

CHAPTER XXXI.

Resolutions proposed by Mr. Fox against war with France.—Commercial distress.—Parliamentary Reform opposed by Mr. Pitt.—Traitorous Correspondence Bill.—Pitt, Burke, Fox,—the diversity of their views of England's policy.—Sanguine expectations of warlike success.—Dumouriez in Holland.—Battle of Neerwinden.—Defection of Dumouriez.—Measures of the Jacobins.—Revolutionary Tribunal.—Committee of Public Salvation.—Excessive prices of Commodities in Paris.—Produced by the depreciation of Assignats.—Plunder of the Shops.—Law of Maximum.—Forced Levy of troops.—La Vendée in insurrection.—Mr. Fox's motion for Peace.—Insurrection against the Girondin Deputies.—Their arrest and flight.—Assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday.—Note on the French Revolutionary Calendar.

THE opposition of Mr. Fox to the war with France, supported as he was by only a small band of his friends, was consistent and unremitting. He moved an amendment to the Address on the King's Message respecting the Declaration of War, and was defeated without a division. He proposed, a week after this royal Message had been delivered, a series of Resolutions, the object of which was to declare, that it was not for the honour or interest of Great Britain to make war upon France, on account of the internal circumstances of that country; that the complaints against the conduct of the French Government were not sufficient to justify war in the first instance without having attempted to obtain redress by negotiation; that the pretended grounds of the war with France, the security of Europe, and the rights of independent nations, had been disregarded in the case of Poland; that no engagements ought to be entered into with other powers which might prevent Great Britain making a separate peace. After an acrimonious debate, Mr. Fox's motion was rejected by an overwhelming majority, only forty-four members supporting the Resolutions. Again, and again, Fox advocated negotiations for peace with those, whoever they were, who had the government of France in their hands. "Why," he said, "was every man in England to be a sufferer because the people of France were in confusion? . . . Let them ask every man in the kingdom who had any commercial dealings, whether the accounts he received from all parts of the kingdom did not call for a conclusion to this war."* The embarrassments in trade had been so serious, from whatever cause, that Parliament

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxx.—Debate of the 18th June.

had sanctioned an issue of five millions in exchequer bills, to be advanced by commissioners, in loans to commercial firms who could give security for repayment. The demand for peace, upon the plea that war produced distress and privation to the bulk of the people, was thus met by Burke, in one of his most virulent personal attacks upon Fox:—"The ground of a political war is, of all things, that which the poor labourer and manufacturer are the least capable of conceiving. This sort of people know in general that they must suffer by war. It is a matter to which they are sufficiently competent, because it is a matter of feeling. The causes of a war are not matters of feeling, but of reason and foresight, and often of remote considerations, and of a very great combination of circumstances, which they are utterly incapable of comprehending; and, indeed, it is not every man in the higher classes who is altogether equal to it."* According to this doctrine, the war with the French republican government was "a political war," of the justice or expediency of which only the initiated in the mysteries of statesmanship were competent to form an opinion. The bulk of the people might feel the consequences of such a war, but they had no capacity for the investigation of its causes, and had therefore only to confide and suffer. Pitt, proud and confident as he was, made no attempt to measure this war by the calculating foresight only of official wisdom. He was driven into the war, undoubtedly against his wishes, by the violence of popular opinion rather than by the calculations of his own statesmanship. He did not claim an infallibility which regarded with contempt the general tone of public feeling. He carried the greater portion of the industrial community with him in his resistance to extreme democratic principles, by describing with a rhetoric that could not exaggerate the reality, the cruelties and oppressions perpetrated in France under the names of Liberty and Equality. He defended his own abandonment of the cause of Parliamentary Reform by dwelling upon the consequences of extended suffrage in France. In the great debate on Mr. Grey's motion for Reform, previous to which petitions had been read praying for Universal Suffrage, Mr. Pitt said, "In what is called the government of the multitude, they are not the many who govern the few, but the few who govern the many. It is a species of tyranny which adds insult to the wretchedness of its subjects, by styling its own arbitrary decrees the voice of the people, and sanctioning its acts of oppression and cruelty under the pretence of the national will. . . . The question is, whether you will abide by your Constitution, or hazard a change,

* "Conduct of the Minority."

with all that dreadful train of consequences with which we have seen it attended in a neighbouring kingdom?"* The fanaticism of the republicans who ruled France has been compared to that of the Mussulmans, "who with the Koran in one hand, and the sword in the other, went forth conquering and converting." The fiery zeal of the higher and middle classes of England has been compared to that of the Crusaders, "who raised the cry of *Deus vult* at Clermont."† The watchword of "King and Constitution" was, on one side of the Channel, as potent as the war-whoop of "Liberty and Equality" on the other side. There was no great "reason and foresight" required to plunge each nation into a conflict of twenty years.

The passions that were involved in this political war impelled the alarmists to call for such stringent measures of precaution and coercion as Great Britain had not witnessed since the days of the exiled Stuarts. The Chancellor, lord Loughborough, was ready with a "Traitorous Correspondence Bill," drawn by the Attorney-General, sir John Scott, and introduced by him to the House of Commons on the 15th of March. They considered the law of Edward III. against adhering to the king's enemies as insufficient to prevent the French being supplied with arms and stores, and they made it high treason even to enter into an agreement for supplying them. They called for the penalties of treason against those who should invest capital in the French funds or in the purchase of lands in France. Forfeiture and corruption of blood were not to follow a conviction; but, on the other hand, the evidence of two witnesses, and the further protections secured to the accused by the statutes of William and Anne, were to be set aside. The arbitrary tendencies of the Lord Chancellor and his Attorney-General could not be more strongly exhibited than in the proposition that a man might be hanged, drawn, and quartered, upon the evidence of one witness, without being furnished with a copy of the indictment against him; and without the privilege of being defended by counsel. The Bill passed the House of Commons in spite of the opposition of Fox, Sheridan, and Erskine; but in the House of Lords this attempt to take from the accused the means of defence, under the appearance of lenity, was modified. The penalties of the law of treason, and its protections, remained as before. This definition of treasonable acts was very widely extended. The minister who had never sanctioned any act of the executive, or any proposal of the legislature, of an unconstitutional

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxx. col. 902—Debate of May 7.
† Macaulay—"Life of Pitt."

or arbitrary tendency, was now to become identified with measures such as Englishmen regarded as belonging to past generations of oppression. The minister who had built his reputation upon his financial prudence was to lay a load of debt upon his country that even now seems fabulous.

Mr. Pitt began this tremendous contest by undervaluing the power of a nation whose government, if government it could be called, was one of factions without a common head, each contending for supremacy; of a nation that had lost every ordinary source of strength,—settled laws, established property, natural leaders, public credit. Obscure men, such as Jourdan, who had carried a pack from fair to fair, were commanding the French armies. Men taken from the ranks, it was held, could know nothing of strategy, and could have no authority over their fellows. In despising their origin and training, it was forgotten that the passion for Equality gave them a more powerful influence in the French armies than was ever wielded by the titled Marshals of the old monarchy. The English minister sent the king's second son, whose military experience had been limited to a field-day in Hyde-Park, to terrify the raw levies of the republic with two regiments of Guards; and with a contingent of Hanoverians and Hessians, all disciplined upon the most approved principles of "the bookish theorick." Mr. Pitt knew that Austria and Prussia hated each other—would act upon no common agreement for large and disinterested purposes in the conduct of the French war. He knew that Russia and Prussia were intent upon aggressions as hateful and as dangerous as the pretensions of the French republicans; that not until they were gorged with the spoils of Poland would they seriously direct their thoughts to the common dangers of established governments; but that meanwhile they would let the war take the languid course of a Coalition without a presiding mind to direct it to salutary ends, or to arrest the selfish schemes which some indulged of territorial aggrandizement. And yet Mr. Pitt had no doubt that the expedition which he sent to Holland in March under the duke of York, and his armaments against the West India islands, constituted that vigorous prosecution of the war which he promised when he brought forward his Budget; and he could not comprehend why Mr. Fox had no confidence in numerous foreign alliances, saying, that "he dreaded our being led into dangerous engagements for the prosecution of the most unjustifiable purposes." It soon became manifest that the war was not carried on with that vigour on the part of the Allies which alone could ensure success; that purposes wholly unjustifiable interfered with that unanimity which justice

and disinterestedness alone could inspire. In a very few months it was found out that there was a new element in this contest, in dealing with which historical experience was no guide. In October, 1793, Burke acknowledged that a state of things had arisen, "of which, in its totality if History furnishes any examples at all, they are very remote and feeble." Who, he says, could have imagined knew and unlooked-for combinations and modifications of political matters, in which property should, through the whole of a vast kingdom, lose all its importance and even its influence;—who could have thought that a formidable revolution in a great empire should have been made by men of letters who would become the sovereign rulers;—that atheism could produce one of the most violently operative principles of fanaticism;—that administrative bodies in a state of the utmost confusion, and of but a momentary duration, should be able to govern the country and its armies with an authority which the most settled senates, and the most respected monarchs, scarcely had in the same degree? "This, for one, I confess I did not foresee," says Burke, and he gives the reason of his own short-sightedness as the apology for others: "I believe very few were able to enter into the effects of mere *terror* For four years we have seen loans made, treasuries supplied, and armies levied and maintained, more numerous than France ever showed in the field, by *the effects of fear alone*." * The experience had come, in less than a year of warfare, which was to be more instructive than "History or books of speculation," but not for encouragement or warning, till the passions had cooled down which prevented its instruction teaching us what to do and what to forbear doing.

Nevertheless, in this condition of "new and unlooked-for combinations and modifications of political matters," it would be presumptuous to affirm that either of the extreme principles advocated on the one hand by Burke, and on the other hand by Fox, would have led eventually to happier results than the middle policy pursued by Pitt. The French Revolution was permitted by the Supreme Arbiter of human affairs to run its course of savage crime, of wild anarchy, of crushing despotism, of insatiate ambition, of aspirations for universal empire, to be arrested at last in its mad career, by the necessity of all nations combining for their common safety. They might have successfully combined at an earlier period to prevent the aggressions of the Republic, had they possessed the wisdom to have left France to choose what form of Government it pleased. They roused the Republicans of every faction to almost superhuman

* "Policy of the Allies." The words in Italics are so in the original.

efforts of resistance, when they believed that a king would be again forced on them; that their noblesse would be brought back with all their privileges and immunities; that the confiscated properties would return to their old possessors; that France itself would be dismembered of some of its fairest provinces. It was the day-dream of Burke to do all these impossible things, except to partition France. He would restore the monarchy—he would restore the Church—he would restore the Aristocracy—he would have no peace with the Regicides—he would have "a long war" to bring back the France before 1789. To him the Constitutionals were as odious as the Jacobins; La Fayette and Marat were equal in villainy. These desires were not fulfilled; the Revolution brought its tardy wisdom as well as its instant terror. Europe had not to groan for another century under the leaden sway of unmitigated Absolutism; England had not to rush upon untried theories to supersede her constitutional freedom. Pitt had no monarchical enthusiasm to oppose to Republican fanaticism. He would treat with any Government in France that he considered stable; he would fight those whom lord Auckland, in his Memorial to the States-General, denounced as "*miserables*," in the belief that their reign would be very short; that exhausted France would soon lie at his feet; that a solid peace would be concluded with some responsible form of power when the revolutionary conflagration had burnt out. The Jacobins dreaded the policy of Pitt more than the idealities of Burke. They called Burke "a madman"—they called Pitt "a monster." The style in which "that Orestes of the British Parliament, the madman Burke; that insolent lord Grenville; or that plotter Pitt," were spoken of in the French Convention was this: "They have misrepresented the independence of the French nation. They have invariably represented us as robbers and cannibals. Soon shall they be laid prostrate before the statue of Liberty, from which they shall rise only to mount the scaffold that awaits them, and to expiate by their death the evils in which they have involved the human race." * Fox, on the contrary, from his original sympathy with the new order of things during the existence of the States-General, from his exultation upon the repulse of the Allies from the French frontier, from his constant abhorrence of the war in which Great Britain was engaged, was in France held to be wedded to the whole course of the Revolution as firmly as Paine was wedded. There is a curious anecdote illustrative of this French feeling in the Journal of Mrs. Elliott. She was arrested,

* Quoted by Burke, from the speech of citizen Lasource, in the *Moniteur* of 17th March.—"Parliamentary History," vol. xxx., col. 614.

and carried before the Comité de Surveillance; a letter addressed to Mr. Fox having been found in her possession. At that sitting Vergniaud interposed in her behalf. "I don't see why this woman should have been arrested because a letter directed to Mr. Fox was found in her house. Had it been directed to the monster Pitt you could have done no more. Mr. Fox is our friend; he is the friend of a free nation, he loves our Revolution, and we have it under his own hand-writing." Fox carried his party feeling too far, but he did good service to his country by his dogged resistance to the measures of Pitt. He, with a few others, saved us from the full swing of rampant Toryism, in those days when fear was hardening the hearts of men in these isles, and driving them into measures which, without some check such as Fox, Grey, Sheridan, Erskine, interposed, might have resulted in despotism or civil war. Madame de Staël has said, with an impartiality which history should endeavour to emulate, "However advantageous it might have been to England, that Mr. Pitt should have been the head of the State in the most dangerous crisis in which that country ever found itself, it was not the less so that a mind as enlarged as that of Mr. Fox should have maintained principles in spite of circumstances, and have known how to preserve the household gods of the friends of liberty in the midst of the conflagration."*

A wise political teacher has justly described the delusion under which the majority in Parliament and in the country laboured at the beginning of 1793: "It is a memorable example of the intoxication of men, and of their Governors, that at the commencement of this war, the bare idea of the possibility of its failure would have been rejected with indignation and scorn."† With the exception of the brilliant successes of our own navy, we shall have to pursue a narrative of a series of disasters which culminated at Austerlitz, and which carried Pitt, broken-hearted, to his grave. The sanguine views of those who expected that a volcano could be extinguished by a fire engine, were never more strongly exhibited than in a speech of Lord Loughborough, at a period when the English Guards, having landed in Holland, assisted in the relief of Williamstadt, and thus in some degree influenced the movements of Dumouriez, which we shall presently relate. On the third reading of the Traitorous Correspondence Bill, on the 22nd of April, Lord Lauderdale had expressed a doubt whether nineteen hundred men,

* "Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution Française," 1818.

† Mackintosh—"Reasons against the French War"—Miscellaneous Works, vol. iii., p. 180.

sent out under the command of the duke of York, had saved Holland, or driven the French from the Austrian Netherlands. Lord Loughborough, in his reply, was extravagant in his appreciation of the consequences which had already attended the warlike operations of the British Government. "To the promptitude in sending out those few troops under the able command of an illustrious personage was to be ascribed that Holland was saved; that the French were defeated and driven back; that all Europe, from Petersburg to Naples, was delivered from the plunder, the confiscation, the rapine, the murder, the destruction of order, morality, and religion, with which it was threatened by the prevalence of French arms and French principles."*

Dumouriez had entered Antwerp, in triumph on the 30th of November, 1792. He moved with his army on the 17th of February, 1793, to carry the war into Holland. During his occupation of Belgium, the French Convention had sent Commissioners into that country, of whose tyrannical conduct Dumouriez bitterly complained in a letter which he addressed to the President of the Convention on the 12th of March: "We have oppressed the Belgians by every species of vexation; have violated the sacred rights of their liberty, and have imprudently insulted their religious opinions." He exposed the pretended union of several parts of Belgium to France. "The union of Hainault to the Republic was effected by sabres and muskets; and that of Brussels by a handful of men who could exist in trouble only, and by a few sanguinary men assembled to intimidate the citizens." Marat denounced the moderation and equity of Dumouriez as "crimes against the Revolution;" and he was accused of aspiring to the title of duke of Brabant, or to the Stadtholdership. The victor at Jemappes was hated by the party of the Mountain, and he knew that if they gained the ascendancy his destruction was inevitable. Danton, however, was his friend, and the Jacobins suspended their avowal of hostility till a more convenient season. Dumouriez marched into Holland, and soon obtained possession of Breda, Klundert, and

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxx. col. 739.—The "few troops" become a great army in the narrative of Sir A. Alison. Under the date of April 20, 1793, he says, "A corps, consisting of twenty thousand English, was embarked, and landed in Holland, under the command of the Duke of York. According to the statements of the Secretary at War, the total number of the effective forces of the kingdom at the commencement of hostilities was 22,000; and, deducting those employed in foreign settlements, the land forces did not amount to more than 9,000 effective men. During the first year of the campaign 10,000 additional men had been raised. This enabled the government gradually to send reinforcements to the duke of York; but with 9,000 disposable troops in the early part of 1793, Mr. Pitt would have had some difficulty in embarking 20,000 for Holland in April.—(See "Parliamentary History," vol. xxx. col. 1248, and col. 1330.)

Gertruydenburg. But he was brought to a stand at Williamstadt, which was occupied by a Dutch garrison who had not been corrupted, and by the English detachment of Guards. The generals who were second in command to Dumouriez had sustained severe reverses whilst he had marched into Holland. In a Proclamation to the French nation he says, "I made myself master of three strong places, and was ready to penetrate into the middle of Holland, when I learned the disaster of Aix-la-Chapelle, the raising of the siege of Maestricht, and the sad retreat of the army. By this army I was loudly summoned: I abandoned my conquests to fly to its succour." On the 16th of March the prince of Cobourg, commanding the Imperialists, was in position at Neerwinden; and upon the arrival of Dumouriez the small river of the Geete only separated the two armies. The river was crossed by the French on the 18th. In their attack upon the Austrians they were defeated with a loss of four thousand men; and were compelled to return to their former position. The hour of misfortune had now arrived; and with the French Convention the certain remedy for defeat was the guillotine for the unhappy commander—*pour encourager les autres*. Dumouriez knew what was in reserve for him when, on the 2nd of April, six Commissioners arrived in his camp to summon him to the bar of the Convention. He refused to obey, and ordered his Germans to take the Commissioners as their prisoners, but to do them no harm. They were sent to Tournay, to be kept as hostages for the safety of the royal family. Dumouriez had been in secret communication with the Austrian general Mack; and an agreement had been come to, that the French army should evacuate Belgium; that the Allied armies should not invade France; but that Dumouriez should march upon Paris, to overthrow the Jacobins and to restore the Constitutional Monarchy. On the day when the French Commissioners had failed in their arrest of Dumouriez, he addressed a Proclamation to the French nation, in which he said, "Frenchmen! we have a rallying point which can stifle the monster of anarchy: 'tis the Constitution we swore to maintain in 1789, '90, and '91: it is the work of a free people, and we shall remain free." On the 4th he was to complete his arrangements with the Prince of Cobourg, near Condé. Although in great danger of being seized by some volunteers, he accomplished his purpose; and a Proclamation of the Prince was agreed upon, and published, in which the alliance with the French general for the purpose of establishing a constitutional king was avowed. When Dumouriez returned to his army on the 5th, escorted by a body of imperial cavalry, he learned that his artillery had left the camp,

and that large bodies of troops had marched to general Dampierre at Valenciennes. The chances of restoring France to any system which should combine order with liberty was at an end for one generation. Dumouriez lived an exile in England till 1823. In the Proclamation of the prince of Cobourg, issued on the 5th of April, he stated that he was seconding the beneficent intentions of general Dumouriez to restore to France its constitutional monarch, with the means of rectifying such experienced abuses as may exist; and he declared, on his word of honour, that he should enter the French territory without any view of making conquests, and that if any strong place should fall into his hands he should regard it as a sacred deposit. After the failure of Dumouriez's project a Congress was held at Antwerp, attended by the representatives of Austria, Prussia, and Great Britain; and then the prince of Cobourg issued a second Proclamation, in which he revoked his former declaration, and announced that he should prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. The Jacobins, now almost supreme, had for three weeks or more been preparing to resist any invasion of the French territory—or any attempt to give France back a king, constitutional or absolute—with a terrible energy of which the world had seen no previous example, in its daring or its atrocity. "The utmost vigour" of the prince of Cobourg was that of a rocket in comparison with a thunderbolt.

On the 10th of March, the Convention passed a decree for the establishment of an extraordinary Criminal Tribunal, without appeal, for the trial of all traitors, conspirators, and counter-revolutionists. This was the terrible Revolutionary Tribunal, composed of five judges who were to be bound by no forms of procedure, and of a permanent jury. These jurymen were to satisfy themselves as to facts in any way that they could, and to vote audibly in the presence of a Paris mob. To direct the proceedings of this awful tribunal, from whose decrees there was no appeal, a Public Accuser was appointed. Fouquier Tinville filled this office with an excess of zeal that permitted none of the ordinary weaknesses of humanity in judge or jury to interfere with the sacred duty of giving to the guillotine its daily food. He had only one remedy for the cure of lukewarmness towards the Revolution—Death. He was in so great a hurry to do his work, that identity of person was sometimes unnecessary when an accused stood before him. Two women of the same name having been arrested, he settled the accounts of both, for fear of a mistake. You are idle, he would say, to his officers—I want two or three hundred every decade.* Over

* See Note on the Revolutionary Kalendar.

the Revolutionary Tribunal presided the *Comité de Salut Public*, which was instituted at the end of March. Consisting only of nine members, it will have all those appliances of despotism at its command which cannot be so well managed by that discordant body the Convention, of which Assembly a very large party, the Girondins, are utterly sick of the system which has been growing into irresistible strength, since they winked at the September massacres, and equivocated with the murder of the king. If the *Comité de Salut Public* has its centralizing functions, extending to all matters civil and military, the local agencies for carrying on the system of terror are not less efficient. In every township of France there is a *Comité Révolutionnaire*, each consisting of twelve staunch patriots, chosen by universal suffrage; and of these committees there are forty-four thousand, all busy in making domiciliary visits, arresting and examining the suspected, giving certificates of good citizenship—*Cartes de Civisme*—and filling the prisons with victims for the Moloch of Liberty. There is much to do in this mad world of France in which all the ordinary relations of social life are overthrown. The whole state machinery is out of gear, and nevertheless it must work. Oiling the wheels and cranks will be useless, so they must be moved by main strength. "The effects of fear alone" will do a great deal. But fear will not give the people food, when the interruption of commercial dealings, by the utter want of confidence between seller and buyer, keeps food out of the markets. In 1792 Paris had been provisioned with grain and flour, not in the ordinary course of demand and supply, but by the municipality. The loss to the government upon this year's transactions was enormous. In February, 1793, it was reported to the Convention that the price of bread must either be raised by the municipality, or an extraordinary tax must be levied, to keep down the price of bread. The Convention granted the tax, to be levied upon an ascending scale upon property, moveable and immoveable. The municipality, however, could not keep down prices, even by buying in the dearest market and selling in the cheapest. The farmers kept their grain in their barns; the merchants kept their sugar in their warehouses; the soap-boilers made no stock to supply the retailers. They did not like the coin in which they were to be paid in exchange for their commodities. When the National Assembly and the National Convention had declared the domains of the church and the estates of the emigrants to be public property, they put into circulation a new species of Paper-Money, estimated upon the supposed value of that property, denominated *Assignats*, the holders of them be-

ing assignees of so much of the property thus represented. Lands and houses might be bought, and were largely bought, by the holders of assignats, but they were not otherwise convertible. As a necessary consequence the value of this paper-money fluctuated according to the belief in the permanency of the Revolution; and in the same way the purchasers of the confiscated property became fewer and fewer when the hope of a constitutional monarchy had passed away, and France was governed in a great degree by the Jacobin Clubs. But the more decided was the depreciation of the Assignats the more unlimited was their issue by the Convention. As an inevitable consequence the nominal price of every article of subsistence and household necessity was prodigiously increased. Sugar, coffee, candles, soap, were doubled in price. The wages of labour remained stationary; for there was a superabundance of labour through the general interruption to production and exchange. The washerwomen of Paris go to the Convention to say that soap is so dear that their trade will be at an end. We want soap and bread, cry the poor *blanchisseuses* of the Seine. Commissioners of the Sections superintend the distribution of loaves to those who can pay. Furious women surround the grocers' shops, demanding sugar. The terrified grocers roll their sugar-hogsheads into the streets, and the citizenesses weigh it out at twenty-two sous a pound. Some paid; some helped themselves without paying; and the pallid shopkeepers helplessly looked on; for had not Marat, the friend of the people, said in his journal of the 25th of February that there would be an end of high prices if a few shops were pillaged, and a few shopkeepers hanged at their own doors? The shopkeepers, however, brought out their stores when their price was tendered in metallic currency. The Convention had its strong remedy against the unpatriotic *bourgeoisie*. It decreed that whoever exchanged gold or silver for a higher amount in assignats than their nominal value, and whoever stipulated for a different price of commodities if paid in paper or in specie, should be subjected to six years' imprisonment. The final step in this direction was to fix a maximum of price upon all agricultural produce and upon all merchandize. The system was extended from Paris to the departments, with the certain results of the ruin and misery which follow every violation of economical laws. And yet amidst this total derangement of the ordinary principles of social intercourse, the people lost no faith in their Republic. They were stirred up to the belief that their miseries were not the result of natural causes, but were produced by the intrigues of the aristocrats, aided by the gold of Pitt. Marat, who had excited the

plunder of the shops, was in vain denounced by a small majority in the Convention, who foresaw the quick approach of the reign of anarchy and bloodshed. The Mountain was gradually deriving new strength from the hunger and violence of the populace. "The people can do no wrong," said Robespierre. Danton, who had manifested many indications of disgust at the proceedings of the extreme democratic faction, was carried away by their ascendancy, and supported the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Its scaffolds were quickly set up. Sansculottism soon became supreme. Misery fell upon all classes, and especially upon those who depended upon the wages of industry. But every Parisian, rich or poor, trembled and obeyed; and the provinces, for the greater part, did the same, for Paris ruled France. Most Frenchmen were ready to defend their country against the foreigner, and to maintain any form of revolutionary government, however oppressive, in preference to the restoration of the ancient order of things which had been destroyed. Their fanaticism was stimulated by arts not wholly unlike the delusion practised upon the Kaffir tribes in 1857, who were persuaded by their chief to destroy their cattle and corn, that, rendered desperate by want, they might rush to a war which would sweep the British colonists from the land. The Assignats and the Law of Maximum produced the same desperation in France. The Jacobin leaders knew perfectly well what would be the consequences of their insane decrees. They traded on the despair of the people.

"The Jacobin Revolution," wrote Burke, "is carried on by men of no rank, of no consideration; of wild savage minds, full of levity, arrogance, and presumption; without morals, without probity, without prudence. What have they then to supply their innumerable defects, and to make them terrible even to the firmest minds? One thing, and one thing only—but that thing is worth a thousand—they have energy."* This energy was put forth in the formation of Revolutionary Committees, which were to reject all the ordinary principles of justice and mercy; and in desperate conflicts with those natural laws by which the exchanges of mankind are regulated. But the greater the domestic miseries of France, the readier were its population to turn from peaceful pursuits to the excitement of war. The Convention, on the 10th of March, decreed a forced levy of three hundred thousand men. This decree few dared to disobey, and many submitted to it without reluctance, and even with patriotic ardour. There was a remarkable exception in the district of La Vendée, in which singular country an insurrec-

* "Policy of the Allies."

tionary spirit was developed in the population, when their priests were ejected and the king had perished on the scaffold. When the peasantry were about to be dragged from their homes to serve in the armies of the Revolution, this spirit broke out into open violence against the republican authorities. In La Vendée the zeal of Loyalty and Religion came into open conflict with the passions excited under the names of the Rights of Man and the Age of Reason.

In the British Parliament, on the 17th of June, Mr. Fox proposed an elaborate Address to the Crown, the object of which was to make it the most earnest and solemn request of the Commons, that his majesty would employ the earliest measures for the re-establishment of peace with France. The proposition was rejected by the very large majority that the ministry now commanded. In the course of his speech Mr. Fox contended, in answer to the question which had been often asked, "whether we were to treat with France in its present state," that we ought to treat, and ultimately must treat, with whoever had the government in their hands, with him or them, be he or they whom they might. "Good God," cried the orator, "what was there in their proceedings that made us look for an established government among them? Let them suffer the penalties of their own injustice;—let them suffer the miseries arising from their own confusion. Why were the people of England to suffer because the people of France were unjust?" The reply of Mr. Pitt was not easy to controvert, "Where is our security for the performance of a treaty, where we have neither the good faith of a nation, nor the responsibility of a monarch? The moment that the mob of Paris becomes under the influence of a new leader, mature deliberations are reversed, the most solemn engagements are retracted, our free will is altogether controlled by force Should we treat with Marat, before we had finished the negotiation he might again have descended to the dregs of the people from whom he sprung, and have given place to a more desperate villain."* At this precise point of time it was no figure of speech for Mr. Pitt to refer to Marat as the representative of the executive power in France. "Let us consider," said Mr. Burke in the same debate, "the possibility of negotiation." The minister Le Brun is in gaol. The minister Clavière is not to be found. "Would you have recourse to Roland? Why, he is not only in gaol, but also his wife along with him, who is said to be the real minister Brissot is likewise in gaol, bearing a repetition of that sort of misfortune to which it is hoped that habit may

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxx. col. 994—1012.

reconcile him. Pay your addresses to Egalité, and you will find him in his dungeon at Marseilles. There then only remains my celebrated friend, the mild and merciful Marat."

The Girondins, on whose authority in the Convention rested the only hope of a stable government in France,—a government not founded upon the supremacy of the rabble,—had fallen, never to rise again, on the 2nd of June. They then became wanderers in the provinces, or prisoners in the dungeons of Paris. They had relied upon their patriotic eloquence and their republican virtue. They would hold no communion with the movers of insurrection and massacre; and they found the terrible earnestness of ignorant ruffianism too strong for respectable philosophy. Their majority in the Convention availed them nothing; for that Assembly had come into open conflict with the physical force of Paris, hounded on by the Jacobin Club, when the idol of the populace, Marat, was sent for trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. As more prudent men than the Girondins might have expected, the sanguinary demagogue was acquitted; and he was carried,—as a successful candidate was formerly chaired in England—upon the shoulders of the mob, to the hall of the Convention, amidst the cry of "Death to the Girondins." Robespierre, between whom and Marat there was mutual hatred, saw that in giving his support to this "friend of the people," whose mode of testifying his friendship was to excite to plunder and butchery, he was using an instrument for the destruction of the only party that had the confidence of the middle classes. He denounced the Girondins in the Convention as men who had wished to save the tyrant Louis, and had conspired with the traitor Dumouriez. The Commune of Paris had obtained a power which was opposed to all steady government, and the Girondins tried to bring them under the control of a Commission of Twelve appointed by the Convention. The mob was roused to that fury which never waits to inquire and to reflect, when victims are pointed out for its vengeance. On the 31st of May the mob declared itself in a state of permanent insurrection—a phrase which indicated that the ordinary operations of justice were suspended, in the same way that martial law supersedes the accustomed course of legal authority. On the 2nd of June, the Convention was surrounded by an armed force, whose decrees were to be pronounced by a hundred pieces of artillery. Resistance was in vain. Twenty-two of the Girondin leaders were conducted to prison. Many of their friends escaped to the provinces. Some who had fled from the guillotine died by their own hands. The political existence of the party was at an end.

For the most odious of the assassins of the anarchical republic there was the vengeance of assassination also in store. The story of Charlotte Corday has been told by Lamartine with a power of picturesque narrative which few have equalled. The naked facts can only be related by ourselves. In the city of Caen resided, in 1793, a grand-daughter of the great tragic poet, Corneille. She was an enthusiast, devoted to those ideas of the new philosophy which she had derived from her father, and from the secret study of Rousseau in the convent in which she had passed her girlhood. Some of the proscribed Girondins had come to reside in Normandy; and from their eloquent invectives against the terrorists who were degrading the cause of the revolution by their crimes, she derived, in common with her neighbours, a hatred of Marat as the personification of all that was atrocious in the rulers of the populace. Pétion, Barbaroux, with many others of the fugitive deputies, called up this disgust towards the ruling faction of Paris, by their oratory and their proclamations. Formidable bands of young men enrolled themselves to march to Paris, in order to rescue liberty from the assaults of anarchy. Amongst the number of these volunteers was one who aspired to Charlotte's love, but with a timid reserve. Her enthusiasm suggested that she had a higher call of duty than the indulgence of a feeling suited to more tranquil times. She felt that if the ferocity which now guided the Revolution was not arrested, her province, and the neighbouring districts now in insurrection, would become the scene of the most terrible carnage. She took her resolution. If Marat should fall there might be hope for the Republic. She travelled to Paris, which she entered on the 11th of July. With some difficulty she obtained admission to the mean lodging of Marat, on the evening of the 13th. She found him in a bath; and there she slew him. When examined, she said that she saw civil war ready to devastate France; that she deemed Marat to be the chief cause of the public calamities; and that she sacrificed her life, in taking his, to save her country. Her execution quickly followed. The wretch whom she had murdered was decreed a public funeral in the Pantheon. Danton pronounced his eulogy as "the divine Marat."