that Dessault, the surgeon, had some time since declared the case to be dangerous; yet, notwithstanding policy as well as humanity required that every appearance of mystery and harshness should, on such an occasion, be avoided, the poor child continued to be secluded with the same barbarous jealousy—nor was the Princess, his sister, whose evidence on the subject would have been so conclusive, ever suffered to approach him.

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No report of Dessault's opinion had till now been made public; and Dessault himself, who was an honest man, died of an inflammatory disorder four days before the Dauphin.—It is possible, he might have expressed himself too freely, respecting his patient, to those who employed him— his future discretion might be doubted—or, perhaps, he was only called in at first, that his character might give a sanction to the future operations of those who were more confided in. But whether this event is to be ascribed to natural causes, or to that of opiates, the times and circumstances render it peculiarly liable to suspicions, and the reputation of those who are involved, is not calculated to repel them. Indeed, so conscious are the advocates of government, that the imputation cannot be obviated by pleading the integrity of the parties, that they seem to rest their sole defence on the inutility of a murder, which only transfers whatever rights the House of Bourbon may be supposed to possess, from one branch of it to another. Yet those who make use of this argument are well aware of its fallaciousness: the shades of political opinion in France are extremely diversified, and a considerable part of the Royalists are also Constitutionalists, whom it will require time and necessity to reconcile to the emigrant Princes. But the young King had neither enemies nor errors—and his claims would have united the efforts and affections of all parties, from the friends of the monarchy, as it existed under Louis the Fourteenth, down to the converted Republican, who compromises with his principles, and stipulates for the title of Perpetual President.

That the removal of this child has been fortunate for those who govern, is proved by the effect: insurrections are no longer talked of, the royalists are confounded, the point of interest is no more, and a sort of despondency and confusion prevails, which is highly favourable to a continuance of the present system.—There is no doubt, but that when men's minds become more settled, the advantage of having a Prince who is capable of acting, and whose success will not be accompanied by a long minority, will conciliate all the reflecting part of the constitutional royalists, in spite of their political objections. But the people who are more under the influence of their feelings, and yield less to expediency, may not, till urged by distress and anarchy, be brought to take the same interest in the absent claimant of the throne, that they did in their infant Prince.

It is to be regretted, that an habitual and unconquerable deference for the law which excludes females from the Crown of France, should have survived monarchy itself; otherwise the tender compassion excited by the youth, beauty and sufferings of the Princess, might yet have been the means of procuring peace to this distracted country. But the French admire, lament, and leave her to her fate—

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"O, shame of Gallia, in one sullen tower
"She wets with royal tears her daily cell;
"She finds keen anguish every rose devour,
"They spring, they bloom, then bid the world farewell.
"Illustrious mourner! will no gallant mind
"The cause of love, the cause of justice own?
"Such claims! such charms! And is no life resign'd
"To see them sparkle from their parent throne?"

How inconsistent do we often become through prejudices! The French are at this moment governed by adventurers and courtezans—by whatever is base, degraded, or mean, in both sexes; yet, perhaps, would they blush to see enrolled among their Sovereigns an innocent and beautiful Princess, the descendant of Henry the Fourth.

Nothing since our arrival at Paris has seemed more strange than the eagerness with which every one recounts some atrocity, either committed or suffered by his fellow-citizens; and all seem to conclude, that the guilt or shame of these scenes is so divided by being general, that no share of either attaches to any individual. They are never tired of the details of popular or judicial massacres; and so zealous are they to do the honours of the place, that I might, but for disinclination on my part, pass half my time in visiting the spots where they were perpetrated. It was but to-day I was requested to go and examine a kind of sewer, lately described by Louvet, in the Convention, where the blood of those who suffered at the Guillotine was daily carried in buckets, by men employed for the purpose.*

* "At the gate of St. Antoine an immense aqueduct had been constructed for the purpose of carrying off the blood that was shed at the executions, and every day four men were employed in taking it up in buckets, and conveying it to this horrid reservoir of butchery."

Louvet's Report, 2d May.

—These barbarous propensities have long been the theme of French satyrists; and though I do not pretend to infer that they are national, yet certainly the revolution has produced instances of ferocity not to be paralleled in any country that ever had been civilized, and still less in one that had not.*

* It would be too shocking, both to decency and humanity, to recite the more serious enormities alluded to; and I only add, to those I have formerly mentioned, a few examples which particularly describe the manners of the revolution.—At Metz, the heads of the guillotined were placed on the tops of their own houses. The Guillotine was stationary, fronting the Town-house, for months; and whoever was observed to pass it with looks of disapprobation, was marked as an object of suspicion. A popular Commission, instituted for receiving the revolutionary tax at this place, held their

meetings in a room hung with stripes of red and black, lighted only with sepulchral lamps;

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and on the desk was placed a small Guillotine, surrounded by daggers and swords. In this vault, and amidst this gloomy apparatus, the inhabitants of Metz brought their patriotic gifts, (that is, the arbitrary and exorbitant contributions to which they were condemned,) and laid them on the altar of the Guillotine, like the sacrifice of fear to the infernal deities; and, that the keeping of the whole business might be preserved, the receipts were signed with red ink, avowedly intended as expressive of the reigning system. At Cahors, the deputy, Taillefer, after making a triumphal entry with several waggons full of people whom he had arrested, ordered a Guillotine to be erected in the square, and some of the prisoners to be brought forth and decorated in a mock costume representing Kings, Queens, and Nobility. He then obliged them successively to pay homage to the Guillotine, as though it had been a throne, the executioner manoeuvring the instrument all the while, and exciting the people to call for the heads of those who were forced to act in this horrid farce. The attempt, however, did not succeed, and the spectators retired in silent indignation. At Laval, the head of Laroche, a deputy of the Constituent Assembly, was exhibited (by order of Lavallee, a deputy there on mission) on the house inhabited by his wife.—At Auch, in the department of Gers, d'Artigoyte, another deputy, obliged some of the people under arrest to eat out of a manger.—Borie used to amuse himself, and the inhabitants of Nismes, by dancing what he called a farandole round the Guillotine in his legislative costume.—The representative Lejeune solaced his leisure hours in beheading animals with a miniature Guillotine, the expence of which he had placed to the account of the nation; and so much was he delighted with it, that the poultry served at his table were submitted to its operation, as well as the fruits at his dessert! (Debates, June 1.) But it would be tedious and disgusting to describe all the *menus plaisirs* of these founders of the French republic. Let it suffice to say, that they comprised whatever is ludicrous, sanguinary, and licentious, and that such examples were but too successful in procuring imitators. At Tours, even the women wore Guillotines in their ears, and it was not unusual for people to seal their letters with a similar representation!

We have been once at the theatre since the King's death, and the stanza of the *Reveil du Peuple*, [The rousing of the people.] which contains a compliment to the Convention, was hissed pretty generally, while those expressing an abhorrence of Jacobinism were sung with enthusiasm. But the sincerity of these musical politics is not always to be relied on: a popular air is caught and echoed with avidity; and whether the words be "*Peuple Français, peuple de Freres*," ["Brethren."]—or "*Dansons la Guillotine*," the expression with which it is

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sung is not very different. How often have the theatres resounded with "*Dieu de clemence et de justice.*" ["God of mercy and justice."] and "*Liberte, Liberte, cherie!*" ["Liberty, beloved Liberty!"] while the instrument of death was in a state of unceasing activity—and when the auditors, who joined in these invocations to Liberty, returned to their homes trembling, lest they should be arrested in the street, or find a mandate or guard at their own houses.*

* An acquaintance of mine told me, that he was one evening in company at Dijon, where, after singing hymns to liberty in the most energetic style, all the party were arrested, and betook themselves as tranquilly to prison, as though the name of liberty had been unknown to them. The municipality of Dijon commonly issued their writs of arrest in this form—"Such and such a person shall be arrested, and his wife, if he has one!"

—At present, however, the Parisians really sing the *Reveil* from principle, and I doubt if even a new and more agreeable air in the Jacobin interest would be able to supplant it.

We have had our permission to remain here extended to another Decade; but

Mr. D-----, who declares, ten times in an hour, that the French are the strangest people on earth, besides being the most barbarous and the most frivolous, is impatient to be gone; and as we now have our passports, I believe we shall depart the middle of next week.

—Yours.

Paris, June 15, 1795.

I am now, after a residence of more than three years, amidst the chaos of a revolution, on the eve of my departure from France. Yet, while I joyfully prepare to revisit my own country, my mind involuntarily traces the rapid succession of calamities which have filled this period, and dwells with painful contemplation on those changes in the morals and condition of the French people that seem hitherto to be the only fruits which they have produced. In this recurrence to the past, and estimation of the present, however we may regret the persecution of wealth, the destruction of commerce, and the general oppression, the most important and irretrievable mischief of the revolution is, doubtless, the corruption of manners introduced among the middle and lower classes of the people.

The labouring poor of France have often been described as frugal, thoughtless, and happy, earning, indeed, but little, yet spending still less, and in general able to procure such a subsistence as their habits and climate rendered agreeable and sufficient.*

* Mr. Young seems to have been persuaded, that the common people of France worked harder, and were worse fed, than those of the same description in England. Yet, as far as I have had opportunity of observing, and from the information I have been able to procure, I cannot help supposing that this gentleman has drawn his inference partially, and that he has often compared some particular case

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of distress, with the general situation of the peasantry in the rich counties, which are the scene of his experiments. The peasantry of many distant parts of England fare as coarsely, and labour harder, than was common in France; and taking their habits of frugality, their disposition to be satisfied, and their climate into the account, the situation of the French perhaps was preferable. Mr. Young's Tour has been quoted very triumphantly by a Noble Lord, particularly a passage which laments and ascribes to political causes the appearance of premature old age, observable in French women of the lower classes. Yet, for the satisfaction of his Lordship's benevolence and gallantry, I can assure him, that the female peasants in France have not more laborious occupations than those of England, but they wear no stays, and expose themselves to all weathers without hats; in consequence, lose their shape, tan their complexions, and harden their features so as to look much older than they really are.—Mr. Young's book is translated into French, and I have too high an opinion both of his principles and his talents to doubt that he must regret the ill effects it may have had in France, and the use that has been made of it in England.

—They are now become idle, profuse, and gloomy; their poverty is embittered by fanciful claims to riches and a taste for expence. They work with despair and unwillingness, because they can no longer live by their labour; and, alternately the victims of intemperance or want, they are often to be found in a state of intoxication, when they have not been able to satisfy their hunger—for, as bread cannot always be purchased with paper, they procure a temporary support, at the expence of their health and morals, in the destructive substitute of strong liquors.

Those of the next class, such as working tradesmen, artizans, and domestic servants, though less wretched, are far more dissolute; and it is not uncommon in great towns to see men of this description unite the ferociousness of savages with all the vices of systematic profligacy. The original principles of the revolution, of themselves, naturally tended to produce such a depravation; but the suspension of religious worship, the conduct of the Deputies on mission, and the universal immorality of the existing government, must have considerably hastened it. When the people were forbidden the exercise of their religion, though they did not cease to be attached to it, yet they lost the good effects which even external forms alone are calculated to produce; and while deism and atheism failed in perverting their faith, they were but too successful in corrupting their morals.

As in all countries the restraints which religion imposes are more readily submitted to by the inferior ranks of life, it is these which must be most affected by its abolition; and we cannot wonder, that when men have been once accustomed to neglect the duty they consider as most essential, they should in time become capable of violating every other: for, however it may be among the learned, *qui s'aveuglent a force de lumiere*, [Who blind themselves by excess of light. Destouchet.] with the ignorant the transition from religious indifference to actual vice is rapid and certain.

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The Missionaries of the Convention, who for two years extended their destructive depredations over the departments, were every where guilty of the most odious excesses, and those least culpable offered examples of licentiousness and intemperance with which, till then, the people had never been familiar.*

* "When the Convention was elected, (says Durand Maillane, see Report of the Committee of Legislation, 13th Prairial, 1st June,) the choice fell upon men who abused the name of patriot, and adopted it as a cloak for their vices.—Vainly do we inculcate justice, and expect the Tribunals will bring thieves and assassins to punishment, if we do not punish those amongst ourselves.—Vainly shall we talk of republican manners and democratic government, while our representatives carry into the departments examples of despotism and corruption." The conduct of these civilized banditti has been sufficiently described. Allard, Lacoste, Mallarme, Milhaud, Laplanche, Monestier, Guyardin, Sergent, and many others, were not only ferocious and extravagant, but known to have been guilty of the meanest thefts. Javoques is alledged to have sacrificed two hundred people of Montibrison, and to have stolen a vast quantity of their effects. It was common for him to say, that he acknowledged as true patriots those only who, like himself, "*etaient capables de boire une verre de sang*,"—"were capable of drinking a glass of blood.") D'Artigoyte distinguished himself by such scandalous violations of morals and decency, that they are not fit to be recited. He often obliged married women, by menaces, to bring their daughters to the Jacobin clubs, for the purpose of insulting them with the grossest obscenities.—Having a project of getting up a play for his amusement, he caused it to be declared, that those who had any talents for acting, and did not present themselves, should be imprisoned as suspects. And it is notorious, that this same Deputy once insulted all the women present at the theatre, and, after using the most obscene language for some time, concluded by stripping himself entirely in presence of the spectators.

Report of the Committee of Legislation, 13th Prairial (1st of June). Lacoste and Baudet, when they were on mission at Strasburgh, lived in daily riot and intoxication with the members of the Revolutionary Tribunal, who, after qualifying themselves in these orgies, proceeded to condemn all the prisoners brought before them.—During the debate following the above quoted report, Dentzel accused Lacoste, among other larcenies, of having purloined some shirts belonging to himself; and addressing Lacoste, who was present in the Assembly, with true democratic frankness, adds, "*Je suis sur qu'il en a une sur le corps*."—"I am certain he has one of them on at this moment.") Debate, 1st of June. The following is a translation of a

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letter from Piorry, Representative of the People, to the popular society of Poitiers:— “My honest and determined *Sans Culottes*, as you seemed to desire a Deputy amongst you who has never deviated from the right principles, that is to say, a true Mountaineer, I fulfil your wishes in sending you the Citizen Ingrand.—Remember, honest and determined *Sans Culottes*, that with the sanction of the patriot Ingrand, you may do every thing, obtain every thing, destroy every thing—imprison all, try all, transport all, or guillotine all. Don’t spare him a moment; and thus, through his means, all may tremble, every thing be swept away, and, finally, be re-established in lasting order.

(Signed) “Piorry.” The gentleman who translated the above for me, subjoined, that he had omitted various oaths too bad for translation.—This Piorry always attended the executions, and as fast as a head fell, used to wave his hat in the air, and cry, “*Vive la Republique!*”

Such are the founders of the French Republic, and such the means by which it has been supported!

—It may be admitted, that the lives of the higher Noblesse were not always edifying; but if their dissipation was public, their vices were less so, and the scenes of both were for the most part confined to Paris. What they did not practise themselves, they at least did not discourage in others; and though they might be too indolent to endeavour at preserving the morals of their dependents, they knew their own interest too well to assist in depraving them.

But the Representatives, and their agents, are not to be considered merely as individuals who have corrupted only by example;—they were armed with unlimited authority, and made proselytes through fear, where they failed to produce them from inclination. A contempt for religion or decency has been considered as the test of an attachment to the government; and a gross infraction of any moral or social duty as a proof of civism, and a victory over prejudice. Whoever dreaded an arrest, or courted an office, affected profaneness and profligacy—and, doubtless, many who at first assumed an appearance of vice from timidity, in the end contracted a preference for it. I myself know instances of several who began by deploring that they were no longer able to practise the duties of their religion, and ended by ridiculing or fearing them. Industrious mechanics, who used to go regularly to mass, and bestow their weekly *liard* on the poor, after a month’s revolutionising, in the suite of a Deputy, have danced round the flames which consumed the sacred writings, and become as licentious and dishonest as their leader.

The general principles of the Convention have been adapted to sanction and accelerate the labours of their itinerant colleagues. The sentences of felons were often reversed, in consideration of their “patriotism”—women of scandalous lives have been pensioned, and complimented publicly—and various decrees passed, all tending to promote a national dissoluteness of manners.*

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* Among others, a decree which gave all illegitimate children a claim to an equal participation in the property of the father to whom they should (at the discretion of the mother) be attributed.

—The evil propensities of our nature, which penal laws and moralists vainly contend against, were fostered by praise, and stimulated by reward—all the established distinctions of right and wrong confounded— and a system of revolutionary ethics adopted, not less incompatible with the happiness of mankind than revolutionary politics.

Thus, all the purposes for which this general demoralization was promoted, being at length attained, those who were rich having been pillaged, those who were feared massacred, and a croud of needy and desperate adventurers attached to the fate of the revolution, the expediency of a reform has lately been suggested. But the mischief is already irreparable. Whatever was good in the national character is vitiated; and I do not scruple to assert, that the revolution has both destroyed the morals of the people, and rendered their condition less happy*—that they are not only removed to a greater distance from the possession of rational liberty, but are become more unfit for it than ever.

* It has been asserted, with a view to serve the purposes of party, that the condition of the lower classes in France was mended by the revolution. If those who advance this were not either partial or ill-informed, they would observe that the largesses of the Convention are always intended to palliate some misery, the consequence of the revolution, and not to banish what is said to have existed before. For the most part, these philanthropic projects are never carried into effect, and when they are, it is to answer political purposes.—For instance, many idle people are kept in pay to applaud at the debates and executions, and assignats are distributed to those who have sons serving in the army. The tendency of both these donations needs no comment. The last, which is the most specious, only affords a means of temporary profusion to people whose children are no incumbrance to them, while such as have numerous and helpless families, are left without assistance. Even the poorest people now regard the national paper with contempt; and, persuaded it must soon be of no value, they eagerly squander whatever they receive, without care for the future.

As I have frequently, in the course of these letters, had occasion to quote from the debates of the Convention, and other recent publications, I ought to observe that the French language, like every thing else in the country, has been a subject of innovation—new words have been invented, the meaning of old ones has been changed, and a sort of jargon, compounded of the appropriate terms of various arts and sciences, introduced, which habit alone can render intelligible. There is scarcely a report read in the Convention that does not exhibit every possible example of the Bathos, together with more conceits than are to be found in a writer of the sixteenth century; and I doubt

whether any of their projects of legislation or finance would be understood by Montesquieu or Colbert.

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But the style most difficult to be comprehended by foreigners, is that of the newspapers; for the dread of offending government so entirely possesses the imagination of those who compose such publications, that it is not often easy to distinguish a victory from a defeat, by the language in which it is conveyed. The common news of the day is worded as cautiously as though it were to be the subject of judicial disquisition; and the real tendency of an article is sometimes so much at variance with its comment, that the whole, to a cursory peruser, may seem destitute of any meaning at all. Time, however, has produced a sort of intelligence between news-writers and their readers—and rejoicings, lamentations, praise, or censure, are, on particular occasions, understood to convey the reverse of what they express.

The affected moderation of the government, and the ascendancy which some of the Brissotin party are beginning to take in it, seem to flatter the public with the hope of peace. They forget that these men were the authors of the war, and that a few months imprisonment has neither expiated their crimes, nor subdued their ambition. It is the great advantage of the Brissotins, that the revolutionary tyranny which they had contributed to establish, was wrested from them before it had taken its full effect; but those who appreciate their original claims, without regard to their sufferings under the persecution of a party, are disposed to expect they will not be less tenacious of power, nor less arbitrary in the exercise of it than any of the intervening factions. The present government is composed of such discordant elements, that their very union betrays that they are in fact actuated by no principle, except the general one of retaining their authority. Lanjuinais, Louvet, Saladin, Danou, &c. are now leagued with Tallien, Freron, Dubois de Crance, and even Carnot.

At the head of this motley assemblage of Brissotins, Orleanists, and Robespierrians, is Sieyes—who, with perhaps less honesty, though more cunning, than either, despises and dupes them all. At a moment when the Convention had fallen into increased contempt, and when the public affairs could no longer be conducted by fabricators of reports and framers of decrees, the talents of this sinister politician became necessary; yet he enjoys neither the confidence of his colleagues nor that of the people—the vanity and duplicity of his conduct disgust and alarm the first, while his reputation of partizan of the Duke of Orleans is a reason for suspicion in the latter. But if Sieyes has never been able to conciliate esteem, nor attain popularity, he has at length possessed himself of power, and will not easily be induced to relinquish it.—Many are of opinion, that he is secretly machinating for the son of his former patron; but whether he means to govern in the name of the Duke of Orleans, or in that of the republic, it is certain, had the French any liberty to lose, it never could have found a more subtle and dangerous enemy.*

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* The Abbe, in his "*notices sur la Vie de Sieyes*," declares that his contempt and detestation of the colleagues "with whom his unfortunate stars had connected him," were so great, that he determined, from his first arrival at the Convention, to take no part in public affairs. As these were his original sentiments of the Assembly, perhaps he may hereafter explain by which of their operations his esteem was so much reconciled, that he has condescended to become their leader.

Paris may, without exaggeration, be described as in a state of famine. The markets are scantily supplied, and bread, except the little distributed by order of the government, not to be obtained: yet the inhabitants, for the most part, are not turbulent—they have learned too late, that revolutions are not the source of plenty, and, though they murmur and execrate their rulers, they abstain from violence, and seem rather inclined to yield to despair, than to seek revenge. This is one proof, among a variety of others, that the despotism under which the French have groaned for the last three years, has much subdued the vivacity and impatience of the national character; for I know of no period in their history, when such a combination of personal suffering and political discontent, as exists at present, would not have produced some serious convulsion.

Amiens, June 18, 1795.

We returned hither yesterday, and on Friday we are to proceed to Havre, accompanied by an order from the Committee of Public Welfare, stating that several English families, and ourselves among the number, have been for some time a burthen on the generosity of the republic, and that for this reason we are permitted to embark as soon as we can find the means. This is neither true, nor very gallant; but we are too happy in quitting the republic, to cavil about terms, and would not exchange our pauper-like passports for a consignment of all the national domains.

I have been busy to-day in collecting and disposing of my papers, and though I have taken infinite pains to conceal them, their bulk is so considerable, that the conveyance must be attended with risk. While I was thus employed, the casual perusal of some passages in my letters and notes has led me to consider how much my ideas of the French character and manners differ from those to be found in the generality of modern travels. My opinions are not of importance enough to require a defence; and a consciousness of not having deviated from truth makes me still more averse from an apology. Yet as I have in several instances varied from authorities highly respectable, it may not be improper to endeavour to account for what has almost the appearance of presumption.

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If you examine most of the publications describing foreign countries, you will find them generally written by authors travelling either with the éclat of birth and riches, or, professionally, as men of science or letters. They scarcely remain in any place longer than suffices to view the churches, and to deliver their letters of recommendation; or, if their stay be protracted at some capital town, it is only to be feted from one house to another, among that class of people who are every where alike. As soon as they appear in society, their reputation as authors sets all the national and personal vanity in it afloat. One is polite, for the honour of his country—another is brilliant, to recommend himself; and the traveller cannot ask a question, the answer to which is not intended for an honourable insertion in his repertory of future fame.

In this manner an author is passed from the literati and fashionable people of one metropolis to those of the next. He goes post through small towns and villages, seldom mixes with every-day life, and must in a great degree depend for information on partial enquiries. He sees, as it were, only the two extremes of human condition—the splendour of the rich, and the misery of the poor; but the manners of the intermediate classes, which are less obtrusive, are not within the notice of a temporary resident.

It is not therefore extraordinary, that I, who have been domesticated some years in France, who have lived among its inhabitants without pretensions, and seen them without disguise, should not think them quite so polite, elegant, gay, or susceptible, as they endeavour to appear to the visitant of the day. Where objects of curiosity only are to be described, I know that a vast number may be viewed in a very rapid progress; yet national character, I repeat, cannot be properly estimated but by means of long and familiar intercourse. A person who is every where a stranger, must see things in their best dress; being the object of attention, he is naturally disposed to be pleased, and many circumstances both physical and moral are passed over as novelties in this transient communication, which might, on repetition, be found inconvenient or disgusting. When we are stationary, and surrounded by our connections, we are apt to be difficult and splenetic; but a literary traveller never thinks of inconvenience, and still less of being out of humour—curiosity reconciles him to the one, and his fame so smooths all his intercourse, that he has no plea for the other.

It is probably for these reasons that we have so many panegyrists of our Gallic neighbours, and there is withal a certain fashion of liberality that has lately prevailed, by which we think ourselves bound to do them more than justice, because they [are] our political enemies. For my own part, I confess I have merely endeavoured to be impartial, and have not scrupled to give a preference to my own country where I believed

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it was due. I make no pretensions to that sort of cosmopolitanism which is without partialities, and affects to consider the Chicktaw or the Tartars of Thibet, with the same regard as a fellow-countryman. Such universal philanthropists, I have often suspected, are people of very cold hearts, who fancy they love the whole world, because they are incapable of loving any thing in it, and live in a state of "moral vagabondage," (as it is happily termed by Gregoire,) in order to be exempted from the ties of a settled residence. *"Le cosmopolitisme de systeme et de fait n'est qu'un vagabondage physique ou moral: nous devons un amour de preference a la societe politique dont nous sommes membres."* ["Cosmopolitism, either in theory or in practice, is no better than a moral or physical vagrancy: the political society of which we are members, is entitled to a preference in our affections."]

Let it not be imagined, that, in drawing comparisons between France and England, I have been influenced by personal suffering or personal resentment. My opinions on the French characters and manners were formed before the revolution, when, though my judgment might be deficient, my heart was warm, and my mind unprejudiced; yet whatever credit may be allowed to my general opinions, those which particularly apply to the present situation and temper of the French will probably be disputed. When I describe the immense majority of the nation as royalists, hating their government, and at once indignant and submissive, those who have not studied the French character, and the progress of the revolution, may suspect my veracity. I can only appeal to facts. It is not a new event in history for the many to be subdued by the few, and this seems to be the only instance in which such a possibility has been doubted.*

* It is admitted by Brissot, who is in this case competent authority, that about twenty factious adventurers had oppressed the Convention and the whole country. A more impartial calculator would have been less moderate in the number, but the fact is the same; and it would be difficult to fix the period when this oppression ceased.

—The well-meaning of all classes in France are weak, because they are divided; while the small, but desperate factions that oppress them, are strong in their union, and in the possession of all the resources of the country.

Under these circumstances, no successful effort can be made; and I have collected from various sources, that the general idea of the French at present is, to wait till the new constitution appears, and to accept it, though it should be even more anarchical and tyrannical than the last. They then hope that the Convention will resign their power without violence, that a new election of representatives will take place, and that those representatives, who they intend shall be men of honesty and property, will restore them to the blessings of a moderate and permanent government.

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—Yours.

Havre, June 22, 1795.

We are now in hourly expectation of sailing for England: we have agreed with the Captain of a neutral vessel, and are only waiting for a propitious wind. This good ally of the French seems to be perfectly sensible of the value of a conveyance out of the republic, and accordingly we are to pay him about ten times more for our passage than he would have asked formerly. We chose this port in preference to Calais or Boulogne, because I wished to see my friend Madame de ----- at Rouen, and leave Angelique with her relations, who live there.

I walked this morning to the harbour, and seeing some flat-bottomed boats constructing, asked a French gentleman who accompanied me, perhaps a little triumphantly, if they were intended for a descent on the English coast. He replied, with great composure, that government might deem it expedient (though without any views of succeeding) to sacrifice ten or twenty thousand men in the attempt.—It is no wonder that governments, accountable for the lives and treasure they risk, are scarcely equal to a conflict sustained by such power, and conducted on such principles.—But I am wearied and disgusted with the contemplation of this despotism, and I return to my country deeply and gratefully impressed with a sense of the blessings we enjoy in a free and happy constitution.

—I am, &c.

FINIS.