

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

## **A Residence in France During the Years 1792, 1793, 1794 and 1795, Complete**

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# Page 1

**Produced by Mary Munarin and David Widger**

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

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

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

Second Edition.

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

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

## **PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE EDITOR.**

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

colour to every action of the persons exercising the powers of government in France; and I had marked, with indignation, the atrocious attempt to strip vice of its deformity, to dress crime in the garb of virtue, to decorate slavery with the symbols of freedom, and give to folly the attributes of wisdom. I had seen, with extreme concern, men, whom the lenity, mistaken lenity, I must call it, of our government had rescued from punishment, if not from ruin, busily engaged in this scandalous

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

April 14, 1797.

## RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

### DEDICATION

To The *right Hon. Edmund Burke*.

*Sir,*

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

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



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

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

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

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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Sept. 12, 1796.

### A RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

May 10, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

May, 1792.

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

June 10, 1792.

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

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

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

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

June 24, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

July 24, 1792.

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

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

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

August 4, 1792.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

August 15.

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

\* All fire and slaughter.

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

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

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

*Choeur Bearnais.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours, &c.

August 22, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Hesdin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arras, August, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lisle, August, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

Lisle.

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

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

Lisle, Saturday.

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

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Arras, September 1, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arras, September.

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arras.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Arras.

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

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

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

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

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

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

September 2, 1792.

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

\* The scrubs and scoundrels for deputies.

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

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

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

September 4.

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

“Rue St. Honore, Sept. 2, 1792.

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

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

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

Arras, September, 1792.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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“L\_\_\_\_.”

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

Arras, September 14, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

St. Omer, September, 1792.

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

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

\* Maximilien de Bethune, Duc de Sully.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

September, 1792.

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

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

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

Amiens, 1792.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Abbeville, September, 1792.

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

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

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

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

October, 1792.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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Amiens, October, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Amiens, November, 1792.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

December, 1792.

Dear Brother,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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—Yours, &c.

1793

Amiens, January, 1793.

Vanity, I believe, my dear brother, is not so innoxious a quality as we are desirous of supposing. As it is the most general of all human failings, so is it regarded with the most indulgence: a latent consciousness averts the censure of the weak; and the wise, who flatter themselves with being exempt from it, plead in its favour, by ranking it as a foible too light for serious condemnation, or too inoffensive for punishment. Yet, if vanity be not an actual vice, it is certainly a potential one—it often leads us to seek reputation rather than virtue, to substitute appearances for realities, and to prefer the eulogiums of the world to the approbation of our own minds. When it takes possession of an uninformed or an ill-constituted mind, it becomes the source of a thousand errors, and a thousand absurdities. Hence, youth seeks a preeminence in vice, and age in folly; hence, many boast of errors they would not commit, or claim distinction by investing themselves with an imputation of excess in some popular absurdity—duels are courted by the daring, and vaunted by the coward—he who trembles at the idea of death and a future state when alone, proclaims himself an atheist or a free-thinker in public—the water-drinker, who suffers the penitence of a week for a supernumerary glass, recounts the wonders of his intemperance—and he who does not mount the gentlest animal without trepidation, plumes himself on breaking down horses, and his perils in the chace. In short, whatever order of mankind we contemplate, we shall perceive that the portion of vanity allotted us by nature, when it is not corrected by a sound judgement, and rendered subservient to useful purposes, is sure either to degrade or mislead us.

I was led into this train of reflection by the conduct of our Anglo-Gallican legislator, Mr. Thomas Paine. He has lately composed a speech, which was translated and read in his presence, (doubtless to his great satisfaction,) in which he insists with much vehemence on the necessity of trying the King; and he even, with little credit to his humanity, gives intimations of presumed guilt. Yet I do not suspect Mr. Paine to be of a cruel or unmerciful nature; and, most probably, vanity alone has instigated him to a proceeding which, one would wish to believe, his heart disapproves. Tired of the part he was playing, and which, it must be confessed, was not calculated to flatter the censurer of Kings and the reformer of constitutions, he determined to sit no longer for whole hours in colloquy with his interpreter, or in mute contemplation, like the Chancellor in the Critic; and the speech to which I have alluded was composed. Knowing that lenient opinions would meet no applause from the tribunes, he inclines himself on the side of severity, accuses all the Princes in the world as the accomplices of Louis the Sixteenth, expresses his desire for an universal



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revolution, and, after previously assuring the Convention the King is guilty, recommends that they may instantly proceed to his trial. But, after all this tremendous eloquence, perhaps Mr. Paine had no malice in his heart: he may only be solicitous to preserve his reputation from decay, and to indulge his self-importance by assisting at the trial of a Monarch whom he may not wish to suffer.—I think, therefore, I am not wrong in asserting, that Vanity is a very mischievous counsellor.

The little distresses I formerly complained of, as arising from the paper currency, are nearly removed by a plentiful emission of small assignats, and we have now pompous assignments on the national domains for ten sols: we have, likewise, pieces coined from the church bells in circulation, but most of these disappear as soon as issued. You would scarcely imagine that this copper is deemed worthy to be hoarded; yet such is the people's aversion from the paper, and such their mistrust of the government, that not an housewife will part with one of these pieces while she has an assignat in her possession; and those who are rich enough to keep a few livres by them, amass and bury this copper treasure with the utmost solicitude and secrecy.

A tolerably accurate scale of the national confidence might be made, by marking the progress of these suspicious interments. Under the first Assembly, people began to hide their gold; during the reign of the second they took the same affectionate care of their silver; and, since the meeting of the Convention, they seem equally anxious to hide any metal they can get. If one were to describe the present age, one might, as far as regards France, call it, both literally and metaphorically, the Iron Age; for it is certain, the character of the times would justify the metaphoric application, and the disappearance of every other metal the literal one. As the French are fond of classic examples, I shall not be surprized to see an iron coinage, in imitation of Sparta, though they seem in the way of having one reason less for such a measure than the Spartans had, for they are already in a state to defy corruption; and if they were not, I think a war with England would secure the purity of their morals from being endangered by too much commercial intercourse.

I cannot be displeased with the civil things you say of my letters, nor at your valuing them so much as to preserve them; though, I assure you, this fraternal gallantry is not necessary, on the account you intimate, nor will our countrymen suffer, in my opinion, by any comparisons I can make here. Your ideas of French gallantry are, indeed, very erroneous—it may differ in the manner from that practised in England, but is far from having any claim to superiority. Perhaps I cannot define the pretensions of the two nations in this respect better than by saying, that the gallantry of an Englishman is a sentiment—that of a Frenchman a system. The first, if a lady

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happen to be old or plain, or indifferent to him, is apt to limit his attentions to respect, or utility—now the latter never troubles himself with these distinctions: he is repulsed by no extremity of years, nor deformity of feature; he adores, with equal ardour, both young and old, nor is either often shocked by his visible preference of the other. I have seen a youthful beau kiss, with perfect devotion, a ball of cotton dropped from the hand of a lady who was knitting stockings for her grand-children. Another pays his court to a belle in her climacteric, by bringing *gimblettes* [A sort of gingerbread.] to the favourite lap-dog, or attending, with great assiduity, the egresses and regresses of her angola, who paces slowly out of the room ten times in an hour, while the door is held open by the complaisant Frenchman with a most respectful gravity.

Thus, you see, France is to the old what a masquerade is to the ugly —the one confounds the disparity of age as the other does that of person; but indiscriminate adoration is no compliment to youth, nor is a mask any privilege to beauty. We may therefore conclude, that though France may be the Elysium of old women, England is that of the young. When I first came into this country, it reminded me of an island I had read of in the Arabian Tales, where the ladies were not deemed in their bloom till they verged towards seventy; and I conceived the project of inviting all the belles, who had been half a century out of fashion in England, to cross the Channel, and begin a new career of admiration!— Yours, &c.

Amiens, 1793.

Dear Brother,

I have thought it hitherto a self evident proposition—that of all the principles which can be inculcated in the human mind, that of liberty is least susceptible of propagation by force. Yet a Council of Philosophers (disciples of Rousseau and Voltaire) have sent forth Dumouriez, at the head of an hundred thousand men, to instruct the people of Flanders in the doctrine of freedom. Such a missionary is indeed invincible, and the defenceless towns of the Low Countries have been converted and pillaged [By the civil agents of the executive power.] by a benevolent crusade of the philanthropic assertors of the rights of man. These warlike Propagandistes, however, do not always convince without experiencing resistance, and ignorance sometimes opposes, with great obstinacy, the progress of truth. The logic of Dumouriez did not enforce conviction at Gemappe, but at the expence of fifteen thousand of his own army, and, doubtless, a proportionate number of the unconverted.

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Here let me forbear every expression tending to levity: the heart recoils at such a slaughter of human victims; and, if a momentary smile be excited by these Quixotisms, it is checked by horror at their consequences!—Humanity will lament such destruction; but it will likewise be indignant to learn, that, in the official account of this battle, the killed were estimated at three hundred, and the wounded at six!—But, if the people be sacrificed, they are not deceived. The disabled sufferers, who are returning to their homes in different parts of the republic, betray the turpitude of the government, and expose the fallacy of these bloodless victories of the gazettes. The pedants of the Convention are not unlearned in the history of the Praetorian Bands and the omnipotence of armies; and an offensive war is undertaken to give occupation to the soldiers, whose inactivity might produce reflection, or whose discontent might prove fatal to the new order of things.—Attempts are made to divert the public mind from the real misery experienced at home, by relations of useless conquests abroad; the substantial losses, which are the price of these imaginary benefits, are palliated or concealed; and the circumstances of an engagement is known but by individual communication, and when subsequent events have nearly effaced the remembrance of it.—By these artifices, and from motives at least not better, and, perhaps, worse than those I have mentioned, will population be diminished, and agriculture impeded: France will be involved in present distress, and consigned to future want; and the deluded people be punished in the miseries of their own country, because their unprincipled rulers have judged it expedient to carry war and devastation into another.

One of the distinguishing features in the French character is *sang froid*—scarcely a day passes that it does not force itself on one's observation. It is not confined to the thinking part of the people, who know that passion and irritability avail nothing; nor to those who, not thinking at all, are, of course, not moved by any thing: but is equally possessed by every rank and condition, whether you class them by their mental endowments, or their temporal possessions. They not only (as, it must be confessed, is too commonly the case in all countries,) bear the calamities of their friends with great philosophy, but are nearly as reasonable under the pressure of their own. The grief of a Frenchman, at least, partakes of his imputed national complaisance, and, far from intruding itself on society, is always ready to accept of consolation, and join in amusement. If you say your wife or relations are dead, they replay coldly, "*Il faut se consoler*:" or if they visit you in an illness, "*Il faut prendre patience*." Or tell them you are ruined, and their features then become something more attenuated, the shoulders something more elevated, and a more commiserating tone confesses, "*C'est bien mal beureux—Mai enfin que voulez vous?*" ["It's unlucky, but what can be said in such cases?"] and in the same instant they ill recount some good fortune at a card party, or expatiate on the excellence of a ragout.—Yet, to do them justice, they only offer for your comfort the same arguments they would have found efficacious in promoting their own.

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This disposition, which preserves the tranquillity of the rich, indurates the sense of wretchedness in the poor; it supplies the place of fortitude in the one, and that of patience in the other; and, while it enables both to endure their own particular distresses, it makes them submit quietly to a weight and excess of public evils, which any nation but their own would sink under, or resist. Amongst shopkeepers, servants, &c. without incurring personal odium, it has the effect of what would be deemed in England impenetrable assurance. It forces pertinaciously an article not wanted, and preserves the inflexibility of the features at a detected imposition: it inspires servants with arguments in defence of every misdemeanour in the whole domestic catalogue; it renders them insensible either of their negligences or the consequences of them; and endows them with a happy facility of contradicting with the most obsequious politeness.

A gentleman of our acquaintances dined at a table d'Hôte, where the company were annoyed by a very uncommon and offensive smell. On cutting up a fowl, they discovered the smell to have been occasioned by its being dressed with out any other preparation than that of depluming. They immediately sent for the host, and told him, that the fowl had been dressed without having been drawn: but, far from appearing disconcerted, as one might expect, he only replied, "*Cela se pourroit bien, Monsieur.*" ["'Tis very possible, Sir."] Now an English Boniface, even though he had already made his fortune, would have been mortified at such an incident, and all his eloquence would scarcely have produced an unfaltering apology.

Whether this national indifference originate in a physical or a moral cause, from an obtuseness in their corporeal formation or a perfection in their intellectual one, I do not pretend to decide; but whatever be the cause, the effect is enjoyed with great modesty. So little do the French pique themselves on this valuable stoicism, that they acknowledge being more subject to that human weakness called feeling, than any other people in the world. All their writers abound in pathetic exclamations, sentimental phrases, and allusions to "*la sensibilité Française*," as though they imagined it proverbial. You can scarcely hold a conversation with a Frenchman without hearing him detail, with an expression of feature not always analogous, many very affecting sentences. He is *desole, desespere, or afflige*—he has *le coeur trop sensible, le coeur serre, or le coeur navre*; [Afflicted—in despair—too feeling a heart—his heart is wrung or wounded.] and the well-placing of these dolorous assertions depends rather upon the judgement and eloquence of the speaker, than the seriousness of the case which gives rise to them. For instance, the despair and desolation of him who has lost his money, and of him whose head is ill drest, are of different degrees, but the expressions are usually the same. The

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debates of the Convention, the debates of the Jacobins, and all the public prints, are fraught with proofs of this appropriated susceptibility, and it is often attributed to persons and occasions where we should not much expect to find it. A quarrel between the legislators as to who was most concerned in promoting the massacres of September, is reconciled with a “sweet and enthusiastic excess of fraternal tenderness.” When the clubs dispute on the expediency of an insurrection, or the necessity of a more frequent employment of the guillotine, the debate terminates by overflowing of sensibility from all the members who have engaged in it!

At the assassinations in one of the prisons, when all the other miserable victims had perished, the mob discovered one Jonneau, a member of the Assembly, who had been confined for kicking another member named Grangeneuve.\* As the massacrers probably had no orders on the subject, he was brought forth, from amidst heaps of murdered companions, and a messenger dispatched to the Assembly, (which during these scenes met as usual,) to enquire if they acknowledged Jonneau as a member. A decree was passed in the affirmative, and Jonneau brought by the assassins, with the decree fastened on his breast, in triumph to his colleagues, who, we are told, at this instance of respect for themselves, shed tears of tenderness and admiration at the conduct of monsters, the sight of whom should seem revolting to human nature.

\* When the massacres began, the wife and friends of Jonneau petitioned Grangeneuve on their knees to consent to his enlargement; but Grangeneuve was implacable, and Jonneau continued in prison till released by the means above mentioned. It is observable, that at this dreadful moment the utmost strictness was observed, and every form literally enforced in granting the discharge of a prisoner. A suspension of all laws, human and divine, was allowed to the assassins, while those only that secured them their victims were rigidly adhered to.

Perhaps the real sang froid I have before noticed, and these pretensions to sensibility, are a natural consequence one or the other. It is the history of the beast's confession—we have only to be particularly deficient in any quality, to make us solicitous for the reputation of it; and after a long habit of deceiving others we finish by deceiving ourselves. He who feels no compassion for the distresses of his neighbour, knows that such indifference is not very estimable; he therefore studies to disguise the coldness of his heart by the exaggeration of his language, and supplies, by an affected excess of sentiment, the total absence of it.—The gods have not (as you know) made me poetical, nor do I often tax your patience with a simile, but I think this French sensibility is to genuine feeling, what their paste is to the diamond—it gratifies the vanity of the wearer, and deceives the eye of the superficial observer, but is of little use or value, and when tried by the fire of adversity quickly disappears.

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You are not much obliged to me for this long letter, as I own I have scribbled rather for my own amusement than with a view to yours.— Contrary to our expectation, the trial of the King has begun; and, though I cannot properly be said to have any real interest in the affairs of this country, I take a very sincere one in the fate of its unfortunate Monarch—indeed our whole house has worn an appearance of dejection since the commencement of the business. Most people seem to expect it will terminate favourably, and, I believe, there are few who do not wish it. Even the Convention seem at present disposed to be merciful; and as they judge now, so may they be judged hereafter!

—Yours.

Amiens, January 1793.

I do all possible justice to the liberality of my countrymen, who are become such passionate admirers of the French; and I cannot but lament their having been so unfortunate in the choice of the aera from whence they date this new friendship. It is, however, a proof, that their regards are not much the effect of that kind of vanity which esteems objects in proportion as they are esteemed by the rest of the world; and the sincerity of an attachment cannot be better evinced than by its surviving irretrievable disgrace and universal abhorrence. Many will swell the triumph of a hero, or add a trophy to his tomb; but he who exhibits himself with a culprit at the gallows, or decorates the gibbet with a wreath, is a friend indeed.

If ever the character of a people were repugnant to amity, or inimical to connection, it is that of the French for the last three years.—\*

\* The editor of the *Courier de l'Egalite*, a most decided patriot, thus expresses himself on the injuries and insults received by the King from the Parisians, and their municipality, previous to his trial: "I know that Louis is guilty—but are we to double his punishment before it is pronounced by the law? Indeed one is tempted to say that, instead of being guided by the humanity and philosophy which dictated the revolution, we have taken lessons of barbarity from the most ferocious savages! Let us be virtuous if we would be republicans; if we go on as we do, we never shall, and must have recourse to a despot: for of two evils it is better to choose the least."

The editor, whose opinion of the present politics is thus expressed, is so truly a revolutionist, and so confidential a patriot, that, in August last, when almost all the journalists were murdered, his paper was the only one that, for some time, was allowed to reach the departments.



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In this short space they have formed a compendium of all the vices which have marked as many preceding ages:—the cruelty and treachery of the league—the sedition, levity, and intrigue of the *Fronde* [A name given to the party in opposition to the court during Cardinal Mazarin's ministry.—See the origin of it in the Memoirs of that period.] with the licentiousness and political corruption of more modern epochs. Whether you examine the conduct of the nation at large, or that of its chiefs and leaders, your feelings revolt at the one, and your integrity despises the other. You see the idols erected by Folly, degraded by Caprice;—the authority obtained by Intrigue, bartered by Profligacy;—and the perfidy and corruption of one side so balanced by the barbarity and levity of the other, that the mind, unable to decide on the preference of contending vices, is obliged to find repose, though with regret and disgust, in acknowledging the general depravity.

La Fayette, without very extraordinary pretensions, became the hero of the revolution. He dictated laws in the Assembly, and prescribed oaths to the Garde Nationale—and, more than once, insulted, by the triumph of ostentatious popularity, the humiliation and distress of a persecuted Sovereign. Yet when La Fayette made an effort to maintain the constitution to which he owed his fame and influence, he was abandoned with the same levity with which he had been adopted, and sunk, in an instant, from a dictator to a fugitive!

Neckar was an idol of another description. He had already departed for his own country, when he was hurried back precipitately, amidst universal acclamations. All were full of projects either of honour or recompence— one was for decreeing him a statue, another proposed him a pension, and a third hailed him the father of the country. But Mr. Neckar knew the French character, and very wisely declined these pompous offers; for before he could have received the first quarter of his pension, or the statue could have been modelled, he was glad to escape, probably not without some apprehensions for his head!

The reign of Mirabeau was something longer. He lived with popularity, was fortunate enough to die before his reputation was exhausted, was deposited in the Pantheon, apotheosised in form, and his bust placed as a companion to that of Brutus, the tutelary genius of the Assembly.—Here, one might have expected, he would have been quit for this world at least; but the fame of a patriot is not secured by his death, nor can the gods of the French be called immortal: the deification of Mirabeau is suspended, his memory put in sequestration, and a committee appointed to enquire, whether a profligate, expensive, and necessitous character was likely to be corruptible. The Convention, too, seem highly indignant that a man, remarkable only for vice and atrocity, should make no conscience of betraying those who were as bad as himself; and that, after having prostituted his talents

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from the moment he was conscious of them, he should not, when associated with such immaculate colleagues, become pure and disinterested. It is very probable that Mirabeau, whose only aim was power, might rather be willing to share it with the King, as Minister, than with so many competitors, and only as Prime Speechmaker to the Assembly: and as he had no reason for suspecting the patriotism of others to be more inflexible than his own, he might think it not impolitic to anticipate a little the common course of things, and betray his companions, before they had time to stipulate for felling him. He might, too, think himself more justified in disposing of them in the gross, because he did not thereby deprive them of their right of bargaining for themselves, and for each other in detail.—\*

\* La Porte, Steward of the Household, in a letter to Duquesnoy, [Not the brutal Dusquenoy hereafter mentioned.] dated February, 1791, informs him that Barrere, Chairman of the Committee of Domains, is in the best disposition possible.—A letter of Talon, (then minister,) with remarks in the margin by the King, says, that “Sixteen of the most violent members on the patriotic side may be brought over to the court, and that the expence will not exceed two millions of livres: that fifteen thousand will be sufficient for the first payment; and only a Yes or No from his Majesty will fix these members in his interest, and direct their future conduct.”—It likewise observes, that these two millions will cost the King nothing, as the affair is already arranged with the Liquidator-General.

Extract of a letter from Chambonas to the King, dated June 18, 1792:

“Sire,

“I inform your Majesty, that my agents are now in motion. I have just been converting an evil spirit. I cannot hope that I have made him good, but I believe I have neutralized him.—To-night we shall make a strong effort to gain Santerre, (Commandant of the Garde Nationale,) and I have ordered myself to be awakened to hear the result. I shall take care to humour the different interests as well as I can.—The Secretary of the Cordeliers club is now secured.—All these people are to be bought, but not one of them can be hired.—I have had with me one Mollet a physician. Perhaps your Majesty may have heard of him. He is an outrageous Jacobin, and very difficult, for he will receive nothing. He insists, previous to coming to any definitive treaty, on being named Physician to the Army. I have promised him, on condition that Paris is kept quiet for fifteen days. He is now gone to exert himself in our favour. He has great credit at the Caffe de Procope, where all the journalists and ‘enragis’ of the Fauxbourg St. Germain assemble. I hope he will keep his word.—The orator of the people, the noted Le Maire, a clerk at the Post-office, has promised tranquility for a week, and he is to be rewarded.”A new Gladiator has appeared



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lately on the scene, one Ronedie Breton, arrived from England. He has already been exciting the whole quarter of the Poisonnerie in favour of the Jacobins, but I shall have him laid siege to.—Petion is to come to-morrow for fifteen thousand livres, [This sum was probably only to propitiate the Mayor; and if Chambonas, as he proposed, refused farther payment, we may account for Petion's subsequent conduct.] on account of thirty thousand per month which he received under the administration of Dumouriez, for the secret service of the police.— I know not in virtue of what law this was done, and it will be the last he shall receive from me. Your Majesty will, I doubt not, understand me, and approve of what I suggest.

(Signed) "Chambonas."

Extract from the Papers found at the Thuilleries.

It is impossible to warrant the authenticity of these Papers; on their credibility, however, rests the whole proof of the most weighty charges brought against the King. So that it must be admitted, that either all the first patriots of the revolution, and many of those still in repute, are corrupt, or that the King was condemned on forged evidence.

The King might also be solicitous to purchase safety and peace at any rate; and it is unfortunate for himself and the country that he had not recourse to the only effectual means till it was too late. But all this rests on no better evidence than the papers found at the Thuilleries; and as something of this kind was necessary to nourish the exhausted fury of the populace, I can easily conceive that it was thought more prudent to sacrifice the dead, than the living; and the fame of Mirabeau being less valuable than the safety of those who survived him, there would be no great harm in attributing to him what he was very likely to have done.— The corruption of a notorious courtier would have made no impression: the King had already been overwhelmed with such accusations, and they had lost their effect: but to have seduced the virtuous Mirabeau, the very Confucius of the revolution, was a kind of profanation of the holy fire, well calculated to revive the languid rage, and extinguish the small remains of humanity yet left among the people.

It is sufficiently remarkable, that notwithstanding the court must have seen the necessity of gaining over the party now in power, no vestige of any attempt of this kind has been discovered; and every criminating negotiation is ascribed to the dead, the absent, or the insignificant. I do not, however, presume to decide in a case so very delicate; their panegyrists in England may adjust the claims of Mirabeau's integrity, and that of his accusers, at their leisure.

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Another patriot of “distinguished note,” and more peculiarly interesting to our countrymen, because he has laboured much for their conversion, is Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun.—He was in England some time as Plenipotentiary from the Jacobins, charged with establishing treaties between the clubs, publishing seditious manifestoes, contracting friendly alliances with discontented scribblers, and gaining over neutral or hostile newspapers.—But, besides his political and ecclesiastical occupations, and that of writing letters to the Constitutional Society, it seems this industrious Prelate had likewise a correspondence with the Agents of the Court, which, though he was too modest to surcharge his fame by publishing it, was, nevertheless, very profitable.

I am sorry his friends in England are mostly averse from episcopacy, otherwise they might have provided for him, as I imagine he will have no objection to relinquish his claims on the see of Autun. He is not under accusation, and, were he to return, he would not find the laws quite so ceremonious here as in England. After labouring with impunity for months together to promote an insurrection with you, a small private barter of his talents would here cost him his head; and I appeal to the Bishop's friends in England, whether there can be a proper degree of freedom in a country where a man is refused the privilege of disposing of himself to the best advantage.

To the eternal obloquy of France, I must conclude, in the list of those once popular, the ci-devant Duke of Orleans. But it was an unnatural popularity, unaided by a single talent, or a single virtue, supported only by the venal efforts of those who were almost his equals in vice, though not in wealth, and who found a grateful exercise for their abilities in at once profiting by the weak ambition of a bad man, and corrupting the public morals in his favour. The unrighteous compact is now dissolved; those whom he ruined himself to bribe have already forsaken him, and perhaps may endeavour to palliate the disgrace of having been called his friends, by becoming his persecutors.—Thus, many of the primitive patriots are dead, or fugitives, or abandoned, or treacherous; and I am not without fear lest the new race should prove as evanescent as the old.

The virtuous Rolland,\* whose first resignation was so instrumental in dethroning the King, has now been obliged to resign a second time, charged with want of capacity, and suspected of malversation; and this virtue, which was so irreproachable, which it would have been so dangerous to dispute while it served the purposes of party, is become hypocrisy, and Rolland will be fortunate if he return to obscurity with only the loss of his gains and his reputation.

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\* In the beginning of December, the Council-General of the municipality of Paris opened a register, and appointed a Committee to receive all accusations and complaints whatever against Rolland, who, in return, summoned them to deliver in their accounts to him as Minister of the interior, and accused them, at the same time, of the most scandalous speculations.

The credit of Brissot and the Philosophers is declining fast—the clubs are unpropitious, and no party long survives this formidable omen; so that, like Macbeth, they will have waded from one crime to another, only to obtain a short-lived dominion, at the expence of eternal infamy, and an unlamented fall.

Dumouriez is still a successful General, but he is denounced by one faction, insulted by another, insidiously praised by a third, and, if he should persevere in serving them, he has more disinterested rectitude than I suspect him of, or than they merit. This is another of that Jacobin ministry which proved so fatal to the King; and it is evident that, had he been permitted to entertain the same opinion of all these people as they now profess to have of each other, he would have been still living, and secure on his throne.

After so many mutual infidelities, it might be expected that one party would grow indifferent, and the other suspicious; but the French never despair: new hordes of patriots prepare to possess themselves of the places they are forcing the old ones to abandon, and the people, eager for change, are ready to receive them with the momentary and fallacious enthusiasm which ever precedes disgrace; while those who are thus intriguing for power and influence, are, perhaps, secretly devising how it may be made most subservient to their personal advantage.

Yet, perhaps, these amiable levities may not be displeasing to the Constitutional Society and the revolutionists of England; and, as the very faults of our friends are often endearing to us, they may extend their indulgence to the “humane” and “liberal” precepts of the Jacobins, and the massacres of September.—To confess the truth, I am not a little ashamed for my country when I see addresses from England to a Convention, the members of which have just been accusing each other of assassination and robbery, or, in the ardour of a debate, threatening, cuffing, and knocking each other down. Exclusive of their moral character, considered only as it appears from their reciprocal criminations, they have so little pretension to dignity, or even decency, that it seems a mockery to address them as the political representatives of a powerful nation deliberating upon important affairs.

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If a bearer of one of these congratulatory compliments were not apprized of the forms of the House, he would be rather astonished, at his introduction, to see one member in a menacing attitude, and another denying his veracity in terms perfectly explicit, though not very civil. Perhaps, in two minutes, the partizans of each opponent all rise and clamour, as if preparing for a combat—the President puts on his hat as the signal of a storm—the subordinate disputants are appeased—and the revilings of the principal ones renewed; till, after torrents of indecent language, the quarrel is terminated by a fraternal embrace.\*—I think, after such a scene, an addresser must feel a little humiliated, and would return without finding his pride greatly increased by his mission.

\* I do not make any assertions of this nature from conjecture or partial evidence. The journals of the time attest that the scenes I describe occur almost in every debate.—As a proof, I subjoin some extracts taken nearly at hazard: “January 7th, Convention Nationale, Presidence de Treilhard.—The debate was opened by an address from the department of Finisterre, expressing their wishes, and adding, that these were likewise the wishes of the nation at large—that Marat, Robespierre, Bazire, Chabot, Merlin, Danton, and their accomplices, might be expelled the Convention as caballers and intriguers paid by the tyrants at war with France.”The account of this debate is thus continued—“The almost daily troubles which arise in the Convention were on the point of being renewed, when a member, a friend to order, spoke as follows, and, it is remarked, was quietly listened to:

“Citizens,

“If three months of uninterrupted silence has given me any claim to your attention, I now ask it in the name of our afflicted country. Were I to continue silent any longer, I should render myself as culpable as those who never hold their tongues. I see we are all sensible of the painfulness of our situation. Every day dissatisfied with ourselves, we come to the debate with the intention of doing something, and every day we return without having done any thing. The people expect from us wise laws, and not storms and tumults. How are we to make these wise laws, and keep twenty-five millions of people quiet, when we, who are only seven hundred and fifty individuals, give an example of perpetual riot and disorder? What signifies our preaching the unity and indivisibility of the republic, when we cannot maintain peace and union amongst ourselves? What good can we expect to do amidst such scandalous disturbances, and while we spend our time in attending to informations, accusations, and inculpations, for the most part utterly unfounded? For my part, I see but one means of attaining any thing like dignity and tranquillity, and that is, by submitting ourselves to coercive regulations.”

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Here follow some proposals, tending to establish a little decency in their proceedings for the future; but the account from whence this extract is taken proceeds to remark, that this invitation to peace was no sooner finished, than a new scene of disturbance took place, to the great loss of their time, and the scandal of all good citizens. One should imagine, that if ever the Convention could think it necessary to assume an appearance of dignity, or at least of seriousness and order, it would be in giving their judgement relative to the King. Yet, in determining how a series of questions should be discussed, on the arrangement of which his fate seems much to have depended, the solemnity of the occasion appears to have had no weight. It was proposed to begin by that of the appeal to the people. This was so violently combated, that the Convention would hear neither party, and were a long time without debating at all. Petion mounted the tribune, and attempted to restore order; but the noise was too great for him to be heard. He at length, however, obtained silence enough to make a motion. Again the murmurs recommenced. Rabaud de St. Etienne made another attempt, but was equally unsuccessful. Those that were of an opposite opinion refused to hear him, and both parties rose up and rushed together to the middle of the Hall. The most dreadful tumult took place, and the President, with great difficulty, procured a calm. Again the storm began, and a member told them, that if they voted in the affirmative, those on the left side (Robespierre, &c.) would not wait the result, but have the King assassinated. "Yes! Yes! (resounded from all parts) the Scelerats of Paris will murder him!" —Another violent disorder ensuing, it was thought no decree could be passed, and, at length, amidst this scene of riot and confusion, the order of questions was arranged, and in such a manner as to decide the fate of the King.—It was determined, that the question of his guilt should precede that of the appeal to the people. Had the order of the questions been changed, the King might have been saved, for many would have voted for the appeal in the first instance who did not dare do it when they found the majority resolved to pronounce him guilty.

It is very remarkable, that, on the same day on which the friends of liberty and equality of Manchester signalized themselves by a most patriotic compliment to the Convention, beginning with "*Francais, vous etes libres,*" ["Frenchmen, you are free."] they were, at that very moment, employed in discussing a petition from numbers of Parisians who had been thrown into prison without knowing either their crime or their accusers, and were still detained under the same arbitrary circumstances.—The law of the constitution is, that every person arrested shall be interrogated within twenty-four hours; but as these imprisonments were the work of the republican Ministers, the Convention seemed to think it indelicate to interpose,

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and these citizens of a country whose freedom is so much envied by the Manchester Society, will most likely remain in durance as long as their confinement shall be convenient to those who have placed them there.—A short time after, Villette, who is a news-writer and deputy, was cited to appear before the municipality of Paris, under the charge of having inserted in his paper “equivocal phrases and anti-civic expressions, tending to diminish the confidence due to the municipality.”—Villette, as being a member of the Convention, obtained redress; but had he been only a journalist, the liberty of the press would not have rescued him.—On the same day, complaint was made in the Assembly, that one man had been arrested instead of another, and confined for some weeks, and it was agreed unanimously, (a thing that does not often occur,) that the powers exercised by the Committee of Inspection [Surveillance.—See Debates, December.] were incompatible with liberty.

The patriots of Belfast were not more fortunate in the adaption of their civilities—they addressed the Convention, in a strain of great piety, to congratulate them on the success of their arms in the “cause of civil and religious liberty.”\*

\* At this time the municipalities were empowered to search all houses by night or day; but their visites domiciliaires, as they are called, being made chiefly in the night, a decree has since ordained that they shall take place only during the day. Perhaps an Englishman may think the latter quite sufficient, considering that France is the freest country in the world, and, above all, a republic.

The harangue was interrupted by the *mal-a-propos* entrance of two deputies, who complained of having been beaten, almost hanged, and half drowned, by the people of Chartres, for belonging, as they were told, to an assembly of atheistical persecutors of religion; and this Convention, whom the Society of Belfast admire for propagating “religious liberty” in other countries, were in a few days humbly petitioned, from various departments, not to destroy it in their own. I cannot, indeed, suppose they have really such a design; but the contempt with which they treat religion has occasioned an alarm, and given the French an idea of their piety very different from that so kindly conceived by the patriots of Belfast.

I entrust this to our friend Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, who is leaving France in a few days; and as we are now on the eve of a war, it will be the last letter you will receive, except a few lines occasionally on our private affairs, or to inform you of my health. As we cannot, in the state Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ is in, think of returning to England at present, we must trust ourselves to the hospitality of the French for at least a few weeks, and I certainly will not abuse it, by sending any remarks on their political affairs out

of the country. But as I know you interest yourself much in the subject, and read with partiality my attempts to amuse you, I will continue to



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throw my observations on paper as regularly as I have been accustomed to do, and I hope, ere long, to be the bearer of the packets myself. I here also renew my injunction, that no part of my correspondence that relates to French politics be communicated to any one, not even my mother. What I have written has been merely to gratify your own curiosity, and I should be extremely mortified if my opinions were repeated even in the little circle of our private acquaintance. I deem myself perfectly justifiable in imparting my reflections to you, but I have a sort of delicacy that revolts at the thought of being, in the remotest degree, accessary to conveying intelligence from a country in which I reside, and which is so peculiarly situated as France is at this moment. My feelings, my humanity, are averse from those who govern, but I should regret to be the means of injuring them. You cannot mistake my intentions, and I conclude by seriously reminding you of the promise I exacted previous to any political discussion.—Adieu.

Amiens, February 15, 1793.

I did not, as I promised, write immediately on my return from Chantilly; the person by whom I intended to send my letter having already set out for England, and the rule I have observed for the last three months of entrusting nothing to the post but what relates to our family affairs, is now more than ever necessary. I have before requested, and I must now insist, that you make no allusion to any political matter whatever, nor even mention the name of any political person. Do not imagine that you are qualified to judge of what is prudent, or what may be written with safety—I repeat, no one in England can form an idea of the suspicion that pervades every part of the French government.

I cannot venture to answer decisively your question respecting the King—indeed the subject is so painful to me, that I have hitherto avoided reverting to it. There certainly was, as you observe, some sudden alteration in the dispositions of the Assembly between the end of the trial and the final judgement. The causes were most probably various, and must be sought for in the worst vices of our nature—cruelty, avarice, and cowardice. Many, I doubt not, were guided only by the natural malignity of their hearts; many acted from fear, and expected to purchase impunity for former compliances with the court by this popular expiation; a large number are also supposed to have been paid by the Duke of Orleans—whether for the gratification of malice or ambition, time must develop.—But, whatever were the motives, the result was an iniquitous combination of the worst of a set of men, before selected from all that was bad in the nation, to profane the name of justice—to sacrifice an unfortunate, but not a guilty Prince—and to fix an indelible stain on the country.





Among those who gave their opinion at large, you will observe Paine: and, as I intimated in a former letter, it seems he was at that time rather allured by the vanity of making a speech that should be applauded, than by any real desire of injuring the King. Such vanity, however, is not pardonable: a man has a right to ruin himself, or to make himself ridiculous; but when his vanity becomes baneful to others, as it has all the effect, so does it merit the punishment, of vice.

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Of all the rest, Condorcet has most powerfully disgusted me. The avowed wickedness of Thuriot or Marat inspires one with horror; but this cold philosophic hypocrite excites contempt as well as detestation. He seems to have wavered between a desire to preserve the reputation of humanity, which he has affected, and that of gratifying the real depravity of his mind. Would one have expected, that a speech full of benevolent systems, mild sentiments, and aversion from the effusion of human blood, was to end in a vote for, and recommendation of, the immediate execution of his sovereign?—But such a conduct is worthy of him, who has repaid the benefits of his patron and friend [The Duke de la Rochefaucault.] by a persecution which ended in his murder.

You will have seen, that the King made some trifling requests to be granted after his decease, and that the Convention ordered him to be told, that the nation, “always great, always just,” accorded them in part. Yet this just and magnanimous people refused him a preparation of only three days, and allowed him but a few hours—suffered his remains to be treated with the most scandalous indecency—and debated seriously, whether or no the Queen should receive some little tokens of affection he had left for her.

The King’s enemies had so far succeeded in depreciating his personal courage, that even his friends were apprehensive he might not sustain his last moments with dignity. The event proves how much injustice has been done him in this respect, as well as in many others. His behaviour was that of a man who derived his fortitude from religion—it was that of pious resignation, not ostentatious courage; it was marked by none of those instances of levity and indifference which, at such a time, are rather symptoms of distraction than resolution; he exhibited the composure of an innocent mind, and the seriousness that became the occasion; he seemed to be occupied in preparing for death, but not to fear it.—I doubt not but the time will come, when those who have sacrificed him may envy the last moments of Louis the Sixteenth!

That the King was not guilty of the principal charges brought against him, has been proved indubitably—not altogether by the assertions of those who favour him, but by the confession of his enemies. He was, for example, accused of planning the insurrection of the tenth of August; yet not a day passes that both parties in the Convention are not disputing the priority of their efforts to dethrone him, and to erect a republic; and they date their machinations long before the period on which they attribute the first aggression to the King.—Mr. Sourdat, and several other writers, have very ably demonstrated the falsehood of these charges; but the circulation of such pamphlets was dangerous—of course, secret and limited; while those which tended to deceive and prejudice the people were dispersed with profusion, at the expence of the government.\*

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\* Postscript of the *Courier de l'Egalite*, Sept. 29:

"The present minister (Rolland) takes every possible means in his power to enlighten and inform the people in whatever concerns their real interests. For this purpose he has caused to be printed and distributed, in abundance, the accounts and papers relative to the events of the tenth of August. We have yet at our office a small number of these publications, which we have distributed to our subscribers, and we still give them to any of our fellow-citizens who have opportunities of circulating them."

I have seen one of these written in coarse language, and replete with vulgar abuse, purposely calculated for the lower classes in the country, who are more open to gross impositions than those of the same rank in towns; yet I have no doubt, in my own mind, that all these artifices would have proved unavailing, had the decision been left to the nation at large: but they were intimidated, if not convinced; and the mandate of the Convention, which forbids this sovereign people to exercise their judgement, was obeyed with as much submission, and perhaps more reluctance, than an edict of Louis the fourteenth.\*

\* The King appealed, by his counsel, to the People; but the convention, by a decree, declared his appeal of no validity, and forbade all persons to pay attention to it, under the severest penalties.

The French seem to have no energy but to destroy, and to resist nothing but gentleness or infancy. They bend under a firm or oppressive administration, but become restless and turbulent under a mild Prince or a minority.

The fate of this unfortunate Monarch has made me reflect, with great seriousness, on the conduct of our opposition-writers in England. The literary banditti who now govern France began their operations by ridiculing the King's private character—from ridicule they proceeded to calumny, and from calumny to treason; and perhaps the first libel that degraded him in the eyes of his subjects opened the path from the palace to the scaffold.—I do not mean to attribute the same pernicious intentions to the authors on your side the Channel, as I believe them, for the most part, to be only mercenary, and that they would write panegyrics as soon as satires, were they equally profitable. I know too, that there is no danger of their producing revolutions in England—we do not suffer our principles to be corrupted by a man because he has the art of rhyming nothings into consequence, nor suffer another to overturn the government because he is an orator. Yet, though these men may not be very mischievous, they are very reprehensible; and, in a moment like the present, contempt and neglect should supply the place of that punishment against which our liberty of the press secures them.

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It is not for a person no better informed than myself to pronounce on systems of government—still less do I affect to have more enlarged notions than the generality of mankind; but I may, without risking those imputations, venture to say, I have no childish or irrational deference for the persons of Kings. I know they are not, by nature, better than other men, and a neglected or vicious education may often render them worse. This does not, however, make me less respect the office. I respect it as the means chosen by the people to preserve internal peace and order—to banish corruption and petty tyrants ["And fly from petty tyrants to the throne."—Goldsmith]—and give vigour to the execution of the laws.

Regarded in this point of view, I cannot but lament the mode which has lately prevailed of endeavouring to alienate the consideration due to our King's public character, by personal ridicule. If an individual were attacked in this manner, his house beset with spies, his conversation with his family listened to, and the most trifling actions of his life recorded, it would be deemed unfair and illiberal, and he who should practice such meanness would be thought worthy of no punishment more respectful than what might be inflicted by an oaken censor, or an admonitory heel.—But it will be said, a King is not an individual, and that such a habit, or such an amusement, is beneath the dignity of his character. Yet would it be but consistent in those who labour to prove, by the public acts of Kings, that they are less than men, not to exact, that, in their private lives, they should be more.—The great prototype of modern satyrists, Junius, does not allow that any credit should be given a Monarch for his domestic virtues; is he then to be reduced to an individual, only to scrutinize his foibles, and is his station to serve only as the medium of their publicity? Are these literary miners to penetrate the recesses of private life, only to bring to light the dross? Do they analyse only to discover poisons? Such employments may be congenial to their natures, but have little claim to public remuneration. The merit of a detractor is not much superior to that of a flatterer; nor is a Prince more likely to be amended by imputed follies, than by undeserved panegyrics. If any man wished to represent his King advantageously, it could not be done better than by remarking, that, after all the watchings of assiduous necessity, and the laborious researches of interested curiosity, it appears, that his private life affords no other subjects of ridicule than, that he is temperate, domestic, and oeconomical, and, as is natural to an active mind, wishes to be informed of whatever happens not to be familiar to him. It were to be desired that some of these accusations were applicable to those who are so much scandalized at them: but they are not littlenesses—the littleness is in him who condescends to report them; and I have often wondered that men of genius should make a traffic of gleaning from the refuse of anti-chambers, and retailing the anecdotes of pages and footmen!

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You will perceive the kind of publications I allude to; and I hope the situation of France, and the fate of its Monarch, may suggest to the authors a more worthy employ of their talents, than that of degrading the executive power in the eyes of the people.

Amiens, Feb. 25, 1793.

I told you, I believe, in a former letter, that the people of Amiens were all aristocrats: they have, nevertheless, two extremely popular qualifications—I mean filth and incivility. I am, however, far from imputing either of them to the revolution. This grossness of behavior has long existed under the palliating description of "*la franchise Picarde*," ["Picardy frankness."] and the floors and stairs of many houses will attest their preeminence in filth to be of a date much anterior to the revolution.—If you purchase to the amount of an hundred livres, there are many shopkeepers who will not send your purchases home; and if the articles they show you do not answer your purpose, they are mostly sullen, and often rude. No appearance of fatigue or infirmity suggests to them the idea of offering you a seat; they contradict you with impertinence, address you with freedom, and conclude with cheating you if they can. It was certainly on this account that Sterne would not agree to die at the inn at Amiens. He might, with equal justice, have objected to any other house; and I am sure if he thought them an unpleasant people to die amongst, he would have found them still worse to live with.—My observation as to the civility of aristocrats does not hold good here—indeed I only meant that those who ever had any, and were aristocrats, still preserved it.

Amiens has always been a commercial town, inhabited by very few of the higher noblesse; and the mere gentry of a French province are not very much calculated to give a tone of softness and respect to those who imitate them. You may, perhaps, be surprized that I should express myself with little consideration for a class which, in England, is so highly respectable: there gentlemen of merely independent circumstances are not often distinguishable in their manners from those of superior fortune or rank. But, in France, it is different: the inferior noblesse are stiff, ceremonious, and ostentatious; while the higher ranks were always polite to strangers, and affable to their dependents. When you visit some of the former, you go through as many ceremonies as though you were to be invested with an order, and rise up and sit down so many times, that you return more fatigued than you would from a cricket match; while with the latter you are just as much at your ease as is consistent with good breeding and propriety, and a whole circle is never put in commotion at the entrance and exit of every individual who makes part of it. Any one not prepared for these formalities, and who, for the first time, saw an assembly of twenty people all rising from their seats at the entrance of a single

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beau, would suppose they were preparing for a dance, and that the new comer was a musician. For my part I always find it an oeconomy of strength (when the locality makes it practicable) to take possession of a window, and continue standing in readiness until the hour of visiting is over, and calm is established by the arrangement of the card tables.—The revolution has not annihilated the difference of rank; though it has effected the abolition of titles; and I counsel all who have remains of the gout or inflexible joints, not to frequent the houses of ladies whose husbands have been ennobled only by their offices, of those whose genealogies are modern, or of the collaterals of ancient families, whose claims are so far removed as to be doubtful. The society of all these is very exigent, and to be avoided by the infirm or indolent.

I send you with this a little collection of airs which I think you will find very agreeable. The French music has not, perhaps, all the reputation it is entitled to. Rousseau has declared it to be nothing but doleful psalmodes; Gray calls a French concert “Une tintamarre de diable:” and the prejudices inspired by these great names are not easily obliterated. We submit our judgement to theirs, even when our taste is refractory.—The French composers seem to excel in marches, in lively airs that abound in striking passages calculated for the popular taste, and yet more particularly in those simple melodies they call romances: they are often in a very charming and singular style, without being either so delicate or affecting as the Italian. They have an expression of plaintive tenderness, which makes one tranquil rather than melancholy; and which, though it be more soothing than interesting, is very delightful.—Yours, &c.

Amiens, 1793.

I have been to-day to take a last view of the convents: they are now advertised for sale, and will probably soon be demolished. You know my opinion is not, on the whole, favourable to these institutions, and that I thought the decree which extinguishes them, but which secured to the religious already profest the undisturbed possession of their habitations during life, was both politic and humane. Yet I could not see the present state of these buildings without pain—they are now inhabited by volunteers, who are passing a novitiate of intemperance and idleness, previous to their reception in the army; and those who recollect the peace and order that once reigned within the walls of a monastery, cannot but be stricken with the contrast. I felt both for the expelled and present possessors, and, perhaps, gave a mental preference to the superstition which founded such establishments, over the persecution that destroys them.

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The resigned and pious votaries, who once supposed themselves secure from all the vicissitudes of fortune, and whose union seemed dissoluble only by the common lot of mortality, are now many of them dispersed, wandering, friendless, and miserable. The religion which they cherished as a comfort, and practised as a duty, is now pursued as a crime; and it is not yet certain that they will not have to choose between an abjuration of their principles, and the relinquishment of the means of existence.—The military occupiers offered nothing very alleviating to such unpleasant reflections; and I beheld with as much regret the collection of these scattered individuals, as the separation of those whose habitations they fill. They are most of them extremely young, taken from villages and the service of agriculture, and are going to risk their lives in a cause detested perhaps by more than three parts of the nation, and only to secure impunity to its oppressors.

It has usually been a maxim in all civilized states, that when the general welfare necessitates some act of partial injustice, it shall be done with the utmost consideration for the sufferer, and that the required sacrifice of moral to political expediency shall be palliated, as much as the circumstances will admit, by the manner of carrying it into execution. But the French legislators, in this respect, as in most others, truly original, disdain all imitation, and are rarely guided by such confined motives. With them, private rights are frequently violated, only to facilitate the means of public oppressions—and cruel and iniquitous decrees are rendered still more so by the mode of enforcing them.

I have met with no person who could conceive the necessity of expelling the female religious from their convents. It was, however, done, and that with a mixture of meanness and barbarity which at once excites contempt and detestation. The ostensible reasons were, that these communities afforded an asylum to the superstitious, and that by their entire suppression, a sale of the houses would enable the nation to afford the religious a more liberal support than had been assigned them by the Constituent Assembly. But they are shallow politicians who expect to destroy superstition by persecuting those who practise it: and so far from adding, as the decree insinuates, to the pensions of the nuns, they have now subjected them to an oath which, to those at least whose consciences are timid, will act as a prohibition to their receiving what they were before entitled to.

The real intention of the legislature in thus entirely dispersing the female religious, besides the general hatred of every thing connected with religion, is, to possess itself of an additional resource in the buildings and effects, and, as is imagined by some, to procure numerous and convenient state prisons. But, I believe, the latter is only an aristocratic apprehension, suggested by the appropriation of the



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convents to this use in a few places, where the ancient prisons are full.— Whatever purpose it is intended to answer, it has been effected in a way disgraceful to any national body, except such a body as the Convention; and, though it be easy to perceive the cruelty of such a measure, yet as, perhaps, its injustice may not strike you so forcibly as if you had had the same opportunities of investigating it as I have, I will endeavour to explain, as well as I can, the circumstances that render it so peculiarly aggravated.

I need not remind you, that no order is of very modern foundation, nor that the present century has, in a great degree, exploded the fashion of compounding for sins by endowing religious institutions. Thus, necessarily, by the great change which has taken place in the expence of living, many establishments that were poorly endowed must have become unable to support themselves, but for the efforts of those who were attached to them. It is true, that the rent of land has increased as its produce became more valuable; but every one knows that the lands dependent on religious houses have always been let on such moderate terms, as by no means to bear a proportion to the necessities they were intended to supply; and as the monastic vows have long ceased to be the frequent choice of the rich, little increase has been made to the original stock by the accession of new votaries:—yet, under all these disadvantages, many societies have been able to rebuild their houses, embellish their churches, purchase plate, &c. &c. The love of their order, that spirit of oeconomy for which they are remarkable, and a persevering industry, had their usual effects, and not only banished poverty, but became a source of wealth. An indefatigable labour at such works as could be profitably disposed of, the education of children, and the admission of boarders, were the means of enriching a number of convents, whose proper revenues would not have afforded them even a subsistence.

But the fruits of active toil or voluntary privation, have been confounded with those of expiatory bequest and mistaken devotion, and have alike become the prey of a rapacious and unfeeling government. Many communities are driven from habitations built absolutely with the produce of their own labour. In some places they were refused even their beds and linen; and the stock of wood, corn, &c. provided out of the savings of their pensions, (understood to be at their own disposal,) have been seized, and sold, without making them the smallest compensation.

Thus deprived of every thing, they are sent into the world with a prohibition either to live several of them together, wear their habits,\* or practise their religion; yet their pensions\*\* are too small for them to live upon, except in society, or to pay the usual expence of boarding: many of them have no other means of procuring secular dresses, and still more will imagine themselves criminal in abstaining from the mode of worship they have been taught to think salutary.



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\* Two religious, who boarded with a lady I had occasion to see sometimes, told me, that they had been strictly enjoined not to dress like each other in any way.

\*\* The pensions are from about seventeen to twenty-five pounds sterling per annum.—At the time I am writing, the necessaries of life are increased in price nearly two-fifths of what they bore formerly, and are daily becoming dearer. The Convention are not always insensible to this—the pay of the foot soldier is more than doubled.

It is also to be remembered, that women of small fortune in France often embraced the monastic life as a frugal retirement, and, by sinking the whole they were possessed of in this way, they expected to secure a certain provision, and to place themselves beyond the reach of future vicissitudes: yet, though the sums paid on these occasions can be easily ascertained, no indemnity has been made; and many will be obliged to violate their principles, in order to receive a trifling pension, perhaps much less than the interest of their money would have produced without loss of the principal.

But the views of these legislating philosophers are too sublimely extensive to take in the wrongs or sufferings of contemporary individuals; and not being able to disguise, even to themselves, that they create much misery at present, they promise incalculable advantages to those who shall happen to be alive some centuries hence! Most of these poor nuns are, however, of an age to preclude them from the hope of enjoying this Millennium; and they would have been content en attendant these glorious times, not to be deprived of the necessaries of life, or marked out as objects of persecution.

The private distresses occasioned by the dissolution of the convents are not the only consequences to be regretted—for a time, at least, the loss must certainly be a public one. There will now be no means of instruction for females, nor any refuge for those who are without friends or relations: thousands of orphans must be thrown unprotected on the world, and guardians, or single men, left with the care of children, have no way to dispose of them properly. I do not contend that the education of a convent is the best possible: yet are there many advantages attending it; and I believe it will readily be granted, that an education not quite perfect is better than no education at all. It would not be very difficult to prove, that the systems of education, both in England and France, are extremely defective; and if the characters of women are generally better formed in one than the other, it is not owing to the superiority of boarding-schools over convents, but to the difference of our national manners, which tend to produce qualities not necessary, or not valued, in France.

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The most distinguished female excellencies in England are an attachment to domestic life, an attention to its oeconomies, and a cultivated understanding. Here, any thing like house-wifery is not expected but from the lower classes, and reading or information is confined chiefly to professed wits. Yet the qualities so much esteemed in England are not the effect of education: few domestic accomplishments, and little useful knowledge, are acquired at a boarding-school; but finally the national character asserts its empire, and the female who has gone through a course of frivolities from six to sixteen, who has been taught that the first “human principle” should be to give an elegant tournure to her person, after a few years’ dissipation, becomes a good wife and mother, and a rational companion.

In France, young women are kept in great seclusion: religion and oeconomy form a principal part of conventual acquirements, and the natural vanity of the sex is left to develop itself without the aid of authority, or instillation by precept—yet, when released from this sober tuition, manners take the ascendant here as in England, and a woman commences at her marriage the aera of coquetry, idleness, freedom, and rouge.—We may therefore, I think, venture to conclude, that the education of a boarding-school is better calculated for the rich, that of a convent for the middle classes and the poor; and, consequently, that the suppression of this last in France will principally affect those to whom it was most beneficial, and to whom the want of it will be most dangerous.

A committee of wise men are now forming a plan of public instruction, which is to excel every thing ever adopted in any age or country; and we may therefore hope that the defects which have hitherto prevailed, both in theirs and our own, will be remedied. All we have to apprehend is, that, amidst so many wise heads, more than one wise plan may be produced, and a difficulty of choice keep the rising generation in a sort of abeyance, so that they must remain sterile, or may become vitiated, while it is determining in what manner they shall be cultivated.

It is almost a phrase to say, the resources of France are wonderful, and this is no less true than generally admitted. Whatever be the want or loss, it is no sooner known than supplied, and the imagination of the legislature seems to become fertile in proportion to the exigence of the moment.—I was in some pain at the disgrace of Mirabeau, lest this new kind of retrospective judgement should depopulate the Pantheon of the few divinities that remained; more especially when I considered that Voltaire, notwithstanding his merits as an enemy to revelation, had been already accused of aristocracy, and even Rousseau himself might not be found impeccable. His *Contrat Social* might not, perhaps, in the eyes of a committee of philosophical Rhadmanthus’s, atone for his occasional admiration of christianity: and thus some crime, either of church or state, disfranchise the whole race of immortals, and their fame scarcely outlast the dispute about their earthly remains.\*

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\* Alluding to the disputes between the Convention and the person who claimed the exclusive right to the remains of Rousseau.

My concern, on this account, was the more justifiable, because the great fallibility which prevailed among the patriots, and the very delicate state of the reputation of those who retained their political existence, afforded no hope that they could ever fill the vacancies in the Pantheon.—But my fears were very superfluous—France will never want subjects for an apotheosis, and if one divinity be dethroned, “another and another still succeeds,” all equally worthy as long as they continue in fashion.—The phrenzy of despair has supplied a successor to Mirabeau, in Le Pelletier. [De St. Fargeau.] The latter had hitherto been little heard of, but his death offered an occasion for exciting the people too favourable to be neglected: his patriotism and his virtues immediately increased in a ratio to the use which might be made of them;\* a dying speech proper for the purpose was composed, and it was decreed unanimously, that he should be installed in all the rights, privileges, and immortalities of the degraded Riquetti.—

\* At the first intelligence of his death, a member of the Convention, who was with him, and had not yet had time to study a speech, confessed his last words to have been, “J’ai froid.”—“I am cold.” This, however, would have made no figure on the banners of a funeral procession; and Le Pelletier was made to die, like the hero of a tragedy, uttering blank verse.

The funeral that preceded these divine awards was a farce, which tended more to provoke a massacre of the living, than to honour the dead; and the Convention, who vowed to sacrifice their animosities on his tomb, do so little credit to the conciliating influence of St. Fargeau’s virtues, that they now dispute with more acrimony than ever.

The departments, who begin to be extremely submissive to Paris, thought it incumbent on them to imitate this ceremony; but as it was rather an act of fear than of patriotism, it was performed here with so much oeconomy, and so little inclination, that the whole was cold and paltry. —An altar was erected on the great market-place, and so little were the people affected by the catastrophe of a patriot whom they were informed had sacrificed\* his life in their cause, that the only part of the business which seemed to interest them was the extravagant gestures of a woman in a dirty white dress, hired to act the part of a “pleureuse,” or mourner, and whose sorrow appeared to divert them infinitely.—

\* There is every reason to believe that Le Pelletier was not singled out for his patriotism. —It is said, and with much appearance of probability, that he had promised PARIS, with whom he had been intimate, not to vote for the death of the King; and, on his breaking his word, PARIS, who seems to have not been perfectly in his senses, assassinated him.—PARIS had been

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in the Garde du Corps, and, like most of his brethren, was strongly attached to the King's person. Rage and despair prompted him to the commission of an act, which can never be excused, however the perpetrator may imagine himself the mere instrument of Divine vengeance.—Notwithstanding the most vigilant research, he escaped for some time, and wandered as far as Forges d'Eaux, a little town in Normandy. At the inn where he lodged, the extravagance of his manner giving suspicions that he was insane, the municipality were applied to, to secure him. An officer entered his room while he was in bed, and intimated the purpose he was come for. PARIS affected to comply, and, turning, drew a pistol from under the clothes, and shot himself.—Among the papers found upon him were some affecting lines, expressive of his contempt for life, and adding, that the influence of his example was not to be dreaded, since he left none behind him that deserved the name of Frenchmen!—*"Qu'on n'inquiete personne! personne n'a ete mon complice dans la mort heureuse de Scelerat St. Fargeau. Si Je ne l'eusse pas rencontre sous ma main, Je purgeois la France du regicide, du parricide, du patricide D'Orleans. Qu'on n'inquiete personne. Tous les Francois sont des laches auxquelles Je dis—*

"Peuple, dont les forfaits jettent partout l'effroi,  
"Avec calme et plaisir J'abandonne la vie  
"Ce n'est que par la mort qu'on peut fuir l'infamie,  
"Qu'imprime sur nos fronts le sang de notre Roi."

"Let no man be molested on my account: I had no accomplice in the fortunate death of the miscreant St. Fargeau. If he had not fallen in my way, I should have purged France of the regicide, parricide, patricide D'Orleans. Let no man be molested. All the French are cowards, to whom I say—'People, whose crimes inspire universal horror, I quit life with tranquility and pleasure. By death alone can we fly from that infamy which the blood of our King has marked upon our foreheads!'"—This paper was entitled "My Brevet of Honour."

It will ever be so where the people are not left to consult their own feelings. The mandate that orders them to assemble may be obeyed, but "that which passeth show" is not to be enforced. It is a limit prescribed by Nature herself to authority, and such is the aversion of the human mind from dictature and restraint, that here an official rejoicing is often more serious than these political exactions of regret levied in favour of the dead.—Yours, &c. &c.

March 23, 1793.

The partizans of the French in England alledge, that the revolution, by giving them a government founded on principles of moderation and rectitude, will be advantageous to all Europe, and more especially to Great Britain, which has so often suffered by wars, the fruit of their intrigues.—This reasoning would be unanswerable could the character

of the people be changed with the form of their government: but, I believe, whoever examines its administration, whether as it relates to foreign powers or internal policy, will find that the same spirit of intrigue, fraud, deception, and want of faith, which dictated in the cabinet of Mazarine or Louvois, has been transfused, with the addition of meanness and ignorance,\* into a Constitutional Ministry, or the Republican Executive Council.

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\* The Executive Council is composed of men who, if ever they were well-intentioned, must be totally unfit for the government of an extensive republic. Monge, the Minister of the Marine, is a professor of geometry; Garat, Minister of Justice, a gazette writer; Le Brun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, ditto; and Pache, Minister of the Interior, a private tutor. —Whoever reads the debates of the Convention will find few indications of real talents, and much pedantry and ignorance. For example, Anacharsis Cloots, who is a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, and who one should, of course, expect not to be more ignorant than his colleagues, has lately advised them to distress the enemy by invading Scotland, which he calls the granary of England.

France had not yet determined on the articles of her future political creed, when agents were dispatched to make proselytes in England, and, in proportion as she assumed a more popular form of government, all the qualities which have ever marked her as the disturber of mankind seem to have acquired new force. Every where the ambassadors of the republic are accused of attempts to excite revolt and discontent, and England\* is now forced into a war because she could not be persuaded to an insurrection.

\* For some time previous to the war, all the French prints and even members of the Convention, in their debates, announced England to be on the point of an insurrection. The intrigues of Chauvelin, their ambassador, to verify this prediction, are well known. Brissot, Le Brun, &c. who have since been executed, were particularly charged by the adverse party with provoking the war with England. Robespierre, and those who succeeded, were not so desirous of involving us in a foreign war, and their humane efforts were directed merely to excite a civil one.—The third article of accusation against Rolland is, having sent twelve millions of livres to England, to assist in procuring a declaration of war.

Perhaps it may be said, that the French have taken this part only for their own security, and to procure adherents to the common cause; but this is all I contend for—that the politics of the old government actuate the new, and that they have not, in abolishing courts and royalty, abolished the perfidious system of endeavouring to benefit themselves, by creating distress and dissention among their neighbours.—Louvois supplied the Protestants in the Low Countries with money, while he persecuted them in France. The agents of the republic, more oeconomical, yet directed by the same motives, eke out corruption by precepts of sedition, and arm the leaders of revolt with the rights of man; but, forgetting the maxim that charity should begin at home, in their zeal for the freedom of other countries, they leave no portion of it for their own!

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Louis the Fourteenth over-ran Holland and the Palatinate to plant the white flag, and lay the inhabitants under contribution—the republic send an army to plant the tree of liberty, levy a *don patriotique*, [Patriotic gift.] and place garrisons in the towns, in order to preserve their freedom.—Kings have violated treaties from the desire of conquest —these virtuous republicans do it from the desire of plunder; and, previous to opening the Scheldt, the invasion of Holland, was proposed as a means of paying the expences of the war. I have never heard that even the most ambitious Potentates ever pretended to extend their subjugation beyond the persons and property of the conquered; but these militant dogmatists claim an empire even over opinions, and insist that no people can be free or happy unless they regulate their ideas of freedom and happiness by the variable standard of the Jacobin club. Far from being of Hudibras's philosophy,\* they seem to think the mind as tangible as the body, and that, with the assistance of an army, they may as soon lay one “by the heels” as the other.

\* “Quoth he, one half of man, his mind,  
“Is, sui juris, unconfin'd,  
“And ne'er can be laid by the heels,  
“Whate'er the other moiety feels.”

Hudibras.

Now this I conceive to be the worst of all tyrannies, nor have I seen it exceeded on the French theatre, though, within the last year, the imagination of their poets has been peculiarly ingenious and inventive on this subject.—It is absurd to suppose this vain and overbearing disposition will cease when the French government is settled. The intrigues of the popular party began in England the very moment they attained power, and long before there was any reason to suspect that the English would deviate from their plan of neutrality. If, then, the French cannot restrain this mischievous spirit while their own affairs are sufficient to occupy their utmost attention, it is natural to conclude, that, should they once become established, leisure and peace will make them dangerous to the tranquillity of all Europe. Other governments may be improved by time, but republics always degenerate; and if that which is in its original state of perfection exhibit already the maturity of vice, one cannot, without being more credulous than reasonable, hope any thing better for the future than what we have experienced from the past.—It is, indeed, unnecessary to detain you longer on this subject. You must, ere now, be perfectly convinced how far the revolutionary systems of France are favourable to the peace and happiness of other countries. I will only add a few details which may assist you in judging of what advantage they have been to the French themselves, and whether, in changing the form of their government, they have amended its principles; or if, in “conquering liberty,” (as they express it,) they have really become free.



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The situation of France has altered much within the last two months: the seat of power is less fluctuating and the exercise of it more absolute— arbitrary measures are no longer incidental, but systematic—and a regular connection of dependent tyranny is established, beginning with the Jacobin clubs, and ending with the committees of the sections. A simple decree for instance, has put all the men in the republic, (unmarried and without children,) from eighteen to forty-five at the requisition of the Minister of War. A levy of three hundred thousand is to take place immediately: each department is responsible for the whole of a certain number to the Convention, the districts are answerable for their quota to the departments, the municipalities to the district, and the diligence of the whole is animated by itinerant members of the legislature, entrusted with the disposal of an armed force. The latter circumstance may seem to you incredible; yet is it nevertheless true, that most of the departments are under the jurisdiction of these sovereigns, whose authority is nearly unlimited. We have, at this moment, two Deputies in the town, who arrest and imprison at their pleasure. One-and-twenty inhabitants of Amiens were seized a few nights ago, without any specific charge having been exhibited against them, and are still in confinement. The gates of the town are shut, and no one is permitted to pass or repass without an order from the municipality; and the observance of this is exacted even of those who reside in the suburbs. Farmers and country people, who are on horseback, are obliged to have the features and complexion of their horses minuted on the passport with their own. Every person whom it is found convenient to call suspicious, is deprived of his arms; and private houses are disturbed during the night, (in opposition to a positive law,) under pretext of searching for refractory priests.—These regulations are not peculiar to this department, and you must understand them as conveying a general idea of what passes in every part of France.—I have yet to add, that letters are opened with impunity—that immense sums of assignats are created at the will of the Convention—that no one is excused mounting guard in person—and that all housekeepers, and even lodgers, are burthened with the quartering of troops, sometimes as many as eight or ten, for weeks together.

You may now, I think, form a tolerable idea of the liberty that has accrued to the French from the revolution, the dethronement of the King, and the establishment of a republic. But, though the French suffer this despotism without daring to murmur openly, many a significant shrug and doleful whisper pass in secret, and this political discontent has even its appropriate language, which, though not very explicit, is perfectly understood. —Thus when you hear one man say to another, *"Ah, mon Dieu, on est bien malheureux dans ce moment ici;"* or, *"Nous sommes dans une*



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*position tres critique—Je voudrais bien voir la fin de tout cela;*" ["God knows, we are very miserable at present—we are in a very critical situation—I should like to see an end of all this."] you may be sure he languishes for the restoration of the monarchy, and hopes with equal fervor, that he may live to see the Convention hanged. In these sort of conferences, however, evaporates all their courage. They own their country is undone, that they are governed by a set of brigands, go home and hide any set of valuables they have not already secreted, and receive with obsequious complaisance the next visite domiciliaire.

The mass of the people, with as little energy, have more obstinacy, and are, of course, not quite so tractable. But, though they grumble and procrastinate, they do not resist; and their delays and demurs usually terminate in implicit submission.

The Deputy-commissioners, whom I have mentioned above, have been at Amiens some time, in order to promote the levying of recruits. On Sundays and holidays they summoned the inhabitants to attend at the cathedral, where they harangued them on the subject, called for vengeance on the coalesced despots, expatiated on the love of glory, and insisted on the pleasure of dying for one's country: while the people listened with vacant attention, amused themselves with the paintings, or adjourned in small committees to discuss the hardship of being obliged to fight without inclination.—Thus time elapsed, the military orations produced no effect, and no troops were raised: no one would enlist voluntarily, and all refused to settle it by lot, because, as they wisely observed, the lot must fall on somebody. Yet, notwithstanding the objection, the matter was at length decided by this last method. The decision had no sooner taken place, than another difficulty ensued—those who escaped acknowledged it was the best way that could be devised; but those who were destined to the frontiers refused to go. Various altercations, and excuses, and references, were the consequence; yet, after all this murmuring and evasion, the presence of the Commissioners and a few dragoons have arranged the business very pacifically; many are already gone, and the rest will (if the dragoons continue here) soon follow.

This, I assure you, is a just statement of the account between the Convention and the People: every thing is effected by fear—nothing by attachment; and the one is obeyed only because the other want courage to resist.—Yours, &c.

Rouen, March 31, 1793.

Rouen, like most of the great towns in France, is what is called decidedly aristocratic; that is, the rich are discontented because they are without security, and the poor because they want bread. But these complaints are not peculiar to large places; the causes of them equally exist in the smallest village, and the only difference which fixes the imputation of aristocracy on one more than the other, is, daring to murmur, or submitting in silence.

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I must here remark to you, that the term aristocrate has much varied from its former signification. A year ago, aristocrate implied one who was an advocate for the privileges of the nobility, and a partizan of the ancient government—at present a man is an aristocrate for entertaining exactly the same principles which at that time constituted a patriot; and, I believe, the computation is moderate, when I say, that more than three parts of the nation are aristocrates. The rich, who apprehend a violation of their property, are aristocrates—the merchants, who regret the stagnation of commerce, and distrust the credit of the assignats, are aristocrates—the small retailers, who are pillaged for not selling cheaper than they buy, and who find these outrages rather encouraged than repressed, are aristocrates—and even the poor, who murmur at the price of bread, and the numerous levies for the army, are, occasionally, aristocrates.

Besides all these, there are likewise various classes of moral aristocrates—such as the humane, who are averse from massacres and oppression—those who regret the loss of civil liberty—the devout, who tremble at the contempt for religion—the vain, who are mortified at the national degradation—and authors, who sigh for the freedom of the press.—When you consider this multiplicity of symptomatic indications, you will not be surprized that such numbers are pronounced in a state of disease; but our republican physicians will soon generalize these various species of aristocracy under the single description of all who have any thing to lose, and every one will be deemed plethoric who is not in a consumption. The people themselves who observe, though they do not reason, begin to have an idea that property exposes the safety of the owner and that the legislature is less inexorable when guilt is unproductive, than when the conviction of a criminal comprehends the forfeiture of an estate.—A poor tradesman was lamenting to me yesterday, that he had neglected an offer of going to live in England; and when I told him I thought he was very fortunate in having done so, as he would have been declared an emigrant, he replied, laughing, "*Moi emigre qui n'ai pas un sol*:" ["I am emigrant, who am not worth a halfpenny!"]—No, no; they don't make emigrants of those who are worth nothing. And this was not said with any intended irreverence to the Convention, but with the simplicity which really conceived the wealth of the emigrants to be the cause of the severity exercised against them.

The commercial and political evils attending a vast circulation of assignats have been often discussed, but I have never yet known the matter considered in what is, perhaps, its most serious point of view—I mean its influence on the habits and morals of the people. Wherever I go, especially in large towns like this, the mischief is evident, and, I fear, irremediable. That oeconomy, which was one of the most valuable

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characteristics of the French, is now comparatively disregarded. The people who receive what they earn in a currency they hold in contempt, are more anxious to spend than to save; and those who formerly hoarded six liards or twelve sols pieces with great care, would think it folly to hoard an assignat, whatever its nominal value. Hence the lower class of females dissipate their wages on useless finery; men frequent public-houses, and game for larger sums than before; little shopkeepers, instead of amassing their profits, become more luxurious in their table: public places are always full; and those who used, in a dress becoming their station, to occupy the “parquet” or “parterre,” now, decorated with paste, pins, gauze, and galloon, fill the boxes:—and all this destructive prodigality is excused to others and themselves “*par ce que ce n’est que du papier*.” [Because it is only paper.]—It is vain to persuade them to oeconomize what they think a few weeks may render valueless; and such is the evil of a circulation so totally discredited, that profusion assumes the merit of precaution, extravagance the plea of necessity, and those who were not lavish by habit become so through their eagerness to part with their paper. The buried gold and silver will again be brought forth, and the merchant and the politician forget the mischief of the assignats. But what can compensate for the injury done to the people? What is to restore their ancient frugality, or banish their acquired wants? It is not to be expected that the return of specie will diminish the inclination for luxury, or that the human mind can be regulated by the national finance; on the contrary, it is rather to be feared, that habits of expence which owe their introduction to the paper will remain when the paper is annihilated; that, though money may become more scarce, the propensities of which it supplies the indulgence will not be less forcible, and that those who have no other resources for their accustomed gratifications will but too often find one in the sacrifice of their integrity.—Thus, the corruption of manners will be succeeded by the corruption of morals, and the dishonesty of one sex, with the licentiousness of the other, produce consequences much worse than any imagined by the abstracted calculations of the politician, or the selfish ones of the merchant. Age will be often without solace, sickness without alleviation, and infancy without support; because some would not amass for themselves, nor others for their children, the profits of their labour in a representative sign of uncertain value.

I do not pretend to assert that these are the natural effects of a paper circulation—doubtless, when supported by high credit, and an extensive commerce, it must have many advantages; but this was not the case in France—the measure was adopted in a moment of revolution, and when the credit of the country, never very considerable, was precarious and degraded—It did not flow from the exuberance

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of commerce, but the artifices of party—it never presumed, for a moment, on the confidence of the people—its reception was forced, and its emission too profuse not to be alarming.—I know it may be answered, that the assignats do not depend upon an imaginary appreciation, but really represent a large mass of national wealth, particularly in the domains of the clergy: yet, perhaps, it is this very circumstance which has tended most to discredit them. Had their credit rested only on the solvency of the nation, though they had not been greatly coveted, still they would have been less distributed; people would not have apprehended their abolition on a change of government, nor that the systems adopted by one party might be reversed by another. Indeed we may add, that an experiment of this kind does not begin auspiciously when grounded on confiscation and seizures, which it is probable more than half the French considered as sacrilege and robbery; nor could they be very anxious to possess a species of wealth which they made it a motive of conscience to hope would never be of any value.—But if the original creation of assignats were objectionable, the subsequent creations cannot but augment the evil. I have already described to you the effects visible at present, and those to be apprehended in future—others may result from the new inundation, [1200 millions—50 millions sterling.] which it is not possible to conjecture; but if the mischiefs should be real, in proportion as a part of the wealth which this paper is said to represent is imaginary, their extent cannot easily be exaggerated. Perhaps you will be of this opinion, when you recollect that one of the funds which form the security of this vast sum is the gratitude of the Flemings for their liberty; and if this reimbursement be to be made according to the specimen the French army have experienced in their retreat, I doubt much of the convention will be disposed to advance any farther claims on it; for, it seems, the inhabitants of the Low Countries have been so little sensible of the benefits bestowed on them, that even the peasants seize on any weapons nearest hand, and drub and pursue the retrograding armies as they would wild beasts; and though, as Dumouriez observes in one of his dispatches, our revolution is intended to favour the country people, "*c'est cependant les gens de campagne qui s'arment contre nous, et le tocsin sonne de toutes parts;*" ["It is, however, the country people who take up arms against us, and the alarm is sounded from all quarters."] so that the French will, in fact, have created a public debt of so singular a nature, that every one will avoid as much as possible making any demand of the capital.

I have already been more diffuse than I intended on the subject of finance; but I beg you to observe, that I do not affect to calculate, or speculate, and that I reason only from facts which are daily within my notice, and which, as tending to operate on the morals of the people, are naturally included in the plan I proposed to myself.

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I have been here but a few days, and intend returning to-morrow. I left Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ very little better, and the disaffection of Dumouriez, which I just now learn, may oblige us to remove to some place not on the route to Paris.—Every one looks alert and important, and a physiognomist may perceive that regret is not the prevailing sentiment—

“We now begin to speak in tropes,  
“And, by our fears, express our hopes.”

The Jacobins are said to be apprehensive, which augurs well; for, certainly, next to the happiness of good people, one desires the punishment of the bad.

Amiens, April 7, 1793.

If the sentiments of the people towards their present government had been problematical before, the visible effect of Dumouriez' conduct would afford an ample solution of the problem. That indifference about public affairs which the prospect of an established despotism had begun to create has vanished—all is hope and expectation—the doors of those who retail the newspapers are assailed by people too impatient to read them— each with his gazette in his hand listens eagerly to the verbal circulation, and then holds a secret conference with his neighbour, and calculates how long it may be before Dumouriez can reach Paris. A fortnight ago the name of Dumouriez was not uttered but in a tone of harshness and contempt, and, if ever it excited any thing like complacency, it was when he announced defeats and losses. Now he is spoken of with a significant modulation of voice, it is discovered that he has great talents, and his popularity with the army is descanted upon with a mysterious air of suppressed satisfaction.—Those who were extremely apprehensive lest part of the General's troops should be driven this way by the successes of the enemy, seem to talk with perfect composure of their taking the same route to attack the capital; while others, who would have been unwilling to receive either Dumouriez or his army as peaceful fugitives, will be “nothing loath” to admit them as conquerors. From all I can learn, these dispositions are very general, and, indeed, the actual tyranny is so great, and the perspective so alarming, that any means of deliverance must be acceptable. But whatever may be the event, though I cannot be personally interested, if I thought Dumouriez really proposed to establish a good government, humanity would render one anxious for his success; for it is not to be disguised, that France is at this moment (as the General himself expressed it) under the joint dominion of “*imbécilles*” and “*brigands*.” [Ideots and robbers.]

It is possible, that at this moment the whole army is disaffected, and that the fortified towns are prepared to surrender. It is also certain, that Brittany is in revolt, and that many other departments are little short of it; yet you will not very easily conceive what



may have occupied the Convention during part of this important crisis—nothing less than inventing a dress for their Commissioners! But, as Sterne says, “it is the spirit of the nation;” and I recollect no circumstance during the whole progress of the revolution (however serious) that has not been mixed with frivolities of this kind.

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I know not what effect this new costume may produce on the rebels or the enemy, but I confess it appears to me more ludicrous than formidable, especially when a representative happens to be of the shape and features of the one we have here. Saladin, Deputy for this department, and an advocate of the town of Amiens, has already invested himself with this armour of inviolability; “strange figure in such strange habiliments,” that one is tempted to forget that Baratraria and the government of Sancho are the creation of fancy. Imagine to yourself a short fat man, of sallow complexion and small eyes, with a sash of white, red, and blue round his waist, a black belt with a sword suspended across his shoulders, and a round hat turned up before, with three feathers of the national colours: “even such a man” is our representative, and exercises a more despotic authority than most Princes in Europe.—He is accompanied by another Deputy, who was what is called Pere de la Oratoire before the revolution—that is, in a station nearly approaching to that of an under-master at our public schools; only that the seminaries to which these were attached being very numerous, those employed in them were little considered. They wore the habit, and were subject to the same restrictions, as the Clergy, but were at liberty to quit the profession and marry, if they chose.—I have been more particular in describing this class of men, because they have every where taken an active and successful part in perverting and misleading the people: they are in the clubs, or the municipalities, in the Convention, and in all elective administrations, and have been in most places remarkable for their sedition and violence.

Several reasons may be assigned for the influence and conduct of men whose situation and habits, on a first view, seem to oppose both. In the first ardour of reform it was determined, that all the ancient modes of education should be abolished; small temporary pensions were allotted to the Professors of Colleges, and their admission to the exercise of similar functions in the intended new system was left to future decision. From this time the disbanded oratorians, who knew it would be vain to resist popular authority, endeavoured to share in it; or, at least, by becoming zealous partizans of the revolution, to establish their claims to any offices or emoluments which might be substituted for those they had been deprived of. They enrolled themselves with the Jacobins, courted the populace, and, by the talent of pronouncing Roman names with emphasis, and the study of rhetorical attitudes, they became important to associates who were ignorant, or necessary to those who were designing.



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The little information generally possessed by the middle classes of life in France, is also another cause of the comparative importance of those whose professions had, in this respect, raised them something above the common level. People of condition, liberally educated, have unfortunately abandoned public affairs for some time; so that the incapacity of some, and the pride or despondency of others, have, in a manner, left the nation to the guidance of pedants, incendiaries, and adventurers. Perhaps also the animosity with which the description of men I allude to pursued every thing attached to the ancient government, may, in some degree, have proceeded from a desire of revenge and retaliation. They were not, it must be confessed, treated formerly with the regard due to persons whose profession was in itself useful and respectable; and the wounds of vanity are not easily cured, nor the vindictiveness of little minds easily satisfied.

From the conduct and popular influence of these Peres de l'Oratoire, some truths may be deduced not altogether useless even to a country not liable to such violent reforms. It affords an example of the danger arising from those sudden and arbitrary innovations, which, by depriving any part of the community of their usual means of living, and substituting no other, tempt them to indemnify themselves by preying, in different ways, on their fellow-citizens.—The daring and ignorant often become depredators of private property; while those who have more talents, and less courage, endeavour to succeed by the artifices which conciliate public favour. I am not certain whether the latter are not to be most dreaded of the two, for those who make a trade of the confidence of the people seldom fail to corrupt them—they find it more profitable to flatter their passions than to enlighten their understandings; and a demagogue of this kind, who obtains an office by exciting one popular insurrection, will make no scruple of maintaining himself in it by another. An inference may likewise be drawn of the great necessity of cultivating such a degree of useful knowledge in the middle order of society, as may not only prevent their being deceived by interested adventurers themselves, but enable them to instruct the people in their true interests, and rescue them from becoming the instruments, and finally the victims, of fraud and imposture.—The insult and oppression which the nobility frequently experience from those who have been promoted by the revolution, will, I trust, be a useful lesson in future to the great, who may be inclined to arrogate too much from adventitious distinctions, to forget that the earth we tread upon may one day overwhelm us, and that the meanest of mankind may do us an injury which it is not in the power even of the most exalted to shield us from.



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The inquisition begins to grow so strict, that I have thought it necessary to-day to bury a translation of Burke.—In times of ignorance and barbarity, it was criminal to read the bible, and our English author is prohibited for a similar reason—that is, to conceal from the people the errors of those who direct them: and, indeed, Mr. Burke has written some truths, which it is of much more importance for the Convention to conceal, than it could be to the Catholic priests to monopolize the divine writings.—As far as it was possible, Mr. Burke has shown himself a prophet: if he has not been completely so, it was because he had a benevolent heart, and is the native of a free country. By the one, he was prevented from imagining the cruelties which the French have committed; by the other, the extreme despotism which they endure.

April 20, 1793.

Before these halcyon days of freedom, the supremacy of Paris was little felt in the provinces, except in dictating a new fashion in dress, an improvement in the art of cookery, or the invention of a minuet. At present our imitations of the capital are something more serious; and if our obedience be not quite so voluntary, it is much more implicit. Instead of receiving fashions from the Court, we take them now from the *dames des balles*, [Market-women.] and the municipality; and it must be allowed, that the imaginations of our new sovereigns much exceed those of the old in force and originality.

The mode of pillaging the shops, for instance, was first devised by the Parisian ladies, and has lately been adopted with great success in the departments; the *visite domiciliaire*, also, which I look upon as a most ingenious effort of fancy, is an emanation from the commune of Paris, and has had an universal run.—But it would be vain to attempt enumerating all the obligations of this kind which we owe to the indulgence of that virtuous city: our last importation, however, is of so singular a nature, that, were we not daily assured all the liberty in the world centers in Paris, I should be doubtful as to its tendency. It has lately been decreed, that every house in the republic shall have fixed on the outside of the door, in legible characters, the name, age, birth-place, and profession of its inhabitants. Not the poorest cottager, nor those who are too old or too young for action, nor even unmarried ladies, are exempt from thus proclaiming the abstract of their history to passers-by. —The reigning party judge very wisely, that all those who are not already their enemies may become so, and that those who are unable to take a part themselves may excite others: but, whatever may be the intention of this measure, it is impossible to conceive any thing which could better serve the purposes of an arbitrary government; it places every individual in the republic within the immediate reach of informers and spies—it points out those who are of an age to serve in the army—those who have sought refuge in one department from the persecutions of another—and, in short, whether a victim is pursued by the denunciation of private malice, or political suspicion, it renders escape almost impracticable.

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We have had two domiciliary visits within the last fortnight—one to search for arms, the other under pretext of ascertaining the number of troops each house is capable of lodging. But this was only the pretext, because the municipalities always quarter troops as they think proper, without considering whether you have room or not; and the real object of this inquisition was to observe if the inhabitants answered to the lists placed on the doors.--Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ was ill in bed, but you must not imagine such a circumstance deterred these gallant republicans from entering her room with an armed force, to calculate how many soldiers might be lodged in the bedchamber of a sick female! The French, indeed, had never, in my remembrance, any pretensions to delicacy, or even decency, and they are certainly not improved in these respects by the revolution.

It is curious in walking the streets, to observe the devices of the several classes of aristocracy; for it is not to be disguised, that since the hope from Dumouriez has vanished, though the disgust of the people may be increased, their terror is also greater than ever, and the departments near Paris have no resource but silent submission. Every one, therefore, obeys the letter of the decrees with the diligence of fear, while they elude the spirit of them with all the ingenuity of hatred. The rich, for example, who cannot entirely divest themselves of their remaining hauteur, exhibit a sullen compliance on a small piece of paper, written in a small hand, and placed at the very extreme of the height allowed by the law. Some fix their bills so as to be half covered by a shutter; others fasten them only with wafers, so that the wind detaching one or two corners, makes it impossible to read the rest.\*

\* This contrivance became so common, that an article was obliged to be added to the decree, importing, that whenever the papers were damaged or effaced by the weather, or deranged by the wind, the inhabitants should replace them, under a penalty.

Many who have courts or passages to their houses, put their names on the half of a gate which they leave open, so that the writing is not perceptible but to those who enter. But those who are most afraid, or most decidedly aristocrats, subjoin to their registers, "All good republicans:" or, "*Vive la republique, une et indivisible.*" ["The republic, one and indivisible for ever!"] Some likewise, who are in public offices, or shopkeepers who are very timid, and afraid of pillage, or are ripe for a counter-revolution, have a sheet half the size of the door, decorated with red caps, tri-coloured ribbons, and flaming sentences ending in "Death or Liberty!"

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If, however, the French government confined itself to these petty acts of despotism, I would endeavour to be reconciled to it; but I really begin to have serious apprehensions, not so much for our safety as our tranquillity, and if I considered only myself, I should not hesitate to return to England. Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ is too ill to travel far at present, and her dread of crossing the sea makes her less disposed to think our situation here hazardous or ineligible. Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_, too, who, without being a republican or a partizan of the present system, has always been a friend to the first revolution, is unwilling to believe the Convention so bad as there is every reason to suppose it. I therefore let my judgement yield to my friendship, and, as I cannot prevail on them to depart, the danger which may attend our remaining is an additional reason for my not quitting them.

The national perfidy which has always distinguished France among the other countries of Europe, seems now not to be more a diplomatic principle, than a rule of domestic government. It is so extended and generalized, that an individual is as much liable to be deceived and betrayed by confiding in a decree, as a foreign power would be by relying on the faith of a treaty.—An hundred and twenty priests, above sixty years of age, who had not taken the oaths, but who were allowed to remain by the same law that banished those who were younger, have been lately arrested, and are confined together in a house which was once a college. The people did not behold this act of cruelty with indifference, but, awed by an armed force, and the presence of the Commissioners of the Convention, they could only follow the priests to their prison with silent regret and internal horror. They, however, venture even now to mark their attachment, by taking all opportunities of seeing them, and supplying them with necessaries, which it is not very difficult to do, as they are guarded by the Bourgeois, who are generally inclined to favour them. I asked a woman to-day if she still contrived to have access to the priests, and she replied, *"Ah, oui, il y a encore de la facilite, par ce que l'on ne trouve pas des gardes ici qui ne sont pas pour eux."*\*

\* "Yes, yes, we still contrive it, because there are no guards to be found here who don't befriend them."

Thus, even the most minute and best organized tyranny may be eluded; and, indeed, if all the agents of this government acted in the spirit of its decrees, it would be insupportable even to a native of Turkey or Japan. But if some have still a remnant of humanity left, there are a sufficient number who execute the laws as unfeelingly as they are conceived.

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When these poor priests were to be removed from their several houses, it was found necessary to dislodge the Bishop of Amiens, who had for some time occupied the place fixed on for their reception. The Bishop had notice given him at twelve o'clock in the day to relinquish his lodging before evening; yet the Bishop of Amiens is a constitutional Prelate, and had, before the revolution, the cure of a large parish at Paris; nor was it without much persuasion that he accepted the see of Amiens. In the severe winter of 1789 he disposed of his plate and library, (the latter of which was said to be one of the best private collections in Paris,) to purchase bread for the poor. "But Time hath a wallet on his back, wherein he puts alms for oblivion;" and the charities of the Bishop could not shield him from the contempt and insult which pursue his profession.

I have been much distressed within the last few days on account of my friend Madame de B\_\_\_\_. I subjoining a translation of a letter I have just received from her, as it will convey to you hereafter a tolerable specimen of French liberty.

"Maison de Arret, at \_\_\_\_.

"I did not write to you, my dear friend, at the time I promised, and you will perceive, by the date of this, that I have had too good an excuse for my negligence. I have been here almost a week, and my spirits are still so much disordered, that I can with difficulty recollect myself enough to relate the circumstances of our unfortunate situation; but as it is possible you might become acquainted with them by some other means, I rather determined to send you a few lines, than suffer you to be alarmed by false or exaggerated reports." About two o'clock on Monday morning last our servants were called up, and, on their opening the door, the house was immediately filled with armed men, some of whom began searching the rooms, while others came to our bedchamber, and informed us we were arrested by order of the department, and that we must rise and accompany them to prison. It is not easy to describe the effect of such a mandate on people who, having nothing to reproach themselves with, could not be prepared for it.—As soon as we were a little recovered from our first terrors, we endeavoured to obey, and begged they would indulge us by retiring a few moments till I had put my clothes on; but neither my embarrassment, nor the screams of the child—neither decency nor humanity, could prevail. They would not even permit my maid to enter the room; and, amidst this scene of disorder, I was obliged to dress myself and the terrified infant. When this unpleasant task was finished, a general examination of our house and papers took place, and lasted until six in the evening: nothing, however, tending in the remotest degree to criminate us was found, but we were nevertheless conducted to prison, and God knows how long we are likely to remain here. The denunciation against us being secret, and

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not being able to learn either our crime or our accusers, it is difficult for us to take any measures for our enlargement. We cannot defend ourselves against a charge of which we are ignorant, nor combat the validity of a witness, who is not only allowed to remain secret, but is paid perhaps for his information.\*

\* At this time informers were paid from fifty to an hundred livres for each accusation.

“We most probably owe our misfortune to some discarded servant or personal enemy, for I believe you are convinced we have not merited it either by our discourse or our actions: if we had, the charge would have been specific; but we have reason to imagine it is nothing more than the indeterminate and general charge of being aristocrates. I did not see my mother or sister all the day we were arrested, nor till the evening of the next: the one was engaged perhaps with “Rosine and the Angola”, who were indisposed, and the other would not forego her usual card-party. Many of our friends likewise have forbore to approach us, lest their apparent interest in our fate should involve themselves; and really the alarm is so general, that I can, without much effort, forgive them.” You will be pleased to learn, that the greatest civilities I have received in this unpleasant situation, have been from some of your countrymen, who are our fellow-prisoners: they are only poor sailors, but they are truly kind and attentive, and do us various little services that render us more comfortable than we otherwise should be; for we have no servants here, having deemed it prudent to leave them to take care of our property. The second night we were here, these good creatures, who lodge in the next room, were rather merry, and awoke the child; but as they found, by its cries, that their gaiety had occasioned me some trouble, I have observed ever since that they walk softly, and avoid making the least noise, after the little prisoner is gone to rest. I believe they are pleased with me because I speak their language, and they are still more delighted with your young favourite, who is so well amused, that he begins to forget the gloom of the place, which at first terrified him extremely. “One of our companions is a nonjuring priest, who has been imprisoned under circumstances which make me almost ashamed of my country.—After having escaped from a neighbouring department, he procured himself a lodging in this town, and for some time lived very peaceably, till a woman, who suspected his profession, became extremely importunate with him to confess her. The poor man, for several days, refused, telling her, that he did not consider himself as a priest, nor wished to be known as such, nor to infringe the law which excluded him. The woman, however, still continued to persecute him, alledging, that her conscience was distressed, and that her peace depended on her being able to confess “in the right way.” At length he suffered himself to be prevailed upon—the woman received an hundred livres for informing against him, and, perhaps, the priest will be condemned to the Guillotine.\*

\* He was executed some time after.

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"I will make no reflection on this act, nor on the system of paying informers—your heart will already have anticipated all I could say. I will only add, that if you determine to remain in France, you must observe a degree of circumspection which you may not hitherto have thought necessary. Do not depend on your innocence, nor even trust to common precautions—every day furnishes examples that both are unavailing.—Adieu. —My husband offers you his respects, and your little friend embraces you sincerely. As soon as any change in our favour takes place, I will communicate it to you; but you had better not venture to write—I entrust this to Louison's mother, who is going through Amiens, as it would be unsafe to send it by the post. —Again adieu.—Yours, "Adelaide de \_\_\_\_."

Amiens, 1793.

It is observable, that we examine less scrupulously the pretensions of a nation to any particular excellence, than we do those of an individual. The reason of this is, probably, that our self-love is as much gratified by admitting the one, as in rejecting the other. When we allow the claims of a whole people, we are flattered with the idea of being above narrow prejudices, and of possessing an enlarged and liberal mind; but if a single individual arrogate to himself any exclusive superiority, our own pride immediately becomes opposed to his, and we seem but to vindicate our judgement in degrading such presumption.

I can conceive no other causes for our having so long acquiesced in the claims of the French to pre-eminent good breeding, in an age when, I believe, no person acquainted with both nations can discover any thing to justify them. If indeed politeness consisted in the repetition of a certain routine of phrases, unconnected with the mind or action, I might be obliged to decide against our country; but while decency makes a part of good manners, or feeling is preferable to a mechanical jargon, I am inclined to think the English have a merit more than they have hitherto ascribed to themselves. Do not suppose, however, that I am going to descant on the old imputations of "French flattery," and "French insincerity;" for I am far from concluding that civil behaviour gives one a right to expect kind offices, or that a man is false because he pays a compliment, and refuses a service: I only wish to infer, that an impertinence is not less an impertinence because it is accompanied by a certain set of words, and that a people, who are indelicate to excess, cannot properly be denominated "a polite people."

A French man or woman, with no other apology than "*permettez moi*," ["Give me leave."] will take a book out of your hand, look over any thing you are reading, and ask you a thousand questions relative to your most private concerns—they will enter your room, even your bedchamber, without knocking, place themselves between you and the fire, or take hold of your clothes to guess what they cost; and



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they deem these acts of rudeness sufficiently qualified by "*Je demande bien de pardons.*" ["I ask you a thousand pardons."]—They are fully convinced that the English all eat with their knives, and I have often heard this discussed with much self-complacency by those who usually shared the labours of the repast between a fork and their fingers. Our custom also of using water-glasses after dinner is an object of particular censure; yet whoever dines at a French table must frequently observe, that many of the guests might benefit by such ablutions, and their napkins always testify that some previous application would be by no means superfluous. Nothing is more common than to hear physical derangements, disorders, and their remedies, expatiated upon by the parties concerned amidst a room full of people, and that with so much minuteness of description, that a foreigner, without being very fastidious, is on some occasions apt to feel very unpleasant sympathies. There are scarcely any of the ceremonies of a lady's toilette more a mystery to one sex than the other, and men and their wives, who scarcely eat at the same table, are in this respect grossly familiar. The conversation in most societies partakes of this indecency, and the manners of an English female are in danger of becoming contaminated, while she is only endeavouring to suffer without pain the customs of those she has been taught to consider as models of politeness.

Whether you examine the French in their houses or in public, you are every where stricken with the same want of delicacy, propriety, and cleanliness. The streets are mostly so filthy, that it is perilous to approach the walls. The insides of the churches are often disgusting, in spite of the advertisements that are placed in them to request the forbearance of phthifical persons: the service does not prevent those who attend from going to and fro with the same irreverence as if the church were empty; and, in the most solemn part of the mass, a woman is suffered to importune you for a liard, as the price of the chair you sit on. At the theatres an actor or actress frequently coughs and expectorates on the stage, in a manner one should think highly unpardonable before one's most intimate friends in England, though this habit is very common to all the French. The inns abound with filth of every kind, and though the owners of them are generally civil enough, their notions of what is decent are so very different from ours, that an English traveller is not soon reconciled to them. In short, it would be impossible to enumerate all that in my opinion excludes the French from the character of a well-bred people.—Swift, who seems to have been gratified by the contemplation of physical impurity, might have done the subject justice; but I confess I am not displeased to feel that, after my long and frequent residences in France, I am still unqualified. So little are these people susceptible of delicacy, propriety, and decency, that they do not even use the words in the sense we do, nor have they any others expressive of the same meaning.

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But if they be deficient in the external forms of politeness, they are infinitely more so in that politeness which may be called mental. The simple and unerring rule of never preferring one's self, is to them more difficult of comprehension than the most difficult problem in Euclid: in small things as well as great, their own interest, their own gratification, is their leading principle; and the cold flexibility which enables them to clothe this selfish system in "fair forms," is what they call politeness.

My ideas on this subject are not recent, but they occurred to me with additional force on the perusal of Mad. de B\_\_\_\_'s letter. The behaviour of some of the poorest and least informed class of our countrymen forms a striking contrast with that of the people who arrested her, and even her own friends: the unaffected attention of the one, and the brutality and neglect of the other, are, perhaps, more just examples of English and French manners than you may have hitherto imagined. I do not, however, pretend to say that the latter are all gross and brutal, but I am myself convinced that, generally speaking, they are an unfeeling people.

I beg you to remember, that when I speak of the dispositions and character of the French, my opinions are the result of general observation, and are applicable to all ranks; but when my remarks are on habits and manners, they describe only those classes which are properly called the nation. The higher noblesse, and those attached to courts, so nearly resemble each other in all countries, that they are necessarily excepted in these delineations, which are intended to mark the distinguishing features of a people at large: for, assuredly, when the French assert, and their neighbours repeat, that they are a polite nation, it is not meant that those who have important offices or dignified appellations are polite: they found their claims on their superiority as a people, and it is in this light I consider them. My examples are chiefly drawn, not from the very inferior, nor from the most eminent ranks; neither from the retailer of a shop, nor the claimant of a *tabouret*,\* or *les grandes ou petites entrees*; but from the gentry, those of easy fortunes, merchants, &c.—in fact, from people of that degree which it would be fair to cite as what may be called genteel society in England.

\* The *tabouret* was a stool allowed to the Ladies of the Court particularly distinguished by rank or favour, when in presence of the Royal Family.—"Les entrees" gave a familiar access to the King and Queen.

This cessation of intercourse with our country dispirits me, and, as it will probably continue some time, I shall amuse myself by noting more particularly the little occurrences which may not reach your public prints, but which tend more than great events to mark both the spirit of the government and that of the people.—Perhaps you may be ignorant that the prohibition of the English mails was not the consequence of a decree of the Convention, but a simple order of its commissioners; and I have some



reason to think that even they acted at the instigation of an individual who harbours a mean and pitiful dislike to England and its inhabitants.—Yours, &c.

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May 18, 1793.

Near six weeks ago a decree was passed by the Convention, obliging all strangers, who had not purchased national property, or who did not exercise some profession, to give security to the amount of half their supposed fortune, and under these conditions they were to receive a certificate, allowing them to reside, and were promised the protection of the laws. The administrators of the departments, who perceive that they become odious by executing the decrees of the Convention, begin to relax much of their diligence, and it is not till long after a law is promulgated, and their personal fear operates as a stimulant, that they seriously enforce obedience to these mandates. This morning, however, we were summoned by the Committee of our section (or ward) in order to comply with the terms of the decree, and had I been directed only by my own judgement, I should have given the preference to an immediate return to England; but Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ is yet ill, and Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ is disposed to continue. In vain have I quoted “how fickle France was branded ‘midst the nations of the earth for perfidy and breach of public faith;” in vain have I reasoned upon the injustice of a government that first allured strangers to remain by insidious offers of protection, and now subjects them to conditions which many may find it difficult to subscribe to: Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ wishes to see our situation in the most favourable point of view: he argues upon the moral impossibility of our being liable to any inconvenience, and persists in believing that one government may act with treachery towards another, yet, distinguishing between falsehood and meanness, maintain its faith with individuals—in short, we have concluded a sort of treaty, by which we are bound, under the forfeiture of a large sum, to behave peaceably and submit to the laws. The government, in return, empowers us to reside, and promises protection and hospitality.

It is to be observed, that the spirit of this regulation depends upon those it affects producing six witnesses of their “*civisme*,”\* yet so little interest do the people take on these occasions, that our witnesses were neighbours we had scarcely ever seen, and even one was a man who happened to be casually passing by.

\* Though the meaning of this word is obvious, we have no one that is exactly synonymous to it. The Convention intend by it an attachment to their government: but the people do not trouble themselves about the meaning of words—they measure their unwilling obedience by the letter.

These Committees, which form the last link of a chain of despotism, are composed of low tradesmen and day-labourers, with an attorney, or some person that can read and write, at their head, as President. Priests and nobles, with all that are related, or anywise attached, to them, are excluded by the law; and it is understood that true sans-culottes only should be admitted.

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With all these precautions, the indifference and hatred of the people to their government are so general, that, perhaps, there are few places where this regulation is executed so as to answer the purposes of the jealous tyranny that conceived it. The members of these Committees seem to exact no farther compliances than such as are absolutely necessary to the mere form of the proceeding, and to secure themselves from the imputation of disobedience; and are very little concerned whether the real design of the legislature be accomplished or not. This negligence, or ill-will, which prevails in various instances, tempers, in some degree, the effect of that restless suspicion which is the usual concomitant of an uncertain, but arbitrary, power. The affections or prejudices that surround a throne, by ensuring the safety of the Monarch, engage him to clemency, and the laws of a mild government are, for the most part, enforced with exactness; but a new and precarious authority, which neither imposes on the understanding nor interests the heart, which is supported only by a palpable and unadorned tyranny, is in its nature severe, and it becomes the common cause of the people to counteract the measures of a despotism which they are unable to resist.—This (as I have before had occasion to observe) renders the condition of the French less insupportable, but it is by no means sufficient to banish the fears of a stranger who has been accustomed to look for security, not from a relaxation or disregard of the laws, but from their efficacy; not from the characters of those who execute them, but from the rectitude with which they are formed.—What would you think in England, if you were obliged to contemplate with dread the three branches of your legislature, and depend for the protection of your person and property on soldiers and constables? Yet such is nearly the state we are in; and indeed a system of injustice and barbarism gains ground so fast, that almost any apprehension is justified.—The Tribunal Revolutionnaire has already condemned a servant maid for her political opinions; and one of the Judges of this tribunal lately introduced a man to the Jacobins, with high panegyrics, because, as he alledged, he had greatly contributed to the condemnation of a criminal. The same Judge likewise apologized for having as yet sent but a small number to the Guillotine, and promises, that, on the first appearance of a “Brissotin” before him, he will show him no mercy.

When the minister of public justice thus avows himself the agent of a party, a government, however recent its formation, must be far advanced in depravity; and the corruption of those who are the interpreters of the law has usually been the last effort of expiring power.

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My friends, *Mons.* And *Mad.* de B\_\_\_\_, are released from their confinement; not as you might expect, by proving their innocence, but by the efforts of an individual, who had more weight than their accuser: and, far from obtaining satisfaction for the injury they have received, they are obliged to accept as a favour the liberty they were deprived of by malice and injustice. They will, most probably, never be acquainted with the nature of the charges brought against them; and their accuser will escape with impunity, and, perhaps, meet with reward.

All the French papers are filled with descriptions of the enthusiasm with which the young men “start to arms” [*Offian.*] at the voice of their country; yet it is very certain, that this enthusiasm is of so subtle and aerial a form as to be perceivable only to those who are interested in discovering it. In some places these enthusiastic warriors continue to hide themselves—from others they are escorted to the place of their destination by nearly an equal number of dragoons; and no one, I believe, who can procure money to pay a substitute, is disposed to go himself. This is sufficiently proved by the sums demanded by those who engage as substitutes: last year from three to five hundred livres was given; at present no one will take less than eight hundred or a thousand, besides being furnished with clothes, &c. The only real volunteers are the sons of aristocrats, and the relations of emigrants, who, sacrificing their principles to their fears, hope, by enlisting in the army, to protect their estates and families: those likewise who have lucrative employments, and are afraid of losing them, affect great zeal, and expect to purchase impunity for civil peculation at home, by the military services of their children abroad.

This, I assure you, is the real state of that enthusiasm which occasions such an expence of eloquence to our gazette-writers; but these fallacious accounts are not like the ephemeral deceits of your party prints in England, the effect of which is destroyed in a few hours by an opposite assertion. None here are bold enough to contradict what their sovereigns would have believed; and a town or district, driven almost to revolt by the present system of recruiting, consents very willingly to be described as marching to the frontiers with martial ardour, and burning to combat les esclaves des tyrans! By these artifices, one department is misled with regard to the dispositions of another, and if they do not excite to emulation, they, at least, repress by fear; and, probably, many are reduced to submission, who would resist, were they not doubtful of the support and union of their neighbours. Every possible precaution is taken to prevent any connections between the different departments—people who are not known cannot obtain passports without the recommendation of two housekeepers—you must give an account of the business you go upon, of the carriage you mean to travel in, whether it

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has two wheels or four: all of which must be specified in your passport: and you cannot send your baggage from one town to another without the risk of having it searched. All these things are so disgusting and troublesome, that I begin to be quite of a different opinion from Brutus, and should certainly prefer being a slave among a free people, than thus be tormented with the recollection that I am a native of England in a land of slavery. Whatever liberty the French might have acquired by their first revolution, it is now much like Sir John Cutler's worsted stockings, so torn, and worn, and disguised by patchings and mendings, that the original texture is not discoverable.—Yours, &c.

June 3, 1793.

We have been three days without receiving newspapers; but we learn from the reports of the courier, that the Brissotins are overthrown, that many of them have been arrested, and several escaped to raise adherents in the departments. I, however, doubt much if their success will be very general: the people have little preference between Brissot and Marat, Condorcet and Robespierre, and are not greatly solicitous about the names or even principles of those who govern them—they are not yet accustomed to take that lively interest in public events which is the effect of a popular constitution. In England every thing is a subject of debate and contest, but here they wait in silence the result of any political measure or party dispute; and, without entering into the merits of the cause, adopt whatever is successful. While the King was yet alive, the news of Paris was eagerly sought after, and every disorder of the metropolis created much alarm: but one would almost suppose that even curiosity had ceased at his death, for I have observed no subsequent event (except the defection of Dumouriez) make any very serious impression. We hear, therefore, with great composure, the present triumph of the more violent republicans, and suffer without impatience this interregnum of news, which is to continue until the Convention shall have determined in what manner the intelligence of their proceedings shall be related to the departments.

The great solicitude of the people is now rather about their physical existence than their political one—provisions are become enormously dear, and bread very scarce: our servants often wait two hours at the baker's, and then return without bread for breakfast. I hope, however, the scarcity is rather artificial than real. It is generally supposed to be occasioned by the unwillingness of the farmers to sell their corn for paper. Some measures have been adopted with an intention of remedying this evil, though the origin of it is beyond the reach of decree. It originates in that distrust of government which reconciles one part of the community to starving the other, under the idea of self-preservation. While every individual persists in establishing it as a maxim, that any thing is better than assignats, we must expect that all things will be difficult to procure, and will, of course, bear a high price. I fear, all the empiricism of the legislature cannot produce a nostrum for this want of faith. Dragoons and penal laws only "linger, and linger it out;" the disease is incurable.

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My friends, *Mons.* and *Mad. de B\_\_\_\_\_*, by way of consolation for their imprisonment, now find themselves on the list of emigrants, though they have never been a single day absent from their own province, or from places of residence where they are well known. But that they may not murmur at this injustice, the municipality have accompanied their names with those of others who have not even been absent from the town, and of one gentleman in particular, who I believe may have been seen on the ramparts every day for these seven years.—This may appear to you only very absurd, and you may imagine the consequences easily obviated; yet these mistakes are the effect of private malice, and subject the persons affected by them to an infinity of expence and trouble. They are obliged, in order to avert the confiscation of their property, to appear, in every part of the republic where they have possessions, with attestations of their constant residence in France, and perhaps suffer a thousand mortifications from the official ignorance and brutality of the persons to whom they apply. No remedy lies against the authors of these vexations, and the sufferer who is prudent fears even to complain.

I have, in a former letter, noticed the great number of beggars that swarm at Arras: they are not less numerous at Amiens, though of a different description—they are neither so disgusting, nor so wretched, but are much more importunate and insolent—they plead neither sickness nor infirmity, and are, for the most part, able and healthy. How so many people should beg by profession in a large manufacturing town, it is difficult to conceive; but, whatever may be the cause, I am tempted to believe the effect has some influence on the manners of the inhabitants of Amiens. I have seen no town in France so remarkable for a rude and unfeeling behaviour, and it is not fanciful to conjecture that the multitude of poor may tend in part to occasion it. The constant view of a sort of misery that excites little compassion, of an intrusive necessity which one is more desirous to repulse than to relieve, cannot but render the heart callous, and the manners harsh. The avarice of commerce, which is here unaccompanied by its liberality, is glad to confound real distress with voluntary and idle indigence, till, in time, an absence of feeling becomes part of the character; and the constant habit of petulant refusals, or of acceding more from fatigue than benevolence, has perhaps a similar effect on the voice, gesture, and external.

This place has been so often visited by those who describe better than myself, that I have thought it unnecessary to mention public buildings, or any thing equally obvious to the traveller or the resident. The beauty and elegance of the cathedral have been celebrated for ages, and I only remind you of it to indulge my national vanity in the reflection that one of the most splendid monuments of Gothic architecture in France is the work of our English ancestors.

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The edifice is in perfect preservation, and the hand of power has not yet ventured to appropriate the plate or ornaments; but this forbearance will most probably give way to temptation and impunity. The Convention will respect ancient prejudices no longer than they suppose the people have courage to defend them, and the latter seem so entirely subdued, that, however they may murmur, I do not think any serious resistance is to be expected from them, even in behalf of the relics of St. Firmin. [St. Firmin, the patron of Amiens, where he is, in many of the streets, represented with his head in his hand.]—The bust of Henry the Fourth, which was a present from the Monarch himself, is banished the town-house, where it was formerly placed, though, I hope, some royalist has taken possession of it, and deposited it in safety till better times. This once popular Prince is now associated with Nero and Caligula, and it is “leze nation” to speak of him to a thorough republican.—I know not if the French had before the revolution reached the acme of perfection, but they have certainly been retrograding very fast since. Every thing that used to create fondness and veneration is despised, and things are esteemed only in proportion as they are worthless. Perhaps the bust of Robespierre may one day replace that of Henry the Fourth, and, to speak in the style of an eastern epistle, “what can I say more?”

Should you ever travel this way with Gray in your hand, you will look for the Ursuline convent, and regret the paintings he mentions: but you may recollect, for your consolation, that they are merely pretty, and remarkable only for being the work of one of the nuns.—Gray, who seems to have had that enthusiastic respect for religious orders common to young minds, admired them on this account; and numbers of English travellers have, I dare say, prepossessed by such an authority, experienced the same disappointment I myself felt on visiting the Ursuline church. Many of the chapels belonging to these communities were very showy and much decorated with gilding and sculpture: some of them are sold for a mere trifle, but the greatest part are filled with corn and forage, and on the door is inscribed “Magazin des armees.” The change is almost incredible to those who remember, that less than four years ago the Catholic religion was strictly practised, and the violation of these sanctuaries deemed sacrilegious. Our great historian [Gibbon] might well say “the influence of superstition is fluctuating and precarious;” though, in the present instance, it has rather been restrained than subdued; and the people, who have not been convinced, but intimidated, secretly lament these innovations, and perhaps reproach themselves conscientiously with their submission.—Yours.

June 20, 1793.



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Mercier, in his *Tableau de Paris*, notices, on several occasions, the little public spirit existing among his countrymen—it is also observable, that many of the laws and customs presume on this deficiency, and the name of republicans has by no means altered that cautious disposition which makes the French consider either misfortunes or benefits only as their personal interest is affected by them.—I am just returned from a visit to Abbeville, where we were much alarmed on Sunday by a fire at the Paraclete convent. The tocsin rang great part of the day, and the principal street of the town was in danger of being destroyed. In such circumstances, you will suppose, that people of all ranks eagerly crowded to offer their service, and endeavour to stop the progress of so terrible a calamity. By no means—the gates of the town were shut to prevent its entire evacuation, many hid themselves in garrets and cellars, and dragoons patrolled the streets, and even entered the houses, to force the inhabitants to assist in procuring water; while the consternation, usually the effect of such accidents, was only owing to the fear of being obliged to aid the sufferers.—This employment of military coercion for what humanity alone should dictate, is not ascribable to the principles of the present government—it was the same before the revolution, (except that the agents of the ancient system were not so brutal and despotic as the soldiers of the republic,) and compulsion was always deemed necessary where there was no stimulant but the general interest.

In England, at any alarm of the fort, all distinction of ranks is forgotten, and every one is solicitous to contribute as much as he is able to the safety of his fellow-citizens; and, so far from an armed force being requisite to procure assistance, the greatest difficulty is to repress the too-officious zeal of the croud.—I do not pretend to account for this national disparity, but I fear what a French gentleman once said to me of the Parisians is applicable to the general character, "*Ils sont tous egoistes*," ["They are all selfish!"] and they would not do a benevolent action at the risk of soiling a coat or tearing a ruffle.

Distrust of the assignats, and scarcity of bread, have occasioned a law to oblige the farmers, in every part of the republic, to sell their corn at a certain price, infinitely lower than what they have exacted for some months past. The consequence of this was, that, on the succeeding market days, no corn came to market, and detachments of dragoons are obliged to scour the country to preserve us from a famine. If it did not convey an idea both of the despotism and want with which the nation is afflicted, one should be amused by the ludicrous figures of the farmers, who enter the town preceded by soldiers, and reposing with doleful visages on their sacks of wheat. Sometimes you see a couple of dragoons leading in triumph an old woman and an ass, who follow with lingering steps their military conductors; and the very ass seems to sympathize with his mistress on the disaster of selling her corn at a reduced price, and for paper, when she had hoped to hoard it till a counter-revolution should bring back gold and silver.



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The farmers are now, perhaps, the greatest aristocrates in the country; but as both their patriotism and their aristocracy have been a mere calculation of interest, the severity exercised on their avarice is not much to be regretted. The original fault is, however, in an usurped government, which inspires no confidence, and which, to supply an administration lavish beyond all example, has been obliged to issue such an immense quantity of paper as nearly destroys its credit. In political, as in moral, vices, the first always necessitates a second, and these must still be sustained by others; until, at length, the very sense of right and wrong becomes impaired, and the latter is not only preferred from habit, but from choice.

Thus the arbitrary emission of paper has been necessarily followed by still more arbitrary decrees to support it. For instance—the people have been obliged to sell their corn at a stated price, which has again been the source of various and general vexations. The farmers, irritated by this measure, concealed their grain, or sold it privately, rather than bring it to market.—Hence, some were supplied with bread, and others absolutely in want of it. This was remedied by the interference of the military, and a general search for corn has taken place in all houses without exception, in order to discover if any was secreted; even our bedchambers were examined on this occasion: but we begin to be so accustomed to the *visite domiciliaire*, that we find ourselves suddenly surrounded by the *Garde Nationale*, without being greatly alarmed. —I know not how your English patriots, who are so enamoured of French liberty, yet thunder with the whole force of their eloquence against the ingress of an exciseman to a tobacco warehouse, would reconcile this domestic inquisition; for the municipalities here violate your tranquillity in this manner under any pretext they choose, and that too with an armed cortege sufficient to undertake the siege of your house in form.

About fifteen departments are in insurrection, ostensibly in behalf of the expelled Deputies; but I believe I am authorized in saying, it is by no means the desire of the people at large to interfere. All who are capable of reflection consider the dispute merely as a family quarrel, and are not partial enough to either party to adopt its cause. The troops they have already raised have been collected by the personal interest of the members who contrived to escape, or by an attempt of a few of the royalists to make one half of the faction subservient to the destruction of the other. If you judge of the principles of the nation by the success of the *Foederalists*,\* and the superiority of the Convention, you will be extremely deceived; for it is demonstrable, that neither the most zealous partizans of the ancient system, nor those of the abolished constitution, have taken any share in the dispute; and the departments most notoriously aristocratic have all signified their adherence to the proceedings of the Assembly.

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\* On the 31st of May and 2d of June, the Convention, who had been for some months struggling with the Jacobins and the municipality of Paris, was surrounded by an armed force: the most moderate of the Deputies (those distinguished by the name of Brissotins,) were either menaced into a compliance with the measures of the opposite faction, or arrested; others took flight, and, by representing the violence and slavery in which the majority of the Convention was holden, excited some of the departments to take arms in their favour.—This contest, during its short existence, was called the war of the Foederalists.—The result is well known.

Those who would gladly take an active part in endeavouring to establish a good government, are averse from risking their lives and properties in the cause of Brissot or Condorcet.—At Amiens, where almost every individual is an aristocrate, the fugitive Deputies could not procure the least encouragement, but the town would have received Dumouriez, and proclaimed the King without opposition. But this schism in the legislature is considered as a mere contest of banditti, about the division of spoil, not calculated to excite an interest in those they have plundered and oppressed.

The royalists who have been so mistaken as to make any effort on this occasion, will, I fear, fall a sacrifice, having acted for the most part without union or concert; and their junction with the Deputies renders them suspicious, if not odious, to their own party. The extreme difficulty, likewise, of communication between the departments, and the strict watch observed over all travellers, form another obstacle to the success of any attempt at present; and, on the whole, the only hope of deliverance for the French seems to rest upon the allied armies and the insurgents of La Vendee.

When I say this, I do not assert from prejudices, which often deceive, nor from conjecture, that is always fallible; but from unexceptionable information—from an intercourse with various ranks of people, and a minute observance of all. I have scarcely met with a single person who does not relate the progress of the insurgents in La Vendee with an air of satisfaction, or who does not appear to expect with impatience the surrender of Conde: and even their language, perhaps unconsciously, betrays their sentiments, for I remark, they do not, when they speak of any victory gained by the arms of the republic, say, Nous, or Notre armee, but, Les Francais, and, Les troupes de la republique;—and that always in a tone as though they were speaking of an enemy.—Adieu.

June 30, 1793.

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Our modern travellers are mostly either sentimental or philosophical, or courtly or political; and I do not remember to have read any who describe the manner of living among the gentry and middle ranks of life in France. I will, therefore, relieve your attention for a moment from our actual distresses, and give you the picture of a day as usually passed by those who have easy fortunes and no particular employment.—The social assemblage of a whole family in the morning, as in England, is not very common, for the French do not generally breakfast: when they do, it is without form, and on fruit, bread, wine, and water, or sometimes coffee; but tea is scarcely ever used, except by the sick. The morning is therefore passed with little intercourse, and in extreme dishabille. The men loiter, fiddle, work tapestry, and sometimes read, in a robe de chambre, or a jacket and "*pantalons*;" [Trowsers.] while the ladies, equipped only in a short manteau and petticoat, visit their birds, knit, or, more frequently, idle away the forenoon without doing any thing. It is not customary to walk or make visits before dinner, and if by chance any one calls, he is received in the bedchamber. At half past one or two they dine, but without altering the negligence of their apparel, and the business of the toilette does not begin till immediately after the repast. About four, visits of ceremony begin, and may be made till six or seven according to the season; but those who intend passing an evening at any particular house, go before six, and the card parties generally finish between eight and nine. People then adjourn to their supper engagements, which are more common than those for dinner, and are, for the most part, in different places, and considered as a separate thing from the earlier amusements of the evening. They keep better hours than the English, most families being in bed by half past ten. The theatres are also regulated by these sober habits, and the dramatic representations are usually over by nine.

A day passed in this manner is, as you may imagine, susceptible of much ennui, and the French are accordingly more subject to it than to any other complaint, and hold it in greatest dread than either sickness or misfortune. They have no conception how one can remain two hours alone without being ennuye a la mort; and but few, comparatively speaking, read for amusement: you may enter ten houses without seeing a book; and it is not to be wondered at that people, who make a point of staying at home all the morning, yet do not read, are embarrassed with the disposition of so much time.—It is this that occasions such a general fondness for domestic animals, and so many barbarous musicians, and male-workers of tapestry and tambour.

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I cannot but attribute this littleness and dislike of morning exercise to the quantity of animal food the French eat at night, and to going to rest immediately after it, in consequence of which their activity is checked by indigestions, and they feel heavy and uncomfortable for half the succeeding day.—The French pique themselves on being a gayer nation than the English; but they certainly must exclude their mornings from the account, for the forlorn and neglected figure of a Frenchman till dinner is a very antidote to cheerfulness, especially if contrasted with the animation of our countrymen, whose forenoon is passed in riding or walking, and who make themselves at least decent before they appear even in their own families.

The great difficulty the French have in finding amusement makes them averse from long residences in the country, and it is very uncommon for those who can afford only one house not to prefer a town; but those whose fortune will admit of it, live about three months of the year in the country, and the rest in the neighbouring town. This, indeed, as they manage it, is no very considerable expence, for the same furniture often serves for both habitations, and the one they quit being left empty, requires no person to take charge of it, especially as house-breaking is very uncommon in France; at least it was so before the revolution, when the police was more strict, and the laws against robbers were more severe.

You will say, I often describe the habits and manners of a nation so frequently visited, as though I were writing from Kamschatka or Japan; yet it is certain, as I have remarked above, that those who are merely itinerant have not opportunities of observing the modes of familiar life so well as one who is stationary, and travellers are in general too much occupied by more important observations to enter into the minute and trifling details which are the subject of my communications to you. But if your attention be sometimes fatigued by occurrences or relations too well known, or of too little consequence to be interesting, I claim some merit in never having once described the proportions of a building, nor given you the history of a town; and I might have contrived as well to tax your patience by an erudite description, as a superficial reflection, or a female remark. The truth is, my pen is generally guided by circumstances as they rise, and my ideas have seldom any deeper origin than the scene before me. I have no books here, and I am apt to think if professed travellers were deprived of this resource, many learned etymologies and much profound compilation would be lost to the modern reader.

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The insurgents of La Vendee continue to have frequent and decided successes, but the insurrections in the other departments languish. The avowed object of liberating the Convention is not calculated to draw adherents, and if any better purpose be intended, while a faction are the promoters of it, it will be regarded with too much suspicion to procure any effectual movement. Yet, however partial and unconnected this revolt may be, it is an object of great jealousy and inquietude: all the addresses or petitions brought in favour of it are received with disapprobation, and suppressed in the official bulletin of the legislature; but those which express contrary sentiments are ordered to be inserted with the usual terms of “applaudi, adopte, et mention honorable.”—In this manner the army and the people, who derive their intelligence from these accounts (which are pasted up in the streets,) are kept in ignorance of the real state of distant provinces, and, what is still more important for the Convention, the communication of examples, which they know so many are disposed to imitate, is retarded.

The people here are nearly in the same state they have been in for some time—murmuring in secret, and submitting in public; expecting every thing from that energy in others which they have not themselves, and accumulating the discontents they are obliged to suppress. The Convention call them the brave republicans of Amiens; but if their bravery were as unequivocal as their aristocracy, they would soon be at the gates of Paris. Even the first levies are not all departed for the frontiers, and some who were prevailed on to go are already returned.—All the necessaries of life are augmenting in price—the people complain, pillage the shops and the markets one day, and want the next. Many of the departments have opposed the recruiting much more decidedly than they have ventured to do here; and it was not without inspiring terror by numerous arrests, that the levies which were immediately necessary were procured.—France offers no prospect but that of scarcity, disorder, and oppression; and my friends begin to perceive that we have committed an imprudence in remaining so long. No passports can now be obtained, and we must, as well as several very respectable families still here, abide the event of the war.

Some weeks have elapsed since I had letters from England, and those we receive from the interior come open, or sealed with the seal of the district. This is not peculiar to our letters, as being foreigners, but the same unceremonious inspection is practised with the correspondence of the French themselves. Thus, in this land of liberty, all epistolary intercourse has ceased, except for mere matters of business; and though in the declaration of the rights of man it be asserted, that every one is entitled to write or print his thoughts, yet it is certain no person can entrust a letter to the post, but at the risk of having

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it opened; nor could Mr. Thomas Paine himself venture to express the slightest disapprobation of the measures of government, without hazarding his freedom, and, in the end, perhaps, his life. Even these papers, which I reserve only for your amusement, which contain only the opinions of an individual, and which never have been communicated, I am obliged to conceal with the utmost circumspection; for should they happen to fall into the hands of our domiciliary inquisitors, I should not, like your English liberties, escape with the gentle correction of imprisonment, or the pillory.—A man, who had murdered his wife, was lately condemned to twenty years imprisonment only; but people are guillotined every day for a simple discourse, or an inadvertent expression.—Yours.

Amiens, July 5, 1793.

It will be some consolation to the French, if, from the wreck of their civil liberty, they be able to preserve the mode of administering justice as established by the constitution of 1789. Were I not warranted by the best information, I should not venture an opinion on the subject without much diffidence, but chance has afforded me opportunities that do not often occur to a stranger, and the new code appears to me, in many parts, singularly excellent, both as to principle and practice.—Justice is here gratuitous—those who administer it are elected by the people—they depend only on their salaries, and have no fees whatever. Reasonable allowances are made to witnesses both for time and expences at the public charge—a loss is not doubled by the costs of a prosecution to recover it. In cases of robbery, where property found is detained for the sake of proof, it does not become the prey of official rapacity, but an absolute restitution takes place.—The legislature has, in many respects, copied the laws of England, but it has simplified the forms, and rectified those abuses which make our proceedings in some cases almost as formidable to the prosecutor as to the culprit. Having to compose an entire new system, and being unshackled by professional reverence for precedents, they were at liberty to benefit by example, to reject those errors which have been long sanctioned by their antiquity, and are still permitted to exist, through our dread of innovation. The French, however, made an attempt to improve on the trial by jury, which I think only evinces that the institution as adopted in England is not to be excelled. The decision is here given by ballot—unanimity is not required—and three white balls are sufficient to acquit the prisoner. This deviation from our mode seems to give the rich an advantage over the poor. I fear, that, in the number of twelve men taken from any country, it may sometimes happen that three may be found corruptible: now the wealthy delinquent can avail himself of this human failing; but, “through tatter’d robes small vices do appear,” and the indigent sinner has less chance of escaping than another.



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It is to be supposed, that, at this time, the vigour of the criminal laws is much relaxed, and their execution difficult. The army offers refuge and impunity to guilt of all kinds, and the magistrates themselves would be apprehensive of pursuing an offender who was protected by the mob, or, which is the same thing, by the Jacobins.

The groundwork of much of the French civil jurisprudence is arbitration, particularly in those trifling processes which originate in a spirit of litigation; and it is not easy for a man here, however well disposed, to spend twenty pounds in a contest about as many pence, or to ruin himself in order to secure the possession of half an acre of land. In general, redress is easily obtained without unnecessary procrastination, and with little or no cost. Perhaps most legal codes may be simple and efficacious at their first institution, and the circumstance of their being encumbered with forms which render them complex and expensive, may be the natural consequence of length of time and change of manners. Littleton might require no commentary in the reign of Henry II. and the mysterious fictions that constitute the science of modern judicature were perhaps familiar, and even necessary, to our ancestors. It is to be regretted that we cannot adapt our laws to the age in which we live, and assimilate them to our customs; but the tendency of our nature to extremes perpetuates evils, and makes both the wise and the timid enemies to reform. We fear, like John Calvin, to tear the habit while we are stripping off the superfluous decoration; and the example of this country will probably long act as a discouragement to all change, either judicial or political. The very name of France will repress the desire of innovation—we shall cling to abuses as though they were our support, and every attempt to remedy them will become an objection of suspicion and terror.—Such are the advantages which mankind will derive from the French revolution.

The Jacobin constitution is now finished, and, as far as I am able to judge, it is what might be expected from such an origin: calculated to flatter the people with an imaginary sovereignty—to place the whole power of election in the class most easily misled—to exclude from the representation those who have a natural interest in the welfare of the country, and to establish the reign of anarchy and intrigue.—Yet, however averse the greater number of the French may be from such a constitution, no town or district has dared to reject it; and I remark, that amongst those who have been foremost in offering their acceptance, are many of the places most notoriously aristocratic. I have enquired of some of the inhabitants of these very zealous towns on what principle they acted so much in opposition to their known sentiments: the reply is always, that they fear the vengeance of the Jacobins, and that they are awed by military force. This reasoning is, of course, unanswerable; and we learn, from the debates of the Convention, that the people have received the new constitution "*avec la plus vive reconnaissance*," ["With the most lively gratitude."] and that they have all sworn to die in its defence.—Yours, &c.

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July 14, 1793.

The return of this day cannot but suggest very melancholy reflections to all who are witnesses of the changes which a single year has produced. In twelve months only the government of France has been overturned, her commerce destroyed, the country depopulated to raise armies, and the people deprived of bread to support them. A despotism more absolute than that of Turkey is established, the manners of the nation are corrupted, and its moral character is disgraced in the eyes of all Europe. A barbarous rage has laid waste the fairest monuments of art—whatever could embellish society, or contribute to soften existence, has disappeared under the reign of these modern Goths—even the necessities of life are becoming rare and inadequate to the consumption—the rich are plundered and persecuted, yet the poor are in want—the national credit is in the last stage of debasement, yet an immense debt is created, and daily accumulating; and apprehension, distrust, and misery, are almost universal.—All this is the work of a set of adventurers who are now divided among themselves—who are accusing each other of those crimes which the world imputes to them all—and who, conscious they can no longer deceive the nation, now govern with the fear and suspicion of tyrants. Every thing is sacrificed to the army and Paris, and the people are robbed of their subsistence to supply an iniquitous metropolis, and a military force that awes and oppresses them.

The new constitution has been received here officially, but no one seems to take the least interest in it: it is regarded in just the same light as a new tax, or any other ministerial mandate, not sent to be discussed but obeyed. The mode of proclaiming it conveyed a very just idea of its origin and tendency. It was placed on a cushion, supported by Jacobins in their red caps, and surrounded by dragoons. It seemed the image of Anarchy, guarded by Despotism.—In this manner they paraded the town, and the “sacred volume” was then deposed on an altar erected on the Grande Place.—The Garde Nationale, who were ordered to be under arms, attended, and the constitution was read. A few of the soldiers cried “Vive la republique!” and every one returned home with countenances in which delight was by no means the prevailing expression.

A trifling incident which I noticed on this occasion, will serve, among others of the same kind that I could enumerate, to prove that even the very lower class of the people begin to ridicule and despise their legislators. While a municipal officer was very gravely reading the constitution, an ass forced his way across the square, and placed himself near the spot where the ceremony was performing: a boy, who was under our window, on observing it, cried out, “Why don’t they give him the *accolade fraternele!*”\*



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\* Fraternal embrace.—This is the reception given by the President to any one whom the Convention wish particularly to distinguish. On an occasion of the sort, the fraternal embrace was given to an old Negress.—The honours of the fitting are also daily accorded to deputations of fish-women, chimney-sweepers, children, and all whose missions are flattering. There is no homage so mean as not to gratify the pride of those to whom dominion is new; and these expressions are so often and so strangely applied, that it is not surprizing they are become the cant phrases of the mob.

—“Yes, (rejoined another,) and admit him *aux honneurs de la feance*.” [To the honours of the fitting.] This disposition to jest with their misfortunes is, however, not so common as it was formerly. A bon mot may alleviate the loss of a battle, and a lampoon on the court solace under the burthen of a new impost; but the most thoughtless or improvident can find nothing very facetious in the prospect of absolute want—and those who have been used to laugh under a circumscription of their political liberty, feel very seriously the evil of a government which endows its members with unlimited power, and enables a Deputy, often the meanest and most profligate character of his department, to imprison all who, from caprice, interest, or vengeance, may have become the objects of his persecution.

I know this will appear so monstrous to an Englishman, that, had I an opportunity of communicating such a circumstance before it were publicly authenticated, you would suppose it impossible, and imagine I had been mistaken, or had written only from report; it is nevertheless true, that every part of France is infested by these Commissioners, who dispose, without appeal, of the freedom and property of the whole department to which they are sent. It frequently happens, that men are delegated to places where they have resided, and thus have an opportunity of gratifying their personal malice on all who are so unfortunate as to be obnoxious to them. Imagine, for a moment, a village-attorney acting with uncontrouled authority over the country where he formerly exercised his profession, and you will have some idea of what passes here, except that I hope no class of men in England are so bad as those which compose the major part of the National Convention.—Yours, &c.

July 23, 1793.

The events of Paris which are any way remarkable are so generally circulated, that I do not often mention them, unless to mark their effect on the provinces; but you will be so much misled by the public papers with regard to the death of Marat, that I think it necessary to notice the subject while it is yet recent in my memory. Were the clubs, the Convention, or the sections of Paris to be regarded as expressing the sense of the people, the assassination of this turbulent journalist must be considered being the case, that the departments are for the most part,

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if not rejoiced, indifferent—and many of those who impute to him the honour of martyrdom, or assist at his apotheosis, are much better satisfied both with his christian and heathen glories, than they were while he was living to propagate anarchy and pillage. The reverence of the Convention itself is a mere political pantomime. Within the last twelve months nearly all the individuals who compose it have treated Marat with contempt; and I perfectly remember even Danton, one of the members of the Committee of Salut Publique, accusing him of being a contre revolutionnaire.

But the people, to use a popular expression here, require to be electrified.—St. Fargeau is almost forgotten, and Marat is to serve the same purposes when dead, to which he contributed while living.—An extreme grossness and want of feeling form the characteristic feature of the Parisians; they are ignorant, credulous, and material, and the Convention do not fail on all occasions to avail themselves of these qualities. The corpse of Marat decently enclosed in a coffin would have made little impression, and it was not pity, but revenge, which was to be excited. The disgusting object of a dead leper was therefore exposed to the eyes of a metropolis calling itself the most refined and enlightened of all Europe—

“And what t’oblivion better were consign’d,  
Is hung on high to poison half mankind.”

I know not whether these lines are most applicable to the display of Marat’s body, or the consecration of his fame, but both will be a lasting stigma on the manners and morals of Paris.

If the departments, however, take no interest in the loss of Marat, the young woman who assassinated him has created a very lively one. The slightest anecdotes concerning her are collected with avidity, and repeated with admiration; and this is a still farther proof of what you have heard me advance, that neither patriotism nor humanity has an abundant growth in this country. The French applaud an act in itself horrid and unjustifiable, while they have scarcely any conception of the motive, and such a sacrifice seems to them something supernatural.—The Jacobins assert, that Charlotte Corday was an emissary of the allied powers, or, rather, of Mr. Pitt; and the Parisians have the complaisance to believe, that a young woman could devote herself to certain destruction at the instigation of another, as though the same principles which would lead a person to undertake a diplomatic commission, would induce her to meet death.

I wrote some days ago to a lady of my acquaintance at Caen, to beg she would procure me some information relative to this extraordinary female, and I subjoin an extract of her answer, which I have just received:

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“Miss Corday was a native of this department, and had, from her earliest years, been very carefully educated by an aunt who lives at Caen. Before she was twenty she had decided on taking the veil, and her noviciate was just expired when the Constituent Assembly interdicted all religious vows for the future: she then left the convent, and resided entirely with her aunt. The beauty of her person, and particularly her mental acquisitions, which were superior to that of French women in general, rendered an object of much admiration. She spoke uncommonly well, and her discourse often turned on the ancients, and on such subjects as indicated that masculine turn of mind which has since proved so fatal to her. Perhaps her conversation was a little tinged with that pedantry not unjustly attributed to our sex when they have a little more knowledge than usual, but, at the same time, not in such a degree as to render it unpleasant. She seldom gave any opinion on the revolution, but frequently attended the municipalities to solicit the pensions of the expelled religious, or on any other occasion where she could be useful to her friends. On the arrival of Petion, Barbaroux, and others of the Brissotin faction, she began to frequent the clubs, and to take a more lively interest in political affairs. Petion, and Barbaroux especially, seemed to be much respected by her. It was even said, she had a tender partiality for the latter; but this I believe is untrue.—I dined with her at her aunt’s on the Sunday previous to her departure for Paris. Nothing very remarkable appeared in her behaviour, except that she was much affected by a muster of the recruits who were to march against Paris, and seemed to think many lives might be lost on the occasion, without obtaining any relief for the country.—On the Tuesday following she left Caen, under pretext of visiting her father, who lives at Sens. Her aunt accompanied her to the gate of the town, and the separation was extremely sorrowful on both sides. The subsequent events are too well known to need recital.”

On her trial, and at her execution, Miss Corday was firm and modest; and I have been told, that in her last moments her whole figure was interesting beyond description. She was tall, well formed, and beautiful—her eyes, especially, were fine and expressive—even her dress was not neglected, and a simple white dishabille added to the charms of this self-devoted victim. On the whole, it is not possible to ascertain precisely the motives which determined her to assassinate Marat. Her letter to Barbaroux expresses nothing but republican sentiments; yet it is difficult to conceive that a young woman, who had voluntarily embraced the life of a cloister, could be really of this way of thinking.—I cannot but suppose her connection with the Deputies arose merely from an idea that they might be the instruments of restoring the abolished government, and her profession of republican principles after she was arrested might

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probably be with a view of saving Duperret, and others of the party, who were still in the power of the Convention.—Her selection of Marat still remains to be accounted for. He was, indeed, the most violent of the Jacobins, but not the most dangerous, and the death of several others might have been more serviceable to the cause. Marat was, however, the avowed persecutor of priests and religion, and if we attribute any influence to Miss Corday's former habits, we may suppose them to have had some share in the choice of her victim. Her refusal of the ministry of a constitutional priest at the scaffold strengthens this opinion. We pay a kind of involuntary tribute of admiration to such firmness of mind in a young and beautiful woman; and I do not recollect that history has transmitted any thing parallel to the heroism of Charlotte Corday. Love, revenge, and ambition, have often sacrificed their victims, and sustained the courage of their voluntaries under punishment; but a female, animated by no personal motives, sensible only to the misfortunes of her country, patriotic both from feeling and reflection, and sacrificing herself from principle, is singular in the annals of human nature.—Yet, after doing justice to such an instance of fortitude and philanthropic devotion, I cannot but sincerely lament the act to which it has given rise. At a time when so many spirits are irritated by despair and oppression, the example may be highly pernicious, and a cause, however good, must always be injured by the use of such means in its support.—Nothing can sanctify an assassination; and were not the French more vindictive than humane, the crimes of the republican party would find a momentary refuge in this injudicious effort to punish them.

My friend La Marquise de \_\_\_\_ has left Paris, and is now at Peronne, where she has engaged me to pass a few weeks with her; so that my next will most probably be dated from thence.--Mr. D\_\_\_\_ is endeavouring to get a passport for England. He begins to regret having remained here. His temper, naturally impatient of restraint, accords but ill with the portion of liberty enjoyed by our republicans. Corporal privations and mental interdictions multiply so fast, that irritable people like himself, and valetudinarians like Mrs. C\_\_\_\_ and me, could not choose a worse residence; and, as we are now unanimous on the subject, I hope soon to leave the country.—There is, as you observe in your last, something of indolence as well as friendship in my having so long remained here; but if actions were always analyzed so strictly, and we were not allowed to derive a little credit from our weaknesses, how many great characters would be reduced to the common level. Voltaire introduced a sort of rage for anecdotes, and for tracing all events to trifling causes, which has done much more towards exploding the old-fashioned system or the dignity of human nature than the dry maxims of Rochefaucault, the sophisms of

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Mandeville, or even the malicious wit of Swift. This is also another effect of the progress of philosophy; and this sort of moral Quixotism, continually in search of evil, and more gratified in discovering it than pained by its existence, may be very philosophical; but it is at least gloomy and discouraging; and we may be permitted to doubt whether mankind

become wiser or better by learning, that those who have been most remarkable either for wisdom or virtue were occasionally under the influence of the same follies and passions as other people.—Your uncharitable discernment, you see, has led me into a digression, and I have, without intending it, connected the motives of my stay with reflections on Voltaire's General History, Barillon's Letters, and all the secret biography of our modern libraries. This, you will say, is only a chapter of a "man's importance to himself;" but public affairs are now so confused and disgusting, that we are glad to encourage any train of ideas not associated with them.

The Commissioners I gave you some account of in a former letter are departed, and we have lately had Chabot, an Ex-capuchin, and a patriot of special note in the Convention, and one Dumont, an attorney of a neighbouring village. They are, like all the rest of these missionaries, entrusted with unlimited powers, and inspire apprehension and dismay wherever they approach.

The Garde Nationale of Amiens are not yet entirely subdued to the times, and Chabot gave some hints of a project to disarm them, and actually attempted to arrest some of their officers; but, apprized of his design, they remained two nights under arms, and the Capuchin, who is not martially inclined, was so alarmed at this indication of resistance, that he has left the town with more haste than ceremony.—He had, in an harangue at the cathedral, inculcated some very edifying doctrines on the division of property and the right of pillage; and it is not improbable, had he not withdrawn, but the Amienois would have ventured, on this pretext, to arrest him. Some of them contrived, in spite of the centinel placed at the lodging of these great men, to paste up on the door two figures, with the names of Chabot and Dumont; in the "fatal position of the unfortunate brave;" and though certain events in the lives of these Deputies may have rendered this perspective of their last moments not absolutely a novelty, yet I do not recollect that Akenside, or any other author, has enumerated a gibbet amongst the objects, which, though not agreeable in themselves, may be reconciled to the mind by familiarity. I wish, therefore, our representatives may not, in return for this admonitory portrait of their latter end, draw down some vengeance on the town, not easily to be appeased. I am no astrologer, but in our sublunary world the conjunction of an attorney and a renegade

monk cannot present a fortunate aspect; and I am truly anxious to find myself once again under the more benign influence of your English hemisphere.—Yours.

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Peronne, July 29, 1793.

Every attempt to obtain passports has been fruitless, and, with that sort of discontented resignation which is the effect of necessity, I now look upon myself as fixed here till the peace. I left Mr. and Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ yesterday morning, the disappointment operating upon them in full force. The former takes longer walks than usual, breaks out in philippics against tyrannies of all kinds, and swears ten times a day that the French are the most noisy people upon earth—the latter is vexed, and, for that reason, fancies she is ill, and calculates, with great ingenuity, all the hazard and inconvenience we may be liable to by remaining here. I hope, on my return, to find them more reconciled.

At Villars de Bretonne, on my road hither, some people told me, with great gaiety, that the English had made a descent on the coast of Picardy. Such a report (for I did not suppose it possible) during the last war would have made me tremble, but I heard this without alarm, having, in no instance, seen the people take that kind of interest in public events which formerly made a residence in France unpleasant to an individual of an hostile nation. It is not that they are become more liberal, or better informed—no change of this kind has been discovered even by the warmest advocates of the revolution; but they are more indifferent, and those who are not decidedly the enemies of the present government, for the most part concern themselves as little about the events of the war, as though it were carried on in the South Sea.

I fear I should risk an imputation on my veracity, were I to describe the extreme ignorance and inattention of the French with respect to public men and measures. They draw no conclusions from the past, form no conjectures for the future, and, after exclaiming “Il ne peut pas durer comme cela,” they, with a resignation which is certainly neither pious nor philosophic, leave the rest to the agency of Providence.—Even those who are more informed so bewilder themselves in the politics of Greece and Rome, that they do not perceive how little these are applicable to their own country. Indeed, it should seem that no modern age or people is worthy the knowledge of a Frenchman.—I have often remarked, in the course of our correspondence, how little they are acquainted with what regards England or the English; and scarcely a day passes that I have not occasion to make the same observation.



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My conductor hither, who is a friend of Mad. de T\_\_\_\_, and esteemed “bien instruit,” was much surprized when I told him that the population and size of London exceeded that of Paris—that we had good fruit, and better vegetables than were to be found in many parts of France. I saw that he suspected my veracity, and there is always on these occasions such a decided and impenetrable incredulity in a Frenchman as precludes all hopes of convincing him. He listens with a sort of self-sufficient complacence which tells you he does not consider your assertions as any thing more than the exaggerations of national vanity, but that his politeness does not allow him to contradict you. I know nothing more disgustingly impertinent than his ignorance, which intrenches itself behind the forms of civility, and, affecting to decline controversy, assumes the merit of forbearance and moderation: yet this must have been often observed by every one who has lived much in French society: for the first emotion of a Frenchman, on hearing any thing which tends to place another country on an equality with France, is doubt—this doubt is instantly reinforced by vanity—and, in a few seconds, he is perfectly satisfied that the thing is impossible.

One must be captious indeed to object to this, did it arise from that patriotic feeling so common in the English; but here it is all vanity, downright vanity: a Frenchman must have his country and his mistress admired, though he does not often care much for either one or the other. I have been in various parts of France in the most critical periods of the revolution—I have conversed with people of all parties and of all ranks—and I assert, that I have never yet met but with one man who had a grain of real patriotism. If the Athenian law were adopted which doomed all to death who should be indifferent to the public welfare in a time of danger, I fear there would be a woeful depopulation here, even among the loudest champions of democracy.

It is not thirty miles from Amiens to Peronne, yet a journey of thirty miles is not now to be undertaken inconsiderately; the horses are so much worked, and so ill fed, that few perform such a distance without rest and management. If you wish to take others, and continue your route, you cannot, or if you wait while your own horses are refreshed, as a reward for your humanity you get starved yourself. Bread being very scarce, no family can get more than sufficient for its own consumption, and those who travel without first supplying themselves, do it at the risk of finding none on the road.

Peronne is chiefly remarkable in history for never having been taken, and for a tower where Louis XI. was confined for a short time, after being outwitted in a manner somewhat surprizing for a Monarch who piqued himself on his talents for intrigue, by Charles le Temeraire, Duke of Burgundy. Its modern reputation, arises from its election



of the Abbe Maury for its representative, and for entertaining political principles every way analogous to such a choice.

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I found the Marquise much altered in her person, and her health much impaired, by the frequent alarms and continual apprehensions she had been subject to at Paris. Fortunately she has no imputation against her but her rank and fortune, for she is utterly guiltless of all political opinions; so that I hope she will be suffered to knit stockings, tend her birds and dogs, and read romances in peace.—Yours, &c. &c.

August 1, 1793.

When the creation of assignats was first proposed, much ingenuity was employed in conjecturing, and much eloquence displayed in expatiating upon, the various evils that might result from them; yet the genius of party, however usually successful in gloomy perspective, did not at that time imagine half the inconvenience this measure was fraught with. It was easy, indeed, to foresee, that an immense circulation of paper, like any other currency, must augment the price of every thing; but the excessive discredit of the assignats, operating accessarily to their quantity, has produced a train of collateral effects of greater magnitude than even those that were originally apprehended. Within the last twelve months the whole country are become monopolizers—the desire of realizing has so possessed all degrees of people, that there is scarcely an article of consumption which is not bought up and secreted. One would really suppose that nothing was perishable but the national credit—the nobleman, the merchant, the shopkeeper, all who have assignats, engage in these speculations, and the necessities of our dissipated heirs do not drive them to resources for obtaining money more whimsical than the commerce now practised here to get rid of it. I know a beau who has converted his *hypothèque* [Mortgage.] on the national domains into train oil, and a General who has given these “airy nothings” the substance and form of hemp and leather!\*

\* In the late rage for monopolies in France, a person who had observed the vast daily consumption of onions, garlic, and eschalots, conceived the project of making the whole district of Amiens tributary for this indispensable article. In consequence, he attended several market-days, and purchased all that came in his way. The country people finding a ready sale for their onions, poured in from all quarters, and our projector found that, in proportion as he bought, the market became more profusely supplied, and that the commodity he had hoped to monopolize was inexhaustible.

Goods purchased from such motives are not as you may conceive sold till the temptation of an exorbitant profit seduces the proprietor to risk a momentary possession of assignats, which are again disposed of in a similar way. Thus many necessities of life are withdrawn from circulation, and when a real scarcity ensues, they are produced to the people, charged with all the accumulated gains of these intermediate barterers.

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This illiberal and pernicious commerce, which avarice and fear have for some time kept in great activity, has at length attracted the notice of the Convention, and very severe laws are now enacted against monopolies of all kinds. The holder of any quantity of merchandize beyond what he may be supposed to consume is obliged to declare it to his municipality, and to expose the articles he deals in in writing over his door. These clauses, as well as every other part of the decree, seem very wise and equitable; but I doubt if the severity of the punishment annexed to any transgression of it will not operate so as to defeat the purposes intended to be produced. A false declaration is punishable by six years imprisonment, and an absolute non-compliance with death.—Blackstone remarks, that it is the certainty, not the severity, of punishment, which makes laws efficacious; and this must ever be the case amongst an humane people.—An inordinate desire of gain is not often considered by mankind as very criminal, and those who would willingly subject it to its adequate punishment of fine and confiscation, will hesitate to become the means of inflicting death on the offender, or of depriving him of his liberty. The Poets have, from time immemorial, claimed a kind of exclusive jurisdiction over the sin of avarice: but, unfortunately, minds once steeled by this vice are not often sensible to the attacks of ridicule; and I have never heard that any poet, from Plautus to Moliere, has reformed a single miser. I am not, therefore, sorry that our legislature has encroached on this branch of the poetical prerogative, and only wish that the mild regimen of the Muses had been succeeded by something less rigid than the prison or the guillotine. It is true, that, in the present instance, it is not the ordinary and habitual practice of avarice that has called forth the severity of the laws, but a species so destructive and extensive in its consequences, that much may be said in defence of any penalty short of death; and such is the general distrust of the paper-money, that I really believe, had not some measure of the kind been adopted, no article susceptible of monopoly would have been left for consumption. There are, however, those who retort on the government, and assert, that the origin of the evil is in the waste and speculation of its agents, which also make the immense emission of paper more necessary; and they are right in the fact, though not in their deduction, for as the evil does exist whatever may be the cause, it is certainly wise to endeavour to remedy it.

The position of Valenciennes, which is supposed to be on the eve of a surrender—the progress of the insurgents in La Vendee—the discontents in the South—and the charge of treachery against so many of the Generals, and particularly Custine—all together seem to have agitated the public extremely: yet it is rather the agitation of uncertainty than that occasioned by any deep impression of hope or fear. The people wish to be relieved from their present situation, yet are without any determinate views for the future; and, indeed, in this part of the country, where they have neither leaders nor union, it would be very difficult for them to take a more active part.

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The party of the foederalists languish, merely because it is nothing more than a party, and a party of which the heads excite neither interest nor esteem. I conclude you learn from the papers all the more important events, and I confine myself, as usual, to such details as I think less likely to reach you. The humanity of the English must often banish their political animosities when they read what passes here; and thousands of my countrymen must at this moment lament with me the situation to which France is reduced by projects in which common sense can distinguish no medium between wickedness and folly.

All apparent attachment to royalism is now cautiously avoided, but the royalists do not diminish by persecution, and the industry with which they propagate their opinions is nearly a match for all the force armee of the republicans.—It is not easy to print pamphlets or newspapers, but there are certain shops which one would think were discovered by instinct, where are sold a variety of mysterious emblems of royalty, such as fans that have no visible ornaments except landscapes, &c. but when opened by the initiated, present tolerable likenesses of the Royal Family; snuff-boxes with secret lids, containing miniature busts of the late King; and music so ingeniously printed, that what to the common eye offers only some popular air, when folded so as to join the heads and tails of the notes together, forms sentences of very treasonable import, and by no means flattering to the existing government—I have known these interdicted trifles purchased at extravagant prices by the best-reputed patriots, and by officers who in public breathe nothing but unconquerable democracy, and detestation of Kings. Yet, though these things are circulated with extreme caution, every body has something of the sort, and, as Charles Surface says, “for my part, I don’t see who is out of the secret.”

The belief in religious miracles is exploded, and it is only in political ones that the faith of the people is allowed to exercise itself.—We have lately seen exhibited at the fairs and markets a calf, produced into the world with the tri-coloured cockade on its head; and on the painted cloth that announces the phenomenon is the portrait of this natural revolutionist, with a mayor and municipality in their official scarfs, addressing the four-footed patriot with great ceremony.

We set out early to-morrow-morning for Soissons, which is about twenty leagues from hence. Travelling is not very desirable in the present circumstances, but Mad. de F\_\_\_\_\_ has some affairs to settle there which cannot well be entrusted to a third person. The times, however, have a very hostile appearance, and we intend, if possible, to be absent but three days.—Yours.

Soissons, August 4, 1793.

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“And you may go by Beauvais if you will, for which reason many go by Beauvais;” and the stranger who turns out of his road to go by Soissons, must use the same reasoning, for the consciousness of having exercised his free agency will be all his reward for visiting Soissons. This, by the way; for my journey hither not being one of curiosity, I have no right to complain; yet somehow or other, by associating the idea of the famous Vase, the ancient residence of the first French Kings, and other circumstances as little connected as these I suppose with modern history, I had ranked Soissons in my imagination as one of the places I should see with interest. I find it, however, only a dull, decent-looking town, tolerably large, but not very populous. In the new division of France it is the capital of the department De l’Aisne, and is of course the seat of the administration.

We left Peronne early, and, being so fortunate as to encounter no accidental delays, we arrived within a league of Soissons early in the afternoon. Mad. de F\_\_\_\_, recollecting an acquaintance who has a chateau not far out of our road, determined to stop an hour or two; for, as she said, her friend was so “fond of the country,” she should be sure to find him there. We did, indeed, find this Monsieur, who is so “fond of the country,” at home, extremely well powdered, dressed in a striped silk coat, and engaged with a card party, on a warm afternoon on the third of August.—The chateau was situated as a French chateau usually is, so as to be benefited by all the noises and odours of the village—built with a large single front, and a number of windows so judiciously placed, that it must be impossible either to be cool in summer or warm in winter.

We walked out after taking some coffee, and I learned that this lover of the country did not keep a single acre of land in his own hands, but that the part immediately contiguous to the house was cultivated for a certain share of the profit by a farmer who lives in a miserable looking place adjoining, and where I saw the operations of the dairy-maid carried on amidst pigs, ducks, and turkeys, who seemed to have established a very familiar access.

Previous to our arrival at Soissons, the Marquise (who, though she does not consider me as an aristocrate, knows I am by no means a republican,) begged me to be cautious in expressing my sentiments, as the Comte de \_\_\_\_\_, where we were going, had embraced the principles of the revolution very warmly, and had been much blamed by his family on this account. Mad. de F\_\_\_\_ added, that she had not seen him for above a year, but that she believed him still to be “extremement patriote.”

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We reached *Mons. de \_\_\_\_*'s just as the family were set down to a very moderate supper, and I observed that their plate had been replaced by pewter. After the first salutations were over, it was soon visible that the political notions of the count were much changed. He is a sensible reflecting man, and seems really to wish the good of his country. He thinks, with many others, that all the good effects which might have been obtained by the revolution will be lost through the contempt and hatred which the republican government has drawn upon it.

*Mons. de \_\_\_\_* has two sons who have distinguished themselves very honourably in the army, and he has himself made great pecuniary sacrifices; but this has not secured him from numerous domiciliary visits and vexations of all kinds. The whole family are at intervals a little pensive, and *Mons. de \_\_\_\_* told us, at a moment when the ladies were absent, that the taking of Valenciennes had occasioned a violent fermentation at Paris, and that he had serious apprehensions for those who have the misfortune to be distinguished by their rank, or obnoxious from their supposed principles—that he himself, and all who were presumed to have an attachment to the constitution of eighty-nine, were much more feared, and of course more suspected, than the original aristocrats—and “enfin” that he had made up his mind *à la Française* to the worst that could happen.

I have just run over the papers of the day, and I perceive that the debates of the Convention are filled with invectives against the English. A letter has been very opportunely found on the ramparts of Lisle, which is intended to persuade the people that the British government has distributed money and phosphoric matches in every town in France—the one to provoke insurrection, the other to set fire to the corn.\* You will conclude this letter to be a fabrication, and it is imagined and executed with so little ingenuity, that I doubt whether it will impose on the most ignorant of the people for a moment.

\* “The National Convention, in the name of violated humanity, denounces to all the world, and to the people of England in particular, the base, perfidious, and wicked conduct of the British government, which does not hesitate to employ fire, poison, assassination, and every other crime, to procure the triumph of tyranny, and the destruction of the rights of man.” (Decree, 1st August, 1793.)

The Queen has been transferred to the Conciergerie, or common prison, and a decree is passed for trying her; but perhaps at this moment (whatever may be the result hereafter) they only hope her situation may operate as a check upon the enemy; at least I have heard it doubted by many whether they intend to proceed seriously on this trial so

long threatened.— Perhaps I may have before noticed to you that the convention never seemed capable of any thing great or uniform, and that all their proceedings took a tinge from that

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frivolity and meanness which I am almost tempted to believe inherent in the French character. They have just now, amidst a long string of decrees, the objects of which are of the first consequence, inserted one for the destruction of all the royal tombs before the tenth of August, and another for reducing the expences of the King's children, particularly their food, to bare necessities. Had our English revolutionists thus employed themselves, they might have expelled the sculptured Monarchs from the Abbey, and waged a very successful war on the admirers of Gothic antiquity; but neither the Stuarts, nor the Catholic religion, would have had much to fear from them.

We have been wandering about the town all day, and I have not remarked that the successes of the enemy have occasioned any regret. When I was in France three years ago, you may recollect that my letters usually contained some relation of our embarrassment and delays, owing to the fear and ignorance of the people. At one place they apprehended the introduction of foreign troops—at another, that the Comte d'Artois was to burn all the corn. In short, the whole country teemed with plots and counterplots, every one of which was more absurd and inexplicable than those of Oates, with his whole tribe of Jesuits. At present, when a powerful army is invading the frontiers, and people have not in many places bread to eat, they seem to be very little solicitous about the former, and as little disposed to blame the aristocrates for the latter.

It is really extraordinary, after all the pains that have been taken to excite hatred and resentment against the English, that I have not heard of a single instance of their having been insulted or molested. Whatever inconveniencies they may have been subjected to, were acts of the government, not of the people; and perhaps this is the first war between the two nations in which the reverse has not been the case.

I accompanied Mad. de \_\_\_\_ this afternoon to the house of a rich merchant, where she had business, and who, she told me, had been a furious patriot, but his ardour is now considerably abated. He had just returned from the department, [Here used for the place where the public business is transacted.] where his affairs had led him; and he assures us, that in general the agents of the republic were more inaccessible, more insolent, corrupt, and ignorant, than any employed under the old government. He demurred to paying Mad. de \_\_\_\_ a sum of money all in *assignats a face*;\* and this famous patriot would readily have given me an hundred livres for a pound sterling.

\* *Assignats a face*—that is, with the King's effigy; at this time greatly preferred to those issued after his death.





We shall return to Peronne to-morrow, and I have availed myself of the hour between cards and supper, which is usually employed by the French in undressing, to scribble my remarks. In some families, I suppose, supping in dishabille is an arrangement of oeconomy, in others of ease; but I always think it has the air of preparation for a very solid meal; and, in effect, supping is not a mere ceremony with either sex in this country.

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I learnt in conversation with M. de \_\_\_\_\_, whose sons were at Famars when the camp was forced, that the carnage was terrible, and that the loss of the French on this occasion amounted to several thousands. You will be informed of this much more accurately in England, but you will scarcely imagine that no official account was ever published here, and that in general the people are ignorant of the circumstance, and all the disasters attending it. In England, you have opposition papers that amply supply the omissions of the ministerial gazettes, and often dwell with much complacency on the losses and defeats of their country; here none will venture to publish the least event which they suppose the government wish to keep concealed. I am told, a leading feature of republican governments is to be extremely jealous of the liberty of the press, and that of France is, in this respect, truly republican.—Adieu.

Peronne, August, 1793.

I have often regretted, my dear brother, that my letters have for some time been rather intended to satisfy your curiosity than your affection. At this moment I feel differently, and I rejoice that the inquietude and danger of my situation will, probably, not come to your knowledge till I shall be no longer subject to them. I have been for several days unwell, and yet my body, valetudinarian as I am at best, is now the better part of me; for my mind has been so deranged by suspense and terror, that I expect to recover my health long before I shall be able to tranquillize my spirits.

On our return from Soissons I found, by the public prints, that a decree had passed for arresting all natives of the countries with which France is at war, and who had not constantly resided there since 1789.—This intelligence, as you will conceive, sufficiently alarmed me, and I lost no time in consulting Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_'s friends on the subject, who were generally of opinion that the decree was merely a menace, and that it was too unjust to be put in execution. As some days elapsed and no steps were taken in consequence, I began to think they were right, and my spirits were somewhat revived; when one evening, as I was preparing to go to bed, my maid suddenly entered the room, and, before she could give me any previous explanation, the apartment was filled with armed men. As soon as I was collected enough to enquire the object of this unseasonable visit, I learned that all this military apparel was to put the seals on my papers, and convey my person to the Hotel de Ville!—I knew it would be vain to remonstrated, and therefore made an effort to recover my spirits and submit. The business, however, was not yet terminated, my papers were to be sealed—and though they were not very voluminous, the process was more difficult than you would imagine, none of the company having been employed on affairs of the kind before. A debate ensued on the manner in which it should be done, and, after a very tumultuous discussion, it was sagaciously concluded to seal up the doors and windows of all the

apartments appropriated to my use. They then discovered that they had no seal fit for the purpose, and a new consultation was holden on the propriety of affixing a cypher which was offered them by one of the Garde Nationale.

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This weighty matter being at length decided, the doors of my bedchamber, dressing-room, and of the apartments with which they communicated, were carefully fastened up, though not without an observation on my part that I was only a guest at Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s, and that an order to seize my papers or person was not a mandate for rendering a part of her home useless. But there was no reasoning with ignorance and a score of bayonets, nor could I obtain permission even to take some linen out of my drawers. On going down stairs, I found the court and avenues to the garden amply guarded, and with this numerous escort, and accompanied by Mad. de \_\_\_\_, I was conducted to the Hotel de Ville. I know not what resistance they might expect from a single female, but, to judge by their precautions, they must have deemed the adventure a very perilous one. When we arrived at the Hotel de Ville, it was near eleven o'clock: the hall was crowded, and a young man, in a dirty linen jacket and trowsers and dirty linen, with the air of a Polisson and the countenance of an assassin, was haranguing with great vehemence against the English, who, he asserted, were all agents of Pitt, (especially the women,) and were to set fire to the corn, and corrupt the garrisons of the fortified towns.— The people listened to these terrible projects with a stupid sort of surprize, and, for the most part, seemed either very careless or very incredulous. As soon as this inflammatory piece of eloquence was finished, I was presented to the ill-looking orator, who, I learned, was a representant du peuple. It was very easy to perceive that my spirits were quite overpowered, and that I could with difficulty support myself; but this did not prevent the representant du peuple from treating me with that inconsiderable brutality which is commonly the effect of a sudden accession of power on narrow and vulgar minds. After a variety of impertinent questions, menaces of a prison for myself, and exclamations of hatred and vengeance against my country, on producing some friends of Mad. de \_\_\_\_, who were to be answerable for me, I was released, and returned home more dead than alive.

You must not infer, from what I have related, that I was particularly distinguished on this occasion, for though I have no acquaintance with the English here, I understand they had all been treated much in the same manner.—As soon as the representant had left the town, by dint of solicitation we prevailed on the municipality to take the seal off the rooms, and content themselves with selecting and securing my papers, which was done yesterday by a commission, formally appointed for the purpose. I know not the quality of the good citizens to whom this important charge was entrusted, but I concluded from their costume that they had been more usefully employed the preceding part of the day at the anvil and last. It is certain, however, they had undertaken a business greatly beyond their powers. They indeed turned over

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all my trunks and drawers, and dived to the bottom of water-jugs and flower-jars with great zeal, but neglected to search a large portfolio that lay on the table, probably from not knowing the use of it; and my servant conveyed away some letters, while I amused them with the sight of a blue-bottle fly through a microscope. They were at first much puzzled to know whether books and music were included under the article of papers, and were very desirous of burning a history of France, because they discovered, by the title-plate, that it was “about Kings;” but the most difficult part of this momentous transaction was taking an account of it in writing. However, as only one of the company could write, there was no disputing as to the scribe, though there was much about the manner of execution. I did not see the composition, but I could hear that it stated “comme quoi,” they had found the seals unbroken, “comme quoi,” they had taken them off, and divers “as hows” of the same kind. The whole being concluded, and my papers deposited in a box, I was at length freed from my guests, and left in possession of my apartments.

It is impossible to account for this treatment of the English by any mode of reasoning that does not exclude both justice and policy; and viewing it only as a symptom of that desperate wickedness which commits evil, not as a means, but an end, I am extremely alarmed for our situation. At this moment the whole of French politics seems to center in an endeavour to render the English odious both as a nation and as individuals. The Convention, the clubs, and the streets of Paris, resound with low abuse of this tendency; and a motion was made in the former, by one Garnier, to procure the assassination of Mr. Pitt. Couthon, a member of the Comite de Salut Publique, has proposed and carried a decree to declare him the enemy of mankind; and the citizens of Paris are stunned by the hawkers of Mr. Pitt’s plots with the Queen to “starve all France,” and “massacre all the patriots.”—Amidst so many efforts\* to provoke the destruction of the English, it is wonderful, when we consider the sanguinary character which the French people have lately evinced, that we are yet safe, and it is in effect only to be accounted for by their disinclination to take any part in the animosities of their government.

\* When our representative appeared at Abbeville with an intention of arresting the English and other foreigners, the people, to whom these missionaries with unlimited powers were yet new, took the alarm, and became very apprehensive that he was come likewise to disarm their Garde Nationale. The streets were crowded, the town house was beset, and Citizen Dumout found it necessary to quiet the town’s people by the following proclamation. One part of his purpose, that of insuring his personal safety, was answered by it; but that of exciting the people against the English, failed—insomuch, that I was told even the lowest classes, so far from giving credit to the malignant calumnies propagated against the English, openly regretted their arrestation.

“Citizens,

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“On my arrival amongst you, I little thought that malevolence would be so far successful as to alarm you on the motives of my visit. Could the aristocrates, then, flatter themselves with the hope of making you believe I had the intention of disarming you? Be deaf, I beseech you, to so absurd a calumny, and seize on those who propagate it. I came here to fraternize with you, and to assist you in getting rid of those malcontents and foreigners, who are striving to destroy the republic by the most infernal manoeuvres.—An horrible plot has been conceived. Our harvests are to be fired by means of phosphoric matches, and all the patriots assassinated. Women, priests, and foreigners, are the instruments employed by the coalesced despots, and by England above all, to accomplish these criminal designs.—A law of the first of this month orders the arrest of all foreigners born in the countries with which the republic is at war, and not settled in France before the month of July, 1789. In execution of this law I have required domiciliary visits to be made. I have urged the preservation of the public tranquillity. I have therefore done my duty, and only what all good citizens must approve.”

I have just received a few lines from Mrs. D\_\_\_\_, written in French, and put in the post without sealing. I perceive, by the contents, though she enters into no details, that circumstances similar to those I have described have likewise taken place at Amiens. In addition to my other anxieties, I have the prospect of a long separation from my friends; for though I am not in confinement, I cannot, while the decree which arrested me remains in force, quit the town of Peronne. I have not often looked forward with so little hope, or so little certainty, and though a first-rate philosopher might make up his mind to a particular event, yet to be prepared for any thing, and all things, is a more difficult matter.

The histories of Greece and Rome have long constituted the grand resources of French eloquence, and it is not till within a few days that an orator has discovered all this good learning to be of no use—not, as you might imagine, because the moral character and political situation of the French differ from those of the Greeks and Romans, but because they are superior to all the people who ever existed, and ought to be cited as models, instead of descending to become copyists. “Therefore, continues this Jacobin sage, (whose name is Henriot, and who is highly popular,) let us burn all the libraries and all the antiquities, and have no guide but ourselves—let us cut off the heads of all the Deputies who have not voted according to our principles, banish or imprison all the gentry and the clergy, and guillotine the Queen and General Custine!”

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These are the usual subjects of discussion at the clubs, and the Convention itself is not much more decent. I tremble when I recollect that I am in a country where a member of the legislature proposes rewards for assassination, and the leader of a society, that pretends to inform and instruct the people, argues in favour of burning all the books. The French are on the eve of exhibiting the singular spectacle of a nation enlightened by science, accustomed to the benefit of laws and the enjoyment of arts, suddenly becoming barbarous by system, and sinking into ignorance from choice.—When the Goths shared the most curious antiques by weight, were they not more civilized than the Parisian of 1793, who disturbs the ashes of Henry the Fourth, or destroys the monument of Turenne, by a decree?—I have myself been forced to an act very much in the spirit of the times, but I could not, without risking my own safety, do otherwise; and I sat up late last night for the purpose of burning Burke, which I had brought with me, but had fortunately so well concealed, that it escaped the late inquisition. I indeed made this sacrifice to prudence with great unwillingness—every day, by confirming Mr. Burke's assertions, or fulfilling his predictions, had so increased my reverence for the work, that I regarded it as a kind of political oracle. I did not, however, destroy it without an apologetic apostrophe to the author's benevolence, which I am sure would suffer, were he to be the occasion, though involuntarily, of conducting a female to a prison or the Guillotine.

“How chances mock, and changes fill the cup of alteration up with divers liquors.”—On the same hearth, and in a mingled flame, was consumed the very constitution of 1789, on which Mr. Burke's book was a censure, and which would now expose me to equal danger were it to be found in my possession. In collecting the ashes of these two compositions, the tendency of which is so different, (for such is the complexion of the moment, that I would not have even the servant suspect I had been burning a quantity of papers,) I could not but moralize on the mutability of popular opinion. Mr. Burke's Gallic adversaries are now most of them proscribed and anathematized more than himself. Perhaps another year may see his bust erected on the pedestal which now supports that of Brutus or Le Pelletier.

The letters I have written to you since the communication was interrupted, with some other papers that I am solicitous to preserve, I have hitherto always carried about me, and I know not if any danger, merely probable, will induce me to part with them. You will not, I think, suspect me of attaching any consequence to my scribblings from vanity; and if I run some personal risk in keeping them, it is because the situation of this country is so singular, and the events which occur almost daily so important, that the remarks of any one who is unlucky enough to be a spectator, may interest, without the advantage of literary talents.—Yours.

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Peronne, August 24, 1793.

I have been out to-day for the first time since the arrest of the English, and, though I have few acquaintances here, my adventure at the Hotel de Ville has gained me a sort of popularity. I was saluted by many people I did not know, and overwhelmed with expressions of regret for what had happened, or congratulations on my having escaped so well.

The French are not commonly very much alive to the sufferings of others, and it is some mortification to my vanity that I cannot, but at the expence of a reproaching conscience, ascribe the civilities I have experienced on this occasion to my personal merit. It would doubtless have been highly flattering to me to relate the tender and general interest I had excited even among this cold-hearted people, who scarcely feel for themselves: but the truth is, they are disposed to take the part of any one whom they think persecuted by their government; and their representative, Dumont, is so much despised in his private character, and detested in his public one, that it suffices to have been ill treated by him, to ensure one a considerable portion of the public good will.

This disposition is not a little consolatory, at a time when the whole rage of an oligarchical tyranny, though impotent against the English as a nation, meanly exhausts itself on the few helpless individuals within its power. Embarrassments accumulate and if Mr. Pitt's agents did not most obligingly write letters, and these letters happen to be intercepted just when they are most necessary, the Comite de Salut Publique would be at a loss how to account for them.

Assignats have fallen into a discredit beyond example, an hundred and thirty livres having been given for one Louis-d'or; and, as if this were not the natural result of circumstances like the present, a correspondence between two Englishmen informs us, that it is the work of Mr. Pitt, who, with an unparalleled ingenuity, has contrived to send couriers to every town in France, to concert measures with the bankers for this purpose. But if we may believe Barrere, one of the members of the Committee, this atrocious policy of Mr. Pitt will not be unrevenged, for another intercepted letter contains assurances that an hundred thousand men have taken up arms in England, and are preparing to march against the iniquitous metropolis that gives this obnoxious Minister shelter.

My situation is still the same—I have no hope of returning to Amiens, and have just reason to be apprehensive for my tranquillity here. I had a long conversation this morning with two people whom Dumont has left here to keep the town in order during his absence. The subject was to prevail on them to give me a permission to leave Peronne, but I could not succeed. They were not, I believe, indisposed to gratify me, but were afraid of involving themselves. One of them expressed much partiality for the English, but was very vehement in his disapprobation



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of their form of government, which he said was “detestable.” My cowardice did not permit me to argue much in its behalf, (for I look upon these people as more dangerous than the spies of the old police,) and I only ventured to observe, with great diffidence, that though the English government was monarchical, yet the power of the Crown was very much limited; and that as the chief subjects of our complaints at present were not our institutions, but certain practical errors, they might be remedied without any violent or radical changes; and that our nobility were neither numerous nor privileged, and by no means obnoxious to the majority of the people.—“*Ah, vous avez donc de la noblesse blesse en Angleterre, ce sont peut-etre les milords,*” [“What, you have nobility in England then? The milords, I suppose.”] exclaimed our republican, and it operated on my whole system of defence like my uncle Toby’s smoke-jack, for there was certainly no discussing the English constitution with a political critic, who I found was ignorant even of the existence of a third branch of it; yet this reformer of governments and abhorrer of Kings has power delegated to him more extensive than those of an English Sovereign, though I doubt if he can write his own language; and his moral reputation is still less in his favour than his ignorance—for, previous to the revolution, he was known only as a kind of swindler, and has more than once been nearly convicted of forgery.—This is, however, the description of people now chiefly employed, for no honest man would accept of such commissions, nor perform the services annexed to them.

Bread continues very scarce, and the populace of Paris are, as usual, very turbulent; so that the neighbouring departments are deprived of their subsistence to satisfy the wants of a metropolis that has no claim to an exemption from the general distress, but that which arises from the fears of the Convention. As far as I have opportunity of learning or observing, this part of France is in that state of tranquillity which is not the effect of content but supineness; the people do not love their government, but they submit to it, and their utmost exertions amount only to a little occasional obstinacy, which a few dragoons always reduce to compliance. We are sometimes alarmed by reports that parties of the enemy are approaching the town, when the gates are shut, and the great bell is toll’d; but I do not perceive that the people are violently apprehensive about the matter. Their fears are, I believe, for the most part, rather personal than political—they do not dread submission to the Austrians, but military licentiousness.

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I have been reading this afternoon Lord Orrery's definition of the male Cecisbeo, and it reminds me that I have not yet noticed to you a very important class of females in France, who may not improperly be denominated female Cecisbeos. Under the old system, when the rank of a woman of fashion had enabled her to preserve a degree of reputation and influence, in spite of the gallantries of her youth and the decline of her charms, she adopted the equivocal character I here allude to, and, relinquishing the adorations claimed by beauty, and the respect due to age, charitably devoted herself to the instruction and advancement of some young man of personal qualifications and uncertain fortune. She presented him to the world, panegyricized him into fashion, and insured his consequence with one set of females, by hinting his successes with another. By her exertions he was promoted in the army or distinguished at the levee, and a career begun under such auspices often terminated in a brilliant establishment. —In the less elevated circle, a female Cecisbeo is usually of a certain age, of an active disposition, and great volubility, and her functions are more numerous and less dignified. Here the grand objects are not to besiege Ministers, nor give a “ton” to the protege at a fashionable ruelle, but to obtain for him the solid advantages of what she calls “*un bon parti*.” [A good match.] To this end she frequents the houses of widows and heiresses, vaunts the docility of his temper, and the greatness of his expectations, enlarges on the solitude of widowhood, or the dependence and insignificance of a spinster; and these prefatory encomiums usually end in the concerted introduction of the Platonic “ami.”

But besides these principal and important cares, a female Cecisbeo of the middle rank has various subordinate ones—such as buying linen, choosing the colour of a coat, or the pattern of a waistcoat, with all the minutiae of the favourite's dress, in which she is always consulted at least, if she has not the whole direction.

It is not only in the first or intermediate classes that these useful females abound, they are equally common in more humble situations, and only differ in their employments, not in their principles. A woman in France, whatever be her condition, cannot be persuaded to resign her influence with her youth; and the bourgeoisie who has no pretensions to court favour or the disposal of wealthy heiresses, attaches her eleve by knitting him stockings, forcing him with bons morceaux till he has an indigestion, and frequent regales of coffee and liqueur.

You must not conclude from all this that there is any gallantry implied, or any scandal excited—the return for all these services is only a little flattery, a philosophic endurance of the card-table, and some skill in the disorders of lap-dogs. I know there are in England, as well as in France, many notable females of a certain age, who delight in what they call managing, and who are zealous in promoting, matches among the young people of their acquaintance; but for one that you meet with in England there are fifty here.

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I doubt much if, upon the whole, the morals of the English women are not superior to those of the French; but however the question may be decided as to morals, I believe their superiority in decency of manners is indisputable—and this superiority is, perhaps, more conspicuous in women of a certain age, than in the younger part of the sex. We have a sort of national regard for propriety, which deters a female from lingering on the confines of gallantry, when age has warned her to withdraw; and an old woman that should take a passionate and exclusive interest about a young man not related to her, would become at least an object of ridicule, if not of censure:—yet in France nothing is more common; every old woman appropriates some youthful dangler, and, what is extraordinary, his attentions are not distinguishable from those he would pay to a younger object.—I should remark, however, as some apology for these juvenile gallants, that there are very few of what we call Tabbies in France; that is, females of severe principles and contracted features, in whose apparel every pin has its destination with mathematical exactness, who are the very watch-towers of a neighbourhood, and who give the alarm on the first appearance of incipient frailty. Here, antique dowagers and faded spinsters are all gay, laughing, rouged, and indulgent—so that 'bating the subtraction of teeth and addition of wrinkles, the disparity between one score and four is not so great:

“Gay rainbow silks their mellow charms enfold,  
Nought of these beauties but themselves is old.”

I know if I venture to add a word in defence of Tabbyhood, I shall be engaged in a war with yourself and all our young acquaintance; yet in this age, which so liberally “softens, and blends, and weakens, and dilutes” away all distinctions, I own I am not without some partiality for strong lines of demarcation; and, perhaps, when fifty retrogrades into fifteen, it makes a worse confusion in society than the toe of the peasant treading on the heel of the courtier.—But, adieu: I am not gay, though I trifle. I have learnt something by my residence in France, and can be, as you see, frivolous under circumstances that ought to make me grave.—Yours.

Peronne, August 29, 1793.

The political horizon of France threatens nothing but tempests. If we are still tranquil here, it is only because the storm is retarded, and, far from deeming ourselves secure from its violence, we suffer in apprehension almost as much as at other places is suffered in reality. An hundred and fifty people have been arrested at Amiens in one night, and numbers of the gentry in the neighbouring towns have shared the same fate. This measure, which I understand is general throughout the republic, has occasioned great alarms, and is beheld by the mass of the people themselves with regret. In some towns, the Bourgeois have petitions to the Representatives on mission in behalf of their gentry thus imprisoned: but, far from succeeding, all who have signed such petitions are menaced and intimidated, and the terror is so much increased, that I doubt if even this slight effort will be repeated any where.

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The levee en masse, or rising in a body, which has been for some time decreed, has not yet taken place. There are very few, I believe, that comprehend it, and fewer who are disposed to comply. Many consultations have been holden, many plans proposed; but as the result of all these consultations and plans is to send a certain number to the frontiers, the suffrages have never been unanimous except in giving their negative.—Like Falstaff's troops, every one has some good cause of exemption; and if you were to attend a meeting where this affair is discussed, you would conclude the French to be more physically miserable than any people on the globe. Youths, in apparent good health, have internal disorders, or concealed infirmities—some are near-sighted—others epileptic—one is nervous, and cannot present a musquet—another is rheumatic, and cannot carry it. In short, according to their account, they are a collection of the lame, the halt, and the blind, and fitter to send to the hospital, than to take the field. But, in spite of all these disorders and incapacities, a considerable levy must be made, and the dragoons will, I dare say, operate very wonderful cures.

The surrender of Dunkirk to the English is regarded as inevitable. I am not politician enough to foresee the consequences of such an event, but the hopes and anxieties of all parties seem directed thither, as if the fate of the war depended on it. As for my own wishes on the subject, they are not national, and if I secretly invoke the God of Armies for the success of my countrymen, it is because I think all that tends to destroy the present French government may be beneficial to mankind. Indeed, the successes of war can at no time gratify a thinking mind farther than as they tend to the establishment of peace.

After several days of a mockery which was called a trial, though the witnesses were afraid to appear, or the Counsel to plead in his favour, Custine has suffered at the Guillotine. I can be no judge of his military conduct, and Heaven alone can judge of his intentions. None of the charges were, however, substantiated, and many of them were absurd or frivolous. Most likely, he has been sacrificed to a cabal, and his destruction makes a part of that system of policy, which, by agitating the minds of the people with suspicions of universal treason and unfathomable plots, leaves them no resource but implicit submission to their popular leaders.

The death of Custine seems rather to have stimulated than appeased the barbarity of the Parisian mob. At every defeat of their armies they call for executions, and several of those on whom the lot has fallen to march against the enemy have stipulated, at the tribune of the Jacobins, for the heads they exact as a condition of their departure,\* or as the reward for their labours. The laurel has no attraction for heroes like these, who invest themselves with the baneful yew and inauspicious cypress, and go to the field of honour with the dagger of the assassin yet ensanguined.

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\* Many insisted they would not depart until after the death of the Queen—some claimed the death of one General, some that of another, and all, the lives or banishment of the gentry and clergy.

“Fair steeds, gay shields, bright arms,” [Spencer.] the fancy-created deity, the wreath of fame, and all that poets have imagined to decorate the horrors of war, are not necessary to tempt the gross barbarity of the Parisian: he seeks not glory, but carnage—his incentive is the groans of defenceless victims—he inlists under the standard of the Guillotine, and acknowledges the executioner for his tutelary Mars.

In remarking the difficulties that have occurred in carrying into execution the levee en masse, I neglected to inform you that the prime mover of all these machinations is your omnipotent Mr. Pitt—it is he who has fomented the perverseness of the towns, and alarmed the timidity of the villages—he has persuaded some that it is not pleasant to leave their shops and families, and insinuated into the minds of others that death or wounds are not very desirable—he has, in fine, so effectually achieved his purpose, that the Convention issues decree after decree, the members harangue to little purpose, and the few recruits already levied, like those raised in the spring, go from many places strongly escorted to the army.—I wish I had more peaceful and more agreeable subjects for your amusement, but they do not present themselves, and “you must blame the times, not me.” I would wish to tell you that the legislature is honest, that the Jacobins are humane, and the people patriots; but you know I have no talent for fiction, and if I had, my situation is not favourable to any effort of fancy.—Yours.

Peronne, Sept. 7, 1793.

The successes of the enemy on all sides, the rebellion at Lyons and Marseilles, with the increasing force of the insurgents in La Vendee, have revived our eagerness for news, and if the indifference of the French character exempt them from more patriotic sensations, it does not banish curiosity; yet an eventful crisis, which in England would draw people together, here keeps them apart. When an important piece of intelligence arrives, our provincial politicians shut themselves up with their gazettes, shun society, and endeavour to avoid giving an opinion until they are certain of the strength of a party, or the success of an attempt. In the present state of public affairs, you may therefore conceive we have very little communication—we express our sentiments more by looks and gestures than words, and Lavater (admitting his system) would be of more use to a stranger than Boyer or Chambaud. If the English take Dunkirk, perhaps we may be a little more social and more decided.

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Mad. de \_\_\_\_ has a most extensive acquaintance, and, as we are situated on one of the roads from Paris to the northern army, notwithstanding the cautious policy of the moment, we are tolerably well informed of what passes in most parts of France; and I cannot but be astonished, when I combine all I hear, that the government is able to sustain itself. Want, discord, and rebellion, assail it within—defeats and losses from without. Perhaps the solution of this political problem can only be found in the selfishness of the French character, and the want of connection between the different departments. Thus one part of the country is subdued by means of another: the inhabitants of the South take up arms in defence of their freedom and their commerce, while those of the North refuse to countenance or assist them, and wait in selfish tranquillity till the same oppression is extended to themselves. The majority of the people have no point of union nor mode of communication, while the Jacobins, whose numbers are comparatively insignificant, are strong, by means of their general correspondence, their common center at Paris, and the exclusive direction of all the public prints. But, whatever are the causes, it is certain that the government is at once powerful and detested—almost without apparent support, yet difficult to overthrow; and the submission of Rome to a dotard and a boy can no longer excite the wonder of any one who reflects on what passes in France.

After various decrees to effect the levee en masse, the Convention have discovered that this sublime and undefined project was not calculated for the present exhausted state of martial ardour. They therefore no longer presume on any movement of enthusiasm, but have made a positive and specific requisition of all the male inhabitants of France between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. This, as might be expected, has been more effectual, because it interests those that are exempt to force the compliance of those who are not. Our young men here were like children with a medicine—they proposed first one form of taking this military potion, then another, and finding them all equally unpalatable, would not, but for a little salutary force, have decided at all.

A new law has been passed for arresting all the English who cannot produce two witnesses of their civisme, and those whose conduct is thus guaranteed are to receive tickets of hospitality, which they are to wear as a protection. This decree has not yet been carried into effect at Peronne, nor am I much disturbed about it. Few of our countrymen will find the matter very difficult to arrange, and I believe they have all a better protection in the disposition of the people towards them, than any that can be assured them by decrees of the Convention.



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Sept. 11. The news of Lord Hood's taking possession of Toulon, which the government affected to discredit for some days, is now ascertained; and the Convention, in a paroxysm of rage, at once cowardly and unprincipled, has decreed that all the English not resident in France before 1789, shall be imprisoned as hostages, and be answerable with their lives for the conduct of their countrymen and of the Toulonese towards Bayle and Beauvais, two Deputies, said to be detained in the town at the time of its surrender. My first emotions of terror and indignation have subsided, and I have, by packing up my clothes, disposing of my papers, and providing myself with money, prepared for the worst. My friends, indeed, persuade me, (as on a former occasion,) that the decree is too atrocious to be put in execution; but my apprehensions are founded on a principle not likely to deceive me—namely, that those who have possessed themselves of the French government are capable of any thing. I live in constant fear, watching all day and listening all night, and never go to bed but with the expectation of being awakened, nor rise without a presentiment of misfortune.—I have not spirits nor composure to write, and shall discontinue my letters until I am relieved from suspense, if nor from uneasiness. I risk much by preserving these papers, and, perhaps, may never be able to add to them; but whatever I may be reserved for, while I have a hope they may reach you they shall not be destroyed. —I bid you adieu in a state of mind which the circumstances I am under will describe better than words.—Yours.

Maison d'Arret, Arras, Oct. 15, 1793.

Dear Brother,

The fears of a timid mind usually magnify expected evil, and anticipated suffering often diminishes the effect of an apprehended blow; yet my imagination had suggested less than I have experienced, nor do I find that a preparatory state of anxiety has rendered affliction more supportable. The last month of my life has been a compendium of misery; and my recollection, which on every other subject seems to fail me, is, on this, but too faithful, and will enable me to relate events which will interest you not only as they personally concern me, but as they present a picture of the barbarity and despotism to which this whole country is subject, and to which many thousands besides myself were at the same instant victims.

A few evenings after I concluded my last, the firing of cannon and ringing the great bell announced the arrival of Dumont (still Representative en mission in our department). The town was immediately in alarm, all the gates were shut, and the avenues leading to the ramparts guarded by dragoons. Our house being in a distant and unfrequented street, before we could learn the cause of all this confusion, a party of the national guard, with a municipal officer at their head, arrived, to escort Mad. de \_\_\_\_ and myself to a church, where the Representant was then

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examining the prisoners brought before him. Almost as much astonished as terrified, we endeavoured to procure some information of our conductors, as to what was to be the result of this measure; but they knew nothing, and it was easy to perceive they thought the office they were executing an unpleasant one. The streets we passed were crowded with people, whose silent consternation and dismayed countenances increased our forebodings, and depressed the little courage we had yet preserved. The church at our arrival was nearly empty, and Dumont preparing to depart, when the municipal officer introduced us to him. As soon as he learned that Mad. de \_\_\_\_ was the sister of an emigrant, and myself a native of England, he told us we were to pass the night in a church appointed for the purpose, and that on the morrow we should be conveyed to Arras. For a moment all my faculties became suspended, and it was only by an effort almost convulsive that I was able to ask how long it was probable we should be deprived of our liberty. He said he did not know—"but that the raising of the siege of Dunkirk, and the loss of six thousand troops which the French had taken prisoners, would doubtless produce an insurrection in England, par consequent a peace, and our release from captivity!"

You may be assured I felt no desire of freedom on such terms, and should have heard this ignorant and malicious suggestion only with contempt, had not the implication it conveyed that our detention would not terminate but with the war overwhelmed every other idea. Mad. de \_\_\_\_ then petitioned that we might, on account of our health, (for we were both really unwell,) be permitted to go home for the night, accompanied by guards if it were thought necessary. But the Representant was inexorable, and in a brutal and despotic tone ordered us away.—When we reached the church, which was to be our prison till morning, we found about an hundred and fifty people, chiefly old men, women, and children, dispersed in melancholy groupes, lamenting their situation, and imparting their fears to each other. The gloom of the building was increased by the darkness of the night; and the noise of the guard, many of whom were intoxicated, the odour of tobacco, and the heat of the place, rendered our situation almost insupportable. We soon discovered several of our acquaintance, but this association in distress was far from consolatory, and we passed the time in wandering about together, and consulting upon what would be of most use to us in our confinement. We had, indeed, little to hope for from the morrow, yet the hours dragged on heavily, and I know not if ever I beheld the return of light with more pleasure. I was not without apprehension for our personal safety. I recollected the massacres in churches at Paris, and the frequent propositions that had been made to exterminate the gentry and clergy. Mad. de \_\_\_\_ has since confessed, that she had the same ideas.



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Morning at length came, and our servants were permitted to enter with breakfast. They appeared sorrowful and terror-stricken, but offered with great willingness to accompany us whithersoever we should be sent. After a melancholy sort of discussion, it was decided that we should take our *femmes de chambres*, and that the others should remain for the safety of the house, and to send us what we might have occasion for. This settled, they returned with such directions as we were able to give them, (God knows, not very coherent ones,) to prepare for our journey: and as our orders, however confused, were not very voluminous, they were soon executed, and before noon every thing was in readiness for our departure. The people employed by our companions were equally diligent, and we might very well have set out by one o'clock, had our case been at all considered; but, I know not why, instead of so providing that we might reach our destination in the course of the day, it seemed to have been purposely contrived that we should be all night on the road, though we had already passed one night without rest, and were exhausted by watching and fatigue.

In this uncertain and unpleasant state we waited till near six o'clock; a number of small covered waggons were then brought, accompanied by a detachment of dragoons, who were to be our escort. Some time elapsed, as you may suppose, before we could be all settled in the carriages and such a cavalcade put in motion; but the concourse of people that filled the streets, the appearance of the troops, and the tumult occasioned by so many horses and carriages, overpowered my spirits, and I remember little of what passed till I found we were on the road to Arras. Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s maid now informed us, that Dumont had arrived the evening before in extreme ill humour, summoned the municipality in haste, enquired how many people they had arrested, and what denunciations they had yet to make. The whole body corporate trembled, they had arrested no one, and, still worse, they had no one to accuse; and could only alledge in their behalf, that the town was in the utmost tranquillity, and the people were so well disposed, that all violence was unnecessary. The Representant became furious, vociferated *tout grossierement a la Francaise*, [In the vulgar French manner.] that he knew there were five thousand aristocrates in Peronne, and that if he had not at least five hundred brought him before morning, he would declare the town in a state of rebellion.

Alarmed by this menace, they began to arrest with all possible speed, and were more solicitous to procure their number than to make discriminations. Their diligence, however, was inadequate to appease the choleric legislator, and the Mayor, municipal officers, and all the administrators of the district, were in the morning sent to the Castle, whence they are to be conveyed, with some of their own prisoners, to Amiens.

Besides this intelligence, we learned that before our servants had finished packing up our trunks, some Commissioners of the section arrived to put the seals on every thing belonging to us, and it was not without much altercation that they consented to our being furnished with necessaries—that they had not only sealed up all the house, but



had placed guards there, each of whom Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_ is to pay, at the rate of two shillings a day.

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We were too large a body to travel fast, and by the time we reached Bapaume (though only fifteen miles) it was after twelve; it rained dreadfully, the night was extremely dark, the roads were bad, and the horses tired; so that the officer who conducted us thought it would be difficult to proceed before morning. We were therefore once more crowded into a church, in our wet clothes, (for the covering of the waggon was not thick enough to exclude the rain,) a few bundles of damp straw were distributed, and we were then shut up to repose as well as we could. All my melancholy apprehensions of the preceding night returned with accumulated force, especially as we were now in a place where we were unknown, and were guarded by some of the newly-raised dragoons, of whom we all entertained very unfavourable suspicions.

We did not, as you may well imagine, attempt to sleep—a bed of wet straw laid on the pavement of a church, filthy, as most French churches are, and the fear of being assassinated, resisted every effort of nature herself, and we were very glad when at the break of day we were summoned to continue our journey. About eleven we entered Arras: the streets were filled by idle people, apprized of our arrival; but no one offered us any insult, except some soldiers, (I believe, by their uniform, refugees from the Netherlands,) who cried, “a la Guillotine!—a la Guillotine!”

The place to which we were ordered had been the house of an emigrant, now converted into an house of detention, and which, though large, was excessively full. The keeper, on our being delivered to him, declared he had no room for us, and we remained with our baggage in the court-yard some hours before he had, by dislodging and compressing the other inhabitants, contrived to place us. At last, when we were half dead with cold and fatigue, we were shown to our quarters. Those allotted for my friend, myself, and our servants, was the corner of a garret without a ceiling, cold enough in itself, but rendered much warmer than was desirable by the effluvia of a score of living bodies, who did not seem to think the unpleasantness of their situation at all increased by dirt and offensive smells. Weary as we were, it was impossible to attempt reposing until a purification had been effected: we therefore set ourselves to sprinkling vinegar and burning perfumes; and it was curious to observe that the people, (*all gens comme il faut* [People of fashion.]) whom we found inhaling the atmosphere of a Caffrarian hut, declared their nerves were incommoded by the essence of roses and vinaigre des quatre voleurs.

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As a part of the room was occupied by men, our next business was to separate our corner by a curtain, which we had fortunately brought with our bedding; and this done, we spread our mattresses and lay down, while the servants were employed in getting us tea. As soon as we were a little refreshed, and the room was quiet for the night, we made up our beds as well as we could, and endeavoured to sleep. Mad. de \_\_\_\_ and the two maids soon forgot their cares; but, though worn out by fatigue, the agitation of my mind conquered the disposition of my body. I seemed to have lost the very faculty of sleeping, and passed this night with almost as little repose as the two preceding ones. Before morning I discovered that remaining so long in damp clothes, and the other circumstances of our journey, had given me cold, and that I had all the symptoms of a violent fever.

I leave you to conjecture, for it would be impossible to detail, all the misery of illness in such a situation; and I will only add, that by the care of Mad. de \_\_\_\_, whose health was happily less affected, and the attention of my maid, I was able to leave the room in about three weeks. —I must now secrete this for some days, but will hereafter resume my little narrative, and explain how I have ventured to write so much even in the very neighbourhood of the Guillotine.—Adieu.

Maison d'Arret, Arras, Oct. 17, 1793.

On the night I concluded my last, a report that Commissioners were to visit the house on the morrow obliged me to dispose of my papers beyond the possibility of their being found. The alarm is now over, and I proceed.—After something more than three weeks indisposition, I began to walk in the yard, and make acquaintance with our fellow-prisoners. Mad. de \_\_\_\_ had already discovered several that were known to her, and I now found, with much regret, that many of my Arras friends were here also. Having been arrested some days before us, they were rather more conveniently lodged, and taking the wretchedness of our garret into consideration, it was agreed that Mad. de \_\_\_\_ should move to a room less crowded than our own, and a dark closet that would just contain my mattresses was resigned to me. It is indeed a very sorry apartment, but as it promises me a refuge where I may sometimes read or write in peace, I have taken possession of it very thankfully. A lock on the door is not the least of its recommendations, and by way of securing myself against all surprize, I have contrived an additional fastening by means of a large nail and the chain of a portmanteau—I have likewise, under pretext of keeping out the wind, papered over the cracks of the door, and provided myself with a sand-bag, so that no one can perceive when I have a light later than usual.—With these precautions, I can amuse myself by putting on paper any little occurrences that I think worth preserving, without much danger, and perhaps the details of a situation so new and so strange may not be uninteresting to you.

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We are now about three hundred in number of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions—*ci-devant* noblesse, parents, wives, sisters, and other relations of emigrants—priests who have not taken the oaths, merchants and shopkeepers accused of monopoly, nuns, farmers that are said to have concealed their corn, miserable women, with scarcely clothes to cover them, for not going to the constitutional mass, and many only because they happened to be at an inn, or on a visit from their own town, when a general arrest took place of all who are what is called *etrangers*, that is to say, not foreigners only, but not inhabitants of the town where they are found.—There are, besides, various descriptions of people sent here on secret informations, and who do not themselves know the precise reason of their confinement. I imagine we are subject to nearly the same rules as the common prisons: no one is permitted to enter or speak to a “*detenu*” but at the gate, and in presence of the guard; and all letters, parcels, baskets, &c. are examined previous to their being either conveyed from hence or received. This, however, depends much on the political principles of those who happen to be on guard: an aristocrate or a constitutionalist will read a letter with his eyes half shut, and inspect bedding and trunks in a very summary way; while a thorough-paced republican spells every syllable of the longest epistle, and opens all the roasted pigs or duck-pies before he allows their ingress.—None of the servants are suffered to go out, so that those who have not friends in the town to procure them necessaries are obliged to depend entirely on the keeper, and, of course, pay extravagantly dear for every thing; but we are so much in the power of these people, that it is prudent to submit to such impositions without murmuring.

I did not, during my illness, read the papers, and have to-day been amusing myself with a large packet. General Houchard, I find, is arrested, for not having, as they say he might have done, driven all the English army into the sea, after raising the siege of Dunkirk; yet a few weeks ago their utmost hopes scarcely amounted to the relief of the town: but their fears having subsided, they have now leisure to be jealous; and I know no situation so little to be envied under the present government as that of a successful General.—Among all their important avocations, the Convention have found time to pass a decree for obliging women to wear the national cockade, under pain of imprisonment; and the municipality of the superb Paris have ordered that the King’s family shall, in future, use pewter spoons and eat brown bread!

Oct. 18.

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I begin to be very uneasy about Mr. and Mrs. D\_\_\_\_. I have written several times, and still receive no answer. I fear they are in a confinement more severe than my own, or that our letters miscarry. A servant of Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s was here this morning, and no letters had come to Peronne, unless, as my friend endeavours to persuade me, the man would not venture to give them in presence of the guard, who par excellence happened to be a furious Jacobin.—We had the mortification of hearing that a very elegant carriage of Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s has been put in requisition, and taken to convey a tinman and two farriers who were going to Paris on a mission—that two of her farmer's best horses had been killed by hard work in taking provisions to the army, and that they are now cutting down the young wood on her estate to make pikes.—The seals are still on our effects, and the guard remains in possession, which has put us to the expence of buying a variety of articles we could not well dispense with: for, on examining the baggage after our arrival, we found it very much diminished; and this has happened to almost all the people who have been arrested. Our suspicions naturally fall on the dragoons, and it is not very surprizing that they should attempt to steal from those whom they are certain would not dare to make any complaint.

Many of our fellow-prisoners are embarrassed by their servants having quitted them.—One Collot d'Herbois, a member of the Commite de Salut Public, has proposed to the Convention to collect all the gentry, priests, and suspected people, into different buildings, which should be previously mined for the purpose, and, on the least appearance of insurrection, to blow them up all together.—You may perhaps conclude, that such a project was received with horror, and the adviser of it treated as a monster. Our humane legislature, however, very coolly sent it to the committee to be discussed, without any regard to the terror and apprehension which the bare idea of a similar proposal must inspire in those who are the destined victims. I cannot myself believe that this abominable scheme is intended for execution, but it has nevertheless created much alarm in timid minds, and has occasioned in part the defection of the servants I have just mentioned. Those who were sufficiently attached to their masters and mistresses to endure the confinement and privations of a Maison d'Arret, tremble at the thoughts of being involved in the common ruin of a gunpowder explosion; and the men seem to have less courage than the women, at least more of the latter have consented to remain here.—It was atrocious to publish such a conception, though nothing perhaps was intended by it, as it may deprive many people of faithful attendants at a time when they are most necessary.

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We have a tribunal revolutionnaire here, with its usual attendant the Guillotine, and executions are now become very frequent. I know not who are the sufferers, and avoid enquiring through fear of hearing the name of some acquaintance. As far as I can learn, the trials are but too summary, and little other evidence is required than the fortune, rank, and connections of the accused. The Deputy who is Commissioner for this department is one Le Bon, formerly a priest—and, I understand, of an immoral and sanguinary character, and that it is he who chiefly directs the verdicts of the juries according to his personal hatred or his personal interest.—We have lately had a very melancholy instance of the terror created by this tribunal, as well as of the notions that prevail of its justice. A gentleman of Calais, who had an employ under the government, was accused of some irregularity in his accounts, and, in consequence, put under arrest. The affair became serious, and he was ordered to prison, as a preliminary to his trial. When the officers entered his apartment to take him, regarding the judicial procedure as a mere form, and concluding it was determined to sacrifice him, he in a frenzy of despair seized the dogs in the chimney, threw them at the people, and, while they escaped to call for assistance, destroyed himself by cutting his arteries.—It has appeared, since the death of this unfortunate man, that the charge against him was groundless, and that he only wanted time to arrange his papers, in order to exonerate himself entirely.

Oct. 19.

We are disturbed almost nightly by the arrival of fresh prisoners, and my first question of a morning is always "*N'est il pas du monde entre la nuit?*"—Angelique's usual reply is a groan, and "*Ah, mon Dieu, oui;*" "*Une dixaine de pretres;*" or, "*Une trentaine de nobles:*" ["Did not some people arrive in the night?"]—"Yes, God help us—half a score priests, or twenty or thirty gentry." And I observe the depth of the groan is nearly in proportion to the quality of the person she commiserates. Thus, a groan for a Comte, a Marquise, or a Priest, is much more audible than one for a simple gentlewoman or a merchant; and the arrival of a Bishop (especially if not one of the constitutional clergy) is announced in a more sorrowful key than either.

While I was walking in the yard this morning, I was accosted by a female whom I immediately recollected to be Victoire, a very pretty *couturiere*, [Sempstress.] who used to work for me when I was at Panthemont, and who made your last holland shirts. I was not a little surprized to see her in such a situation, and took her aside to enquire her history. I found that her mother was dead, and that her brother having set up a little shop at St. Omer, had engaged her to go and live with him. Being under five-and-twenty, the last requisition obliged him to depart for the army, and leave her to carry on the business alone.



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Three weeks after, she was arrested at midnight, put into a cart, and brought hither. She had no time to take any precautions, and their little commerce, which was in haberdashery, as well as some work she had in hand, is abandoned to the mercy of the people that arrested her. She has reason to suppose that her crime consists in not having frequented the constitutional mass; and that her accuser is a member of one of the town committees, who, since her brother's absence, has persecuted her with dishonourable proposals, and, having been repulsed, has taken this method of revenging himself. Her conjecture is most probably right, as, since her imprisonment, this man has been endeavouring to make a sort of barter with her for her release.

I am really concerned for this poor creature, who is at present a very good girl, but if she remain here she will not only be deprived of her means of living, but perhaps her morals may be irremediably corrupted. She is now lodged in a room with ten or dozen men, and the house is so crowded that I doubt whether I have interest enough to procure her a more decent apartment.

What can this strange policy tend to, that thus exposes to ruin and want a girl of one-and-twenty—not for any open violation of the law, but merely for her religious opinions; and this, too, in a country which professes toleration as the basis of its government?

My friend, Mad. de \_\_\_\_ s'ennui terribly; she is not incapable of amusing herself, but is here deprived of the means. We have no corner we can call our own to sit in, and no retreat when we wish to be out of a crowd except my closet, where we can only see by candle-light. Besides, she regrets her employments, and projects for the winter. She had begun painting a St. Theresa, and translating an Italian romance, and had nearly completed the education of a dozen canary birds, who would in a month's time have accompanied the harp so delightfully, as to overpower the sound of the instrument. I believe if we had a few more square inches of room, she would be tempted, if not to bring the whole chorus, at least to console herself with two particular favourites, distinguished by curious topknots, and rings about their necks.

With all these feminine propensities, she is very amiable, and her case is indeed singularly cruel and unjust.—Left, at an early age, under the care of her brother, she was placed by him at Panthemont (where I first became acquainted with her) with an intention of having her persuaded to take the veil; but finding her averse from a cloister, she remained as a pensioner only, till a very advantageous marriage with the Marquis de \_\_\_\_, who was old enough to be her father, procured her release. About two years ago he died, and left her a very considerable fortune, which the revolution has reduced





to nearly one-third of its former value. The Comte de \_\_\_\_\_, her brother, was one of the original patriots, and embraced with great warmth the cause of the people; but having very narrowly escaped the massacres of September, 1792, he immediately after emigrated.

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Thus, my poor friend, immured by her brother till the age of twenty-two in a convent, then sacrificed three years to a husband of a disagreeable temper and unsuitable age, is now deprived of the first liberty she ever enjoyed, and is made answerable for the conduct of a man over whom she has no sort of influence. It is not, therefore, extraordinary that she cannot reconcile herself to her present situation, and I am really often more concerned on her account than my own. Cut off from her usual resources, she has no amusement but wandering about the house; and if her other causes of uneasiness be not augmented, they are at least rendered more intolerable by her inability to fill up her time.—This does not arise from a deficiency of understanding, but from never having been accustomed to think. Her mind resembles a body that is weak, not by nature, but from want of exercise; and the number of years she has passed in a convent has given her that mixture of childishness and romance, which, my making frivolities necessary, renders the mind incapable of exertion or self-support.

Oct. 20.

The unfortunate Queen, after a trial of some days, during which she seems to have behaved with great dignity and fortitude, is no longer sensible of the regrets of her friends or the malice of her enemies. It is singular, that I have not yet heard her death mentioned in the prison—every one looks grave and affects silence. I believe her death has not occasioned an effect so universal as that of the King, and whatever people's opinions may be, they are afraid of expressing them: for it is said, though I know not with what truth, that we are surrounded by spies, and several who have the appearance of being prisoners like ourselves have been pointed out to me as the objects of this suspicion.

I do not pretend to undertake the defence of the Queen's imputed faults—yet I think there are some at least which one may be very fairly permitted to doubt. Compassion should not make me an advocate for guilt—but I may, without sacrificing morals to pity, venture to observe, that the many scandalous histories circulated to her prejudice took their rise at the birth of the Dauphin,\* which formed so insurmountable a bar to the views of the Duke of Orleans.—

\* Nearly at the same time, and on the same occasion, there were literary partizans of the Duke of Orleans, who endeavoured to persuade the people that the man with the iron mask, who had so long excited curiosity and eluded conjecture, was the real son of Louis XIII.—and Louis XIV. in consequence, supposititious, and only the illegitimate offspring of Cardinal Mazarin and Anne of Austria—that the spirit of ambition and intrigue which characterized this Minister had suggested this substitution to the lawful heir, and that the fears of the Queen and confusion of the times had obliged her to acquiesce: “Cette opinion ridicule, et dont

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les dates connues de l'histoire demontrent l'absurdite, avoit eu des partisans en France —elle tendoit a avilir la maison regnante, et a persuader au peuple que le trone n'appartient pas aux descendants de Louis XIV. prince furtivement sutsttue, mais a la posterite du second fils de Louis XIII. qui est la tige de la branche d'Orleans, et qui est reconnue comme descendant legitimement, et sans objection, du Roi Louis XIII."

—Nouvelles Considerations sur la Masque de Fer, Memoirs de Richelieu.

"This ridiculous opinion, the absurdity of which is demonstrated by historical dates, had not been without its partizans in France.—It tended to degrade the reigning family, and to make the people believe that the throne did not of right belong to the descendants of Louis XIV. (a prince surreptitiously intruded) but to the posterity of the second son of Louis XIII. from whom is derived the branch of Orleans, and who was, without dispute, the legitimate and unobjectionable offspring of Louis XIII."

—New Considerations on the Iron Mask.—Memoirs of the Duc de Richelieu.

The author of the above Memoirs adds, that after the taking of the Bastille, new attempts were made to propagate this opinion, and that he himself had refuted it to many people, by producing original letters and papers, sufficiently demonstrative of its absurdity.

—He might hope, by popularity, to supersede the children of the Count d'Artois, who was hated; but an immediate heir to the Crown could be removed only by throwing suspicions on his legitimacy. These pretensions, it is true, were so absurd, and even incredible, that had they been urged at the time, no inference in the Queen's favour would have been admitted from them; but as the existence of such projects, however absurd and iniquitous, has since been demonstrated, one may now, with great appearance of reason, allow them some weight in her justification.

The affair of the necklace was of infinite disservice to the Queen's reputation; yet it is remarkable, that the most furious of the Jacobins are silent on this head as far as it regarded her, and always mention the Cardinal de Rohan in terms that suppose him to be the culpable party: but, "whatever her faults, her woes deserve compassion;" and perhaps the moralist, who is not too severe, may find some excuse for a Princess, who, at the age of sixteen, possibly without one real friend or disinterested adviser, became the unrestrained idol of the most licentious Court in Europe. Even her enemies do not pretend that her fate was so much a merited punishment as a political measure: they alledge, that while her life was yet spared, the valour of their troops was checked by the possibility of negotiation; and that being no more, neither the people nor armies expecting any thing but execration or revenge, they will be more ready to proceed to the

most desperate extremities.—This you will think a barbarous sort of policy, and considering it as national, it appears no less absurd than barbarous; but for the Convention, whose views perhaps extend little farther than to saving their heads, peculating, and receiving their eighteen livres a day, such measures, and such a principle of action, are neither unwise nor unaccountable: “for the wisdom of civilized nations is not their wisdom, nor the ways of civilized people their ways.”\*—



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\* I have been informed, by a gentleman who saw the Queen pass in her way to execution, that the short white bed gown and the cap which she wore were discoloured by smoke, and that her whole appearance seemed to have been intended, if possible, to degrade her in the eyes of the multitude. The benevolent mind will recollect with pleasure, that even the Queen's enemies allow her a fortitude and energy of character which must have counteracted this paltry malice, and rendered it incapable of producing any emotion but contempt. On her first being removed to the Conciergerie, she applied for some necessaries; but the humane municipality of Paris refused them, under pretext that the demand was contrary to the system of *la sainte elagite*—"holy equality."

—It was reported that the Queen was offered her life, and the liberty to retire to St. Cloud, her favourite residence, if she would engage the enemy to raise the siege of Maubeuge and withdraw; but that she refused to interfere.

Arras, 1793.

For some days previous to the battle by which Maubeuge was relieved, we had very gloomy apprehensions, and had the French army been unsuccessful and forced to fall back, it is not improbable but the lives of those detained in the *Maison d'Arret* [House of detention.] might have been sacrificed under pretext of appeasing the people, and to give some credit to the suspicions so industriously inculcated that all their defeats are occasioned by internal enemies. My first care, as soon as I was able to go down stairs, was to examine if the house offered any means of escape in case of danger, and I believe, if we could preserve our recollection, it might be practicable; but I can so little depend on my strength and spirits, should such a necessity occur, that perhaps the consolation of knowing I have a resource is the only benefit I should ever derive from it.

Oct. 21.

I have this day made a discovery of a very unpleasant nature, which Mad. de \_\_\_\_ had hitherto cautiously concealed from me. All the English, and other foreigners placed under similar circumstances, are now, without exception, arrested, and the confiscation of their property is decreed. It is uncertain if the law is to extend to wearing apparel, but I find that on this ground the Committee of Peronne persist in refusing to take the seals off my effects, or to permit my being supplied with any necessaries whatsoever. In other places they have put two, four, and, I am told, even to the number of six guards, in houses belonging to the English; and these guards, exclusive of being paid each two shillings per day, burn the wood, regale on the wine, and pillage in detail all they can find, while the unfortunate owner is starving in a *Maison d'Arret*, and cannot obtain permission to withdraw a single article for his own

use.—The plea for this paltry measure is, that, according to the report of a deserter escaped from Toulon, Lord Hood has hanged one Beauvais, a

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member of the Convention. I have no doubt but the report is false, and, most likely, fabricated by the Comité de Salut Public, in order to palliate an act of injustice previously meditated.

It is needless to expatiate on the atrocity of making individuals, living here under the faith of the nation, responsible for the events of the war, and it is whispered that even the people are a little ashamed of it; yet the government are not satisfied with making us accountable for what really does happen, but they attribute acts of cruelty to our countrymen, in order to excuse those they commit themselves, and retaliate imagined injuries by substantial vengeance.—Legendre, a member of the Convention, has proposed, with a most benevolent ingenuity, that the manes of the aforesaid Beauvais should be appeased by exhibiting Mr. Luttrell in an iron cage for a convenient time, and then hanging him.

A gentleman from Amiens, lately arrested while happening to be here on business, informs me, that Mr. Luttrell is now in the common gaol of that place, lodged with three other persons in a miserable apartment, so small, that there is not room to pass between their beds. I understand he was advised to petition Dumont for his removal to a Maison d'Arret, where he would have more external convenience; but he rejected this counsel, no doubt from a disdain which did him honour, and preferred to suffer all that the mean malice of these wretches would inflict, rather than ask any accommodation as a favour.—The distinguishing Mr. Luttrell from any other English gentleman is as much a proof of ignorance as of baseness; but in this, as in every thing else, the present French government is still more wicked than absurd, and our ridicule is suppressed by our detestation.

Oct. 22.

Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s *homme d'affaires* [Agent] has been here to-day, but no news from Amiens. I know not what to conjecture. My patience is almost exhausted, and my spirits are fatigued. Were I not just now relieved by a distant prospect of some change for the better, my situation would be insupportable.—“Oh world! oh world! but that thy strange mutations make us wait thee, life would not yield to age.” We should die before our time, even of moral diseases, unaided by physical ones; but the uncertainty of human events, which is the “worm i'the bud” of happiness, is to the miserable a cheering and consolatory reflection. Thus have I dragged on for some weeks, postponing, as it were, my existence, without any resource, save the homely philosophy of “*nous verrons demain.*”

["We shall see to-morrow."]

At length our hopes and expectations are become less general, and if we do not obtain our liberty, we may be able at least to procure a more eligible prison. I confess, the source of our hopes, and the protector we have found, are not of a dignity to be ushered to your notice by citations of blank verse, or scraps of sentiment; for though the top of the ladder is not quite so high, the first rounds are as low as that of Ben Bowling's.



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Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s confidential servant, who came here to-day, has learned, by accident, that a man, who formerly worked with the Marquis's tailor, having (in consequence, I suppose of a political vocation,) quitted the selling of old clothes, in which he had acquired some eminence, has become a leading patriot, and is one of Le Bon's, the Representative's, privy counsellors. Fleury has renewed his acquaintance with this man, has consulted him upon our situation, and obtained a promise that he will use his interest with Le Bon in our behalf. Under this splendid patronage, it is not unlikely but we may get an order to be transferred to Amiens, or, perhaps, procure our entire liberation. We have already written to Le Bon on the subject, and Fleury is to have a conference with our friend the tailor in a few days to learn the success of his mediation; so that, I trust, the business will not be long in suspense.

We have had a most indulgent guard to-day, who, by suffering the servant to enter a few paces within the gate, afforded us an opportunity of hearing this agreeable intelligence; as also, by way of episode, that boots being wanted for the cavalry, all the boots in the town were last night put in requisition, and as Fleury was unluckily gone to bed before the search was made at his inn, he found himself this morning very unceremoniously left bootless. He was once a famous patriot, and the oracle of Mad. de \_\_\_\_'s household; but our confinement had already shaken his principles, and this seizure of his "superb English boots" has, I believe, completed his defection.

Oct. 25.

I have discontinued my journal for three days to attend my friend, Mad. de \_\_\_\_, who has been ill. Uneasiness, and want of air and exercise, had brought on a little fever, which, by the usual mode of treatment in this country, has been considerably increased. Her disorder did not indeed much alarm me, but I cannot say as much of her medical assistants, and it seems to me to be almost supernatural that she has escaped the jeopardy of their prescriptions. In my own illness I had trusted to nature, and my recollection of what had been ordered me on similar occasions; but for Mad. de \_\_\_\_ I was less confident, and desirous of having better advice, begged a physician might be immediately sent for. Had her disorder been an apoplexy, she must infallibly have died, for as no person, not even the faculty, can enter, without an order from the municipal Divan, half a day elapsed before this order could be procured. At length the physician and surgeon arrived, and I know not why the learned professions should impose on us more by one exterior than another; but I own, when I saw the



physician appear in a white camblet coat, lined with rose colour, and the surgeon with dirty linen, and a gold button and loop to his hat, I began to tremble for my friend. My feminine prejudices did not, however, in this instance, deceive me. After the usual questions, the patient was

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declared in a fever, and condemned to cathartics, bleeding, and “bon bouillons;” that is to say, greasy beef soup, in which there is never an oeconomy of onions.—When they were departed, I could not help expressing my surprize that people’s lives should be entrusted to such hands, observing, at the same time, to the Baron de L\_\_\_\_, (who is lodged in the same apartment with Mad. de \_\_\_\_,) that the French must never expect men, whose education fitted them for the profession, would become physicians, while they continued to be paid at the rate of twenty-pence per visit.—Yet, replied the Baron, if they make twenty visits a day, they gain forty livres—“*et c’est de quoi vivre.*” [It is a living.] It is undeniably *de quoi vivre*, but as long as a mere subsistence is the only prospect of a physician, the French must be content to have their fevers cured by “drastics, phlebotomy, and beef soup.”

They tell me we have now more than five hundred detenus in this single house. How so many have been wedged in I can scarcely conceive, but it seems our keeper has the art of calculating with great nicety the space requisite for a given number of bodies, and their being able to respire freely is not his affair. Those who can afford it have their dinners, with all the appurtenances, brought from the inns or *traiteurs*; and the poor cook, sleep, and eat, by scores, in the same room. I have persuaded my friend to sup as I do, upon tea; but our associates, for the most part, finding it inconvenient to have suppers brought at night, and being unwilling to submit to the same privations, regale themselves with the remains of their dinner, re-cooked in their apartments, and thus go to sleep, amidst the fumes of *perdrix a l’onion*, *oeufs a la tripe*, [Partridge a l’onion—eggs a la tripe.] and all the produce of a French kitchen.

It is not, as you may imagine, the Bourgeois, and less distinguished prisoners only, who indulge in these highly-seasoned repasts, at the expence of inhaling the savoury atmosphere they leave behind them: the beaux and petites mistresses, among the *ci-devant*, have not less exigent appetites, nor more delicate nerves; and the ragout is produced at night, in spite of the odours and disorder that remain till the morrow.

I conclude, notwithstanding your English prejudices, that there is nothing unwholesome in filth, for if it were otherwise, I cannot account for our being alive. Five hundred bodies, in a state of coacervation, without even a preference for cleanliness, “think of that Master Brook.” All the forenoon the court is a receptacle for cabbage leaves, fish scales, leeks, &c. &c.—and as a French chambermaid usually prefers the direct road to circumambulation, the refuse of the kitchen is then washed away by plentiful inundations from the dressing-room—the passages are blockaded by foul plates,

fragments, and bones; to which if you add the smell exhaling from hoarded apples and gruyere cheese, you may form some notion

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of the sufferings of those whose olfactory nerves are not robust. Yet this is not all—nearly every female in the house, except myself, is accompanied even here by her lap-dog, who sleeps in her room, and, not unfrequently, on her bed; and these Lesbias and Lindamiras increase the insalubrity of the air, and colonize one's stockings by sending forth daily emigrations of fleas. For my own part, a few close November days will make me as captious and splenetic as Matthew Bramble himself. Nothing keeps me in tolerable good humour at present, but a clear frosty morning, or a high wind.

Oct. 27.

I thought, when I wrote the above, that the house was really so full as to be incapable of containing more; but I did not do justice to the talents of our keeper. The last two nights have brought us an addition of several waggon loads of nuns, farmers, shopkeepers, &c. from the neighbouring towns, which he has still contrived to lodge, though much in the way that he would pack goods in bales. Should another convoy arrive, it is certain that we must sleep perpendicularly, for even now, when the beds are all arranged and occupied for the night, no one can make a diagonal movement without disturbing his neighbour.—This very sociable manner of sleeping is very far, I assure you, from promoting the harmony of the day; and I am frequently witness to the reproaches and recriminations occasioned by nocturnal misdemeanours. Sometimes the lap-dog of one dowager is accused of hostilities against that of another, and thereby producing a general chorus of the rest—then a four-footed favourite strays from the bed of his mistress, and takes possession of a General's uniform—and there are female somnambules, who alarm the modesty of a pair of Bishops, and suspended officers, that, like Richard, warring in their dreams, cry “to arms,” to the great annoyance of those who are more inclined to sleep in peace. But, I understand, the great disturbers of the room where Mad. de \_\_\_\_ sleeps are two chanoines, whose noses are so sonorous and so untuneable as to produce a sort of duet absolutely incompatible with sleep; and one of the company is often deputed to interrupt the serenade by manual application *mais tout en badinant et avec politesse* [But all in pleasantry, and with politeness.] to the offending parties.

All this, my dear brother, is only ludicrous in the relation; yet for so many people to be thus huddled together without distinction of age, sex, or condition, is truly miserable.-- Mad. De \_\_\_\_ is still indisposed, and while she is thus suffocated by bad air, and distracted by the various noises of the house, I see no prospect of her recovery.

Arras is the common prison of the department, and, besides, there are a number of other houses and convents in the town appropriated to the same use, and all equally full. God knows when these iniquities are to terminate! So far from having any hopes at present, the rage for arresting seems, I think, rather to increase than subside. It is supposed there are now more than three hundred thousand people in France confined

under the simple imputation of being what is called “gens suspect:” but as this generic term is new to you, I will, by way of explanation, particularize the several species as classed by the Convention, and then described by Chaumette, solicitor for the City of Paris;\*—

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\* Decree concerning suspected people:

“Art. I. Immediately after the promulgation of the present decree, all suspected persons that are found on the territory of the republic, and who are still at large, shall be put under arrest.

“II. Those are deemed suspicious, who by their connections, their conversation, or their writings, declare themselves partizans of tyranny or foederation, and enemies to liberty—Those who have not demonstrated their means of living or the performance of their civic duties, in the manner prescribed by the law of March last—Those who, having been suspended from public employments by the Convention or its Commissioners, are not reinstated therein—Those of the ci-devant noblesse, who have not invariably manifested their attachment to the revolution, and, in general, all the fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and agents of emigrants—All who have emigrated between the 1st of July, 1789, and 8th of April, 1792.”“III. The execution of the decree is confided to the Committee of Inspection. The individuals arrested shall be taken to the houses of confinement appointed for their reception. They are allowed to take with them such only of their effects as are strictly necessary, the guards set upon them shall be paid at their expence, and they shall be kept in confinement until the peace.—The Committees of Inspection shall, without delay, transmit to the Committee of General Safety an account of the persons arrested, with the motives of their arrest. [If this were observed (which I doubt much) it was but a mockery, few persons ever knew the precise reason of their confinement.]—The civil and criminal tribunals are empowered, when they deem it necessary, to detain and imprison, as suspected persons, those who being accused of crimes have nevertheless had no bill found against them, (lieu a accusation,) or who have even been tried and acquitted.”

Indications that may serve to distinguish suspicious persons, and those to whom it will be proper to refuse certificates of civism:

“I. Those who in popular assemblies check the ardour of the people by artful speeches, by violent exclamations or threats.

“II. Those who with more caution speak in a mysterious way of the public misfortunes, who appear to pity the lot of the people, and are ever ready to spread bad news with an affectation of concern.

“III. Those who adapt their conduct and language to the circumstances of the moment—who, in order to be taken for republicans, put on a studied austerity of manners, and exclaim with vehemence against the most trifling error in a patriot, but mollify when the crimes of an Aristocrate or a Moderee are the subject of complaint. [These trifling events were, being concerned in the massacres of September, 1792—public peculations—occasional, and even habitual

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robbery, forgeries, &c. &c. &c.—The second, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh classes, were particularly numerous, insomuch that I doubt whether they would not have included nineteen-twentieths of all the people in France who were honest or at all capable of reflection.]

“IV. Those who pity avaricious farmers and shopkeepers, against whom the laws have been necessarily directed.

“V. Those who with the words liberty, country, republic, &c. constantly in their mouths, hold intercourse with ci-devant Nobles, Contre-revolutionnaires, Priests, Aristocrates, Feuillans, &c. and take an interest in their concerns.”“VI. Those who not having borne an active part in the revolution, endeavour to excuse themselves by urging the regular payment of their taxes, their patriotic gifts, and their service in the Garde National by substitute or otherwise.

“VII. Those who received the republican constitution with coolness, or who intimated their pretended apprehensions for its establishment and duration.

“VIII. Those who, having done nothing against liberty, have done as little for it.

“IX. Those who do not frequent the assembly of their section, and offer, for excuse, that they are no orators, or have no time to spare from their own business.

“X. Those who speak with contempt of the constituted authorities, of the rigour of the laws, of the popular societies, and the defenders of liberty.

“XI. Those who have signed anti-revolutionary petitions, or any time frequented unpatriotic clubs, or were known as partizans of La Fayette, and accomplices in the affair of the Champ de Mars.”

—and it must be allowed by all who reside in France at this moment, and are capable of observing the various forms under which hatred for the government shelters itself, that the latter is a chef d’oeuvre in its kind.

Now, exclusive of the above legal and moral indications of people to be suspected, there are also outward and visible signs which we are told from the tribune of the Convention, and the Jacobins, are not much less infallible—such as *Gens a bas de soie rayes mouchetes—a chapeau rond—habit carre—culotte pincee etroite—a bottes cirees—les muscadins—Freloquets—Robinets, &c.* [People that wear spotted or



striped silk stockings—round hats—small coats—tight breeches—blackened boots—perfumes—coxcombs—sprigs of the law, &c.] The consequence of making the cut of a man's coat, or the shape of his hat, a test of his political opinions, has been the transformation of the whole country into republicans, at least as far as depends on the costume; and where, as is natural, there exists a consciousness of inveterate aristocracy, the external is more elaborately "à la Jacobin." The equipment, indeed, of a French patriot of the latest date is as singular as his manners, and in both he is highly distinguishable from the inhabitants of any other country: from those of civilized nations, because he is gross and ferocious—from those of barbarous ones, because his grossness is often affected, and his ferocity a matter of principle and preference.

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A man who would not be reckoned suspect now arrays himself in a jacket and trowsers (a Carmagnole) of striped cotton or coarse cloth, a neckcloth of gaudy cotton, wadded like a horse-collar, and projecting considerably beyond his chin, a cap of red and blue cloth, embroidered in front and made much in the form of that worn by the Pierrot of a pantomime, with one, or sometimes a pair, of ear-rings, about the size of a large curtain-ring! Finally, he crops his hair, and carefully encourages the growth of an enormous pair of whiskers, which he does not fail to perfume with volumes of tobacco smoke. He, however, who is ambitious of still greater eminence, disdains these fopperies, and affects an appearance of filth and rags, which he dignifies with the appellation of stern republicanism and virtuous poverty; and thus, by means of a thread-bare coat out at elbows, wooden shoes, and a red woollen cap, the rich hope to secure their wealth, and the covetous and intriguing to acquire lucrative employment.—Rolland, I think, was the founder of these modern Franciscans, and with this miserable affectation he machinated the death of the King, and, during some months, procured for himself the exclusive direction of the government.

All these patriots by prescription and system have likewise a peculiar and appropriated dialect—they address every one by the title of Citizen, thee and thou indistinctly, and talk of nothing but the agents of Pitt and Cobourg, the coalesced tyrants, royal ogres, satellites of the despots, automaton slaves, and anthropophagi; and if they revert to their own prosperous state, and this very happy country, it is, *un peuple libre, en peuple heureux, and par excellence la terre de la liberte*. ["A free people—a happy people—and, above all others, the land of liberty."]—It is to be observed, that those with whom these pompous expressions are most familiar, are officers employed in the war-like service of mutilating the wooden saints in churches, and arresting old women whom they encounter without national cockades; or members of the municipalities, now reduced to execute the offices of constables, and whose chief functions are to hunt out suspected people, or make domiciliary visits in quest of concealed eggs and butter. But, above all, this democratic oratory is used by tailors, shoemakers, &c.\* of the Committees of Inspection, to whom the Representatives on mission have delegated their unlimited powers, who arrest much on the principle of Jack Cade, and with whom it is a crime to read and write, or to appear decently dressed.

\* For some months the departments were infested by people of this description—corrupt, ignorant, and insolent. Their motives of arrest were usually the hope of plunder, or the desire of distressing those whom they had been used to look upon as their superiors.—At Arras it sufficed even to have disoblged the wives of these miscreants to become the object of persecution.

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In some places they arrested with the most barbarous caprice, even without the shadow of a reason. At Hesden, a small town in Artois, Dumont left the Mayor carte blanche, and in one night two hundred people were thrown into prison. Every where these low and obscure dominators reigned without controul, and so much were the people intimidated, that instead of daring to complain, they treated their new tyrants with the most servile adulation.—I have seen a ci-devant Comtesse coquetting with all her might a Jacobin tailor, and the richest merchants of a town soliciting very humbly the good offices of a dealer in old clothes.

These ridiculous accoutrements, and this magnificent phraseology, are in themselves very harmless; but the ascendancy which such a class of people are taking has become a subject of just alarm.—The whole administration of the country is now in the hands of uninformed and necessitous profligates, swindlers, men already condemned by the laws, and who, if the revolution had not given them “place and office,” would have been at the galleys, or in prison.\*

\* One of the administrators of the department de la Somme (which, however, was more decently composed than many others,) was, before the revolution, convicted of house-breaking, and another of forgery; and it has since been proved on various occasions, particularly on the trial of the ninety-four Nantais, that the revolutionary Committees were, for the most part, composed of the very refuse of society—adventurers, thieves, and even assassins; and it would be difficult to imagine a crime that did not there find reward and protection.—In vain were the privileges of the nobility abolished, and religion proscribed. A new privileged order arose in the Jacobins, and guilt of every kind, without the semblance of penitence, found an asylum in these Committees, and an inviolability more sacred than that afforded by the demolished altars.

To these may be added a few men of weak character, and unsteady principles, who remain in office because they fear to resign; with a few, and but very few, ignorant fanatics, who really imagine they are free because they can molest and destroy with impunity all they have hitherto been taught to respect, and drink treble the quantity they did formerly.

Oct. 30.

For some days the guards have been so untractable, and the croud at the door has been so great, that Fleury was obliged to make various efforts before he could communicate the result of his negotiation. He has at length found means to inform us, that his friend the tailor had exerted all his interest in our favour, but that Dumont and Le Bon (as often happens between neighbouring potentates) are at war, and their enmity being in some degree subject to their mutual fears, neither will venture to liberate any prisoner arrested by the other, lest such a disposition to clemency should be seized on by his rival as a ground of accusation.\*

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\* But if they did not free the enemies of each other, they revenged themselves by throwing into prison all their mutual friends—for the temper of the times was such, that, though these Representatives were expressly invested with unlimited powers, they did not venture to set any one at liberty without a multitude of forms and a long attendance: on the contrary, they arrested without any form at all, and allowed their myrmidons to harrass and confine the persons and sequester the property of all whom they judged proper.—It seemed to have been an elementary principle with those employed by the government at this time, that they risked nothing in doing all the mischief they could, and that they erred only in not doing enough.

—All, therefore, that can be obtained is, a promise to have us removed to Amiens in a short time; and I understand the detenus are there treated with consideration, and that no tribunal revolutionnaire has yet been established.

My mind will be considerably more at ease if this removal can be effected. Perhaps we may not be in more real danger here than at any other place, but it is not realities that constitute the misery of life; and situated as we are, that imagination must be phlegmatic indeed, which does not create and exaggerate enough to prevent the possibility of ease.—We are, as I before observed, placed as it were within the jurisdiction of the guillotine; and I have learned “a secret of our prison-house” to-day which Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_ had hitherto concealed from me, and which has rendered me still more anxious to quit it. Several of our fellow prisoners, whom I supposed only transferred to other houses, have been taken away to undergo the ceremony of a trial, and from thence to the scaffold. These judicial massacres are now become common, and the repetition of them has destroyed at once the feeling of humanity and the sense of justice. Familiarized to executions, the thoughtless and sanguinary people behold with equal indifference the guilty or innocent victim; and the Guillotine has not only ceased to be an object of horror, but is become almost a source of amusement.

\* At Arras this horrid instrument of death was what they called en permanence, (stationary,) and so little regard was paid to the morals of the people, (I say the morals, because every thing which tends to destroy their humanity renders them vicious,) that it was often left from one execution to another with the ensanguined traces of the last victim but too evident.—Children were taught to amuse themselves by making models of the Guillotine, with which they destroyed flies, and even animals. On the Pontneuf, at Paris, a sort of puppet-show was exhibited daily, whose boast it was to give a very exact imitation of a guillotinage; and the burthen of a popular song current for some months was “*Dansons la Guillotine.*” —On the 21st of January, 1794, the anniversary of the King’s death, the Convention

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were invited to celebrate it on the “Place de la Revolution,” where, during the ceremony, and in presence of the whole legislative body, several people were executed. It is true, Bourdon, one of the Deputies, complained of this indecency; but not so much on account of the circumstance itself, as because it gave some of the people an opportunity of telling him, in a sort of way he might probably deem prophetic, that one of the victims was a Representative of the People. The Convention pretended to order that some enquiry should be made why at such a moment such a place was chosen; but the enquiry came to nothing, and I have no doubt but the executions were purposely intended as analogous to the ceremony.—It was proved that Le Bon, on an occasion when he chose to be a spectator of some executions he had been the cause of, suspended the operation while he read the newspaper aloud, in order, as he said, that the aristocrates might go out of the world with the additional mortification of learning the success of the republican arms in their last moments. The People of Brest were suffered to behold, I had almost said to be amused with (for if those who order such spectacles are detestable, the people that permit them are not free from blame,) the sight of twenty-five heads ranged in a line, and still convulsed with the agonies of death.—The cant word for the Guillotine was “our holy mother;” and verdicts of condemnation were called prizes in the Sainte Lotterie—“holy lottery.”

The dark and ferocious character of Le Bon developes itself hourly: the whole department trembles before him; and those who have least merited persecution are, with reason, the most apprehensive. The most cautious prudence of conduct, the most undeviating rectitude in those who are by their fortune or rank obnoxious to the tyrant, far from contributing to their security, only mark them out for a more early sacrifice. What is still worse, these horrors are not likely to terminate, because he is allowed to pay out of the treasury of the department the mob that are employed to popularize and applaud them.—I hope, in a few days, we shall receive our permission to depart. My impatience is a malady, and, for nearly the first time in my life, I am sensible of ennui; not the ennui occasioned by want of amusement, but that which is the effect of unquiet expectation, and which makes both the mind and body restless and incapable of attending to any thing. I am incessantly haunted by the idea that the companion of to-day may to-morrow expire under the Guillotine, that the common acts of social intercourse may be explained into intimacy, intimacy into the participation of imputed treasons, and the fate of those with whom we are associated become our own. It appears both useless and cruel to have brought us here, nor do I yet know any reason why we were not all removed to Amiens, except it was to avoid exposing to the eyes of the people in the places through which we must pass too large a number of victims at once.—The cause of our being removed from Peronne is indeed avowed, as it is at present a rule not to confine people at the place of their residence, lest they should have too much facility or communication with, or assistance from, their friends.\*

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\* In some departments the nobles and priests arrested were removed from ten to twenty leagues distant from their homes; and if they happened to have relations living at the places where they were confined, these last were forbidden to reside there, or even to travel that way.

We should doubtless have remained at Arras until some change in public affairs had procured our release, but for the fortunate discovery of the man I have mentioned; and the trifling favour of removal from one prison to another has been obtained only by certain arrangements which Fleury has made with this subordinate agent of tyranny, and in which justice or consideration for us had no share. Alas! are we not miserable? is not the country miserable, when our only resource is in the vices of those who govern?—It is uncertain when we shall be ordered from hence—it may happen when we least expect it, even in the night, so that I shall not attempt to write again till we have changed our situation. The risk is at present too serious, and you must allow my desire of amusing you to give way to my solicitude for my own preservation.

Bicetre at Amiens, Nov. 18, 1793.

*Nous voila donc encore, logees a la nation;* that is to say, the common prison of the department, amidst the thieves, vagabonds, maniacs, &c. confined by the old police, and the gens suspects recently arrested by the new.—I write from the end of a sort of elevated barn, sixty or seventy feet long, where the interstices of the tiles admit the wind from all quarters, and scarcely exclude the rain, and where an old screen and some curtains only separate Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_, myself, and our servants, from sixty priests, most of them old, sick, and as wretched as men can be, who are pious and resigned. Yet even here I feel comparatively at ease, and an escape from the jurisdiction of Le Bon and his merciless tribunal seems cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of our personal convenience. I do not pretend to philosophize or stoicize, or to any thing else which implies a contempt of life—I have, on the contrary, a most unheroic solicitude about my existence, and consider my removal to a place where I think we are safe, as a very fortunate aera of our captivity.

After many delays and disappointments, Fleury at length procured an order, signed by the Representative, for our being transferred to Amiens, under the care of two *Gardes Nationaux*, and, of course, at our expence.—Every thing in this country wears the aspect of despotism. At twelve o'clock at night we were awakened by the officer on guard, and informed we were to depart on the morrow; and, notwithstanding the difficulty of procuring horses and carriages, it was specified, that if we did not go on the day appointed, we were not to go at all. It was, of course, late before we could surmount the various obstacles to our journey, and procure two crazy cabriolets, and a cart for the guards, ourselves,

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and baggage. The days being short, we were obliged to sleep at Dourlens; and, on our arrival at the castle, which is now, as it always has been, a state-prison, we were told it was so full, that it was absolutely impossible to lodge us, and that we had better apply to the Governor, for permission to sleep at an inn. We then drove to the Governor's\* house, who received us very civilly, and with very little persuasion agreed to our request. At the best of the miserable inns in the town we were informed they had no room, and that they could not accommodate us in any way whatever, except a sick officer then in the house would permit us to occupy one of two beds in his apartment.

\* The Commandant had been originally a private soldier in the regiment of Dillon.—I know not how he had obtained his advancement, but, however obtained, it proved fatal to him: he was, a very short time after I saw him, guillotined at Arras, for having borrowed money of a prisoner. His real crime was, probably, treating the prisoners in general with too much consideration and indulgence; and at this period every suspicion of the kind was fatal.

In England it would not be very decent to make such a request, or to accept such an accommodation. In France, neither the one nor the other is unusual, and we had suffered lately so many embarrassments of the kind, that we were, if not reconciled, at least inured to them. Before, however, we could determine, the gentleman had been informed of our situation, and came to offer his services. You may judge of our surprise when we found in the stranger, who had his head bound up and his arm in a sling, General \_\_\_\_\_, a relation of Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_. We had now, therefore, less scruple in sharing his room, though we agreed, notwithstanding, only to repose a few hours in our clothes.

After taking some tea, the remainder of the evening was dedicated to reciprocal conversation of all kinds; and our guards having acquaintance in the town, and knowing it was impossible for us to escape, even were we so inclined, very civilly left us to ourselves. We found the General had been wounded at Maubeuge, and was now absent on conge for the recovery of his health. He talked of the present state of public affairs like a military man who is attached to his profession, and who thinks it his duty to fight at all events, whatever the rights or merits of those that employ him. He confessed, indeed, that they were repulsing their external enemies, only to confirm the power of those who were infinitely more to be dreaded at home, and that the condition of a General was more to be commiserated at this time than any other: if he miscarry, disgrace and the Guillotine await him—if he be successful, he gains little honour, becomes an object of jealousy, and assists in rivetting the chains of his country. He said, the armies were for the most part licentious and insubordinate, but that the political discipline



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was terrible—the soldiers are allowed to drink, pillage, and insult their officers with impunity, but all combinations are rigorously suppressed, the slightest murmur against the Representative on mission is treason, and to disapprove of a decree of the convention, death—that every man of any note in the army is beset with spies, and if they leave the camp on any occasion, it is more necessary to be on their guard against these wretches than against an ambuscade of the enemy; and he related a circumstance which happened to himself, as an example of what he mentioned, and which will give you a tolerable idea of the present system of government.—After the relief of Dunkirk, being quartered in the neighbourhood of St. Omer, he occasionally went to the town on his private concerns. One day, while he was waiting at the inn where he intended to dine, two young men accosted him, and after engaging him in a general conversation for some time, began to talk with great freedom, though with an affected caution of public men and measures, of the banditti who governed, the tyranny that was exercised, and the supineness of the people: in short, of all those too poignant truths which constitute the leze nation of the day. *Mons. de \_\_\_\_* was not at first very attentive, but finding their discourse become still more liberal, it excited his suspicions, and casting his eyes on a glass opposite to where they were conversing, he perceived a sort of intelligence between them, which immediately suggested to him the profession of his companions; and calling to a couple of dragoons who had attended him, ordered them to arrest the two gentlemen as artistocrates, and convey them without ceremony to prison. They submitted, seemingly more surprized than alarmed, and in two hours the General received a note from a higher power, desiring him to set them at liberty, as they were agents of the republic.

Duquesnoy, one of the Representatives now with the Northern army, is ignorant and brutal in the extreme. He has made his brother (who, as well as himself, used to retail hops in the streets of St. Pol,) a General; and in order to deliver him from rivals and critics, he breaks, suspends, arrests, and sends to the Guillotine every officer of any merit that comes in his way. After the battle of Maubeuge, he arrested a General Bardell, [The Generals Bardell and D'Avesnes, and several others, were afterwards guillotined at Paris.] for accommodating a wounded prisoner of distinction (I think a relation of the Prince of Cobourg) with a bed, and tore with his own hands the epaulette from the shoulders of those Generals whose divisions had not sustained the combat so well as the others. His temper, naturally savage and choleric, is irritated to fury by the habit of drinking large quantities of strong liquors; and *Mad. de \_\_\_\_*'s relation assured us, that he had himself seen him take the Mayor of Avesnes (a venerable old man, who was presenting some petition to him that



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regarded the town,) by the hair and throw him on the ground, with the gestures of an enraged cannibal. He also confined one of his own fellow deputies in the tower of Guise, upon a very frivolous pretext, and merely on his own authority. In fact, I scarcely remember half the horrors told us of this man; and I shall only remind you, that he has an unlimited controul over the civil constitution of the Northern army, and over the whole department of the North.

You, I suppose, will be better informed of military events than we are, and I mention our friend's conjecture, that (besides an enormous number of killed) the wounded at Maubeuge amounted to twelve or fourteen thousand, only to remark the deception which is still practised on the people; for no published account ever allowed the number to be more than a few hundreds.—Besides these professional details, the General gave us some very unpleasant family ones. On returning to his father's chateau, where he hoped to be taken care of while his wounds were curing, he found every room in it under seals, three guards in possession, his two sisters arrested at St. Omer, where they happened to be on a visit, and his father and mother confined in separate houses of detention at Arras. After visiting them, and making some ineffectual applications for their relief, he came to the neighbourhood of Dourlens, expecting to find an asylum with an uncle, who had hitherto escaped the general persecution of the gentry. Here again his disappointment and chagrin were renewed: his uncle had been carried off to Amiens the morning of his arrival, and the house rendered inaccessible, by the usual affixture of seals, and an attendant pair of myrmidons to guard them from infraction. Thus excluded from all his family habitations, he had taken up his residence for a day or two at the inn where we met him, his intention being to return to Arras.

In the morning we made our adieus and pursued our journey; but, tenacious of this comparative liberty and the enjoyment of pure air, we prevailed on our conductors to let us dine on the road, so that we lingered with the unwillingness of truant children, and did not reach Amiens until dark. When we arrived at the Hotel de Ville, one of the guards enquired how we were to be disposed of. Unfortunately for us, Dumont happened to be there himself, and on hearing we were sent from Arras by order of Le Bon, declared most furiously (for our Representative is subject to choler since his accession to greatness) that he would have no prisoners received from Arras, and that we should sleep at the Conciergerie, and be conveyed back again on the morrow. Terrified at this menace, we persuaded the guard to represent to Dumont that we had been sent to Amiens at our own instance, and that we had been originally arrested by himself, and were therefore desirous of returning to the department where he was on mission, and where we had more reason to expect justice than at Arras.

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Mollified, perhaps, by this implied preference of his authority, he consented that we should remain for the present at Amiens, and ordered us to be taken to the Bicetre. Whoever has been used to connect with the word Bicetre the idea of the prison so named at Paris, must recoil with horror upon hearing they are destined to such a abode. Mad. de \_\_\_\_, yet weak from the remains of her illness, laid hold of me in a transport of grief; but, far from being able to calm or console her, my thoughts were so bewildered that I did not, till we alighted at the gate, begin to be really sensible of our situation. The night was dark and dreary, and our first entrance was into a kitchen, such as my imagination had pictured the subterraneous one of the robbers in Gil Blas. Here we underwent the ceremony of having our pocket-books searched for papers and letters, and our trunks rummaged for knives and fire-arms. This done, we were shown to the lodging I have described, and the poor priests, already insufferably crowded, were obliged almost to join their beds in order to make room for us.—I will not pain you by a recital of all the embarrassments and distresses we had to surmount before we could even rest ourselves. We were in want of every thing, and the rules of the prison such, that it was nearly impossible, for some time, to procure any thing: but the human mind is more flexible than we are often disposed to imagine it; and in two days we were able to see our situation in this best point of view, (that is, as an escape from Arras,) and the affair of submitting our bodies to our minds must be atchieved by time.—We have now been here a week. We have sounded the very depth of humiliation, taken our daily allowance of bread with the rest of the prisoners, and contracted a most friendly intimacy with the gaoler.

I have discovered since our arrival, that the order for transferring us hither described me as a native of the Low Countries. I know not how this happened, but my friend has insisted on my not rectifying the mistake, for as the French talk continually of reconquering Brabant, she persuades herself such an event would procure me my liberty. I neither desire the one nor expect the other; but, to indulge her, I speak no English, and avoid two or three of my countrymen who I am told are here. There have been also some English families who were lately removed, but the French pronounce our names so strangely, that I have not been able to learn who they were.

November 19, 1793.

The English in general, especially of late years, have been taught to entertain very formidable notions of the Bastille and other state prisons of the ancient government, and they were, no doubt, horrid enough; yet I have not hitherto been able to discover that those of the new republic are any way preferable. The only difference is, that the great number of prisoners which, for want of room, are obliged to be heaped together, makes it impossible to exclude them

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as formerly from communication, and, instead of being maintained at the public expence, they now, with great difficulty, are able to procure wherewithal to eat at their own. Our present habitation is an immense building, about a quarter of a mile from the town, intended originally for the common gaol of the province. The situation is damp and unwholesome, and the water so bad, that I should suppose a long continuance here of such a number of prisoners must be productive of endemical disorders. Every avenue to the house is guarded, and no one is permitted to stop and look up at the windows, under pain of becoming a resident. We are strictly prohibited from all external intercourse, except by writing; and every scrap of paper, though but an order for a dinner, passes the inquisition of three different people before it reaches its destination, and, of course, many letters and notes are mislaid, and never sent at all.—There is no court or garden in which the prisoners are allowed to walk, and the only exercise they can take is in damp passages, or a small yard, (perhaps thirty feet square,) which often smells so detestably, that the atmosphere of the house itself is less mephitic.

Our fellow-captives are a motley collection of the victims of nature, of justice, and of tyranny—of lunatics who are insensible of their situation, of thieves who deserve it, and of political criminals whose guilt is the accident of birth, the imputation of wealth, or the profession of a clergyman. Among the latter is the Bishop of Amiens, whom I recollect to have mentioned in a former letter. You will wonder why a constitutional Bishop, once popular with the democratic party, should be thus treated. The real motive was, probably, to degrade in his person a minister of religion—the ostensible one, a dispute with Dumont at the Jacobin club. As the times grew alarming, the Bishop, perhaps, thought it politic to appear at the club, and the Representative meeting him there one evening, began to interrogate him very rudely with regard to his opinion of the marriage of priests. M. Dubois replied, that when it was officially incumbent on him to explain himself, he would do so, but that he did not think the club a place for such discussions, or something to this purpose. "*Tu prevariques donc!—Je t'arrete sur le champ:*" ["What, you prevaricate!—I arrest you instantly."] the Bishop was accordingly arrested at the instant, and conducted to the Bicetre, without even being suffered to go home and furnish himself with necessaries; and the seals being immediately put on his effects, he has never been able to obtain a change of linen and clothes, or any thing else—this too at a time when the pensions of the clergy are ill paid, and every article of clothing so dear as to be almost unpurchaseable by moderate fortunes, and when those who might otherwise be disposed to aid or accommodate their friends, abandon them through fear of being implicated in their misfortunes.

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But the Bishop, yet in the vigour of life, is better capable of enduring these hardships than most of the poor priests with whom he is associated: the greater number of them are very old men, with venerable grey locks— and their tattered clerical habits, scanty meals, and wretched beds, give me many an heart-ache. God send the constant sight of so much misery may not render me callous!—It is certain, there are people here, who, whatever their feelings might have been on this occasion at first, seem now little affected by it. Those who are too much familiarized with scenes of wretchedness, as well as those to whom they are unknown, are not often very susceptible; and I am sometimes disposed to cavil with our natures, that the sufferings which ought to excite our benevolence, and the prosperity that enables us to relieve them, should ever have a contrary effect. Yet this is so true, that I have scarcely ever observed even the poor considerate towards each other—and the rich, if they are frequently charitable, are not always compassionate.\*

\* Our situation at the Bicetre, though terrible for people unused to hardships or confinement, and in fact, wretched as personal inconvenience could make it, was yet Elysium, compared to the prisons of other departments. At St. Omer, the prisoners were frequently disturbed at midnight by the entrance of men into their apartments, who, with the detestable ensign of their order, (red caps,) and pipes in their mouths, came by way of frolic to search their pockets, trunks, &c.—At Montreuil, the Maisons d'Arret were under the direction of a Commissary, whose behaviour to the female prisoners was too atrocious for recital—two young women, in particular, who refused to purchase milder treatment, were locked up in a room for seventeen days.—Soon after I left Arras, every prison became a den of horror. The miserable inhabitants were subject to the agents of Le Bon, whose avarice, cruelty, and licentiousness, were beyond any thing a humane mind can imagine. Sometimes the houses were suddenly surrounded by an armed force, the prisoners turned out in the depth of winter for several hours into an open court, during the operation of robbing them of their pocket-books, buckles, ear-rings, or whatever article of value they had about them. At other times they were visited by the same military array, and deprived of their linen and clothes. Their wine and provisions were likewise taken from them in the same manner—wives were separated from their husbands, parents from their children, old men treated with the most savage barbarity, and young women with an indecency still more abominable. All communication, either by writing or otherwise, was often prohibited for many days together, and an order was once given to prevent even the entry of provisions, which was not revoked till the prisoners became absolutely distressed. At the Hotel Dieu they were forbidden to draw more than a single jug of water

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in twenty-four hours. At the Providence, the well was left three days without a cord, and when the unfortunate females confined there procured people to beg water of the neighbours, they were refused, "because it was for prisoners, and if Le Bon heard of it he might be displeased!" Windows were blocked up, not to prevent escape, but to exclude air; and when the general scarcity rendered it impossible for the prisoners to procure sufficient food for their support, their small portions were diminished at the gate, under pretext of searching for letters, &c. —People, respectable both for their rank and character, were employed to clean the prisons and privies, while their low and insolent tyrants looked on and insulted them. On an occasion when one of the Maisons d'Arrets was on fire, guards were planted round, with orders to fire upon those that should attempt to escape.—My memory has but too faithfully recorded these and still greater horrors; but curiosity would be gratified but too dearly by the relation. I added the above note some months after writing the letter to which it is annexed.

Nov. 20.

Besides the gentry and clergy of this department, we have likewise for companions a number of inhabitants of Lisle, arrested under circumstances singularly atrocious, even where atrocity is the characteristic of almost every proceeding.—In the month of August a decree was passed to oblige all the nobility, clergy, and their servants, as well as all those persons who had been in the service of emigrants, to depart from Lisle in eight-and-forty hours, and prohibiting their residence within twenty leagues from the frontiers. Thus banished from their own habitations, they took refuge in different towns, at the prescribed distance; but, almost as soon as they were arrived, and had been at the expence of settling themselves, they were arrested as strangers,\* and conducted to prison.

\* I have before, I believe, noticed that the term *estranger* at this time did not exclusively apply to foreigners, but to such as had come from one town to another, who were at inns or on a visit to their friends.

It will not be improper to notice here the conduct of the government towards the towns that have been besieged. Thionville,\* to whose gallant defence in 1792 France owed the retreat of the Prussians and the safety of Paris, was afterwards continually reproached with aristocracy; and when the inhabitants sent a deputation to solicit an indemnity for the damage the town had sustained during the bombardment a member of the Convention threatened them from the tribune with "*indemnities a coup de baton!*" that is, in our vernacular tongue, with a good thrashing.

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\* Wimpfen, who commanded there, and whose conduct at the time was enthusiastically admired, was driven, most probably by the ingratitude and ill treatment of the Convention, to head a party of the Foederalists.—These legislators perpetually boast of imitating and surpassing the Romans, and it is certain, that their ingratitude has made more than one Coriolanus. The difference is, that they are not jealous for the liberty of the country, but for their own personal safety.

The inhabitants of Lisle, who had been equally serviceable in stopping the progress of the Austrians, for a long time petitioned without effect to obtain the sums already voted for their relief. The noblesse, and others from thence who have been arrested, as soon as it was known that they were Lillois, were treated with peculiar rigour;\* and an *armee revolutionnaire*,\*\* with the Guillotine for a standard, has lately harrassed the town and environs of Lisle, as though it were a conquered country.

\* The Commandant of Lisle, on his arrival at the Bicetre, was stripped of a considerable sum of money, and a quantity of plate he had unluckily brought with him by way of security. Out of this he is to be supplied with fifty livres at a time in paper, which, according to the exchange and the price of every thing, is, I suppose, about half a guinea.\*\* The *armee revolutionnaire* was first raised by order of the Jacobins, for the purpose of searching the countries for provisions, and conducting them to Paris. Under this pretext, a levy was made of all the most desperate ruffians that could be collected together. They were divided into companies, each with its attendant Guillotine, and then distributed in the different departments: they had extraordinary pay, and seem to have been subject to no discipline. Many of them were distinguished by the representation of a Guillotine in miniature, and a head just severed, on their cartouch-boxes. It would be impossible to describe half the enormities committed by these banditti: wherever they went they were regarded as a scourge, and every heart shrunk at their approach. Lecointre, of Versailles, a member of the Convention, complained that a band of these wretches entered the house of a farmer, one of his tenants, by night, and, after binding the family hand and foot, and helping themselves to whatever they could find, they placed the farmer with his bare feet on the chaffing-dish of hot ashes, by way of forcing him to discover where he had secreted his plate and money, which having secured, they set all the vessels of liquor running, and then retired.

You are not to suppose this a robbery, and the actors common thieves; all was in the usual form—“au nom de la loi,” and for the service of the republic; and I do not mention this instance as remarkable, otherwise than as having been noticed in the Convention. A thousand events of this kind, even still more atrocious, have happened; but the sufferers who had not the means of defence as well as of complaint, were obliged, through policy, to be silent.



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—The garrison and national guard, indignant at the horrors they committed, obliged them to decamp. Even the people of Dunkirk, whose resistance to the English, while the French army was collecting together for their relief, was perhaps of more consequence than ten victories, have been since intimidated with Commissioners, and Tribunals, and Guillotines, as much as if they had been convicted of selling the town. In short, under this philanthropic republic, persecution seems to be very exactly proportioned to the services rendered. A jealous and suspicious government does not forget, that the same energy of character which has enabled a people to defend themselves against an external enemy, may also make them less submissive to domestic oppression; and, far from repaying them with the gratitude to which they have a claim, it treats them, on all occasions, as opponents, whom it both fears and hates.

Nov. 22. We have been walking in the yard to-day with General Laveneur, who, for an act which in any other country would have gained him credit, is in this suspended from his command.—When Custine, a few weeks before his death, left the army to visit some of the neighbouring towns, the command devolved on Laveneur, who received, along with other official papers, a list of countersigns, which, having probably been made some time, and not altered conformably to the changes of the day, contained, among others, the words Condorcet—Constitution; and these were in their turn given out. On Custine's trial, this was made a part of his accusation. Laveneur, recollecting that the circumstance had happened in the absence of Custine, thought it incumbent on him to take the blame, if there were any, on himself, and wrote to Paris to explain the matter as it really stood; but his candour, without availing Custine, drew persecution on himself, and the only notice taken of his letter was an order to arrest him. After being dragged from one town to another, like a criminal, and often lodged in dungeons and common prisons, he was at length deposited here.

I know not if the General's principles are republican, but he has a very democratic pair of whiskers, which he occasionally strokes, and seems to cherish with much affection. He is, however, a gentleman-like man, and expresses such anxiety for the fate of his wife and children, who are now at Paris, that one cannot but be interested in his favour. —As the agents of the republic never err on the side of omission, they arrested *Mons.* Laveneur's aid-de-camp with him; and another officer of his acquaintance, who was suspended, and living at Amiens, has shared the same fate, only for endeavouring to procure him a trifling accommodation. This gentleman called on Dumont, to beg that General Laveneur's servant might be permitted to go in and out of the prison on his master's errands. After breakfasting together, and conversing on very civil terms, Dumont told him, that as he concerned himself so much in behalf of his friend, he would send him to keep the latter company, and at the conclusion of his visit he was sent prisoner to the Bicetre.

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Perhaps the greater part of between three and four hundred thousand people, now imprisoned on suspicion, have been arrested for reasons as little substantial.

—I begin to fear my health will not resist the hardship of a long continuance here. We have no fire-place, and are sometimes starved with partial winds from the doors and roof; at others faint and heartsick with the unhealthy air produced by so many living bodies. The water we drink is not preferable to the air we breathe; the bread (which is now every where scarce and bad) contains such a mixture of barley, rye, damaged wheat, and trash of all kinds, that, far from being nourished by it, I lose both my strength and appetite daily.—Yet these are not the worst of our sufferings. Shut out from all society, victims of a despotic and unprincipled government capable of every thing, and ignorant of the fate which may await us, we are occasionally oppressed by a thousand melancholy apprehensions. I might, indeed, have boasted of my fortitude, and have made myself an heroine on paper at as small an expence of words as it has cost me to record my cowardice: but I am of an unlucky conformation, and think either too much or too little (I know not which) for a female philosopher; besides, philosophy is getting into such ill repute, that not possessing the reality, the name of it is not worth assuming.

A poor old priest told me just now, (while Angelique was mending his black coat with white thread,) that they had left at the place where they were last confined a large quantity of linen, and other necessities; but, by the express orders of Dumont, they were not allowed to bring a single article away with them. The keeper, too, it seems, was threatened with dismissal, for supplying one of them with a shirt.—In England, where, I believe, you ally political expediency as much as you can with justice and humanity, these cruelties, at once little and refined, will appear incredible; and the French themselves, who are at least ashamed of, if they are not pained by, them, are obliged to seek refuge in the fancied palliative of a “state of revolution.”—Yet, admitting the necessity of confining the persons of these old men, there can be none for heaping them together in filth and misery, and adding to the sufferings of years and infirmity by those of cold and want. If, indeed, a state of revolution require such deeds, and imply an apology for them, I cannot but wish the French had remained as they were, for I know of no political changes that can compensate for turning a civilized nation into a people of savages. It is not surely the eating acorns or ragouts, a well-powdered head, or one decorated with red feathers, that constitutes the difference between barbarism and civilization; and, I fear, if the French proceed as they have begun, the advantage of morals will be considerably on the side of the unrefined savages.



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The conversation of the prison has been much engaged by the fate of an English gentleman, who lately destroyed himself in a Maison d'Arret at Amiens. His confinement had at first deeply affected his spirits, and his melancholy increasing at the prospect of a long detention, terminated in deranging his mind, and occasioned this last act of despair.—I never hear of suicide without a compassion mingled with terror, for, perhaps, simple pity is too light an emotion to be excited by an event which reminds us, that we are susceptible of a degree of misery too great to be borne—too strong for the efforts of instinct, reflection, and religion. —I could moralize on the necessity of habitual patience, and the benefit of preparing the mind for great evils by a philosophic endurance of little ones; but I am at the Bicetre—the winds whistle round me—I am beset by petty distresses, and we do not expatiate to advantage on endurance while we have any thing to endure.—Seneca's contempt for the things of this world was doubtless suggested in the palace of Nero. He would not have treated the subject so well in disgrace and poverty. Do not suppose I am affecting to be pleasant, for I write in the sober sadness of conviction, that human fortitude is often no better than a pompous theory, founded on self-love and self-deception.

I was surprized at meeting among our fellow-prisoners a number of Dutch officers. I find they had been some time in the town on their parole, and were sent here by Dumont, for refusing to permit their men to work on the fortifications.—The French government and its agents despise the laws of war hitherto observed; they consider them as a sort of aristocratie militaire, and they pretend, on the same principle, to be enfranchised from the law of nations.—An orator of the convention lately boasted, that he felt himself infinitely superior to the prejudices of Grotius, Puffendorff, and Vatel, which he calls "l'aristocratie diplomatique."—Such sublime spirits think, because they differ from the rest of mankind, that they surpass them. Like Icarus, they attempt to fly, and are perpetually struggling in the mire.—Plain common sense has long pointed out a rule of action, from which all deviation is fatal, both to nations and individuals. England, as well as France, has furnished its examples; and the annals of genius in all countries are replete with the miseries of eccentricity.—Whoever has followed the course of the French revolution, will, I believe, be convinced, that the greatest evils attending on it have been occasioned by an affected contempt for received maxims. A common banditti, acting only from the desire of plunder, or men, erring only through ignorance, could not have subjugated an whole people, had they not been assisted by narrow-minded philosophers, who were eager to sacrifice their country to the vanity of making experiments, and were little solicitous whether their systems were good or bad, provided they

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were celebrated as the authors of them. Yet, where are they now? Wandering, proscribed, and trembling at the fate of their followers and accomplices.—The Brissotins, sacrificed by a party even worse than themselves, have died without exciting either pity or admiration. Their fall was considered as the natural consequence of their exaltation, and the courage with which they met death obtained no tribute but a cold and simple comment, undistinguished from the news of the day, and ending with it.

December.

Last night, after we had been asleep about an hour, (for habit, that “lulls the wet sea-boy on the high and giddy mast,” has reconciled us to sleep even here,) we were alarmed by the trampling of feet, and sudden unlocking of our door. Our apprehensions gave us no time for conjecture—in a moment an ill-looking fellow entered the room with a lantern, two soldiers holding drawn swords, and a large dog! The whole company walked as it were processionally to the end of the apartment, and, after observing in silence the beds on each side, left us. It would not be easy to describe what we suffered at this moment: for my own part, I thought only of the massacres of September, and the frequent proposals at the Jacobins and the Convention for dispatching the “*gens suspect*,” and really concluded I was going to terminate my existence “*revolutionnairement*.” I do not now know the purport of these visits, but I find they are not unusual, and most probably intended to alarm the prisoners.

After many enquiries and messages, I have had the mortification of hearing that Mr. and Mrs. D\_\_\_\_ were taken to Arras, and were there even before I left it. The letters sent to and from the different prisons are read by so many people, and pass through so many hands, that it is not surprising we have not heard from each other. As far as I can learn, they had obtained leave, after their first arrest, to remove to a house in the vicinity of Dourlens for a few days, on account of Mrs. D\_\_\_\_’s health, which had suffered by passing the summer in the town, and that at the taking of Toulon they were again arrested while on a visit, and conveyed to a *Maison d’Arret* at Arras. I am the more anxious for them, as it seems they were unprepared for such an event; and as the seals were put upon their effects, I fear they must be in want of every thing. I might, perhaps, have succeeded in getting them removed here, but Fleury’s Arras friend, it seems, did not think, when the Convention had abolished every other part of Christianity, that they intended still to exact a partial observance of the eighth article of the decalogue; and having, in the sense of Antient Pistol, “conveyed” a little too notoriously, Le Bon has, by way of securing him from notice or pursuit, sent him to the

frontiers in the capacity of Commissary.

The prison, considering how many French inhabitants it contains, is tolerably quiet—to say

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the truth, we are not very sociable, and still less gay. Common interest establishes a sort of intimacy between those of the same apartment; but the rest of the house pass each other, without farther intercourse than silent though significant civility. Sometimes you see a pair of unfortunate aristocrats talking politics at the end of a passage, or on a landing-place; and here and there a bevy of females, en deshabille, recounting altogether the subject of their arrest. One's ear occasionally catches a few half-suppressed notes of a proscribed aire, but the unhallowed sounds of the Carmagnole and Marseillois are never heard, and would be thought more dissonant here than the war-whoop. In fact, the only appearance of gaiety is among the ideots and lunatics. — "*Je m'ennuye furieusement*," is the general exclamation.—An Englishman confined at the Bicetre would express himself more forcibly, but, it is certain, the want of knowing how to employ themselves does not form a small part of the distresses of our fellow-prisoners; and when they tell us they are "*ennuyes*," they say, perhaps, nearly as much as they feel— for, as far as I can observe, the loss of liberty has not the same effect on a Frenchman as an Englishman. Whether this arises from political causes, or the natural indifference of the French character, I am not qualified to determine; probably from both: yet when I observe this facility of mind general, and by no means peculiar to the higher classes, I cannot myself but be of opinion, that it is more an effect of their original disposition than of their form of government; for though in England we were accustomed from our childhood to consider every man in France as liable to wake and find himself in the Bastille, or at Mont St. Michel, this formidable despotism existed more in theory than in practice; and if courtiers and men of letters were intimidated by it, the mass of the people troubled themselves very little about Lettres de Cachet. The revenge or suspicion of Ministers might sometimes pursue those who aimed at their power, or assailed their reputation; but the lesser gentry, the merchants, or the shopkeepers, were very seldom victims of arbitrary imprisonment—and I believe, amongst the evils which it was the object of the revolution to redress, this (except on the principle) was far from being of the first magnitude. I am not likely, under my present circumstances, to be an advocate for the despotism of any form of government; and I only give it as a matter of opinion, that the civil liberty of the French was not so often and generally violated,\* as to influence their character in such a degree as to render them insensible of its loss. At any rate, we must rank it among the *bizarreries* [Unaccountable whimsical events.] of this world, that the French should have been prepared, by the theory of oppression under their old system, for enduring the practice of it under the new one; and that what during the monarchy was only possible to a few, is, under the republic, almost certain to all.

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\* I remember in 1789, after the destruction of the Bastille, our compassionate countrymen were taught to believe that this tremendous prison was peopled with victims, and that even the dungeons were inhabited; yet the truth is, though it would not have told so pathetically, or have produced so much theatrical effect, there were only seven persons confined in the whole building, and certainly not one in the dungeons.

Amiens, Providence, Dec. 10, 1793.

We have again, as you will perceive, changed our abode, and that too without expecting, and almost without desiring it. In my moments of sullenness and despondency, I was not very solicitous about the modifications of our confinement, and little disposed to be better satisfied with one prison than another: but, heroics apart, external comforts are of some importance, and we have, in many respects, gained by our removal.

Our present habitation is a spacious building, lately a convent, and though now crowded with more prisoners by two or three hundred than it will hold conveniently, yet we are better lodged than at the Bicetre, and we have also a large garden, good water, and, what above all is desirable, the liberty of delivering our letters or messages ourselves (in presence of the guard) to any one who will venture to approach us. Mad. de \_\_\_\_ and myself have a small cell, where we have just room to place our beds, but we have no fire-place, and the maids are obliged to sleep in an adjoining passage.

A few evenings ago, while we were at the Bicetre, we were suddenly informed by the keeper that Dumont had sent some soldiers with an order to convey us that night to the Providence. We were at first rather surprized than pleased, and reluctantly gathered our baggage together with as much expedition as we could, while the men who were to escort us were exclaiming “a la Francaise” at the trifling delay this occasioned. When we had passed the gate, we found Fleury, with some porters, ready to receive our beds, and overjoyed at having procured us a more decent prison, for, it seems, he could by no means reconcile himself to the name of Bicetre. We had about half a mile to walk, and on the road he contrived to acquaint us with the means by which he had solicited this favour of Dumont. After advising with all Mad. de \_\_\_\_’s friends who were yet at liberty, and finding no one willing to make an effort in her behalf, for fear of involving themselves, he discovered an old acquaintance in the “femme de chambre” of one of Fleury’s mistresses.— This, for one of Fleury’s sagacity, was a spring to have set the whole Convention in a ferment; and in a few days he profited so well by this female patronage, as to obtain an order for transferring us hither. On our arrival, we were informed, as usual, that the house was already full, and that there was no possibility of admitting us. We however, set up all night in the keeper’s room with some other people newly arrived like ourselves, and in the morning, after a little disputing and a pretty general derangement of the more ancient inhabitants, we were “nichees,” as I have described to you.

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We have not yet quitted our room much, but I observe that every one appears more chearful, and more studied in their toilette, than at the Bicetre, and I am willing to infer from thence that confinement here is less insupportable.—I have been employed two days in enlarging the notes I had made in our last prison, and in making them more legible, for I ventured no farther than just to scribble with a pencil in a kind of short-hand of my own invention, and not even that without a variety of precautions. I shall be here less liable either to surprize or observation, and as soon as I have secured what I have already noted, (which I intend to do to-night,) I shall continue my remarks in the usual form. You will find even more than my customary incorrectness and want of method since we left Peronne; but I shall not allow your competency as a critic, until you have been a prisoner in the hands of French republicans.

It will not be improper to notice to you a very ingenious decree of Gaston, (a member of the Convention,) who lately proposed to embark all the English now in France at Brest, and then to sink the ships.—Perhaps the Committee of Public Welfare are now in a sort of benevolent indecision, whether this, or Collot d'Herbois' gunpowder scheme, shall have the preference. Legendre's iron cage and simple hanging will, doubtless, be rejected, as too slow and formal. The mode of the day is "les grandes mesures." If I be not seriously alarmed at these propositions, it is not that life is indifferent to me, or that I think the government too humane to adopt them. My tranquillity arises from reflecting that such measures would be of no political use, and that we shall most likely be soon forgotten in the multitude of more important concerns. Those, however, whom I endeavour to console by this reasoning, tell me it is nothing less than infallible, that the inutility of a crime is here no security against its perpetration, and that any project which tends to evil will sooner be remembered than one of humanity or justice.

[End of Vol. I. The Printed Books]

[Beginning of Volume II. Of The Printed Books]

Providence, Dec. 20, 1793.

"All places that are visited by the eye of Heaven, are to the wise man happy havens." If Shakspeare's philosophy be orthodox, the French have, it must be confessed, many claims to the reputation of a wise people; and though you know I always disputed their pretensions to general gaiety, yet I acknowledge that misfortune does not deprive them of the share they possess, and, if one may judge by appearances, they have at least the habit, more than any other nation, of finding content under situations with which it should seem incompatible. We are here between six and seven hundred, of all ages and of all ranks, taken from our homes, and from all that usually makes the comfort of life, and crowded together under many of the inflictions that constitute its misery; yet,

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in the midst of all this, we fiddle, dress, rhyme, and visit as ceremoniously as though we had nothing to disturb us. Our beaux, after being correctly frizz'd and powdered behind some door, compliment the belle just escaped from a toilet, performed amidst the apparatus of the kitchen; three or four beds are piled one upon another to make room for as many card-tables; and the wits of the prison, who are all the morning employed in writing doleful placets to obtain their liberty, in the evening celebrate the loss of it in bout-rimees and acrostics.

I saw an ass at the *Corps de Garde* this morning laden with violins and music, and a female prisoner seldom arrives without her complement of bandboxes.—Embarrassed, stifled as we are by our numbers, it does not prevent a daily importation of lap-dogs, who form as consequential a part of the community in a prison, as in the most superb hotel. The faithful valet, who has followed the fortunes of his master, does not so much share his distresses as contribute to his pleasure by adorning his person, or, rather, his head, for, excepting the article of hair-dressing, the beaux here are not elaborate. In short, there is an indifference, a frivolity, in the French character, which, in circumstances like the present, appears unaccountable. But man is not always consistent with himself, and there are occasions in which the French are nothing less than philosophers. Under all these externals of levity, they are a very prudent people, and though they seem to bear with infinite fortitude many of the evils of life, there are some in which their sensibility is not to be questioned. At the death of a relation, or the loss of liberty, I have observed that a few hours suffice, *pour prendre son parti*; [To make up his mind.] but on any occasion where his fortune has suffered, the liveliest Frenchman is *au desespoir* for whole days. Whenever any thing is to be lost or gained, all his characteristic indifference vanishes, and his attention becomes mentally concentrated, without dissipating the habitual smile of his countenance. He may sometimes be deceived through deficiency of judgment, but I believe not often by unguardedness; and, in a matter of interest, a *petit maitre* of five-and-twenty might *tout en badinage* [All in the way of pleasantry.] maintain his ground against a whole synagogue.—This disposition is not remarkable only in affairs that may be supposed to require it, but extends to the minutest objects; and the same oeconomy which watches over the mass of a Frenchman's estate, guards with equal solicitude the menu property of a log of wood, or a hen's nest.

There is at this moment a general scarcity of provisions, and we who are confined are, of course, particularly inconvenienced by it; we do not even get bread that is eatable, and it is curious to observe with what circumspection every one talks of his resources. The possessor of a few eggs takes care not to expose them to the eye of his neighbour; and a slice of white bread is a donation of so much consequence, that those who procure any for themselves do not often put their friends to the pain either of accepting or refusing it.



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Mad. de \_\_\_\_ has been unwell for some days, and I could not help giving a hint to a relation of her's whom we found here, and who has frequent supplies of bread from the country, that the bread we eat was peculiarly inimical to her; but I gained only a look of repulsive apprehension, and a cold remark that it was very difficult to get good bread—"*et que c'étoit bien malheureux.*" [And that it certainly was very unfortunate.] I own this kind of selfishness is increased by a situation where our wants are numerous, and our enjoyments few; and the great distinctions of meum and tuum, which at all times have occasioned so much bad fellowship in the world, are here perhaps more rigidly observed than any where else; yet, in my opinion, a close-hearted consideration has always formed an essential and a predominant quality in the French character.

People here do not ruin themselves, as with us, by hospitality; and examples of that thoughtless profusion which we censure and regret, without being able entirely to condemn, are very rare indeed. In France it is not uncommon to see a man apparently dissipated in his conduct, and licentious in his morals, yet regular, even to parsimony, in his pecuniary concerns.—He oeconomizes with his vices, and indulges in all the excesses of fashionable life, with the same system of order that accumulates the fortune of a Dutch miser. Lord Chesterfield was doubtless satisfied, that while his son remained in France, his precepts would have all the benefit of living illustration; yet it is not certain that this cautious and reflecting licentiousness has any merit over the more imprudent irregularity of an English spendthrift: the one is, however, likely to be more durable than the other; and, in fact, the character of an old libertine is more frequent in France than in England.

If oeconomy preside even over the vices of the rich and fashionable, you may conclude that the habits of the middling ranks of people of small fortunes are still more scrupulously subjected to its influence. A French *menage* [Household.] is a practical treatise on the art of saving—a spirit of oeconomy pervades and directs every part of it, and that so uniformly, so generally, and so consistently, as not to make the same impression on a stranger as would a single instance where the whole was not conducted on the same principle. A traveller is not so forcibly stricken by this part of the French character, because it is more real than apparent, and does not seem the effect of reasoning or effort, which is never consequential, but rather that of inclination and the natural course of things.



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A degree of parsimony, which an Englishman, who does not affect the reputation of a Codrus, could not acquire without many self-combats, appears in a Frenchman a matter of preference and convenience, and till one has lived long and familiarly in the country, one is apt to mistake principles for customs, and character for manners, and to attribute many things to local which have their real source in moral causes.—The traveller who sees nothing but gay furniture, and gay clothes, and partakes on invitation of splendid repasts, returns to England the enamoured panegyrist of French hospitality.—On a longer residence and more domestic intercourse, all this is discoverable to be merely the sacrifice of parsimony to vanity—the solid comforts of life are unknown, and hospitality seldom extends beyond an occasional and ostentatious reception. The gilding, painting, glasses, and silk hangings of a French apartment, are only a gay disguise; and a house, which to the eye may be attractive even to splendour, often has not one room that an Englishman would find tolerably convenient. Every thing intended for use rather than shew is scanty and sordid—all is *beau, magnifique, gentil, or superb*, [Fine magnificent, genteel, or superb.] and nothing comfortable. The French have not the word, or its synonyme, in their language.

In France, clothes are almost as durable as furniture, and the gaiety which twenty or thirty years ago we were complaisant enough to admire is far from being expensive. People are not more than five or six hours a day in their gala habits, and the whole of this period is judiciously chosen between the hours of repast, so that no risk is incurred by accidents at table. Then the caprices of fashion, which in England are so various and despotic, have here a more limited influence: the form of a dress changes as long as the material is convertible, and when it has outlasted the possibility of adaptation to a reigning mode, it is not on that account rejected, but is generally worn in some way or other till banished by the more rational motive of its decay. All the expences of tea-visits, breakfast-loungings, and chance-dinners, are avoided—an evening visit is passed entirely at cards, a breakfast in form even for the family is unusual, and there are very few houses where you could dine without being previously engaged. I am, indeed, certain, that (unless in large establishments) the calculation for diurnal supply is so exact, that the intrusion of a stranger would be felt by the whole family. I must, however, do them the justice to say, that on such occasions, and where they find the thing to be inevitable, they put the best face possible on it, and the guest is entertained, if not plentifully, and with a very sincere welcome, at least with smiles and compliments. The French, indeed, allow, that they live less hospitably than the English: but then they say they are not so rich; and it is true, property is not so general,

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nor so much diffused, as with us. This is, however, only relative, and you will not suspect me of being so uncandid as to make comparisons without allowing for every difference which is the effect of necessity. All my remarks of this kind are made after an unprejudiced comparison of the people of the same rank or fortune in the two countries;—yet even the most liberal examination must end by concluding, that the oeconomy of the French too nearly approaches to meanness, and that their civility is ostentatious, perhaps often either interested, or even verbal.

You already exclaim, why, in the year 1793, you are characterizing a nation in the style of Salmon! and implying a panegyric on the moral of the School for Scandal! I plead to the first part of the charge, and shall hereafter defend my opinion against the more polished writers who have succeeded Salmon. For the moral of the School for Scandal, I have always considered it as the seal of humanity on a comedy which would otherwise be perfection.

It is not the oeconomy of the French that I am censuring, but their vanity, which, engrossing all their means of expence, prefers show to accommodation, and the parade of a sumptuous repast three or four times a year to a plainer but more frequent hospitality.—I am far from being the advocate of extravagance, or the enemy of domestic order; and the liberality which is circumscribed only by prudence shall not find in me a censurer.

My ideas on the French character and manner of living may not be unuseful to such of my countrymen as come to France with the project of retrieving their affairs; for it is very necessary they should be informed, that it is not so much the difference in the price of things, which makes a residence here oeconomical, as a conformity to the habits of the country; and if they were not deterred by a false shame from a temporary adoption of the same system in England, their object might often be obtained without leaving it. For this reason it may be remarked, that the English who bring English servants, and persist in their English mode of living, do not often derive very solid advantages from their exile, and their abode in France is rather a retreat from their creditors than the means of paying their debts.

Adieu.—You will not be sorry that I have been able for a moment to forget our personal sufferings, and the miserable politics of the country. The details of the former are not pleasant, and the latter grow every day more inexplicable.

1794

## **A RESIDENCE IN FRANCE**

January 6, 1794.

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If I had undertaken to follow the French revolution through all its absurdities and iniquities, my indolence would long since have taken the alarm, and I should have relinquished a task become too difficult and too laborious. Events are now too numerous and too complicated to be described by occasional remarks; and a narrator of no more pretensions than myself may be allowed to shrink from an abundance of matter which will hereafter perplex the choice and excite the wonder of the historian.—Removed from the great scene of intrigues, we are little acquainted with them—we begin to suffer almost before we begin to conjecture, and our solicitude to examine causes is lost in the rapidity with which we feel their effects.

Amidst the more mischievous changes of a philosophic revolution, you will have learned from the newspapers, that the French have adopted a new aera and a new calendar, the one dating from the foundation of their republic, and other descriptive of the climate of Paris, and the productions of the French territory. I doubt, however, if these new almanack-makers will create so much confusion as might be supposed, or as they may desire, for I do not find as yet that their system has made its way beyond the public offices, and the country people are particularly refractory, for they persist in holding their fairs, markets, &c. as usual, without any regard to the hallowed decade of their legislators. As it is to be presumed that the French do not wish to relinquish all commercial intercourse with other nations, they mean possibly to tack the republican calendar to the rights of man, and send their armies to propagate them together; otherwise the correspondence of a Frenchman will be as difficult to interpret with mercantile exactness as the characters of the Chinese.

The vanity of these philosophers would, doubtless, be gratified by forcing the rest of Europe and the civilized world to adopt their useless and chimerical innovations, and they might think it a triumph to see the inhabitant of the Hebrides date "*Vendemiaire*," [Alluding to the vintage.] or the parched West-Indian "*Nivose*;" but vanity is not on this, as it is on many other occasions, the leading principle.—It was hoped that a new arrangement of the year, and a different nomenclature of the months, so as to banish all the commemorations of Christianity, might prepare the way for abolishing religion itself, and, if it were possible to impose the use of the new calendar so far as to exclude the old one, this might certainly assist their more serious atheistical operations; but as the success of such an introduction might depend on the will of the people, and is not within the competence of the bayonet, the old year will maintain its ground, and these pedantic triflers find that they have laboured to no more extensive a purpose, than to furnish a date to the newspapers, or to their own decrees, which no one will take the pains to understand.

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Mankind are in general more attached to customs than principles. The useful despotism of Peter, which subdued so many of the prejudices of his countrymen, could not achieve the curtailment of their beards; and you must not imagine that, with all the endurance of the French, these continual attempts at innovation pass without murmurs: partial revolts happen very frequently; but, as they are the spontaneous effect of personal suffering, not of political manoeuvre, they are without concert or union, of course easily quelled, and only serve to strengthen the government.—The people of Amiens have lately, in one of these sudden effusions of discontent, burnt the tree of liberty, and even the representative, Dumont, has been menaced; but these are only the blows of a coward who is alarmed at his own temerity, and dreads the chastisement of it.\*

\* The whole town of Bedouin, in the south of France, was burnt pursuant to a decree of the convention, to expiate the imprudence of some of its inhabitants in having cut down a dead tree of liberty. Above sixty people were guillotined as accomplices, and their bodies thrown into pits, dug by order of the representative, Magnet, (then on mission,) before their death. These executions were succeeded by a conflagration of all the houses, and the imprisonment or dispersion of their possessors. It is likewise worthy of remark, that many of these last were obliged, by express order of Maignet, to be spectators of the murder of their friends and relations.

This crime in the revolutionary code is of a very serious nature; and however trifling it may appear to you, it depends only on the will of Dumont to sacrifice many lives on the occasion. But Dumont, though erected by circumstances into a tyrant, is not sanguinary—he is by nature and education passionate and gross, and in other times might only have been a good natured Polisson. Hitherto he has contented himself with alarming, and making people tired of their lives, but I do not believe he has been the direct or intentional cause of anyone's death. He has so often been the hero of my adventures, that I mention him familiarly to you, without reflecting, that though the delegate of more than monarchical power here, he is too insignificant of himself to be known in England. But the history of Dumont is that of two-thirds of the Convention. He was originally clerk to an attorney at Abbeville, and afterwards set up for himself in a neighbouring village. His youth having been marked by some digressions from the “haviour of reputation,” his profession was far from affording him a subsistence; and the revolution, which seems to have called forth all that was turbulent, unprincipled, or necessitous in the country, naturally found a partizan in an attorney without practice.—At the election of 1792, when the King's fall and the domination of the Jacobins had spread so general a terror that no man of character could be prevailed upon to be a candidate

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for a public situation, Dumont availed himself of this timidity and supineness in those who ought to have become the representatives of the people; and, by a talent for intrigue, and a coarse facility of phrase-making, (for he has no pretensions to eloquence,) prevailed on the mob to elect him. His local knowledge, active disposition, and subservient industry, render him an useful kind of drudge to any prevailing party, and, since the overthrow of the Brissotines, he has been entrusted with the government of this and some of the neighbouring departments. He professes himself a zealous republican, and an apostle of the doctrine of universal equality, yet unites in his person all the attributes of despotism, and lives with more luxury and expence than most of the *ci-devant* gentry. His former habitation at Oisemont is not much better than a good barn; but patriotism is more profitable here than in England, and he has lately purchased a large mansion belonging to an emigrant.

\* "Britain no longer pays her patriots with her spoils:" and perhaps it is matter of congratulation to a country, when the profession of patriotism is not lucrative. Many agreeable inferences may be made from it—the sentiment may have become too general for reward, Ministers too virtuous to fear, or even the people too enlightened to be deceived.

—His mode of travelling, which used at best to be in the *coche d'eau* [Passage-boat.] or the diligence, is now in a coach and four, very frequently accompanied by a led horse, and a party of dragoons. I fear some of your patriots behold this with envy, and it is not to be wondered at that they should wish to see a similar revolution in England. What a seducing prospect for the assertors of liberty, to have the power of imprisoning and guillotining all their countrymen! What halcyon days, when the aristocratic palaces\* shall be purified by solacing the fatigues of republican virtue, and the levellers of all distinction travel with four horses and a military escort!—But, as Robespierre observes, you are two centuries behind the French in patriotism and information; and I doubt if English republicanism will ever go beyond a dinner, and toasting the manes of Hampden and Sydney. I would, therefore, seriously advise any of my compatriots who may be enamoured of a government founded on the rights of man, to quit an ungrateful country which seems so little disposed to reward their labours, and enjoy the supreme delight of men a systeme, that of seeing their theories in action.

\* Many of the emigrants' houses were bought by members of the Convention, or people in office. At Paris, crowds of inferior clerks, who could not purchase, found means to get lodged in the most superb national edifices: Monceaux was the villa of Robespierre—St. Just occasionally amused himself at Raincy—Couthon succeed the Comte d'Artois at Bagatelle-and Vliatte, a juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal,

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was lodged at the pavillion of Flora, in the Tuilleries, which he seems to have occupied as a sort of Maitre d'Hotel to the Comite de Salut Public.

*A propos*—a decree of the Convention has lately passed to secure the person of Mr. Thomas Paine, and place seals on his papers. I hope, however, as he has been installed in all the rights of a French citizen, in addition to his representative inviolability, that nothing more than a temporary retreat is intended for him. Perhaps even his personal sufferings may prove a benefit to mankind. He may, like Raleigh, “in his prison hours enrich the world,” and add new proselytes to the cause of freedom. Besides, human evils are often only blessings in a questionable form—Mr. Paine’s persecutions in England made him a legislator in France. Who knows but his persecutions in France may lead to some new advancement, or at least add another line to the already crouded title-pages that announce his literary and political distinctions!

—Yours.

January, 1794.

The total suppression of all religious worship in this country is an event of too singular and important a nature not to have been commented upon largely by the English papers; but, though I have little new to add on the subject, my own reflections have been too much occupied in consequence for me to pass it over in silence.

I am yet in the first emotions of wonder: the vast edifice which had been raised by the blended efforts of religion and superstition, which had been consecrated by time, endeared by national taste, and become necessary by habit, has now disappeared, and scarcely left a vestige of its ruins. To those who revert only to the genius of the Catholic religion, and to former periods of the history of France, this event must seem incredible; and nothing but constant opportunities of marking its gradual approach can reconcile it to probability. The pious christian and the insidious philosopher have equally contributed to the general effect, though with very different intentions: the one, consulting only his reason, wished to establish a pure and simple mode of worship, which, divested of the allurements of splendid processions and imposing ceremonies, should teach the people their duty, without captivating their senses; the other, better acquainted with French character, knew how little these views were compatible with it, and hoped, under the specious pretext of banishing the too numerous ornaments of the Catholic practice, to shake the foundations of Christianity itself. Thus united in their efforts, though dissimilar in their motives, all parties were eager at the beginning of the revolution for a reform in the Church: the wealth of the Clergy, the monastic establishments, the supernumerary saints, were devoted and attacked without pity, and without regret; and, in the zeal and hurry of innovation, the decisive measure, which reduced ecclesiastics to small pensions dependent on the state, was carried, before those who really meant well were aware of its consequences. The next step was, to



make the receiving these pensions subject to an oath, which the selfish philosopher, who can coldly calculate on, and triumph in, the weakness of human nature, foresaw would be a brand of discord, certain to destroy the sole force which the Clergy yet possessed—their union, and the public opinion.



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Unfortunately, these views were not disappointed: conviction, interest, or fear, prevailed on many to take the oath; while doubt, worldly improvidence, or a scrupulous piety, deterred others. A schism took place between the jurors and nonjurors—the people became equally divided, and adhered either to the one or the other, as their habits or prepossessions directed them. Neither party, as it may be imagined, could see themselves deprived of any portion of the public esteem, without concern, perhaps without rancour; and their mutual animosity, far from gaining proselytes to either, contributed only to the immediate degradation and future ruin of both. Those, however, who had not taken the prescribed oath, were in general more popular than what were called the constitutionalists, and the influence they were supposed to exert in alienating the minds of their followers from the new form of government, supplied the republican party with a pretext for proposing their banishment.\*

*The King's exertion of the power vested in him by the constitution, by putting a temporary negative on this decree, it is well known, was one of the pretexts for dethroning him.*

At the King's deposition this decree took place, and such of the nonjuring priests as were not massacred in the prisons, or escaped the search, were to be embarked for Guiana. The wiser and better part of those whose compliances entitled them to remain, were, I believe, far from considering this persecution of their opponents as a triumph—to those who did, it was of short duration. The Convention, which had hitherto attempted to disguise its hatred of the profession by censure and abuse of a part of its members, began now to ridicule the profession itself: some represented it as useless—others as pernicious and irreconcilable with political freedom; and a discourse\* was printed, under the sanction of the Assembly, to prove, that the only feasible republic must be supported by pure atheism.

\* Extracts from the Report of Anacharsis Cloots, member of the Committee of Public Instruction, printed by order of the National Convention:

“Our *Sans-culottes* want no other sermon but the rights of man, no other doctrine but the constitutional precepts and practice, nor any other church than where the section or the club hold their meetings, &c.” The propagation of the rights of man ought to be presented to the astonished world pure and without stain. It is not by offering strange gods to our neighbours that we shall operate their conversion. We can never raise them from their abject state by erecting one altar in opposition to another. A trifling heresy is infinitely more revolting than having no religion at all. Nature, like the sun, diffuses her light without the assistance of priests and vestals. While we were constitutional heretics, we maintained an army of an hundred thousand

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priests, who waged war equally with the Pope and the disciples of Calvin. We crushed the old priesthood by means of the new, and while we compelled every sect to contribute to the payment of a pretended national religion, we became at once the abhorrence of all the Catholics and Protestants in Europe. The repulsion of our religious belief counteracted the attraction of our political principles.—But truth is at length triumphant, and all the ill-intentioned shall no more be able to detach our neighbours from the dominion of the rights of man, under pretext of a religious dominion which no longer exists.—The purpose of religion is no how so well answered as by presenting *carte blanche* to the abused world. Every one will then be at liberty to form his spiritual regimen to his own taste, till in the end the invincible ascendant of reason shall teach him that the Supreme Being, the Eternal Being, is no other than Nature uncreated and uncreatable; and that the only Providence is the association of mankind in freedom and equality!— This sovereign providence affords comfort to the afflicted, rewards the good, and punishes the wicked. It exercises no unjust partialities, like the providence of knaves and fools. Man, when free, wants no other divinity than himself. This god will not cost us a single farthing, not a single tear, nor a drop of blood. From the summit of our mountain he hath promulgated his laws, traced in evident characters on the tables of nature. From the East to the West they will be understood without the aid of interpreters, comments, or miracles. Every other ritual will be torn in pieces at the appearance of that of reason. Reason dethrones both the Kings of the earth, and the Kings of heaven.—No monarch above, if we wish to preserve our republic below.“Volumes have been written to determine whether or no a republic of Atheists could exist. I maintain that every other republic is a chimera. If you once admit the existence of a heavenly Sovereign, you introduce the wooden horse within your walls! —What you adore by day will be your destruction at night.

“A people of theists necessarily become revelationists, that is to say, slaves of priests, who are but religious go-betweens, and physicians of damned souls.

“If I were a scoundrel, I should make a point of exclaiming against atheism, for a religious mask is very convenient to a traitor.

“The intolerance of truth will one day proscribe the very name of temple ‘*fanum*,’ the etymology of fanaticism.

“We shall instantly see the monarchy of heaven condemned in its turn by the revolutionary tribunal of victorious Reason; for Truth, exalted on the throne of Nature, is sovereignly intolerant.

“The republic of the rights of man is, properly speaking, neither theistical nor atheistical—it is nihilistical.”

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Many of the most eminent conforming Prelates and Clergy were arrested, and even individuals, who had the reputation of being particularly devout, were marked as objects of persecution. A new calendar was devised, which excluded the ancient festivals, and limited public worship to the decade, or tenth day, and all observance of the Sabbath was interdicted. The prisons were crowded with sufferers in the cause of religion, and all who had not the zeal or the courage of martyrs, abstained from manifesting any attachment to the Christian faith.

While this consternation was yet recent, the Deputies on mission in the departments shut up the churches entirely: the refuse of low clubs were paid and encouraged to break the windows and destroy the monuments; and these outrages, which, it was previously concerted, should at first assume the appearance of popular tumult, were soon regulated and directed by the mandates of the Convention themselves. The churches were again opened, an atheistic ritual, and licentious homilies,\* were substituted for the proscribed service—and an absurd and ludicrous imitation of the Greek mythology was exhibited, under the title of the Religion of Reason.—

\* I have read a discourse pronounced in a church at Paris, on the decade, so indecent and profane, that the most humble audience of a country-puppet show in England would not have tolerated it.

On the principal church of every town was inscribed, “The Temple of Reason;” and a tutelary goddess was installed with a ceremony equally pedantic, ridiculous, and profane.\*

\* At Havre, the goddess of Reason was drawn on a car by four cart-horses, and as it was judged necessary, to prevent accidents, that the horses should be conducted by those they were accustomed to, the carters were likewise put in requisition and furnished with cuirasses à l’antique from the theatre. The men, it seems, being neither martial nor learned, were not au fait at this equipment, and concluding it was only a waistcoat of ceremony, invested themselves with the front behind, and the back part laced before, to the great amusement of the few who were sensible of the mistake.

Yet the philosophers did not on this occasion disdain those adventitious aids, the use of which they had so much declaimed against while they were the auxiliaries of Christianity.\*

\* Mr. Gibbon reproaches the Christians with their adoption of the allurements of the Greek mythology.—The Catholics have been more hostilely despoiled by their modern persecutors, and may retort that the religion of reason is a more gross appeal to the senses than the darkest ages of superstition would have ventured on.

Music, processions, and decorations, which had been banished from the ancient worship, were introduced in the new one, and the philosophical reformer, even in the

very attempt to establish a religion purely metaphysical, found himself obliged to inculcate it by a gross and material idolatry.\*—

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\* The French do not yet annex any other idea to the religion of reason than that of the female who performs the part of the goddess.

Thus, by submitting his abstractions to the genius of the people, and the imperfections of our nature, perhaps the best apology was offered for the errors of that worship which had been proscribed, persecuted, and ridiculed.

Previous to the tenth day, on which a celebration of this kind was to take place, a Deputy arrived, accompanied by the female goddess:\* that is, (if the town itself did not produce one for the purpose,) a Roman dress of white satin was hired from the theatre, with which she was invested—her head covered with a red cap, ornamented with oak leaves—one arm was reclined on a plough, the other grasped a spear—and her feet were supported by a globe, and environed by mutilated emblems of seodality. [It is not possible to explain this costume as appropriate.]

\* The females who personated the new divinity were usually selected from amongst those who “might make sectaries of whom they bid but follow,” but who were more conspicuous for beauty than any other celestial attribute.—The itinerant goddess of the principal towns in the department de la Somme was the mistress of one Taillefer, a republican General, brother to the Deputy of the same name.—I know not, in this military government, whether the General’s services on the occasion were included in his other appointments. At Amiens, he not only provided the deity, but commanded the detachment that secured her a submissive adoration.

Thus equipped, the divinity and her appendages were borne on the shoulders of Jacobins “en bonnet rouge,” and escorted by the National Guard, Mayor, Judges, and all the constituted authorities, who, whether diverted or indignant, were obliged to preserve a respectful gravity of exterior. When the whole cavalcade arrived at the place appointed, the goddess was placed on an altar erected for the occasion, from whence she harangued the people, who, in return, proffered their adoration, and sung the Carmagnole, and other republican hymns of the same kind. They then proceeded in the same order to the principal church, in the choir of which the same ceremonies were renewed: a priest was procured to abjure his faith and avow the whole of Christianity an imposture;\* and the festival concluded with the burning of prayer-books, saints, confessionals, and every thing appropriated to the use of public worship.\*\*—

*It must be observed, in justice to the French Clergy, that it was seldom possible to procure any who would consent to this infamy. In such cases, the part was exhibited by a man hired and dressed for the purpose.—The end of degrading the profession in the eyes of the people was equally answered.\* In many places, valuable paintings and statues were burnt or disfigured. The communion cups, and other church plate, were, after*

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being exorcised in Jacobin revels, sent to the Convention, and the gold and silver, (as the author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire invidiously expresses himself,) the pearls and jewels, were wickedly converted to the service of mankind; as if any thing whose value is merely fictitious, could render more service to mankind than when dedicated to an use which is equally the solace of the rich and the poor—which gratifies the eye without exciting cupidity, soothes the bed of sickness, and heals the wounds of conscience. Yet I am no advocate for the profuse decorations of Catholic churches; and if I seem to plead in their behalf, it is that I recollect no instance where the depredators of them have appropriated the spoil to more laudable purposes.

The greater part of the attendants looked on in silent terror and astonishment; whilst others, intoxicated, or probably paid to act this scandalous farce, danced round the flames with an appearance of frantic and savage mirth.—It is not to be forgotten, that representatives of the people often presided as the high priests of these rites; and their official dispatches to the convention, in which these ceremonies were minutely described, were always heard with bursts of applause, and sanctioned by decrees of insertion in the bulletin.\*

\* A kind of official newspaper distributed periodically at the expence of Government in large towns, and pasted up in public places—it contained such news as the convention chose to impart, which was given with the exact measure of truth or falsehood that suited the purpose of the day.

I have now conducted you to the period in which I am contemplating France in possession of all the advantages which a total dereliction of religious establishments can bestow—at that consummation to which the labours of modern philosophers have so long tended.

Ye Shaftesburys, Bolingbrokes, Voltaires, and must I add the name of Gibbon,\* behold yourselves inscribed on the registers of fame with a Laplanche, a Chenier, an Andre Dumont, or a Fouché!\*\*—

\* The elegant satirist of Christianity will smile at the presumption of so humble a censurer.—It is certain, the misapplication only of such splendid talents could embolden me to mention the name of the possessor with diminished respect.

\*\* These are names too contemptible for notice, but for the mischief to which they were instrumental—they were among the first and most remarkable persecutors of religion.

Do not blush at the association; your views have been the same; and the subtle underminer of man's best comfort in the principles of his religion, is even more criminal than him who prohibits the external exercise of it. Ridicule of the sacred writings is

more dangerous than burning them, and a sneer at the miracles of the gospel more mischievous than disfiguring the statues of the evangelists; and it must be confessed

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that these Anti-christian Iconoclasts themselves might probably have been content to “believe and say their prayers,” had not the intolerance of philosophy made them atheists and persecutors.—The coarse legend of “death is the sleep of eternity,”\* is only a compendium of the fine-drawn theories of the more elaborate materialist, and the depositaries of the dead will not corrupt more by the exhibition of this desolating standard, than the libraries of the living by the volumes which hold out the same oblivion to vice, and discouragement to virtue.—

\* Posts, bearing the inscription “la mort est un sommeil eternel,” were erected in many public burying-grounds.—No other ceremony is observed with the dead than enclosing the body in some rough boards, and sending it off by a couple of porters, (in their usual garb,) attended by a municipal officer. The latter inscribes on a register the name of the deceased, who is thrown into a grave generally prepared for half a score, and the whole business is finished.

The great experiment of governing a civilized people without religion will now be made; and should the morals, the manners, or happiness of the French, be improved by it, the sectaries of modern philosophy may triumph. Should it happen otherwise, the Christian will have an additional motive for cherishing his faith: but even the afflictions of humanity will not, I fear, produce either regret or conviction in his adversary; for the prejudices of philosophers and systemists are incorrigible.\*

\* *"Ce ne sont point les philosophes qui connoissent le mieux les hommes. Ils ne les voient qu'à travers les prejuges, et je ne fache aucun etat ou l'on en ait tant."*—J. J. Rousseau. ["It is not among philosophers that we are to look for the most perfect knowledge of human nature.—They view it only through the prejudices of philosophy, and I know of no profession where prejudices are more abundant."]

Providence, Jan. 29.

We are now quite domesticated here, though in a very miserable way, without fire, and with our mattresses, on the boards; but we nevertheless adopt the spirit of the country, and a total absence of comfort does not prevent us from amusing ourselves. My friend knits, and draws landscapes on the backs of cards; and I have established a correspondence with an old bookseller, who sends me treatises of chemistry and fortifications, instead of poetry and memoirs. I endeavoured at first to borrow books of our companions, but this resource was soon exhausted, and the whole prison supplied little more than a novel of Florian's, *Le Voyage du jeune Anarcharsis*, and some of the philosophical romances of Voltaire.—They say it ennues them to read; and I observe, that those who read at all, take their books into the garden, and prefer the most crowded walks. These studious persons, who seem to surpass Crambe himself in the faculty of abstraction, smile and bow at every comma, without any appearance of derangement from such frequent interruptions.



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Time passes sorrowly, rather than slowly; and my thoughts, without being amused, are employed. The novelty of our situation, the past, the future, all offer so many subjects of reflection, that my mind has more occasion for repose than amusement. My only external resource is conversing with our fellow-prisoners, and learning the causes of their detention. These relations furnish me with a sort of “abstract of the times,” and mark the character of the government better than circumstances of more apparent consequence; for what are battles, sieges, and political machinations, but as they ultimately affect the happiness of society? And when I learn that the lives, the liberty, and property of no class are secure from violation, it is not necessary one should be at Paris to form an opinion of this period of the revolution, and of those who conduct it.

The persecution which has hitherto been chiefly directed against the Noblesse, has now a little subsided, and seems turned against religion and commerce. People are daily arrested for assisting at private masses, concealing images, or even for being possessors of religious books. Merchants are sent here as monopolizers, and retailers, under various pretexts, in order to give the committees an opportunity of pillaging their shops. It is not uncommon to see people of the town who are our guards one day, become our fellow-prisoners the next; and a few weeks since, the son of an old gentleman who has been some time here, after being on guard the whole day, instead of being relieved at the usual hour, was joined by his wife and children, under the escort of a couple of dragoons, who delivered the whole family into the custody of our keeper; and this appears to have happened without any other motive than his having presented a petition to Dumont in behalf of his father.

An old man was lately taken from his house in the night, and brought here, because he was said to have worn the cross of St. Louis.—The fact is, however, that he never did wear this obnoxious distinction; and though his daughter has proved this incontrovertibly to Dumont, she cannot obtain his liberty: and the poor young woman, after making two or three fruitless journeys to Paris, is obliged to content herself with seeing her father occasionally at the gate.

The refectory of the convent is inhabited by hospital nuns. Many of the hospitals in France had a sort of religious order annexed to them, whose business it was to attend the sick; and habit, perhaps too the association of the offices of humanity with the duties of religion, had made them so useful in their profession, that they were suffered to remain, even after the abolition of the regular monasteries. But the devastating torrent of the revolution at length reached them: they were accused of bestowing a more tender solicitude on their aristocratic patients than on the wounded volunteers and republicans; and, upon these curious charges, they have been heaped into carts, without a single necessary, almost without covering, sent from one department to another, and distributed in different prisons, where they are perishing with cold, sickness, and want! Some people are here only because they happened to be accidentally at a house when the owner was arrested;\* and we have one family who were taken at dinner, with their guests, and the plate they were using!

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\* It was not uncommon for a mandate of arrest to direct the taking  
“Citizen Such-a-one, and all persons found in his house.”

A grand-daughter of the celebrated De Witt, who resided thirty leagues from hence, was arrested in the night, put in an open cart, without any regard to her age, her sex, or her infirmities, though the rain fell in torrents; and, after sleeping on straw in different prisons on the road, was deposited here. As a Fleming, the law places her in the same predicament with a very pretty young woman who has lived some months at Amiens; but Dumont, who is at once the maker, the interpreter, and executor of the laws, has exempted the latter from the general proscription, and appears daily with her in public; whereas poor Madame De Witt is excluded from such indulgence, being above seventy years old—and is accused, moreover, of having been most exemplarily charitable, and, what is still worse, very religious.—I have given these instances not as any way remarkable, and only that you may form some idea of the pretexts which have served to cover France with prisons, and to conduct so many of its inhabitants to the scaffold.

It is impossible to reflect on a country in such a situation, without abhorring the authors of it, and dreading the propagation of their doctrines. I hope they neither have imitators nor admirers in England; yet the convention in their debates, the Jacobins, and all the French newspapers, seem so sanguine in their expectation, and so positive in their assertions of an English revolution, that I occasionally, and in spite of myself, feel a vague but serious solicitude, which I should not have supposed the apprehension of any political evil could inspire. I know the good sense and information of my countrymen offer a powerful resource against the love of change and metaphysical subtleties; but, it is certain, the French government have much depended on the spirit of party, and the zeal of their propagandists. They talk of a British convention, of a conventional army, and, in short, all France seem prepared to see their neighbours involved in the same disastrous system with themselves. The people are not a little supported in this error by the extracts that are given them from your orators in the House of Commons, which teem with nothing but complaints against the oppression of their own country, and enthusiastic admiration of French liberty. We read and wonder—collate the Bill of Rights with the Code Revolutionnaire, and again fear what we cannot give credit to.

Since the reports I allude to have gained ground, I have been forcibly stricken by a difference in the character of the two nations. At the prospect of a revolution, all the French who could conveniently leave the country, fled; and those that remained (except adventurers and the banditti that were their accomplices) studiously avoided taking any part. But so little are our countrymen affected with this selfish apathy,

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that I am told there is scarcely one here who, amidst all his present sufferings, does not seem to regret his absence from England, more on account of not being able to oppose this threatened attack on our constitution, than for any personal motive.—The example before them must, doubtless, tend to increase this sentiment of genuine patriotism; for whoever came to France with but a single grain of it in his composition, must return with more than enough to constitute an hundred patriots, whose hatred of despotism is only a principle, and who have never felt its effects.—Adieu.

February 2, 1794.

The factions which have chosen to give France the appellation of a republic, seem to have judged, and with some reason, that though it might answer their purpose to amuse the people with specious theories of freedom, their habits and ideas were far from requiring that these fine schemes should be carried into practice. I know of no example equal to the submission of the French at this moment; and if “departed spirits were permitted to review the world,” the shades of Richelieu or Louvois might hover with envy round the Committee of Public Welfare, and regret the undaring moderation of their own politics.

How shall I explain to an Englishman the doctrine of universal requisition? I rejoice that you can imagine nothing like it.—After establishing, as a general principle, that the whole country is at the disposal of government, succeeding decrees have made specific claims on almost every body, and every thing. The tailors, shoemakers,\* bakers, smiths, sadlers, and many other trades, are all in requisition—carts, horses, and carriages of every kind, are in requisition—the stables and cellars are put in requisition for the extraction of saltpetre, and the houses to lodge soldiers, or to be converted into prisons.

\* In order to prevent frauds, the shoemakers were obliged to make only square-toed shoes, and every person not in the army was forbidden to wear them of this form. Indeed, people of any pretensions to patriotism (that is to say, who were much afraid) did not venture to wear any thing but wooden shoes; as it had been declared anti-civique, if not suspicious, to walk in leather.

—Sometimes shopkeepers are forbidden to sell their cloth, nails, wine, bread, meat, &c. There are instances where whole towns have been kept without the necessities of life for several days together, in consequence of these interdictions; and I have known it proclaimed by beat of drum, that whoever possessed two uniforms, two hats, or two pair of shoes, should relinquish one for the use of the army! Yet with all these efforts of despotism, the republican troops are in many respects ill supplied, the produce being too often converted to the use of the agents of government, who are all Jacobins, and

whose speculations are suffered with impunity, because they are too necessary, or perhaps too formidable for punishment.

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These proceedings, which are not the less mischievous for being absurd, must end in a total destruction of commerce: the merchant will not import what he may be obliged to sell exclusively to government at an arbitrary and inadequate valuation.—Those who are not imprisoned, and have it in their power, are for the most part retired from business, or at least avoid all foreign speculations; so that France may in a few months depend only on her internal resources. The same measures which ruin one class, serve as a pretext to oppress and levy contributions on the rest.—In order to make this right of seizure still more productive, almost every village has its spies, and the domiciliary visits are become so frequent, that a man is less secure in his own house, than in a desert amidst Arabs. On these occasions, a band of Jacobins, with a municipal officer at their head, enter sans ceremonie, over-run your apartments, and if they find a few pounds of sugar, soap, or any other article which they choose to judge more than sufficient for immediate consumption, they take possession of the whole as a monopoly, which they claim for the use of the republic, and the terrified owner, far from expostulating, thinks himself happy if he escapes so well.—But this is mere vulgar tyranny: a less powerful despotism might invade the security of social life, and banish its comforts. We are prone to suffer, and it requires often little more than the will to do evil to give us a command over the happiness of others. The Convention are more original, and, not satisfied with having reduced the people to the most abject slavery, they exact a semblance of content, and dictate at stated periods the chastisement which awaits those who refuse to smile.

The splendid ceremonies at Paris, which pass for popular rejoicings, merit that appellation less than an auto de fe. Every movement is previously regulated by a Commissioner appointed for the purpose, (to whom en passant these fetes are very lucrative jobs,) a plan of the whole is distributed, in which is prescribed with great exactness, that at such and such parts the people are to “melt into tears,” at others they are to be seized with a holy enthusiasm, and at the conclusion of the whole they are to rend the air with the cry of “Vive la Convention!” —These celebrations are always attended by a military force, sufficient to ensure their observance, besides a plentiful mixture of spies to notice refractory countenances or faint acclamations.

The departments which cannot imitate the magnificence of Paris, are obliged, nevertheless, to manifest their satisfaction. At every occasion on which a rejoicing is ordered, the same kind of discipline is preserved; and the aristocrats, whose fears in general overcome their principles, are often not the least zealous attendants.

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At the retaking of Toulon, when abandoned by our countrymen, the National Guards were every where assembled to participate in the festivity, under a menace of three days imprisonment. Those persons who did not illuminate their houses were to be considered as suspicious, and treated as such: yet, even with all these precautions, I am informed the business was universally cold, and the balls thinly attended, except by aristocrats and relations of emigrants, who, in some places, with a baseness not excused even by their terrors, exhibited themselves as a public spectacle, and sang the defeats of that country which was armed in their defence.

I must here remark to you a circumstance which does still less honour to the French character; and which you will be unwilling to believe. In several towns the officers and others, under whose care the English were placed during their confinement, were desirous sometimes on account of the peculiar hardship of their situation as foreigners, to grant them little indulgences, and even more liberty than to the French prisoners; and in this they were justified on several considerations, as well as that of humanity.—They knew an Englishman could not escape, whatever facility might be given him, without being immediately retaken; and that if his imprisonment were made severe, he had fewer external resources and alleviations than the natives of the country: but these favourable dispositions were of no avail—for whenever any of our countrymen obtained an accommodation, the jealousy of the French took umbrage, and they were obliged to relinquish it, or hazard the drawing embarrassment on the individual who had served them.

You are to notice, that the people in general, far from being averse to seeing the English treated with a comparative indulgence, were even pleased at it; and the invidious comparisons and complaints which prevented it, proceeded from the gentry, from the families of those who had found refuge in England, and who were involved in the common persecution.—I have, more than once, been reproached by a female aristocrat with the ill success of the English army; and many, with whom I formerly lived on terms of intimacy, would refuse me now the most trifling service.—I have heard of a lady, whose husband and brother are both in London, who amuses herself in teaching a bird to repeat abuse of the English.

It has been said, that the day a man becomes a slave, he loses half his virtue; and if this be true as to personal slavery, judging from the examples before me, I conclude it equally so of political bondage.—The extreme despotism of the government seems to have confounded every principle of right and wrong, every distinction of honour and dishonour and the individual, of whatever class, alive only to the sense of personal danger, embraces without reluctance meanness or disgrace, if it insure his safety.—A tailor or shoemaker, whose reputation perhaps is too bad to gain him a livelihood by any trade but that of a patriot, shall be besieged by the flatteries of people of rank, and have levees as numerous as Choiseul or Calonne in their meridian of power.

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When a Deputy of the Convention is sent to a town on mission, sadness takes possession of every heart, and gaiety of every countenance. He is beset with adulatory petitions, and propitiating gifts; the Noblesse who have escaped confinement form a sort of court about his person; and thrice happy is the owner of that habitation at which he condescends to reside.—\*

\* When a Deputy arrives, the gentry of the town contend with jealous rivalry for the honour of lodging him; and the most eloquent eulogist of republican simplicity in the Convention does not fail to prefer a large house and a good table, even though the unhallowed property of an aristocrat.—It is to be observed, that these Missionaries travel in a very patriarchal style, accompanied by their wives, children, and a numerous train of followers, who are not delicate in availing themselves of this hospitality, and are sometimes accused of carrying off the linen, or any thing else portable—even the most decent behave on these occasions as though they were at an inn.

—A Representative of gallantry has no reason to envy either the authority of the Grand Signor, or the licence of his seraglio—he is arbiter of the fate of every woman that pleases him; and, it is supposed, that many a fair captive has owed her liberty to her charms, and that the philosophy of a French husband has sometimes opened the doors of his prison.

Dumont, who is married, and has besides the countenance of a white Negro, never visits us without occasioning a general commotion amongst all the females, especially those who are young and pretty. As soon as it is known that he is expected, the toilettes are all in activity, a renovation of rouge and an adjustment of curls take place, and, though performed with more haste, not with less solicitude, than the preparatory splendour of a first introduction.—When the great man arrives, he finds the court by which he enters crowded by these formidable prisoners, and each with a petition in her hand endeavours, with the insidious coquetry of plaintive smiles and judicious tears, that brighten the eye without deranging the features, to attract his notice and conciliate his favour. Happy those who obtain a promise, a look of complacence, or even of curiosity!—But the attention of this apostle of republicanism is not often bestowed, except on high rank, or beauty; and a woman who is old, or ill dressed, that ventures to approach him, is usually repulsed with vulgar brutality—while the very sight of a male suppliant renders him furious. The first half hour he walks about, surrounded by his fair cortege, and is tolerably civil; but at length, fatigued, I suppose by continual importunity, he loses his temper, departs, and throws all the petitions he has received unopened into the fire.



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Adieu—the subject is too humiliating to dwell on. I feel for myself, I feel for human nature, when I see the fastidiousness of wealth, the more liberal pride of birth, and the yet more allowable pretensions of beauty, degraded into the most abject submission to such a being as Dumont. Are our principles every where the mere children of circumstance, or is it in this country only that nothing is stable? For my own part I love inflexibility of character; and pride, even when ill founded, seems more respectable while it sustains itself, than concessions which, refused to the suggestions of reason, are yielded to the dictates of fear.—Yours.

February 12, 1794.

I was too much occupied by my personal distresses to make any remarks on the revolutionary government at the time of its adoption. The text of this political phenomenon must be well known in England—I shall, therefore, confine myself to giving you a general idea of its spirit and tendency,—It is, compared to regular government, what force is to mechanism, or the usual and peaceful operations of nature to the ravages of a storm—it substitutes violence for conciliation, and sweeps with precipitate fury all that opposes its devastating progress. It refers every thing to a single principle, which is in itself not susceptible of definition, and, like all undefined power, is continually vibrating between despotism and anarchy. It is the execrable shape of Milton's Death, "which shape hath none," and which can be described only by its effects.—For instance, the revolutionary tribunal condemns without evidence, the revolutionary committees imprison without a charge, and whatever assumes the title of revolutionary is exonerated from all subjection to humanity, decency, reason, or justice.—Drowning the insurgents, their wives and children, by boatloads, is called, in the dispatch to the Convention, a revolutionary measure—\*

\* The detail of the horrors committed in La Vendee and at Nantes were not at this time fully known. Carrier had, however, acknowledged, in a report read to the Convention, that a boat-load of refractory priests had been drowned, and children of twelve years old condemned by a military commission! One Fabre Marat, a republican General, wrote, about the same period, I think from Angers, that the Guillotine was too slow, and powder scarce, so that it was concluded more expedient to drown the rebels, which he calls a patriotic baptism!—The following is a copy of a letter addressed to the Mayor of Paris by a Commissary of the Government:

"You will give us pleasure by transmitting the details of your fete at Paris last decade, with the hymns that were sung. Here we all cried "*Vive la Republique!*" as we ever do, when our holy mother Guillotine is at work. Within these three days she has shaved eleven priests, one *ci-devant* noble, a nun, a general, and a superb Englishman, six feet high, and as he was too tall by a head, we have put that into the sack! At the same time eight hundred rebels were shot at the Pont du Ce, and their carcasses thrown into the Loire!—I understand the army is on the track of the runaways. All we overtake we shoot on the spot, and in such numbers that the ways are heaped with them!"



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—At Lyons, it is revolutionary to chain three hundred victims together before the mouths of loaded cannon, and massacre those who escape the discharge with clubs and bayonets;\* and at Paris, revolutionary juries guillotine all who come before them.—\*\*

\* The Convention formally voted their approbation of this measure, and Collot d'Herbois, in a report on the subject, makes a kind of apostrophical panegyric on the humanity of his colleagues. "Which of you, Citizens, (says he,) would not have fired the cannon? Which of you would not joyfully have destroyed all these traitors at a blow?"

\*\* About this time a woman who sold newspapers, and the printer of them, were guillotined for paragraphs deemed incivique.

—Yet this government is not more terrible than it is minutely vexations. One's property is as little secure as one's existence. Revolutionary committees every where sequester in the gross, in order to plunder in detail.\*

\* The revolutionary committees, when they arrested any one, pretended to affix seals in form. The seal was often, however, no other than the private one of some individual employed—sometimes only a button or a halfpenny, which was broken as often as the Committee wanted access to the wine or other effects. Camille Desmoulins, in an address to Freron, his fellow-deputy, describes with some humour the mode of proceeding of these revolutionary pilferers:

*"Avant hier, deux Commissaires de la section de Mutius Scaevola, montent chez lui—ils trouvent dans la bibliotheque des livres de droit; et non-obstant le decret qui porte qu'on ne touchera point Domat ni a Charles Dumoulin, bien qu'ils traitent de matieres feodales, ils sont main basse sur la moitie de la bibliotheque, et chargent deux Chrocheteurs des livres paternels. Ils trouvent une pendule, don't la pointe de Paiguille etoit, comme la plupart des pointes d'aiguilles, terminee en trefle: il leur semble que cette pointe a quelque chose d'approchant d'une fleur de lys; et non-obstant le decret qui ordonne de respecter les monumens des arts, il confisquent la pendule.—Notez bien qu'il y avoit a cote une malle sur laquelle etoit l'adresse fleurdelisee du marchand. —Ici il n'y avoit pas moyen de aier que ce fut une belle et bonne fleur de lys; mais comme la malle ne valoit pas un corset, les Commissaires se contentent de rayer les lys, au lieu que la malheureuse pendule, qui vaut bien 1200 livres, est, malgre son trefle, emportee par eux-memes, qui ne se fioient pas aux Chrocheteurs d'un poid si precieux—et ce, en vertu du droit que Barrere a appelle si heureusement le droit de prehension, quoique le decret s'opposat, dans l'espece, a l'application de ce droit.— Enfin, notre decemvirat sectionnaire, qui se mettoit ainsi au-dessus des decrets, trouve le brevet de pension de mon beau-pere, qui, comme tous les brevets de pension, n'etant pas de nature a etre porte sur le grand*

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*livre de la republique, etoit demeure dans le porte-feuille, et qui, comme tous les brevets de pension possibles, commençoit par ce protocole; Louis, &c. Ciel! s'ecrient les Commissaires, le nom du tyran!—Et apres avoir retrouve leur haleine, suffoquee d'abord par l'indignation, ils mettent en poche le brevet de pension, c'est a dire 1000 livres de rente, et emportent la marmite. Autre crime, le Citoyen Duplessis, qui etoit premier commis des finances, sous Clugny, avoit conserve, comme c'etoit l'usage, la cachet du controle general d'alors—un vieux porte-feuille de commis, qui etoit au rebut, ouble au dessus d'une armoire, dans un tas de poussiere, et auquel il n'avoit pas touche ne meme pense depuis dix ans peutetre, et sur le quel on parvint a decouvrir l'empreinte de quelques fleurs de lys, sous deux doigts de crasse, acheva de completer la preuve que le Citoyen Duplessis etoit suspect—et la voila, lui, enferme jusqu'a la paix, et le scelle mis sur toutes les portes de cette campagne, ou, tu te souviens, mon cher Freroa—que, decretes tous deux de prise de corps, apres le massacre du Champ de Mars, nous trouvions un asyle que le tyran n'osoit violer."*

"The day before yesterday, two Commissaries belonging to the section of Mutius Scaevola, entered my father-in-law's apartments; they found some law-books in the library, and, notwithstanding the decree which exempts from seizure the works of Domat and Charles Dumouin, (although they treat of feudal matters,) they proceeded to lay violent hands on one half of the collection, and loaded two porters with paternal spoils. The next object that attracted their attention was a clock, the hand of which, like the hands of most other clocks, terminated in a point, in the form of a trefoil, which seemed to them to bear some resemblance to a fleur de lys; and, notwithstanding the decree which ordains that the monuments of the arts shall be respected, they immediately passed sentence of confiscation on the clock. I should observe to you, that hard by lay a portmanteau, having on it the maker's address, encircled with lilies.— Here there was no disputing the fact, but as the trunk was not worth five livres, the Commissaries contented themselves with erasing the lilies; but the unfortunate clock, being worth twelve hundred, was, notwithstanding its trefoil, carried off by themselves, for they would not trust the porters with so precious a load.—And all this was done in virtue of the law, which Barrere aptly denominated the law of prehension, and which, according to the terms of the decree itself, was not applicable to the case in question.

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“At length our sectionary decemvirs, who thus placed themselves above the law, discovered the grant of my father-in-law’s pension, which, like all similar grants, being excluded from the privilege of inscription on the great register of public debts, had been left in his port-folio; and which began, as all such grants necessarily must, with the words, Louis, &c. “Heaven!” exclaimed the Commissaries, “here is the very name of the tyrant!” And, as soon as they recovered their breaths, which had been nearly stopped by the violence of the indignation, they coolly pocketed the grant, that is to say, an annuity of one thousand livres, and sent off the porridge-pot. Nor did these constitute all the crimes of Citizen Duplessis, who, having served as first clerk of the revenue board under Clugny, had, as was usual, kept the official seal of that day. An old port-folio, which had been thrown aside, and long forgotten, under a wardrobe, where it was buried in dust, and had, in all probability, not been touched for ten years, but, which with much difficulty, was discovered to bear the impression of a fleur de lys, completed the proof that Citizen Duplessis was a suspicious character. And now behold him shut up in a prison until peace shall be concluded, and the seals put upon all the doors of that country seat, where, you may remember, my dear Freron, that at the time when warrants were issued for apprehending us both, after the massacre in the Champ de Mars, we found an asylum which the tyrant did not dare to violate.”

—In a word, you must generally understand, that the revolutionary system supersedes law, religion, and morality; and that it invests the Committees of Public Welfare and General Safety, their agents, the Jacobin clubs, and subsidiary banditti, with the disposal of the whole country and its inhabitants.

This gloomy aera of the revolution has its frivolities as well as the less disastrous periods, and the barbarism of the moment is rendered additionally disgusting by a mixture of levity and pedantry.—It is a fashion for people at present to abandon their baptismal and family names, and to assume that of some Greek or Roman, which the debates of the Convention have made familiar.—France swarms with Gracchus’s and Publicolas, who by imaginary assimilations of acts, which a change of manners has rendered different, fancy themselves more than equal to their prototypes.\*

\* The vicissitudes of the revolution, and the vengeance of party, have brought half the sages of Greece, and patriots of Rome, to the Guillotine or the pillory. The Newgate Calendar of Paris contains as many illustrious names as the index to Plutarch’s Lives; and I believe there are now many Brutus’s and Gracchus’s in durance vile, besides a Mutius Scaevola condemned to twenty years imprisonment for an unskilful theft.—A man of Amiens, whose name is Le Roy, signified to the public, through the channel of a newspaper, that he had adopted that of Republic.

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—A man who solicits to be the executioner of his own brother ycleps himself Brutus, and a zealous preacher of the right of universal pillage cites the Agrarian law, and signs himself Lycurgus. Some of the Deputies have discovered, that the French mode of dressing is not characteristic of republicanism, and a project is now in agitation to drill the whole country into the use of a Roman costume.—You may perhaps suspect, that the Romans had at least more bodily sedateness than their imitators, and that the shrugs, jerks, and carracoles of a French petit maitre, however republicanized, will not assort with the grave drapery of the toga. But on your side of the water you have a habit of reasoning and deliberating —here they have that of talking and obeying.

Our whole community are in despair to-day. Dumont has been here, and those who accosted him, as well as those who only ventured to interpret his looks, all agree in their reports that he is in a “bad humour.”—The brightest eyes in France have supplicated in vain—not one grace of any sort has been accorded—and we begin to cherish even our present situation, in the apprehension that it may become worse.—Alas! you know not of what evil portent is the “bad humour” of a Representant. We are half of us now, like the Persian Lord, feeling if our heads are still on our shoulders.—I could add much to the conclusion of one of my last letters. Surely this incessant solicitude for mere existence debilitates the mind, and impairs even its passive faculty of suffering. We intrigue for the favour of the keeper, smile complacently at the gross pleasantries of a Jacobin, and tremble at the frown of a Dumont.—I am ashamed to be the chronicler of such humiliation: but, “tush, Hal; men, mortal men!” I can add no better apology, and quit you to moralize on it.—Yours.

[No date given.]

Were I a mere spectator, without fear for myself or compassion for others, the situation of this country would be sufficiently amusing. The effects produced (many perhaps unavoidably) by a state of revolution—the strange remedies devised to obviate them—the alternate neglect and severity with which the laws are executed—the mixture of want and profusion that distinguish the lower classes of people—and the distress and humiliation of the higher; all offer scenes so new and unaccountable, as not to be imagined by a person who has lived only under a regular government, where the limits of authority are defined, the necessaries of life plentiful, and the people rational and subordinate. The consequences of a general spirit of monopoly, which I formerly described, have lately been so oppressive, that the Convention thought it necessary to interfere, and in so extraordinary a way, that I doubt if (as usual) “the distemper of their remedies” will not make us regret the original disease. Almost every article, by having passed through a variety of hands, had become enormously dear; which, operating

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with a real scarcity of many things, occasioned by the war, had excited universal murmurings and inquietude. The Convention, who know the real source of the evil (the discredit of assignats) to be unattainable, and who are more solicitous to divert the clamours of the people, than to supply their wants, have adopted a measure which, according to the present appearances, will ruin one half of the nation, and starve the other. A maximum, or highest price, beyond which nothing is to be sold, is now promulgated under very severe penalties for all who shall infringe it. Such a regulation as this, must, in its nature, be highly complex, and, by way of simplifying it, the price of every kind of merchandise is fixed at a third above what it bore in 1791: but as no distinction is made between the produce of the country, and articles imported—between the small retailer, who has purchased perhaps at double the rate he is allowed to sell at, and the wholesale speculator, this very simplification renders the whole absurd and inexecutable.—The result was such as might have been expected; previous to the day on which the decree was to take place, shopkeepers secreted as many of their goods as they could; and, when the day arrived, the people laid siege to them in crowds, some buying at the maximum, others less ceremonious, and in a few hours little remained in the shop beyond the fixtures. The farmers have since brought neither butter nor eggs to market, the butchers refuse to kill as usual, and, in short, nothing is to be purchased openly. The country people, instead of selling provisions publicly, take them to private houses; and, in addition to the former exorbitant prices, we are taxed for the risk that is incurred by evading the law. A dozen of eggs, or a leg of mutton, are now conveyed from house to house with as much mystery, as a case of fire-arms, or a treasonable correspondence; the whole republic is in a sort of training like the Spartan youth; and we are obliged to have recourse to dexterity and intrigue to procure us a dinner.

Our legislators, aware of what they term the “aristocratie marchande,”— that is to say, that tradesmen would naturally shut up their shops when nothing was to be gained—provided, by a clause in the above law, that no one should do this in less time than a year; but as the injunction only obliged them to keep the shops open, and not to have goods to sell, every demand is at first always answered in the negative, till a sort of intelligence becomes established betwixt the buyer and seller, when the former, if he may be trusted, is informed in a low key, that certain articles may be had, but not au maximum.—Thus even the rich cannot obtain the necessaries of life without difficulty and submitting to imposition—and the decent poor, who will not pillage nor intimidate the tradesmen, are more embarrassed than ever.

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The above species of contraband commerce is carried on, indeed, with great circumspection, and no avowed hostilities are attempted in the towns. The great war of the maximum was waged with the farmers and higlers, as soon as it was discovered that they took their commodities privily to such people as they knew would buy at any price, rather than not be supplied. In consequence, the guards were ordered to stop all refractory butter-women at the gates, and conduct them to the town-house, where their merchandize was distributed, without pity or appeal, au maximum, to those of the populace who could clamour loudest.

These proceedings alarmed the peasants, and our markets became deserted. New stratagems, on one side, new attacks on the other. The servants were forced to supply themselves at private rendezvous in the night, until some were fined, and others arrested; and the searching all comers from the country became more intolerable than the vexations of the ancient Gabelle.—Detachments of dragoons are sent to scour the farm-yards, arrest the farmers, and bring off in triumph whatever the restive housewives have amassed, to be more profitably disposed of.

In this situation we remain, and I suppose shall remain, while the law of the maximum continues in force. The principle of it was certainly good, but it is found impossible to reduce it to practice so equitably as to affect all alike: and as laws which are not executed are for the most part rather pernicious than nugatory, informations, arrests, imposition, and scarcity are the only ends which this measure seems to have answered.

The houses of detention, before insupportable, are now yet more crowded with farmers and shopkeepers suspected of opposing the law.—Many of the former are so ignorant, as not to conceive that any circumstances ought to deprive them of the right to sell the produce of their farms at the highest price they can get, and regard the maximum much in the same light as they would a law to authorize robbing or housebreaking: as for the latter, they are chiefly small dealers, who bought dearer than they have sold, and are now imprisoned for not selling articles which they have not got. An informer by trade, or a personal enemy, lodges an accusation against a particular tradesman for concealing goods, or not selling au maximum; and whether the accusation be true or false, if the accused is not in office, or a Jacobin, he has very little chance of escaping imprisonment.—It is certain, that if the persecution of these classes of people continue, and commerce (already nearly annihilated by the war) be thus shackled, an absolute want of various articles of primary consumption must ensue; but if Paris and the armies can be supplied, the starving the departments will be a mere pleasurable experiment to their humane representatives!

March 1, 1794.



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The freedom of the press is so perfectly well regulated, that it is not surprising we are indulged with the permission of seeing the public papers: yet this indulgence is often, I assure you, a source of much perplexity to me—our more intimate associates know that I am a native of England, and as often as any debates of our House of Commons are published, they apply to me for explanations which it is not always in my power to give them. I have in vain endeavoured to make them comprehend the nature of an opposition from system, so that when they see any thing advanced by a member exactly the reverse of truth, they are wondering how he can be so ill informed, and never suspect him of saying what he does not believe himself. It must be confessed, however, that our extracts from the English papers often form so complete a contrast with facts, that a foreigner unacquainted with the tactics of professional patriotism, may very naturally read them with some surprize. A noble Peer, for example, (whose wisdom is not to be disputed, since the Abbe Mably calls him the English Socrates,\*) asserts that the French troops are the best clothed in Europe; yet letters, of nearly the same date with the Earl's speech, from two Generals and a Deputy at the head of different armies intreat a supply of covering for their denudated legions, and add, that they are obliged to march in wooden shoes!\*\*

\* It is surely a reflection on the English discernment not to have adopted this happy appellation, in which, however, as well as in many other parts of "the rights of Man and the Citizen," the Abbe seems to have consulted his own zeal, rather than the noble Peer's modesty.\*\* If the French troops are now better clothed, it is the effect of requisitions and pre-emptions, which have ruined the manufacturers. —Patriots of the North, would you wish to see our soldiers clothed by the same means?

—On another occasion, your British Sage describes, with great eloquence, the enthusiasm with which the youth of France "start to arms at the call of the Convention;" while the peaceful citizen anticipates, with equal eagerness, the less glorious injunction to extract saltpetre.—The revolts, and the coercion, necessary to enforce the departure of the first levies (however fear, shame, and discipline, may have since made them soldiers, though not republicans) might have corrected the ardour of the orator's inventive talents; and the zeal of the French in manufacturing saltpetre, has been of so slow a growth, that any reference to it is peculiarly unlucky. For several months the Convention has recommended, invited, intreated, and ordered the whole country to occupy themselves in the process necessary for obtaining nitre; but the republican enthusiasm was so tardy, that scarcely an ounce appeared, till a long list of sound penal laws, with fines and imprisonments in every line, roused the public spirit more effectually.\*

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\* Two years imprisonment was the punishment assigned to a Citizen who should be found to obstruct in any way the fabricating saltpetre. If you had a house that was adjudged to contain the materials required, and expostulated against pulling it down, the penalty was incurred.—I believe something of this kind existed under the old government, the abuses of which are the only parts the republic seems to have preserved.

—Another cause also has much favoured the extension of this manufacture: the necessity of procuring gunpowder at any rate has secured an exemption from serving in the army to those who shall be employed in making it.—\*

\* Many, under this pretext, even procured their discharge from the army; and it was eventually found requisite to stop this commutation of service by a decree.

—On this account vast numbers of young men, whose martial propensities are not too vehement for calculation, considering the extraction of saltpetre as more safe than the use of it, have seriously devoted themselves to the business. Thus, between fear of the Convention and of the enemy, has been produced that enthusiasm which seems so grateful to Lord S\_\_\_\_. Yet, if the French are struck by the dissimilitude of facts with the language of your English patriots, there are other circumstances which appear still more unaccountable to them. I acknowledge the word patriotism is not perfectly understood any where in France, nor do my prison-associates abound in it; but still they find it difficult to reconcile the love of their country, so exclusively boasted by certain senators, with their eulogiums on a government, and on men who avow an implacable hatred to it, and are the professed agents of its future destruction. The Houses of Lords and Commons resound with panegyrics on France; the Convention with *"delenda est Carthage"*—*"ces vils Insulaires"*—*de peuple marchand, boutiquier*—*"ces laches Anglois"*—&c. &c. ("Carthage must be destroyed"—"those vile Islanders"—"that nation of shopkeepers"—"those cowardly Englishmen"—&c.)

The efforts of the English patriots overtly tend to the consolidation of the French republic, while the demagogues of France are yet more strenuous for the abolition of monarchy in England. The virtues of certain people called Muir and Palmer,\* are at once the theme of Mr. Fox and Robespierre,\*\* of Mr. Grey and Barrere\*\*\*, of Collot d'Herbois\*\*\*\* and Mr. Sheridan; and their fate is lamented as much at the Jacobins as at St. Stephen's.\*\*\*\*\*

\* If I have not mentioned these gentlemen with the respect due to their celebrity, their friends must pardon me. To say truth, I did not at this time think of them with much complacence, as I had heard of them only from the Jacobins, by whom they were represented as the leaders of a Convention, which was to arm ninety thousand men, for the establishment of a system similar to



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that existing in France.\*\*The French were so much misled by the eloquence of these gentlemen in their favour, that they were all exhibited on the stage in red caps and cropped heads, welcoming the arrival of their Gallic friends in England, and triumphing in the overthrow of the British constitution, and the dethronement of the King.\*\*\* If we may credit the assertions of Barrere, the friendship of the Committee of Public Welfare was not merely verbal. He says, the secret register of the Committee furnishes proofs of their having sent three frigates to intercept these distinguished victims, whom their ungrateful country had so ignominiously banished.\*\*\*\* This humane and ingenious gentleman, by profession a player, is known likewise as the author of several farces and vaudevilles, and of the executions at Lyons.—It is asserted, that many of the inhabitants of this unfortunate city expiated under the Guillotine the crime of having formerly hissed Collot's successful attempts on the stage.\*\*\*\*\* The printing of a particular speech was interdicted on account of its containing allusions to certain circumstances, the knowledge of which might be of disservice to their unfortunate friends during their trial.

—The conduct of Mr. Pitt is not more acrimoniously discussed at the Palais National than by a part of his colleagues; and the censure of the British government, which is now the order of the day at the Jacobins, is nearly the echo of your parliamentary debates.\*

\* Allowing for the difference of education in the orators, a journeyman shoemaker was, I think, as eloquent, and not more abusive, than the facetious *ci-devant* protege of Lord T\_\_\_\_d.

—All this, however, does not appear to me out of the natural order of things; it is the sorry history of opposition for a century and an half, and our political rectitude, I fear, is not increasing: but the French, who are in their way the most corrupt people in Europe, have not hitherto, from the nature of their government, been familiar with this particular mode of provoking corruption, nor are they at present likely to become so. Indeed, I must here observe, that your English Jacobins, if they are wise, should not attempt to introduce the revolutionary system; for though the total possession of such a government is very alluring, yet the prudence, which looks to futurity, and the incertitude of sublunary events, must acknowledge it is “Caesar or nothing;” and that it offers no resource in case of those segregations, which the jealousy of power, or the appropriation of spoil, may occasion, even amongst the most virtuous associates.—The eloquence of a discontented orator is here silenced, not by a pension, but by a mandat d’arret; and the obstinate patriotism, which with you could not be softened with less than a participation of authority, is more cheaply secured

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by the Guillotine. A menace is more efficacious than a bribe, and in this respect I agree with Mr. Thomas Paine,\* that a republic is undoubtedly more oeconomical than a monarchy; besides, that being conducted on such principles, it has the advantage of simplifying the science of government, as it consults neither the interests nor weaknesses of mankind; and, disdaining to administer either to avarice or vanity, subdues its enemies by the sole influence of terror.—\*

\* This gentleman's fate is truly to be pitied. After rejecting, as his friends assert, two hundred a year from the English Ministry, he is obliged now to be silent gratis, with the additional disagreement of occupying a corner in the Luxembourg.

—Adieu!—Heaven knows how often I may have to repeat the word thus unmeaningly. I sit here, like Pope's bard "lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane," and scribbling high-sounding phrases of monarchy, patriotism, and republics, while I forget the humbler subject of our wants and embarrassments. We can scarcely procure either bread, meat, or any thing else: the house is crowded by an importation of prisoners from Abbeville, and we are more strictly guarded than ever. My friend ennuyes as usual, and I grow impatient, not having sang froid enough for a true French ennui in a situation that would tempt one to hang one's self.

March, 1794.

The aspect of the times promises no change in our favour; on the contrary, every day seems to bring its attendant evil. The gentry who had escaped the comprehensive decree against suspected people, are now swept away in this and the three neighbouring departments by a private order of the representatives, St. Just, Lebas, and Dumont.\*

\* The order was to arrest, without exception, all the ci-devant Noblesse, men, women, and children, in the departments of the Somme, North, and Pas de Calais, and to exclude them rigorously from all external communication—(mettre au secret).

—A severer regimen is to be adopted in the prisons, and husbands are already separated from their wives, and fathers from their daughters, for the purpose, as it is alledged, of preserving good morals. Both this place and the Bicetre being too full to admit of more inhabitants, two large buildings in the town are now appropriated to the male prisoners.— My friends continue at Arras, and, I fear, in extreme distress. I understand they have been plundered of what things they had with them, and the little supply I was able to send them was intercepted by some of the harpies of the prisons. Mrs. D\_\_\_\_'s health has not been able to sustain these accumulated misfortunes, and she is at present at the hospital. All this is far from enlivening, even had I a larger share of the national philosophy; and did I not oftener make what I observe, than what I suffer, the subject of my letters, I should tax your patience as much by repetition, as I may by dullness.

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When I enumerated in my last letters a few of the obligations the French have to their friends in England, I ought also to have observed, with how little gratitude they behave to those who are here. Without mentioning Mr. Thomas Paine, whose persecution will doubtless be recorded by abler pens, nothing, I assure you, can be more unpleasant than the situation of one of these Anglo-Gallican patriots. The republicans, supposing that an Englishman who affects a partiality for them can be only a spy, execute all the laws, which concern foreigners, upon him with additional rigour;\* and when an English Jacobin arrives in prison, far from meeting with consolation or sympathy, his distresses are beheld with triumph, and his person avoided with abhorrence. They talk much here of a gentleman, of very democratic principles, who left the prison before I came. It seems, that, notwithstanding Dumont condescended to visit at his house, and was on terms of intimacy with him, he was arrested, and not distinguished from the rest of his countrymen, except by being more harshly treated. The case of this unfortunate gentleman was rendered peculiarly amusing to his companions, and mortifying to himself, by his having a very pretty mistress, who had sufficient influence over Dumont to obtain any thing but the liberation of her protector. The Deputy was on this head inflexible; doubtless, as a proof of his impartial observance of the laws, and to show that, like the just man in Horace, he despised the clamour of the vulgar, who did not scruple to hint, that the crime of our countryman was rather of a moral than a political nature—that he was unaccommodating, and recalcitrant—addicted to suspicions and jealousies, which it was thought charitable to cure him of, by a little wholesome seclusion. In fact, the summary of this gentleman's history is not calculated to tempt his fellow societists on your side of the water to imitate his example.—After taking refuge in France from the tyranny and disappointments he experienced in England, and purchasing a large national property to secure himself the rights of a citizen, he is awakened from his dream of freedom, to find himself lodged in a prison, his estate under sequestration, and his mistress in requisition.—Let us leave this Coriolanus among the Volscians—it is a persecution to make converts, rather than martyrs, and

*"Quand le malheur ne seroit bon, "Qu'a mettre un sot a la raison, "Toujours seroit-ce a juste cause "Qu'on le dit bon a quelque chose."*\*

\* If calamity were only good to restore a fool to his senses, still we might justly say, "that it was good for some thing."

Yours, &c.

March 5, 1794.

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Of what strange influence is this word revolution, that it should thus, like a talisman of romance, keep chained, as it were, the reasoning faculties of twenty millions of people! France is at this moment looking for the decision of its fate in the quarrels of two miserable clubs, composed of individuals who are either despised or detested. The municipality of Paris favours the Cordeliers, the Convention the Jacobins; and it is easy to perceive, that in this case the auxiliaries are principals, and must shortly come to such an open rupture, as will end in the destruction of either one or the other. The world would be uninhabitable, could the combinations of the wicked be permanent; and it is fortunate for the tranquil and upright part of mankind, that the attainment of the purposes for which such combinations are formed, is usually the signal of their dissolution.

The municipality of Paris had been the iniquitous drudges of the Jacobin party in the legislative assembly—they were made the instruments of massacring the prisoners,\* of dethroning and executing the king,\*\* and successively of destroying the Brissotine faction,\*\*\* filling the prisons with all who were obnoxious to the republicans,\*\*\*\* and of involving a repentant nation in the irremediable guilt of the Queen's death.—\*\*\*\*\*

\* It is well known that the assassins were hired and paid by the municipality, and that some of the members presided at these horrors in their scarfs of office.

\*\* The whole of what is called the revolution of the 10th of August may very justly be ascribed to the municipality of Paris—I mean the active part of it. The planning and political part has been so often disputed by different members of the Convention, that it is not easy to decide on any thing, except that the very terms of these disputes fully evince, that the people at large, and more particularly the departments, were both innocent, and, until it took place, ignorant of an event which has plunged the country into so many crimes and calamities.\*\*\* A former imprisonment of Hebert formed a principal charge against the Brissotines, and, indeed, the one that was most insisted on at their trial, if we except that of having precipitated France into a war with England.—It must be difficult for the English Jacobins to decide on this occasion between the virtues of their dead friends and those of their living ones.

\*\*\*\* The famous definition of suspected persons originated with the municipality of Paris.

\*\*\*\*\* It is certain that those who, deceived by the calumnies of faction, permitted, if not assented to, the King's death, at this time regretted it; and I believe I have before observed, that one of the reasons urged in support of the expediency of putting the Queen to death, was, that it would make the army and people decisive, by banishing all hope of peace or accommodation.

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See the *Moniteur* of that time, which, as I have elsewhere observed, may be always considered as official.

—These services being too great for adequate reward, were not rewarded at all; and the municipality, tired of the odium of crime, without the participation of power, has seized on its portion of tyranny; while the convention, at once jealous and timid, exasperated and doubtful, yet menaces with the trepidation of a rival, rather than with the security of a conqueror.

Hebert, the Deputy-solicitor for the commune of Paris, appears on this occasion as the opponent of the whole legislature; and all the temporizing eloquence of Barrere, and the mysterious phraseology of Robespierre, are employed to decry his morals, and to reproach the ministers with the sums which have been the price of his labours.—\*

\* Five thousand pounds, two thousand pounds, and other considerable sums, were paid to Hebert for supplying the army with his paper, called “La Pere Duchene.” Let whoever has read one of them, conceive the nature of a government to which such support was necessary, which supposed its interests promoted by a total extinction of morals, decency, and religion. I could almost wish, for the sake of exhibiting vice under its most odious colours, that my sex and my country permitted me to quote one.

—Virtuous republicans! the morals of Hebert were pure when he outraged humanity in his accusations of the Queen—they were pure when he prostrated the stupid multitude at the feet of a Goddess of Reason;\* they were pure while his execrable paper served to corrupt the army, and to eradicate every principle which yet distinguished the French as a civilized people.

\* Madame Momoro, the unfortunate woman who exposed herself in this pageant, was guillotined as an accomplice of Hebert, together with the wives of Hebert and Camille Desmoulins.

—Yet, atrocious as his crimes are, they form half the Magna Charta of the republic,\* and the authority of the Convention is still supported by them.

\* What are the death of the King, and the murders of August and September, 1792, but the Magna Charta of the republicans?

—It is his person, not his guilt, that is proscribed; and if the one be threatened with the scaffold, the fruits of the other are held sacred. He will fall a sacrifice—not to offended religion or morality, but to the fears and resentment of his accomplices!

Amidst the dissensions of two parties, between which neither reason nor humanity can discover a preference, a third seems to have formed itself, equally inimical to, and hated

by both. At the head of it are Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Philipeaux, &c.—I own I have no better opinion of the integrity of these, than of the rest; but they profess themselves the advocates of a system of mildness and moderation, and, situated as this country is at present, even the affectation

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of virtue is captivating.— As far as they dare, the people are partial to them: bending beneath the weight of a sanguinary and turbulent despotism, if they sigh not for freedom, they do for repose; and the harassed mind, bereft of its own energy, looks up with indolent hope for relief from a change of factions. They forget that Danton is actuated by ambitious jealousy, that Camille Desmoulins is hacknied in the atrocities of the revolution, and that their partizans are adventurers, with neither honour nor morals. Yet, after all, if they will destroy a few of the guillotines, open our bastilles, and give us at least the security of servitude, we shall be content to leave these retrospections to posterity, and be thankful that in this our day the wicked sometimes perceive it their interest to do good.

In this state of seclusion, when I remark to you the temper of the public at any important crisis, you are, perhaps, curious to know my sources of intelligence; but such details are unnecessary. I might, indeed, write you a manuel des prisons, and, like Trenck or Latude, by a vain display of ingenuity, deprive some future victim of a resource. It is enough, that Providence itself seems to aid our invention, when its object is to elude tyranny; besides that a constant accession of prisoners from all parts, who are too numerous to be kept separate, necessarily circulates among us whatever passes in the world.

The Convention has lately made a sort of *pas retrogade* [Retrogade movement.] in the doctrine of holy equality, by decreeing, that every officer who has a command shall be able to read and write, though it cannot be denied that their reasons for this lese democratie are of some weight. All gentlemen, or, as it is expressed here, noblesse, have been recalled from the army, and replaced by officers chosen by the soldiers themselves, [Under the rank of field-officers.] whose affections are often conciliated by qualities not essentially military, though sometimes professional. A buffoon, or a pot-companion, is, of course, often more popular than a disciplinarian; and the brightest talents lose their influence when put in competition with a head that can bear a greater number of bottles.\*

\* Hence it happened, that a post was sometimes confided to one who could not read the parole and countersign; expeditions failed, because commanding officers mistook on the map a river for a road, or woods for mountains; and the most secret orders were betrayed through the inability of those to whom they were entrusted to read them.

—Yet this reading and writing are a sort of aristocratic distinctions, and not among the primeval rights of man; so that it is possible your English patriots will not approve of any regulations founded on them. But this is not the only point on which there is an apparent discordance between them and their friends here—the severity of Messrs. Muir and Palmer's sentence is pathetically lamented



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in the House of Commons, while the Tribunal Revolutionnaire (in obedience to private orders) is petitioning, that any disrespect towards the convention shall be punished with death. In England, it is asserted, that the people have a right to decide on the continuation of the war—here it is proposed to declare suspicious, and treat accordingly, all who shall dare talk of peace.—Mr. Fox and Robespierre must settle these trifling variations at the general congress of republicans, when the latter shall (as they profess) have dethroned all the potentates in Europe!

Do you not read of cart-loads of patriotic gifts,\* bales of lint and bandages, and stockings, knit by the hands of fair citizens, for the use of the soldiers?

\* A sum of money was at this time publicly offered to the Convention for defraying the expences and repairs of the guillotine.—I know not if it were intended patriotically or correctionally; but the legislative delicacy was hurt, and the bearer of the gift ordered for examination to the Committee of General Safety, who most probably sent him to expiate either his patriotism or his pleasantry in a prison.

—Do you not read, and call me calumniator, and ask if these are proofs that there is no public spirit in France? Yes, the public spirit of an eastern tributary, who offers, with apprehensive devotion, a part of the wealth which he fears the hand of despotism may ravish entirely.—The wives and daughters of husbands and fathers, who are pining in arbitrary confinement, are employed in these feeble efforts, to deprecate the malice of their persecutors; and these voluntary tributes are but too often proportioned, not to the abilities, but the miseries of the donor.\*

\* A lady, confined in one of the state prisons, made an offering, through the hands of a Deputy, of ten thousand livres; but the Convention observed, that this could not properly be deemed a gift— for, as she was doubtless a suspicious person, all she had belonged of right to the republic: *"Elle doit etre a moi, dit il, et la raison, "C'est que je m'appelle Lion "A cela l'on n'a rien a dire."* — La Fontaine. Sometimes these *dons patriotiques* were collected by a band of Jacobins, at others regularly assessed by a Representative on mission; but on all occasions the aristocrats were most assiduous and most liberal:

"Urg'd by th' imperious soldier's fierce command,  
"The groaning Greeks break up their golden caverns,  
"The accumulated wealth of toiling ages;

.....

"That wealth, too sacred for their country's use;  
"That wealth, too pleasing to be lost for freedom,  
"That wealth, which, granted to their weeping Prince,  
"Had rang'd embattled nations at their gates."  
— Johnson.



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Or, what is still better, have relieved the exigencies of the state, without offering a pretext for the horrors of a revolution.—O selfish luxury, impolitic avarice, how are ye punished? robbed of your enjoyments and your wealth—glad even to commute both for a painful existence!

—The most splendid sacrifices that fill the bulletin of the Convention, and claim an honourable mention in their registers, are made by the enemies of the republican government—by those who have already been the objects of persecution, or are fearful of becoming such.—Ah, your prison and guillotine are able financiers: they raise, feed, and clothe an army, in less time than you can procure a tardy vote from the most complaisant House of Commons!—Your, &c.

March 17, 1794.

After some days of agitation and suspense, we learn that the popularity of Robespierre is victorious, and that Hebert and his partizans are arrested. Were the intrinsic claims of either party considered, without regard to the circumstances of the moment, it might seem strange I should express myself as though the result of a contest between such men could excite a general interest: yet a people sadly skilled in the gradations of evil, and inured to a choice only of what is bad, learn to prefer comparatively, with no other view than that of adopting what may be least injurious to themselves; and the merit of the object is out of the question. Hence it is, that the public wish was in favour of Robespierre; for, besides that his cautious character has given him an advantage over the undisguised profligacy of Hebert, it is conjectured by many, that the more merciful politics professed by Camille Desmoulins, are secretly suggested, or, at least assented to, by the former.\*

\* This was the opinion of many.—The Convention and the Jacobins had taken alarm at a paper called “The Old Cordelier,” written by Camille Desmoulins, apparently with a view to introduce a milder system of government. The author had been censured at the one, expelled the other, and defended by Robespierre, who seems not to have abandoned him until he found the Convention resolved to persist in the sanguinary plan they had adopted. Robespierre afterwards sacrificed his friends to retrieve his influence; but could his views have been answered by humane measures, as certainly as by cruel ones, I think he would have preferred the first; for I repeat, that the Convention at large were averse from any thing like reason or justice, and Robespierre more than once risked his popularity by professions of moderation.—The most eloquent speech I have seen of his was previous to the death of Danton, and it seems evidently intended to sound the principles of his colleagues as to a change of system.—Camille Desmoulins has excited some interest, and has been deemed a kind of martyr to humanity. Perhaps nothing marks the horrors of the time more than such a partiality.—Camille

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Desmoulins, under an appearance of simplicity, was an adventurer, whose pen had been employed to mislead the people from the beginning of the revolution. He had been very active on the 10th of August; and even in the papers which have given him a comparative reputation, he is the panegyrist of Marat, and recommends “une Guillotine economique;” that is, a discrimination in favour of himself and his party, who now began to fear they might themselves be sacrificed by the Convention and deserted by Robespierre—after being the accomplices and tools of both.

The vicissitudes of the revolution have hitherto offered nothing but a change of vices and of parties; nor can I regard this defeat of the municipality of Paris as any thing more: the event is, however, important, and will probably have great influence on the future.

After having so long authorized, and profited by, the crimes of those they have now sacrificed, the Convention are willing to have it supposed they were themselves held in subjection by Hebert and the other representatives of the Parisian mob.—Admitting this to be true, having regained their independence, we ought naturally to expect a more rational and humane system will take place; but this is a mere hope, and the present occurrences are far from justifying it. We hear much of the guilt of the fallen party, and little of remedying its effects—much of punishment, and little of reform; and the people are excited to vengeance, without being permitted to claim redress. In the meanwhile, fearful of trusting to the cold preference which they owe to a superior abhorrence of their adversaries, the Convention have ordered their colleagues on mission to glean the few arms still remaining in the hands of the National Guard, and to arrest all who may be suspected of connection with the adverse party.—Dumont has performed this service here very diligently; and, by way of supererogation, has sent the Commandant of Amiens to the Bicetre, his wife, who was ill, to the hospital, and two young children to this place.

As usual, these proceedings excite secret murmurs, but are nevertheless yielded to with perfect submission.

One can never, on these occasions, cease admiring the endurance of the French character. In other countries, at every change of party, the people are flattered with the prospect of advantage, or conciliated by indulgences; but here they gain nothing by change, except an accumulation of oppression—and the success of a new party is always the harbinger of some new tyranny. While the fall of Hebert is proclaimed as the triumph of freedom, all the citizens are disarmed by way of collateral security; and at the instant he is accused by the Convention of atheism and immorality,\* a militant police is sent forth to devastate the churches, and punish those who are detected in observing the Sabbath—“*mais plutot souffrir que mourir, c’est la devise des Francois.*” [“To suffer rather than die is the motto of Frenchmen.”]

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\* It is remarkable, that the persecution of religion was never more violent than at the time when the Convention were anathematizing Hebert and his party for athiesm.

—Brissot and his companions died singing a paraphrase of my quotation:

*"Plutot la mort que l'esclavage,  
"C'est la devise des Francois."*

["Death before slavery, is the Frenchman's motto."]

—Let those who reflect on what France has submitted to under them and their successors decide, whether the original be not more apposite.

I hope the act of accusation against Chabot has been published in England, for the benefit of your English patriots: I do not mean by way of warning, but example. It appears, that the said Chabot, and four or five of his colleagues in the Convention, had been bribed to serve a stock-jobbing business at a stipulated sum,\* and that the money was to be divided amongst them.

\* Chabot, Fabre d'Eglantine, (author of "l'Intrigue Epistolaire," and several other admired dramatic pieces,) Delaunay d'Angers, Julien de Toulouse, and Bazire, were bribed to procure the passing certain decrees, tending to enrich particular people, by defrauding the East India Company.—Delaunay and Julien (both re-elected into the present Assembly) escaped by flight, the rest were guillotined. —It is probable, that these little peculations might have passed unnoticed in patriots of such note, but that the intrigues and popular character of Chabot made it necessary to dispose of him, and his accomplices suffered to give a countenance to the measure.

—Chabot, with great reason, insisted on his claim to an extra share, on account, as he expressed it, of having the reputation of one of the first patriots in Europe. Now this I look upon to be a very useful hint, as it tends to establish a tariff of reputations, rather than of talents. In England, you distinguish too much in favour of the latter; and, in a question of purchase, a Minister often prefers a "commodity" of rhetoricians, to one of "good names."—I confess, I am of Chabot's opinion; and think a vote from a member who has some reputation for honesty, ought to be better paid for than the eloquence which, weakened by the vices of the orator, ceases to persuade. How it is that the patriotic harangues at St. Stephen's serve only to amuse the auditors, who identify the sentiments they express as little with the speaker, as they would those of Cato's soliloquy with the actor who personates the character for the night? I fear the people reason like Chabot, and are "fools to fame." Perhaps it is fortunate for England, that those whose talents and principles would make them most dangerous, are become least so, because both are counteracted by the public contempt. Ought it not to humble the pride, and correct the errors, which too often accompany great genius, that the meanest capacity can distinguish between talents and virtue; and that even in the

moment our wonder is excited by the one, a sort of intrinsic preference is given to the other?—Yours, &c.

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Providence, April 15, 1794.

“The friendship of bad men turns to fear:” and in this single phrase of our popular bard is comprized the history of all the parties who have succeeded each other during the revolution.—Danton has been sacrificed to Robespierre’s jealousy,\* and Camille Desmoulins to support his popularity;\*\* and both, after sharing in the crimes, and contributing to the punishment, of Hebert and his associates, have followed them to the same scaffold.

\* The ferocious courage of Danton had, on the 10th of August, the 2d of September, the 31st of May, and other occasions, been the ductile instrument of Robespierre; but, in the course of their iniquitous connection, it should seem, they had committed themselves too much to each other. Danton had betrayed a desire of more exclusively profiting by his crimes; and Robespierre’s views been equally ambitious, though less daring, their mutual jealousies had risen to a height which rendered the sacrifice of one party necessary—and Robespierre had the address to secure himself, by striking the first blow. They had supped in the country, and returned together to Paris, on the night Danton was arrested; and, it may be supposed, that in this interview, which was intended to produce a reconciliation, they had been convinced that neither was to be trusted by the other.\*\* There can be no doubt but Robespierre had encouraged Camille Desmoulins to publish his paper, intitled “The Old Cordelier,” in which some translations from Tacitus, descriptive of every kind of tyranny, were applied to the times, and a change of system indirectly proposed. The publication became highly popular, except with the Convention and the Jacobins; these, however, it was requisite for Robespierre to conciliate; and Camille Desmoulins was sacrificed, to prove that he did not favour the obnoxious moderation of his friend.

I know not if one’s heart gain any thing by this habitual contemplation of successive victims, who ought not to inspire pity, and whom justice and humanity forbid one to regret.—How many parties have fallen, who seem to have laboured only to transmit a dear-bought tyranny, which they had not time to enjoy themselves, to their successors: The French revolutionists may, indeed, adopt the motto of Virgil’s Bees, “Not for ourselves, but for you.” The monstrous powers claimed for the Convention by the Brissotines,\* with the hope of exclusively exercising them, were fatal to themselves—the party that overthrew the Brissotines in its turn became insignificant—and a small number of them only, under the description of Committees of Public Welfare and General Safety, gradually usurped the whole authority.

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\* The victorious Brissotines, after the 10th of August, availing themselves of the stupor of one part of the people, and the fanaticism of the other, required that the new Convention might be entrusted with unlimited powers. Not a thousandth portion of those who elected the members, perhaps, comprehended the dreadful extent of such a demand, as absurd as it has proved fatal.—*"Tout pouvoir sans bornes ne fauroit etre legitime, parce qu'il n'a jamais pu avoir d'origine legitime, car nous ne pouvons pas donner a un autre plus de pouvoir sur nous que nous n'en avons nous-memes"* [Montesquieu.]:—that is, the power which we accord to others, or which we have over ourselves, cannot exceed the bounds prescribed by the immutable laws of truth and justice. The united voice of the whole French nation could not bestow on their representatives a right to murder or oppress one innocent man.

—Even of these, several have already perished; and in the hands of Robespierre, and half a dozen others of equal talents and equal atrocity, but less cunning, center at present all the fruits of so many miseries, and so many crimes.

In all these conflicts of party, the victory seems hitherto to have remained with the most artful, rather than the most able; and it is under the former title that Robespierre, and his colleagues in the Committee of Public Welfare, are now left inheritors of a power more despotic than that exercised in Japan.—Robespierre is certainly not deficient in abilities, but they are not great in proportion to the influence they have acquired him. They may, perhaps, be more properly called singular than great, and consist in the art of appropriating to his own advantage both the events of chance and the labours of others, and of captivating the people by an exterior of severe virtue, which a cold heart enables him to assume, and which a profligacy, not the effect of strong passions, but of system, is easily subjected to. He is not eloquent, nor are his speeches, as compositions,\* equal to those of Collot d'Herbais, Barrere, or Billaud Varennes; but, by contriving to reserve himself for extraordinary occasions, such as announcing plots, victories, and systems of government, he is heard with an interest which finally becomes transferred from his subject to himself.\*\*

\* The most celebrated members of the Convention are only readers of speeches, composed with great labour, either by themselves or others; and I think it is distinguishable, that many are manufactured by the same hand. The style and spirit of Lindet, Barrere, and Carnot, seem to be in common.\*\* The following passages, from a speech of Dubois Crance, who may be supposed a competent judge, at once furnish an idea of Robespierre's oratory, exhibit a leading feature in his character, and expose some of the arts by which the revolutionary despotism was maintained: *"Rapportant tout a lui seul, jusqu'a*

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*la patrie, il n'en parla jamais que pour s'en designer comme l'unique defenseur: otez de ses longs discours tout ce qui n'a rapport qu'à son personnel, vous n'y trouverez plus que de seches applications de prinipes connus, et surtout de phrases preparees pour amener encore son eloge. Vous l'avez juge timide, parce que son imagination, que l'on croyait ardente, qui n'etait que feroce, parassait exagerer souvent les maux de son pays. C'etait une jonglerie: il ne croyait ni aux conspirations don't il faisait tant d'etalage, ni aux poignards aux-quels il feignoit de sse devouer; mais il vouloit que les citoyens fussent constamment en defiance l'un de l'autre," &c.* "Affecting to consider all things, even the fate of the country, as depending on himself alone, he never spoke of it but with a view to point himself out its principal defender.—If you take away from his long harangues all that regards him personally, you will find only dry applications of familiar principles, and, above all, those studied turns, which were artfully prepared to introduce his own eternal panegyric.—You supposed him timid because his imagination (which was not merely ardent, as was supposed, but ferocious) seemed often to exaggerate the misfortunes of his country.—This was a mere trick: he believed neither in the conspiracies he made so great a parade of, nor in the poignards to which he pretended to devote himself as a victim.—His real design was to infuse into the minds of all men an unceasing diffidence of each other."

One cannot study the characters of these men, and the revolution, without wonder; and, after an hour of such scribbling, I wake to the scene around me, and my wonder is not a little increased, at the idea that the fate of such an individual as myself should be at all dependent on either.—My friend Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_ is ill,\* and taken to the hospital, so that having no longer the care of dissipating her ennui, I am at full liberty to indulge my own.

\* I have generally made use of the titles and distinctions by which the people I mention were known before the revolution; for, besides that I found it difficult to habituate my pen to the republican system of levelling, the person to whom these letters were addressed would not have known who was meant by the new appellations. It is, however, to be observed, that, except in private aristocratic intercourse, the word Citizen was in general use; and that those who had titles relinquished them and assumed their family names.

—Yet I know not how it is, but, as I have before observed to you, I do not ennuye—my mind is constantly occupied, though my heart is vacant—curiosity serves instead of interest, and I really find it sufficiently amusing to conjecture how long my head may remain on my shoulders.—You will, I dare say, agree with me that any doubts on such a subject are very well calculated to remove the tranquil sort of indifference which produces ennui;



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though, to judge by the greater part of my fellow-prisoners, one would not think so.—There is something surely in the character of the French, which makes them differ both in prosperity and adversity from other people. Here are many amongst us who see little more in the loss of their liberty than a privation of their usual amusements; and I have known some who had the good fortune to obtain their release at noon, exhibit themselves at the theatre at night.—God knows how such minds are constituted: for my part, when some consolatory illusion restores me to freedom, I associate with it no idea of positive pleasure, but long for a sort of intermediate state, which may repose my harassed faculties, and in which mere comfort and security are portrayed as luxuries. After being so long deprived of the decent accommodations of life, secluded from the intercourse which constitutes its best enjoyments, trembling for my own fate, and hourly lamenting that of my friends, the very thoughts of tumult or gaiety seem oppressive, and the desire of peace, for the moment, banishes every other. One must have no heart, after so many sufferings, not to prefer the castle of Indolence to the palace of Armida.

The coarse organs of an Argus at the door, who is all day employed in calling to my high-born companions by the republican appellations of "*Citoyen*," and "*Citoyenne*," has just interrupted me by a summons to receive a letter from my unfortunate friends at Arras.—It was given me open;\* of course they say nothing of their situation, though I have reason to believe it is dreadful.

\* The opening of letters was now so generally avowed, that people who corresponded on business, and were desirous their letters should be delivered, put them in the post without sealing; otherwise they were often torn in opening, thrown aside, or detained, to save the trouble of perusing.

—They have now written to me for assistance, which I have not the means of affording them. Every thing I have is under sequestration; and the difficulty which attends the negotiating any drafts drawn upon England, has made it nearly impossible to procure money in the usual way, even if I were not confined. The friendship of Mad. de \_\_\_\_ will be little available to me. Her extensive fortune, before frittered to mere competency by the extortions of the revolution, now scarcely supplies her own wants; and her tenants humanely take the opportunity of her present distress to avoid paying their rent.\*

\* In some instances servants or tenants have been known to seize on portions of land for their own use—in others the country municipalities exacted as the price of a certificate of civism, (without which no release from prison could be obtained,) such leases, lands, or privileges, as they thought the embarrassments of their landlords would induce them to grant. Almost every where the houses of persons arrested were pilfered



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either by their own servants or the agents of the republic. I have known an elegant house put in requisition to erect blacksmiths' forges in for the use of the army, and another filled with tailors employed in making soldiers' clothes.—Houses were likewise not unfrequently abandoned by the servants through fear of sharing the fate of their masters, and sometimes exposed equally by the arrest of those who had been left in charge, in order to extort discoveries of plate, money, &c. the concealment of which they might be supposed privy to.

--So that I have no resource, either for myself or Mrs. D\_\_\_\_, but the sale of a few trinkets, which I had fortunately secreted on my first arrest. How are we to exist, and what an existence to be solicitous about! In gayer moments, and, perhaps, a little tintured by romantic refinement, I have thought Dr. Johnson made poverty too exclusively the subject of compassion: indeed I believe he used to say, it was the only evil he really felt for. This, to one who has known only mental suffering, appears the notion of a coarse mind; but I doubt whether, the first time we are alarmed by the fear of want, the dread of dependence does not render us in part his converts. The opinion of our English sage is more natural than we may at first imagine; or why is it that we are affected by the simple distresses of Jane Shore, beyond those of any other heroine?—Yours.

April 22, 1794.

Our abode becomes daily more crowded; and I observe, that the greater part of those now arrested are farmers. This appears strange enough, when we consider how much the revolutionary persecution has hitherto spared this class of people; and you will naturally enquire why it has at length reached them.

It has been often observed, that the two extremes of society are nearly the same in all countries; the great resemble each other from education, the little from nature. Comparisons, therefore, of morals and manners should be drawn from the intervening classes; yet from this comparison also I believe we must exclude farmers, who are every where the same, and who seem always more marked by professional similitude than national distinction.

The French farmer exhibits the same acuteness in all that regards his own interest, and the same stupidity on most other occasions, as the mere English one; and the same objects which enlarge the understanding and dilate the heart of other people, seem to have a contrary effect on both. They contemplate the objects of nature as the stock-jobber does the vicissitudes of the public funds: "the dews of heaven," and the enlivening orb by which they are dispelled, are to the farmer only objects of avaricious speculation; and the scarcity, which is partially profitable, is but too often more welcome

than a general abundance.—They consider nothing beyond the limits of their own farms, except for the purpose of making envious comparisons with those of their neighbours; and being fed and clothed almost without intermediate commerce, they have little necessity for communication, and are nearly as isolated a part of society as sailors themselves.

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The French revolutionists have not been unobserving of these circumstances, nor scrupulous of profiting by them: they knew they might have discussed for ever their metaphysical definitions of the rights of man, without reaching the comprehension, or exciting the interest, of the country people; but that if they would not understand the propagation of the rights of man, they would very easily comprehend an abolition of the rights of their landlords. Accordingly, the first principle of liberty they were taught from the new code was, that they had a right to assemble in arms, to force the surrender of title-deeds; and their first revolutionary notions of equality and property seem to have been manifested by the burning of chateaux, and refusing to pay their rents. They were permitted to intimidate their landlords, in order to force them to emigration, and either to sell their estates at a low price, or leave them to the mercy of the tenants.

At a time when the necessities of the state had been great enough to be made the pretext of a dreadful revolution, they were not only almost exempt from contributing to its relief, but were enriched by the common distress; and while the rest of their countrymen beheld with unavailing regret their property gradually replaced by scraps of paper, the peasants became insolent and daring by impunity, refused to sell but for specie, and were daily amassing wealth. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that they were partial to the new order of things. The prisons might have overflowed or been thinned by the miseries of those with whom they had been crowded—the Revolutionary Tribunal might have sacrificed half France, and these selfish citizens, I fear, would have beheld it tranquilly, had not the requisition forced their labourers to the army, and the “maximum” lowered the price of their corn. The exigency of the war, and an internal scarcity, having rendered these measures necessary, and it being found impossible to persuade the farmers into a peaceful compliance with them, the government has had recourse to its usual summary mode of expostulation—a prison or the Guillotine.\*

\* The avarice of the farmers was doubtless to be condemned, but the cruel despotism of the government almost weakened our sense of rectitude; for by confounding error with guilt, and guilt with innocence, they habituated us to indiscriminate pity, and obliged us to transfer our hatred of a crime to those who in punishing it, observed neither mercy nor justice. A farmer was guillotined, because some blades of corn appeared growing in one of his ponds; from which circumstance it was inferred, he had thrown in a large quantity, in order to promote a scarcity—though it was substantially proved on his trial, that at the preceding harvest the grain of an adjoining field had been got in during a high wind, and that in all probability some scattered ears which reached the water had produced what was deemed sufficient

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testimony to convict him.— Another underwent the same punishment for pursuing his usual course of tillage, and sowing part of his ground with lucerne, instead of employing the whole for wheat; and every where these people became the objects of persecution, both in their persons and property.

“Almost all our considerable farmers have been thrown into prison; the consequence is, that their capital is eat up, their stock gone to ruin, and our lands have lost the almost incalculable effect of their industry. In La Vendee six million acres of land lie uncultivated, and five hundred thousand oxen have been turned astray, without shelter and without an owner.”

Speech of Dubois Crance, Sept. 22, 1794.

—Amazed to find themselves the objects of a tyranny they had hitherto contributed to support, and sharing the misfortune of their Lords and Clergy, these ignorant and mistaken people wander up and down with a vacant sort of ruefulness, which seems to bespeak that they are far from comprehending or being satisfied with this new specimen of republicanism.—It has been a fatality attending the French through the whole revolution, that the different classes have too readily facilitated the sacrifice of each other; and the Nobility, the Clergy, the Merchant, and the Farmer, have the mortification of experiencing, that their selfish and illiberal policy has answered no purpose but to involve all in one common ruin.

Angelique has contrived to-day to negotiate the sale of some bracelets, which a lady, with whom I was acquainted previous to our detention, has very obligingly given almost half their value for, though not without many injunctions to secrecy, and as many implied panegyrics on her benevolence, in risking the odium of affording assistance to a foreigner. We are, I assure you, under the necessity of being oeconomists, where the most abundant wealth could not render us externally comfortable: and the little we procure, by a clandestine disposal of my unnecessary trinkets, is considerably diminished,\* by arbitrary impositions of the guard and the poor,\*\* and a voluntary tax from the misery that surrounds us.

\* I am aware of Mr. Burke’s pleasantry on the expression of very little, being greatly diminished; but my exchequer at this time was as well calculated to prove the infinite divisibility of matter, as that of the Welch principality.\*\* The guards of the republican Bastilles were paid by the prisoners they contained; and, in many places, the tax for this purpose was levied with indecent rigour. It might indeed be supposed, that people already in prison could have little to apprehend from an inability or unwillingness to submit to such an imposition; yet those who refused were menaced with a dungeon; and I was informed, from undoubted authority, of two instances of the sort among the English—the one

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a young woman, the other a person with a large family of children, who were on the point of suffering this treatment, but that the humanity of some of their companions interfered and paid the sum exacted of them. The tax for supporting the imprisoned poor was more willingly complied with, though not less iniquitous in its principle; numbers of inoffensive and industrious people were taken from their homes on account of their religion, or other frivolous pretexts, and not having the wherewithal to maintain themselves in confinement, instead of being kept by the republic, were supported by their fellow-prisoners, in consequence of a decree to that purpose. Families who inherited nothing from their noble ancestors but their names, were dragged from obscurity only to become objects of persecution; and one in particular, consisting of nine persons, who lived in extreme indigence, but were notwithstanding of the proscribed class; the sons were brought wounded from the army and lodged with the father, mother, and five younger children in a prison, where they had scarcely food to support, or clothing to cover them. I take this opportunity of doing justice to the Comte d'Artois, whose youthful errors did not extinguish his benevolence—the unfortunate people in question having enjoyed a pension from him until the revolution deprived them of it.

Our male companions are for the most part transferred to other prisons, and among the number are two young Englishmen, with whom I used sometimes to converse in French, without acknowledging our compatriotism. They have told me, that when the decree for arresting the English was received at Amiens, they happened to be on a visit, a few miles from the town; and having notice that a party of horse were on the road to take them, willing to gain time at least, they escaped by another route, and got home. The republican constables, for I can call the military employed in the interior by no better appellation, finding their prey had taken flight, adopted the impartial justice of the men of Charles Town,\* and carried off the old couple (both above seventy) at whose house they had been.

\* “But they maturely having weigh’d  
“They had no more but him o’th’trade,  
“Resolved to spare him, yet to do  
“The Indian Hoghan-Moghan too  
“Impartial justice—in his stead did  
“Hang an old weaver that was bed-rid.”

The good man, who was probably not versed in the etiquette of the revolution, conceived nothing of the matter, and when at the end of their journey they were deposited at the Bicetre, his head was so totally deranged, that he imagined himself still in his own house, and continued for some days addressing all the prisoners as though they were his guests—at one moment congratulating them on their arrival, the next apologizing for want of room and accommodation.—The evasion of the young men, as you will conclude, availed them nothing, except a delay of their captivity for a few hours.

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A report has circulated amongst us to-day, that all who are not detained on specific charges are soon to be liberated. This is eagerly believed by the new-comers, and those who are not the “pale converts of experience.” I am myself so far from crediting it, that I dread lest it should be the harbinger of some new evil, for I know not whether it be from the effect of chance, or a refinement in atrocity, but I have generally found every measure which tended to make our situation more miserable preceded by these flattering rumours.

You would smile to see with what anxious credulity intelligence of this sort is propagated: we stop each other on the stairs and listen while our palled dinner, just arrived from the *traiteur*, is cooling; and the bucket of the draw-well hangs suspended while a history is finished, of which the relator knows as little as the hearer, and which, after all, proves to have originated in some ambiguous phrase of our keeper, uttered in a good-humoured paroxysm while receiving a *douceur*.

We occasionally lose some of our associates, who, having obtained their discharge, *depart a la Francaise*, forget their suffering, and praise the clemency of Dumont, and the virtue of the Convention; while those who remain still unconverted amuse themselves in conjecturing the channel through which such favours were solicited, and alleging reasons why such preferences were partial and unjust.

Dumont visits us, as usual, receives an hundred or two of petitions, which he does not deign to read, and reserves his indulgence for those who have the means of assailing him through the smiles of a favourite mistress, or propitiating him by more substantial advantages.—Many of the emigrants' wives have procured their liberty by being divorced, and in this there is nothing blameable, for I imagine the greater number consider it only as a temporary expedient, indifferent in itself, and which they are justified in having recourse to for the protection of their persons and property. But these domestic alienations are not confined to those who once moved in the higher orders of society—the monthly registers announce almost as many divorces as marriages, and the facility of separation has rendered the one little more than a licentious compact, which the other is considered as a means of dissolving. The effect of the revolution has in this, as in many other cases, been to make the little emulate the vices of the great, and to introduce a more gross and destructive policy among the people at large, than existed in the narrow circle of courtiers, imitators of the Regent, or Louis the fifteenth. Immorality, now consecrated as a principle, is far more pernicious than when, though practised, it was condemned, and, though suffered, not sanctioned.

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You must forgive me if I ennuye you a little sententiously—I was more partial to the lower ranks of life in France, than to those who were deemed their superiors; and I cannot help beholding with indignant regret the last asylums of national morals thus invaded by the general corruption.—I believe no one will dispute that the revolution has rendered the people more vicious; and, without considering the matter either in a moral or religious point of view, it is impossible to assert that they are not less happy. How many times, when I was at liberty, have I heard the old wish for an accession of years, or envy those yet too young to be sensible of “the miseries of a revolution!”—Were the vanity of the self-sufficient philosopher susceptible of remorse, would he not, when he beholds this country, lament his presumption, in supposing he had a right to cancel the wisdom of past ages; or that the happiness of mankind might be promoted by the destruction of their morals, and the depravation of their social affections?—Yours, &c.

April 30, 1794.

For some years previous to the revolution, there were several points in which the French ascribed to themselves a superiority not very distant from perfection. Amongst these were philosophy, politeness, the refinements of society, and, above all, the art of living.—I have sometimes, as you know, been inclined to dispute these claims; yet, if it be true that in our sublunary career perfection is not stationary, and that, having reached the apex of the pyramid on one side, we must necessarily descend on the other, I might, on this ground, allow such pretensions to be more reasonable than I then thought them. Whatever progress might have been attained in these respects, or however near our neighbours might have approached to one extreme, it is but too certain they are now rapidly declining to the other. This boasted philosophy is become a horrid compound of all that is offensive to Heaven, and disgraceful to man—this politeness, a ferocious incivility—and this social elegance and exclusive science in the enjoyment of life, are now reduced to suspicious intercourse, and the want of common necessities.

If the national vanity only were wounded, perhaps I might smile, though I hope I should not triumph; but when I see so much misery accompany so profound a degradation, my heart does not accord with my language, if I seem to do either one or the other.

I should ineffectually attempt to describe the circumstances and situation which have given rise to these reflections. Imagine to yourself whatever tyranny can inflict, or human nature submit to—whatever can be the result of unrestrained wickedness and unresisting despair—all that can scourge or disgrace a people—and you may form some idea of the actual state of this country: but do not search your books for comparisons, or expect to find in the proscriptions and extravagancies of former periods any examples by which to judge the present.—Tiberius and Nero are on the road to oblivion, and the subjects of the Lama may boast comparative pretensions to rank as a free and enlightened nation.



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The frantic ebullitions of the revolutionary government are now as it were subsided, and instead of appearing the temporary resources of “despotism in distress,” [Burke.] have assumed the form of a permanent and regular system. The agitation occasioned by so many unexampled scenes is succeeded by an habitual terror, and this depressing sentiment has so pervaded all ranks, that it would be difficult to find an individual, however obscure or inoffensive, who deems his property, or even his existence, secure only for a moment. The sound of a bell or a knocker at the close of the evening is the signal of dismay. The inhabitants of the house regard each other with looks of fearful interrogation—all the precautions hitherto taken appear insufficient—every one recollects something yet to be secreted—a prayer-book, an unburied silver spoon, or a few assignats “a face royale,” are hastily scrambled together, and if the visit prove nothing more than an amicable domiciliary one, in search of arms and corn, it forms matter of congratulation for a week after. Yet such is the submission of the people to a government they abhor, that it is scarcely thought requisite now to arrest any person formally: those whom it is intended to secure often receive nothing more than a written mandate\* to betake themselves to a certain prison, and such unpleasant rendezvous are attended with more punctuality than the most ceremonious visit, or the most gallant assignation.

\* These rescripts were usually couched in the following terms:—  
“Citizen, you are desired to betake yourself immediately to -----,  
(naming the prison,) under pain of being conveyed there by an armed force in case of delay.”

—A few necessaries are hastily packed together, the adieus are made, and, after a walk to their prison, they lay their beds down in the corner allotted, just as if it were a thing of course.

It was a general observation with travellers, that the roads in France were solitary, and had rather the deserted appearance of the route of a caravan, than of the communications between different parts of a rich and populous kingdom. This, however, is no longer true, and, as far as I can learn, they are now sufficiently crowded—not, indeed, by curious itinerants, parties of pleasure, or commercial industry, but by Deputies of the Convention,\* agents of subsistence,\*\* committee men, Jacobin missionaries,\*\*\* troops posting from places where insurrection is just quelled to where it has just begun, besides the great and never-failing source of activity, that of conveying suspected people from their homes to prison, and from one prison to another.—



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\* Every department was infested by one, two, or more of these strolling Deputies; and, it must be confessed, the constant tendency of the people to revolt in many places afforded them sufficient employment. Sometimes they acted as legislators, making laws on the spot—sometimes, both as judges and constables—or, if occasion required, they amused themselves in assisting the executioner.—The migrations of obscure men, armed with unlimited powers, and whose persons were unknown, was a strong temptation to imposture, and in several places adventurers were detected assuming the character of Deputies, for various purposes of fraud and depredation.—The following instance may appear ludicrous, but I shall be excused mentioning it, as it is a fact on record, and conveys an idea of what the people supposed a Deputy might do, consistent with the “dignity” of his executive functions. An itinerant of this sort, whose object seems to have been no more than to procure a daily maintenance, arriving hungry in a village, entered the first farm-house that presented itself, and immediately put a pig in requisition, ordered it to be killed, and some sausages to be made, with all speed. In the meanwhile our mock-legislator, who seems to have acted his part perfectly well, talked of liberty, l’amour de la Patrie, of Pitt and the coalesced tyrants, of arresting suspicious people and rewarding patriots; so that the whole village thought themselves highly fortunate in the presence of a Deputy who did no worse than harangue and put their pork in requisition.—Unfortunately, however, before the repast of sausages could be prepared, a hue and cry reached the place, that this gracious Representant was an impostor! He was bereft of his dignities, conveyed to prison, and afterwards tried by the Tribunal Revolutionnaire at Paris; but his Counsel, by insisting on the mildness with which he had “borne his faculties,” contrived to get his punishment mitigated to a short imprisonment.—Another suffered death on a somewhat similar account; or, as the sentence expressed it, for degrading the character of a National Representative.—Just Heaven! for degrading the character of a National Representative!!! —and this too after the return of Carrier from Nantes, and the publication of Collot d’Herbois’ massacres at Lyons!\*\*The agents employed by government in the purchase of subsistence amounted, by official confession, to ten thousand. In all parts they were to be seen, rivalling each other, and creating scarcity and famine, by requisitions and exactions, which they did not convert to the profit of the republic, but to their own.—These privileged locusts, besides what they seized upon, occasioned a total stagnation of commerce, by laying embargoes on what they did not want; so that it frequently occurred that an unfortunate tradesman might have half the articles in his shop under requisition for a month together, and sometimes under different

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requisitions from deputies, commissaries of war, and agents of subsistence, all at once; nor could any thing be disposed of till such claims were satisfied or relinquished.\*\*\* Jacobin missionaries were sent from Paris, and other great towns, to keep up the spirits of the people, to explain the benefits of the revolution, (which, indeed, were not very apparent,) and to maintain the connection between the provincial and metropolitan societies.—I remember the Deputies on mission at Perpignan writing to the Club at Paris for a reinforcement of civic apostles, "*pour evangeliser les habitants et les mettre dans la voie de salut*"—"to convert the inhabitants, and put them in the road to salvation").

—These movements are almost entirely confined to the official travellers of the republic; for, besides the scarcity of horses, the increase of expence, and the diminution of means, few people are willing to incur the suspicion or hazard\* attendant on quitting their homes, and every possible obstacle is thrown in the way of a too general intercourse between the inhabitants of large towns.

\* There were moments when an application for a passport was certain of being followed by a mandat d'arret—a writ of arrest). The applicant was examined minutely as to the business he was going upon, the persons he was to transact it with, and whether the journey was to be performed on horseback or in a carriage, and any signs of impatience or distaste at those democratic ceremonies were sufficient to constitute "*un homme suspect*"—"a suspicious person"), or at least one "*soupconne d'etre suspect*," that is, a man suspected of being suspicious. In either case it was usually deemed expedient to prevent the dissemination of his supposed principles, by laying an embargo on his person.—I knew a man under persecution six months together, for having gone from one department to another to see his family.

The committee of Public Welfare is making rapid advances to an absolute concentration of the supreme power, and the convention, while they are the instruments of oppressing the whole country, are themselves become insignificant, and, perhaps, less secure than those over whom they tyrannize. They cease to debate, or even to speak; but if a member of the Committee ascends the tribune, they overwhelm him with applauses before they know what he has to say, and then pass all the decrees presented to them more implicitly than the most obsequious Parliament ever enregistered an arrete of the Court; happy if, by way of compensation, they attract a smile from Barrere, or escape the ominous glances of Robespierre.\*

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\* When a member of the committee looked inauspiciously at a subordinate accomplice, the latter scarce ventured to approach his home for some time.—Legendre, who has since boasted so continually about his courage, is said to have kept his bed, and Bourdon de l'Oise, to have lost his senses for a considerable time, from frights, the consequence of such menaces.

Having so far described the situation of public affairs, I proceed as usual, and for which I have the example of Pope, who never quits a subject without introducing himself, to some notice of my own. It is not only bad in itself, but worse in perspective than ever: yet I learn not to murmur, and derive patience from the certainty, that almost every part of France is more oppressed and wretched than we are.—Yours, *etc.*

June 3, 1794.

The individual sufferings of the French may perhaps yet admit of increase; but their humiliation as a people can go no farther; and if it were not certain that the acts of the government are congenial to its principles, one might suppose this tyranny rather a moral experiment on the extent of human endurance, than a political system.

Either the vanity or cowardice of Robespierre is continually suggesting to him plots for his assassination; and on pretexts, at once absurd and atrocious, a whole family, with near seventy other innocent people as accomplices, have been sentenced to death by a formal decree of the convention.

One might be inclined to pity a people obliged to suppress their indignation on such an event, but the mind revolts when addresses are presented from all quarters to congratulate this monster's pretended escape, and to solicit a farther sacrifice of victims to his revenge.— The assassins of Henry the Fourth had all the benefit of the laws, and suffered only after a legal condemnation; yet the unfortunate Cecilia Renaud, though evidently in a state of mental derangement, was hurried to the scaffold without a hearing, for the vague utterance of a truth, to which every heart in France, not lost to humanity, must assent. Brooding over the miseries of her country, till her imagination became heated and disordered, this young woman seems to have conceived some hopeless plan of redress from expostulation with Robespierre, whom she regarded as a principal in all the evils she deplored. The difficulty of obtaining an audience of him irritated her to make some comparison between an hereditary sovereign and a republican despot; and she avowed, that, in desiring to see Robespierre, she was actuated only by a curiosity to “contemplate the features of a tyrant.”—On being examined by the Committee, she still persisted that her design was “seulement pour voir comment etoit fait un tyran;” and no instrument nor possible means of destruction was found upon her to justify a charge of any thing more than the wild and enthusiastic attachment to royalism, which she did not attempt to disguise. The influence of a feminine propensity, which often survives even the wreck of reason and beauty, had induced her to dress with peculiar neatness, when she went in search of Robespierre;

and, from the complexion of the times, supposing it very probable a visit of this nature might end in imprisonment and death, she had also provided herself with a change of clothes to wear in her last moments.

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Such an attention in a beautiful girl of eighteen was not very unnatural; yet the mean and cruel wretches who were her judges, had the littleness to endeavour at mortifying, by divesting her of her ornaments, and covering her with the most loathsome rags. But a mind tortured to madness by the sufferings of her country, was not likely to be shaken by such puerile malice; and, when interrogated under this disguise, she still preserved the same firmness, mingled with contempt, which she had displayed when first apprehended. No accusation, nor even implication, of any person could be drawn from her, and her only confession was that of a passionate loyalty: yet an universal conspiracy was nevertheless decreed by the Convention to exist, and Miss Renaud, with sixty-nine others,\* were sentenced to the guillotine, without farther trial than merely calling over their names.

\* It is worthy of remark, that the sixty-nine people executed as accomplices of Miss Renaud, except her father, mother, and aunt, were totally unconnected with her, or with each other, and had been collected from different prisons, between which no communication could have subsisted.

—They were conducted to the scaffold in a sort of red frocks, intended, as was alleged, to mark them as assassins—but, in reality, to prevent the crowd from distinguishing or receiving any impression from the number of young and interesting females who were comprised in this dreadful slaughter.—They met death with a courage which seemed almost to disappoint the malice of their tyrants, who, in an original excess of barbarity, are said to have lamented that their power of inflicting could not reach those mental faculties which enabled their victims to suffer with fortitude.\*

\* Fouquier Tinville, public accuser of the Revolutionary Tribunal, enraged at the courage with which his victims submitted to their fate, had formed the design of having them bled previous to their execution; hoping by this means to weaken their spirits, and that they might, by a pusillanimous behaviour in their last moments, appear less interesting to the people.

Such are the horrors now common to almost every part of France: the prisons are daily thinned by the ravages of the executioner, and again repopled by inhabitants destined to the fate of their predecessors. A gloomy reserve, and a sort of uncertain foreboding, have taken possession of every body—no one ventures to communicate his thoughts, even to his nearest friend—relations avoid each other—and the whole social system seems on the point of being dissolved. Those who have yet preserved their freedom take the longest circuit, rather than pass a republican Bastille; or, if obliged by necessity to approach one, it is with downcast or averted looks, which bespeak their dread of incurring the suspicion of humanity.

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I say little of my own feelings; they are not of a nature to be relieved by pathetic expressions: "I am e'en sick at heart." For some time I have struggled both against my own evils, and the share I take in the general calamity, but my mortal part gives way, and I can no longer resist the despondency which at times depresses me, and which indeed, more than the danger attending it, has occasioned my abandoning my pen for the last month.—Several circumstances have occurred within these few days, to add to the uneasiness of our situation, and my own apprehensions. Le Bon,\* whose cruelties at Arras seem to have endeared him to his colleagues in the Convention, has had his powers extended to this department, and Andre Dumont is recalled; so that we are hourly menaced with the presence of a monster, compared to whom our own representative is amiable.—

\* I have already noticed the cruel and ferocious temper of Le Bon, and the massacres of his tribunals are already well known. I will only add some circumstances which not only may be considered as characteristic of this tyrant, but of the times—and I fear I may add of the people, who suffered and even applauded them. They are selected from many others not susceptible of being described in language fit for an English reader. As he was one day enjoying his customary amusement of superintending an execution, where several had already suffered, one of the victims having, from a very natural emotion, averted his eyes while he placed his body in the posture required, the executioner perceived it, and going to the sack which contained the heads of those just sacrificed, took one out, and with the most horrible imprecations obliged the unhappy wretch to kiss it: yet Le Bon not only permitted, but sanctioned this, by dining daily with the hangman. He was afterwards reproached with this familiarity in the Convention, but defended himself by saying, "A similar act of Lequinio's was inserted by your orders in the bulletin with 'honourable mention;' and your decrees have invariably consecrated the principles on which I acted." They all felt for a moment the dominion of conscience, and were silent.—On another occasion he suspended an execution, while the savages he kept in pay threw dirt on the prisoners, and even got on the scaffold and insulted them previous to their suffering. When any of his colleagues passed through Arras, he always proposed their joining with him in a "*partie de Guillotine*," and the executions were perpetrated on a small square at Arras, rather than the great one, that he, his wife, and relations might more commodiously enjoy the spectacle from the balcony of the theatre, where they took their coffee, attended by a band of music, which played while this human butchery lasted. The following circumstance, though something less horrid, yet sufficiently so to excite the indignation of feeling people, happened

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to some friends of my own.—They had been brought with many others from a distant town in open carts to Arras, and, worn out with fatigue, were going to be deposited in the prison to which they were destined. At the moment of their arrival several persons were on the point of being executed. Le Bon, presiding as usual at the spectacle, observed the cavalcade passing, and ordered it to stop, that the prisoners might likewise be witnesses. He was, of course, obeyed; and my terrified friends and their companions were obliged not only to appear attentive to the scene before them, but to join in the cry of "*Vive la Republique!*" at the severing of each head.— One of them, a young lady, did not recover the shock she received for months. The Convention, the Committees, all France, were well acquainted with the conduct of Le Bon. He himself began to fear he might have exceeded the limits of his commission; and, upon communicating some scruples of this kind to his employers, received the following letters, which, though they do not exculpate him, certainly render the Committee of Public Welfare more criminal than himself.

"Citizen,

"The Committee of Public Welfare approve the measures you have adopted, at the same time that they judge the warrant you solicit unnecessary—such measures being not only allowable, but enjoined by the very nature of your mission. No consideration ought to stand in the way of your revolutionary progress—give free scope therefore to your energy; the powers you are invested with are unlimited, and whatever you may deem conducive to the public good, you are free, you are even called upon by duty, to carry into execution without delay.—We here transmit you an order of the Committee, by which your powers are extended to the neighbouring departments. Armed with such means, and with your energy, you will go on to confound the enemies of the republic, with the very schemes they have projected for its destruction.

"Carnot.

"Barrere.

"R. Lindet."

Extract from another letter, signed Billaud Varenne, Carnot, Barrere.

"There is no commutation for offences against a republic. Death alone can expiate them!—Pursue the traitors with fire and sword, and continue to march with courage in the revolutionary track you have described."

—Merciful Heaven! are there yet positive distinctions betwixt bad and worse that we thus regret a Dumont, and deem ourselves fortunate in being at the mercy of a tyrant who is only brutal and profligate? But so it is; and Dumont himself, fearful that he has not exercised his mission with sufficient severity, has ordered every kind of indulgence

to cease, the prisons to be more strictly guarded, and, if possible, more crowded; and he is now gone to Paris, trembling lest he should be accused of justice or moderation!



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The pretended plots for assassinating Robespierre are, as usual, attributed to Mr. Pitt; and a decree has just passed, that no quarter shall be given to English prisoners. I know not what such inhuman politics tend to, but my contempt, and the conscious pride of national superiority; certain, that when Providence sees fit to vindicate itself, by bestowing victory on our countrymen, the most welcome

“Laurels that adorn their brows  
“Will be from living, not dead boughs.”

The recollection of England, and its generous inhabitants, has animated me with pleasure; yet I must for the present quit this agreeable contemplation, to take precautions which remind me that I am separated from both, and in a land of despotism and misery!

—Yours affectionately.

June 11, 1794.

The immorality of Hebert, and the base compliances of the Convention, for some months turned the churches into “temples of reason.”—The ambition, perhaps the vanity, of Robespierre, has now permitted them to be dedicated to the “Supreme Being,” and the people, under such auspices, are to be conducted from atheism to deism. Desirous of distinguishing his presidency, and of exhibiting himself in a conspicuous and interesting light, Robespierre, on the last decade, appeared as the hero of a ceremony which we are told is to restore morals, destroy all the mischiefs introduced by the abolition of religion, and finally to defeat the machinations of Mr. Pitt. A gay and splendid festival has been exhibited at Paris, and imitated in the provinces: flags of the republican colours, branches of trees, and wreaths of flowers, were ordered to be suspended from the houses—every countenance was to wear the prescribed smile, and the whole country, forgetting the pressure of sorrow and famine, was to rejoice. A sort of monster was prepared, which, by some unaccountable ingenuity, at once represented Atheism and the English, Cobourg and the Austrians—in short, all the enemies of the Convention.—This external phantom, being burned with proper form, discovered a statue, which was understood to be that of Liberty, and the inauguration of this divinity, with placing the busts of Chalier\* and Marat in the temple of the Supreme Being, by way of attendant saints, concluded the ceremony.—

\* Chalier had been sent from the municipality of Paris after the dethronement of the King, to revolutionize the people of Lyons, and to excite a massacre. In consequence, the first days of September presented the same scenes at Lyons as were presented in the capital. For near a year he continued to scourge this unfortunate city, by urging the lower classes of people to murder and pillage; till, at the insurrection which took place in the spring of 1793, he was arrested by the insurgents, tried, and sentenced to the

guillotine. —The Convention, however, whose calendar of saints is as extraordinary as their criminal

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code, chose to beatify Chaliér, while they executed Malesherbes; and, accordingly, decreed him a lodging in the Pantheon, pensioning his mistress, and set up his bust in their own Hall as an associate for Brutus, whom, by the way, one should not have expected to find in such company.

The good citizens of the republic, not to be behind hand with their representatives, placed Chaliér in the cathedrals, in their public-houses, on fans and snuff-boxes—in short, wherever they thought his appearance would proclaim their patriotism.—I can only exclaim as Poultier, a deputy, did, on a similar occasion—“Français, Français, serez vous toujours Français?”—(Frenchmen, Frenchmen, will you never cease to be Frenchmen?)

—But the mandates for such celebrations reach not the heart: flowers were gathered, and flags planted, with the scrupulous exactitude of fear;\* yet all was cold and heavy, and a discerning government must have read in this anxious and literal obedience the indication of terror and hatred.

\* I have more than once had occasion to remark the singularity of popular festivities solemnized on the part of the people with no other intention but that of exact obedience to the edicts of government. This is so generally understood, that Richard, a deputy on mission at Lyons, writes to the Convention, as a circumstance extraordinary, and worthy of remark, that, at the repeal of a decree which was to have razed their city to the ground, a rejoicing took place, “*dirigée et exécutée par le peuple, les autorités constituées n’ayant fait en quelque sorte qu’y assister,*” — (directed and executed by the people, the constituted authorities having merely assisted at the ceremony).

—Even the prisons were insultingly decorated with the mockery of colours, which, we are told, are the emblems of freedom; and those whose relations have expired on the scaffold, or who are pining in dungeons for having heard a mass, were obliged to listen with apparent admiration to a discourse on the charms of religious liberty.—The people, who, for the most part, took little interest in the rest of this pantomime, and insensible of the national disgrace it implied, beheld with stupid satisfaction\* the inscription on the temple of reason replaced by a legend, signifying that, in this age of science and information, the French find it necessary to declare their acknowledgment of a God, and their belief in the immortality of the soul.

\* Much has been said of the partial ignorance of the unfortunate inhabitants of La Vendée, and divers republican scribblers attribute their attachment to religion and monarchy to that cause: yet at Havre, a sea-port, where, from commercial communication, I should suppose the people as informed and civilized as in any other part of France, the ears of piety and decency were assailed, during the celebration above-mentioned, by the acclamations of, “*Vive le Pere Eternel!*”—“*Vive*

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*l'etre Supreme!*"—(I entreat that I may not be suspected of levity when I translate this; in English it would be "God Almighty for ever! The Supreme Being for ever!")

—At Avignon the public understanding seems to have been equally enlightened, if we may judge from the report of a Paris missionary, who writes in these terms:—"The celebration in honour of the Supreme Being was performed here yesterday with all possible pomp: all our country-folks were present, and unspeakably content that there was still a God—What a fine decree (cried they all) is this!"

My last letter was a record of the most odious barbarities—to-day I am describing a festival. At one period I have to remark the destruction of the saints—at another the adoration of Marat. One half of the newspaper is filled with a list of names of the guillotined, and the other with that of places of amusement; and every thing now more than ever marks that detestable association of cruelty and levity, of impiety and absurdity, which has uniformly characterized the French revolution. It is become a crime to feel, and a mode to affect a brutality incapable of feeling—the persecution of Christianity has made atheism a boast, and the danger of respecting traditional virtues has hurried the weak and timid into the apotheosis of the most abominable vices. Conscious that they are no longer animated by enthusiasm,\* the Parisians hope to imitate it by savage fury or ferocious mirth—their patriotism is signalized only by their zeal to destroy, and their attachment to their government only by applauding its cruelties.—If Robespierre, St. Just, Collot d'Herbois, and the Convention as their instruments, desolate and massacre half France, we may lament, but we can scarcely wonder at it. How should a set of base and needy adventurers refrain from an abuse of power more unlimited than that of the most despotic monarch; or how distinguish the general abhorrence, amid addresses of adulation, which Louis the Fourteenth would have blushed to appropriate?\*

\* Louis the Fourteenth, aguerri (stealed) as he was by sixty years of adulation and prosperity, had yet modesty sufficient to reject a "dose of incense which he thought too strong." (See D'Alembert's Apology for Clermont Tonnerre.) Republicanism, it should seem, has not diminished the national complaisance for men in power, though it has lessened the modesty of those who exercise it.—If Louis the Fourteenth repressed the zeal of the academicians, the Convention publish, without scruple, addresses more hyperbolical than the praises that monarch refused.—Letters are addressed to Robespierre under the appellation of the Messiah, sent by the almighty for the reform of all things! He is the apostle of one, and the tutelar deity of another. He is by turns the representative of the virtues individually, and a compendium of them altogether: and this monster, whose features are the counterpart of

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his soul, find republican parasites who congratulate themselves on resembling him.

The bulletins of the Convention announce, that the whole republic is in a sort of revolutionary transport at the escape of Robespierre and his colleague, Collot d'Herbois, from assassination; and that we may not suppose the legislators at large deficient in sensibility, we learn also that they not only shed their grateful tears on this affecting occasion, but have settled a pension on the man who was instrumental in rescuing the benign Collot.

The members of the Committee are not, however, the exclusive objects of public adoration—the whole Convention are at times incensed in a style truly oriental; and if this be sometimes done with more zeal than judgment, it does not appear to be less acceptable on that account. A petition from an incarcerated poet assimilates the mountain of the Jacobins to that of Parnassus—a state-creditor importunes for a small payment from the Gods of Olympus—and congratulations on the abolition of Christianity are offered to the legislators of Mount Sinai! Every instance of baseness calls forth an eulogium on their magnanimity. A score of orators harangue them daily on their courage, while they are over-awed by despots as mean as themselves and whom they continue to reinstall at the stated period with clamorous approbation. They proscribe, devastate, burn, and massacre—and permit themselves to be addressed by the title of “Fathers of their Country!”

All this would be inexplicable, if we did not contemplate in the French a nation where every faculty is absorbed by a terror which involves a thousand contradictions. The rich now seek protection by becoming members of clubs,\* and are happy if, after various mortifications, they are finally admitted by the mob who compose them; while families, that heretofore piqued themselves on a voluminous and illustrious genealogy,\*\* eagerly endeavour to prove they have no claim to either.

*\* Le diplome de Jacobin etait une espece d'amulette, dont les initiees etaient jaloux, et qui frappoit de prestiges ceux qui ne l'etaient pas*—“The Jacobin diploma was a kind of amulet, which the initiated were jealous of preserving, and which struck as it were with witchcraft, those who were not of the number.”

Rapport de Courtois sur les Papiers de Robespierre.

*\*\* Besides those who, being really noble, were anxious to procure certificates of sans-cullotism, many who had assumed such honours without pretensions now relinquished them, except indeed some few, whose vanity even surmounted their fears. But an express law included all these seceders in the general proscription; alledging, with a candour not usual, that those who assumed rank were, in fact, more criminal than such as were guilty of being born to it.—Places and employments, which are in most countries the objects of intrigue*

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and ambition, are here refused or relinquished with such perfect sincerity, that a decree became requisite to oblige every one, under pain of durance, to preserve the station to which his ill stars, mistaken politics, or affectation of patriotism, had called him. Were it not for this law, such is the dreadful responsibility and danger attending offices under the government, that even low and ignorant people, who have got possession of them merely for support, would prefer their original poverty to emoluments which are perpetually liable to the commutation of the guillotine.—Some members of a neighbouring district told me to-day, when I asked them if they came to release any of our fellow-prisoners, that so far from it, they had not only brought more, but were not certain twelve hours together of not being brought themselves.

The visionary equality of metaphysical impostors is become a substantial one—not constituted by abundance and freedom, but by want and oppression. The disparities of nature are not repaired, but its whole surface is levelled by a storm. The rich are become poor, but the poor still remain so; and both are conducted indiscriminately to the scaffold. The prisons of the former government were “petty to the ends” of this. Convents, colleges, palaces, and every building which could any how be adapted to such a purpose, have been filled with people deemed suspicious;\* and a plan of destruction seems resolved on, more certain and more execrable than even the general massacre of September 1792.

\* Now multiplied to more than four hundred thousand!—The prisons of Paris and the environs were supposed to contain twenty-seven thousand. The public papers stated but about seven thousand, because they included the official returns of Paris only.

—Agents of the police are, under some pretended accusation, sent to the different prisons; and, from lists previously furnished them, make daily information of plots and conspiracies, which they alledge to be carrying on by the persons confined. This charge and this evidence suffice: the prisoners are sent to the tribunal, their names read over, and they are conveyed by cart’s-full to the republican butchery. Many whom I have known, and been in habits of intimacy with, have perished in this manner; and the expectation of Le Bon,\* with our numbers which make us of too much consequence to be forgotten, all contribute to depress and alarm me.

\* Le Bon had at this period sent for lists of the prisoners in the department of the Somme—which lists are said to have been since found, and many of the names in them marked for destruction.

—Even the levity of the French character yields to this terrible despotism, and nothing is observed but weariness, silence, and sorrow:— “*O triste loisir, poids affreux du tems.*” [St. Lambert.] The season returns with the year, but not to us—the sun shines, but to add to our miseries that of insupportable heat—and the vicissitudes of nature only awaken our regret that we cannot enjoy them—

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"Now gentle gales o'er all the vallies play,  
"Breathe on each flow'r, and bear their sweets away."  
[Collins.]

Yet what are fresh air and green fields to us, who are immured amidst a thousand ill scents, and have no prospect but filth and stone walls? It is difficult to describe how much the mind is depressed by this state of passive suffering. In common evils, the necessity of action half relieves them, as a vessel may reach her port by the agitation of a storm; but this stagnant listless existence is terrible.

Those most to be envied here are the victims of their religious opinions. The nuns, who are more distressed than any of us,\* employ themselves patiently, and seem to look beyond this world; whilst the once gay deist wanders about with a volume of philosophy in his hand, unable to endure the present, and dreading still more the future.

\* These poor women, deprived of the little which the rapacity of the Convention had left them, by it subordinate agents, were in want of every thing; and though in most prisons they were employed for the republican armies, they could scarcely procure more than bread and water. Yet this was not all: they were objects of the meanest and most cruel persecution.—I knew one who was put in a dungeon, up to her waist in putrid water, for twelve hours altogether, without losing her resolution or serenity.

I have already written you a long letter, and bid you adieu with the reluctance which precedes an uncertain separation. Uneasiness, ill health, and confinement, besides the danger I am exposed to, render my life at present more precarious than "the ordinary of nature's tenures." --God knows when I may address you again!--My friend Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_ is returned from the hospital, and I yield to her fears by ceasing to write, though I am nevertheless determined not to part with what I have hitherto preserved; being convinced, that if evil be intended us, it will be as soon without a pretext as with one.—Adieu.

Providence, Aug. 11, 1794.

I have for some days contemplated the fall of Robespierre and his adherents, only as one of those dispensations of Providence, which were gradually to pursue all who had engaged in the French revolution. The late change of parties has, however, taken a turn I did not expect; and, contrary to what has hitherto occurred, there is a manifest disposition in the people to avail themselves of the weakness which is necessarily occasioned by the contentions of their governors.

When the news of this extraordinary event first became public, it was ever where received with great gravity—I might say, coldness.—Not a comment was uttered, nor a glance of approbation seen. Things might be yet in equilibrium, and popular commotions are always uncertain. Prudence was, therefore, deemed, indispensable;

and, until the contest was finally decided, no one ventured to give an opinion; and many, to be certain of guarding against verbal indiscretion, abstained from all intercourse whatever.



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By degrees, the execution of Robespierre and above an hundred of his partizans, convinced even the most timid; the murmurs of suppressed discontent began to be heard; and all thought they might now with safety relieve their fears and their sufferings, by execrating the memory of the departed tyrants. The prisons, which had hitherto been avoided as endangering all who approached them, were soon visited with less apprehension; and friendship or affection, no longer exanimate by terror, solicited, though still with trepidation, the release of those for whom they were interested. Some of our associates have already left us in consequence of such intercessions, and we all hope that the tide of opinion, now avowedly inimical to the detestable system to which we are victims, will enforce a general liberation.—We are guarded but slightly; and I think I perceive in the behaviour of the Jacobin Commissaries something of civility and respect not usual.

Thus an event, which I beheld merely as the justice which one set of banditti were made the instruments of exercising upon another, may finally tend to introduce a more humane system of government; or, at least, suspend proscription and massacre, and give this harassed country a little repose.

I am in arrears with my epistolary chronicle, and the hope of so desirable a change will now give me courage to resume it from the conclusion of my last. To-morrow shall be dedicated to this purpose.— Yours.

August 12.

My letters, previous to the time when I judged it necessary to desist from writing, will have given you some faint sketch of the situation of the country, and the sufferings of its inhabitants—I say a faint sketch, because a thousand horrors and iniquities, which are now daily disclosing, were then confined to the scenes where they were perpetrated; and we knew little more of them than what we collected from the reports of the Convention, where they excited a laugh as pleasantries, or applause as acts of patriotism.

France had become one vast prison, executions were daily multiplied, and a minute and comprehensive oppression seemed to have placed the lives, liberty, and fortune of all within the grasp of the single Committee. Despair itself was subdued, and the people were gradually sinking into a gloomy and stupid obedience.

\* The words despotism and tyranny are sufficiently expressive of the nature of the government to which they are applied; yet still they are words rendered familiar to us only by history, and convey no precise idea, except that of a bad political system. The condition of the French at this time, besides its wretchedness, had something so strange, so original in it, that even those who beheld it with attention must be content to wonder, without pretending to offer any description as adequate.

—The following extract from a speech of Bailleul, a member of the Convention, exhibits a picture nearer the original than I have yet seen—

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*"La terreur dominait tous les esprits, comprimait tous les couers— elle etait la force du gouvernement, et ce gouvernement etait tel, que les nombreux habitans d'un vaste territoire semblaient avoir perdu les qualites qui distinguent l'homme de l'animal domestique: ils semblaient meme n'avoir de vie que ce que le gouvernement voulait bien leur en accorder.—Le moi humain n'existoit plus; chaque individu n'etait qu'une machine, allant, venant, pensant ou ne pensant pas, felon que la tyrannie le pressait ou l'animait."*

Discours de Bailleul, 19 March 1795.

"The minds of all were subdued by terror, and every heart was compressed beneath its influence.—In this consisted the strength of the government; and that government was such, that the immense population of a vast territory, seemed to have lost all the qualities which distinguish man from the animals attached to him.—They appeared to exhibit no signs of life but such as their rulers condescended to permit—the very sense of existence seemed doubtful or extinct, and each individual was reduced to a mere machine, going or coming, thinking or not thinking, according as the impulse of tyranny gave him force or animation."

Speech of Bailleul, 19 March 1795.

On the twenty-second of Prairial, (June 10,) a law, consisting of a variety of articles for the regulation of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was introduced to the convention by Couthon, a member of the government; and, as usual adopted with very little previous discussion.—Though there was no clause of this act but ought to have given the alarm to humanity, "knocked at the heart, and bid it not be quiet;" yet the whole appeared perfectly unexceptionable to the Assembly in general: till, on farther examination, they found it contained an implied repeal of the law hitherto observed, according to which, no representative could be arrested without a preliminary decree for that purpose.—This discovery awakened their suspicions, and the next day Bourdon de l'Oise, a man of unsteady principles, (even as a revolutionist,) was spirited up to demand an explicit renunciation of any power in the Committee to attack the legislative inviolability except in the accustomed forms.—The clauses which elected a jury of murderers, that bereft all but guilt of hope, and offered no prospect to innocence but death, were passed with no other comment than the usual one of applause.\*—

\* The baseness, cruelty, and cowardice of the Convention are neither to be denied, nor palliated. For several months they not only passed decrees of proscription and murder which might reach every individual in France except themselves, but they even sacrificed numbers of their own body; and if, instead of proposing an article affecting the whole Convention, the Committee had demanded the heads of as many Deputies as

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they had occasion for by name, I am persuaded they would have met no resistance.— This single example of opposition only renders the convention still more an object of abhorrence, because it marks that they could subdue their pusillanimity when their own safety was menaced, and that their previous acquiescence was voluntary.

—This, and this only, by involving their personal safety, excited their courage through their fears.—Merlin de Douay, originally a worthless character, and become yet more so by way of obviating the imputation of bribery from the court, seconded Bourdon's motion, and the obnoxious article was repealed instantaneously.

This first and only instance of opposition was highly displeasing to the Committee, and, on the twenty-fourth, Robespierre, Barrere, Couthon, and Billaud, animadverted with such severity on the promoters of it, that the terrified Bourdon\* declared, the repeal he had solicited was unnecessary, and that he believed the Committee were destined to be the saviours of the country; while Merlin de Douay disclaimed all share in the business — and, in fine, it was determined, that the law of the twenty-second of Prairial should remain as first presented to the Convention, and that the qualification of the succeeding day was void.

\* It was on this occasion that the “intrepid” Bourdon kept his bed a whole month with fear.

So dangerous an infringement on the privileges of the representative body, dwelt on minds insensible to every other consideration; the principal members caballed secretly on the perils by which they were surrounded; and the sullen concord which now marked their deliberations, was beheld by the Committee rather as the prelude to revolt, than the indication of continued obedience. In the mean while it was openly proposed to concentrate still more the functions of government. The circulation of newspapers was insinuated to be useless; and Robespierre gave some hints of suppressing all but one, which should be under particular and official controul.\*

\* This intended restriction was unnecessary; for the newspapers were all, not indeed paid by government, but so much subject to the censure of the guillotine, that they had become, under an “unlimited freedom of the press,” more cautious and insipid than the gazettes of the proscribed court. Poor Duplain, editor of the “Petit Courier,” and subsequently of the “Echo,” whom I remember one of the first partizans of the revolution, narrowly escaped the massacre of August 1792, and was afterwards guillotined for publishing the surrender of Landrecy three days before it was announced officially.

A rumour prevailed, that the refractory members who had excited the late rebellion were to be sacrificed, a general purification of the Assembly to take place, and that the committee and a few select adherents were to be invested with the whole national

authority. Lists of proscription were said to be made; and one of them was secretly communicated as having been found among the papers of a jurymen of the Revolutionary Tribunal lately arrested.—These apprehensions left the members implicated no alternative but to anticipate hostilities, or fall a sacrifice; for they knew the instant of attack would be that of destruction, and that the people were too indifferent to take any part in the contest.

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Things were in this state, when two circumstances of a very different nature assisted in promoting the final explosion, which so much astonished, not only the rest of Europe, but France itself.

It is rare that a number of men, however well meaning, perfectly agree in the exercise of power; and the combinations of the selfish and wicked must be peculiarly subject to discord and dissolution. The Committee of Public Welfare, while it enslaved the convention and the people, was torn by feuds, and undermined by the jealousies of its members. Robespierre, Couthon, and St. Just, were opposed by Collot and Billaud Varennes; while Barrere endeavoured to deceive both parties; and Carnot, Lindet, the two Prieurs, and St. Andre, laboured in the cause of the common tyranny, in the hope of still dividing it with the conquerors.

For some months this enmity was restrained, by the necessity of preserving appearances, and conciliated, by a general agreement in the principles of administration, till Robespierre, relying on his superior popularity, began to take an ascendant, which alarmed such of his colleagues as were not his partisans, both for their power and their safety. Animosities daily increased, and their debates at length became so violent and noisy, that it was found necessary to remove the business of the Committee to an upper room, lest people passing under the windows should overhear these scandalous scenes. Every means were taken to keep these disputes a profound secret—the revilings which accompanied their private conferences were turned into smooth panegyrics of each other when they ascended the tribune, and their unanimity was a favourite theme in all their reports to the Convention.\*

\* So late as on the seventh of Thermidor, (25th July,) Barrere made a pompous eulogium on the virtues of Robespierre; and, in a long account of the state of the country, he acknowledges “some little clouds hang over the political horizon, but they will soon be dispersed, by the union which subsists in the Committees;—above all, by a more speedy trial and execution of revolutionary criminals.” It is difficult to imagine what new means of dispatch this airy barbarian had contrived, for in the six weeks preceding this harangue, twelve hundred and fifty had been guillotined in Paris only.

The impatience of Robespierre to be released from associates whose views too much resembled his own to leave him an undivided authority, at length overcame his prudence; and, after absenting himself for six weeks from the Committee, on the 8th of Thermidor, (26th July,) he threw off the mask, and in a speech full of mystery and implications, but containing no direct charges, proclaimed the divisions which existed in the government.—On the same evening he repeated this harangue at the Jacobins, while St. Just, by his orders, menaced the obnoxious part of the Committee with a formal denunciation to the Convention.—From this moment Billaud Varennes and Collot d’Herbois concluded their destruction to be certain. In vain they soothed, expostulated with, and endeavoured to mollify St. Just, so as to avert an open rupture. The latter,

who probably knew it was not Robespierre's intention to accede to any arrangement, left them to make his report.

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On the morning of the ninth the Convention met, and with internal dread and affected composure proceeded to their ordinary business.—St. Just then ascended the tribune, and the curiosity or indecision of the greater number permitted him to expatiate at large on the intrigues and guilt of every kind which he imputed to a “part” of the Committee. —At the conclusion of this speech, Tallien, one of the devoted members, and Billaud Varennes, the leader of the rival party, opened the trenches, by some severe remarks on the oration of St. Just, and the conduct of those with whom he was leagued. This attack encouraged others: the whole Convention joined in accusing Robespierre of tyranny; and Barrere, who perceived the business now deciding, ranged himself on the side of the strongest, though the remaining members of the Committee still appeared to preserve their neutrality. Robespierre was, for the first time, refused a hearing, yet, the influence he so lately possessed still seemed to protect him. The Assembly launched decrees against various of his subordinate agents, without daring to proceed against himself; and had not the indignant fury with which he was seized, at the desertion of those by whom he had been most flattered, urged him to call for arrest and death, it is probable the whole would have ended in the punishment of his enemies, and a greater accession of power to himself.

But at this crisis all Robespierre’s circumspection abandoned him. Having provoked the decree for arresting his person, instead of submitting to it until his party should be able to rally, he resisted; and by so doing gave the Convention a pretext for putting him out of the law; or, in other words, to destroy him, without the delay or hazard of a previous trial.

Having been rescued from the Gens d’Armes, and taken in triumph to the municipality, the news spread, the Jacobins assembled, and Henriot, the commander of the National Guard, (who had likewise been arrested, and again set at liberty by force,) all prepared to act in his defence. But while they should have secured the Convention, they employed themselves at the Hotel de Ville in passing frivolous resolutions; and Henriot, with all the cannoneers decidedly in his favour, exhibited an useless defiance, by stalking before the windows of the Committee of General Safety, when he should have been engaged in arresting its members.

All these imprudences gave the Convention time to proclaim that Robespierre, the municipality, and their adherents, were decreed out of the protection of the laws, and in circumstances of this nature such a step has usually been decisive—for however odious a government, if it does but seem to act on a presumption of its own strength, it has always an advantage over its enemies; and the timid, the doubtful, or indifferent, for the most part, determine in favour of whatever wears the appearance of established authority. The people, indeed, remained perfectly neuter; but



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the Jacobins, the Committees of the Sections, and their dependents, might have composed a force more than sufficient to oppose the few guards which surrounded the National Palace, had not the publication of this summary outlawry at once paralyzed all their hopes and efforts.—They had seen multitudes hurried to the Guillotine, because they were “hors de la loi;” and this impression now operated so forcibly, that the cannoneers, the national guard, and those who before were most devoted to the cause, laid down their arms, and precipitately abandoned their chiefs to the fate which awaited them. Robespierre was taken at the Hotel de Ville, after being severely wounded in the face; his brother broke his thigh, in attempting to escape from a window; Henriot was dragged from concealment, deprived of an eye; and Couthon, whom nature had before rendered a cripple, now exhibited a most hideous spectacle, from an ineffectual effort to shoot himself.—Their wounds were dressed to prolong their suffering, and their sentence being contained in the decree that outlawed them, their persons were identified by the same tribunal which had been the instrument of their crimes. —On the night of the tenth they were conveyed to the scaffold, amidst the insults and execrations of a mob, which a few hours before beheld them with trembling and adoration.—Lebas, also a member of the convention, and a principal agent of Robespierre, fell by his own hand; and Couthon, St. Just, and seventeen others, suffered with the two Robespierres. —The municipality of Paris, &c. to the number of seventy-two, were guillotined the succeeding day, and about twelve more the day after.

The fate of these men may be ranked as one of the most dreadful of those examples which history vainly transmits to discourage the pursuits of ambition. The tyrant who perishes amidst the imposing fallaciousness of military glory, mingles admiration with abhorrence, and rescues his memory from contempt, if not from hatred. Even he who expiates his crimes on the scaffold, if he die with fortitude, becomes the object of involuntary compassion, and the award of justice is not often rendered more terrible by popular outrage. But the fall of Robespierre and his accomplices was accompanied by every circumstance that could add poignancy to suffering, or dread to death. The ambitious spirit which had impelled them to tyrannize over a submissive and defenceless people, abandoned them in their last moments. Depressed by anguish, exhausted by fatigue, and without courage, religion, or virtue, to support them, they were dragged through the savage multitude, wounded and helpless, to receive that stroke, from which even the pious and the brave sometimes shrink with dismay.

Robespierre possessed neither the talents nor merits of Nicolas Riezi; but they are both conspicuous instances of the mutability of popular support, and there is a striking similitude in the last events of their history. They both degraded their ambition by cowardice—they were both deserted by the populace, whom they began by flattering, and ended by oppressing; and the death of both was painful and ignominious—borne without dignity, and embittered by reproach and insult.\*

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\* Robespierre lay for some hours in one of the committee-rooms, writhing with the pain of his wound, and abandoned to despair; while many of his colleagues, perhaps those who had been the particular agents and applauders of his crimes, passed and repassed him, glorying and jesting at his sufferings. The reader may compare the death of Robespierre with that of Rienzi; but if the people of Rome revenged the tyranny of the Tribune, they were neither so mean nor so ferocious as the Parisians.

You will perceive by this summary that the overthrow of Robespierre was chiefly occasioned by the rivalry of his colleagues in the Committee, assisted by the fears of the Convention at large for themselves.—Another circumstance, at which I have already hinted, as having some share in this event, shall be the subject of my next letter.

Providence, Aug. 13, 1794.

*Amour, tu perdis Troye* [Love! thou occasionedst the destruction of Troy.]:—yet, among the various mischiefs ascribed to the influence of this capricious Sovereign, amidst the wrecks of sieges, and the slaughter of battles, perhaps we may not unjustly record in his praise, that he was instrumental to the solace of humanity, by contributing to the overthrow of Robespierre. It is at least pleasing to turn from the general horrors of the revolution, and suppose, for a moment, that the social affections were not yet entirely banished, and that gallantry still retained some empire, when every other vestige of civilization was almost annihilated.

After such an exordium, I feel a little ashamed of my hero, and could wish, for the credit of my tale, it were not more necessary to invoke the historic muse of Fielding, than that of Homer or Tasso; but imperious Truth obliges me to confess, that Tallien, who is to be the subject of this letter, was first introduced to celebrity by circumstances not favourable for the comment of my poetical text.

At the beginning of the revolution he was known only as an eminent orator en plain vent; that is, as a preacher of sedition to the mob, whom he used to harangue with great applause at the Palais Royal. Having no profession or means of subsistence, he, as Dr. Johnson observes of one of our poets, necessarily became an author. He was, however, no farther entitled to this appellation, than as a periodical scribbler in the cause of insurrection; but in this he was so successful, that it recommended him to the care of Petion and the municipality, to whom his talents and principles were so acceptable, that they made him Secretary to the Committee.

On the second and third of September 1792, he superintended the massacre of the prisons, and is alledged to have paid the assassins according to the number of victims they dispatched with great regularity; and he himself seems to have little to say in his defence, except that he acted officially. Yet even the imputation of such a claim could not be overlooked by the citizens of Paris; and at the election of the Convention he was distinguished by being chosen one of their representatives.

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It is needless to describe his political career in the Assembly otherwise than by adding, that when the revolutionary furor was at its acme, he was deemed by the Committee of Public Welfare worthy of an important mission in the South. The people of Bourdeaux were, accordingly, for some time harassed by the usual effects of these visitations—imprisonments and the Guillotine; and Tallien, though eclipsed by Maignet and Carrier, was by no means deficient in the patriotic energies of the day.

I think I must before have mentioned to you a Madame de Fontenay, the wife of an emigrant, whom I occasionally saw at Mad. de C\_\_\_\_'s. I then remarked her for the uncommon attraction of her features, and the elegance of her person; but was so much disgusted at a tendency to republicanism I observed in her, and which, in a young woman, I thought unbecoming, that I did not promote the acquaintance, and our different pursuits soon separated us entirely. Since this period I have learned, that her conduct became exceedingly imprudent, or at least suspicious, and that at the general persecution, finding her republicanism would not protect her, she fled to Bourdeaux, with the hope of being able to proceed to Spain. Here, however, being a Spaniard by birth, and the wife of an emigrant, she was arrested and thrown into prison, where she remained till the arrival of Tallien on his mission.

The miscellaneous occupations of a deputy-errant, naturally include an introduction to the female prisoners; and Tallien's presence afforded Mad. de Fontenay an occasion of pleading her cause with all the success which such a pleader might, in other times, be supposed to obtain from a judge of Tallien's age. The effect of the scenes Tallien had been an actor in, was counteracted by youth, and his heart was not yet indifferent to the charms of beauty—Mad. de Fontenay was released by the captivity of her liberator, and a reciprocal attachment ensued.

We must not, however, conclude, all this merely a business of romance. Mad. de Fontenay was rich, and had connexions in Spain, which might hereafter procure an asylum, when a regicide may with difficulty find one: and on the part of the lady, though Tallien's person is agreeable, a desire of protecting herself and her fortune might be allowed to have some influence.

From this time the revolutionist is said to have given way: Bourdeaux became the Capua of Tallien; and its inhabitants were, perhaps, indebted for a more moderate exercise of his power, to the smiles of Mad. de Fontenay.—From hanging loose on society, he had now the prospect of marrying a wife with a large fortune; and Tallien very wisely considered, that having something at stake, a sort of comparative reputation among the higher class of people at Bourdeaux, might be of more importance to him in future, than all the applause the Convention could bestow on a liberal use of the

Guillotine.—The relaxed system which was the consequence of such policy, soon reached the Committee of Public Welfare, to whom it was highly displeasing, and Tallien was recalled.

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A youth of the name of Julien, particularly in the confidence of Robespierre, was then sent to Bourdeaux, not officially as his successor, but as a spy, to collect information concerning him, as well as to watch the operations of other missionaries, and prevent their imitating Tallien's schemes of personal advantage, at the expence of scandalizing the republic by an appearance of lenity.—The disastrous state of Lyons, the persecutions of Carrier, the conflagrations of Maignet, and the crimes of various other Deputies, had obliterated the minor revolutionisms of Tallien:\* The citizens of Bourdeaux spoke of him without horror, which in these times was equal to eulogium; and Julien transmitted such accounts of his conduct to Robespierre,\*\* as were equally alarming to the jealousy of his spirit, and repugnant to the cruelty of his principles.

\* It was Tallien's boast to have guillotined only aristocrats, and of this part of his merit I am willing to leave him in possession. At Toulon he was charged with the punishment of those who had given up the town to the English; but finding, as he alledged, nearly all the inhabitants involved, he selected about two hundred of the richest, and that the horrid business might wear an appearance of regularity, the patriots, that is, the most notorious Jacobins, were ordered to give their opinion on the guilt of these victims, who were brought out into an open field for that purpose. With such judges the sentence was soon passed, and a fusillade took place on the spot.—It was on this occasion that Tallien made particular boast of his humanity; and in the same publication where he relates the circumstance, he exposes the "atrocious conduct" of the English at the surrender of Toulon. The cruelty of these barbarians not being sufficiently gratified by dispatching the patriots the shortest way, they hung up many of them by their chins on hooks at the shambles, and left them to die at their leisure.—See "Mitraillades, Fusillades," a recriminating pamphlet, addressed by Tallien to Collot d'Herbois.—The title alludes to Collot's exploits at Lyons.\*\* It is not out of the usual course of things that Tallien's moderation at Bourdeaux might have been profitable; and the wife or mistress of a Deputy was, on such occasions, a useful medium, through which the grateful offerings of a rich and favoured aristocrat might be conveyed, without committing the legislative reputation.—The following passage from Julien's correspondence with Robespierre seems to allude to some little arrangements of this nature: "I think it my duty to transmit you an extract from a letter of Tallien's, [Which had been intercepted.] to the National Club.—It coincides with the departure of La Fontenay, whom the Committee of General Safety have doubtless had arrested. I find some very curious political details regarding her; and Bourdeaux seems to have been, until this moment, a labyrinth

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of intrigue and peculation.”

It appears from Robespierre's papers, that not only Tallien, but Legendre, Bourdon de l'Oise, Thuriot, and others, were incessantly watched by the spies of the Committee. The profession must have improved wonderfully under the auspices of the republic, for I doubt if *Mons. le Noir's Mouchards* [The spies of the old police, so called in derision.—Brissot, in this act of accusation, is described as having been an agent of the Police under the monarchy.—I cannot decide on the certainty of this, or whether his occupation was immediately that of a spy, but I have respectable authority for saying, that antecedent to the revolution, his character was very slightly estimated, and himself considered as “hanging loose on society.”] were as able as Robespierre's.—The reader may judge from the following specimens:

“The 6th instant, the deputy Thuriot, on quitting the Convention, went to No. 35, Rue Jaques, section of the Pantheon, to the house of a pocket-book maker, where he staid talking with a female about ten minutes. He then went to No. 1220, Rue Fosse St. Bernard, section of the Sans-Culottes, and dined there at a quarter past two. At a quarter past seven he left the last place, and meeting a citizen on the Quay de l'Ecole, section of the Museum, near le Cafe Manoury, they went in there together, and drank a bottle of beer. From thence he proceeded to la Maison Memblee de la Providence, No. 16, Rue d'Orleans Honore, section de la Halle au Bled, whence, after staying about five-and-twenty minutes, he came out with a citoyenne, who had on a puce Levite, a great bordered shawl of Japan cotton, and on her head a white handkerchief, made to look like a cap. They went together to No. 163, Place Egalite, where after stopping an instant, they took a turn in the galleries, and then returned to sup.—They went in at half past nine, and were still there at eleven o'clock, when we came away, not being certain if they would come out again.

“Bourdon de l'Oise, on entering the Assembly, shook hands with four or five Deputies. He was observed to gape while good news was announcing.”

Tallien was already popular among the Jacobins of Paris; and his connexion with a beautiful woman, who might enable him to keep a domestic establishment, and to display any wealth he had acquired, without endangering his reputation, was a circumstance not to be overlooked; for Robespierre well knew the efficacy of female intrigue, and dinners,\* in gaining partizans among the subordinate members of the Convention.

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\* Whoever reads attentively, and in detail, the debates of the Convention, will observe the influence and envy created by a superior style of living in any particular member. His dress, his lodging, or dinners, are a perpetual subject of malignant reproach. —This is not to be wondered at, when we consider the description of men the Convention is composed of;—men who, never having been accustomed to the elegancies of life, behold with a grudging eye the gay apparel or luxurious table of a colleague, who arrived at Paris with no other treasure but his patriotism, and has no ostensible means beyond his eighteen livres a day, now increased to thirty-six.

Mad. de Fontenay, was, therefore, on her arrival at Paris, whither she had followed Tallien, (probably in order to procure a divorce and marry him,) arrested, and conveyed to prison.

An injury of this kind was not to be forgiven; and Robespierre seems to have acted on the presumption that it could not. He beset Tallien with spies, menaced him in the Convention, and made Mad. de Fontenay an offer of liberty, if she would produce a substantial charge against him, which he imagined her knowledge of his conduct at Bourdeaux might furnish her grounds for doing. A refusal must doubtless have irritated the tyrant; and Tallien had every reason to fear she would soon be included in one of the lists of victims who were daily sacrificed as conspirators in the prisons. He was himself in continual expectation of being arrested; and it was generally believed Robespierre would soon openly accuse him.—Thus situated, he eagerly embraced the opportunity which the schism in the Committee presented of attacking his adversary, and we certainly must allow him the merit of being the first who dared to move for the arrest of Robespierre.—I need not add, that *la belle* was one of the first whose prison doors were opened; and I understand that, being divorced from *Mons. de Fontenay*, she is either married, or on the point of being so, to Tallien.

This conclusion spoils my story as a moral one; and had I been the disposer of events, the Septembriser, the regicide, and the cold assassin of the Toulonais, should have found other rewards than affluence, and a wife who might represent one of Mahomet's Houris. Yet, surely, "the time will come, though it come ne'er so slowly," when Heaven shall separate guilt from prosperity, and when Tallien and his accomplices shall be remembered only as monuments of eternal justice. For the lady, her faults are amply punished in the disgrace of such an alliance—

"A cut-purse of the empire and the rule;  
"\_\_\_\_ a King of shreds and patches."

Providence, Aug. 14, 1794.

The thirty members whom Robespierre intended to sacrifice, might perhaps have formed some design of resisting, but it appears evident that the Convention in general acted without plan, union, or confidence.\*—



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\* The base and selfish timidity of the Convention is strongly evinced by their suffering fifty innocent people to be guillotined on the very ninth of Thermidor, for a pretended conspiracy in the prison of St. Lazare.—A single word from any member might at this crisis have suspended the execution of the sentence, but that word no one had the courage or the humanity to utter.

—Tallien and Billaud were rendered desperate by their situation, and it is likely that, when they ventured to attack Robespierre, they did not themselves expect to be successful—it was the consternation of the latter which encouraged them to persist, and the Assembly to support them:

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
“Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”

And to have been lucky enough to seize on this crisis, is, doubtless, the whole merit of the convention. There has, it is true, been many allusions to the dagger of Brutus, and several Deputies are said to have conceived very heroic projects for the destruction of the tyrant; but as he was dead before these projects were brought to light, we cannot justly ascribe any effect to them.

The remains of the Brissotin faction, still at liberty, from whom some exertions might have been expected, were cautiously inactive; and those who had been most in the habit of appreciating themselves for their valour, were now conspicuous only for that discretion which Falstaff calls the better part of it.—Dubois Crance, who had been at the expence of buying a Spanish poniard at St. Malo, for the purpose of assassinating Robespierre, seems to have been calmed by the journey, and to have finally recovered his temper, before he reached the Convention.—Merlin de Thionville, Merlin de Douay, and others of equal note, were among the “passive valiant;” and Bourdon de l’Oise had already experienced such disastrous effects from inconsiderate exhibitions of courage, that he now restrained his ardour till the victory should be determined. Even Legendre, who is occasionally the Brutus, the Curtius, and all the patriots whose names he has been able to learn, confined his prowess to an assault on the club-room of the Jacobins, when it was empty, and carrying off the key, which no one disputed with him, so that he can at most claim an ovation. It is, in short, remarkable, that all the members who at present affect to be most vehement against Robespierre’s principles, [And where was the all-politic Sieyes?—At home, writing his own eulogium.] were the least active in attacking his person; and it is indisputable, that to Tallien, Billaud, Louchet, Elie Lacoste, Collot d’Herbois, and a few of the more violent Jacobins, were due those first efforts which determined his fall.—Had Robespierre, instead of a querelous harangue, addressed the convention in his usual tone of authority, and ended by moving for a decree against a few only of those obnoxious to him, the rest might have been glad to compound for their own safety, by abandoning a cause no longer personal: but his impolicy, not his wickedness, hastened his fate; and it is so far fortunate for France, that it has at least suspended the system of government which is ascribed to him.

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The first days of victory were passed in receiving congratulations, and taking precautions; and though men do not often adapt their claims to their merits, yet the members of the Convention seemed in general to be conscious that none amongst them had very decided pretensions to the spoils of the vanquished.—Of twelve, which originally composed the Committee of Public Welfare, seven only remained; yet no one ventured to suggest a completion of the number, till Barrere, after previously insinuating how adequate he and his colleagues were to the task of “saving the country,” proposed, in his flippant way, and merely as a matter of form, that certain persons whom he recommended, should fill up the vacancies in the government.

This modest Carmagnole\* was received with great coolness; the late implicit acquiescence was changed to demur, and an adjournment unanimously called for.

\* A ludicrous appellation, which Barrere used to give to his reports in the presence of those who were in the secret of his Charlatanry. The air of “La Carmagnole” was originally composed when the town of that name was taken by Prince Eugene, and was adapted to the indecent words now sung by the French after the 10th of August 1792.

—Such unusual temerity surprised and alarmed the remains of the Committee, and Billaud Varennes sternly reminded the Convention of the abject state they were so lately released from. This produced retort and replication, and the partners of Robespierre’s enormities, who had hoped to be the tranquil inheritors of his power, found, that in destroying a rival, they had raised themselves masters.

The Assembly persisted in not adopting the members offered to be imposed upon them; but, as it was easier to reject than to choose, the Committee were ordered to present a new plan for this part of the executive branch, and the election of those to be entrusted with it was postponed for farther consideration.

Having now felt their strength, they next proceeded to renew a part of the committee of General Safety, several of its members being inculpated as partizans of Robespierre, and though this Committee had become entirely subordinate to that of Public Welfare, yet its functions were too important for it to be neglected, more especially as they comprised a very favourite branch of the republican government, that of issuing writs of arrest at pleasure.—The law of the twenty-second of Prairial is also repealed, but the Revolutionary Tribunal is preserved, and the necessity of suspending the old jury, as being the creatures of Robespierre, has not prevented the tender solicitude of the Convention for a renovated activity in the establishment itself.

This assumption of power has become every day more confirmed, and the addresses which are received by the Assembly, though yet in a strain of gross adulation,\* express such an abhorrence of the late system, as must suffice to convince them the people are not disposed to see such a system continued.

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\* A collection of addresses, presented to the Convention at various periods, might form a curious history of the progress of despotism. These effusions of zeal were not, however, all in the “sublime” style: the legislative dignity sometimes condescended to unbend itself, and listen to metrical compositions, enlivened by the accompaniment of fiddles; but the manly and ferocious Danton, to whom such sprightly interruptions were not congenial, proposed a decree, that the citizens should, in future, express their adorations in plain prose, and without any musical accessories.

Billaud Varennes, Collot, and other members of the old Committee, view these innovations with sullen acquiescence; but Barrere, whose frivolous and facile spirit is incapable of consistency, even in wickedness, perseveres and flourishes at the tribune as gaily as ever.—Unabashed by detection, insensible to contempt, he details his epigrams and antitheses against Catilines and Cromwells with as much self-sufficiency as when, in the same tinsel eloquence, he promulgated the murderous edicts of Robespierre.

Many of the prisoners at Paris continue daily to obtain their release, and, by the exertions of his personal enemies, particularly of our quondam sovereign, Andre Dumont, (now a member of the Committee of General Safety,) an examination into the atrocities committed by Le Bon is decreed.—But, amidst these appearances of justice, a versatility of principle, or rather an evident tendency to the decried system, is perceptible. Upon the slightest allusion to the revolutionary government, the whole Convention rise in a mass to vociferate their adherence to it:\* the tribunal, which was its offspring and support, is anxiously reinstalled; and the low insolence with which Barrere announces their victories in the Netherlands, is, as usual, loudly applauded.

\* The most moderate, as well as the most violent, were always united on the subject of this irrational tyranny.—“*Toujours en menageant, comme la prunelle de ses yeux, le gouvernement revolutionnaire.*”—“Careful always of the revolutionary government, as of the apple of their eye.” *Fragment pour servir a l’Hist. de la Convention, par J. J. Dussault.*

The brothers of Cecile Renaud, who were sent for by Robespierre from the army to Paris, in order to follow her to the scaffold, did not arrive until their persecutor was no more, and a change of government was avowed. They have presented themselves at the bar of the Convention, to entreat a revisal of their father’s sentence, and some compensation for his property, so unjustly confiscated.—You will, perhaps, imagine, that, at the name of these unfortunate young men, every heart anticipated a consent to their claims, even before the mind could examine the justice of them, and that one of those bursts of sensibility for which this legislature is so remarkable instantaneously accorded the petition. Alas! this was not an

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occasion to excite the enthusiasm of the Convention: Coupilleau de Fontenay, one of the “mild and moderate party”, repulsed the petitioners with harshness, and their claim was silenced by a call for the order of the day. The poor Renauds were afterwards coldly referred to the Committee of Relief, for a pittance, by way of charity, instead of the property they have a right to, and which they have been deprived of, by the base compliance of the Convention with the caprice of a monster.

Such relapses and aberrations are not consolatory, but the times and circumstances seem to oppose them—the whole fabric of despotism is shaken, and we have reason to hope the efforts of tyranny will be counteracted by its weakness.

We do not yet derive any advantage from the early maturity of the harvest, and it is still with difficulty we obtain a limited portion of bad bread. Severe decrees are enacted to defeat the avarice of the farmers, and prevent monopolies of the new corn; but these people are invulnerable: they have already been at issue with the system of terror—and it was found necessary, even before the death of Robespierre, to release them from prison, or risk the destruction of the harvest for want of hands to get it in. It is now discovered, that natural causes, and the selfishness of individuals, are adequate to the creation of a temporary scarcity; yet when this happened under the King, it was always ascribed to the machinations of government.—How have the people been deceived, irritated, and driven to rebellion, by a degree of want, less, much less, insupportable than that they are obliged to suffer at present, without daring even to complain!

I have now been in confinement almost twelve months, and my health is considerably impaired. The weather is oppressively warm, and we have no shade in the garden but under a mulberry-tree, which is so surrounded by filth, that it is not approachable. I am, however, told, that in a few days, on account of my indisposition, I shall be permitted to go home, though with a proviso of being guarded at my own expence.—My friends are still at Arras; and if this indulgence be extended to Mad. de la F\_\_\_\_, she will accompany me. Personal accommodation, and an opportunity of restoring my health, render this desirable; but I associate no idea of freedom with my residence in this country. The boundary may be extended, but it is still a prison.—Yours.

Providence, Aug. 15, 1794.

To-morrow I expect to quit this place, and have been wandering over it for the last time. You will imagine I can have no attachment to it: yet a retrospect of my sensations when I first arrived, of all I have experienced, and still more of what I have apprehended since that period, makes me look forward to my departure with a satisfaction that I might almost call melancholy. This cell, where I have shivered through the winter—the long passages, which I have so often traversed in bitter rumination—the

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garden, where I have painfully breathed a purer air, at the risk of sinking beneath the fervid rays of an unmitigated sun, are not scenes to excite regret; but when I think that I am still subject to the tyranny which has so long condemned me to them, this reflection, with a sentiment perhaps of national pride, which is wounded by accepting as a favour what I have been unjustly deprived of, renders me composed, if not indifferent, at the prospect of my release.

This dreary epoch of my life has not been without its alleviations. I have found a cheerful companion in Mad. de M\_\_\_\_, who, at sixty, was brought here, because she happened to be the daughter of Count L\_\_\_\_, who has been dead these thirty years!—The graces and silver accents of Madame de B\_\_\_\_, might have assisted in beguiling severer captivity; and the Countess de C\_\_\_\_, and her charming daughters (the eldest of whom is not to be described in the common place of panegyric), who, though they have borne their own afflictions with dignity, have been sensible to the misfortunes of others, and whom I must, in justice, except from all the imputations of meanness or levity, which I have sometimes had occasion to notice in those who, like themselves, were objects of republican persecution, have essentially contributed to diminish the horrors of confinement.—I reckon it likewise among my satisfactions, that, with the exception of the Marechalle de Biron,\* and General O’Moran, none of our fellow-prisoners have suffered on the scaffold.—

\* The Marechalle de Biron, a very old and infirm woman, was taken from hence to the Luxembourg at Paris, where her daughter-in-law, the Duchess, was also confined. A cart arriving at that prison to convey a number of victims to the tribunal, the list, in the coarse dialect of republicanism, contained the name of la femme Biron. “But there are two of them,” said the keeper. “Then bring them both.”—The aged Marechalle, who was at supper, finished her meal while the rest were preparing, then took up her book of devotion, and departed cheerfully.—The next day both mother and daughter were guillotined.

—Dumont has, indeed, virtually occasioned the death of several; in particular the Duc du Chatelet, the Comte de Bethune, *Mons. de Manchville*, &c.—and it is no merit in him that Mr. Luttrell, with a poor nun of the name of Pitt,\* whom he took from hence to Paris, as a capture which might give him importance, were not massacred either by the mob or the tribunal.

\* This poor woman, whose intellects, as I am informed, appeared in a state of derangement, was taken from a convent at Abbeville, and brought to the Providence, as a relation of Mr. Pitt, though I believe she has no pretensions to that honour. But the name of Pitt gave her importance; she was sent to Paris under a military escort, and

Dumont announced the arrival of this miserable victim with all the airs of a conqueror. I have

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been since told, she was lodged at St. Pelagie, where she suffered innumerable hardships, and did not recover her liberty for many months after the fall of Robespierre.

—If the persecution of this department has not been sanguinary,\* it should be remembered, that it has been covered with prisons; and that the extreme submission of its inhabitants would scarcely have furnished the most merciless tyrant with a pretext for a severer regimen.—

\* There were some priests guillotined at Amiens, but the circumstance was concealed from me for some months after it happened.

—Dumont, I know, expects to establish a reputation by not having guillotined as an amusement, and hopes that he may here find a retreat when his revolutionary labours shall be finished.

The Convention have not yet chosen the members who are to form the new Committee. They were yesterday solemnly employed in receiving the American Ambassador; likewise a brass medal of the tyrant Louis the Fourteenth, and some marvellous information about the unfortunate Princess' having dressed herself in mourning at the death of Robespierre. These legislators remind me of one of Swift's female attendants, who, in spite of the literary taste he endeavoured to inspire her with, never could be divested of her original housewifely propensities, but would quit the most curious anecdote, as he expresses it, "to go seek an old rag in a closet." Their projects for the revival of their navy seldom go farther than a transposal in the stripes of the flag, and their vengeance against regal anthropophagi, and proud islanders, is infallibly diverted by a denunciation of an aristocratic quartrain, or some new mode, whose general adoption renders it suspected as the badge of a party.—If, according to Cardinal de Retz' opinion, elaborate attention to trifles denote a little mind, these are true Lilliputian sages.—Yours, &c.

August, 1794.

I did not leave the Providence until some days after the date of my last: there were so many precautions to be taken, and so many formalities to be observed—such references from the municipality to the district, and from the district to the Revolutionary Committee, that it is evident Robespierre's death has not banished the usual apprehension of danger from the minds of those who became responsible for acts of justice or humanity. At length, after procuring a house-keeper to answer with his life and property for our re-appearance, and for our attempting nothing against the "unity and indivisibility" of the republic, we bade (I hope) a long adieu to our prison.



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Madame de \_\_\_\_ is to remain with me till her house can be repaired; for it has been in requisition so often, that there is now, we are told, scarcely a bed left, or a room habitable. We have an old man placed with us by way of a guard, but he is civil, and is not intended to be a restraint upon us. In fact, he has a son, a member of the Jacobin club, and this opportunity is taken to compliment him, by taxing us with the maintenance of his father. It does not prevent us from seeing our acquaintance, and we might, I suppose, go out, though we have not yet ventured.

The politics of the Convention are fluctuating and versatile, as will ever be the case where men are impelled by necessity to act in opposition to their principles. In their eagerness to attribute all the past excesses to Robespierre, they have, unawares, involved themselves in the obligation of not continuing the same system. They doubtless expected, by the fall of the tyrant, to become his successors; but the people, weary of being dupes, and of hearing that tyrants were fallen, without feeling any diminution of tyranny, have every where manifested a temper, which the Convention, in the present relaxed state of its power, is fearful of making experiments upon. Hence, great numbers of prisoners are liberated, those that remain are treated more indulgently, and the fury of revolutionary despotism is in general abated.

The Deputies who most readily assent to these changes have assumed the appellation of Moderates; (Heaven knows how much they are indebted to comparison;) and the popularity they have acquired has both offended and alarmed the more inflexible Jacobins. A motion has just been made by one Louchet, that a list of all persons lately enlarged should be printed, with the names of those Deputies who solicited in their favour, annexed; and that such aristocrats as were thus discovered to have regained their liberty, should be re-imprisoned.—The decree passed, but was so ill received by the people, that it was judged prudent to repeal it the next day.

This circumstance seems to be the signal of dissention between the Assembly and the Club: the former, apprehensive of revolting the public opinion on the one hand, and desirous of conciliating the Jacobins on the other, waver between indulgence and severity; but it is easy to discover, that their variance with the Jacobins is more a matter of expediency than principle, and that, were it not for other considerations, they would not suffer the imprisonment of a few thousand harmless people to interrupt the amity which has so long subsisted between themselves and their ancient allies.—It is written, “from their works you shall know them;” and reasoning from this tenet, which is our best authority, (for who can boast a science in the human heart?) I am justified in my opinion, and I know it to be that of many persons more competent to decide than myself. If I could have had doubts on the subject, the occurrences of the last few days would have amply satisfied them.



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However rejoiced the nation at large might be at the overthrow of Robespierre, no one was deceived as to the motives which actuated his colleagues in the Committee. Every day produced new indications not only of their general concurrence in the enormities of the government, but of their own personal guilt. The Convention, though it could not be insensible of this, was willing, with a complaisant prudence, to avoid the scandal of a public discussion, which must irritate the Jacobins, and expose its own weakness by a retrospect of the crimes it had applauded and supported. Laurent Lecointre,\* alone, and apparently unconnected with party, has had the courage to exhibit an accusation against Billaud, Collot, Barrere, and those of Robespierre's accomplices who were members of the Committee of General Safety. He gave notice of his design on the eleventh of Fructidor (28th of August).

\* Lecointre is a linen-draper at Versailles, an original revolutionist, and I believe of more decent character than most included in that description. If we could be persuaded that there were any real fanatics in the Convention, I should give Lecointre the credit of being among the number. He seems, at least, to have some material circumstances in his favour—such as possessing the means of living; of not having, in appearance, enriched himself by the revolution; and, of being the only member who, after a score of decrees to that purpose, has ventured to produce an account of his fortune to the public.

—It was received everywhere but in the Convention with applause; and the public was flattered with the hope that justice would attain another faction of its oppressors. On the succeeding day, Lecointre appeared at the tribune to read his charges. They conveyed, even to the most prejudiced mind, an entire conviction, that the members he accused were sole authors of a part, and accomplices in all the crimes which had desolated their country. Each charge was supported by material proof, which he deposited for the information of his colleagues. But this was unnecessary—his colleagues had no desire to be convinced; and, after overpowering him with ridicule and insult, they declared, without entering into any discussion, that they rejected the charges with indignation, and that the members implicated had uniformly acted according to their [own] wishes, and those of the nation.

As soon as this result was known in Paris, the people became enraged and disgusted, the public walks resounded with murmurs, the fermentation grew general, and some menaces were uttered of forcing the Convention to give Lecointre a more respectful hearing.—Intimidated by such unequivocal proofs of disapprobation, when the Assembly met on the thirteenth, it was decreed, after much opposition from Tallien, that Lecointre should be allowed to reproduce his charges, and that they should be solemnly examined.

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After all this, Lecointre, whose figure is almost ludicrous, and who is no orator, was to repeat a voluminous denunciation, amidst the clamour, abuse, chicane, and derision of the whole Convention. But there are occasions when the keenest ridicule is pointless; when the mind, armed by truth and elevated by humanity, rejects its insidious efforts—and, absorbed by more laudable feelings, despises even the smile of contempt. The justice of Lecointre's cause supplied his want of external advantages: and his arguments were so clear and so unanswerable, that the plain diction in which they were conveyed was more impressive than the most finished eloquence; and neither the malice nor sarcasms of his enemies had any effect but on those who were interested in silencing or confounding him. Yet, in proportion as the force of Lecointre's denunciation became evident, the Assembly appeared anxious to suppress it; and, after some hours' scandalous debate, during which it was frequently asserted that these charges could not be encouraged without criminating the entire legislative body, they decreed the whole to be false and defamatory.

The accused members defended themselves with the assurance of delinquents tried by their avowed accomplices, and who are previously certain of favour and acquittal; while Lecointre's conduct in the business seems to have been that of a man determined to persevere in an act of duty, which he has little reason to hope will be successful.\*

\* It is said, that, at the conclusion of this disgraceful business, the members of the convention crowded about the delinquents with their habitual servility, and appeared gratified that their services on the occasion had given them a claim to notice and familiarity.

Though the galleries of the Convention were more than usually furnished on the day with applauders, yet this decision has been universally ill received. The time is passed when the voice of reason could be silenced by decrees. The stupendous tyranny of the government, though not meliorated in principle, is relaxed in practice; and this vote, far from operating in favour of the culprits, has only served to excite the public indignation, and to render them more odious. Those who cannot judge of the logical precision of Lecointre's arguments, or the justness of his inferences, can feel that his charges are merited. Every heart, every tongue, acknowledges the guilt of those he has attacked. They are certain France has been the prey of numberless atrocities—they are certain, that these were perpetrated by order of the committee; that eleven members composed it; and that Robespierre and his associates being but three, did not constitute a majority.

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These facts are now commented on with as much freedom as can be expected among a people whose imaginations are yet haunted by revolutionary tribunals and Bastilles, and the conclusions are not favourable to the Convention. The national discontent is, however, suspended by the hostilities between the legislature and the Jacobin club: the latter still persists in demanding the revolutionary system in its primitive severity, while the former are restrained from compliance, not only by the odium it must draw on them, but from a certainty that it cannot be supported but through the agency of the popular societies, who would thus again become their dictators. I believe it is not unlikely that the people and the Convention are both endeavouring to make instruments of each other to destroy the common enemy; for the little popularity the Convention enjoy is doubtless owing to a superior hatred of the Jacobins: and the moderation which the former affect towards the people, is equally influenced by a view of forming a powerful balance against these obnoxious societies.—While a sort of necessity for this temporizing continues, we shall go on very tranquilly, and it is become a mode to say the Convention is “adorable.”

Tallien, who has been wrestling with his ill fame for a transient popularity, has thought it advisable to revive the public attention by the farce of Pisistratus—at least, an attempt to assassinate him, in which there seems to have been more eclat than danger, has given rise to such an opinion. Bulletins of his health are delivered every day in form to the Convention, and some of the provincial clubs have sent congratulations on his escape. But the sneers of the incredulous, and perhaps an internal admonition of the ridicule and disgrace attendant on the worship of an idol whose reputation is so unpropitious, have much repressed the customary ardour, and will, I think, prevent these “hair-breadth ‘scapes” from continuing fashionable.—Yours, &c.

[No Date Given]

When I describe the French as a people bending meekly beneath the most absurd and cruel oppression, transmitted from one set of tyrants to another, without personal security, without commerce—menaced by famine, and desolated by a government whose ordinary resources are pillage and murder; you may perhaps read with some surprize the progress and successes of their armies. But, divest yourself of the notions you may have imbibed from interested misrepresentations—forget the revolutionary common-place of “enthusiams”, “soldiers of freedom,” and “defenders of their country”—examine the French armies as acting under the motives which usually influence such bodies, and I am inclined to believe you will see nothing very wonderful or supernatural in their victories.

The greater part of the French troops are now composed of young men taken indiscriminately from all classes, and forced into the service by the first requisition. They arrive at the army ill-disposed, or at best indifferent, for it must not be forgotten, that all who could be prevailed on to go voluntarily had departed before recourse was had to the measure of a general levy. They are then distributed into different corps, so

that no local connections remain: the natives of the North are mingled with those of the South, and all provincial combinations are interdicted.

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It is well known that the military branch of espionage is as extended as the civil, and the certainty of this destroys confidence, and leaves even the unwilling soldier no resource but to go through his professional duty with as much zeal as though it were his choice. On the one hand, the discipline is severe—on the other, licentiousness is permitted beyond all example; and, half-terrified, half-seduced, principles the most inimical, and morals the least corrupt, become habituated to fear nothing but the government, and to relish a life of military indulgence.—The armies were some time since ill clothed, and often ill fed; but the requisitions, which are the scourge of the country, supply them, for the moment, with profusion: the manufacturers, the shops, and the private individual, are robbed to keep them in good humour—the best wines, the best clothes, the prime of every thing, is destined to their use; and men, who before laboured hard to procure a scanty subsistence, now revel in luxury and comparative idleness.

The rapid promotion acquired in the French army is likewise another cause of its adherence to the government. Every one is eager to be advanced; for, by means of requisitions, pillage and perquisites, the most trifling command is very lucrative.—Vast sums of money are expended in supplying the camps with newspapers written nearly for that purpose, and no others are permitted to be publicly circulated.—When troops are quartered in a town, instead of that cold reception which it is usual to accord such inmates, the system of terror acts as an excellent Marechal de Logis, and procures them, if not a cordial, at least a substantial one; and it is indubitable, that they are no where so well entertained as at the houses of professed aristocrats. The officers and men live in a familiarity highly gratifying to the latter; and, indeed, neither are distinguishable by their language, manners, or appearance. There is, properly speaking, no subordination except in the field, and a soldier has only to avoid politics, and cry “Vive la Convention!” to secure plenary indulgence on all other occasions.—Many who entered the army with regret, continue there willingly for the sake of a maintenance; besides that a decree exists, which subjects the parents of those who return, to heavy punishments. In a word, whatever can operate on the fears, or interests, or passions, is employed to preserve the allegiance of the armies to the government, and attach them to their profession.

I am far from intending to detract from the national bravery—the annals of the French Monarchy abound with the most splendid instances of it—I only wish you to understand, what I am fully convinced of myself, that liberty and republicanism have no share in the present successes. The battle of Gemappe was gained when the Brissotin faction had enthroned itself on the ruins of a constitution, which the armies were said to adore with enthusiasm: by what sudden

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inspiration were their affections transferred to another form of government? or will any one pretend that they really understood the democratic Machiavelism which they were to propagate in Brabant? At the battle of Maubeuge, France was in the first paroxysm of revolutionary terror—at that of Fleurus, she had become a scene of carnage and proscription, at once the most wretched and the most detestable of nations, the sport and the prey of despots so contemptible, that neither the excess of their crimes, nor the sufferings they inflicted, could efface the ridicule which was incurred by a submission to them. Were the French then fighting for liberty, or did they only move on professionally, with the enemy in front, the Guillotine in the rear, and the intermediate space filled up with the licentiousness of a camp?—If the name alone of liberty suffices to animate the French troops to conquest, and they could imagine it was enjoyed under Brissot or Robespierre, this is at least a proof that they are rather amateurs than connoisseurs; and I see no reason why the same impulse might not be given to an army of Janizaries, or the the legions of Tippoo Saib.

After all, it may be permitted to doubt, whether the sort of enthusiasm so liberally ascribed to the French, would really contribute more to their successes, than the thoughtless courage I am willing to allow them.—It is, I believe, the opinion of military men, that the best soldiers are those who are most disposed to act mechanically; and we are certain that the most brilliant victories have been obtained where this ardour, said to be produced by the new doctrines, could have had no influence.—The heroes of Pavia, of Narva, or those who administered to the vain-glory of Louis the Fourteenth, by ravaging the Palatinate, we may suppose little acquainted with it. The fate of battles frequently depends on causes which the General, the Statesman, or the Philosopher, are equally unable to decide upon; and the laurel, “meed of mighty conquerors,” seems oftener to fall at the caprice of the wind, than to be gathered. It is sometimes the lot of the ablest tactician, at others of the most voluminous muster-roll; but, I believe, there are few examples where these political elevations have had an effect, when unaccompanied by advantages of situation, superior skill, or superior numbers.—“*La plupart des gens de guerre (says Fontenelle) sont leur metier avec beaucoup de courage. Il en est peu qui y pensent; leurs bras agissent aussi vigoureusement que l’on veut, leurs tetes se reposent, et ne prennent presque part a rieu*”<sup>\*</sup>—

<sup>\*</sup> “Military men in general do their duty with much courage, but few make it a subject of reflection. With all the bodily activity that can be expected of them, their minds remain at rest, and partake but little of the business they are engaged in.”

—If this can be applied with truth to any armies, it must be to those of France. We have seen them successively and implicitly adopting all the new constitutions and strange gods which faction and extravagance could devise—we have seen them alternately the dupes and slaves of all parties: at one period abandoning their King and their religion: at another adulating Robespierre, and deifying Marat.—These, I confess are

dispositions to make good soldiers, but convey to me no idea of enthusiasts or republicans.

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The bulletin of the Convention is periodically furnished with splendid feats of heroism performed by individuals of their armies, and I have no doubt but some of them are true. There are, however, many which have been very peaceably culled from old memoirs, and that so unskillfully, that the hero of the present year loses a leg or an arm in the same exploit, and uttering the self-same sentences, as one who lived two centuries ago. There is likewise a sort of jobbing in the edifying scenes which occasionally occur in the Convention—if a soldier happen to be wounded who has relationship, acquaintance, or connexion, with a Deputy, a tale of extraordinary valour and extraordinary devotion to the cause is invented or adopted; the invalid is presented in form at the bar of the Assembly, receives the fraternal embrace and the promise of a pension, and the feats of the hero, along with the munificence of the Convention, are ordered to circulate in the next bulletin. Yet many of the deeds recorded very deservedly in these annals of glory, have been performed by men who abhor republican principles, and lament the disasters their partizans have occasioned. I have known even notorious aristocrats introduced to the Convention as martyrs to liberty, and who have, in fact, behaved as gallantly as though they had been so.—These are paradoxes which a military man may easily reconcile.

Independently of the various secondary causes that contribute to the success of the French armies, there is one which those persons who wish to exalt every thing they denominate republican seem to exclude—I mean, the immense advantage they possess in point of numbers. There has scarcely been an engagement of importance, in which the French have not profited by this in a very extraordinary degree.\*

\* This has been confessed to me by many republicans themselves; and a disproportion of two or three to one must add considerably to republican enthusiasm.

—Whenever a point is to be gained, the sacrifice of men is not a matter of hesitation. One body is dispatched after another; and fresh troops thus succeeding to oppose those of the enemy already harassed, we must not wonder that the event has so often proved favourable to them.

A republican, who passes for highly informed, once defended this mode of warfare by observing, that in the course of several campaigns more troops perished by sickness than the sword. If then an object could be attained by such means, so much time was saved, and the loss eventually the same: but the Generals of other countries dare not risk such philosophical calculations, and would be accountable to the laws of humanity for their destructive conquests.



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When you estimate the numbers that compose the French armies, you are not to consider them as an undisciplined multitude, whose sole force is in their numbers. From the beginning of the revolution, many of them have been exercised in the National Guard; and though they might not make a figure on the parade at Potsdam, their inferiority is not so great as to render the German exactitude a counterbalance for the substantial inequality of numbers. Yet, powerfully as these considerations favour the military triumphs of France, there is a period when we may expect both cause and effect will terminate. That period may still be far removed, but whenever the assignats\* become totally discredited, and it shall be found requisite to economize in the war department, adieu la gloire, a bas les armes, and perhaps bon soir la republique; for I do not reckon it possible, that armies so constituted can ever be persuaded to subject themselves to the restraints and privations which must be indispensable, as soon as the government ceases to have the disposal of an unlimited fund.

\* The mandats were, in fact, but a continuation of the assignats, under another name. The last decree for the emission of assignats, limited the quantity circulated to forty milliards, which taken at par, is only about sixteen hundred millions of pounds sterling!

What I have hitherto written you will understand as applicable only to the troops employed on the frontiers. There are some of another description, more cherished and not less serviceable, who act as a sort of police militant and errant, and defend the republic against her internal enemies—the republicans. Almost every town of importance is occasionally infested by these servile instruments of despotism, who are maintained in insolent profusion, to overawe those whom misery and famine might tempt to revolt. When a government, after imprisoning some hundred thousands of the most distinguished in every class of life, and disarming all the rest, is yet obliged to employ such a force for its protection, we may justifiably conclude, it does not presume on the attachment of the people. It is not impossible that the agents of different descriptions, destined to the service of conciliating the interior to republicanism, might alone form an army equal to that of the Allies; but this is a task, where the numbers employed only serve to render it more difficult. They, however, procure submission, if they do not create affection; and the Convention is not delicate.

Amiens, Sept. 30, 1794.

The domestic politics of France are replete with novelties: the Convention is at war with the Jacobins—and the people, even to the most decided aristocrats, have become partizans of the Convention.—My last letters have explained the origin of these phaenomena, and I will now add a few words on their progress.

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You have seen that, at the fall of Robespierre, the revolutionary government had reached the very summit of despotism, and that the Convention found themselves under the necessity of appearing to be directed by a new impulse, or of acknowledging their participation in the crimes they affected to deplore.—In consequence, almost without the direct repeal of any law, (except some which affected their own security,) a more moderate system has been gradually adopted, or, to speak more correctly, the revolutionary one is suffered to relax. The Jacobins behold these popular measures with extreme jealousy, as a means which may in time render the legislature independent of them; and it is certainly not the least of their discontents, that, after all their labours in the common cause, they find themselves excluded both from power and emoluments. Accustomed to carry every thing by violence, and more ferocious than politic, they have, by insisting on the reincarceration of suspected people, attached a numerous party to the Convention, which is thus warned that its own safety depends on repressing the influence of clubs, which not only loudly demand that the prisons may be again filled, but frequently debate on the project of transporting all the “enemies of the republic” together.

The liberty of the press, also, is a theme of discord not less important than the emancipation of aristocrats. The Jacobins are decidedly adverse to it; and it is a sort of revolutionary solecism, that those who boast of having been the original destroyers of despotism, are now the advocates of arbitrary imprisonment, and restraints on the freedom of the press. The Convention itself is divided on the latter subject; and, after a revolution of five years, founded on the doctrine of the rights of man, it has become matter of dispute—whether so principal an article of them ought really to exist or not. They seem, indeed, willing to allow it, provided restrictions can be devised which may prevent calumny from reaching their own persons; but as that cannot easily be achieved, they not only contend against the liberty of the press in practice, but have hitherto refused to sanction it by decree, even as a principle.

It is perhaps reluctantly that the Convention opposes these powerful and extended combinations which have so long been its support, and it may dread the consequences of being left without the means of overawing or influencing the people; but the example of the Brissotins, who, by attempting to profit by the services of the Jacobins, without submitting to their domination, fell a sacrifice, has warned their survivors of the danger of employing such instruments. It is evident that the clubs will not act subordinately, and that they must either be subdued to insignificance, or regain their authority entirely; and as neither the people nor Convention are disposed to acquiesce in the latter, they are politicly joining their efforts to accelerate the former.

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Yet, notwithstanding these reciprocal cajoleries, the return of justice is slow and mutable; an instinctive or habitual preference of evil appears at times to direct the Convention, even in opposition to their own interests. They have as yet done little towards repairing the calamities of which they are the authors; and we welcome the little they have done, not for its intrinsic value, but as we do the first spring flowers—which, though of no great sweetness or beauty, we consider as pledges that the storms of winter are over, and that a milder season is approaching.—It is true, the revolutionary Committees are diminished in number, the prisons are disencumbered, and a man is not liable to be arrested because a Jacobin suspects his features: yet there is a wide difference between such toleration and freedom and security; and it is a circumstance not favourable to those who look beyond the moment, that the tyrannical laws which authorized all the late enormities are still unrepealed. The Revolutionary Tribunal continues to sentence people to death, on pretexts as frivolous as those which were employed in the time of Robespierre; they have only the advantage of being tried more formally, and of forfeiting their lives upon proof, instead of without it, for actions that a strictly administered justice would not punish by a month's imprisonment.\*

\* For instance, a young monk, for writing fanatic letters, and signing resolutions in favour of foederalism—a hosier, for facilitating the return of an emigrant—a man of ninety, for speaking against the revolution, and discrediting the assignats—a contractor, for embezzling forage—people of various descriptions, for obstructing the recruitment, or insulting the tree of liberty. These, and many similar condemnations, will be found in the proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal, long after the death of Robespierre, and when justice and humanity were said to be restored.

A ceremony has lately taken place, the object of which was to deposit the ashes of Marat in the Pantheon, and to dislodge the bust of Mirabeau—who, notwithstanding two years notice to quit this mansion of immortality, still remained there. The ashes of Marat being escorted to the Convention by a detachment of Jacobins, and the President having properly descanted on the virtues which once animated the said ashes, they were conveyed to the place destined for their reception; and the excommunicated Mirabeau being delivered over to the secular arm of a beadle, these remains of the divine Marat were placed among the rest of the republican deities. To have obliged the Convention in a body to attend and consecrate the crimes of this monster, though it could not degrade them, was a momentary triumph for the Jacobins, nor could the royalists behold without satisfaction the same men deploring the death of Marat, who, a month before, had celebrated the fall of Louis the Sixteenth! To have been so deplored, and so celebrated, are, methinks, the very extremes of infamy and glory.

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I must explain to you, that the Jacobins have lately been composed of two parties—the avowed adherents of Collot, Billaud, &c. and the concealed remains of those attached to Robespierre; but party has now given way to principle, a circumstance not usual; and the whole club of Paris, with several of the affiliated ones, join in censuring the innovating tendencies of the Convention.—It is curious to read the debates of the parent society, which pass in afflicting details of the persecutions experienced by the patriots on the parts of the moderates and aristocrats, who, they assert, are become so daring as even to call in question the purity of the immortal Marat. You will suppose, of course, that this cruel persecution is nothing more than an interdiction to persecute others; and their notions of patriotism and moderation may be conceived by their having just expelled Tallien and Freron as moderates.\*

\* Freron endeavoured, on this occasion, to disculpate himself from the charge of “moderantisme,” by alledging he had opposed Lecointre’s denunciation of Barrere, &c. —and certainly one who piques himself on being the pupil of the divine Marat, was worthy of remaining in the fraternity from which he was now expelled.—Feron is a veteran journalist of the revolution, of better talents, though not of better fame, than the generality of his contemporaries: or, rather, his early efforts in exciting the people to rebellion entitle him to a preeminence of infamy.

Amiens, October 4, 1794.

We have had our guard withdrawn for some days; and I am just now returned from Peronne, where we had been in order to see the seals taken off the papers, &c. which I left there last year. I am much struck with the alteration observable in people’s countenances. Every person I meet seems to have contracted a sort of revolutionary aspect: many walk with their heads down, and with half-shut eyes measure the whole length of a street, as though they were still intent on avoiding greetings from the suspicious; some look grave and sorrow-worn; some apprehensive, as if in hourly expectation of a *mandat d’arret*; and others absolutely ferocious, from a habit of affecting the barbarity of the times.

Their language is nearly as much changed as their appearance—the revolutionary jargon is universal, and the most distinguished aristocrats converse in the style of Barrere’s reports. The common people are not less proficient in this fashionable dialect, than their superiors; and, as far as I can judge, are become so from similar motives. While I was waiting this morning at a shop-door, I listened to a beggar who was cheapening a slice of pumpkin, and on some disagreement about the price, the beggar told the old *revendeuse* [Market-woman.] that she was “*gangrenee d’aristocratie*.” [“Eat up with aristocracy.”] “*Je vous en defie*,” [“I defy you.”] retorted the pumpkin-merchant; but turning pale as she spoke, “*Mon civisme est*

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*a toute epreuve, mais prenez donc ta citrouille,*" ["My civism is unquestionable; but here take your pumpkin."] take it then." *"Ah, te voila bonne republicaine,* ["Ah! Now I see you are a good republican."] says the beggar, carrying off her bargain; while the old woman muttered, *"Oui, oui, l'on a beau etre republicaine tandis qu'on n'a pas de pain a manger."* ["Yes, in troth, it's a fine thing to be a republican, and have no bread to eat."]

I hear little of the positive merits of the convention, but the hope is general that they will soon suppress the Jacobin clubs; yet their attacks continue so cold and cautious, that their intentions are at least doubtful: they know the voice of the nation at large would be in favour of such a measure, and they might, if sincere, act more decisively, without risk to themselves.—The truth is, they would willingly proscribe the persons of the Jacobins, while they cling to their principles, and still hesitate whether they shall confide in a people whose resentment they have so much deserved, and have so much reason to dread. Conscious guilt appears to shackle all their proceedings, and though the punishment of some subordinate agents cannot, in the present state of things, be dispensed with, yet the Assembly unveil the register of their crimes very reluctantly, as if each member expected to see his own name inscribed on it. Thus, even delinquents, who would otherwise be sacrificed voluntarily to public justice, are in a manner protected by delays and chicane, because an investigation might implicate the Convention as the example and authoriser of their enormities.—Fouquier Tinville devoted a thousand innocent people to death in less time than it has already taken to bring him to a trial, where he will benefit by all those judicial forms which he has so often refused to others. This man, who is much the subject of conversation at present, was Public Accuser to the Revolutionary Tribunal—an office which, at best, in this instance, only served to give an air of regularity to assassination: but, by a sort of genius in turpitude, he contrived to render it odious beyond its original perversion, in giving to the most elaborate and revolting cruelties a turn of spontaneous pleasantry, or legal procedure.—The prisoners were insulted with sarcasms, intimidated by threats, and still oftener silenced by arbitrary declarations, that they were not entitled to speak; and those who were taken to the scaffold, after no other ceremony than calling over their names, had less reason to complain, than if they had previously been exposed to the barbarities of such trials.—Yet this wretch might, for a time at least, have escaped punishment, had he not, in defending himself, criminated the remains of the Committee, whom it was intended to screen. When he appeared at the bar of the Convention, every word he uttered seemed to fill its members with alarm, and he was ordered away before he could finish his declaration. It must be acknowledged, that, however he may be condemned by justice and humanity, nothing could legally attach to him: he was only the agent of the Convention, and the utmost horrors of the Tribunal were not merely sanctioned, but enjoined by specific decrees.

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I have been told by a gentleman who was at school with Fouquier, and has had frequent occasions of observing him at different periods since, that he always appeared to him to be a man of mild manners, and by no means likely to become the instrument of these atrocities; but a strong addiction to gaming having involved him in embarrassments, he was induced to accept the office of Public Accuser to the Tribunal, and was progressively led on from administering to the iniquity of his employers, to find a gratification in it himself.

I have often thought, that the habit of watching with selfish avidity for those turns of fortune which enrich one individual by the misery of another, must imperceptibly tend to harden the heart. How can the gamester, accustomed both to suffer and inflict ruin with indifference, preserve that benevolent frame of mind, which, in the ordinary and less censurable pursuits of common life, is but too prone to become impaired, and to leave humanity more a duty than a feeling?

The conduct of Fouquier Tinville has led me to some reflections on a subject which I know the French consider as matter of triumph, and as a peculiar advantage which their national character enjoys over the English—I mean that smoothness of manner and guardedness of expression which they call “aimable,” and which they have the faculty of attaining and preserving distinctly from a correspondent temper of the mind. It accompanies them through the most irritating vicissitudes, and enables them to deceive, even without deceit: for though this suavity is habitual, of course frequently undesigning, the stranger is nevertheless thrown off his guard by it, and tempted to place confidence, or expect services, which a less conciliating deportment would not have been suggested. A Frenchman may be an unkind husband, a severe parent, or an arrogant master, yet never contract his features, or asperate his voice, and for this reason is, in the national sense, “un homme bien doux.” His heart may become corrupt, his principles immoral, and his disposition ferocious—yet he shall still retain his equability of tone and complacent phraseology, and be “un homme bien aimable.”

The revolution has tended much to develop this peculiarity of the French character, and has, by various examples in public life, confirmed the opinions I had formed from previous observation. Fouquier Tinville, as I have already noticed, was a man of gentle exterior.—Couthon, the execrable associate of Robespierre, was mildness itself—Robespierre’s harangues are in a style of distinguished sensibility—and even Carrier, the destroyer of thirty thousand Nantais, is attested by his fellow-students to have been of an amiable disposition. I know a man of most insinuating address, who has been the means of conducting his own brother to the Guillotine; and another nearly as prepossessing, who, without losing his courteous demeanor, was, during the late revolutionary excesses, the intimate of an executioner.



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*It would be too voluminous to enumerate all the contrasts of manners and character exhibited during the French revolution—The philosophic Condorcet, pursuing with malignancy his patron, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, and hesitating with atrocious mildness on the sentence of the King—The massacres of the prisons connived at by the gentle Petion—Collot d'Herbois dispatching, by one discharge of cannon, three hundred people together, "to spare his sensibility" the talk of executions in detail—And St. Just, the deviser of a thousand enormities, when he left the Committee, after his last interview, with the project of sending them all to the Guillotine, telling them, in a tone of tender reproach, like a lover of romance, "Vous avez fletri mon coeur, je vais l'ouvrir a la Convention."— Madame Roland, in spite of the tenderness of her sex, could coldly reason on the expediency of a civil war, which she acknowledged might become necessary to establish the republic. Let those who disapprove this censure of a female, whom it is a sort of mode to lament, recollect that Madame Roland was the victim of a celebrity she had acquired in assisting the efforts of faction to dethrone the King—that her literary bureau was dedicated to the purpose of exasperating the people against him—and that she was considerably instrumental to the events which occasioned his death. If her talents and accomplishments make her an object of regret, it was to the unnatural misapplication of those talents and accomplishments in the service of party, that she owed her fate. Her own opinion was, that thousands might justifiably be devoted to the establishment of a favourite system; or, to speak truly, to the aggrandisement of those who were its partizans. The same selfish principle actuated an opposite faction, and she became the sacrifice.—"Oh even-handed justice!"*

I do not pretend to decide whether the English are virtually more gentle in their nature than the French; but I am persuaded this douceur, on which the latter pride themselves, affords no proof of the contrary. An Englishman is seldom out of humour, without proclaiming it to all the world; and the most forcible motives of interest, or expediency, cannot always prevail on him to assume a more engaging external than that which delineates his feelings.

If he has a matter to refuse, he usually begins by fortifying himself with a little ruggedness of manner, by way of prefacing a denial he might otherwise not have resolution to persevere in. "The hows and whens of life" corrugate his features, and disharmonize his periods; contradiction sours, and passion ruffles him—and, in short, an Englishman displeased, from whatever cause, is neither "un homme bien doux," nor "un homme bien aimable;" but such as nature has made him, subject to infirmities and sorrows, and unable to disguise the one, or appear indifferent to the other. Our country, like every other, has doubtless produced too many examples of human depravity; but I scarcely recollect any, where a ferocious disposition was not accompanied by corresponding manners—or where men, who would plunder or massacre, affected to retain at the same time habits of softness, and a conciliating physiognomy.

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We are, I think, on the whole, authorized to conclude, that, in determining the claims to national superiority, the boasted and unvarying controul which the French exercise over their features and accents, is not a merit; nor those indications of what passes within, to which the English are subject, an imperfection. If the French sometimes supply their want of kindness, or render disappointment less acute at the moment, by a sterile complacency, the English harshness is often only the alloy to an efficient benevolence, and a sympathizing mind. In France they have no humourists who seem impelled by their nature to do good, in spite of their temperament—nor have we in England many people who are cold and unfeeling, yet systematically aimable: but I must still persist in not thinking it a defect that we are too impetuous, or perhaps too ingenuous, to unite contradictions.

There is a cause, that doubtless has its effects in representing the English disadvantageously, and which I have never heard properly allowed for. The liberty of the press, and the great interest taken by all ranks of people in public affairs, have occasioned a more numerous circulation of periodical prints of every kind in England, than in any other country in Europe. Now, as it is impossible to fill them constantly with politics, and as the taste of different readers must be consulted, every barbarous adventure, suicide, murder, robbery, domestic fracas, assaults, and batteries of the lower orders, with the duels and divorces of the higher, are all chronicled in various publications, disseminated over Europe, and convey an idea that we are a very miserable, ferocious, and dissolute nation. The foreign gazettes being chiefly appropriated to public affairs, seldom record either the vices, the crimes, or misfortunes of individuals; so that they are thereby at least prevented from fixing an unfavourable judgement on the national character.

Mercier observes, that the number of suicides committed in Paris was supposed to exceed greatly that of similar disasters in London; and that murders in France were always accompanied by circumstances of peculiar horror, though policy and custom had rendered the publication of such events less general than with us.—Our divorces, at which the Gallic purity of manners used to be so much scandalized, are, no doubt, to be regretted; but that such separations were not then allowed, or desired in France, may perhaps be attributed, at least as justly, to the complaisance of husbands, as to the discretion of wives, or the national morality.\*

\* At present, in the monthly statement, the number of divorces in France, is often nearly equal to that of the marriages.

I should reproach myself if I could feel impartial when I contemplate the English character; yet I certainly endeavour to write as though I were so. If I have erred, it has been rather in allowing too much to received opinions on the subject of this country, than in suffering my affections to make me unjust; for though I am far from affecting the fashion of the day, which censures all prejudices as illiberal, except those in disfavour of



our own country, yet I am warranted, I hope, in saying, that however partial I may appear to England, I have not been so at the expence of truth.—Yours, &c.

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October 6, 1794.

The sufferings of individuals have often been the means of destroying or reforming the most powerful tyrannies; reason has been convinced by argument, and passion appealed to by declamation in vain—when some unvarnished tale, or simple exposure of facts, has at once roused the feelings, and conquered the supineness of an oppressed people.

The revolutionary government, in spite of the clamorous and weekly swearings of the Convention to perpetuate it, has received a check from an event of this nature, which I trust it will never recover.—By an order of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes, in November 1793, all prisoners accused of political crimes were to be transferred to Paris, where the tribunal being more immediately under the direction of government, there would be no chance of their acquittal. In consequence of this order, an hundred and thirty-two inhabitants of Nantes, arrested on the usual pretexts of foederalism, or as suspected, or being Muscadins, were, some months after, conducted to Paris. Forty of the number died through the hardships and ill treatment they encountered on the way, the rest remained in prison until after the death of Robespierre.

The evidence produced on their trial, which lately took place, has revealed but too circumstantially all the horrors of the revolutionary system. Destruction in every form, most shocking to morals or humanity, has depopulated the countries of the Loire; and republican Pizarro's and Almagro's seem to have rivalled each other in the invention and perpetration of crimes.

When the prisons of Nantes overflowed, many hundreds of their miserable inhabitants had been conducted by night, and chained together, to the river side; where, being first stripped of their clothes, they were crouded into vessels with false bottoms, constructed for the purpose, and sunk.\*—

\* Though the horror excited by such atrocious details must be serviceable to humanity, I am constrained by decency to spare the reader a part of them. Let the imagination, however repugnant, pause for a moment over these scenes—Five, eight hundred people of different sexes, ages, and conditions, are taken from their prisons, in the dreary months of December and January, and conducted, during the silence of the night, to the banks of the Loire. The agents of the Republic there despoil them of their clothes, and force them, shivering and defenceless, to enter the machines prepared for their destruction—they are chained down, to prevent their escape by swimming, and then the bottom is detached for the upper part, and sunk.—On some occasions the miserable victims contrived to loose themselves, and clinging to the boards near them, shrieked in the agonies of despair and death, “O save us! it is not even now too late: in mercy save us!” But they appealed to wretches to whom mercy was a stranger; and, being cut away from their hold by strokes of the sabre, perished with their companions.

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That nothing might be wanting to these outrages against nature, they were escribed as jests, and called “Noyades, water parties,” and “civic baptisms”! Carrier, a Deputy of the Convention, used to dine and make parties of pleasure, accompanied by music and every species of gross luxury, on board the barges appropriated to these execrable purposes.

—At one time, six hundred children appear to have been destroyed in this manner;—young people of different sexes were tied in pairs and thrown into the river;—thousands were shot in the high roads and in the fields; and vast numbers were guillotined, without a trial!\*

\* Six young women, (the *Mesdemoiselles la Meterie*,) in particular, sisters, and all under four-and-twenty, were ordered to the Guillotine together: the youngest died instantly of fear, the rest were executed successively.—A child eleven years old, who had previously told the executioner, with affecting simplicity, that he hoped he would not hurt him much, received three strokes of the Guillotine before his head was severed from his body.

—Two thousand died, in less than two months, of a pestilence, occasioned by this carnage: the air became infected, and the waters of the Loire empoisoned, by dead bodies; and those whom tyranny yet spared, perished by the elements which nature intended for their support.\*

\* Vast sums were exacted from the Nantais for purifying the air, and taking precautions against epidemical disorders.

But I will not dwell on horrors, which, if not already known to all Europe, I should be unequal to describe: suffice it to say, that whatever could disgrace or afflict mankind, whatever could add disgust to detestation, and render cruelty, if possible, less odious than the circumstances by which it was accompanied, has been exhibited in this unfortunate city.—Both the accused and their witnesses were at first timid through apprehension, but by degrees the monstrous mysteries of the government were laid open, and it appeared, beyond denial or palliation, that these enormities were either devised, assisted, or connived at, by Deputies of the Convention, celebrated for their ardent republicanism and revolutionary zeal.—The danger of confiding unlimited power to such men as composed the majority of the Assembly, was now displayed in a manner that penetrated the dullest imagination, and the coldest heart; and it was found, that, armed with decrees, aided by revolutionary committees, revolutionary troops, and revolutionary vehicles of destruction,\* missionaries selected by choice from the whole representation, had, in the city of Nantes alone, and under the mask of enthusiastic patriotism, sacrificed thirty thousand people!

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\* A company was formed of all the ruffians that could be collected together. They were styled the Company of Marat, and were specially empowered to arrest whomsoever they chose, and to enter houses by night or day—in fine, to proscribe and pillage at their pleasure.

Facts like these require no comment. The nation may be intimidated, and habits of obedience, or despair of redress, prolong its submission; but it can no longer be deceived: and patriotism, revolutionary liberty, and philosophy, are for ever associated with the drowning machines of Carrier, and the precepts and calculations of a Herault de Sechelles,\* or a Lequinio.\*\*—

\* Herault de Sechelles was distinguished by birth, talents, and fortune, above most of his colleagues in the Convention; yet we find him in correspondence with Carrier, applauding his enormities, and advising him how to continue them with effect.—Herault was of a noble family, and had been a president in the Parliament of Paris. He was one of Robespierre's Committee of Public Welfare, and being in some way implicated in a charge of treachery brought against Simon, another Deputy, was guillotined at the same time with Danton.\*\* Lequinio is a philosopher by profession, who has endeavoured to enlighten his countrymen by a publication entitled "*Les Prejuges Detruits*," and since by proving it advantageous to make no prisoners of war.

—The ninety Nantais, against whom there existed no serious charge, and who had already suffered more than death, were acquitted. Yet, though the people were gratified by this verdict, and the general indignation appeased by an immediate arrest of those who had been most notoriously active in these dreadful operations, a deep and salutary impression remains, and we may hope it will be found impracticable either to renew the same scenes, or for the Convention to shelter (as they seemed disposed to do) the principal criminals, who are members of their own body. Yet, how are these delinquents to be brought to condemnation? They all acted under competent authority, and their dispatches to the Convention, which sufficiently indicated their proceedings, were always sanctioned by circulation, and applauded, according to the excess of their flagitiousness.

It is worthy of remark, that Nantes, the principal theatre of these persecutions and murders, had been early distinguished by the attachment of its inhabitants to the revolution; insomuch, that, at the memorable epoch when the short-sighted policy of the Court excluded the Constituent Assembly from their Hall at Versailles, and they took refuge in the Jeu de Paume, with a resolution fatal to their country, never to separate until they had obtained their purposes, an express was sent to Nantes, as the place they should make choice of, if any violence obliged them to quit the neighbourhood of Paris.

But it was not only by its principles that Nantes had signalized itself; at every period of the war, it had contributed largely both in men and money, and its riches and commerce

still rendered it one of the most important towns of the republic.—What has been its reward?—Barbarous envoys from the Convention, sent expressly to level the aristocracy of wealth, to crush its mercantile spirit, and decimate its inhabitants.\*—

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\* When Nantes was reduced almost to a state of famine by the destruction of commerce, and the supplies drawn for the maintenance of the armies, Commissioners were sent to Paris, to solicit a supply of provisions. They applied to Carrier, as being best acquainted with their distress, and were answered in this language:—"*Demandez, pour Nantes! je solliciterai qu'on porte le fer et la flamme dans cette abominable ville. Vous etes tous des coquins, des contre- revolutionnaires, des brigands, des scelerats, je ferai nommer une commission par la Convention Nationale.—J'irai moi meme a la tete de cette commission.—Scelerats, je serai rouler les tetes dans Nantes—je regenererai Nantes.*"—"Is it for Nantes that you petition? I'll exert my influence to have fire and sword carried into that abominable city. You are all scoundrels, counter-revolutionists, thieves, miscreants.—I'll have a commission appointed by the Convention, and go myself at the head of it.— Villains, I'll set your heads a rolling about Nantes—I'll regenerate Nantes." Report of the Commission of Twenty-one, on the conduct of Carrier.

—Terrible lesson for those discontented and mistaken people, who, enriched by commerce, are not content with freedom and independence, but seek for visionary benefits, by becoming the partizans of innovation, or the tools of faction!\*

\* The disasters of Nantes ought not to be lost to the republicans of Birmingham, Manchester, and other great commercial towns, where "men fall out they know not why;" and where their increasing wealth and prosperity are the best eulogiums on the constitution they attempt to undermine.

I have hitherto said little of La Vendee; but the fate of Nantes is so nearly connected with it, that I shall make it the subject of my next letter.

[No Date or Place Given.]

It appears, that the greater part of the inhabitants of Poitou, Anjou, and the Southern divisions of Brittany, now distinguished by the general appellation of the people of La Vendee, (though they include those of several other departments,) never either comprehended or adopted the principles of the French revolution. Many different causes contributed to increase their original aversion from the new system, and to give their resistance that consistency, which has since become so formidable. A partiality for their ancient customs, an attachment to their Noblesse, and a deference for their Priests, are said to characterize the brave and simple natives of La Vendee. Hence republican writers, with self-complacent decision, always treat this war as the effect of ignorance, slavery, and superstition.

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The modern reformist, who calls the labourer from the plough, and the artizan from the loom, to make them statesmen or philosophers, and who has invaded the abodes of contented industry with the rights of man, that our fields may be cultivated, and our garments wove, by metaphysicians, will readily assent to this opinion.—Yet a more enlightened and liberal philosophy may be tempted to examine how far the Vendean have really merited the contempt and persecution of which they have been the objects. By the confession of the republicans themselves, they are religious, hospitable, and frugal, humane and merciful towards their enemies, and easily persuaded to whatever is just and reasonable.

I do not pretend to combat the narrow prejudices of those who suppose the worth or happiness of mankind compatible but with one set of opinions; and who, confounding the adventitious with the essential, appreciate only book learning: but surely, qualities which imply a knowledge of what is due both to God and man, and information sufficient to yield to what is right or rational, are not descriptive of barbarians; or at least, we may say with Phyrrius, “there is nothing barbarous in their discipline.”\*

*“The husbandmen of this country are in general men of simple manners, naturally well inclined, or at least not addicted to serious vices.” Lequinio, Guerre de La Vendee.*

Dubois de Crance, speaking of the inhabitants of La Vendee, says, “They are the most hospitable people I ever saw, and always disposed to listen to what is just and reasonable, if proffered with mildness and humanity.”

“This unpolished people, whom, however, it is much less difficult to persuade than to fight.” Lequinio, G. de La V.

“They affected towards our prisoners a deceitful humanity, neglecting no means to draw them over to their own party, and often sending them back to us with only a simple prohibition to bear arms against the King or religion.” Report of Richard and Choudieu.

The ignorant Vendean then could give lessons of policy and humanity, which the “enlightened” republicans were not capable of profiting by.

—Their adherence to their ancient institutions, and attachment to their Gentry and Clergy, when the former were abolished and the latter proscribed, might warrant a presumption that they were happy under the one, and kindly treated by the other: for though individuals may sometimes persevere in affections or habits from which they derive neither felicity nor advantage, whole bodies of men can scarcely be supposed eager to risk their lives in defence of privileges that have oppressed them, or of a religion from which they draw no consolation.

But whatever the cause, the new doctrines, both civil and religious, were received in La Vendee with a disgust, which was not only expressed by murmurs, but occasionally by little revolts, by disobedience to the constitutional authorities, and a rejection of the constitutional clergy.



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Some time previous to the deposition of the King, Commissioners were sent to suppress these disorders; and though I doubt not but all possible means were taken to conciliate, I can easily believe, that neither the King nor his Ministers might be desirous of subduing by force a people who erred only from piety or loyalty. What effect this system of indulgence might have produced cannot now be decided; because the subsequent overthrow of the monarchy, and the massacre or banishment of the priests, must have totally alienated their minds, and precluded all hope of reconciliation.—Disaffection, therefore, continued to increase, and the Brissotines are suspected of having rather fostered than repressed these intestine commotions,\* for the same purpose which induced them to provoke the war with England, and to extend that of the Continent.

\* Le Brun, one of the Brissotin Ministers, concealed the progress of this war for six months before he thought fit to report it to the Convention.

—It is impossible to assign a good motive to any act of this literary intriguer.

—Perhaps, while they determined to establish their faction by “braving all Europe,” they might think it equally politic to perplex and overawe Paris by a near and dangerous enemy, which would render their continuance in power necessary, or whom they might join, if expelled from it.\*

\* This last reason might afterwards have given way to their apprehensions, and the Brissotins have preferred the creation of new civil wars, to a confidence in the royalists. These men, who condemned the King for a supposed intention of defending an authority transmitted to him through whole ages, and recently sanctioned by the voice of the people, did not scruple to excite a civil war in defence of their six months’ sovereignty over a republic, proclaimed by a ferocious comedian, and certainly without the assent of the nation. Had the ill-fated Monarch dared thus to trifle with the lives of his subjects, he might have saved France and himself from ruin.

When men gratify their ambition by means so sanguinary and atrocious as those resorted to by the Brissotines, we are authorized in concluding they will not be more scrupulous in the use or preservation of power, than they were in attaining it; and we can have no doubt but that the fomenting or suppressing the progress of civil discord, was, with them, a mere question of expediency.

The decree which took place in March, 1793, for raising three hundred thousand men in the departments, changed the partial insurrections of La Vendee to an open and connected rebellion; and every where the young people refused going, and joined in preference the standard of revolt. In the beginning of the summer, the brigands\* (as they were called) grew so numerous, that the government, now in the hands of Robespierre and his party, began to take serious measures to combat them.

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\* Robbers—*banditti*—The name was first given, probably, to the insurgents of La Vendee, in order to insinuate a belief that the disorders were but of a slight and predatory nature.

—One body of troops were dispatched after another, who were all successively defeated, and every where fled before the royalists.

It is not unusual in political concerns to attribute to deep-laid plans and abstruse combinations, effects which are the natural result of private passions and isolated interests. Robespierre is said to have promoted both the destruction of the republican armies and those of La Vendee, in order to reduce the national population. That he was capable of imagining such a project is probable—yet we need not, in tracing the conduct of the war, look farther than to the character of the agents who were, almost necessarily, employed in it. Nearly every officer qualified for the command of an army, had either emigrated, or was on service at the frontiers; and the task of reducing by violence a people who resisted only because they deemed themselves injured, and who, even in the estimation of the republicans, could only be mistaken, was naturally avoided by all men who were not mere adventurers. It might likewise be the policy of the government to prefer the services of those, who, having neither reputation nor property, would be more dependent, and whom, whether they became dangerous by their successes or defeats, it would be easy to sacrifice.

Either, then, from necessity or choice, the republican armies in La Vendee were conducted by dissolute and rapacious wretches, at all times more eager to pillage than fight, and who were engaged in securing their plunder, when they should have been in pursuit of the enemy. On every occasion they seemed to retreat, that their ill success might afford them a pretext for declaring that the next town or village was confederated with the insurgents, and for delivering it up, in consequence, to murder and rapine. Such of the soldiers as could fill their pocket-books with assignats, left their less successful companions, and retired as invalids to the hospitals: the battalions of Paris (and particularly “the conquerors of the Bastille”) had such ardour for pillage, that every person possessed of property was, in their sense, an aristocrat, whom it was lawful to despoil.\*

\* *“Le pillage a ete porte a son comble—les militaires au lieu de songer a ce qu’ils avoient a faire, n’ont pense qu’a remplir leurs sacs, et a voir se perpetuer une guerre aussi avantageuse a leur interet—beaucoup de simples soldats ont acquis cinquante mille francs et plus; on en a vu couverts de bijoux, et faisant dans tous les genres des depenses d’une produgaloite, monstreuse.”* Lequinio, *Guerre de la Vendee*. “The most unbridled pillage prevailed—officers, instead of attending to their duty, thought only of filling their portmanteaus, and of the means

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to perpetuate a war they found so profitable.—Many private soldiers made fifty thousand livres, and they have been seen loaded with trinkets, and exercising the most abominable prodigalities of every kind.” Lequinio, War of La Vendee. “The conquerors of the Bastille had unluckily a most unbridled ardour for pillage—one would have supposed they had come for the express purpose of plunder, rather than fighting. The stage coaches for Paris were entirely loaded with their booty.” Report of Benaben, Commissioner of the Department of Maine and Loire.

—The carriages of the army were entirely appropriated to the conveyance of their booty; till, at last, the administrators of some departments were under the necessity of forbidding such incumbrances: but the officers, with whom restrictions of this sort were unavailing, put all the horses and waggons of the country in requisition for similar purposes, while they relaxed themselves from the serious business of the war, (which indeed was nearly confined to burning, plundering, and massacring the defenceless inhabitants,) by a numerous retinue of mistresses and musicians.

It is not surprising that generals and troops of this description were constantly defeated; and their reiterated disasters might probably have first suggested the idea of totally exterminating a people it was found so difficult to subdue, and so impracticable to conciliate.—On the first of October 1793, Barrere, after inveighing against the excessive population of La Vendee, which he termed “frightful,” proposed to the Convention to proclaim by a decree, that the war of La Vendee “should be terminated” by the twentieth of the same month. The Convention, with barbarous folly, obeyed; and the enlightened Parisians, accustomed to think with contempt on the ignorance of the Vendean, believed that a war, which had baffled the efforts of government for so many months, was to end on a precise day—which Barrere had fixed with as much assurance as though he had only been ordering a fete.

But the Convention and the government understood this decree in a very different sense from the good people of Paris. The war was, indeed, to be ended; not by the usual mode of combating armies, but by a total extinction of all the inhabitants of the country, both innocent and guilty—and Merlin de Thionville, with other members, so perfectly comprehended this detestable project, that they already began to devise schemes for repeopleing La Vendee, when its miserable natives should be destroyed.\*

\* It is for the credit of humanity to believe, that the decree was not understood according to its real intention; but the nation has to choose between the imputation of cruelty, stupidity, or slavery—for they either approved the sense of the decree, believed what was not possible, or were obliged to put on an appearance of both, in spite of their senses and their feelings.

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A proclamation, in consequence, to the army, is more explicit—"All the brigands of La Vendee must be exterminated before the end of October."

From this time, the representatives on mission, commissaries of war, officers, soldiers, and agents of every kind, vied with each other in the most abominable outrages. Carrier superintended the fusillades and noyades at Nantes, while Lequinio dispatched with his own hands a part of the prisoners taken at La Fontenay, and projected the destruction of the rest.—After the evacuation of Mans by the insurgents, women were brought by twenties and thirties, and shot before the house where the deputies Tureau and Bourbotte had taken up their residence; and it appears to have been considered as a compliment to these republican Molochs, to surround their habitation with mountains of the dead. A compliment of the like nature was paid to the representative Prieur de la Marne,\* by a volunteer, who having learned that his own brother was taken amongst the enemy, requested, by way of recommending himself to notice, a formal permission to be his executioner.—The Roman stoicism of Prieur accepted the implied homage, and granted the request!!

\* This representative, who was also a member of the Committee of Public Welfare, was not only the Brutus, but the Antony of La Vendee; for we learn from the report of Benaben, that his stern virtues were accompanied, through the whole of his mission in this afflicted country, by a cortege of thirty strolling fiddlers!

Fourteen hundred prisoners, who had surrendered at Savenay, among whom were many women and children, were shot, by order of the deputy Francastel, who, together with Hentz, Richard, Choudieu, Carpentier, and others of their colleagues, set an example of rapine and cruelty, but too zealously imitated by their subordinate agents. In some places, the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex, were put indiscriminately to the sword; in others, they were forced to carry the pillage collected from their own dwellings, which, after being thus stripped, were consigned to the flames.\*

\* "This conflagration accomplished, they had no sooner arrived in the midst of our army, than the volunteers, in imitation of their commanders, seized what little they had preserved, and massacred them.—But this is not all: a whole municipality, in their scarfs of office, were sacrificed; and at a little village, inhabited by about fifty good patriots, who had been uniform in their resistance of the insurgents, news is brought that their brother soldiers are coming to assist them, and to revenge the wrongs they have suffered. A friendly repast is provided, the military arrive, embrace their ill-fated hosts, and devour what they have provided; which is no sooner done, than they drive all these poor people into the churchyard, and stab them one after another." Report of Faure, Vice-President of a Military Commission at Fontenay.

—The heads of the prisoners served occasionally as marks for the officers to shoot at for trifling wagers, and the soldiers, who imitated these heinous examples, used to conduct whole hundreds to the place of execution, singing "*allons enfans de la patrie*."\*

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\* Woe to those who were unable to walk, for, under pretext that carriages could not be found to convey them, they were shot without hesitation!—Benaben.

The insurgents had lost Cholet, Chatillon, Mortagne, &c. Yet, far from being vanquished by the day appointed, they had crossed the Loire in great force, and, having traversed Brittany, were preparing to make an attack on Granville. But this did not prevent Barrere from announcing to the convention, that La Vendee was no more, and the galleries echoed with applause, when they were told that the highways were impassable, from the numbers of the dead, and that a considerable part of France was one vast cemetery. This intelligence also tranquillized the paternal solicitude of the legislature, and, for many months, while the system of depopulation was pursued with the most barbarous fury, it was not permissible even to suspect that the war was yet unextinguished.

It is only since the trial of the Nantais, that the state of La Vendee has again become a subject of discussion: truth has now forced its way, and we learn, that, whatever may be the strength of these unhappy people, their minds, embittered by suffering, and animated by revenge, are still less than ever disposed to submit to the republican government. The design of total extirpation, once so much insisted on, is at present said to be relinquished, and a plan of instruction and conversion is to be substituted for bayonets and conflagrations. The revolted countries are to be enlightened by the doctrines of liberty, fanaticism is to be exposed, and a love of the republic to succeed the prejudices in favour of Kings and Nobles.—To promote these objects, is, undoubtedly, the real interest of the Convention; but a moralist, who observes through another medium, may compare with regret and indignation the instructors with the people they are to illumine, and the advantages of philosophy over ignorance.

Lequinio, one of the most determined reformers of the barbarism of La Vendee, proposes two methods: the first is, a general massacre of all the natives—and the only objection it seems susceptible of in his opinion is, their numbers; but as he thinks on this account it may be attended with difficulty, he is for establishing a sort of perpetual mission of Representatives, who, by the influence of good living and a company of fiddlers and singers, are to restore the whole country to peace.\*—

*"The only difficulty that presents itself is, to determine whether recourse shall be had to the alternative of indulgence, or if it will not be more advantageous to persist in the plan of total destruction."*If the people that still remain were not more than thirty or forty thousand, the shortest way would doubtless be, to cut all their throats (egorger), agreeably to my first opinion; but the population is immense, amounting still to four hundred thousand souls.—If there

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were no hope of succeeding by any other methods, certainly it were better to kill all (egorger), even were there five hundred thousand. "But what are we to understand by measures of rigour? Is there no distinction to be made between rigorous and barbarous measures? The utmost severity is justified on the plea of the general good, but nothing can justify barbarity. If the welfare of France necessitated the sacrifice of the four hundred thousand inhabitants of La Vendee, and the countries in rebellion adjoining, they ought to be sacrificed: but, even in this case, there would be no excuse for those atrocities which revolt nature, which are an outrage to social order, and repugnant equally to feeling (sentiment) and reason; and in cutting off so many entire generations for the good of the country, we ought not to suffer the use of barbarous means in a single instance.

"Now the most effectual way to arrive at this end (converting the people), would be by joyous and fraternal missions, frank and familiar harangues, civic repasts, and, above all, dancing.

"I could wish, too, that during their circuits in these countries, the Representatives were always attended by musicians. The expence would be trifling, compared with the good effect; if, as I am strongly persuaded, we could thus succeed in giving a turn to the public mind, and close the bleeding arteries of these fertile and unhappy provinces." Lequinio, *Guerre de La Vendee*. And this people, who were either to have their throats cut, or be republicanized by means of singing, dancing, and revolutionary Pans and Silenus's, already beheld their property devastated by pillage or conflagration, and were in danger of a pestilence from the unburied bodies of their families.—Let the reader, who has seen Lequinio's pamphlet, compare his account of the sufferings of the Vendean, and his project for conciliating them. They convey a strong idea of the levity of the national character; but, in this instance, I must suppose, that nature would be superior to local influence; and I doubt if Lequinio's jocund philosophy will ever succeed in attaching the Vendean to the republic.

—Camille Desmouins, a republican reformer, nearly as sanguinary, though not more liberal, thought the guillotine disgraced by such ignorant prey, and that it were better to hunt them down like wild beasts; or, if made prisoners, to exchange them against the cattle of their country!—The eminently informed Hérault de Séchelles was the patron and confidant of the exterminating reforms of Carrier; and Carnot, when the mode of reforming by noyades and fusillades was debated at the Committee, pleaded the cause of Carrier, whom he describes as a good, nay, an excellent patriot.—Merlin de Thionville, whose philosophy is of a more martial cast, was desirous that the natives of La Vendee should be completely annihilated, in



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order to furnish in their territory and habitations a recompence for the armies.—Almost every member of the Convention has individually avowed principles, or committed acts, from which common turpitude would recoil, and, as a legislative body, their whole code has been one unvarying subversion of morals and humanity. Such are the men who value themselves on possessing all the advantages the Vendéans are pretended to be in want of.—We will now examine what disciples they have produced, and the benefits which have been derived from their instructions.

Every part of France remarkable for an early proselytism to the revolutionary doctrines has been the theatre of crimes unparalleled in the annals of human nature. Those who have most boasted their contempt for religious superstition have been degraded by an idolatry as gross as any ever practiced on the Nile; and the most enthusiastic republicans have, without daring to murmur, submitted for two years successively to a horde of cruel and immoral tyrants.—A pretended enfranchisement from political and ecclesiastical slavery has been the signal of the lowest debasement, and the most cruel profligacy: the very Catechumens of freedom and philosophy have, while yet in their first rudiments, distinguished themselves as proficient in the arts of oppression and servility, of intolerance and licentiousness.—Paris, the rendezvous of all the persecuted patriots and philosophers in Europe, the centre of the revolutionary system, whose inhabitants were illumined by the first rays of modern republicanism, and who claim a sort of property in the rights of man, as being the original inventors, may fairly be quoted as an example of the benefits that would accrue from a farther dissemination of the new tenets.

Without reverting to the events of August and September, 1792, presided by the founders of liberty, and executed by their too apt sectaries, it is notorious that the legions of Paris, sent to chastise the unenlightened Vendéans, were the most cruel and rapacious banditti that ever were let loose to afflict the world. Yet, while they exercised this savage oppression in the countries near the Loire, their fellow-citizens on the banks of the Seine crouched at the frown of paltry tyrants, and were unresistingly dragged to dungeons, or butchered by hundreds on the scaffold.—At Marseilles, Lyons, Bourdeaux, Arras, wherever these baleful principles have made converts, they have made criminals and victims; and those who have been most eager in imbibing or propagating them have, by a natural and just retribution, been the first sacrificed. The new discoveries in politics have produced some in ethics not less novel, and until the adoption of revolutionary doctrines, the extent of human submission or human depravity was fortunately unknown.



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In this source of guilt and misery the people of La Vendee are now to be instructed—that people, who are acknowledged to be hospitable, humane, and laborious, and whose ideas of freedom may be better estimated by their resistance to a despotism which the rest of France has sunk under, than by the jargon of pretended reformers.—I could wish, that not only the peasants of La Vendee, but those of all other countries, might for ever remain strangers to such pernicious knowledge. It is sufficient for this useful class of men to be taught the simple precepts of religion and morality, and those who would teach them more, are not their benefactors. Our age is, indeed, a literary age, and such pursuits are both liberal and laudable in the rich and idle; but why should volumes of politics or philosophy be mutilated and frittered into pamphlets, to inspire a disgust for labour, and a taste for study or pleasure, in those to whom such disgusts or inclinations are fatal. The spirit of one author is extracted, and the beauties of another are selected, only to bewilder the understanding, and engross the time, of those who might be more profitably employed.

I know I may be censured as illiberal; but I have, during my abode in this country, sufficiently witnessed the disastrous effects of corrupting a people through their amusements or curiosity, and of making men neglect their useful callings to become patriots and philosophers.\*—

*This right of directing public affairs, and neglecting their own, we may suppose essential to republicans of the lower orders, since we find the following sentence of transportation in the registers of a popular commission: “Bergeron, a dealer in skins—suspected—having done nothing in favour of the revolution—extremely selfish (egoiste,) and blaming the Sans-Culottes for neglecting their callings, that they may attend only to public concerns.”—Signed by the members of the Commission and the two Committees.*

—“Il est dangereux d’apprendre au peuple a raisonner: il ne faut pas l’éclairer trop, parce qu’il n’est pas possible de l’éclairer assez.”\_ [“It is dangerous to teach the people to reason—they should not be too much enlightened, because it is not possible to enlighten them sufficiently.”]—When the enthusiasm of Rousseau’s genius was thus usefully submitted to his good sense and knowledge of mankind, he little expected every hamlet in France would be inundated with scraps of the *contrat social*, and thousands of inoffensive peasants massacred for not understanding the *Profession de Foi*.

The arguments of mistaken philanthropists or designing politicians may divert the order of things, but they cannot change our nature—they may create an universal taste for literature, but they will never unite it with habits of industry; and until they prove how men are to live without labour, they have no right to banish the cheerful vacuity which usually accompanies it, by substituting reflections to make it irksome, and propensities with which it is incompatible.

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The situation of France has amply demonstrated the folly of attempting to make a whole people reasoners and politicians—there seems to be no medium; and as it is impossible to make a nation of sages, you let loose a horde of savages: for the philosophy which teaches a contempt for accustomed restraints, is not difficult to propagate; but that superior kind, which enables men to supply them, by subduing the passions that render restraints necessary, is of slow progress, and never can be general.

I have made the war of La Vendee more a subject of reflection than narrative, and have purposely avoided military details, which would be not only uninteresting, but disgusting. You would learn no more from these desultory hostilities, than that the defeats of the republican armies were, if possible, more sanguinary than their victories; that the royalists, who began the war with humanity, were at length irritated to reprisals; and that more than two hundred thousand lives have already been sacrificed in the contest, yet undecided.

Amiens, Oct. 24, 1794.

Revolutions, like every thing else in France, are a mode, and the Convention already commemorate four since 1789: that of July 1789, which rendered the monarchical power nugatory; that of August the 10th, 1792, which subverted it; the expulsion of the Brissotins, in May 1793; and the death of Robespierre, in July 1794.

The people, accustomed, from their earliest knowledge, to respect the person and authority of the King, felt that the events of the two first epochs, which disgraced the one and annihilated the other, were violent and important revolutions; and, as language which expresses the public sentiment is readily adopted, it soon became usual to speak of these events as the revolutions of July and August.

The thirty-first of May has always been viewed in a very different light, for it was not easy to make the people at large comprehend how the succession of Robespierre and Danton to Brissot and Roland could be considered as a revolution, more especially as it appeared evident that the principles of one party actuated the government of the other. Every town had its many-headed monster to represent the defeat of the Foederalists, and its mountain to proclaim the triumph of their enemies the Mountaineers; but these political hieroglyphics were little understood, and the merits of the factions they alluded to little distinguished—so that the revolution of the thirty-first of May was rather a party aera, than a popular one.

The fall of Robespierre would have made as little impression as that of the Girondists, if some melioration of the revolutionary system had not succeeded it; and it is in fact only since the public voice, and the interest of the Convention, have occasioned a change approaching to reform, that the death of Robespierre is really considered as a benefit.

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But what was in itself no more than a warfare of factions, may now, if estimated by its consequences, be pronounced a revolution of infinite importance. The Jacobins, whom their declining power only rendered more insolent and daring, have at length obliged the Convention to take decided measures against them, and they are now subject to such regulations as must effectually diminish their influence, and, in the end, dissolve their whole combination. They can no longer correspond as societies, and the mischievous union which constituted their chief force, can scarcely be supported for any time under the present restrictions.\*

\* "All affiliations, aggregations, and foederations, as well as correspondences carried on collectively between societies, under whatever denomination they may exist, are henceforth prohibited, as being subversive of government, and contrary to the unity of the republic." "Those persons who sign as presidents or secretaries, petitions or addresses in a collective form, shall be arrested and confined as suspicious, &c. &c.—Whoever offends in any shape against the present law, will incur the same penalty." The whole of the decree is in the same spirit. The immediate and avowed pretext for this measure was, that the popular societies, who have of late only sent petitions disagreeable to the Convention, did not express the sense of the people. Yet the deposition of the King, and the establishment of the republic, had no other sanction than the adherence of these clubs, who are now allowed not to be the nation, and whose very existence as then constituted is declared to be subversive of government.

It is not improbable, that the Convention, by suffering the clubs still to exist, after reducing them to nullity, may hope to preserve the institution as a future resource against the people, while it represses their immediate efforts against itself. The Brissotins would have attempted a similar policy, but they had nothing to oppose to the Jacobins, except their personal influence. Brissot and Roland took part with the clubs, as they approved the massacres of August and September, just as far as it answered their purpose; and when they were abandoned by the one, and the other were found to incur an unprofitable odium, they acted the part which Tallien and Freron act now under the same circumstances, and would willingly have promoted the destruction of a power which had become inimical to them.\*—

\* Brissot and Roland were more pernicious as Jacobins than the most furious of their successors. If they did not in person excite the people to the commission of crimes, they corrupted them, and made them fit instruments for the crimes of others. Brissot might affect to condemn the massacres of September in the gross, but he is known to have enquired with eager impatience, and in a tone which implied he had reasons for expecting it,

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whether De Morande, an enemy he wished to be released from, was among the murdered.

—Their imitators, without possessing more honesty, either political or moral, are more fortunate; and not only Tallien and Freron, who since their expulsion from the Jacobins have become their most active enemies, are now in a manner popular, but even the whole Convention is much less detested than it was before.

It is the singular felicity of the Assembly to derive a sort of popularity from the very excesses it has occasioned or sanctioned, and which, it was natural to suppose, would have consigned it for ever to vengeance or obloquy; but the past sufferings of the people have taught them to be moderate in their expectations; and the name of their representation has been so connected with tyranny of every sort, that it appears an extraordinary forbearance when the usual operations of guillotines and mandates of arrest are suspended.

Thus, though the Convention have not in effect repaired a thousandth part of their own acts of injustice, or done any good except from necessity, they are overwhelmed with applauding addresses, and affectionate injunctions not to quit their post. What is still more wonderful, many of these are sincere; and Tallien, Freron, Legendre, &c. with all their revolutionary enormities on their heads, are now the heroes of the reviving aristocrats.

Situated as things are at present, there is much sound policy in flattering the Convention into a proper use of their power, rather than making a convulsive effort to deprive them of it. The Jacobins would doubtless avail themselves of such a movement; and this is so much apprehended, that it has given rise to a general though tacit agreement to foment the divisions between the Legislature and the Clubs, and to support the first, at least until it shall have destroyed the latter.

The late decrees, which obstruct the intercourse and affiliation of popular societies, may be regarded as an event not only beneficial to this country, but to the world in general; because it is confessed, that these combinations, by means of which the French monarchy was subverted, and the King brought to the scaffold, are only reconcileable with a barbarous and anarchical government.

The Convention are now much occupied on two affairs, which call forth all their “natural propensities,” and afford a farther confirmation of this fact—that their feelings and principles are always instinctively at war with justice, however they may find it expedient to affect a regard for it—*C’est la chatte metamorphosee en femme* [The cat turned into a woman.]—

*"En vain de son train ordinaire"  
"On la veut desaccoutumer,  
"Quelque chose qu'on puisse faire  
"On ne fauroit la reformer."  
La Fontaine.*

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The Deputies who were imprisoned as accomplices of the Girondists, and on other different pretexts, have petitioned either to be brought to trial or released; and the abominable conduct of Carrier at Nantes is so fully substantiated, that the whole country is impatient to have some steps taken towards bringing him to punishment: yet the Convention are averse from both these measures—they procrastinate and elude the demand of their seventy-two colleagues, who were arrested without a specific charge; while they almost protect Carrier, and declare, that in cases which tend to deprive a Representative of his liberty, it is better to reflect thirty times than once. This is curious doctrine with men who have sent so many people arbitrarily to the scaffold, and who now detain seventy-two Deputies in confinement, they know not why.

The ashes of Rousseau have recently been deposited with the same ceremonies, and in the same place, as those of Marat. We should feel for such a degradation of genius, had not the talents of Rousseau been frequently misapplied; and it is their misapplication which has levelled him to an association with Marat. Rousseau might be really a fanatic, and, though eccentric, honest; yet his power of adorning impracticable systems, it must be acknowledged, has been more mischievous to society than a thousand such gross impostors as Marat.

I have learned since my return from the Providence, the death of Madame Elizabeth. I was ill when it happened, and my friends took some pains to conceal an event which they knew would affect me. In tracing the motives of the government for this horrid action, it may perhaps be sufficiently accounted for in the known piety and virtues of this Princess; but reasons of another kind have been suggested to me, and which, in all likelihood, contributed to hasten it. She was the only person of the royal family of an age competent for political transactions who had not emigrated, and her character extorted respect even from her enemies. [The Prince of Conti was too insignificant to be an object of jealousy in this way.] She must therefore, of course, since the death of the Queen, have been an object of jealousy to all parties. Robespierre might fear that she would be led to consent to some arrangement with a rival faction for placing the King on the throne—the Convention were under similar apprehensions with regard to him; so that the fate of this illustrious sufferer was probably gratifying to every part of the republicans.

I find, on reading her trial, (if so it may be called,) a repetition of one of the principal charges against the Queen—that of trampling on the national colours at Versailles, during an entertainment given to some newly-arrived troops. Yet I have been assured by two gentlemen, perfectly informed on the subject, and who were totally unacquainted with each other, that this circumstance, which has been so usefully enlarged upon, is false,\* and that the whole calumny originated in the jealousy of a part of the national guard who had not been invited.

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\* This infamous calumny (originally fabricated by Lecointre the linen draper, then an officer of the National Guard, now a member of the council of 500) was amply confuted by M. Mounier, who was President of the States-General at the time, in a publication intitled "*Expose de ma Conduite*," which appeared soon after the event—in the autumn of 1789.—Editor.

But this, as well as the taking of the Bastille, and other revolutionary falsehoods, will, I trust, be elucidated. The people are now undeceived only by their calamities—the time may come, when it will be safe to produce their conviction by truth. Heroes of the fourteenth of July, and patriots of the tenth of August, how will ye shrink from it!—Yours, &c.

Amiens, Nov. 2, 1794.

Every post now brings me letters from England; but I perceive, by the suppressed congratulations of my friends, that, though they rejoice to find I am still alive, they are far from thinking me in a state of security. You, my dear Brother, must more particularly have lamented the tedious confinement I have endured, and the inconveniencies to which I have been subjected; I am, however, persuaded that you would not wish me to have been exempt from a persecution in which all the natives of England, who are not a disgrace to their country, as well as some that are so, have shared. Such an exemption would now be deemed a reproach; for, though it must be confessed that few of us have been voluntary sufferers, we still claim the honour of martyrdom, and are not very tolerant towards those who, exposed by their situation, may be supposed to have owed their protection to their principles.

There are, indeed, many known revolutionists and republicans, who, from party disputes, personal jealousies, or from being comprised in some general measure, have undergone a short imprisonment; and these men now wish to be confounded with their companions who are of a different description. But such persons are carefully distinguished;\* and the aristocrats have, in their turn, a catalogue of suspicious people—that is, of people suspected of not having been suspicious.

\* Mr. Thomas Paine, for instance, notwithstanding his sufferings, is still thought more worthy of a seat in the Convention or the Jacobins, than of an apartment in the Luxembourg.—Indeed I have generally remarked, that the French of all parties hold an English republican in peculiar abhorrence.

It is now the fashion to talk of a sojourn in a maison d'arret with triumph; and the more decent people, who from prudence or fear had been forced to seek refuge in the Jacobin clubs, are now solicitous to proclaim their real motives. The red cap no longer "rears its hideous front" by day, but is modestly converted into a night-cap; and the bearer of a *diplome de Jacobin*, instead of swinging along, to the annoyance of all the passengers he meets, paces soberly with a diminished height, and an air not unlike



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what in England we call sneaking. The bonnet rouge begins likewise to be effaced from flags at the doors; and, as though this emblem of liberty were a very bad neighbour to property, its relegation seems to encourage the re-appearance of silver forks and spoons, which are gradually drawn forth from their hiding-places, and resume their stations at table. The Jacobins represent themselves as being under the most cruel oppression, declare that the members of the Convention are aristocrats and royalists, and lament bitterly, that, instead of fish-women, or female patriots of republican external, the galleries are filled with auditors in flounces and anti-civic top-knots, femmes a fontanges.

These imputations and grievances of the Jacobins are not altogether without foundation. People in general are strongly impressed with an idea that the Assembly are veering towards royalism; and it is equally true, that the speeches of Tallien and Freron are occasionally heard and applauded by fair elegantes, who, two years ago, would have recoiled at the name of either. It is not that their former deeds are forgotten, but the French are grown wise by suffering; and it is politic, when bad men act well, whatever the motive, to give them credit for it, as nothing is so likely to make them persevere, as the hope that their reputation is yet retrievable. On this principle the aristocrats are the eulogists of Tallien, while the Jacobins remind him hourly of the massacres of the priests, and his official conduct as Secretary to the municipality of Paris.\*

\* Tallien was Secretary to the Commune of Paris in 1792, and on the thirty-first of August he appeared at the bar of the Legislative Assembly with an address, in which he told them "he had caused the refractory priests to be arrested and confined, and that in a few days the Land of Liberty should be freed of them."—The massacres of the prisons began two days after!

As soon as a Representative is convicted of harbouring an opinion unfavourable to pillage or murder, he is immediately declared an aristocrat; or, if the Convention happen for a moment to be influenced by reason or justice, the hopes and fears of both parties are awakened by suspicions that the members are converts to royalism.—For my own part, I believe they are and will be just what their personal security and personal interest may suggest, though it is but a sorry sort of panegyric on republican ethics to conclude, that every one who manifests the least symptom of probity or decency, must of course be a royalist or an aristocrat.



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Notwithstanding the harmony which appears to subsist between the Convention and the people, the former is much less popular in detail than in the gross. Almost every member who has been on mission, is accused of dilapidations and cruelties so heinous, that, if they had not been committed by Representans du Peuple, the criminal courts would find no difficulty in deciding upon them.—But as theft or murder does not deprive a member of his privileges, complaints of this nature are only cognizable by the Assembly, which, being yet in its first days of regeneration, is rather scrupulous of defending such amusements overtly. Alarmed, however, at the number, and averse from the precedent of these denunciations, it has now passed a variety of decrees, which are termed a guarantee of the national representation, and which in fact guarantee it so effectually, that a Deputy may do any thing in future with impunity, provided it does not affect his colleagues. There are now so many forms, reports, and examinations, that several months may be employed before the person of a delinquent, however notorious his guilt, can be secured. The existence of a fellow-creature should, doubtless, be attacked with caution; for, though he may have forfeited his claims on our esteem, and even our pity, religion has preserved him others, of which he should not be deprived.—But when we recollect that all these merciful ceremonies are in favour of a Carrier or a Le Bon, and that the King, Madame Elizabeth, and thousands of innocent people, were hurried to execution, without being allowed the consolations of piety or affection, which only a mockery of justice might have afforded them; when, even now, priests are guillotined for celebrating masses in private, and thoughtless people for speaking disrespectfully of the Convention—the heart is at variance with religion and principle, and we regret that mercy is to be the exclusive portion of those who were never accessible to its dictates.\*

\* The denunciation being first presented to the Assembly, they are to decide whether it shall be received. If they determine in the affirmative, it is sent to the three Committees of Legislation, Public Welfare, and General Safety, to report whether there may be room for farther examination. In that case, a commission of twenty-one members is appointed to receive the proofs of the accuser, and the defence of the accused. These Commissioners, after as long a delay as they may think fit to interpose, make known their opinion; and if it be against the accused, the Convention proceed to determine finally whether the matter shall be referred to the ordinary tribunal. All this time the culprit is at large, or, at worst, and merely for the form, carelessly guarded at his own dwelling.

I would not “pick bad from bad,” but it irks one’s spirit to see these miscreants making “assurance doubly sure,” and providing for their own safety with such solicitude, after sacrificing, without remorse, whatever was most interesting or respectable in the country.—Yours, &c.

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Basse-ville, Arras, Nov. 6, 1794.

Since my own liberation, I have been incessantly employed in endeavouring to procure the return of my friends to Amiens; who, though released from prison some time, could not obtain passports to quit Arras. After numerous difficulties and vexations, we have at length succeeded, and I am now here to accompany them home.

I found Mr. and Mrs. D\_\_\_\_ much altered by the hardships they have undergone: Mrs. D\_\_\_\_, in particular, has been confined some months in a noisome prison called the Providence, originally intended as a house of correction, and in which, though built to contain an hundred and fifty persons, were crowded near five hundred females, chiefly ladies of Arras and the environs.—The superintendence of this miserable place was entrusted to a couple of vulgar and vicious women, who, having distinguished themselves as patriots from the beginning of the revolution, were now rewarded by Le Bon with an office as profitable as it was congenial to their natures.

I know not whether it is to be imputed to the national character, or to that of the French republicans only, but the cruelties which have been committed are usually so mixed with licentiousness, as to preclude description. I have already noticed the conduct of Le Bon, and it must suffice to say, his agents were worthy of him, and that the female prisoners suffered every thing which brutality, rapaciousness, and indecency, could inflict. Mr. D\_\_\_\_ was, in the mean time, transferred from prison to prison—the distress of separation was augmented by their mutual apprehensions and pecuniary embarrassments—and I much fear, the health and spirits of both are irretrievably injured.

I regret my impatience in coming here, rather than waiting the arrival of my friends at home; for the changes I observe, and the recollections they give birth to, oppress my heart, and render the place hateful to me.—All the families I knew are diminished by executions, and their property is confiscated—those whom I left in elegant hotels are now in obscure lodgings, subsisting upon the superfluities of better days—and the sorrows of the widows and orphans are increased by penury; while the Convention, which affects to condemn the crimes of Le Bon, is profiting by the spoils of his victims.

I am the more deeply impressed by these circumstances, because, when I was here in 1792, several who have thus fallen, though they had nothing to reproach themselves with, were yet so much intimidated as to propose emigrating; and I then was of opinion, that such a step would be impolitic and unnecessary. I hope and believe this opinion did not influence them, but I lament having given it, for the event has proved that a great part of the emigrants are justifiable. It always appeared to me so serious and great an

evil to abandon one's country, that when I have seen it done with indifference or levity, I may perhaps have sometimes

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transferred to the measure itself a sentiment of disapprobation, excited originally by the manner of its adoption. When I saw people expatiate with calmness, and heard them speak of it as a means of distinguishing themselves, I did not sufficiently allow for the tendency of the French to make the best of every thing, or the influence of vanity on men who allow it to make part of the national characteristic: and surely, if ever vanity were laudable, that of marking a detestation for revolutionary principles, and an attachment to loyalty and religion, may justly be considered so. Many whom I then accused of being too lightly affected by the prospect of exile, might be animated by the hope of personally contributing to the establishment of peace and order, and rescuing their country from the banditti who were oppressing it; and it is not surprising that such objects should dazzle the imagination and deceive the judgment in the choice of measures by which they were to be obtained.

The number of emigrants from fashion or caprice is probably not great; and whom shall we now dare to include under this description, when the humble artizan, the laborious peasant, and the village priest, have ensanguined the scaffold destined for the prince or the prelate?—But if the emigrants be justifiable, the refugees are yet more so.

By Emigrants, I mean all who, without being immediately in danger, left their country through apprehension of the future—from attachment to the persons of the Princes, or to join companions in the army whom they might deem it a disgrace to abandon.—Those whom I think may with truth be styled Refugees, are the Nobility and Priests who fled when the people, irritated by the literary terrorists of the day, the Brissots, Rolands, Camille Desmoulins, &c. were burning their chateaux and proscribing their persons, and in whom expatriation cannot properly be deemed the effect of choice. These, wherever they have sought an asylum, are entitled to our respect and sympathy.

Yet, I repeat, we are not authorized to discriminate. There is no reasoning coldly on the subject. The most cautious prudence, the most liberal sacrifices, and the meanest condescensions, have not insured the lives and fortunes of those who ventured to remain; and I know not that the absent require any other apology than the desolation of the country they have quitted. Had my friends who have been slaughtered by Le Bon's tribunal persisted in endeavouring to escape, they might have lived, and their families, though despoiled by the rapacity of the government, have been comparatively happy.\*

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\* The first horrors of the revolution are well known, and I have seen no accounts which exaggerate them. The niece of a lady of my acquaintance, a young woman only seventeen, escaped from her country-house (whilst already in flames) with her infant at her breast, and literally without clothes to cover her. In this state she wandered a whole night, and when she at length reached a place where she procured assistance, was so exhausted that her life was in danger.—Another lady, whom I knew, was wounded in the arm by some peasants assembled to force from her the writings of her husband's estates. Even after this they still remained in France, submitted with cheerfulness to all the demands of patriotic gifts, forced loans, requisitions and impositions of every kind; yet her husband was nevertheless guillotined, and the whole of their immense property confiscated.

Retrospections, like these, obliterate many of my former notions on the subject of the Emigrants; and if I yet condemn emigration, it is only as a general measure, impolitic, and inadequate to the purposes for which it was undertaken. But errors of judgment, in circumstances so unprecedented, cannot be censured consistently with candour, though we may venture to mark them as a discouragement to imitation; for if any nation should yet be menaced by the revolutionary scourge, let it beware of seeking external redress by a temporary abandonment of its interests to the madness of systemists, or the rapine of needy adventurers. We must, we ought to, lament the fate of the many gallant men who have fallen, and the calamities of those who survive; but what in them has been a mistaken policy, will become guilt in those who, on a similar occasion, shall not be warned by their example. I am concerned when I hear these unhappy fugitives are any where objects of suspicion or persecution, as it is not likely that those who really emigrated from principle can merit such treatment: and I doubt not, that most of the instances of treachery or misconduct ascribed to the Emigrants originated in republican emissaries, who have assumed that character for the double purpose of discrediting it, and of exercising their trade as spies.

The common people here, who were retained by Le Bon for several months to attend and applaud his executions, are still dissolute and ferocious, and openly regret the loss of their pay, and the disuse of the guillotine.

—I came to Arras in mourning, which I have worn since the receipt of your first letter, but was informed by the lady with whom my friends lodge, that I must not attempt to walk the streets in black, for that it was customary to insult those who did so, on a supposition that they were related to some persons who had been executed; I therefore borrowed a white undress, and stole out by night to visit my unfortunate acquaintance, as I found it was also dangerous to be seen entering houses known to contain the remains of those families which had been dismembered by Le Bon's cruelties.

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We return to Amiens to-morrow, though you must not imagine so formidable a person as myself is permitted to wander about the republic without due precaution; and I had much difficulty in being allowed to come, even attended by a guard, who has put me to a considerable expence; but the man is civil, and as he has business of his own to transact in the town, he is no embarrassment to me.

Amiens, Nov. 26, 1794.

The Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, and the National Convention, all seem to have acted from a persuasion, that their sole duty as revolutionists was comprised in the destruction of whatever existed under the monarchy. If an institution were discovered to have the slightest defect in principle, or to have degenerated a little in practice, their first step was to abolish it entirely, and leave the replacing it for the present to chance, and for the future to their successors. In return for the many new words which they have introduced into the French language, they have expunged that of reform; and the havock and devastation, which a Mahometan conqueror might have performed as successfully, are as yet the only effects of philosophy and republicanism.

This system of ignorance and violence seems to have persecuted with peculiar hostility all the ancient establishments for education; and the same plan of suppressing daily what they have neither leisure nor abilities to supply, which I remarked to you two years ago, has directed the Convention ever since. It is true, the interval has produced much dissertation, and engendered many projects; but those who were so unanimous in rejecting, were extremely discordant in adopting, and their own disputes and indecision might have convinced them of their presumption in condemning what they now found it so difficult to excel. Some decided in favour of public schools, after the example of Sparta—this was objected to by others, because, said they, if you have public schools you must have edifices, and governors, and professors, who will, to a certainty, be aristocrats, or become so; and, in short, this will only be a revival of the colleges of the old government—A third party proposed private seminaries, or that people might be at liberty to educate their children in the way they thought best; but this, it was declared, would have a still greater tendency to aristocracy; for the rich, being better able to pay than the poor, would engross all the learning to themselves. The Jacobins were of opinion, that there should be no schools, either public or private, but that the children should merely be taken to hear the debates of the Clubs, where they would acquire all the knowledge necessary for republicans; and a few spirits of a yet sublimer cast were adverse both to schools or clubs, and recommended, that the rising generation should “study the great book of Nature alone.” It is, however, at length concluded, that there shall be a certain number of public establishments, and that people shall even be allowed to have their children instructed at home, under the inspection of the constituted authorities, who are to prevent the instillation of aristocratic principles.\*

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\* We may judge of the competency of many of these people to be official censors of education by the following specimens from a report of Gregoire's. Since the rage for destruction has a little subsided, circular letters have been sent to the administrators of the departments, districts, &c. enquiring what antiquities, or other objects of curiosity, remain in their neighbourhood.—“From one, (says Gregoire,) we are informed, that they are possessed of nothing in this way except four vases, which, as they have been told, are of porphyry. From a second we learn, that, not having either forge or manufactory in the neighbourhood, no monument of the arts is to be found there: and a third announces, that the completion of its library cataloges has been retarded, because the person employed at them ne fait pas la diplomatique!”—(“does not understand the science of diplomacy.”)

The difficulty as to the mode in which children were to be taught being got over, another remained, not less liable to dispute—which was, the choice of what they were to learn. Almost every member had a favourite article—music, physic, prophylactics, geography, geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, natural history, and botany, were all pronounced to be requisites in an eleemosynary system of education, specified to be chiefly intended for the country people; but as this debate regarded only the primary schools for children in their earliest years, and as one man for a stipend of twelve hundred livres a year, was to do it all, a compromise became necessary, and it has been agreed for the present, that infants of six years shall be taught only reading, writing, gymnastics, geometry, geography, natural philosophy, and history of all free nations, and that of all the tyrants, the rights of man, and the patriotic songs. —Yet, after these years of consideration, and days of debate, the Assembly has done no more than a parish-clerk, or an old woman with a primer, and “a twig whilom of small regard to see,” would do better without its interference.

The students of a more advanced age are still to be disposed of, and the task of devising an institution will not be easy; because, perhaps a Collot d'Herbois or a Duhem is not satisfied with the system which perfected the genius of Montesquieu or Descartes. Change, not improvement, is the object—whatever bears a resemblance to the past must be proscribed; and while other people study to simplify modes of instruction, the French legislature is intent on rendering them as difficult and complex as possible; and at the moment they decree that the whole country shall become learned, they make it an unfathomable science to teach urchins of half a dozen years old their letters.

Foreigners, indeed, who judge only from the public prints, may suppose the French far advanced towards becoming the most erudite nation in Europe: unfortunately, all these schools, primary, and secondary, and central, and divergent, and normal,\* exist as yet but in the repertoires of the Convention, and perhaps may not add “a local habitation” to their names, till the present race\*\* shall be unfit to reap the benefit of them.



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\* *Les Ecoles Normales* were schools where masters were to be instructed in the art of teaching. Certain deputies objected to them, as being of feudal institution, supposing that Normale had some reference to Normandy.\*\* This was a mistake, for the French seem to have adopted the maxim, “that man is never too old to learn;” and, accordingly, at the opening of the Normal schools, the celebrated Bougainville, now eighty years of age, became a pupil. This Normal project was, however, soon relinquished—for by that fatality which has hitherto attended all the republican institutions, it was found to have become a mere nursery for aristocrats.

But this revolutionary barbarism, not content with stopping the progress of the rising generation, has ravaged without mercy the monuments of departed genius, and persecuted with senseless despotism those who were capable of replacing them. Pictures have been defaced, statues mutilated, and libraries burnt, because they reminded the people of their Kings or their religion; while artists, and men of science or literature, were wasting their valuable hours in prison, or expiring on the scaffold.—The moral and gentle Florian died of vexation. A life of abstraction and utility could not save the celebrated chymist, Lavoisier, from the Guillotine. La Harpe languished in confinement, probably, that he might not eclipse Chenier, who writes tragedies himself; and every author that refused to degrade his talents by the adulation of tyranny has been proscribed and persecuted. Palissot,\* at sixty years old, was destined to expiate in a prison a satire upon Rousseau, written when he was only twenty, and escaped, not by the interposition of justice, but by the efficacy of a bon mot.

\* Palissot was author of “The Philosophers,” a comedy, written thirty years ago, to ridicule Rousseau. He wrote to the municipality, acknowledged his own error, and the merits of Rousseau; yet, says he, if Rousseau were a god, you ought not to sacrifice human victims to him.—The expression, which in French is well tuned, pleased the municipality, and Palissot, I believe, was not afterwards molested.

—A similar fate would have been awarded Dorat, [Author of “*Les Malheurs de l’Inconstance*,” and other novels.] for styling himself Chevalier in the title-pages of his novels, had he not commuted his punishment for base eulogiums on the Convention, and with the same pen, which has been the delight of the French boudoir, celebrated Carrier’s murders on the Loire under the appellation of “baptêmes civiques.” Every province in France, we are informed by the eloquent pedantry of Gregoire, exhibits traces of these modern Huns, which, though now exclusively attributed to the agents of Robespierre and Mr. Pitt,\* it is very certain were authorized by the decrees of the Convention, and executed under the sanction of Deputies on mission, or their subordinates.



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\* *"Soyez sur que ces destructions se sont pour la plupart a l'instigation de nos ennemis —quel triomphe pour l'Anglais si il eul pu ecraser notre commerce par l'aneantissement des arts dont la culture enrichit le sien."*—"Rest assured that these demolitions were, for the most part, effected at the instigation of our enemies —what a triumph would it have been for the English, if they had succeeded in crushing our commerce by the annihilation of the arts, the culture of which enriched their own."

—If the principal monuments of art be yet preserved to gratify the national taste or vanity, it is owing to the courage and devotion of individuals, who obeyed with a protecting dilatoriness the destructive mandates of government.

At some places, orangeries were sold by the foot for fire-wood, because, as it was alledged, that republicans had more occasion for apples and potatoes than oranges.—At Mousseaux, the seals were put on the hot-houses, and all the plants nearly destroyed. Valuable remains of sculpture were condemned for a crest, a fleur de lys, or a coronet attached to them; and the deities of the Heathen mythology were made war upon by the ignorance of the republican executioners, who could not distinguish them from emblems of feodality.\*

\* At Anet, a bronze stag, placed as a fountain in a large piece of water, was on the point of being demolished, because stags are beasts of chace, and hunting is a feodal privilege, and stags of course emblems of feodality.—It was with some difficulty preserved by an amateur, who insisted, that stags of bronze were not included in the decree.—By a decree of the Convention, which I have formerly mentioned, all emblems of royalty or feodality were to be demolished by a particular day; and as the law made no distinction, it could not be expected that municipalities, &c. often ignorant or timid, should either venture or desire to spare what in the eyes of the connoisseur might be precious."At St. Dennis, (says the virtuoso Gregoire,) where the National Club justly struck at the tyrants even in their tombs, that of Turenne ought to have been spared; yet strokes of the sword are still visible on it."—He likewise complains, that at the Botanic Garden the bust of Linnaeus had been destroyed, on a presumption of its being that of Charles the Ninth; and if it had been that of Charles the Ninth, it is not easy to discern how the cause of liberty was served by its mutilation.—The artist or moralist contemplates with equal profit or curiosity the features of Pliny or Commodus; and History and Science will appreciate Linnaeus and Charles the Ninth, without regarding whether their resemblances occupy a palace, or are scattered in fragments by republican ignorance.—Long after the death of Robespierre, the people of Amiens humbly petitioned the Convention, that their cathedral, perhaps the most beautiful Gothic edifice in Europe,

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might be preserved; and to avoid giving offence by the mention of churches or cathedrals, they called it a Basilique.—But it is unnecessary to adduce any farther proof, that the spirit of what is now called Vandalism originated in the Convention. Every one in France must recollect, that, when dispatches from all corners announced these ravages, they were heard with as much applause, as though they had related so many victories gained over the enemy.

—Quantities of curious medals have been melted down for the trifling value of the metal; and at Abbeville, a silver St. George, of uncommon workmanship, and which Mr. Garrick is said to have desired to purchase at a very high price, was condemned to the crucible—

”——*Sur tant de tresors “Antiques monumens respectes jusqu’alors, “Par la destruction signalant leur puissance, “Las barbares etendirent leur stupide vengeance.” “La Religion,” Racine.*

Yet the people in office who operated these mischiefs were all appointed by the delegates of the Assembly; for the first towns of the republic were not trusted even with the choice of a constable. Instead, therefore, of feeling either surprise or regret at this devastation, we ought rather to rejoice that it has extended no farther; for such agents, armed with such decrees, might have reduced France to the primitive state of ancient Gaul. Several valuable paintings are said to have been conveyed to England, and it will be curious if the barbarism of France in the eighteenth century should restore to us what we, with a fanaticism and ignorance at least more prudent than theirs, sold them in the seventeenth. The zealots of the Barebones’ Parliament are, however, more respectable than the atheistical Vandals of the Convention; and, besides the benefit of our example, the interval of a century and an half, with the boast of a philosophy and a degree of illumination exceeding that of any other people, have rendered the errors of the French at once more unpardonable and more ridiculous; for, in assimilating their past presentations to their present conduct and situation, we do not always find it possible to regret without a mixture of contempt.

Amiens, Nov. 29, 1794.

The selfish policy of the Convention in affecting to respect and preserve the Jacobin societies, while it deprived them of all power, and help up the individuals who composed them to abhorrence, could neither satisfy nor deceive men versed in revolutionary expedients, and more accustomed to dictate laws than to submit to them.\*

\* The Jacobins were at this time headed by Billaud Varenne, Collot, Thuriot, &c.—veterans, who were not likely to be deceived by temporizing.

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Supported by all the force of government, and intrinsically formidable by their union, the Clubs had long existed in defiance of public reprobation, and for some time they had braved not only the people, but the government itself. The instant they were disabled from corresponding and communicating in that privileged sort of way which rendered them so conspicuous, they felt their weakness; and their desultory and unconnected efforts to regain their influence only served to complete its annihilation. While they pretended obedience to the regulations to which the Convention had subjected them, they intrigued to promote a revolt, and were strenuously exerting themselves to gain partizans among the idle and dissolute, who, having subsisted for months as members of revolutionary committees, and in other revolutionary offices, were naturally averse from a more moderate government. The numbers of these were far from inconsiderable: and, when it is recollected that this description of people only had been allowed to retain their arms, while all who had any thing to defend were deprived of them, we cannot wonder if the Jacobins entertained hopes of success.

The Convention, aware of these attempts, now employed against its ancient accomplices the same arts that had proved so fatal to all those whom it had considered as its enemies. A correspondence was “opportunely” intercepted between the Jacobins and the Emigrants in Switzerland, while emissaries insinuated themselves into the Clubs, for the purpose of exciting desperate motions; or, dispersed in public places, contrived, by assuming the Jacobin costume, to throw on the faction the odium of those seditious exclamations which they were employed to vociferate.

There is little doubt that the designs of the Jacobins were nearly such as have been imputed to them. They had, however, become more politic than to act thus openly, without being prepared to repel their enemies, or to support their friends; and there is every appearance that the Swiss plots, and the insurrections of the *Palais Egalite*, were the devices of the government, to give a pretext for shutting up the Club altogether, and to avert the real dangers with which it was menaced, by spreading an alarm of fictitious ones. A few idle people assembled (probably on purpose) about the *Palais Egalite*, and the place where the Jacobins held their meetings, and the exclamation of “Down with the Convention!” served as the signal for hostilities. The aristocrats joined the partizans of the Convention, the Jacobins were attacked in their hall, and an affray ensued, in which several persons on each side were wounded. Both parties accused each other of being the aggressor, and a report of the business was made to the Assembly; but the Assembly had already decided—and, on the ninth of November, while the Jacobins were endeavouring to raise the storm by a recapitulation of the rights of man, a decree was passed, prohibiting their debates, and ordering the national seal to be put on their doors and papers. The society were not in force to make resistance, and the decree was carried into execution as quietly as though it had been levelled against the hotel of some devoted aristocrat.

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When the news of this event reached the departments, it occasioned an universal rejoicing—not such a rejoicing as is ordered for the successes of the French arms, (which always seems to be a matter of great indifference,) but a chearfulness of heart and of countenance; and many persons whom I do not remember to have ever seen in the least degree moved by political events, appeared sincerely delighted at this—

“And those smile now, who never smil’d before,  
“And those who always smil’d, now smile the more.”  
Parnell’s Claudian.

The armies might proceed to Vienna, pillage the Escorial, or subjugate all Europe, and I am convinced no emotion of pleasure would be excited equal to that manifested at the downfall of the Jacobins of Paris.

Since this disgrace of the parent society, the Clubs in the departments have, for the most part, dissolved themselves, or dwindled into peaceable assemblies to hear the news read, and applaud the convention.—The few Jacobin emblems which were yet remaining have totally disappeared, and no vestige of Jacobinism is left, but the graves of its victims, and the desolation of the country.

The profligate, the turbulent, the idle, and needy, of various countries in Europe, have been tempted by the successes of the French Jacobins to endeavour to establish similar institutions; but the same successes have operated as a warning to people of a different description, and the fall of these societies has drawn two confessions from their original partizans, which ought never to be forgotten—namely, that they were formed for the purpose of subverting the monarchy, and that their existence is incompatible with regular government of any kind.—“While the monarchy still existed, (says the most philosophic Lequinio, with whose scheme of reforming La Vendee you are already acquainted,) it was politic and necessary to encourage popular societies, as the most efficacious means of operating its destruction; but now we have effected a revolution, and have only to consolidate it by mild and philosophic laws, these societies are dangerous, because they can produce only confusion and disorder.”—This is also the language of Brissot, who admires the Jacobins from their origin till the end of 1792, but after that period he admits they were only the instruments of faction, and destructive of all property and order.\*

\* The period of the Jacobin annals so much admired by Brissot, comprises the dethronement of the King, the massacres of the prisons, the banishment of the priests, &c. That which he reprobates begins precisely at the period when the Jacobins disputed the claims of himself and his party to the exclusive direction of the government.—See Brissot’s Address to his Constituents.

—We learn therefore, not from the abuses alone, but from the praises bestowed on the Jacobins, how much such combinations are to be dreaded. Their merit, it appears,

consisted in the subversion of the monarchical government, and their crime in ceasing to be useful as agents of tyranny, the moment they ceased to be principals.

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I am still sceptical as to the conversion of the Assembly, and little disposed to expect good from it; yet whatever it may attempt in future, or however its real principles may take an ascendant, this fortunate concurrence of personal interests, coalition of aristocrats and democrats, and political rivalry, have likewise secured France from a return of that excess of despotism which could have been exercised only by such means. It is true, the spirit of the nation is so much depressed, that an effort to revive these Clubs might meet no resistance; but the ridicule and opprobrium to which they have latterly been subject, and finally the manner of their being sacrificed by that very Convention, of which they were the sole creators and support, will, I think, cool the zeal, and diminish the numbers of their partizans too much for them ever again to become formidable.

The conduct of Carrier has been examined according to the new forms, and he is now on his trial—though not till the delays of the Convention had given rise to a general suspicion that they intended either to exonerate or afford him an opportunity of escaping; and the people were at last so highly exasperated, that six thousand troops were added to the military force of Paris, and an insurrection was seriously apprehended. This stimulated the diligence, or relaxed the indulgence, of the commission appointed to make the report on Carrier's conduct; and it being decided that there was room for accusation, the Assembly confirmed the decision, and he was ordered into custody, to be tried along with the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes which had been the instrument of his crimes.

It is a circumstance worth noting, that most of the Deputies who explained the motives on which they thought Carrier guilty, were silent on the subject of his drowning, shooting, and guillotining so many thousands of innocent people, and only declared him guilty, as having been wanting in respect towards Trehouard, one of his colleagues, and of injuring the republican cause by his atrocities.

The fate of this monster exhibits a practical exposition of the enormous absurdity of such a government. He is himself tried for the exercise of a power declared to be unbounded when entrusted to him. The men tried with him as his accomplices were obliged by the laws to obey him; and the acts of which they are all accused were known, applauded, and held out for imitation, by the Convention, who now declare those very acts to be criminal!—There is certainly no way of reconciling justice but by punishing both chiefs and subordinates, and the hour for this will yet come.—Adieu.

Amiens. [No date given.]

I do not yet venture to correspond with my Paris friends by the post, but whenever the opportunity of private conveyance occurs, I receive long and circumstantial letters, as well as packets, of all the publications most read, and the theatrical pieces most applauded. I have lately drudged through great numbers of these last, and bestowed

on them an attention they did not in themselves deserve, because I considered it as one means of judging both of the spirit of the government and the morals of the people.

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The dramas produced at the beginning of the revolution were in general calculated to corrupt the national taste and morals, and many of them were written with skill enough to answer the purpose for which they were intended; but those that have appeared during the last two years, are so stupid and so depraved, that the circumstance of their being tolerated even for a moment implies an extinction both of taste and of morals.\*

\* *"Dans l'espace d'un an ils ont failli detruire le produit de plusieurs siecles de civilization."*—"In the space of a year they nearly destroyed the fruits of several ages of civilization.")

The principal cause of this is the despotism of the government in making the stage a mere political engine, and suffering the performance of such pieces only as a man of honesty or genius would not submit to write.\*

\* The tragedy of Brutus was interdicted on account of these two lines:

*"Arreter un romain sur de simple soupcons,  
"C'est agir en tyrans, nous qui les punissons."*

That of Mahomet for the following:

*"Exterminez, grands dieux, de la terre ou nous sommes  
"Quiconque avec plaisir repand le sang des hommes."*

It is to be remarked, that the last lines are only a simple axiom of humanity, and could not have been considered as implying a censure on any government except that of the French republic.

—Hence a croud of scribblers, without shame or talents, have become the exclusive directors of public amusements, and, as far as the noise of a theatre constitutes success, are perhaps more successful than ever was Racine or Moliere. Immorality and dulness have an infallible resource against public disapprobation in the abuse of monarchy and religion, or a niche for Mr. Pitt; and an indignant or impatient audience, losing their other feelings in their fears, are glad to purchase the reputation of patriotism by applauding trash they find it difficult to endure. The theatres swarm with spies, and to censure a revolutionary piece, however detestable even as a composition, is dangerous, and few have courage to be the critics of an author who is patronized by the superintendants of the guillotine, or who may retaliate a comment on his poetry by the significant prose of a mandat d'arret.

Men of literature, therefore, have wisely preferred the conservation of their freedom to the vindication of their taste, and have deemed it better to applaud at the Theatre de la Republique, than lodge at St. Lazare or Duplessis.—Thus political slavery has assisted





moral depravation: the writer who is the advocate of despotism, may be dull and licentious by privilege, and is alone exempt from the laws of Parnassus and of decency. —One Sylvan Marechal, author of a work he calls philosophie, has written a sort of farce, which has been performed very generally,

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where all the Kings in Europe are brought together as so many monsters; and when the King of France is enquired after as not being among them, a Frenchman answers,—“Oh, he is not here—we have guillotined him—we have cut off his head according to law.”—In one piece, the hero is a felon escaped from the galleys, and is represented as a patriot of the most sublime principles; in another, he is the virtuous conductor of a gang of banditti; and the principal character in a third, is a ploughman turned deist and politician.

Yet, while these malevolent and mercenary scribblers are ransacking past ages for the crimes of Kings or the abuses of religion, and imputing to both many that never existed, they forget that neither their books nor their imagination are able to furnish scenes of guilt and misery equal to those which have been presented daily by republicans and philosophers. What horror can their mock-tragedies excite in those who have contemplated the Place de la Revolution? or who can smile at a farce in ridicule of monarchy, that beholds the Convention, and knows the characters of the men who compose it?—But in most of these wretched productions the absurdity is luckily not less conspicuous than the immoral intention: their Princes, their Priests, their Nobles, are all tyrannical, vicious, and miserable; yet the common people, living under these same vicious tyrants, are described as models of virtue, hospitality, and happiness. If, then, the auditors of such edifying dramas were in the habit of reasoning, they might very justly conclude, that the ignorance which republicanism is to banish is desirable, and that the diffusion of riches with which they have been flattered, will only increase their vices, and subtract from their felicity.

There are, however, some patriotic spirits, who, not insensible to this degeneracy of the French theatre, and lamenting the evil, have lately exercised much ingenuity in developing the cause. They have at length discovered, that all the republican tragedies, flat farces, and heavy comedies, are attributable to Mr. Pitt, who has thought proper to corrupt the authors, with a view to deprave the public taste. There is, certainly, no combating this charge; for as, according to the assertions of the Convention, Mr. Pitt has succeeded in bribing nearly every other description of men in the republic, we may suppose the consciences of such scribblers not less flexible. Mr. Pitt, indeed, stands accused, sometimes in conjunction with the Prince of Cobourg, and sometimes on his own account, of successively corrupting the officers of the fleet and army, all the bankers and all the farmers, the priests who say masses, and the people who attend them, the chiefs of the aristocrats, and the leaders of the Jacobins. The bakers who refuse to bake when they have no flour, and the populace who murmur when they have no bread, besides the merchants and shopkeepers who prefer coin to assignats, are notoriously pensioned by him: and even a part of the Representatives, and all the frail beauties, are said to be enlisted in his service.—These multifarious charges will be found on the journals of the Assembly, and we must of course infer, that Mr. Pitt is the ablest statesman, or the French the most corrupt nation, existing.

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But it is not only Barrere and his colleagues who suppose the whole country bribeable—the notion is common to the French in general; and vanity adding to the omnipotence of gold, whenever they speak of a battle lost, or a town taken, they conclude it impossible to have occurred but through the venal treachery of their officers.—The English, I have observed, always judge differently, and would not think the national honour sustained by a supposition that their commanders were vulnerable only in the hand. If a general or an admiral happen to be unfortunate, it would be with the utmost reluctance that we should think of attributing his mischance to a cause so degrading; yet whoever has been used to French society will acknowledge, that the first suggestion on such events is "*nos officiers ont ete gagnes*," [Our officers were bought.] or "*sans la trahison ce ne seroit pas arrive*." [This could not have happened without treachery.]—Pope's hyperbole of

"Just half the land would buy, and half be sold,"

is more than applicable here; for if we may credit the French themselves, the buyers are by no means so well proportioned to the sellers.

As I have no new political intelligence to comment upon, I shall finish my letter with a domestic adventure of the morning.—Our house was yesterday assigned as the quarters of some officers, who, with part of a regiment, were passing this way to join the Northern army. As they spent the evening out, we saw nothing of them, but finding one was a Colonel, and the other a Captain, though we knew what republican colonels and captains might be, we thought it civil, or rather necessary, to send them an invitation to breakfast. We therefore ordered some milk coffee early, (for Frenchmen seldom take tea,) and were all assembled before the usual time to receive our military guests. As they did not, however, appear, we were ringing to enquire for them, when Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ entered from his morning walk, and desired us to be at ease on their account, for that in passing the kitchen, he had perceived the Captain fraternizing over some onions, bread, and beer, with our man; while the Colonel was in close conference with the cook, and watching a pan of soup, which was warming for his breakfast. We have learned since, that these heroes were very willing to accept of any thing the servants offered them, but could not be prevailed upon to approach us; though, you are to understand, this was not occasioned either by timidity or incivility, but by mere ignorance. --Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ says, the Marquise and I have not divested ourselves of aristocratic associations with our ideas of the military, and that our *deshabilles* this morning were unusually coquetish. Our projects of conquest were, however, all frustrated by the unlucky intervention of Bernardine's *soupe aux choux*, [Cabbage-soup.] and Eustace's regale of cheese and onions.

"And with such beaux 'tis vain to be a belle."

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Yours, &c.

Amiens, Dec. 10, 1794.

Your American friend passed through here yesterday, and delivered me the two parcels. As marks of your attention, they were very acceptable; but on any other account, I assure you, I should have preferred a present of a few pecks of wheat to all your fineries.

I have been used to conclude, when I saw such strange and unaccountable absurdities given in the French papers as extracts from the debates in either of your Houses of Parliament, that they were probably fabricated here to serve the designs of the reigning factions: yet I perceive, by some old papers which came with the muslins, that there are really members so ill-informed or so unprincipled, as to use the language attributed to them, and who assert that the French are attached to their government, and call France “a land of republicans.”

When it is said that a people are republicans, we must suppose they are either partial to republicanism as a system, or that they prefer it in practice. A little retrospection, perhaps, will determine both these points better than the eloquence of your orators.

A few men, of philosophic or restless minds, have, in various ages and countries, endeavoured to enlighten or disturb the world by examinations and disputes on forms of government; yet the best heads and the best hearts have remained divided on the subject, and I never heard that any writer was able to produce more than a partial conviction, even in the most limited circle. Whence, then, did it happen in France, where information was avowedly confined, and where such discussions could not have been general, that the people became suddenly inspired with this political sagacity, which made them in one day the judges and converts of a system they could scarcely have known before, even by name?—At the deposition of the King, the French, (speaking at large,) had as perspicuous a notion of republics, as they may be supposed to have of mathematics, and would have understood Euclid’s Elements as well as the Social Contract. Yet an assemblage of the worst and most daring men from every faction, elected amidst massacres and proscription, the moment they are collected together, declare, on the proposal of Collot d’Herbois, a profligate strolling player, that France shall be a republic.—Admitting that the French were desirous of altering their form of government, I believe no one will venture to say such an inclination was ever manifested, or that the Convention were elected in a manner to render them competent to such a decision. They were not the choice of the people, but chiefly emissaries imposed on the departments by the Jacobins and the municipality of Paris; and let those who are not acquainted with the means by which the elections were obtained, examine the composition of the Assembly itself, and then decide whether any people being free could have selected such men as Petion, Tallien, Robespierre, Brissot,

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Carrier, Taillefer, &c. &c. from the whole nation to be their Representatives.—There must, in all large associations, be a mixture of good and bad; but when it is incontrovertible that the principal members of the Convention are monsters, who, we hope, are not to be paralleled—that the rest are inferior rather in talents than wickedness, or cowards and ideots, who have supported and applauded crimes they only wanted opportunity to commit—it is not possible to conceive, that any people in the world could make a similar choice. Yet if the French were absolutely unbiassed, and of their own free will made this collection, who would, after such an example, be the advocates of general suffrage and popular representation?—But, I repeat, the people were not free. They were not, indeed, influenced by bribes—they were intimidated by the horrors of the moment; and along with the regulations for the new elections, were every where circulated details of the assassinations of August and September.\*

\* The influence of the municipality of Paris on the new elections is well known. The following letter will show what instruments were employed, and the description of Representatives likely to be chosen under such auspices.

“Circular letter, written by the Committee of Inspection of the municipality of Paris to all the departments of the republic, dated the third of September, the second day of the massacres:

“The municipality of Paris is impatient to inform their brethren of the departments, that a part of the ferocious conspirators detained in the prisons have been put to death by the people: an act of justice which appeared to them indispensable, to restrain by terror those legions of traitors whom they must have left behind when they departed for the army. There is no doubt but the whole nation, after such multiplied treasons, will hasten to adopt the same salutary measure!”—Signed by the Commune of Paris and the Minister of Justice.

Who, after this mandate, would venture to oppose a member recommended by the Commune of Paris?

—The French, then, neither chose the republican form of government, nor the men who adopted it; and are, therefore, not republicans on principle.—Let us now consider whether, not being republicans on principle, experience may have rendered them such.

The first effects of the new system were an universal consternation, the disappearance of all the specie, an extravagant rise in the price of provisions, and many indications of scarcity. The scandalous quarrels of the legislature shocked the national vanity, by making France the ridicule of all Europe, until ridicule was suppressed by detestation at the subsequent murder of the King. This was followed by the efforts of one faction to strengthen itself against another, by means of a general war—the leaders of the former presuming, that they alone were capable of conducting it.

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To the miseries of war were added revolutionary tribunals, revolutionary armies and committees, forced loans, requisitions, maximums, and every species of tyranny and iniquity man could devise or suffer; or, to use the expression of Rewbell, [One of the Directory in 1796.] "France was in mourning and desolation; all her families plunged in despair; her whole surface covered with Bastilles, and the republican government become so odious, that the most wretched slave, bending beneath the weight of his chains, would have refused to live under it!"

Such were the means by which France was converted into a land of republicans, and such the government to which your patriots assert the French people were attached: yet so little was this attachment appreciated here, that the mere institutions for watching and suppressing disaffection amount, by the confession of Cambon, the financier, to twenty-four millions six hundred and thirty-one thousand pounds sterling a year!

To suppose, then, that the French are devoted to a system which has served as a pretext for so many crimes, and has been the cause of so many calamities, is to conclude them a nation of philosophers, who are able to endure, yet incapable of reasoning; and who suffer evils of every kind in defence of a principle with which they can be little acquainted, and which, in practice, they have known only by the destruction it has occasioned.

You may, perhaps, have been persuaded, that the people submit patiently now, for the sake of an advantage in perspective; but it is not in the disposition of unenlightened men (and the mass of a people must necessarily be so) to give up the present for the future. The individual may sometimes achieve this painful conquest over himself, and submit to evil, on a calculation of future retribution, but the multitude will ever prefer the good most immediately attainable, if not under the influence of that terror which supersedes every other consideration. Recollect, then, the counsel of the first historian of our age, and "suspend your belief of whatever deviates from the laws of nature and the character of man;" and when you are told the French are attached to a government which oppresses them, or to principles of which they are ignorant, suppose their adoption of the one, and their submission to the other, are the result of fear, and that those who make these assertions to the contrary, are either interested or misinformed.

Excuse me if I have devoted a few pages to a subject which with you is obsolete. I am indignant at the perusal of such falsehoods; and though I feel for the humiliation of great talents, I feel still more for the disgrace such an abuse of them brings on our country.

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It is not inapposite to mention a circumstance which happened to a friend of Mr. D\_\_\_\_'s, some little time since, at Paris. He was passing through France, in his way from Italy, at the time of the general arrest, and was detained there till the other day. As soon as he was released from prison, he applied in person to a member of the Convention, to learn when he might hope to return to England. The Deputy replied, "*Ma soi je n'en sais rien* [Faith I can't tell you.]—If your Messieurs (naming some members in the opposition) had succeeded in promoting a revolution, you would not have been in your cage so long—*mais pour le coup il faut attendre.*" [But now you must have patience.] It is not probable the members he named could have such designs, but Dumont once held the same

language to me; and it is mortifying to hear these miscreants suppose, that factious or ambitious men, because they chance to possess talents, can make revolutions in England as they have done in France.

In the papers which gave rise to these reflections, I observe that some of your manufacturing towns are discontented, and attribute the stagnation of their commerce to the war; but it is not unlikely, that the stagnation and failures complained of might have taken place, though the war had not happened.—When I came here in 1792, every shop and warehouse were over-stocked with English goods. I could purchase any article of our manufacture at nearly the retail price of London; and some I sent for from Paris, in the beginning of 1793, notwithstanding the reports of war, were very little advanced. Soon after the conclusion of the commercial treaty, every thing English became fashionable; and so many people had speculated in consequence, that similar speculations took place in England. But France was glutted before the war; and all speculations entered into on a presumption of a demand equal to that of the first years of the treaty, must have failed in a certain degree, though the two countries had remained at peace.—Even after a two years cessation of direct intercourse, British manufactures are every where to be procured, which is a sufficient proof that either the country was previously over supplied, or that they are still imported through neutral or indirect channels. Both these suppositions preclude the likelihood that the war has so great a share in relaxing the activity of your commerce, as is pretended.

But whatever may be the effect of the war, there is no prospect of peace, until the efforts of England, or the total ruin of the French finances,\* shall open the way for it.

\* By a report of Cambon's at this time, it appears the expences of France in 1792 were eighteen millions sterling—in 1793, near ninety millions—and, in the spring of 1794, twelve and a half millions per month!—The church bells, we learn from the same authority, cost in coinage, and the purchase of copper to mix with the metal, five or



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six millions of livres more than they produced as money. The church plate, which was brought to the bar of the Convention with such éclat, and represented as an inexhaustible resource, amounted to scarcely a million sterling: for as the offering was every where involuntary, and promoted by its agents for the purposes of pillage, part was secreted, a still greater part stolen, and, as the conveyance to Paris was a sort of job, the expences often exceeded the worth—a patine, a censor, and a small chalice, were sent to the Convention, perhaps an hundred leagues, by a couple of Jacobin Commissioners in a coach and four, with a military escort. Thus, the prejudices of the people were outraged, and their property wasted, without any benefit, even to those who suggested the measure.

—The Convention, indeed, have partly relinquished their project of destroying all the Kings of the earth, and forcing all the people to be free. But, though their schemes of reformation have failed, they still adhere to those of extirpation; and the most moderate members talk occasionally of “vile islanders,” and “sailing up the Thames.”\*—

\* The Jacobins and the Moderates, who could agree in nothing else, were here perfectly in unison; so that on the same day we see the usual invectives of Barrere succeeded by menaces equally ridiculous from Pelet and Tallien—

*"La seule chose dont nous devons nous occuper est d'écraser ce gouvernement infame."*

Discours de Pelet, 14 Nov.

“The destruction of that infamous government is the only thing that ought to engage our attention.”  
Pelet’s Speech, 14 Nov. 1794.

*"Aujourd'hui que la France peut en se débarrassant d'une partie de ses ennemis reporter la gloire de ses armes sur les bords de la Tamise, et écraser le gouvernement Anglais." Discours de Tallien.* “France, having now the opportunity of lessening the number of her enemies, may carry the glory of her arms to the banks of the Thames, and crush the English government.” Tallien’s Speech. *"Que le gouvernement prenne des mesures sages pour faire une paix honorable avec quelques uns de nos ennemis, et à l'aide des vaisseaux Hollands et Espagnols, portons nous ensuite avec vigueur sur les bords de la Tamise, et détruisons la nouvelle Carthage." Discours de Tallien, 14 Nov.* “Let the government but adopt wise measures for making an honorable peace with a part of our enemies, and with the aid of the Dutch and Spanish navies, let us repair to the banks of the Thames, and destroy the modern Carthage.” Tallien’s Speech, 14 Nov. 1794.



No one is here ignorant of the source of Tallien's predilection for Spain, and we may suppose the intrigue at this time far advanced. Probably the charms of his wife (the daughter of *Mons.* Cabarrus, a French speculator, formerly much encouraged by the Spanish government, afterwards disgraced and imprisoned, but now liberated) might not be the only means employed to procure his conversion.

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—Tallien, Clauzel, and those who have newly assumed the character of rational and decent people, still use the low and atrocious language of Brissot, on the day he made his declaration of war; and perhaps hope, by exciting a national spirit of vengeance against Great Britain, to secure their lives and their pay, when they shall have been forced to make peace on the Continent: for, be certain, the motives of these men are never to be sought for in any great political object, but merely in expedients to preserve their persons and their plunder.

Those who judge of the Convention by their daily harangues, and the justice, virtue, or talents which they ascribe to themselves, must believe them to be greatly regenerated: yet such is the dearth both of abilities and of worth of any kind, that Andre Dumont has been successively President of the Assembly, Member of the Committee of General Safety, and is now in that of Public Welfare.—Adieu.

Amiens, Dec. 16, 1794.

The seventy-three Deputies who have been so long confined are now liberated, and have resumed their seats. Jealousy and fear for some time rendered the Convention averse from the adoption of this measure; but the public opinion was so determined in favour of it, that farther resistance might not have been prudent. The satisfaction created by this event is general, though the same sentiment is the result of various conclusions, which, however, all tend to one object—the re-establishment of monarchy.

The idea most prevalent is, that these deputies, when arrested, were royalists.\*

\* This opinion prevailed in many places where the proscribed deputies took refuge. “The Normans (says Louvet) deceived by the imputations in the newspapers, assisted us, under the idea that we were royalists: but abandoned us when they found themselves mistaken.” In the same manner, on the appearance of these Deputies in other departments, armies were collecting very fast, but dispersed when they perceived these men were actuated only by personal fear or personal ambition, and that no one talked of restoring the monarchy.

—By some it is thought, persecution may have converted them; but the reflecting part of the nation look on the greater number as adherents of the Girondists, whom the fortunate violence of Robespierre excluded from participating in many of the past crimes of their colleagues, and who have, in that alone, a reason for not becoming accomplices in those which may be attempted in future.

It is astonishing to see with what facility people daily take on trust things which they have it in their power to ascertain. The seventy-three owe a great part of the interest they have excited to a persuasion of their having voted either for a mild sentence on the King, or an appeal to the nation: yet this is so far from being true, that many of them were unfavourable to him on every question. But supposing it to have been otherwise,

their merit is in reality little enhanced: they all voted him guilty, without examining whether he was so or not; and in affecting mercy while they refused justice, they only aimed at conciliating their present views with their future safety.

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The whole claim of this party, who are now the Moderates of the Convention, is reducible to their having opposed the commission of crimes which were intended to serve their adversaries, rather than themselves. To effect the dethronement of the King, and the destruction of those obnoxious to them, they approved of popular insurrections; but expected that the people whom they had rendered proficient in cruelty, should become gentle and obedient when urged to resist their own authority; yet they now come forth as victims of their patriotism, and call the heads of the faction who are fallen—martyrs to liberty! But if they are victims, it is to their folly or wickedness in becoming members of such an assembly; and if their chiefs were martyrs, it was to the principles they inculcated.

The trial of the Brissotins was justice, compared with that of the King. If the former were condemned without proof, their partizans should remember, that the revolutionary jury pretended to be influenced by the same moral evidence they had themselves urged as the ground on which they condemned the King; and if the people beheld with applause or indifference the execution of their once-popular idols, they only put in practice the barbarous lessons which those idols had taught them;—they were forbidden to lament the fate of their Sovereign, and they rejoiced in that of Brissot and his confederates.—These men, then, only found the just retribution of their own guilt; and though it may be politic to forget that their survivors were also their accomplices, they are not objects of esteem—and the contemporary popularity, which a long seclusion has obtained for them, will vanish, if their future conduct should be directed by their original principles.\*

\* Louvet's pamphlet had not at this time appeared, and the subsequent events proved, that the interest taken in these Deputies was founded on a supposition they had changed their principles; for before the close of the Convention they were as much objects of hatred and contempt as their colleagues.

Some of these Deputies were the hirelings of the Duke of Orleans, and most of them are individuals of no better reputation than the rest of the Assembly. Lanjuinais has the merit of having acted with great courage in defence of himself and his party on the thirty-first of May 1792; but the following anecdote, recited by Gregoire\* in the Convention a few days ago will sufficiently explain both his character and Gregoire's, who are now, however, looked up to as royalists, and as men comparatively honest.

\* Gregoire is one of the constitutional Clergy, and, from the habit of comparing bad with worse, is more esteemed than many of his colleagues; yet, in his report on the progress of Vandalism, he expresses himself with sanguinary indecency—"They have torn (says he) the prints which represented the execution of Charles the first, because there were coats of arms on them. Ah, would to god

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we could behold, engraved in the same manner, the heads of all Kings, done from nature! We might then reconcile ourselves to seeing a ridiculous embellishment of heraldry accompany them.”

—“When I first arrived at Versailles, (says Gregoire,) as member of the Constituent Assembly, (in 1789,) I met with Lanjuinais, and we took an oath in concert to dethrone the King and abolish Nobility.” Now, this was before the alledged provocations of the King and Nobility—before the constitution was framed—before the flight of the royal family to Varennes—and before the war. But almost daily confessions of this sort escape, which at once justify the King, and establish the infamy of the revolutionists.

These are circumstances not to be forgotten, did not the sad science of discriminating the shades of wickedness, in which (as I have before noticed) the French have been rendered such adepts, oblige them at present to fix their hopes—not according to the degree of merit, but by that of guilt. They are reduced to distinguish between those who sanction murders, and those who perpetrated them—between the sacrificer of one thousand victims, and that of ten—between those who assassinate, and those who only reward the assassin.\*

\* Tallien is supposed, as agent of the municipality of paris, to have paid a million and a half of livres to the Septembrisers or assassins of the prisons! I know not whether the sum was in assignats or specie.—If in the former, it was, according to the exchange then, about two and thirty thousand pounds sterling: but if estimated in proportion to what might be purchased with it, near fifty thousand. Tallien has never denied the payment of the money— we may, therefore, conclude the charge to be true.

—Before the revolution, they would not have known how to select, where all were objects of abhorrence; but now the most ignorant are casuists in the gradations of turpitude, and prefer Tallien to Le Bon, and the Abbe Sieyes to Barrere.

The crimes of Carrier have been terminated, not punished, by death. He met his fate with a courage which, when the effect of innocence, is glorious to the sufferer, and consoling to humanity; but a career like his, so ended, was only the confirmation of a brutal and ferocious mind.\*

\* When Carrier was arrested, he attempted to shoot himself, and, on being prevented by the Gens-d’armes, he told them there were members of the Convention who would not forgive their having prevented his purpose—implying, that they apprehended the discoveries he might make on his trial. While he was dressing himself, (for they took him in bed,) he added, “*Les Scelerats!* (Meaning his more particular accomplices, who, he was told, had voted against him,) they deserved that I should be as dastardly as themselves.” He rested his defence entirely on the decrees of the Convention.

—Of thirty who were tried with him as his

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agents, and convicted of assisting at the drownings, shootings, &c. two only were executed, the rest were acquitted; because, though the facts were proved, the moral latitude of the Revolutionary Jury\* did not find the guilt of the intention—that is, the culprits were indisputably the murderers of several thousand people, but, according to the words of the verdict, they did not act with a counter-revolutionary intention.

\* An English reader may be deceived by the name of Jury. The Revolutionary Jury was not only instituted, but even appointed by the Convention.—The following is a literal translation of some of the verdicts given on this occasion:

“That O’Sullivan is author and accomplice of several noyades (drownings) and unheard-of cruelties towards the victims delivered to the waves.

“That Lefevre is proved to have ordered and caused to be executed a noyade of men, women, and children, and to have committed various arbitrary acts.

“That General Heron is proved to have assassinated children, and worn publicly in his hat the ear of a man he had murdered. That he also killed two children who were peaceably watching sheep.

“That Bachelier is author and accomplice of the operations at Nantes, in signing arbitrary mandates of arrest, imposing vexatious taxes, and taking for himself plate, &c. found at the houses of citizens arrested on suspicion.

“That Joly is guilty, &c. in executing the arbitrary orders of the Revolutionary Committee, of tying together the victims destined to be drowned or shot.”

There are thirty-one articles conceived nearly in the same terms, and which conclude thus—“All convicted as above, but not having acted with criminal or counter-revolutionary intentions, the Tribunal acquits and sets them at liberty.” All France was indignant at those verdicts, and the people of Paris were so enraged, that the Convention ordered the acquitted culprits to be arrested again, perhaps rather for protection than punishment. They were sent from Paris, and I never heard the result; but I have seen the name of General Heron as being at large.

The Convention were certainly desirous that the atrocities of these men (all zealous republicans) should be forgotten; for, independently of the disgrace which their trial has brought on the cause, the sacrifice of such agents might create a dangerous timidity in future, and deprive the government of valuable partizans, who would fear to be the instruments of crimes for which, after such a precedent, they might become responsible. But the evil, which was unavoidable, has been palliated by the tenderness



or gratitude of a jury chosen by the Convention, who, by sacrificing two only of this mass of monsters, and protecting the rest, hope to consecrate the useful principle of indulgence for every act, whatever its enormity, which has been the consequence of zeal or obedience to the government.



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It is among the dreadful singularities of the revolution, that the greatest crimes which have been committed were all in strict observance of the laws. Hence the Convention are perpetually embarrassed by interest or shame, when it becomes necessary to punish them. We have only to compare the conduct of Carrier, le Bon, Maignet, &c. with the decrees under which they acted, to be convinced that their chief guilt lies in having been capable of obeying: and the convention, coldly issuing forth their rescripts of extermination and conflagration, will not, in the opinion of the moralist, be favorably distinguished from those who carried these mandates into execution.

December 24, 1794.

I am now at a village a few miles from Amiens, where, upon giving security in the usual form, we have been permitted to come for a few days on a visit to some relations of my friend Mad. de \_\_\_\_\_. On our arrival, we found the lady of the house in a nankeen pierrot, knitting grey thread stockings for herself, and the gentleman in a thick woollen jacket and pantaloons, at work in the fields, and really labouring as hard as his men.— They hope, by thus taking up the occupation and assuming the appearance of farmers, to escape farther persecution; and this policy may be available to those who have little to lose: but property is now a more dangerous distinction than birth, and whoever possesses it, will always be considered as the enemies of the republic, and treated accordingly.

We have been so much confined the last twelve months, that we were glad to ride yesterday in spite of the cold; and our hosts having procured asses for the females of the party, accompanied us themselves on foot.— During our ramble, we entered into conversation with two old men and a boy, who were at work in an open field near the road. They told us, they had not strength to labour, because they had not their usual quantity of bread—that their good lady, whose chateau we saw at a distance, had been guillotined, or else they should have wanted for nothing—"*Et ste pauvre Javotte la n'aurait pas travaille quant elle est qualsiment prete a mourir.*" ["And our poor Javotte there would not have had to work when she is almost in her grave."]—"Mon dieu," (says one of the old men, who had not yet spoke,) "*Je donnerais bien ma portion de sa terre pour la ravoir notre bonne dame.*" ["God knows, I would willingly give up my share of her estate to have our good lady amongst us again."]—"Ah pour ca oui," (returned the other,) "*mais j'crois que nous n'aurons ni l'une l'autre, voila ste maudite nation qui s'empare de tout.*" ["Ah truly, but I fancy we shall have neither one nor the other, for this cursed nation gets hold of every thing."]

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While they were going on in this style, a berline and four cabriolets, with three-coloured flags at the windows, and a whole troop of national guard, passed along the road. "*Vive la Republique!*"—"Vive la Nation!" cried our peasants, in an instant; and as soon as the cavalcade was out of sight, "*Voyez ste gueusaille la, quel train, c'est vraiment quelque depute de la Convention—ces brigands la, ils ne manquent de rien, ils vivent comme des rois, et nous autres nous sommes cent sois plus miserables que jamais.*" ["See there what a figure they make, those beggarly fellows—it's some deputy of the convention I take it. The thieves want for nothing, they live like so many kings, and we are all a hundred times worse off than ever."]—"Tais toi, tais toi," ["Be quiet, I tell you."] (says the old man, who seemed the least garrulous of the two.)—"Ne crains rien, ["Never fear."] (replied the first,) *c'est de braves gens*; these ladies and gentlemen I'm sure are good people; they have not the look of patriots."—And with this compliment to ourselves, and the externals of patriotism, we took our leave of them.

I found, however, by this little conversation, that some of the peasants still believe they are to have the lands of the gentry divided amongst them, according to a decree for that purpose. The lady, whom they lamented, and whose estate they expected to share, was the Marquise de B\_\_\_\_, who had really left the country before the revolution, and had gone to drink some of the German mineral waters, but not returning within the time afterwards prescribed, was declared an emigrant. By means of a friend, she got an application made to Chabot, (then in high popularity,) who for an hundred thousand livres procured a passport from the Executive Council to enter France. Upon the faith of this she ventured to return, and was in consequence, notwithstanding her passport, executed as an emigrant.

Mrs. D\_\_\_\_, who is not yet well enough for such an expedition, and is, besides, unaccustomed to our montures, remained at home. We found she had been much alarmed during our absence, every house in the village having been searched, by order of the district, for corn, and two of the horses taken to the next post to convey the retinue of the Deputy we had seen in the morning. Every thing, however, was tranquil on our arrival, and rejoicing it was no worse, though *Mons. \_\_\_\_* seemed to be under great apprehension for his horses, we sat down to what in France is called a late dinner.

Our host's brother, who left the army at the general exclusion of the Noblesse, and was in confinement at the Luxembourg until after the death of Robespierre, is a professed wit, writes couplets to popular airs, and has dramatized one of Plutarch's Lives. While we were at the desert, he amused us with some of his compositions in prison, such as an epigram on the Guillotine, half a dozen calembours on the bad

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fare at the *Gamelle*, [Mess.] and an ode on the republican victory at Fleurus—the last written under the hourly expectation of being sent off with the next *fournée* (batch) of pretended conspirators, yet breathing the most ardent attachment to the convention, and terminated by a full sounding line about tyrants and liberty.—This may appear strange, but the Poets were, for the most part, in durance, and the Muses must sing, though in a cage: hope and fear too both inspire prescriptively, and freedom might be obtained or death averted by these effusions of a devotion so profound as not to be alienated by the sufferings of imprisonment, or the menace of destruction. Whole volumes of little jeux d'esprit, written under these circumstances, might be collected from the different prisons; and, I believe, it is only in France that such a collection could have been furnished.\*

\* Many of these poetical trifles have been published—some written even the night before their authors were executed. There are several of great poetical merit, and, when considered relatively, are wonderful.—Among the various poets imprisoned, was one we should scarcely have expected—Rouget Delille, author of the Marseillois Hymn, who, while his muse was rousing the citizens from one end of the republic to the other to arm against tyrants, was himself languishing obscurely a victim to the worst of all tyrannies.

Mr. D\_\_\_\_, though he writes and speaks French admirably, does not love French verses; and I found he could not depend on the government of his features, while a French poet was reciting his own, but kept his eyes fixed on a dried apple, which he pared very curiously, and when that was atchieved, betook himself to breaking pralines, and extracting the almonds with equal application. We, however, complimented Monsieur's poetry; and when we had taken our coffee, and the servants were entirely withdrawn, he read us some trifles more agreeable to our principles, if not to our taste, and in which the Convention was treated with more sincerity than complaisance. It seems the poet's zeal for the republic had vanished at his departure from the Luxembourg, and that his wrath against coalesced despots, and his passion for liberty, had entirely evaporated. In the evening we played a party of reversi with republican cards,\* and heard the children sing "Mourrons pour la Patrie."

\* The four Kings are replaced by four Genii, the Queens by four sorts of liberty, and the Knaves by four descriptions of equality.

—After these civic amusements, we closed our chairs round the fire, conjecturing how long the republic might last, or whether we should all pass another twelve months in prison, and, agreeing that both our fate and that of the republic were very precarious, adjourned to rest.



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While I was undressing, I observed Angelique looked extremely discontented, and on my enquiring what was the matter, she answered, "*C'est que je m'ennuie beaucoup ici,*" ["I am quite tired of this place."] "Mademoiselle," (for no state or calling is here exempt from this polite sensation.) "And why, pray?"—"Ah *quelle triste societe, tout le monde est d'un patriotisme insoutenable, la maison est remplie d'images republicaines, des Marat, des Voltaire, des Pelletier, que sais-moi? et voila jusqu'au garçon de l'ecurie qui me traite de citoyenne.*" ["Oh, they are a sad set—every body is so insufferably patriotic. The house is full from top to bottom of republican images, Marats, and Voltaires, and Pelletiers, and I don't know who—and I am called Citizen even by the stable boy."] I did not think it right to satisfy her as to the real principles of our friends, and went to bed ruminating on the improvements which the revolution must have occasioned in the art of dissimulation. Terror has drilled people of the most opposite sentiments into such an uniformity of manner and expression, that an aristocrat who is ruined and persecuted by the government is not distinguishable from the Jacobin who has made his fortune under it.

In the morning Angelique's countenance was brightened, and I found she had slept in the same room with Madame's *femme de chambre*, when an explanation of their political creeds had taken place, so that she now assured me Mad. Augustine was "*fort honnete dans le fond,*" [A very good girl at heart.] though she was obliged to affect republicanism.—"All the world's a stage," says our great dramatic moralist. France is certainly so at present, and we are not only necessitated to act a part, but a sorry one too; for we have no choice but to exhibit in farce, or suffer in tragedy.—Yours, &c.

December 27, 1794.

I took the opportunity of my being here to go about four leagues farther to see an old convent acquaintance lately come to this part of the country, and whom I have not met since I was at Orleans in 1789.

The time has been when I should have thought such a history as this lady's a romance, but tales of woe are now become familiar to us, and, if they create sympathy, they no longer excite surprize, and we hear of them as the natural effects of the revolution.

Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d is the daughter of a gentleman whose fortune was inadequate both to his rank and manner of living, and he gladly embraced the offer of Monsieur de St. E\_\_m\_\_d to marry her at sixteen, and to relinquish the fortune allotted her to her two younger sisters. Monsieur de St. E\_\_m\_\_d, being a dissipated man, soon grew weary of any sort of domestic life, and placing his wife with her father, in less than a year after their marriage departed for Italy.—Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d, thus left in a situation both delicate and dangerous for a young and pretty woman, became unfortunately attached

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to a gentleman who was her distant relation: yet, far from adopting the immoral principles not unjustly ascribed to your country, she conducted herself with a prudence and reserve, which even in France made her an object of general respect. About three years after her husband's departure the revolution took place, and not returning, he was of course put on the list of emigrants. In 1792, when the law passed which sanctioned and facilitated divorces, her friends all earnestly persuaded her to avail herself of it, but she could not be prevailed upon to consider the step as justifiable; for though Monsieur de St. E\_\_m\_\_d neglected her, he had, in other respects, treated her with generosity and kindness. She, therefore, persisted in her refusal, and her lover, in despair, joined the republican army.

At the general arrest of the Noblesse, Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d and her sisters were confined in the town where they resided, but their father was sent to Paris; and a letter from one of his female relations, who had emigrated, being found among his papers, he was executed without being able to see or write to his children. Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d's husband had returned about the same time to France, in the disguise of a post-boy, was discovered, and shared the same fate. These events reached her love, still at the army, but it was impossible for him to quit his post, and in a few days after, being mortally wounded, he died,\* recommending Eugenie de St. E\_\_m\_\_d to the protection of his father.—

\* This young man, who died gallantly fighting in the cause of the republic, was no republican: but this does not render the murder of his father, a deaf [There were people both deaf and dumb in the prisons as conspirators.] and inoffensive man, less abominable.—The case of General Moreau's father, though somewhat similar, is yet more characteristic of the revolution. *Mons.* Moreau was persuaded, by a man who had some interest in the business, to pay a debt which he owed an emigrant, to an individual, instead of paying it, as the law directed, to the use of the republic. The same man afterwards denounced him, and he was thrown into prison. At nine o'clock on the night preceding his trial, his act of accusation was brought him, and before he had time to sketch out a few lines for his defence, the light by which he wrote was taken away. In the morning he was tried, the man who had informed against him sitting as one of his judges, and he was condemned and executed the very day on which his son took the Fort de l'Ecluse!—*Mons.* Moreau had four sons, besides the General in the army, and two daughters, all left destitute by the confiscation of his property.

—A brother officer, who engaged to execute this commission, wrote immediately to the old man, to inform him of his loss, and of his son's last request. It was too late, the father having been arrested on suspicion, and afterwards guillotined, with many other persons, for a pretended conspiracy in prison, the very day on which his son had fallen in the performance of an act of uncommon bravery.

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Were I writing from imagination, I should add, that Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d had been unable to sustain the shock of these repeated calamities, and that her life or understanding had been the sacrifice. It were, indeed, happy for the sufferer, if our days were always terminated when they became embittered, or that we lost the sense of sorrow by its excess: but it is not so—we continue to exist when we have lost the desire of existence, and to reason when feeling and reason constitute our torments. Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d then lives, but lives in affliction; and having collected the wreck of her personal property, which some friends had concealed, she left the part of France she formerly inhabited, and is now with an aunt in this neighbourhood, watching the decay of her eldest sister, and educating the youngest.

Clementine was consumptive when they were first arrested, and vexation, with ill-treatment in the prison, have so established her disorder, that she is now past relief. She is yet scarcely eighteen, and one of the most lovely young women I ever saw. Grief and sickness have ravaged her features; but they are still so perfect, that fancy, associating their past bloom with their present languor, supplies perhaps as much to the mind as is lost by the eye. She suffers without complaining, and mourns without ostentation; and hears her father spoken of with such solemn silent floods of tears, that she looks like the original of Dryden's beautiful portrait of the weeping Sigismunda.

The letter which condemned the father of these ladies, was not, it seems, written to himself, but to a brother, lately dead, whose executor he was, and of whose papers he thus became possessed. On this ground their friends engaged them to petition the Assembly for a revision of the sentence, and the restoration of their property, which was in consequence forfeited.

The daily professions of the Convention, in favour of justice and humanity, and the return of the seventy-three imprisoned Deputies, had soothed these poor young women with the hopes of regaining their paternal inheritance, so iniquitously confiscated. A petition was, therefore, forwarded to Paris about a fortnight ago; and the day before, the following decree was issued, which has silenced their claims for ever: "La Convention Nationale declare qu'elle n'admettra aucune demande en revision des jugemens criminels portant confiscation de biens rendus et executes pendant la revolution."\*

\* "The National Convention hereby declares that it will admit no petitions for the revisal of such criminal sentences, attended with confiscation of property, as have been passed and executed since the revolution." Yet these revolutionists, who would hear nothing of repairing their own injustice, had occasionally been annulling sentences past half a century ago, and the more recent one of the Chevalier La Barre. But their own executions



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and confiscations for an adherence to religion were to be held sacred.—I shall be excused for introducing here a few words respecting the affair of La Barre, which has been a favourite topic with popular writers of a certain description. The severity of the punishment must, doubtless, be considered as disgraceful to those who advised as well as to those who sanctioned it: but we must not infer from hence that he merited no punishment at all; and perhaps degradation, some scandalous and public correction, with a few years solitary confinement, might have answered every purpose intended. La Barre was a young etourdi, under twenty, but of lively talents, which, unfortunately for him, had taken a very perverse turn. The misdemeanour commonly imputed to him and his associates was, that they had mutilated a Christ which stood on the Pont-neuf at Abbeville: but La Barre had accustomed himself to take all opportunities of insulting, with the most wanton malignity, these pious representations, and especially in the presence of people, with whom his particular connections led him to associate, and whose profession could not allow them entirely to overlook such affronts on what was deemed an appendage to the established religion of the country. The people of Abbeville manifested their sense of the business when d'Etalonde, La Barre's intimate friend, who had saved himself by flight, returned, after a long exile, under favour of the revolution. He was received in the neighbourhood with the most mortifying indifference. The decree of the Convention too, by which the memory of this imprudent young man was re-established, when promulgated, created about as much interest as any other law which did not immediately affect the property or awaken the apprehensions of the hearers.

Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d told me her whole fortune was now reduced to a few Louis, and about six or seven thousand livres in diamonds; that she was unwilling to burden her aunt, who was not rich, and intended to make some advantage of her musical talents, which are indeed considerable. But I could not, without anguish, hear an elegant young woman, with a heart half broken, propose to get her living by teaching music.—I know not that I ever passed a more melancholy day. In the afternoon we walked up and down the path of the village church-yard. The church was shut up, the roof in part untiled, the windows were broken, and the wooden crosses that religion or tenderness had erected to commemorate the dead, broken and scattered about. Two labourers, and a black-smith in his working garb, came while we were there, and threw a sort of uncouth wooden coffin hastily into a hole dug for the purpose, which they then covered and left without farther ceremony. Yet this was the body of a lady regretted by a large family, who were thus obliged to conquer both their affection and their prejudices, and inter her according to the republican mode.\*

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\* The relations or friends of the dead were prohibited, under severe penalties, from following their remains to the grave.

I thought, while we traversed the walk, and beheld this scene, that every thing about me bore the marks of the revolution. The melancholy objects I held on my arm, and the feeble steps of Clementine, whom we could scarcely support, aided the impression; and I fear that, for the moment, I questioned the justice of Heaven, in permitting such a scourge to be let loose upon its works.

I quitted Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d this morning with reluctance, for we shall not meet again till I am entirely at liberty. The village municipality where she now resides, are quiet and civil, and her misfortunes make her fearful of attracting the notice of the people in authority of a large place, so that she cannot venture to Amiens.—You must observe, that any person who has suffered is an object of particular suspicion, and that to have had a father or a husband executed, and to be reduced to beggary, are titles to farther persecution.—The politics of the day are, it is true, something less ferocious than they were: but confidence is not to be restored by an essay in the *Orateur du Peuple*,\* or an equivocal harangue from the tribune; and I perceive every where, that those who have been most injured, are most timid.

\* "*L'Orateur du Peuple*," was a periodical paper published by Freron, many numbers of which were written with great spirit.— Freron was at this time supposed to have become a royalist, and his paper, which was comparatively favourable to the aristocrats, was read with great eagerness.

The following extract from the registers of one of the popular commissions will prove, that the fears of those who had already suffered by the revolution were well founded:

"A. Sourdeville, and A. N. E. Sourdeville, sisters of an emigrant Noble, daughters of a Count, aristocrats, and having had their father and brother guillotined.

"M. J. Sourdeville, mother of an emigrant, an aristocrat, and her husband and son having been guillotined.

"Jean Marie Defille—very suspicious—a partizan of the Abbe Arnoud and La Fayette, has had a brother guillotined, and always shewn himself indifferent about the public welfare."

The commissions declare that the above are condemned to banishment.

I did not reach this place till after the family had dined, and taking my soup and a dish of coffee, have escaped, under pretext of the headache, to my own room. I left our poet



far gone in a classical description of a sort of Roman dresses, the drawings of which he had seen exhibited at the Lyceum, as models of an intended national equipment for the French citizens of both sexes; and my visit to Madame de St. E\_\_m\_\_d had incapacitated me for discussing revolutionary draperies.

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In England, this is the season of festivity to the little, and beneficence in the great; but here, the sterile genius of atheism has suppressed the sounds of mirth, and closed the hands of charity—no season is consecrated either to the one or the other; and the once-varied year is but an uniform round of gloom and selfishness. The philosopher may treat with contempt the notion of periodical benevolence, and assert that we should not wait to be reminded by religion or the calendar, in order to contribute to the relief of our fellow creatures: yet there are people who are influenced by custom and duty, that are not always awake to compassion; and indolence or avarice may yield a too ready obedience to prohibitions which favour both. The poor are certainly no gainers by the substitution of philosophy for religion; and many of those who are forbidden to celebrate Christmas or Easter by a mass, will forget to do it by a donation. For my own part, I think it an advantage that any period of the year is more particularly signalized by charity; and I rejoice when I hear of the annual gifts of meat or firing of such, or such a great personage—and I never enquire whether they might still continue their munificence if Christianity were abolished.—Adieu.

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.

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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.\*

\* 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.

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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.\*

\* 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.

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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. [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 insued; 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.\*

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\* 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."

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.

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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.

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.]



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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.\*—

\* "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.

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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.

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

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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 voyait 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?\*

\* 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.

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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.

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.

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“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.

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.

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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.\*

\* 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



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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.

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.

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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.

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



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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 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 Coblenz, 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

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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.

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.

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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.

\* Vilate, in his pamphlet on the secret causes of the revolution of the ninth Thermidor, relates the following anecdote of the origin of the peruques 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

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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 coiffure, 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.\*

\* 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

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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.

“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



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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 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 peculation 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.

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“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.

“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.

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“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.

\* 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.

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“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.

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.

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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 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.

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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 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

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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.

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.

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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.

\* 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

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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.

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.\*

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\* 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.

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.\*

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\* 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.

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.

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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 accessory 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.\*

\* 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.”

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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.

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

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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.

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,

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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.

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.

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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 flippant 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 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

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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.

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*

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*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 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.\*

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\* 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.\*

\* 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.

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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.

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.\*



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\* “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 necessities 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.\*

\* 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:

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"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.

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

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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 Constitutionals, 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.

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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 espee*, 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.

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.

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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.

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

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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.\*

\* 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!!!



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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 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."\*



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\* -"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.

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

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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—

“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 courtizans—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.

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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; 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

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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 Francais, peuple de Freres*," ["Brethren."]—or "*Dansons la Guillotine*," the expression with which it is 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.\*

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\* 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 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

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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.

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.\*



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\* "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 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,

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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.\*

\* 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.

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—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.