

hunger and sickness, began their evacuation of France on October 1.

**Defence of Lille; Victory of Jemmapes.** — While Dumouriez arrested at Valmy the invading army, and slowly followed up its retreat, Custine had taken the offensive on the Rhine, captured Speyer, Worms, and even Mainz. In the Alps, Montesquiou conquered Savoy, and Anselme the county of Nice. In the Netherlands the Austrians had attacked Lille with savage barbarity, but could not overcome the stanch bravery of that patriotic city. Dumouriez arrived with the army of Valmy. On the 6th of November he won the battle of Jemmapes, which gave France the Austrian Netherlands. On the 13th he entered Brussels.

Thus, in the first campaign, the new France, training her young soldiers under fire, repulsed the attack of kings, and laid her hand upon those half-French countries which Louis XIV. himself had not been able to secure. Goethe, who was present with the Prussian army at Valmy, as a spectator, declared that evening that then and there a new epoch in the history of the world began.

## CHAPTER LXI.

## THE CONVENTION.

(1792-1795 A.D.)

**National Convention.** — Royalty had succumbed. The Convention's first act was to proclaim the republic. But the conquerors were divided; two great parties contended for the direction of the Assembly, — the Girondists, who had had the predominance in the Legislative Assembly, and who retained it some months longer in the Convention; and the Montagnards, who were later to rule over it. The first was superior in eloquence and learning, the second had more passion and boldness. Nourished upon the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, they dreamed of a millennium of public virtue for France; even though society perished under the experiment, they wished to apply their theories. Between the Girondists and the Montagnards was the Plain, composed of moderate and feeble men, who were powerless against the momentum of the majority.

**Death of Louis XVI.** (January 21, 1793). — After the affair of the 10th of August, the royal family had been shut up in the Temple. All communication with those outside had been forbidden. They lived thus for five months in the Temple under a surveillance always strict and often insulting. Louis XVI., formed rather for private life than for the throne, showed during his captivity a calm dignity and virtue which often touched the most brutal jailers.

The constitution declared the king inviolable and authorized no penalty against him but deposition, which had been already pronounced. But the situation was extreme, a coalition of all Europe was imminent, and the Convention, constituting itself both accuser and judge, ordered the king to appear before it (December 3). The venerable Malesherbes, crowning a beautiful life by a noble act, demanded and obtained the honor of defending his old master. Saint-Just and Robespierre did not trouble themselves as to whether the accusations against the king were true or false;

they loudly demanded his death as a measure for the public safety. The Girondists made only timid efforts to save him.

Four questions were successively submitted to the vote: 1. Is Louis guilty of conspiracy against the public liberty and an attempt against the general safety? A unanimous affirmative. 2. Shall he have an appeal to the people? 276 affirmatives out of 745 voting. 3. What penalty shall be inflicted? 387 votes for death unconditionally, 338 for detention or death conditionally, 28 absent or not voting. 4. Shall his execution be delayed? 310 yeas against 380 nays. The Convention ordered the execution to take place within twenty-four hours; and on the 21st of January, 1793, Louis XVI., with a courage and Christian resignation which posterity admires, mounted the scaffold. He tried to speak a few words to the crowd, but a roll of the drums drowned his voice.

Thus a prince who had sincerely desired the welfare of his people died by the hand of the people, a victim of hatred the more implacable because it was believed to be legitimate. The fatal doctrine of the supremacy of the public safety was responsible for one more crime, for it was again forgotten that the real safety of nations comes from courage and magnanimity and not from the executioner. Executions could only lead to still further executions.

**First Coalition (1793-1797).** — The death of Louis XVI. armed against France the states which were still hesitating. All sovereigns felt themselves threatened by the doctrines of revolutionary propagandism which the Convention practised. Upon the proposition of Danton it had decreed that France should grant aid and fraternity to all peoples who should wish to recover their liberty (November 19, 1792). Pitt carried England into the coalition with her fleets and subsidies. France, threatened on all her frontiers, did not recoil. In February and March, 1793, she sent her declaration of war to England, the Netherlands, and Spain, and received that of the Empire. It was a new crusade, so to speak, of all European royalties and aristocracies, not to revenge Louis XVI., but to crush the principles of the new social order upheld by the Revolution.

**Extreme Dangers; the Terror.** — In the western part of France agitation against the Revolutionary government had commenced early. In October, 1791, it became necessary to

send troops against the Chouans, as the insurgents were called. But the Vendean peasants did not begin civil war for the cause of the throne and the altar till after the death of the king. At the same time that this danger appeared in the interior, reverses began abroad. The English attacked the colonies; Dumouriez, defeated at Neerwinden, evacuated Belgium and declared against the Convention. His soldiers refused to follow him, but the republic had none the less lost in him its best general. The army was again disorganized and the northern frontier was endangered.

The Convention, however, made progress everywhere. Against enemies within, a committee of general security was created, which was to search for not only criminals, but suspected persons; and a revolutionary tribunal to punish them. A committee of public safety, a sort of dictatorship of nine persons, controlled all public authority, so as to infuse into the national defence the most energetic activity (April 6). There was suspicion everywhere; Robespierre firmly believed that the Girondists were trying to dismember France and throw it open to the foreigners; the Girondists suspected Marat, Robespierre, and Danton. An extraordinary state of distrust arose, from which followed the Reign of Terror.

**Proscription of the Girondists (June 2, 1793); Revolt in the Provinces.** — Since the trial of the king, the Girondists and Montagnards had been keeping up a desperate struggle in the Convention; the one party wishing to arrest the Revolution, the other to hasten its progress. The most atrocious of the radicals was the hideous Marat. The Girondists, whom he accused of the crime of moderatism, attacked him. They obtained his indictment and had him summoned before the Revolutionary Tribunal. That terrible tribunal acquitted Marat, and the only result was to show the weakness of the Girondists. An attack against Robespierre was not more successful, and alienated Danton, who at once fought against them. The party of the Mountain, controlling the sections of Paris through the Commune and the Jacobins, armed them against the Convention, which, under the pressure of the riot, voted for the arrest of thirty-one of the Girondists. Some of them, as Vergniaud and Gensonné, awaited their sentence; others escaped from their persecutors and attempted to raise the departments. The

greater part of the cities in the south declared against the Convention; Toulon was delivered over to the English with the whole Mediterranean squadron (August); Paoli tried to deliver up Corsica to them; Condé, Valenciennes, and Mainz were lost (July), and the Spaniards invaded Rousillon. At the same time a terrible scarcity of food was causing internal disorganization.

**Energy of the Measures for Defence.** — But the Convention displayed a desperate energy. It attempted to regulate prices (September), and established the most severe laws against monopolizers and speculators. Commercial liberty, political liberty, civil liberty, were all suppressed. The entire country submitted to the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety. The law against suspects threw three hundred thousand people into the prisons, and Barrère declared, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, that France must become one vast camp. Twelve hundred thousand men were levied. In a few months Carnot organized fourteen armies. Powder and steel were hastily prepared. Bells were melted to make cannon. Bordeaux and Lyons were reduced to submission, the latter city after a resistance of sixty-three days. Bonaparte, then a captain of artillery, recaptured Toulon (December); the Vendéans were driven out of Nantes (June), and Jourdan, at the head of the principal army, held the allies in check.

**The Guillotine.** — Meanwhile nobles and priests, proscribed as "suspects," perished in great numbers on the scaffolds erected in all the cities: Carrier, Collot-d'Herbois, Couthon, Fouché, Barras, and others, exceeded in the provinces the most horrible proscriptions ever recorded in history. The murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday rendered the Terror more implacable. Queen Marie Antoinette (October 16), Madame Elizabeth, Bailly, the Girondists (October 31), the Duke of Orleans, General Custine, the great chemist Lavoisier, Malesherbes, and a thousand others were guillotined. Cartloads of victims, without regard to age or station, were daily dragged to execution.

**Execution of the Hébertists and Dantonists** (March and April, 1794). — Disputes began to arise among the Montagnards themselves. The most violent of them, the Hébertists, all-powerful in the Commune, attempted to make the Terror the regular government of France, professed Atheism, and caused the Goddess of Reason to be placed on the altar

of Notre-Dame. The Dantonists attacked both the anarchists of Hébert's party, and the Committee of Public Safety, whose tyranny they eloquently denounced. Robespierre, who with Couthon and Saint-Just had the upper hand in the Committee, first denounced the Hébertists, whom he accused of corrupting the nation by propagating atheism, and of conspiring with foreigners. They were executed (March 24, 1794); twelve days after, Danton, Desmoulins, and those who were now called the Moderates, suffered the same fate on pretext of Orleanism (April 8, 1794).

**The 9th Thermidor.** — Meantime Robespierre, in his turn, began to think of checking the Revolution, so as to construct upon the bloody ruins of the past a society arranged according to his own ideas. At this, Collot-d'Herbois, Billaud-Vareannes, and others, were roused to fierce opposition. Robespierre proposed a reorganization of the Revolutionary Tribunal, rendering easier the process of judicial murder by effacing the last vestiges of legal forms, and placing the Convention at his mercy (22 Prairial). Then he withdrew from the government and retired to the Jacobin Club, awaiting the opportunity to strike a decisive blow. Meantime the Terror redoubled. In forty-seven days, fourteen hundred persons perished.

Such a horrible state of affairs could not last. The outcry of public pity arose against the authors of these abominations, and especially against Robespierre. His enemies made the most of this movement of public opinion; they accused him of aspiring to the dictatorship. On the 8th Thermidor the struggle took place in the Convention. Robespierre wearied the Assembly by an interminable defence, and irritated it by threats. The debate was stormy, and for a long time indecisive, but finally the Plain went over to the enemies of Robespierre. Next day the struggle in the Convention was renewed. Robespierre was arraigned with Couthon and Saint-Just, his brother and Lebas. But the Commune rose in insurrection, delivered the prisoners, and conducted them in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville. Open war now broke out between the rival powers, the representatives of Paris and those of France. The Convention acted with energy and determination, outlawed Robespierre and his friends, and marched powerful forces upon the Hôtel de Ville, who seized the condemned men. Robespierre was severely wounded, perhaps by his own

hand. All were led to the scaffold amid the insults of the mob, who beheld in their punishment the end of the Reign of Terror (9–10 Thermidor, 27–28 July, 1794). In the four hundred and twenty days during which the Terror had lasted, 2669 sentences of condemnation had been pronounced by the Revolutionary Tribunal and carried out, not counting the victims put to death in the provinces.

**Abolition of the Revolutionary Laws.** — The fall of Robespierre became the signal for a reaction, which, in spite of its excesses, allowed France time to breathe. The guillotine ceased to be the chief means of government. The importance of the Committees of Public Safety and General Security was considerably diminished; the law of Prairial was repealed; the prisons were opened; at Paris alone ten thousand captives were set free. The Convention assumed the powers of the Commune of Paris, and the Jacobin Club was closed. Carrier and other leaders in the massacres were sent to punishment. Collot-d'Herbois, Barrère, and Billaud-Varennes were transported to Cayenne, after a final effort on the part of the Jacobin party on the 1st Prairial (May 20, 1795).

**Glorious Campaign of 1793.** — The great success of her arms had happily consoled France in her grief. Carnot, as a member of the Committee of Public Safety, had organized victory. The strategists of the coalition were slow and methodical. Carnot, instead of scientific manœuvres which the new French generals had not yet learned, and which the French conscripts could not comprehend, demanded that the army should strike rapid blows, marching right on with bayonets fixed, without considering the numbers of the enemy. This system of tactics, well suited to the inexperience and enthusiasm of the raw French troops, was also the best for cutting the long and slender cordon with which the coalition had surrounded France; it was successful. At the end of August, 1793, France was invaded on all sides, and her situation seemed desperate; at the end of December she was almost everywhere victorious.

**Loss of Condé, Valenciennes, and Mainz (May–August).** — After the defection of Dumouriez, the allies, instead of marching together upon Paris, were thinking only of their own individual interests. Condé and Valenciennes were invested. Custine had allowed the Prussians to surround Mainz. After three months' sieges the allies took the three

towns; but meanwhile all France had risen, and the preparations for defence were carried on with an energy proportioned to the danger.

The allies lost another month in preparing for new operations. The English then marched on Dunkirk, and the Austrians laid siege to Quesnay. Houchard defeated the English at Hondshoote (September 8). Five days after he defeated the Dutch, but a panic drove his army back in disorder to Lille. He was removed, and he, as well as Custine, was sent to the scaffold. The allies, now masters of the Scheldt and of the country between the Scheldt and the Sambre, endeavored to take Maubeuge, so as to assure themselves of the possession of the upper Sambre. France seemed in great peril; but Carnot promoted Jourdan, a simple chief of battalion at the beginning of the campaign, to the command of the army of the North, and Jourdan defeated the Prince of Coburg at Watignies, and blockaded Maubeuge.

In the Vosges the French armies at first lost some battles. But the youthful Hoche was placed at the head of the army of the Moselle, Pichegru at the head of the army of the Rhine, and Saint-Just and Lebas, coming to the seat of operations, inspired the troops and people with fresh energy. Hoche and Pichegru defeated the Austrians and compelled them to recross the Rhine, while the Prussians, thus exposed on their left, fell back to Mainz. Hoche wintered in the enemy's country, in the Palatinate. In Italy the French and Piedmontese contended for the chain of the Alps. On the side of the Pyrenees the republican army fell back before the Spaniards (December).

**Successes and Defeat of the Vendéans (1793).** — But at this moment the civil war was drawing to an end. The republicans had recaptured Lyons (October) and Toulon (December). La Vendée resisted longer. The revolt of the peasants of that province began at Saint-Florent on the Loire. In March, 1793, the young men of the canton were summoned thither to be drafted into the army. They mutinied, drove off the gendarmes, and pillaged the Hôtel de Ville. A peasant named Cathelineau represented to them that the Convention would take summary vengeance upon them. He persuaded them to follow him, hastened from village to village, collected volunteers, and at the head of this force captured some posts, arms, and cannon. A game-keeper, Stofflet, joined him with a similar following. From

a band of insurgent peasants, the force grew into an army. Led by the noblemen of the province and the two popular chiefs, the Vendéans took Saumur (June), and in order to make their way to the sea, — that is, to join hands with the émigrés and the English, — they captured Nantes. Cathelineau was killed in this last attack, but the Vendéans remained masters of their country and drove the republicans out of it by two victories in July and one in September.

A considerable republican force was then sent into La Vendée, and with them Kléber, who was a host in himself; but divided commands resulted in the defeat of all four divisions of this army. The Convention ordered its generals to end the war before the 20th of October. In eleven days the Vendéans sustained four defeats. Kléber finally routed them before Chollet (October 17). Eighty thousand Vendéans, men, women, children, and old men, whom this disaster had driven to the Loire, crossed the river and endeavored to raise Anjou, Maine, and Brittany; they even went as far as Granville, where they hoped to obtain assistance from the English. But Granville repulsed them, and they then turned towards Angers (December), to return to La Vendée. This time the Loire was well guarded; they were thrown back upon Le Mans, defeated in that city, and entirely overcome in Savenay (December 28). This was the end, so far as field operations were concerned.

**Campaign of the Summer of 1794; Fleurus.** — Pichegru, displacing Hoche by intrigue and then transferred to the North, lost two months in fruitless and bloody struggles on the Scheldt and the Sambre. Fortunately, Carnot renounced in season the idea of attacking the enemy in front, and determined to threaten their communications and line of retreat by bringing up Jourdan with forty-five thousand men from the Moselle to the Sambre. Four times the republican columns crossed the Sambre; four times they were repulsed. But it was necessary, at whatever cost, to obtain possession of Charleroi. A fifth passage was successful. Charleroi capitulated, and the Prince of Coburg lost the battle of Fleurus (June 28), which reopened the Low-Countries to the French. Pichegru drove the English towards Holland; Jourdan drove the Austrians back behind the Meuse. Dugommier won a decided success in the Pyrenees, and Dumerbion captured the camp of the Piedmontese. The way into Italy and Spain was now open as well as the Low-Countries.

**Winter Campaign of 1794-1795; Conquest of the Low-Countries; Invasion of Spain.** — Winter put a stop neither to the operations nor to the success of the armies. Jourdan drove the Austrians again beyond the Rhine (October), whither the Prussians were compelled to follow them. Then the four French armies of the North, of the Sambre and Meuse, of the Moselle, and of the Rhine, were stretched along the great river. Winter had set in and was very severe. The temperature fell to twenty-seven degrees below zero (Cent.). The soldiers, ragged and unpaid, but supported against all miseries by their moral energy, marched onward, crossing the canals and rivers, and driving before them the English and Dutch. On the twentieth of January, 1795, they entered Amsterdam. Squadrons of hussars hastened to the Texel to take the Dutch fleet, fastened in by the ice. Pichegru established in Holland the Batavian Republic. Thence he could turn the Prussian defences on the Rhine; Northern Germany lay open to attack.

Dugommier forced the passage of the Eastern Pyrenees (November), but perished at the moment of victory. As a consequence of this victory, one of the strongest places in Europe, Figueras, opened its gates. Moncey, at the other extremity of the Pyrenees, at the same time effected the conquest of Guipuzcoa; Spain was invaded on two sides.

**Peace with Prussia and Spain (1795); Quiberon.** — Prussia and Spain were alarmed at their defeats; Prussia, besides, was at this moment much occupied with the final partition of Poland. Both powers asked for peace (treaty of Basel, April and July); Prussia ceded her provinces on the left bank of the Rhine; Spain, the Spanish portion of San Domingo. This peace was the recognition of the republic and the Revolution by two of the great states of Europe.

England, Austria, Sardinia, and the Empire remained in line. The first, in order to arouse again in the French provinces of the West the forces of the royalist party, landed in the peninsula of Quiberon two divisions of émigrés. Hoche, called from the army of the Rhine to pacify La Vendée, destroyed them (July, 1795).

**Reverses on the Sea; the Vengeur.** — If the genius of war on land is born of inspiration, maritime warfare demands science and long practice. Now the brilliant naval staff which had conquered England in the American war had

emigrated; the fleet was left without commanders; hence its inferiority in great naval battles. On the 1st of June, 1794, Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse attacked, with twenty-five ships, manned by peasants, an English fleet of thirty-two sails, in order to protect an immense convoy of grain. The convoy passed, but the fleet was defeated and lost six vessels. As one of them, the *Vengeur*, sank in the waves, the crew went down singing the Marseillaise. Martinique, Guadeloupe, and even Corsica were taken by the English. There were, however, some successes gained in privateering.

**Constitution of the Year III. (1795).**—Meanwhile the Convention, having triumphantly survived the disturbances which followed the 9th Thermidor, abolished the democratic constitution of 1793, which had never yet been put in operation, and vested the legislative power in two councils: the Council of Five Hundred, whose duty was to propose laws, and the Council of Ancients, whose office was to examine and accept them. The executive power was given to a directory of five members, renewed by fifths each year, nominated by the legislature, and responsible. All power was divided. It was hoped by this means to escape a dictatorship and form a moderate republic; yet the result of the constitution of the year III. was only a feeble and anarchical republic.

**The 13th Vendémiaire (October 5, 1795).**—The 9th Thermidor had been followed by such a reaction that the royalists hoped for an early restoration. They believed that the approaching elections would give them a majority. But the Convention decided that two-thirds of the members of the new legislative body should be taken among the members of the Convention, so that the royalists could be only a very small minority in it. The royalists incited the sections of the National Guard to outbreak, and marched upon the Tuileries, where the Convention was sitting. Barras, who was appointed to defend it, chose as his lieutenant a young general who had performed important services before Toulon, Napoleon Bonaparte. They had only six thousand or seven thousand soldiers. Bonaparte rapidly fortified the Tuileries; the troops of the sections, received with a furious fire of grape-shot, were routed at once and put to flight. In October, 1795, the Convention declared its mission ended.

**Principal Achievements of the Convention.**—In the midst

of its intestine commotions and its victories, the Convention had prepared a uniform code for all France, had decreed a system of national instruction, and the establishment of the Normal School, the Polytechnic School, the Lycées, the Schools of Medicine, the Conservatory of Arts and Trades, chairs of Modern Languages, the Bureau of Longitudes, the Conservatory of Music, the Institute, the Museum of Natural History, and had established the unity of weights and measures (metric system).<sup>1</sup> By the disorderly issues of assignats (44 billions) it had broken down all fortunes, and by the law fixing a maximum of prices, it had ruined commerce; but by the sale of the "national property," which formed a third of the territory, it had laid open to the fruitful labor of the new proprietors immense domains until then unproductive; and by the systematic consolidation of the public debt, it had prepared, for better days, public confidence in the credit of the State.

<sup>1</sup> The Convention had replaced the Gregorian calendar by the republican calendar. The new era began on the 22d of September, 1792.