

CHAPTER LVIII.

REIGN OF LOUIS XVI. TO THE REVOLUTION.

(1774-1789 A.D.)

Louis XVI. — The new king, the grandson of Louis XV., was only twenty years old. He was a prince of pure morals, a somewhat narrow mind, and extreme timidity of character and speech; loving the right, and desiring it, but unfortunately too weak to be able to force those about him to carry out his wishes. The first thing he did was to remit succession dues; he reformed the law which rendered the *tailables* conjointly responsible for the payment of the taxes, and recalled the Parliament. If he manifested his weakness by reappointing to the ministry the old and useless Maurepas, he showed his love of right by removing from it Maupéou and Terray, whom he replaced by Malesherbes and Turgot. Later, he gave the ministry of war to another honest man, the Count of St. Germain, who desired to reorganize the finances and the administration, but executed his reforms ill. The Count of Vergennes, who was given the portfolio of foreign affairs, had filled several embassies with distinction. He was a laborious man, and very conversant with the affairs of his department, but lacked firmness of character.

Malesherbes and Turgot (1774-1776). — Lamoignon de Malesherbes, one of the most admirable men of the eighteenth century, had long been president of the Court of Aids and supervisor of publications. He had always urgently advocated economical administration and favored the spirit of reform. This line of conduct had gained him great popularity among men of letters, when the king appointed him to the position of minister of his household.

Turgot, a man of the greatest talent, was possessed of as much virtue as learning. As intendant of Limoges since 1761 he had suppressed the *corvées*, opened roads, and made popular the use of potatoes; and by wise and generous measures he had saved this poor province from actual

famine. From the moment of his entrance upon his ministry (1774) he urged upon the king, "No bankruptcy, no increase of taxation, no borrowing." Without recurring to these now familiar expedients, he found means within twenty months to pay off more than 100,000,000 of debts. He proposed great reforms: the gradual introduction of a complete system of local self-government, the abolition of the *corvée*, the imposition of a land tax upon the nobility and clergy; the amelioration of the condition of curés and vicars, and the suppression of the greater part of the monasteries; the equalization of the tax by means of a land survey, liberty of conscience, and the recall of the Protestants; redemption of feudal revenues; a single code; a uniform system of weights and measures for the whole kingdom; the suppression of wardenships and masterships, which impeded industry; freedom of thought as well as of commerce and industry; finally, he interested himself in moral as well as in material needs, forming a vast plan of public instruction which should shed light in every direction.

Reforms of Turgot; Opposition of the Privileged Classes. — These reforms would have been neither more nor less than a revolution; the threatened interests made a sort of war upon the minister; he could only proceed slowly and partially. He made a beginning by authorizing the free circulation of grain and flour throughout the kingdom. His enemies hastened to say that exportation would soon be allowed; that it was already, in fact. The people were excited: they were made to fear a famine. Insurrections broke out in the country districts. It became necessary to use force (1775).

There was a more violent outburst against Turgot when he induced the king to adopt the idea of replacing the *corvée* by a tax which should be paid by the landowners. Even the Parliament, its interests being affected, entered into the struggle, for the defence of an obnoxious abuse, against the reforming minister. It registered the edict only under compulsion (1776). The abolition of wardenships and masterships, that is to say, such freeing of industry as he had desired to effect in the case of commerce, increased the number of his enemies.

Weakness of the King. — The principal minister, Maurepas, secretly undermined Turgot's influence with the king; the queen attacked a comptroller-general who talked con-

stantly of economy: Louis XVI., in spite of his good intentions, began to be weary of the mental strain which Turgot caused him by holding up to his view vast designs which were beyond his capacity. The king worked at the locksmith's trade, designed maps, or passed whole days in hunting. When the Emperor Joseph II. came to France in 1777, he learned with astonishment that his brother-in-law, far from having visited his cities and provinces, had not even seen the Invalides or the École Militaire. Royalty had little by little retired from the centre of national life, and become isolated in the solemn idleness of Versailles.

Discharge of Turgot (1776); Suppression of his Reforms.—Malesherbes was the first to give way; he sent in his resignation. Turgot, a stronger character, awaited his dismissal; he would not abandon a position in which he could do good, until he was driven from it. In May, 1776, he received orders to resign the ministry, and wrote to the king, "My only desire is that you shall always be able to believe that I have been mistaken, and that I have warned you of fancied dangers. I hope that time will not justify my fears, and that your reign may be as happy and as peaceful as your people have expected from your principles of justice and benevolence."

Four months had scarcely passed before the king had yielded to the privileged classes the re-establishment of the *corvée* and of mastership in trades. Turgot and Malesherbes were succeeded by incompetent men. Maurepas, a silly old man, feared the men who troubled his peace of mind by showing him the danger and by trying to overcome it.

Necker (1776-1781).—Meantime the American war was about to begin. In order to face the additional expenses, with a budget in arrears, there was need of a capable man. In this emergency a Genevese banker named Necker, who had a great reputation as a financier, was called upon. As he was a Protestant and a foreigner, he received only the title of director of the finances (October, 1776). His mind had not the breadth and force of Turgot's; he believed that the disease of which France was dying could be cured by partial expedients and reforms. Still, he was influenced by the most generous feelings: he earnestly desired the public good. For five years he acquitted himself with honor in a position which was rendered difficult by the petty and

jealous character of Maurepas, the indolence of the king, and the greed of the courtiers. He was obliged to diminish the deficit, and to provide for the costs of the American war and the enormous expenses of an over-numerous court. He succeeded in this without increasing taxation, without greatly economizing in the court expenses, but by a reduction in the costs of collection, by a thousand little useful reforms, and by borrowing 490,000,000. This was deferring the difficulty, not solving it, and the chasm continued to widen. He relied upon peace, upon the future, to fill it.

Necker fell two years before the conclusion of the peace. The occasion of his fall was his famous *Compte rendu*, or report on the state of the finances, published in 1781, which made so great a noise, and yet was very far from complete. There was no mention made in it of the loans, nor of the expenses of the war. In it the receipts appeared to be 10,000,000 more than the expenditures. The public received this publication with immense applause. The capitalists lent the minister 236,000,000 livres. But the court was vexed at this appeal to public opinion. If daylight was let in upon the financial administration, what would become of the pensions and the customary robbery? Maurepas gave the signal for the attack, and the war which had been so successful against Turgot recommenced against his successor. Parliament rose against the edict for the re-establishment of the provincial assemblies; the courtiers with one voice decried the minister, who was ruining them by introducing order into the finances. Louis XVI. again yielded to this clamor of the court; and when Necker, his patience exhausted, tendered him his resignation, he accepted it (May, 1781). For the real public this was a calamity, and was so regarded. Besides his financial reforms, some honorable acts had marked his administration; he had caused the serfs of the royal domain to be set free; destroyed the right of pursuit, which gave the lord all the property acquired in a foreign country by his fugitive serf; and abolished the "preliminary question" by torture.

The American War (1778-1783); La Fayette.—The Seven Years' War, so favorable politically to England, had raised her debt to £133,000,000, which demanded an annual interest of £5,000,000. The mother country thought of unloading upon her colonies a portion of this heavy burden. But the colonists, invoking the great principle of the English constitution

that no one is bound to submit to taxes which have not been voted by his representatives, offered armed resistance, and war broke out (1775). The insurrection extended to all the provinces; the following year their deputies, assembled in general congress at Philadelphia, published their Declaration of Independence.

France hailed with enthusiasm a revolution in which she recognized the principles of French philosophy. The three American envoys to Paris, Arthur Lee, Silas Deane, and particularly the aged Franklin, were the objects of a perpetual ovation. The young nobility, carried away by the philosophical ideas of the time, and filled with a desire to wipe out the disgrace of the Seven Years' War, asked permission, in great numbers, to set out for America. The Marquis de la Fayette, scarcely twenty years old, himself fitted out a vessel which he loaded with arms. The government, however, feared a rupture with England. Vergennes contented himself at first with sending indirect assistance in the shape of arms, money, and ammunition, which Beaumarchais undertook to deliver. Louis XVI. did not like war, above all he did not wish to seem to be the aggressor, and perhaps feared the consequences of embarking France in a contest of liberty against monarchy. Yet he allowed himself to be led on, and in February, 1778, he signed a commercial treaty with the United States, to which was to be added an alliance offensive and defensive if England should declare war against France. The English ambassador was immediately recalled.

D'Orvilliers, D'Estaing, and De Guichen. — Happily France had passed through the hands of Choiseul, who had restored her navy. A fleet set sail for America (1778), under Count d'Estaing; another was formed at Brest, to fight in the European seas; and an army was prepared to make a descent upon England. Count d'Orvilliers left Brest with thirty-two ships, and fought an indecisive battle off Ouessant against Admiral Keppel (July). Count d'Estaing would have gained a brilliant victory over Admiral Howe, but his fleet was scattered by a storm. Bouillé, however, took Dominica.

The policy of Choiseul, who had renewed the alliance of France with Spain, now bore fruit. She declared war against England, and united her navy to that of France (1779). Count d'Orvilliers, with sixty-six ships of the line,

sailed for Plymouth; but a storm scattered his fleet. D'Estaing captured Grenada. The English admiral Rodney, on the other hand, defeated a Spanish fleet, reprovisioned Gibraltar, which had been besieged by a French and Spanish army, and fought in the Antilles three indecisive battles with Count de Guichen. Guichen, in his turn, in Europe, carried off an English convoy of sixty ships, with booty amounting to 50,000,000 francs.

The Armed Neutrality. — A repulse of Count d'Estaing before Savannah compromised for a moment the American cause. But a vast coalition was forming against the maritime despotism of England. In order to prevent Spain from receiving naval supplies from the northern countries, the English stopped and examined neutral vessels. After much damage to neutral commerce, Catharine II. proclaimed (1780) the freedom of vessels sailing under neutral flags, provided articles contraband of war were not protected by them; to sustain this principle, she proposed a plan of armed neutrality which was successively adopted by Sweden and Denmark, Prussia and Austria, Portugal, the Two Sicilies, and Holland. England, greatly irritated, immediately declared war against Holland, the weakest and most vulnerable of the neutral powers; and Rodney attacked St. Eustatius, one of its colonies.

Naval Achievements. — The year 1781 was, for France, the most successful year of the war. Count de Grasse won a series of brilliant victories. In October, 1781, Washington and Rochambeau forced General Cornwallis to surrender at Yorktown, with seven thousand men, six ships of war, and fifty merchant vessels. This victory decided American independence. At the same time the Marquis de Bouillé took St. Eustatius from the English; the Duke of Crillon took Minorca, and Suffren, one of the greatest of French seamen, sent to the East Indies to save the Dutch colonies, won in those regions four naval victories (1782). He was already concerting with Hyder-Ali, sultan of Mysore, great plans for the destruction of the English rule in the Eastern Continent, when the conclusion of peace interrupted him.

In the Antilles the English retained but one island of any importance, that of Jamaica; De Grasse tried to take it from them in 1782, but, attacked by superior forces under the command of Rodney, he was defeated and captured:

there were only three men on board his ship who were not wounded.

Siege of Gibraltar.—The skilful defence of Gibraltar by Sir G. Elliot against the combined forces of France and Spain was another check. Twenty thousand men and forty ships blockaded the place, two hundred cannons on the land side and ten floating batteries kept up an incessant fire upon it. The place, attacked as no other had ever been before, was soon reduced to extremity. In vain it had thrown six hundred red-hot balls at the floating batteries; when at last one of them succeeded, and started a conflagration which resulted in the dispersion of the batteries. Twelve thousand men perished in this siege, and Gibraltar remained an English possession.

Treaty of Versailles (1783).—Meanwhile England had lost her reputation for being invincible upon the seas, suffered prodigiously in her commerce, and added 2,500,000,000 francs (£116,000,000) to her debt. The Whigs, coming into office, caused proposals of peace to be conveyed to the cabinet of Versailles. France had spent 1,400,000,000; but she had at least obtained a great and noble result,—the independence of the United States. The peace, signed in September, 1783, was honorable to France, which caused Minorca to be restored to Spain, and obtained for itself the restitution of Chandernagore, Pondicherry, etc., in the Indies, Tobago and St. Lucia in the Antilles; the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, with the right of fishing on Newfoundland; and Goree and Senegal in Africa.

A treaty of commerce between France and England was signed in 1786 which substituted, in place of the existing prohibitions, an *ad valorem* duty upon merchandise common to the two countries. This treaty was the first step taken by England towards free trade. A treaty of commerce with Russia in 1787 opened that country to France. France also supported Sweden and Bavaria against the ambition of the great powers. Her diplomacy was as successful as her arms.

Progress of the Sciences.—Meantime the movement which ruled the age continued its course, and influenced even the arts. Remarkable public works were begun. New sciences were established; all sciences were striving for development and being popularized. Lavoisier decomposed water, thus transforming chemistry (1775). The abbé de L'Épée

founded his institution for deaf-mutes (1778); Valentin Haüy, the institution for the blind (1784); while Pinel showed that the insane were not dangerous creatures whom it was necessary to chain, but patients who could be cured. Turgot established a chair of hydrodynamics. In 1778 a chair of mineralogy was established, and the Royal Society of Medicine was founded; in 1780 the veterinary school at Alfort was established; in 1788 the School of Mines; in 1787, in the Academy of Sciences, sections of natural history, agriculture, mineralogy, and physics were instituted. Parmentier increased the alimentary resources of the people by popularizing the use of potatoes (1779), and Daubenton introduced into France the Spanish breed of merino sheep. It was in these years that Galvani of Bologna exhibited (1791) the singular phenomena of electricity to which his name has been given, and Volta of Como invented (1794) the pile, which has opened a new career to chemistry. Finally, in 1789, Laurent de Jussieu proclaimed, for botanical classification, the principle of the subordination of characters, which, generalized by Cuvier, gave a new life to natural sciences. At the same time, bold and scientific navigators, the Englishmen Wallis and Cook, the Frenchmen Bougainville and La Pérouse, finishing the work of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, completed the exploration of the globe, and at the price of a thousand dangers opened safe routes to commerce. Thus the sciences, properly speaking, were tending to use and practice, while the moral sciences were tending to reforms. This involuntary agreement announced the approach of a new era.

Death of Voltaire and Rousseau (1778).—The press became more active and more audacious. Voltaire, then eighty-four years old, returned to Paris and stopped at the hôtel of the Marquis de Villette, at the corner of the quay which ever since has been known as the Quai Voltaire. An immense crowd gathered under the windows and in the halls. He went to the French Academy, which came forward to meet him, a thing it never did even for sovereigns. Then he went to the Comédie-Française, where, at the first representation of his *Irène*, he received the most enthusiastic homage. He survived this triumph only two months; and died in May, 1778: his body was transferred to the Pantheon in 1791.

Rousseau, his rival in glory and influence, soon followed

him (July), and died, as he had lived, alone, in the retreat provided for him at Ermenonville by the Marquis of Girardin. Montesquieu had died in 1755. Of the four great writers of the century, Buffon alone survived; he did not pass away until 1788, at the age of eighty-one. He had just written (1778) another magnificent work, his *Époques de la Nature*, one of the books which took strongest hold upon the imagination of the men of that time. Very far from Voltaire and Rousseau, yet inheriting the spirit of both, Beaumarchais, the author of the *Mariage de Figaro* (1784), continued the war against the prejudices of birth, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, in his *Études* (1784), but especially his *Paul and Virginia*, tried to revive the taste for nature, simple manners, and true sentiment.

Invention of the Air-Balloon (1784).—The desire to become acquainted with and cut new paths was so great that it seemed as though the horizon of human knowledge had no longer any limits. Franklin had just "brought down the thunder from the clouds," and Giroud de Villette, Pilâtre de Rozier, and D'Arlande made (1783) the first ascension in a fire-balloon, while two years after, Blanchard passed, in a balloon, from Dover to Calais.

Animal Magnetism; Illuminism; Freemasonry.—Side by side with the aerostats, the mysteries and the falsehoods of magnetism: Cagliostro and Mesmer; the one, an Italian adventurer, claimed to possess the true secrets of chemistry, as discovered by the priests of Egypt and India; the other, a German adventurer, came to Paris to give his famous séances (1779). In a rich apartment, dimly lighted, and so furnished as to act upon the imagination and the senses, the sick or the curious assembled around the magnetic trough: some soon fell into convulsions; the contagion seized the rest. It was vaunted as a remedy for everything.

Certain minds became in a measure unbalanced. St. Martin published the incomprehensible reveries of the *Philosophie inconnue*; the extraordinary book of Swedenborg was introduced and eagerly devoured. Beneath politics and science, in shade and in silence, the freemasons worked; a vast and ancient society of men of all ranks and all countries, which counted princes among its initiated, and, under its strange and somewhat childish rites, concealed and propagated liberal ideas.

Queen Marie Antoinette.—Amid the ferment of thought public opinion gained in power. The court no longer gave the tone and direction to French society. Louis XVI. could not keep up the tradition of Louis XIV., and the beautiful and gracious Marie Antoinette had made many enemies at court by her too exclusive friendships, and among the public by too great a disregard of rules of etiquette and royal conventionalities. She neglected Versailles for Trianon, and thought that a queen of France could then live to please herself. Such were the habits of the house of Austria, but it had not been so with the house of Bourbon. Consequently those scandals began which later turned to hatred, and finally burst out in such a terrible manner against her.

An unfortunate event, as early as the year 1784, showed the feeling of the public in regard to her. The cardinal of Rohan was then the scandal of the Church. When ambassador at Vienna he had compromised his character of priest and representative of France by frivolous conduct and frightful expenditures. Scorned by the king, and particularly by the queen, he was in complete disgrace. An intriguing woman, the Countess of Lamotte, made him believe that she was the confidante of Marie Antoinette, and that that princess was disposed to be favorable to him. By means of forged letters and a pretended secret interview she completely duped the cardinal. Then she persuaded him that the queen charged him to purchase secretly for her a certain necklace of great price. He went to see the merchants, showed them the letters, and obtained possession of the jewel, from which the countess at once realized the desired profit. Some time after, the jewellers, uneasy at not being paid, wrote to the queen. Everything was at once disclosed. The cardinal was sent to the Bastille. Parliament set him at liberty, regarding him as only a dupe, and condemned the countess. The affair made the greatest commotion, and though the queen had had nothing to do with it, her reputation suffered greatly from having her name connected with such a scandal. After the retirement of Necker, Marie Antoinette began to take an active interest in the affairs of the government, and acquired a great ascendancy over the king. But not having the administrative genius of her mother, Maria Theresa, though she desired influence, she did not wish for the cares of business; and as she gave the latter only a partial attention, she could not

give her influence an enlightened direction. It was she who caused Calonne to be appointed comptroller-general in 1783.

Calonne (1783-1787).— Calonne had some administrative ability and despatched business with great ease; but he was a spendthrift. His financial principles were thus stated by himself: "A man who wishes to borrow must appear to be rich, and in order to appear rich it is necessary to make a display by expenditure. Economy is doubly fatal: it warns the capitalists not to lend to a treasury involved in debt; it causes the arts to languish, while prodigality invigorates them." The courtiers and the women were delighted with this amiable minister. The king, in his indolence, found comfort in a minister whom nothing embarrassed. This pleasant exterior covered 500,000,000 fr. borrowed in three years, and that in time of peace. The time came, however, to disclose everything to the king. Then the spendthrift became a reformer. Calonne conceived a plan in which all the ideas of all his predecessors were combined: he proposed to subject the privileged classes to a tax and the payment of a subsidy based on land, to diminish the *taille*; to decree the freedom of the grain trade, etc.

The Notables (1787).— Thus the fatal words, *privileges, abuses*, were continually repeated. The government, in order to effect these reforms, would need to have recourse to the nation. But the name of the States-General excited alarm; the court did not venture to do more than call an assembly of the Notables. The Notables assembled on February 12, 1787. They numbered one hundred and forty-four members, of whom twenty-seven were regarded as representatives of the Third Estate; in reality there were only six or seven plebeians. Calonne set before them his plans, which were received with general approbation. But the Notables were less interested in looking into the finances than in avoiding the land-tax. The discussion became very earnest. Calonne grew angry; the king also; and the Notables were ordered to deliberate upon the form and not the principle of the tax. But the enemies of Calonne finally carried the day, and Louis exiled him to Lorraine.

Ministry of Brienne (1787-1788).— One of those most active against Calonne had been Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse; brilliant, ambitious, but a prelate without morality and perhaps without faith, whom the pious Louis XVI. had

long kept out of the ministry. He finally appointed him prime minister; Brienne gained credit among the Notables by his plans of economy. This assembly, however, adjourned in a very short time (May 25). The Notables had accomplished nothing; but in their midst the words "States-General," and even "National Assembly," had been uttered.

Brienne, having got rid of the Notables, now found himself face to face with the Parliament. The edict with regard to the provincial assemblies was registered without difficulty; but an animated discussion arose on the subjects of the stamp-tax and the land-tax. The king held a *lit de justice* (*i.e.*, appeared in the Parliament), and had the last two edicts registered. The Parliament protested. The king banished it to Troyes. Few men were now more unpopular than Brienne; in the first place he was known to be on good terms with the queen, who was already boldly attacked by pamphlets. Brienne was not even supported by his order. The assembly of the clergy refused him a miserable subsidy of 1,800,000 livres. Abroad, the ministry was not more fortunate. It left the intrigues of England and the arms of the king of Prussia to overturn the republican government of the Netherlands.

But now a reconciliation was accomplished between the government and Parliament. Brienne had won over a majority of the members of Parliament. He brought in an edict for a loan of 420,000,000, to be realized in five years. In exchange, he promised the convocation of the States-General before the end of that period, having resolved in advance not to keep his promise. There were violent protests, but Louis XVI. ordered the edict registered. Two members who opposed were arrested. The Parliament was thrown into commotion by this attack upon individual liberty in the person of two of its members. D'Espréménil drew up, in the name of the Parliament, an act in which was summed up what were called the fundamental laws of the monarchy; another councillor proposed still further protest. By the king's order, the two were arrested in full session of Parliament, and sent to prison.

The government profited by this stroke; the Parliament, summoned to Versailles, was obliged to verify several edicts which deprived it of the power of registration, and transferred the same to a *plenary court*, which was a sort of council of State composed of those who were devoted to the king,

and which abridged the jurisdiction of the Parliament. Resistance was everywhere organized, and disturbances took place in Brittany, in Béarn, and in ten other provinces, and an insurrection in Grenoble. To raise money, Brienne seized the invalid pension fund and the proceeds of several benevolent lotteries; but in August, 1788, he was obliged to declare that the payments of the State should be made partly in specie, partly in treasury notes. This was a fatal blow to Brienne. He was obliged to give up his place to Necker (August 23).

Second Ministry of Necker (1788-1789).—The return of Necker called forth acclamations of joy; the departure of Brienne caused scenes of disorder and unhappily of bloodshed. This first bloodshed in Paris made a deep impression. However, confidence revived, thanks to Necker. In one day the public securities rose thirty per cent. But there were in the treasury only five hundred thousand livres, while the needs of the State were urgent and considerable. It was too late to save the country by minor expedients. An appeal to the nation became indispensable. Brienne had promised to convoke the States-General in 1789; Necker confirmed the engagement.

Convocation of the States-General.—The meeting of the States became the one thought of France. Under what form should they assemble? The Third Estate had become a considerable order, on account of its wealth, its intelligence, its activity, and the conspicuous positions held by its chief men in the government and in the administration of the country. Respect for the nobility was greatly diminished. Now in order that the Third Estate should occupy the position it deserved, it was necessary at least to double the number of its members, and establish individual vote, in place of vote by orders. This view was sustained by Necker and by all liberal men. But the nobility resisted. Necker wished to decide the question in an assembly of Notables, but they refused to make any change in the ancient form. Then he resolved to settle one part of the difficulty himself. A decree of the council, establishing double representation, without deciding anything as to individual vote, convoked the States at Versailles for the first of May, 1789.

FIFTEENTH PERIOD.

CONSTITUTIONAL FRANCE, SINCE 1789.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

(1789-1791 A.D.)

Necessity of a Constitution.—It had been long said that the Third Estate paid in money, the nobility in blood, and the clergy in prayers. Now, the clergy of the court and the salon prayed but little, and the nobility no longer composed the entire army; but the Third Estate had remained faithful to its functions in the State: it was always paying, and more each year. It was inevitable that the day should come when, weary of paying, it would demand a reckoning. That day is called the Revolution of 1789.

The abbé Siéyès, in a celebrated pamphlet, discussing questions which every one was then asking, said, "What is the Third Estate? The nation. What is it now? Nothing. What ought it to be? Everything." He estimated the number of the nobility of all ages and both sexes to be less than one hundred and ten thousand, and the clergy was not more numerous.

The court, especially the queen, the Count of Artois, the princes of Condé and Conti, were desirous that the States-General should have charge of financial matters only, and that when the deficit was made up and the debts paid, the deputies should be sent home. But political reforms were the best precaution to be taken against the recurrence of the deficit.

France suffered, in fact, from two evils, of which one was the result of the other,—a bad financial system and a bad