

other conflict, full of danger and difficulty, in which, fighting for his sovereign, he had in the same manner the support of the nation. Major Cartwright, so well known for his subsequent endeavours to promote a Reform in Parliament, wrote to Wilberforce: "I very much fear that the king's present derangement is likely to produce other derangements not for the public benefit. I hope we are not to be sold to the Coalition faction."\* When the battle was over, George the Third wrote to his persevering minister that "his constant attachment to my interest, and that of the public which are inseparable, must ever place him in the most advantageous light." † On the 23rd of April, a public thanksgiving was appointed for the king's recovery. His majesty went to St. Paul's, accompanied by both Houses of Parliament, to return his own thanksgivings. The day was observed throughout the kingdom. Illuminations were never so general; joy was never so heartfelt. The minister, still only in his twenty-ninth year, had reached the pinnacle of power and popularity.

\* "Life of Wilberforce," vol. i. p. 100.

† Rose—"Diaries, &c.," p. 97.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Symptoms of great changes in France.—Constant financial difficulties.—General view of the French social system.—Expectations of a Revolution.—The Parliament of Paris—Meeting of the States-General.—The Three Orders.—The Tiers Etat demand that all the Orders shall unite.—Excitement in Paris, during this contest.—Tiers Etat assume the title of the National Assembly.—Their meeting in a Tennis Court.—The Royal Sitting.—Open resistance of the Tiers Etat to the king's orders.—The king yields.—Dismissal of Necker.—Destruction of the Bastille.—March to Versailles of a Parisian mob.—The Royal Family and National Assembly, removed to Paris.

ON the 11th of July, 1788, the king, at the close of the Session of Parliament, said: "The general state of Europe, and the assurances which I receive from foreign powers, afford me every reason to expect that my subjects will continue to enjoy the blessings of peace." The differences with France on the subject of the United Provinces had been adjusted. On the 6th of September, Mr. Pitt exultingly wrote to the marquis of Stafford, "The state of France, whatever else it may produce, seems to promise us more than ever a considerable respite from any dangerous projects."\* The "state of France" was that of a country in which the disordered condition of its finances appeared to render any new disturbances of Europe, from the ambition of the government and the restlessness of the people, something approaching to an impossibility. The "whatever else it might produce" was a vague and remote danger. Yet in September, 1788, there were symptoms of impending changes, that, with a full knowledge of the causes operating to produce them, might have suggested to the far-seeing eye of that statesmanship that looked beyond the formal relations of established governments, some real cause for disquiet. Since the peace of 1763, there had been constant and increasing deficiency of revenue in France. The area of taxation was limited by the manifold exemptions from bearing a due proportion of the public burthens, which Turgot, in 1776, had vainly endeavoured to abolish. He was dismissed, as the result of his attempts to impose taxes upon the noblesse and the clergy. Necker is summoned to fill the great post of Controller-general of Finance. He carries France through the American war by various temporary expedients; but there is still a deficit. He proposes some solid measures, and is dis-

\* "Diaries, &c., of George Rose," vol. i. p. 85.

missed in May, 1781. The war comes to an end. Englishmen flock to Paris in 1782, and there, wondrous disclosure! are "struck with surprise at the freedom of conversation on general liberty, even within the walls of the king's palace."\* Thus was George Rose impressed. He writes in his Diary—"On a Sunday morning, while we were waiting in an outer room to see the king pass in state to the chapel of Versailles, where several of the great officers were, there was a discussion almost as free as I have heard in the House of Commons, in which Monsieur Chauvelin was the loudest, who was in some employment about the person of the king, for he dropped on his knee, and gave his majesty a cambric handkerchief as he passed through the room." Pitt, accompanied by Wilberforce and another friend, went to France in 1783. He inquired particularly into the political institutions of the French, and in a conversation with Abbé de Lageard, "a man of family and fortune," he said to him, "You have not political liberty, but for civil liberty you have more than you believe you have."† There were things below the surface that Pitt did not see. Wilberforce records of Pitt, that "it was the singular position occupied by La Fayette which most of all attracted his attention: he seemed to be the representative of the democracy in the very presence of the monarch; the tribune intruding with his veto within the chamber of the patrician order."‡ Theoretical democracy was in fashion amongst the patrician order. They had been talking about abstract rights, and the perfectibility of society, in their Parisian salons, without a thought of the hopeless condition of the miserable peasantry that were ground into the most abject poverty by their seigniorial rights. They had no public duties to fulfil; they were utterly isolated from the millions of whom they ought to have been the friends and protectors. The aristocracy received the doctrines of the political philosophers as if they were mere speculative opinions that would have no practical effects, and might be advocated as an indulgence of elegant sentiment which manifested their superiority to selfish prejudices. "The nobles shared as a pleasant pastime in these discussions, and quietly enjoyed their immunities and privileges whilst they serenely discussed the absurdity of all established customs. . . . Not the barest notion of a violent revolution ever entered into the minds of the generation which witnessed it."§ We need feel no surprise that the sagacious English minister felt no fear of the gathering clouds which foreboded a storm. Other Controllers of

\* "Diaries, &c., of George Rose," vol. i. p. 41.

† "Life of Wilberforce," vol. i. p. 38.

‡ Tocqueville—"France before the Revolution," p. 261.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Finance succeeded Necker, with indifferent success. In 1783, Calonne took the onerous post. He got on for three years by loan upon loan, the court squandering without stint; the people excited by scandalous stories against the queen, with little foundation; a general ferment in all political circles. Calonne can do no more with the stock-jobbers, and he resolves upon a convocation of Notables, influential men from all districts of France, to devise new plans of taxation. Such an assembly had not been heard of for a hundred and sixty years. Mr. Jefferson, the American ambassador at Paris, announces this fact to his government. He saw its significance, writing, in a private letter, "this event, which will hardly excite any attention in America, is deemed here the most important one which has taken place in their civil line during the present century."\* This body met towards the end of February, 1787. Calonne shows his terrible deficit; he proposes a new land-tax, from which no proprietors,—neither noblesse, nor clergy, nor any other privileged class,—shall be exempt. The majority of the Notables was composed of these privileged classes. They would have nothing to do with the scheme of Calonne; and the Controller, who had hoped for more effectual control over an enormous deficit than the worn-out system of borrowing, is dismissed to make way for others who may be able to manage more adroitly.

At this period an Englishman visited France, who could observe more accurately, and reason more acutely, than diplomatists who moved in a narrow circle. Arthur Young travelled over various parts of that kingdom in 1787, 1788, and 1789. M. Tocqueville speaks of Young's "Travels," published in 1792, as "one of the most instructive works which exist on the former state of society in France."† Let us see how this man of large experience, who had uniformly regarded the prosperous condition of the labourers as an essential concomitant of the prosperity of the farmers, describes the French peasantry. He proceeds on his journey south from Paris to Orleans, and having crossed the Loire finds that the cultivators are *metayers*—men who hire the land without ability to stock it, the proprietor finding cattle and seed and the tenant labour, and dividing the scanty produce. As he goes on he becomes excited at the wretched management and the miserable dwellings, in a country highly improveable—"the property, perhaps, of some of those glittering beings who figured in the procession the other day at Versailles. Heaven grant me

\* Tucker—"Life of Jefferson," vol. i. p. 253.

† "France before the Revolution," p. 179.

patience while I see a country thus neglected, and forgive me the oaths I swear at the absence and ignorance of the possessors." \* Having passed the Dordogne, he finds all the girls and women without shoes or stockings; and "the ploughmen at their work have neither sabots nor feet to their stockings." Everywhere, however, the roads are magnificent—in Languedoc "stupendous works"—"superb even to a folly"—but roads almost without traffic. There were two modes of executing these noble causeways, carried across valleys, and through levelled hills. They were either constructed by the forced labour of the peasantry, called the *corvée*; or by assessment of the proprietors, under which the lands held by a noble tenure were eased, and those held by a base tenure were proportionably burthened. The king of France, during the administration of Turgot, tried to abolish the system of compulsory labour. The decree of this benevolent sovereign—who truly said, "I and Turgot are the only friends of the people"—contains this avowal: "With the exception of a small number of provinces, almost all the roads throughout the kingdom have been made by the gratuitous labour of the poorest part of our subjects. . . . By forcing the poor to keep them up unaided, and by compelling them to give their time and labour without remuneration, they are deprived of their sole resource against want and hunger, because they are made to labour for the profit of the rich." In spite of the decree, the system of compulsory labour was re-established in a few months. We have a striking picture of the operation of the *corvée*, in a description by M. Grosley, of a scene at a village near Langres. Sixty or eighty peasants arrive at night at this village, summoned from distant quarters, to begin next day a grand *corvée* upon the road. They could not get their carts and oxen over the mountains; they must pay a fine or go to prison; their feet were cut by the flinty byways; they were hungry. The little money they had was nearly exhausted by providing for the inexorable inspector. The traveller, an Englishman, who told Grosley the story, paid for the supper of twenty of these poor people, which procured him a thousand blessings. They were to go to work the next day without their teams. †

And yet, with such oppression, the French peasantry were not serfs, as in most of the German states. Many were even small proprietors of land. That subdivision of landed property, which some imagine to have been caused by the Revolution, existed to a large extent before the Revolution. Young was greatly surprised to find a state of things so different from that generally prevailing

\* "Travels in France," p. 12. † "Observations on England," vol. ii. p. 16.

in England. He averred that half the soil belonged to these small proprietors. In the country of Bearne, in a ride of twelve miles from Pau to Moneng, he saw pretty cottages, neat gardens, and every appearance of comfort. The land "is all in the hands of little proprietors, without the farms being so small as to occasion a vicious and miserable population." \* But this was an exceptional case. "All these small landowners were, in reality, ill at ease in the cultivation of their property, and had to bear many charges or easements on the land which they could not shake off." † The ancient seigniorial rights were the most oppressive; but the seigneur was not the local administrator. Neither did he select the parochial officers who exacted the various payments and services connected with the land. All the local officers were under the government and control of the central power. "The seigneur was in fact no longer anything but an inhabitant of the parish, separated by his own immunities and privileges from all the other inhabitants." The nobility had ceased to have any political power; they had no concern in maintaining public order or administering justice. Many had sold their land in small patches, and lived only on seigniorial rights and rent-charges. The greater number did not dwell among the people who were the means of their support. The peasant only knew the nobleman as a living person, or an abstract power, who was exempt from the taxes which the plebeian paid; who had the exclusive right of sporting; who compelled him to grind his corn in the lord's mill, and to crush his grapes in the lord's wine press; who made him pay toll when he crossed a river, and tolled him in selling his corn in the public market; whose perpetual quit-rents, which could not be redeemed, were always an incumbrance on his little property. Arthur Young met with a poor woman who complained of the times, and said that it was a sad country. Her husband had a morsel of land, one cow, and a poor little horse. They had to pay a quantity of wheat to one seigneur, and a larger quantity to another seigneur, "besides very heavy *tailles* and other taxes." The poor woman was only twenty-eight years of age, but she might, "at no great distance, have been taken for sixty or seventy, her figure was so bent, and her face so furrowed and hardened by labour." She said that she heard that something was to be done by some great folks for such poor ones, but she did not know by whom or how—but God send us better, for "*les tailles et les droits nous écrasent.*" ‡ There was no personal sympathy of the higher classes to ameliorate the

\* "Travels in France," p. 42.

‡ "Travels in France," p. 134.

† Tocqueville, p. 45.

burthens of their poor dependents. They knew them only as toilers from whom revenue was to be extracted. None of the gentry remained in the rural districts but such as were too poor to leave them. "Being no longer in the position of a chief, they had not the same interest as of old, to attend to, or assist, or direct, the village population; and, on the other hand, not being subject to the same burthens, they could neither feel much sympathy for poverty which they did not share, nor for grievances to which they were not exposed."\*

In the rural districts, as well as in the provincial towns, the real administrative functions had gone out of the hands of individuals or bodies having a natural interest in local affairs, and qualified to direct them by local influence and intelligence, to be wielded by a vast army of functionaries all deriving their existence from a central authority in the capital. The King's Council was an administrative and legislative power that decided upon all affairs of a public nature, that prepared laws, that fixed taxes, to which every question was referred, the centre from which was derived the movement that set everything in motion. The individuals composing this Council were obscure; its power appeared to be that of the throne. The Controller-general was the head of this Council. Its instruments were the Intendants of provinces; who had under them each a sub-delegate. These men were the real governors of France. The taxes, whether the ancient tax of the *taille*, or taxes of more recent date, were wholly under their regulation. The quota of men to serve in the militia for each parish was prescribed by the Intendant. All the public works, all the roads, highways and by-ways, kept up out of the public revenue, were under the care of the Council, the Intendant, and the Sub-delegate. The *maréchaussée*, or mounted police, distributed throughout the whole kingdom, were under the management of the Intendants. There was no provision for the Poor in the rural districts. Under circumstances of great pressure, the Intendant distributed corn or rice, and sometimes bestowed alms in the form of work at low wages. In the towns "a few families managed all the public business for their own private purposes, removed from the eye of the public, and with no public responsibility." But the Council came in, and the government, through the Intendant with his subordinate officers, "had a finger in all the concerns of every town, the least as well as the greatest." There were semblances of local freedom in the system of parochial government; but, "compared with the total impotence which was

\* Tocqueville, p. 223.

connected with them, they afford an example, in miniature, of the combination of the most absolute government with some of the forms of extreme democracy." The precise details of the complicated system of Centralization presented by M. Tocqueville, are thus summed up: "Under the social condition of France anterior to the Revolution of 1789, as well as at the present day, there was no city, town, borough, village, or hamlet, in the kingdom—there was neither hospital, church fabric, religious house, nor college—which could have an independent will in the management of its private affairs, or which could administer its own property according to its own choice."\* The system of Centralization had so completely pervaded France that "no one imagined that any important affair could be properly carried out without the intervention of the state." The people had lost all power of managing their own affairs. "The French government," says M. Tocqueville, "having thus assumed the place of Providence, it was natural that every one should invoke its aid in his individual necessities." May we not add that it was equally natural that when no help came from government at a season of calamity, the people should blaspheme the Providence to which they cried in vain, and in their rage break their false idols in pieces?

The pride of birth which made the aristocracy of France a caste, separating them wholly from the middle classes, was carried forward into a more hateful separation of the middle classes of the towns from those termed the common people. The great passion of the burgher was to become a public functionary. He could buy a place connected with some real or pretended duty arising out of the administrative system of Centralization. Every man wanted to be something "by command of the king." But the honour was not altogether barren. The holders of place were exempted, wholly or in part, from public burthens. They quarrelled amongst themselves; but they were agreed in one principle—to grind the people below them. "Most of the local burthens which they imposed were so contrived as to press most heavily on the lower classes."† The isolation of classes had gradually proceeded to this height under that principle of the French monarchy which sought to govern its subjects by dividing them. The separate parts of the social fabric had no coherence. The whole fell to pieces when it was attempted to repair the rotten edifice. "The nation," said Turgot, in a Report to the king, "is a community consisting of different orders ill-compacted together, and of a people whose members have very few ties between

\* See the details of Book II., chapters 2 and 3.

† Tocqueville, p. 170.

themselves, so that every man is exclusively engrossed by his personal interest. Nowhere is any common interest discernible. The villages, the towns, have not any stronger mutual relations than the districts to which they belong." To complete this remarkable isolation, Paris preponderated over the whole kingdom. It was the seat of all mental activity; it was the centre of all political action. "Circulation is stagnant in France," says Young in 1787. In 1789, whilst the mightiest events were passing in Paris, he found the people of Strasbourg, and other towns, perfectly ignorant of circumstances that most intimately concerned them. "That universal circulation of intelligence, which in England transmits the least vibration of feeling or alarm, with electric sensibility, from one end of the kingdom to another, and which unites in bonds of connection men of similar interests and situations, has no existence in France."\*

Arthur Young appears to have been almost the only observer amongst Englishmen who, after the dismissal of Calonne in 1787, thought that a Revolution was approaching. Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, had become Controller-general. Young dined with a party whose conversation was entirely political. "One opinion pervaded the whole company, that they are on the eve of some great revolution in the government; that everything points to it"—financial confusion; no minister to propose anything but palliatives; a prince on the throne with excellent dispositions, but wanting in mental resources; a court buried in pleasure and dissipation, and adding to the public distress; a great ferment amongst all ranks of men, "who are eager for some change, without knowing what to look to, or to hope for; and a strong leaven of liberty, increasing every hour since the American revolution." He adds, "all agree that the States of the kingdom cannot assemble without more liberty being the consequence; but I meet with so few men that have any just ideas of freedom, that I question much the species of this new liberty that is to arise." †

Loménie de Brienne has dismissed the Notables, who were beginning to be troublesome, some uttering strange words about liberty, a national assembly, and other unwonted sounds. They had recommended some practical reforms, such as the formation of Provincial Assemblies; the suppression of *Corvées*; a modification of *Gabelle*. These measures were announced in edicts. But the deficit presses. New taxes must be imposed by edicts. These, however, must be registered by the *Parlement* of Paris. Very different from a British Parliament was this ancient institution. It was originally

\* "Travels," p. 147.

† *Ibid.*, p. 66.

only a court of justice; and some of the provinces had similar courts, with local jurisdiction. The members of these Parlements were formerly appointed by the king, and were removable at his will. The appointments were afterwards sold, and those who bought the places were considered to hold them for life. The Parlements thus gradually acquired a semblance of dependence, and did not always register the royal edicts without inquiry. Towards the close of the reign of Louis XV. the Parlement of Paris, refusing to register some royal edicts, was suppressed, as well as some of the provincial Parlements. They were restored to their functions, by Louis XVI., in 1774. In 1785 the Parlement of Paris refused to register an edict for a large loan; but the peremptory command of the king overpowered them. Calonne had then recourse to an Assembly of Notables, which was dissolved in 1787, as we have seen. One of the new taxes proposed by Loménie was a project of raising money by stamps. The Parlement of Paris refused to register the edict, unless the financial accounts were submitted to their examination. At the beginning of August, they came to a resolution that a perpetual tax, such as that required to be registered, could only be imposed by the States-General. Then commenced a collision between the Crown and the only body that stood between the Crown and its absolute power. According to the old forms of the monarchy, a Bed of Justice was to be held—a ceremony in which the Parlement should meet the king face to face, and hear his positive commands to register his decrees. On the 6th of August this command is given at Versailles. The Parlement returns to Paris, and refuses to obey the solemn mandate, even though it issued from a Bed of Justice. The refractory Parlement must be put down. The members are banished to Troyes. Paris is in a state of furious excitement. Large bodies of troops are marched into the city to suppress the growing disposition towards violence. At length a compromise is effected. The obnoxious edicts for taxation are withdrawn; and another is proposed and accepted, which recognized equality of taxation without exemptions. The Parlement is now recalled from its exile. On the 19th of November, the king held a royal sitting (*séance royale*) when he carried to the Parlement an edict for a succession of loans for five years, amounting to nineteen millions sterling. He also submitted to them an edict for the relief of the Protestants. He called upon them to confine their functions to their ancient powers, and to show an example of loyalty and obedience. Violent discussions ensued, in which the duke of Orleans, the relative of the king, took part against the Court. The king departed, after a

contest of nine hours, and the Parlement declared the edicts null and void. The next day the duke was banished to one of his country seats; and two of the most refractory members of the Parlement, were arrested by *lettres de cachet*. Temporary expedients for raising money must be resorted to, till something could be done with this rebellious Parlement. Loménie had his scheme ready. It was to establish a grand Council of State, to be called "La Cour Plenièrè," which should dispense with the Parlement, and yet give a sanction to taxation that might be more satisfactory than the mere exercise of the royal authority. The plan was concocted in secret; but it became known, and produced the greatest agitation in the Parlement of Paris. Two of its most violent opponents, M. d'Espremenil and M. de Montsabert, were ordered to be arrested. They were taken into custody during a sitting of the Parlement, in which, after the example of the Commons of England, when Charles the First went to arrest the five members, not one of the Parlement would point out the persons demanded by a military force. D'Espremenil and Montsabert surrendered, and were taken to prison. The provincial Parlements were now in a state of revolt. The people were furious with excitement. The day after the arrest of the members, the king held another Bed of Justice at Versailles, in which he proposed a number of salutary reforms in six edicts, which provided for the more rapid administration of justice; which regulated the proceedings of the Parlement of Paris; which put all criminal procedure upon a footing which swept away many odious and cruel abuses; which established "La Cour Plenièrè"; which provided for local courts; and which suspended the proceeding of all other courts. These reforms, admirable as some were, were rejected. The edicts became waste paper, through the short-sightedness of the Parlement and the violence of the people. A visitation of Providence then became the cause of general distress. A tremendous hailstorm, on the 13th of July, 1788, destroyed, in many districts, the crops of corn and the vineyards. The ruin was almost total for sixty leagues round Paris. An edict was issued on the 8th of August, that the States-General should be assembled in May of the following year. The royal Treasury was becoming empty, and no means of warding off the pressure of the demands of the public creditors but by a measure declaratory of insolvency. The Treasury payments shall, according to a proclamation of the 16th of August, henceforth be three-fifths in money and two-fifths in paper. The alarm was universal. The Court was terrified. There was no hope but in the recall of Necker, to become Controller of the Finances. Loménie was dismissed, with the solace of more eccle-

siastical preferments. Paris was in a state of riot, which was suppressed with some bloodshed. But hope returned with the presence of Necker. He found himself a financial minister without finances. Offers of loans poured in upon him. The funds rose thirty per cent. The popular cause had triumphed, and Necker was the minister of the people. Nothing remained to do, but to provide for the meeting of the States-General. An Assembly of Notables was again convened. They recommended that each of the three Estates, the Clergy, the Noblesse, and the *Tiers Etat*, should send three hundred members. By the advice of Necker, the king issued an edict that the Clergy and the Noblesse should each elect three hundred members, and the *Tiers Etat* six hundred. The States-General were to assemble on the 4th of May, 1789. The elections began in January.

On the morning of Monday, the 4th of May, the streets of Versailles were filled with thousands of people, to gaze upon the procession of the Court and the States-General from the church of St. Louis, where all had assembled, to the church of Notre-Dame, where a sermon was to be preached. Two hundred and seventy-five years had passed since a king of France had met the States-General. As if to mark the long interval, the costume of the States-General of 1614 was prescribed. The clergy went first—the bishops in velvet robes and rochets, the curés in their plainer dress. The Noblesse came next, in embroidered velvet mantles and gold vests, laced cravats, white plumes in their hats, such as Henri Quatre wore. The *Tiers Etat* came last, in plain black mantles, white cravats, and unfeathered hats. Lastly, came the king beneath a sumptuous canopy, with the queen, the princesses and high-born dames, and the king's brothers. The duke of Orleans had contrived to walk in the last rank of the Nobles, that he might appear to mingle with the first of the Commons. The marquis de Ferrières had painted the scene with the most gorgeous tints—the respectful silence of the immense crowd, the windows filled with elegantly dressed ladies, the joy speaking from their brilliant eyes, the clapping of hands, the sound of trumpets, the chant of the priests,—ravishing picture: "I called to mind the words of the prophet, Daughters of Jerusalem, your king advances; take your nuptial robes and run before him: tears of joy flowed from my eyes."\* The daughter of Necker was at one of the windows. "I was abandoning myself," she says, "to the most lively hopes at seeing, for the first time in France, representatives of the nation. Madame de

\* "Mémoires de Ferrières."

Montmorin said to me, 'You are wrong in rejoicing; out of this there will come great disasters for France and for us.'\*

The next day the States-General was opened. A large hall in the avenue of the palace had been provided for the assembly. This *Salle des Menus*, as it was called, was of sufficient size to contain the twelve hundred members, with galleries for spectators. There was a platform for the king and his Court. Louis—with Marie-Antoinette by his side, looking pale and ill at ease—read an address, of which the principal subject was that of the finances. When the reading was finished, the king put on his hat, as he took his seat on the throne. The clergy and nobility, also put on their hats. Some of the *Tiers Etat* also took this mode of asserting their position, and there was great confusion, which the king stopped by taking off his own hat. The costume of the Third Estate was the same as in 1614, but the sentiment which then required them to kneel in the presence of the sovereign was gone. The keeper of the seals made a speech; and so did Necker, the Controller-General of the Finances—a speech which Arthur Young said was such "as you would expect from a banking clerk of some ability." The difficult question, whether the three estates should deliberate and vote in one body, or in separate chambers, was not touched upon. It seemed to have been arranged that, contrary to the strong opinion that had been expressed by some of the constituencies, the discussions and the votes should not take place in one common assembly. It had been intended that four chambers should be provided; one for the solemn meetings of the three orders together; and for each distinct order a separate chamber. By some difference between the Court functionaries, who were of more importance than the sovereign or his ministers, the building set apart for the Commons was refused to be given up by the administration of the stables. The *Salle des Menus* was therefore occupied by the Third Estate. The Clergy and the Nobles met in their appropriated chambers, and proceeded to the verification of their powers, having decided to do so by the votes of a majority in each of the two orders. The Commons refused to proceed to a separate verification; and for five weeks this contest went on, but without any decisive results, of speeches and resolutions.

Milton has eloquently described the intellectual fervour of London in the early days of the Long Parliament. "The shop of war hath not more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice, in defense of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious

\* Madame de Staël—"Considérations sur la Révolution."

lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation."\* But in Paris, in 1789, the literary activity was of a very different character from that of London in 1644. There was the same disputing and discoursing upon "things not before discoursed or written of;" but in London "the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed" had regard to the differences of doctrine rather than the destruction of religion; and contemplated resistance to arbitrary power rather than the overthrow of all lawful authority. During the first month of the meeting of the States-General, Arthur Young was in Paris, and "was much in company." He found "a general ignorance of the principles of government; a strange and unaccountable appeal, on one side, to ideal and visionary rights of nature; and, on the other, no settled plan that shall give security to the people for being in future in a much better situation than hitherto."† He saw the booksellers' shops filled with eager crowds, squeezing from the door to the counter to buy the pamphlet of the last hour. He saw the coffee-houses in the Palais Royal not only crowded within, but other crowds without, listening to orators who, from chairs or tables, harangued each his audience. The pamphlets and the orators were admired, exactly in the proportion in which they attacked Christianity with a sort of rage, without any attempt to substitute any other belief; and proposed to the French people, not that their affairs should be better conducted, but that they should take the conduct of them into their own hands—they "a people so ill-prepared to act for themselves, that they could not undertake a universal and simultaneous reform without a universal destruction."‡

On the 14th of June, Arthur Young repaired to the *Salle des Menus* to behold what was to him, as it was to most Englishmen, a scene eminently interesting—"the spectacle of the representatives of twenty-five millions of people, just emerging from the evils of two hundred years of arbitrary power, and rising to the blessings of a freer constitution, assembled with open doors under the eye of the public."§ His feelings were roused; but he saw how the irregularities of the proceedings showed the representatives of the people to be without that self-control, in the absence of which a deliberative assembly is only an organized mob. The spectators in the gallery were allowed to applaud; a hundred members were on their legs at one time; the president, Bailly, absolutely without the means of keeping order. Specific motions, founded on distinct

\* "Liberty of unlicensed Printing."

† Tocqueville, p. 305.

‡ "Travels in France," p. 105.

§ "Travels," p. 110.