

This double representation was demanded by the intelligence of the epoch, by the necessity of reform, by the importance which the *tiers-état* had acquired. It had been already admitted into the provincial assemblies. Brienne, before leaving the ministry, having made an appeal to writers, in order to know what would be the best mode of composing and holding the states-general, the celebrated pamphlet of Sieyès on the *tiers-état*, and that of Entraigues on the states-general, were added to the works on the rights of the people. Opinion declaring itself more decidedly every day, Necker, wishing to satisfy it, and not daring,—desirous of conciliating all orders, of obtaining the approbation of all parties,—once more convoked the notables. He had believed that they would consent to the doubling of the *tiers*; they refused it, and he was compelled to decide in defiance of them, that which he should have decided without them. Necker did not know how to avoid contest by settling all difficulties in advance. He did not take the initial measure on the doubling of the *tiers*, as in the sequel he did not take it on the vote by order or by poll. When the states-general were assembled, the solution of this second question, on which depended the fate of power, and that of the people, was abandoned to force.

Although Necker had been unable to prevail on the notables to adopt the doubling of the *tiers*, he procured its adoption by the council. He obtained the admission of *curés* into the order of the clergy, and of Protestants into that of the *tiers*. The assemblies of burghers were convoked for the elections; every one exerted himself to procure the nomination of men of his own party, and to publish pamphlets and papers expressive of his own opinion. The parliament had little influence in the elections: the court none at all. The noblesse chose some popular deputies; but the most part were devoted to the interests of their order, and as opposed to the *tiers-état* as to the oligarchy of the great families of the court. The clergy nominated bishops and abbots favourable to their privileges, and *curés* favourable to the popular cause which was their own. Finally, the *tiers-état* chose men enlightened, firm, and unanimous in their views. The opening of the states-general was appointed for the 5th of May, 1789.

Thus was brought about the revolution. The court tried in vain to prevent it, as in the sequel it tried vainly to quash it. Under the direction of Maurepas, the king appointed popular ministers, and made essays of reform; under the direction of the queen, he appointed courtier-ministers, and made essays of authority. Oppression was as little successful as reform. After having uselessly resorted to the courtiers for economy, to the parliaments for imposts, to the capitalists for loans, he had recourse to a new class of contributors, and made an appeal to the privileged. He demanded from the notables, composed of the noblesse and the clergy, a participation in the charges of the state, which they refused. This led him to address himself to all France, and to convene the states-general. He treated with detached bodies of men before he treated with the nation; and it was only on the refusal of the first, that he appealed to a power of which he dreaded the interposition and the support. He preferred partial assemblies, which, being isolated, would be secondary to a general assembly, which, representing all the interests of the realm, would combine all its power. Up to this great epoch, each year saw the necessities of the government increase, and resistance extend itself. The opposition passed from the parliament to the noblesse, and from the noblesse to the clergy, and from all to the people. In proportion as each of them participated in power, it commenced its opposition, until all these particular oppositions were confounded in one great national opposition, or dwindled into nothing before it. The states-general only decreed a revolution which was already virtually accomplished. (1)

(1) Considerations on the principal Events of the French Revolution, by the baroness de Stael, vol. i.—Sir James Mackintosh's Defence of the French Revolution.—Histoire de la Revolution en 1789, tom. i.

## LETTER XVI.

*Affairs of France, during the Year 1789—Opening of the States-general—Formation of the National Assembly—Insurrection of Paris—Formation of the National Guard—Destruction of the Bastille.*

It is an undoubted truth, my son, that no great revolution can be accomplished without the infliction of misery, and the commission of excess at which humanity revolts. This unfortunately is true, in an especial manner, of those revolutions which, like that of France, are strictly popular. Where the people are led by a faction, its leaders find no difficulty in the re-establishment of that order which must be the object of their wishes, because it is the sole security of their power. But when a general movement of the popular mind levels a despotism with the ground, it is far less easy to restrain excess. There is more resentment to satiate, and less authority to control. The passion which produced an effect so tremendous, is too violent to subside in a moment into serenity and submission. The spirit of revolt breaks out with fatal violence after its object is destroyed, and turns against the order of freedom those arms by which it had subdued the strength of tyranny. The attempt to punish the spirit that actuates a people, would be vain if it were just, and if it were possible, would be cruel. The number is too great to be punished in a view of justice, and too strong to be punished in a view of policy. The ostentation of vigour would in such a case prove the display of impotence, and the rigour of justice conduct to the cruelty of extirpation. No remedy is therefore left but the progress of instruction, the force of persuasion, the mild authority of opinion. These remedies, though infallible, are of slow operation; and in the interval which elapses before a calm succeeds the boisterous moments of a revolution, it is vain to expect that a people, inured to barbarism by their oppressors, and which has ages of oppression to avenge, will be punctiliously generous in their triumph, nicely discriminative in their vengeance, or cautiously mild in their mode of retaliation. They will break their chains on the heads of their oppressors.

I offer these remarks, my dear son, with the view of preparing you for those scenes of tumult and carnage which the state of matters in France gave birth to—scenes which the friends of freedom deplore as tarnishing her triumphs. Let us now return to the proceedings in the French capital.

The 5th of May, 1789, was appointed for the opening of the states-general. The watching, a religious ceremonial, preceded their installation. The king, his family, his ministers, the deputies of the three orders, went in procession from the church of Notre Dame to the church of Saint Louis, to hear mass at the opening; they beheld with intoxication the return of this national solemnity, of which France had been so long deprived. It bore the aspect of a festival. An immense multitude, from all parts, had resorted to Versailles; the occasion was magnificent, the pomp of decoration had been lavished with prodigality; the chantings of music, the benevolent and satisfied air of the king, the beauty and noble deportment of the queen, and, above all, the common expectations, inspired and animated all minds. Nevertheless they beheld with pain, the etiquettes, the costume, and the subordination of the states which had been observed in 1614. The clergy, in cassocks, large cloaks, and square bonnets, or in a purple robe and lawn sleeves, occupied the first place. Then came the noblesse, habited in black, having the vest and facing of silver cloth, the cravat of lace, and the hat with a white plume, turned up after the fashion of Henry IV. The modest *tiers-état* were in the last place, clothed in black, a short cloak, muslin cravat, and the hat without plumes or loops. At the church the same distinctions were observed as to the places of the three orders.

The next day the royal sitting was held in the hall of the privy treasury. The galleries of the amphitheatre were filled with spectators. The deputies

to take their own course, and flattered himself that he should be able to conduct them, without having done any thing to prepare them. He felt that the ancient organization of the states could be no longer maintained; that the existence of the three orders, having each the right of refusal, was a barrier to the execution of reforms, and the march of the administration. He hoped, after the proof of this triple opposition, to reduce the number of the orders, and procure the adoption of the English government, by uniting the clergy and the noblesse in one chamber, and the *tiers-état* in another. He did not see that, the struggle once begun, his interposition would be unavailing; that half-measures would suit no one; that the weak, by their obstinacy, and the strong, by their natural weight, would refuse this mediating system. Concessions only satisfy before the victory is won.

The court, far from wishing to invest the states-general with a regular form, was desirous of annulling them. It preferred the accidental resistance of the great bodies of the realm, to a participation of authority with a permanent assembly. The separation of the orders favoured his views; it reckoned upon fomenting their discord, and preventing their effectual co-operation. Formerly, they had never produced any result, from the defects of their organization; the court hoped the more confidently that the same farce would be acted over again, as the first two orders were little disposed to concur in the forms solicited by the last. The clergy wished to preserve their privileges and their opulence; they foresaw very clearly that they would have many sacrifices to make, and few advantages to gain. The noblesse, on its part, in resuming a political independence which it had long since lost, was ignorant that it would have much more to yield up to the people, than to demand from the sovereign. It was almost entirely in favour of the people that the new revolution was about to operate, and the first two orders were induced to coalesce with the court against it, as not long before they had coalesced with it against the court. Interest alone produced this change of party, and they reunited themselves to the monarch without attachment, as they had defended the people without regard for the public good.

No efforts were spared to maintain the noblesse and the clergy in these dispositions. The deputies of these two orders were seduced by every species of flattering attention. A committee of the most illustrious individuals composing this party, sat at the house of the countess de Polignac; their principal members were admitted there. It was here that they gained over d'Epréménil and d'Enragues, two of the most ardent defenders of liberty in the parliament before the states-general, and who became afterward its most decided opponents. It was here that the costume of the deputies of the different orders was regulated, and that they endeavoured to separate them, first by etiquette, then by intrigue, and lastly by force. The remembrance of the ancient states-general governed the court; it believed that it would be able to regulate the present by the past, to restrain Paris by the army, the deputies of the commons by those of the noblesse, to control the states by dividing the orders, and to separate the orders by reviving the ancient usages, which elevated the noblesse and depressed the commons. It was thus that, after the first sitting, they believed that by granting nothing they had placed obstacles in the way of every thing.

The day after the opening of the states, the noblesse and the clergy met in their respective chambers, and formed themselves. The commons, to which the double representation had made the hall of the states more suitable, as furnishing greater accommodation, waited there for the two other orders; regarded its situation as provisional, its members as presumptive deputies, and adopted a system of inaction until the two others should join it. Then commenced a memorable struggle, of which the issue was to decide whether the revolution should be accomplished or interdicted. The future condition of France depended on the separation or the reunion of the orders. Most opportunely, this important question arose contemporaneously with that of the verification of the powers. The popular deputies justly contended that the verification should be made in common, since even in rejecting the re-

union of the orders, it could not be questioned but that each order had an interest in examining the powers of the other two. The privileged deputies contended, on the other hand, that the orders having a distinct existence, the verification should be several. They felt that a single operation in common would thenceforward render all separation impossible.

The commons, at this delicate epoch, acted with the greatest circumspection, wisdom, and firmness. It was by a series of efforts, which were not always without peril, by successes slow and indecisive, by struggles constantly reviving, that they attained their object. That system of inaction which they adopted from the commencement was the wisest and most certain plan: there are occasions when we have only to know how to wait, to be triumphant. The commons were unanimous, and they alone constituted a numerical half of the states-general; the noblesse had among them popular dissidents; the majority of the clergy, composed of some bishops, friends of peace, and a numerous class of curates, which was the *tiers-état* of the church, were favourably disposed towards the commons. Inaction ought, therefore, to lead to a reunion. This was what the *tiers-état* hoped, what the bishops dreaded, and what induced them to offer themselves as mediators. But this mediation led to no result, since the noblesse would not consent to vote by poll, nor the commons to vote by order. Thus, these conciliatory conferences, after having been vainly prolonged, were broken off by the noblesse, who declared themselves for the separate verification.

The day after this hostile determination, the commons resolved to declare themselves the assembly of the nation, and, *in the name of the God of Peace, and of the public welfare*, invited the clergy to a reunion with them. The court, alarmed by this measure, interposed, to induce the states to resume their conferences. The first commissioners to effect reconciliation had to settle the differences of the orders; the ministry charged itself with settling the differences of the commissioners. By this means the states depended on a commission, and the commission had for its arbitrator the council of the prince. But these new conferences had no happier termination than the former; they were protracted to a great length, without any of the orders yielding to the other, and the noblesse ended by breaking them off in confirming all its resolutions.

Five weeks had elapsed in these useless parleys. The *tiers-état*, seeing that the moment was come to constitute itself as a substantive body, that longer delay would indispose the nation, whose confidence it had obtained by the refusal of the privileged orders, determined to act, and displayed the same moderation and firmness which it had manifested in its inertia. Mirabeau announced that a deputy of Paris had a motion to make; and Siéyes, naturally timid, but of an enterprising mind, who had the authority of superior knowledge, and who, more than any other person, was calculated to move for a decision, demonstrated the impossibility of agreement, the urgency of the verification, the justice of making it in common, and he induced the assembly to decree that the noblesse and the clergy should be *invited* to meet in the hall of the states, in order to assist in the verification, which would take place *whether they were absent or present*.

The measure of the general verification was followed by another still more energetic. The commons, after having terminated the verification, upon the motion of Siéyes, constituted themselves the *national assembly*. By this bold measure, the most numerous of the three orders, and the only one whose powers had been legalized, declared itself the representation of France, and rejected the two others till they had undergone the verification, settled the questions hitherto undecided, and changed the assembly of the states into the assembly of the people. The régime of the orders disappeared in the political powers; and this was the first step towards the abolition of the classes in the private régime. This memorable decree of the 17th of June was pregnant with the night of the 4th of August; but it was necessary to defend the measures which they had dared to decide, and it was to be apprehended that they would not be able to maintain such a determination.

The first decree of the *national assembly* was an act of sovereignty. In proclaiming the indivisibility of the legislative power, it had placed the privileged under its dependence. It remained to control the court in the matter of imposts. It declared their illegality; voted, nevertheless, the provisional receipt of them, so long as it should be assembled, and their cessation if it should be dissolved; in consolidating the public debt, it reassured the capitalists; in appointing a committee of subsistence, it provided for the wants of the people.

This firmness and forecast inspired the enthusiasm of the nation. But they who directed the court felt that the divisions which had been fomented among the orders had failed in their object, and that to obtain this object they must have recourse to other artifices. The royal authority appeared to them alone capable of prescribing the maintenance of the orders which the opposition of the noblesse had failed to accomplish. They availed themselves of an excursion to Marly to withdraw Louis XVI. from the prudent and pacific counsels of Necker, and prevail on him to adopt hostile projects. This prince, equally accessible to good and evil counsels, surrounded by a court abandoned to the spirit of party, being supplicated by the interests of his crown, and in the name of religion, yielded to their artifices, and promised every thing. They decided that he should present himself in state to the assembly; that he should quash their decrees; that he should command the separation of the orders, as constitutive of the monarchy; and should himself fix all the reforms which the states-general were operating. From that time the secret council occupied the government, and it no longer carried on its operations in secret. Barentin, the keeper of the seals, the count of Artois, the prince of Condé, the prince of Conti, alone conducted the plots which they had concerted. Necker lost all influence; he had proposed to the king a conciliating plan, which could not now, indeed, avail, although it might have succeeded before the struggle had reached its present animosity. He had advised another meeting in the royal presence, in which should have been granted the vote by poll in matters of impost, and that by order should still have been permitted to subsist in matters of privilege and private interest. This measure, which was unfavourable to the people, since it would have tended to maintain abuses by investing the clergy and the noblesse with the power of preventing their abolition, would have been followed by the establishment of two chambers for the next states-general. Necker loved half-measures, and wished to operate, by gradual concessions, a political change which should have been effected at a single stroke. The time was come when its rights must be granted to the nation, or it would take them itself. His project of a royal sitting, already very insufficient, was changed into a state manœuvre by the new council. This council believed that the injunctions of the throne would intimidate the assembly, and that France would be satisfied by some promises of reform: it did not know that the last hazard to which the royal power should be exposed is that of disobedience.

State manœuvres in general are suddenly disclosed, and surprise those whom they are intended to strike. It was not so in this case; the preparations contributed to prevent its success. It was apprehended that the clergy would recognise the assembly by uniting themselves to it; and to prevent this decisive measure, instead of hastening the royal sitting, the hall of the states was closed, in order to suspend the assembly till it should take place. The preparations required by the presence of the monarch were made the pretext. Bailly then presided over the assembly. This virtuous citizen, without seeking for them, had obtained all the honours of the rising spirit of liberty. He was the first president of the assembly, as he had been the first deputy of Paris, and was to be its first mayor. He was beloved by his friends, respected by his enemies, and though endowed with virtues the most bland and enlightened, he possessed in a high degree the courage of duty. Apprized by the keeper of the seals, on the night of the 20th of June, of the suspension of the sittings, he showed himself faithful to the wish of the assembly, and did not shrink from disobeying the court. The next day, at the hour

appointed, he appeared at the hall of the states, found it invaded by an armed force, and protested against this act of despotism. Meantime, the deputies arrived, the uproar increased, all were resolved to brave the perils of a reunion. The most indignant wished to go and hold the assembly at Marly, immediately under the windows of the prince; some one cried out the "Tennis Court." This proposition was applauded; the deputies went there in a body; Bailly at their head; the crowd following them with enthusiasm; the soldiers came to escort them; and there, in an empty hall, the deputies of the commons, standing, with their hands upraised, and their hearts full of the sanctity of their mission, swore, with the exception of one individual, that they would not separate until they had given a constitution to France.

This solemn oath, taken on the 20th of June, in the face of the nation, was followed, on the 22d, by an important triumph. The assembly, deprived of the place of its sittings, and no longer able to meet at the tennis ground, which the princes had occupied in order that it might be refused, assembled at the church of St. Louis. It was in this sitting that the majority of the clergy united themselves to it, in the midst of the most patriotic transports. Thus the measures taken to intimidate the assembly raised its courage, and hastened that very reunion which they were designed to prevent. It was by two checks that the court anticipated the famous sitting of the 23d of June.

It arrived at length. A numerous guard surrounded the hall of the states; the gate was opened to the deputies, but closed to the public. The king appeared, surrounded by all the circumstance of power. He was received, contrary to custom, in profound silence. His harangue fanned to its extremity the spirit of discontent, by the tone of authority with which he dictated measures disapproved by opinion and by the assembly. The king complained of a disagreement excited by the court itself; he condemned the conduct of the assembly, which recognised only the order of the *tiers-état*; he quashed all its resolutions; prescribed the conservation of the orders, imposed reforms and determined their limits, enjoined upon the states-general their acceptance, threatened to dissolve them, and to do alone what the good of the realm might require, if he encountered any opposition from them.

After this scene of authority, which was very little suitable to the occasion, and which in truth was alien to his own feelings, he commanded the deputies to separate, and withdrew. The clergy and the noblesse obeyed. The deputies of the people, immovable, silent, indignant, did not quit their seats. They remained some time in this attitude, and Mirabeau, suddenly breaking the silence, "Sirs," he said, "I confess that what you have heard might be for the good of the country, were not the boons of despotism always dangerous. What means this insulting dictation? the display of arms, the violation of the national temple, in order to command you to be happy! Who is it that makes this command? your proxy! Who gives you imperious laws? your proxy! he who ought to receive them from you, from us, gentlemen, who are invested with a political and inviolable priesthood; from us, from whom twenty-five millions of people expect certain happiness, because it ought to be consented to, given, and received by all. But the liberty of your deliberations is chained down; a military force environs the assembly! Where are the enemies of the nation? Is Catiline at our gates? I demand that you, clothing yourselves in your dignity and your legislative authority, be firm in the sacredness of your oath; it does not permit us to separate till we have made the constitution." The grand-master of the ceremonies, seeing that the assembly did not separate, was about to remind it of the order of the king. "Go," exclaimed Mirabeau, "tell your master that we are here by the order of the people, and that we shall depart only at the point of the bayonet." "You are to-day," added Siéyes, with calmness, "what you were yesterday; let us deliberate!" and the assembly, full of resolution and majesty, proceeded to its deliberation. Upon the motion of Camus, it persevered in all its decrees; and upon that of Mirabeau, it decreed the inviolability of its members.

On this memorable occasion, the royal authority was lost. The initiation of laws as well as the moral power passed from the monarch to the assembly. Necker, whose retirement had been decreed in the morning, was in the evening entreated to remain, by the queen and the monarch. This minister had disapproved of the royal sitting, and, in refusing to assist at it, had conciliated anew the confidence of the assembly, which he had forfeited by his hesitation. The period of disgrace was for him the period of popularity. He became then, by his refusal, the ally of the assembly, which declared itself his defender. It is at all epochs necessary to have a leader, whose name shall be the standard of a party: so long as the assembly had to struggle against the court, that man was Necker.

At the first sitting, that part of the clergy which had reunited itself to the assembly in the church of St. Louis resumed its seats in it; a few days after, forty-seven members of the noblesse, among whom was the duke of Orleans, also effected their reunion, and the court saw itself compelled to solicit the noblesse and the minority of the clergy to cease from a separation which was become unavailing. The deliberation became general, the orders ceased to exist in point of right, and very soon disappeared in point of fact. They had preserved, even in the common hall, distinct places, which were, however, soon confounded; the vain pre-eminence of particular bodies vanished in the presence of the national authority.

The court, after having tried in vain to prevent the formation of the assembly, was no longer able, even by associating with it, to direct its labours. It might, nevertheless, by prudence and good faith, have repaired its errors, and made the assembly forget its attacks. There are times when we can volunteer sacrifices; there are others when we can claim nothing but the merit of submitting to them. The monarch, at the opening of the states-general, had the power to make the constitution himself: he must now receive it from the assembly, and if he had submitted to this position, his condition would infallibly have been ameliorated. But, recovered from the first surprise of defeat, the advisers of Louis XVI. determined to resort to the employment of bayonets, after having failed in that of authority. They persuaded him that obedience to his orders, the security of his throne, the maintenance of the laws of the realm, the happiness even of his people, required that he should reduce the assembly to submission; that this last, situated at Versailles, in the vicinity of Paris, two towns which had declared in its favour, ought to be subdued by force; that he must either remove or dissolve it; that this determination was urgent in order to arrest it in its progress: and that it was necessary, in the execution of these measures, to call in, without delay, the assistance of the troops, to intimidate the assembly, and control Versailles and Paris.

While these plots were hatching, the deputies opened their legislative labours, and prepared the constitution so impatiently expected, and which they thought should be no longer retarded. Addresses to them were poured in from Paris and the principal towns of France, congratulating them on their wisdom, and encouraging them to pursue the work of regenerating France. In the mean time, the troops arrived in great numbers; Versailles presented the appearance of a camp; the hall of the states was environed with guards, and entrance prohibited to the citizens; Paris was surrounded by different bodies of the army, who seemed posted there to be ready, as occasion might require, for a siege or a blockade. These immense military preparations, trains of artillery arriving from the frontiers, the presence of foreign regiments, whose obedience was unlimited,—every thing announced some sinister project. The people were agitated, the assembly rushed to inform the throne, and demand from it the return of the troops. Upon the proposition of Mirabeau, it tendered an address to the king, respectful and firm; but which was unavailing. Louis XVI. declared, that he alone was competent to judge of the necessity of assembling these troops, or of causing their return; that this was only an army of precaution, in order to prevent troubles and guard the assembly. He offered, moreover, to transfer the

assembly to Noyon or Soissons, that is, to place it between two armies, and deprive it of the support of the people.

Paris was in the greatest fermentation; this immense town was unanimous in its devotion to the assembly. The perils by which the representatives of the nation were menaced, its own, and the deficiency in the means of subsistence, disposed it to an insurrection; the capitalists, from motives of interest, and in the fear of a bankruptcy; men of intelligence, and the whole of the middle class, from patriotism; the people, pressed by its wants, ascribing its sufferings to the privileged and the court, desirous of agitation and of novelty, had embraced with enthusiasm the cause of the revolution. It is difficult to conceive the convulsion which agitated the capital of France; it started from the repose and the silence of servitude, it was surprised by the novelty of its situation, and it was absolutely drunk with liberty and enthusiasm. The press inflamed the public mind, the journals spread the deliberations of the assembly, and thus in some degree assisted at its sittings; the people discussed in the open air, in public places, the questions which were then agitated in its bosom. It was at the Palais-Royal in particular that the assembly of Paris was held. It was always filled by a multitude, which seemed permanent, and which was incessantly renewed. A table served as a tribune, any citizen for an orator; there they harangued upon the dangers of the country, and excited it to resistance. Already, upon a motion made at the Palais-Royal, the prisons of the Abbaye had been forced, and the grenadiers of the French guards, who had been imprisoned for refusing to draw upon the people, had been brought out in triumph. This uproar, however, produced no effect; a deputation had solicited, in favour of the prisoners, the interest of the assembly, which had recommended them to the clemency of the king; they were remitted to prison, and they received their pardon. But this regiment, one of the most brave and complete, was become favourable to the popular cause.

Such were the dispositions of Paris when Necker was removed from the ministry. The court, after having established troops at Versailles, at St. Denis, thought itself able to execute its plan. It commenced by the exile of Necker, and a complete change in the ministry. The marshal de Broglie, Lagallissonnière, the duke of Vaugouon, the baron de Bréteuil, and the intendant Foulon, were appointed to succeed Puiségur, Montmorin, Luzerne, Saint Priest, and Necker. The last received, on Saturday, the 11th of July, while at dinner, a note from the king, commanding him to quit the realm immediately. He very calmly finished his dinner, without taking any notice of the order he had received, then got into a carriage with Madame Necker, as if going to Saint Ouen, and took the road for Brussels.

The following day, the 12th of July, about four in the afternoon, intelligence was spread in Paris of the disgrace of Necker, and his departure into exile. This measure was considered as the execution of the plot, of which they had observed the preparations. In a few moments the town was in an uproar; crowds collected from all parts; more than ten thousand persons met at the Palais-Royal, agitated by this new act of despotism, ready for the most desperate measures, and not knowing where to begin. A young man, more hardy than the rest, an habitual haranguer of the mob, Camille Desmoulins, ascended the tribune, having a pistol in one hand, and exclaiming:—"Citizens, there is not a moment to lose; the removal of Necker is the tocsin for a St. Bartholomew of patriots! This evening all the Swiss and German battalions are coming out of the Champ-de-Mars to slaughter us! There remains for us only one resource; let us rush to arms." This was approved, by the most deafening acclamations. He proposed to take cockades, in order to recognise and defend themselves. "Will ye," said he, "have green, the colour of hope, or red, the colour of the free order of Cincinnati?" "Green, green," re-echoed the multitude. The speaker descended from the tribune; attached a branch of a tree to his hat; they all imitated him; the chestnut trees of Paris were almost despoiled of their leaves, and this troop went in tumult to the house of the sculptor Curtius.

were called and introduced by the government according to the order established in 1614. The clergy were led to the right, the noblesse to the left, and the commons in front of the throne, were placed at the bottom of the hall. The most animated applauses announced the deputation of Dauphiné; that of Crépi in Valois, of which the duke of Orleans made a part; and that of Provence. M. Necker was also greeted on his entering with general enthusiasm. The public favour attached itself to all those who had contributed to the convocation of the states-general. When the deputies and ministers had taken their places, the king made his entrance, followed by the queen, the princes, and a brilliant retinue. The hall resounded with plaudits on his arrival. Louis XVI. seated himself on his throne, and when he had put on his hat, the three orders covered themselves at the same time. The commons, contrary to the usage of the ancient states, imitated, without hesitation, the clergy and the noblesse. The time had passed away when it was necessary for the third estate to stand uncovered, and speak upon its knees. They waited in the most profound silence for the king's address; they were anxious to ascertain the real dispositions of the government to the states. Whether it would assimilate the new assembly to those which had been formerly held, or whether that importance would be attached to it which the necessities of the state and the magnitude of circumstances required.

"Gentlemen," said the monarch, with emotion, "this day, which my heart has so anxiously expected, has at length arrived, and I see myself surrounded by the representatives of the nation I have the glory to command. A long interval has elapsed since the last holding of the states-general; and the convocation of these assemblies appears to have fallen into desuetude. I have not hesitated to re-establish a usage from which the realm may derive new energy, and which may open out to the nation new sources of prosperity." These first words, which promised much, were followed only by explanations upon the debt, and announcements of reduction in the expenditure. The king, instead of wisely tracing out to the states the march which they ought to follow, invited the orders to act in harmony with each other, told them the necessities of the state, declared his apprehensions of innovation, and complained of the inquietude of the public mind, without announcing any measure which might satisfy it. He was nevertheless loudly cheered when he ended by these words, which painted well his intentions. "Every thing which you can expect from the tenderest regard for the public welfare, every thing which you can demand from a sovereign, the fast friend of his people, you may, you ought to hope from my sentiments. May, gentlemen, a happy union reign in this assembly, and may this epoch become henceforward memorable for the happiness and prosperity of the realm! this is the desire of my heart, the most ardent of my wishes; this is, in a word, the reward which I expect for the rectitude of my intentions, and my affection for my people."

Barentin, the keeper of the seals, spoke next. His harangue was a mere rhetorical declamation on the subject of the states-general, and on the favours of the king. After a long preamble, he adverted to the questions of importance. "His majesty," he said, "in granting a double representation in favour of the most numerous of the three orders, that on which the burden of imposts principally fall, has not changed the form of the ancient deliberations. Although the vote by poll, producing only a single result, appears to have the advantage of manifesting more clearly the general will, the king has been desirous that this new form should be put in operation only by the free consent of the states-general and with the approbation of his majesty. But in whatever way we pronounce upon this question, whatever distinctions be made among the different objects which may come under discussion, we cannot doubt that the most perfect agreement will unite the three orders relative to the imposts." The government was not opposed to the vote by poll in matters respecting money; because it was more expeditious, while on political questions it declared itself in favour of the vote by the three orders severally, because this was better adapted to prevent inno-

vation. The government wished to attain its object, subsidies, without permitting the nation to attain its object also, which was reform. The manner in which the keeper of the seals defined the privileges of the states-general, manifested still more the intentions of the court. He reduced them, in some degree, to the examination of the impost, in order to vote it; to the discussion of a law upon the press, in order to impose restrictions on it; and to the reform of the civil and criminal legislation. He proscribed all other changes, and he exclaimed, "Just demands have been acceded to; the king has not been influenced by indiscreet murmurs, he has deigned to cover them with his indulgence; he has pardoned even the expression of these false and strange maxims, in favour of which they would substitute pernicious chimeras for the unalterable principles of monarchy. You will reject, gentlemen, with indignation, these dangerous innovations, which the enemies of the public weal would confound with the happy and necessary changes which would produce that regeneration which is the first wish of his majesty."

This harangue manifested either great ignorance of the wishes of the nation, or great hardihood in combating them. The assembly expected another language from M. Necker. He was the popular minister, he had obtained the double representation, and they had hoped that he would approve the vote by poll, by which alone the *tiers-état* could avail itself of its numbers. But he spoke with great reserve and caution; his harangue, which lasted three hours, was a long budget of finances: and when, after having wearied the assembly, he touched upon the question which occupied all minds, he left it undecided, that he might neither commit himself with the court nor the people.

The government had very imperfectly comprehended the importance of the states-general. The return of this assembly in itself announced a great revolution. Ardently wished for by the nation, they reappeared at an epoch when the ancient monarchy had fallen, and when they alone were capable of reforming the state, and purveying for the necessities of the throne. The embarrassments of the time, the nature of their summons, the choice of their members, every thing declared that they were no longer convoked as contributors, but as legislators. The right of regenerating France was accorded them by the decree of opinion, devolved on them by the budget; and they found in the enormity of abuses, and in the encouragement of the people, the power to undertake and accomplish this great task.

To the monarch it was of the last importance that he should associate himself in their labours. He would thus have been able to restore his power, and to guarantee himself from a revolution, by operating it himself. Had he taken the first step in these changes, and prescribed with firmness, but with justice, the new order of things; had he, realizing the wishes of France, defined the rights of the citizens, the prerogatives of the states-general, the limits of the royal power; had he renounced arbitrary sway for himself, inequality for the noblesse, privileges for corporate bodies; finally, had he executed all the reforms which were demanded by opinion, and which were executed by the constituent assembly, this resolution would have prevented the destructive dissensions which afterward blazed forth. But it is rarely that we find a prince who consents to a participation in his power, and who is sufficiently enlightened to yield up that which he will be compelled to part with. Louis XVI., however, would have done it, had he been less under the dominion of his household, and had he followed his own suggestions. But the greatest anarchy reigned in the councils of the king. When the states-general assembled, no measure had been taken; no precautions had been provided for the prevention of disputes. Louis XVI. floated irresolute between his ministry, directed by Necker, and his court, directed by the queen and some princes of his family.

The minister, satisfied with having obtained the double representation of the *tiers-état*, dreaded the indecision of the king, and the discontent of the court. Not sufficiently appreciating the importance of the revolution, which he contemplated rather as a statesman than as a citizen, he suffered events