monarchical element were the two leading articles of his programme. Unfortunately, he never succeeded in acquiring a guiding influence. In the first place, he was a noble, and therefore subject to suspicion; and, further, his early life had been a succession of scandals, which now rose up and bore witness against him, undermining confidence in his honor.

Calamitous influence of the masses.

The National Assembly had no hesitation in designating as its primary business the making of a free constitution.[1] It was of the highest importance that this work should be done in perfect security, free from the interference of popular passion and violence. But, owing to the excitement and fervor which permeated all classes, the Assembly soon fell under the domination of the street. The growth of the influence of the lower elements, who, while desiring reform, created anarchy, is the most appalling feature of the great events of 1789. If we understand this fact, we have the key to the rapid degeneration of what was, at its outset, perhaps the most promising movement in the history of mankind.

Failure of the authority of the king and the Assembly.

For this degeneration the king and the Assembly were both responsible, as well by reason of what they did as of what they did not do. It goes without saying that the sudden failure of absolutism in June, 1789, demoralized the government and threw France into unutterable confusion. Parisian mobs frequently fell upon and murdered the royal officials, while the excited peasants everywhere burned and plundered the castles of the nobles. In view of these irregularities, king and National Assembly should have united to maintain order; but unite they would not, because the king, who was under the domination of the court, distrusted the popular Assembly, and because the Assembly feared the

[1] For this reason the National Assembly is known also as the Constituent Assembly.

designs of the court and the king. Mutual suspicion ruined harmony and played into the hands of the agitators.

The fall of the Bastille, July 14, 1789.

And, in fact, early in July it was discovered that the court was plotting to dissolve the Assembly and overawe the Parisians by means of troops. At this news a tremendous excitement seized the people. Armed crowds gathered in the streets, and clamorous to teach the court a lesson, threw themselves upon the Bastille, the ancient state prison and royal fortress in the heart of Paris. After a bloody encounter with the troops, they took the gloomy stronghold, and in their fury razed it to the ground (July 14th).

Expected reign of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The fall of the Bastille was celebrated throughout France as the end of tyranny and the dawn of a new era of brotherly love. And in truth there was much suggestive of a new order of things in the destruction of a monument which had been the witness of the brutalities of mediæval justice, and of the wanton oppression of the absolute king. Now indeed we know that July 14th did not inaugurate a reign of liberty, equality, and fraternity; but it is not difficult to understand why the French people, cherishing the memory of their generous illusion, should have made July 14th their national holiday.

The emigration

The king at Versailles did not misread the lesson which the episode of the Bastille pointed. All thought of violence was temporarily dropped, and the irreconcilables of the court party, with the king's brother, the count of Artois, at their head, left France in disgust. Thus began the so-called emigration, which, continuing for the next few years, soon collected on the borders of France, chiefly along the Rhine, hundreds and thousands of the old privileged classes, who preferred exile to the threatened ascendancy of popular government.

The National Guard and Lafayette.

The storming of the Bastille promised at first to clarify the situation. Again the king made his bow to the Revo-

lution: he paid a formal visit to Paris as a pledge of reconciliation, and was received with acclamations of joy. The well-to-do citizens for their part seemed to be resolved to have done with violence and follow the way of sensible reform. They organized a militia called the National Guard, in order to secure Paris from the excesses to which the city had lately been exposed, and made the popular Lafayette commander. However, the condition of the capital remained most precarious. The multitude of the idle was growing in numbers every day, and their misery, which the general stoppage of business steadily sharpened, was pushing them to the brink of savagery. It was a question whether Lafayette, with his citizen-guard, would be willing or able to chain the people when a new access of passion lashed them into fury.

The events of October 5th and 6th

The test came soon enough. In October the rumor of another plot on the part of the remnant of the court party ran through Paris. Excited men and women told one another that at a banquet of officers, held at Versailles, the new tricolor cockade of red, blue, and white, the passionately adored emblem of the Revolution, had been trampled under foot, and the health of the king and queen drunk amid scenes of wild enthusiasm. What really happened was an act of homage, perhaps unnecessarily provocative, on the part of the army toward its sovereign; but suspicion of the king and court had sunk so deeply into the hearts of the Parisians that every disparagement of the monarch, however unfounded, was sure to find an audience. Demagogues announced that the king was the cause of the famine in the city, and that he and the court intercepted the grain-carts outside of Paris in order to reduce the patriots to starvation. On the morning of October 5th, 10,000 women, fierce and haggard from long suffering, set out for Versailles to fetch the king to Paris. As they straggled over the muddy roads

all the male and female riff-raff of the suburbs joined them. In the face of this tremendous danger Lafayette, the commander of the militia and guardian of the civil order, did nothing. If, as has been supposed, he remained inactive in order to get the king into his power, he has fairly merited the charge of political trickery. Certain it is that it was only when the National Guard refused to wait longer that he consented to conduct it to Versailles, and preserve peace. When he arrived there in the night, some hours after the women, he found everything in the greatest confusion; but by his timely intercession he saved the lives of the royal family, and was enabled to pose as the preserver of the monarchy. But if the rioters spared the king and queen, they declared firmly, at the same time, that they would be satisfied with nothing short of the removal of the royal residence to Paris. What could the king do but give his consent? On the 6th the terrible mænads, indulging in triumphant song and dance along the road, escorted to the palace of the Tuileries "the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's little boy," from whose presence in their midst they promised themselves an end of misery. The National Assembly, of course, followed the king, and was quartered in the riding-school near the palace.

The people henceforth supreme.

The events of October 5th and 6th ruined the monarchy, and Lafayette cannot escape the charge of having contributed in some measure to the result. The king at the Tuileries, indeed, was now practically Lafayette's prisoner; but Lafayette himself, even though it took him some months to find it out, was henceforth the prisoner of the people. The great October days had allowed "the patriots," as the agitators euphemistically called themselves, to realize their power; and having once eaten of the poisonous fruit of violence, they would require more than Lafayette's energy to bring them back to a respect for the law. Henceforth, organized

under clever and unscrupulous leaders, "the patriots" play the decisive rôle in the Revolution, gradually but resistlessly forcing the king, Lafayette, the National Assembly, and all the constituted authorities of France to bow down before them.

The clubs.

What greatly contributed to the power of the multitude was the excitement and vague enthusiasm which possessed all classes alike. We must always remember, in order to understand the tremendous pace at which the Revolution developed, that the year 1789 marks an almost unparalleled agitation of public opinion. A leading symptom of this condition were the innumerable pamphlets and newspapers which accompanied the events of the day with explanatory comment, and not infrequently assumed the form of fanatical exhortation. But the most prominent and unique witness of the disturbed state of opinion was offered by the clubs. Clubs for consultation and debate became the great demand of the hour; they arose spontaneously in all quarters; in fact, every coffee-house acquired, through the passion of its frequenters, the character of a political association. Of all these unions the Jacobins and the Cordeliers soon won the most influential position. The Cordeliers recruited their numbers from among the Parisian "patriots"; Danton and Marat were among their leaders, and the tone of the club was, from the first, wildly revolutionary. The Jacobins, destined to become a name of dread throughout Europe, began much more gently. They offered a meeting-point for the constitutional and educated elements, and rapidly spread in numberless branches, or so-called daughter societies, over the length and breadth of France. However, this club, too, succumbed before long to the extreme revolutionary tendencies. Lafayette, Sieyès, and Mirabeau, whose power was at first dominant, were gradually displaced by Robespierre, and Robespierre, once in authority, skilfully used the club as

Cordeliers and Jacobins.

a means of binding together the radical opinion of the country.

The abolition of privileges, August 4th.

Throughout the years 1789 and 1790 the National Assembly was engaged in meeting current issues, and in making a constitution. The great question of the privileges, which had proved unsolvable in the early years of Louis XVI., caused no difficulties after the National Assembly had once been constituted. On August 4, 1789, the nobility and clergy, in an access of magnanimity, renounced voluntarily their feudal rights, and demanded that they be admitted into the body of French citizens on a basis of equality. August 4th saw the last of the *corvée*, rights of the chase, guilds, and other forms of mediæval injustice, and is one of the great days of the Revolution.

Financial policy of the Assembly.

But one burning question inherited from the *ancien régime* remained—the question of the finances. Since the general cessation of business which attended the Revolution contributed to the depletion of the treasury, the National Assembly, in order to avoid imminent bankruptcy, resolved, in November, 1789, to confiscate the property of the clergy, valued at many millions, and presently issued against this new security paper money called *assignats*. The *assignats* at the beginning were a perfectly sound financial measure, but owing to the continued needs of the treasury they were multiplied to such a degree that confidence in them was undermined and their value shrunk to almost nothing. Already the time was not far off when it would take a basket of *assignats* to buy a pair of boots. Under these conditions the finances fell into frightful disorder, and by permanently deranging the business of the country contributed in no small measure to the increasing anarchy of the Revolution.

The new constitution.

In the intervals of the discharge of current business, the Assembly deliberated concerning the future constitution of

France. By slow degrees that creation marched during the succeeding months to completion. Of course it is not possible to examine it here with any detail. If we remember that it was the work of men who had suffered from an absolute executive and were under the spell of the dogmatic philosophy of the eighteenth century, we shall understand its principal feature. This was that the executive was made purposely weak, and the power intrusted to the people and the legislature. This legislature, it was provided, should consist of one House, elected for two years by all the active citizens[1] of the kingdom. Mirabeau, the great statesman of the Revolution, fought hard to secure to the king that measure of power which an executive requires in order to be efficient; but he was unappreciated by his colleagues and distrusted by Louis, and in almost all important matters met defeat. Broken down by disappointment and reckless excesses he died (April, 1791), prophesying in his last days, with marvellous accuracy, all the ulterior stages of the Revolution.

Death of Mirabeau, April, 1791.

The unsatisfactory position of the king.

The death of Mirabeau was generally lamented, but no one had more reason for regret than the king, who had found in the statesman his most valuable supporter. Ever since October 6th, Louis had been the virtual prisoner of the populace, and had lost all influence in the shaping of events. The constitution, which in the spring of 1791 was nearing completion and would soon be forced upon him, he regarded as impracticable. While Mirabeau lived he retained some hope of a change among the legislators in his favor; but when the great orator's death robbed him of this prospect, his thoughts turned to flight as the only means of escaping from a position which he regarded as untenable,

[1] Citizens were divided by this constitution into two classes, active and passive. Only the active class, composed of those who paid a certain small contribution in the form of a direct tax, could vote.

and which exposed his queen, his children, and all who were dear to him to the insults of the Parisian multitude.

The flight to Varennes, 1791.

The flight of the king and royal family was arranged with the greatest secrecy for the night of June 20th. But too confident of his disguise as a valet, Louis exposed himself needlessly at a post-station, only to be recognized by the son of the postmaster, who galloped through the night to give the alarm. At the village of Varennes the bells sounded the tocsin, and the excited people, summoned from their beds, would not permit the royal carriage to proceed. With safety almost in view the flight came to an end. The fugitives were brought back to Paris, where once more they had the key turned on them in their palatial prison.

The monarchical majority reinstates the king.

The flight of the king divided opinion in Paris sharply. It gave the monarchists, who had a clear majority in the Assembly, their first inkling that they had gone too far. A monarch was necessary to their constitutional fabric, and now they beheld their chosen representative attempting to elude the honor by running away from it. They began in consequence to exhibit suddenly for the captive and disarmed Louis a consideration which they had never accorded him in his happier days. Many popular leaders, on the other hand, such as Danton and Robespierre, regarded the flight as an abdication and a welcome pretext for proclaiming the republic. A struggle followed (July, 1791), the most ominous which Paris had yet witnessed; but the monarchists were still a majority, and by ordering out the National Guard against the rioters, won a victory. The Assembly, on hearing from the king the doubtful statement that he had never meant to leave the soil of France, nor employ force against his subjects, solemnly welcomed him back to office; and Louis, in return, to mark his reconciliation with his subjects, accepted and swore to observe the constitution. The Assembly was pleased to imagine that

End of the Assembly.

it had, by its magnanimous reinstatement of the king, settled all the difficulties of the situation. By September 30, 1791, it had added the last touches to its work, and, dissolving itself, retired from the scene. Its strenuous labors of two years, from which the enthusiasts had expected the renovation of old Europe, culminated in the gift to the nation of the completed constitution. The question now was: Would the constitution at length inaugurate the prophesied era of peace and plenty?

Herewith ended what we may call the first phase of the Revolution. The privileges had been abolished and the absolute monarchy had, at the almost unanimous demand of the people, been transformed into a constitutional one; but still men and opinions continued to clash in a bloody and ominous manner. In this state of unrest a particular reason for apprehension lay in the circumstance that the government had not been given power enough to defend itself, let alone guide and control the nation.

The Legislative Assembly (*October* 1, 1791, *to September* 21, 1792).

Character of the Legislative Assembly.

The First Legislative Assembly, elected on the basis of the new constitution, met the day after the National Assembly adjourned. By a self-denying ordinance, characteristic of the mistaken magnanimity which pervaded the National Assembly, that body had voted the exclusion of its members from the succeeding legislature. The seven hundred and forty-five new rulers of France were, therefore, all men without experience. That alone constituted a grave danger, which was still further increased by the fact that most of the members were young enthusiasts, who owed their political elevation to the oratorical vigor displayed by them in the local Jacobin clubs.

Is hostile to the king.

The dangerous disposition of the Assembly became apparent as soon as the members fell into party groups. Only a minority, called the Feuillants, undertook to support the constitution. On the other hand, a very influential group, called the Gironde,[1] favored the establishment of a republic. Thus constituted, the Assembly from the first day directed its energies upon destroying the monarchy. The stages by which it accomplished its purpose we need not here consider; but the supreme blow against the king was delivered when he was forced to declare war against Austria; and except for this declaration, which marks a new mile-stone in the Revolution, we can in a sketch like this forget the Legislative Assembly entirely.

France declares war upon Austria, April, 1792.

The declaration of war against Austria resulted from the rising indignation in France over the *émigrés*, who had gathered in armed bands along the Rhine, and over the increasing demonstrations of monarchical Europe against the Revolution. Frenchmen generally supposed that Emperor Leopold II., brother of Queen Marie Antoinette, was planning a war to punish them for their opinions. This we now know was not the case; but Leopold certainly took some steps that the French were justified in interpreting as interference with their affairs. Lashed into fury by the Girondist orators, who wanted war on the ground that it would prove the means of carrying the republican faith to the ends of the earth, the Assembly assumed a more and more lofty tone with the emperor, and finally, on April 20, 1792, declared war against him.

Prussia in alliance with Austria.

Unfortunately, Leopold, who was a moderate and capable man, had died a month before the declaration was made, and it was his dull and narrow-minded son, Francis II. (1792–1835), who was called to do battle with the Revolu-

[1] So called from the fact that the leaders of the party hailed from the department of the Gironde (Bordeaux).

tion. But the far-sighted Leopold had not died without making some provision for an eventual war with France. In February, 1792, alarmed by the hostile attitude of the French people, he had persuaded the king of Prussia to league himself with him in a close alliance. The declaration of April 20th, therefore, though directed only at Austria, brought Prussia also into the field. Thus began the wars which were destined to carry the revolutionary ideas around the world, to sweep away landmarks and traditions, and to lock France and Europe in death-grapple for over twenty years.

Invasion and terror.

It is probable that the republican Girondists, who more than any man or party were responsible for the war and proudly looked upon it as theirs, expected an easy victory. They saw in a vision the thrones of the tyrants crumbling at the irresistible onset of the new democracy, and themselves hailed everywhere as the liberators of the human race. But the first engagement brought a sharp disappointment. The undisciplined French forces, at the mere approach of the Austrians, scampered away without risking a battle, and when the summer came it was known that the Austrians and Prussians together were preparing an invasion of France. At this unexpected turn wrath and terror filled the republicans in Paris. They began to whisper the word treason, and soon their orators dared to denounce the king publicly as the author of the national calamities. In August the allies crossed the border and proceeded on their march to the capital. Excitement rose ever to new heights, and when the duke of Brunswick, the commander-in-chief of the allies, threatened, in an outrageous proclamation, to wreak an unexampled vengeance on the capital if but a hair of the king's head were injured, the seething passion burst in a wave of uncontrollable fury. In the early morning of August 10th the mob, organized by the republican

The proclamation of Brunswick.

leaders, marched against the Tuileries to overthrow the man whom the orators had represented as in league with foreign despots against the common mother, France.

When, during the night, the bells from the steeples rang out the preconcerted summons over the city, the king and his family knew that the supreme struggle had come. Dispersed about in small groups, the palace inmates passed the night discussing the chances of the coming day. Of all the soldiers a regiment of Swiss mercenaries could alone be counted on. That fact tells more vividly than words the pass to which the ancient monarchy of France had come. But even so, if Louis XVI. had now resolved to conquer or die at the head of this faithful guard, he might have rallied the moderates around the throne. But from this king no such action was to be expected. He could be patient, tolerant of ideas beyond his grasp, and even generous to his enemies, but he could not form a heroic resolution. At eight o'clock in the morning, seeing that the mob was making ready to storm the palace, he abandoned it to seek shelter with the Legislative Assembly. The Swiss Guard, deserted by their leader, made a brave stand. Only on the king's express order did they give up the Tuileries and attempt to effect a retreat. But the odds were against them; and the enraged populace, falling upon them, butchered most of them in the streets.

August 10, 1792.

Meanwhile, the Assembly was engaged in putting its official seal to the verdict of the mob. In the presence of Louis and the royal family the members voted the suspension of the king and ordered the election of a National Convention to constitute a new government. The present Assembly agreed to hold over till September 21st, the day when the new body was ordered to meet. Thus perished, after an existence of ten months, the constitution which had inflamed so many generous hearts.

End of the monarchy and of the constitution.

The government seized by the democrats.

The suspension of the king left the government in the hands of the Legislative Assembly and a ministerial committee. But as the capital was in the hands of the mob and nobody paid any attention to the authorities, the real power fell into the hands of the leaders who on August 10th had the courage to strike down the king. Danton, provisional minister of justice, was the most capable member of the group. To make success doubly sure they had, in the early morning hours of August 10th, seized the municipal government of Paris and now lay intrenched in the city hall or *hôtel de ville*. Robespierre and Marat, acting from this local center, and Danton, from his post of national influence, were the real sovereigns of France during the interlude from August 10th, the day of the overthrow of the monarchy, to September 21st, the day of the meeting of the National Convention.

Democratic enthusiasm saves France.

It was plain that the first need of France in this crisis was to beat back the invasion. The victors of the tenth of August, therefore, made themselves the champions of the national defence. Their orators steeled the hearts of the citizens by infusing into them an indomitable courage. "What do we require in order to conquer?" cried Danton, the man of the hour: "to dare, and dare, and dare again." The fatherland was declared in danger; all occupations ceased but those which provided for the necessities of life and the manufacture of weapons; finally, the whole male population was ordered under arms. Whatever we may think of this travesty of government by violence and frenzied enthusiasm, it certainly accomplished its first end, for it put an army into the field composed of men who were ready to die, and so saved France.

The invasion is checked at Valmy, September 20, 1792.

Let us turn for a moment to the invasion of the two German powers, the immediate cause of these Parisian disturbances. By September 20th Brunswick, at the head of an army composed chiefly of Prussians, had got to Valmy. There he was so furiously cannonaded by the eastern army under the command of Dumouriez that, deeply discouraged, he ordered a retreat which became almost a rout. In a few weeks not a Prussian or Austrian was left upon French soil.

The September massacres

This patriotic success of the radical democrats was unfortunately marred by a succession of frightful crimes. To understand them we must once again picture to ourselves the state of France. The country was in anarchy, the power in the hands of a few men, resolute to save their country. They were a thoroughly unscrupulous band, the Dantons, the Marats, and their colleagues, and since they could not afford to be disturbed in their work of equipping armies by local risings among the supporters of the king, they resolved to cow the monarchists, still perhaps a majority, by a system of terror. They haled to the prisons all whom they suspected of being devoted to the king, and in the early days of September they emptied the crowded cells by a deliberate massacre of the inmates. An armed band of assassins made the round of the prisons, and in the course of three days despatched nearly two thousand helpless victims. Not a hand was raised to stop the hideous proceedings. Paris, to all appearances, looked on stupefied.

The National Convention (*September* 21, 1792, *to October* 26, 1795).

The National Convention meets and abolishes monarchy.

The short interlude of government by an irresponsible faction came to an end when the National Convention met (September 21st) and assumed control. This body immediately declared the monarchy abolished. The defeat of the allies at Valmy about this time freed France from all immediate danger from without, and enabled the Convention to concern itself with domestic affairs.