

as the other had rendered it the master of the government; and permitted it to prepare the new constitution by destroying the old one.

The march of the revolution had been very rapid, and in a very short time had produced most important results. Had it not been opposed, it would have been less prompt and less complete. Each refusal became for it the occasion of new successes; it overthrew intrigue, resisted authority, triumphed over force, and, at the moment at which we have arrived, the whole edifice of absolute monarchy had been shaken by the mismanagement of its supporters. The 17th of June had annihilated the three orders, and changed the states-general into the assembly of the nation; the 23d of June had been the termination of the moral influence of the crown—the 14th of July that of its material power; the assembly had inherited the one, and the people the other; finally, the 4th of August was the completion of this first revolution. The epoch which we have described is conspicuously detached from the others; within its short period, the seat of power was displaced, and all the preliminary changes were effected. The epoch which follows is that in which the new régime is discussed and established, and in which the assembly, after having been destructive, becomes constituent.

LETTER XVII.

View of the State of Parties in France—The Constituent Assembly—The Clergy and Noblesse—The Party of Orleans—Constitutional Labours; Declaration of Rights; Permanence and Unity of the legislative Body; royal Sanction; external Agitation; Insurrection of the 5th and 6th October, 1789—The King removes his Residence to Paris.

In pursuance of our plan, and in narrating the series of events, my dear son, which, at this tremendous crisis, followed one another in rapid succession, in the French metropolis, I am aware that I have imposed a tax upon your feelings, that will make it necessary for you to summon all your resolution, and brace up the energies of your mind to accompany me in the farther detail.

The popular excesses to which I have already called your attention, inflicted great calamities on the capital: but commotions of another description early followed the revolution, partly arising from the general causes already stated, and partly from others of more limited and local operation.

The peasantry of the provinces, buried for many ages in the darkness of servitude, saw, indistinctly and confusedly, in the first dawn of liberty, the boundaries of their duties and their rights. It cannot surprise us that they should little understand that freedom which had been so long remote from their views. The name conveyed to their ear a right to reject all restraint, to gratify every resentment, and to attack all property. Ruffians mingled with the deluded peasants, in the hope of booty, and inflamed their ignorance and prejudice, by forged acts of the king and the assembly, authorizing their licentiousness. From these circumstances arose many calamities in the provinces. The country houses of many gentlemen were burned, and some obnoxious persons were assassinated. Perhaps the peasants had oppressions to avenge—those silent grinding oppressions which form almost the only intercourse of the rich with the indigent, which, though less flagrant than those of government, are perhaps productive of more intolerable and diffusive misery.

But whatever was the demerit of these excesses, it is unfair to impute them to the national assembly or the leaders of the revolution. In what manner were they to repress them? If they exerted against them their own authority with vigour, they must have provoked a civil war. If they invigorated the police and tribunals of the deposed government, besides incurring the hazard of the same calamity, they put arms into the hands of their enemies. Placed in this dilemma, there was nothing left for them but to wait a slow remedy from the returning serenity of the public mind, and the progress of the new government towards consistency and vigour.

A degree of influence exerted by the people, far more than would be tolerated by a firm government, or could exist in a state of tranquillity, must be expected in a crisis of a revolution which the people have brought about. They have too recent experience of their own strength to abstain at once from exerting it. Their political antipathies have been agitated by too fierce a storm to regain in a moment that serenity which would expect with patient acquiescence the decrees of their representatives. From an inflamed multitude, who had felt themselves irresistible, and whose fancy annexed to the decision of every political question the fate of their freedom, an undue interposition in the proceedings of the legislature was to have been expected. The passions which prompt it are vehement; the arguments which prove its impropriety are remote and refined. Too much, therefore, of this interposition, was, at such a conjuncture, inevitable. It is, without doubt, a great evil; but it is irremediable. The submission of the people, in a period of tranquillity, degenerates into a lifeless and torpid negligence of public affairs; and the fervour which the moment of revolution inspires, necessarily produces the opposite extreme. That the conduct of the populace of Paris, therefore, should not have been the most circumspect and decorous respecting the deliberations of the assembly, at this tremendous crisis of their country's fate—that it should be frequently irregular and tumultuous, was, in the nature of things, inevitable.

In offering these remarks to your consideration, you must understand me as doing it with a view to account, not to apologize, for the disgraceful scenes and shocking atrocities which, in the sequel, you will have to contemplate: and, requesting you to keep in mind the distinction which has been now made, I shall resume the narrative.

The national assembly, composed of the *élite* of the nation, was full of intelligence, honest purposes, and views for the public welfare; it was not, however, free from parties and disagreements: let us see what were the divisions of views and interests that prevailed among them.

The court had in the assembly a party, that of the privileged, which for some time maintained silence, and took only a retarding part in the discussions. This party was composed of those who, on the dispute of the orders, declared against the reunion. In spite of their momentary agreements with the commons in the late circumstances, the aristocratic classes had interests contrary to those of the national party. Thus the noblesse and the high clergy were in constant opposition with it, except on certain days, when personal feelings were silenced in the general enthusiasm. These non-contents of the revolution, who could neither prevent it by their sacrifices, nor arrest it by their adherence, systematically resisted all its reforms. Their principal organs were two men, no way distinguished by their birth or dignities, but who had the superiority of talent. The abbé Maury and Cazalès might be said to represent the clergy and the noblesse.

These two orators of the privileged order, according to the intentions of their party, which did not believe in the permanence of the changes, sought less to defend themselves than to protest; and, in all their discussions, their object was not to instruct, but to embarrass, the assembly. Each of them, in the part he acted, manifested the peculiarities of his genius and character. Maury made long harangues; Cazalès had vivid sallies. The former preserved, on the tribune, the habits of the preacher and academician; he discoursed on legislative matters without comprehending them, never seizing on the true point of a question, nor even the most advantageous for his party; displaying boldness, erudition, address, a brilliant and sustained facility, but never a profound conviction, a settled judgment, a genuine eloquence. The abbé Maury spoke as soldiers fight. No one knew how to contradict more frequently, or more perseveringly than he did; no one could better supply the place of good reasons by citations and sophisms, and of the excursions of genius by the forms of oratory. He had no lack of talent; but he wanted truth, its vivifying principle. Cazalès was in all respects the very opposite of Maury. His genius was prompt and unerring; his elocution was as easy, but more animated; there was a frankness in all his movements. His rea-

its march. It was not the constitution which gave it the character it had; this was merely one of the events which sprang from the struggle of parties. What could the upper chamber have done between the court and the nation? declared in favour of the first, it could neither have conducted nor saved it; in favour of the second, it could not have strengthened it; and in either case, its suppression had been inevitable. We move rapidly in such seasons, and whatever impedes our progress is a nuisance. In England, the house of lords, although it showed itself sufficiently pliant, was suspended during the crisis. These different systems have each their epoch; revolutions are made by a single chamber, and are terminated by two.

The royal sanction excited very strong debates within the assembly, and very violent agitation without. It was required to determine the share of the monarch in the making of laws. The deputies were almost all agreed upon one point. They were unanimous in granting him the right of sanction or refusal of laws; but one party wished this right to be absolute, the other party that it should be temporary. At bottom, these were the same thing; for it was not possible for the prince to prolong his refusal indefinitely, and the *veto*, although absolute, would have been only suspensive. But this power, vested in a single man, of thwarting the work of the people, appeared exorbitant out of the assembly, especially where it was least understood.

Paris was not yet recovered from the agitation of the 14th of July; it was at the *début* of the popular government, and it experienced both its freedom and its disorders. The assembly of electors, who, in the trying times, had taken the place of the provisional municipality, had just been replaced. A hundred and twenty-four members, nominated by the districts, were constituted legislators and representatives of the *commune*. While they were preparing a plan of municipal organization, every body wished to command; for, in France, the love of liberty is a little the love of power. The committees acted apart from the mayor; the assembly of representatives raised themselves in opposition to the committees, and the districts against the assembly of representatives. Each of the sixty districts took upon itself the legislative power, and gave the executive power to its committees. They considered as subordinate to them the members of the general assembly, and they took upon themselves the right of quashing their resolutions. This idea of sovereignty of the constituent over his delegate made rapid progress. All those who did not participate in authority united themselves in assemblies, and abandoned themselves to deliberations. The soldiers debated at the Oratoire, the journeymen tailors at the Colonnade, the barbers at the Champs-Élysées, the domestics at the Louvre. But it was at the Palais-Royal in particular that the most animated discussions took place; they examined the matters which occupied the debates of the national assembly, and controlled its discussions. The famine also occasioned tumults, and these were not the least dangerous.

Such was the state of Paris when the discussions upon the *veto* began. The apprehensions excited by granting this right to the king were extreme. They said, that the fate of liberty depended on this decision, and that the *veto* alone would reduce every thing to the ancient régime. The multitude, who were ignorant of the nature and the limits of power, wished that the assembly, in which they trusted, should have all power, that the king, whom they mistrusted, should have none; every instrument left at the disposition of the court seemed a counter-revolutionary lever. The Palais-Royal was in agitation; menacing letters were written to members of the assembly, who, like Mounier, had declared for the absolute *veto*; it was threatened to abandon them as unfaithful representatives, and to march upon Versailles. The Palais-Royal sent a deputation to the assembly, and demanded from the *commune*, that the deputies should be declared revocable, and that they should be made at all times dependent on the electors. The *commune* was firm, resisted the demands of the Palais-Royal, and took measures to prevent the tumults. The national guard, which was very well disposed, seconded these efforts. La Fayette had acquired its confidence; it carried the uni-

form, and adopted the discipline, of which the French guards had given the example, and it imbibed from its leader his love of order, and respect for the laws. But the middle class, which composed it, had not yet exclusively taken possession of the popular government. The multitude enrolled the 14th of July were not altogether ejected; the agitation from without made the debates on the *veto* very stormy. A question very simple in itself thus acquired very great importance; and the minister, seeing how pernicious might be the effect of an absolute decision, feeling, moreover, that in point of fact, the *veto absolute* and the *veto suspensive* were the same thing, decided the king to be content with the latter, and desist from the other. The assembly decreed, that the refusal of the king's sanction could not be prolonged beyond two legislatures, and this decision satisfied the multitude.

The court availed itself of the agitation of Paris to realize other projects; for some time they had been experimenting on the disposition of the king. He had at first refused to sanction the decrees of the 4th of August, although they were constitutional, and that he could avoid promulgating them. After having accepted them upon the observations of the assembly, he renewed the same difficulties relatively to the declaration of rights. The object of the court was to make Louis XVI. appear as oppressed by the assembly, and compelled to submit to measures he was unwilling to accept; it bore its situation impatiently, and wished to re seize its ancient authority. Flight was the only means, and it was necessary to make it legitimate; nothing could be done in the presence of the assembly, and in the vicinity of Paris; the royal authority had fallen on the 23d of June, military display on the 14th of July; there remained only civil war. As it was difficult to make the king decide, they waited till the last moment to involve him in flight, and his uncertainty defeated their plan. They were to retire to Metz near Bouillé, to the middle of his army, to call around the monarch the noblesse, the troops that were still faithful, the parliaments; to declare the assembly and Paris to be rebels, to invite them to obedience, or to enforce it; and if they could not restore the ancient absolute régime, to confine themselves at least to the declaration of the 20th of June. On the other hand, if the court had power to induce the departure of the king from Versailles, the partisans of the revolution had the interest to bring him to Paris; it was important to others that he should undertake something; the faction of Orleans, if there existed one, would naturally be desirous to push the king to flight by intimidation, in the expectation that the assembly would nominate its leader lieutenant-general of the realm; finally, the people, wanting bread, would hope that the residence of the king at Paris would remove or diminish the famine. All these causes existing, there wanted only an occasion for insurrection, and the court furnished it. Under the pretext of guarding itself from the movements of Paris, it summoned the troops to Versailles; doubled the gardes-du-corps of service, and brought up the dragoons and regiment of Flanders. This display of military force gave rise to the most vivid apprehensions; a report of some counter-revolutionary blow was spread, and the flight of the king, and the dissolution of the assembly, were announced. At the Luxembourg, at the Palais-Royal, at the *Champs-Élysées*, unknown uniforms were observed, white or yellow cockades. The enemies of the revolution manifested a joy which they had not for some time displayed; the court, by its conduct, confirmed suspicion, and defeated the object of all its preparations.

The officers of the regiment of Flanders, endured very impatiently by the town of Versailles, were entertained at the château, and admitted to the parties of the queen. The court was anxious to assure itself of their devotions. A fête was given them by the guards of the king; the officers of dragoons, and chasseurs, who were at Versailles, those of the Swiss guards, of the Hundred Swiss, of the provost-marshal's guard, and the staff of the national guard, were invited to it. They chose for the banquet-room the grand saloon for the exhibition of plays and other entertainments, exclusively destined to the most solemn festivals of the court, and which, since the marriage of the second brother of the king, had been opened only for the emperor Joseph II.

The king's band of musicians was ordered to assist at this festival, the first which the guards had ever given. During the banquet, they drank with enthusiasm the health of the royal family; that of the nation was omitted or rejected. At the second service, the grenadiers of France, the Swiss, and the dragoons were introduced, in order to witness this spectacle, and participate in the sentiments which animated the guests. Their transports increased every moment; suddenly the king was announced, he entered the hall of the banquet in a hunting-dress, followed by the queen, who held the dauphin in her arms. Acclamations of attachment and devotion rang through the saloon; with naked swords in hand, they drank to the health of the royal family, and at the moment when Louis XVI. was retiring, the band struck up the air, *O Richard, o mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne!* The scene assumed then a character sufficiently significant. The jovial clamour and the profusion of wine banished all reserve. They sounded the charge; staggering, they scaled the boxes, as if they were advancing to an assault, white cockades were distributed, the tri-coloured cockade was trodden under foot, and this troop then spread itself among the galleries of the château, where the ladies of the court overwhelmed them with congratulations, and decorated them with ribands and cockades.

Such was the famous banquet of the 1st of October, which the court had the imprudence to renew on the 3d. We cannot but deplore its fatal want of foresight; it knew neither how to submit to its destiny, nor how to change it. The assembling of a military force, far from preventing the aggression of Paris, provoked it. The banquet did not render the devotedness of the soldiers more certain, while it increased the disaffection of the multitude. To guard itself, there was no necessity for so much ardour, nor for flight so much preparation; but the court never took the proper measure for the success of its designs, or it took only half-measures, and delayed its final decision till it was too late.

At Paris the news of the banquet, and the appearance of the black cockades, produced the greatest fermentation. From the 4th, secret rumours, counter-revolutionary invitations, the apprehension of conspiracies, indignation against the court, the increasing fear of famine, every thing announced a revolution: the multitude already turned its regards towards Versailles. On the 5th, the insurrection broke out in a manner at once violent and resistless; the absolute want of bread was the signal for it. A young woman, entering a guard-house, seized a drum, and ran along the streets beating it, and crying, *Bread! bread!* She was soon surrounded by a crowd of women. This mob advanced towards the Hotel-de-Ville, thickening as it went along; it forced the horse-guard, which was at the gates of the commune, penetrated to the interior, and demanded bread and arms; it broke open the gates, seized the arms, sounded the tocsin, and prepared to march on to Versailles. Presently, the people, *en masse*, raised the same shout, and the cry "*To Versailles!*" became general. The women went first, under the conduct of Maillard, one of the volunteers of the bastille. The people, the national guard, the French guards, demanded to follow. The commandant, La Fayette, opposed this departure a long time, but it was in vain; and neither his efforts nor his popularity could triumph over the obstinacy of the multitude. For seven hours he harangued and retained them. Finally, impatient of so much delay, disregarding his remonstrances, they were beginning to march without him; when, feeling it was now his duty to lead, as it had been before to arrest their career, he obtained from the commune the authorization of his departure, and he gave the signal for it at seven o'clock in the evening.

The agitation at Versailles, though less impetuous, was not less substantial; the national guard and the assembly were restless and irritated. The double banquet of the body-guard; the approbation which the queen had manifested towards it in saying, "*I was enchanted by the pleasures of Thursday;*" the refusal of the king to consent to the declaration of the rights of man, his concerted temporizations, and the want of food, excited the alarm of the representatives of the people, and filled them with suspicions. Pétion

having denounced the banquet of the guards, was summoned by a royalist deputy to prove his denunciation and make known the guilty. "Let us declare expressly that every thing which is not the king, is a subject and responsible," exclaimed Mirabeau in a voice of thunder; "and I will furnish the proofs." These words, which pointed at the queen, silenced the right side. This angry discussion was followed by others not less animated, upon the refusal of the sanction, and upon the famine of Paris. A deputation was about being sent to the king, to demand from him the simple and unmodified consent to the rights of man, and to conjure him to facilitate the provisioning of the capital by every means in his power, when they announced the arrival of the women headed by Maillard.

Their unexpected appearance, for they had arrested all the couriers who could have announced it, excited the terror of the court. The soldiers of Versailles stood to their arms, and surrounded the château; but the intentions of the women were not hostile. Maillard, their leader, had persuaded them to present themselves as supplicants, and it was in this attitude that they exposed in succession their griefs to the assembly and to the king. Thus the first hours of this tumultuous evening were very calm; but it was impossible that the causes of trouble and hostility should not break out between this disorderly multitude and the body-guards, the object of so much irritation. These were placed in the court of the château, in front of the national guard and the regiment of Flanders. The interval which separated them was filled with women and volunteers of the bastille. In the midst of the confusion which inevitably resulted from such an approximation, a quarrel began: this was the signal of disorder and of battle. An officer of the guards struck a Parisian soldier with his sabre, and was immediately hit in return by a shot in the arm. The national guard took part against the body-guard; the fray became very violent, and would have been sanguinary, but for the night, which was unfavourable for such a struggle, and the order which the body-guards received, first, to cease from firing, and then to retreat. But as they were accused of having been the aggressors, the fury of the multitude was for some time excessive; it rushed into their hotel; two of them were wounded, and another was saved with great difficulty.

During this disorder the court was in consternation; the flight of the king was deliberated upon; the carriages were ready; a picket of the national guard perceived them at the grate of the orangerie, and made them enter after having closed the grate. The king, moreover, whether he was ignorant of the designs of the court, or whether he did not deem them practicable, refused to escape. Fears mingled themselves with his pacific intentions, since he would neither repel aggression, nor have recourse to flight. Vanquished, he apprehended the same fate as had befallen Charles I. in England; absent, he apprehended that the duke of Orleans might obtain the lieutenantancy of the kingdom. But, in the mean time, the rain, fatigue, and the inaction of the body-guard slackened the fury of the multitude, and La Fayette arrived at the head of the Parisian army.

His presence restored security to the court, and the answers of the king to the deputation of Paris satisfied the multitude and the army. In a short time, the activity of La Fayette, the good spirit and discipline of the Parisian guard, re-established order every where. The calm reappeared: this assemblage of women and volunteers, overcome by weariness, slid quietly away; and the national guards were, some intrusted with the defence of the château, the rest were received among their brethren in arms of Versailles. The royal family, reassured, after the alarms and fatigues of this anxious night, abandoned themselves to repose at two o'clock in the morning. At five o'clock, La Fayette, after having visited the outposts, which had been intrusted to him, finding the service well executed, the town calm, the mob either gone or asleep, took also himself some moments of rest.

Towards the hour of six, some individuals of the mob, more elevated, and earlier awake, rambled round the château. They found an open grate; they informed their companions of it, and entered by this aperture. Unfortunately,

sons were always the best. No rhetorician, he took on questions which interested his party the ground of justice, and left to Maury the topics of declamation. With the exactness of his views, the ardour of his character, and the good use of his talents, he had only the faults which were incident to his position. Maury to the errors of his genius added those which were inseparable from his cause.

Necker and the ministry had also a party, but it was less numerous than the other, because it was a moderate party. France was then divided into the privileged, who opposed the revolution, and the men of the people, who wished to have it entire. There was no place between them for a mediating party. Necker had declared for the English constitution; and all those who shared his views, whether from conviction or ambition, rallied round him. Of this number, were Mounier, a man of strong judgment and inflexible character, who considered this system as the type of representative governments; Lally Tollandal, as fully convinced as he, and more persuasive; Clermont Tonnerre, the friend and associate of Mounier; and Lally, who participated in the qualities and views of them both. Finally, the minority of the noblesse, and a party of the bishops, who hoped to become members of the upper chamber, if the ideas of Necker should be adopted.

The leaders of this latter party, who were subsequently called the *monarchists*, wished to effect the revolution by accommodation: at each epoch, they endeavoured to prevail on the more powerful to act with the weaker. Previous to the 14th of July, they demanded of the court and the privileged classes to satisfy the wants of the commons; after this epoch, they demanded of the commons to come to an accommodation with the court and the privileged. They thought that it was necessary to preserve to each party its action in the state; that parties displaced are parties discontented; and that we must create for them a legal existence, under pain of being exposed to interminable struggles from them. But that which they did not see, was the inappositeness of their ideas in a moment of exclusive passion. The struggle was commenced; the struggle which was to lead to the triumph of a system, and not to an arrangement. It was a victory which had replaced the three orders by a single assembly, and it was very difficult to break the unity of this assembly in order to arrive at the government of two chambers.

The moderate party had not been able to obtain this government from the court; there was no more reason why they should obtain it from the people. To the one it had appeared too popular, for the other it was too aristocratic. The rest of the assembly consisted of the national party. The men who, as Robespierre, Pétion, Buzot, &c., at a subsequent period wished to commence a second revolution when the first had been achieved, were not as yet remarked in it. At this epoch the extremes on this side were Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, who formed a triumvirate, whose opinions were prepared by Duport, supported by Barnave, and whose measures were directed by Alex. Lameth. There was something very remarkable, and which proclaimed the spirit of equality of the epoch, in the intimate union of an advocate belonging to the middle class, of a counsellor belonging to the parliamentary class, and of a colonel belonging to the court, who renounced the interest of their order, to associate in views of public good and of popularity. This party placed itself at once in a position a little in advance of that at which the revolution had arrived. The 14th of July had been the triumph of the middle class; the constituent was its assembly; the national guard its armed force; the mayoralty its popular power. Mirabeau, La Fayette, Bailly, applied themselves to this class, and were, the one its orator, the other its general, and the third its magistrate. The party, Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, had the principles, and sustained the interests, of this epoch of the revolution; but it was composed of young men of ardent patriotism, who came upon the theatre of public affairs with superior qualities, fine talents, and high rank; and who, to the ambition of liberty, added that of occupying the first rank. This party placed itself at first a little in advance of the revolution of the 14th of July. It took its *point d'appui* in the assembly among the members

of the extreme left; out of the assembly, among the clubs; in the nation, among the party of the people who had co-operated at the 14th of July, and who did not wish that the *bourgeoisie* alone should profit by the victory. In putting itself at the head of those who had no leaders, and who, being a little out of the government, were aspiring to enter it, it did not cease to belong to this first epoch of the revolution. It formed a species of democratic opposition in the middle class itself, differing from its leaders only upon points of little importance, and voting with them on almost every question. There was rather among these popular men an emulation of patriotism, than a difference of party.

Duport, who possessed a strong mind, and who had acquired a premature experience of the conduct of the political passions in the struggles which the parliament had sustained against the ministry, and which he had, in a great measure, directed, knew that a people reposes when it has conquered its rights, and that its passions subside only when it is at rest. In order to hold the rein over those who governed in the assembly, the mayoralty, the militias; in order to prevent the public activity from slackening, and the people, of whom there might one day be need, from being disbanded, he conceived and executed the famous confederation of clubs. This institution, like every thing which impresses a great movement on a nation, did much evil and much good. It encumbered the legal authority when it was sufficient, but it also gave an immense energy to the revolution. When attacked on all sides, it could save itself only at the expense of the most violent efforts. In a word, the founders had not calculated all the consequences of this association. It was, in their estimation, simply a piece of machinery which was to sustain or to wind up without danger the motion of the public machine, when it tended to slacken or to cease. They did not believe that they were labouring for the party of the multitude. After the flight of Varennes they abandoned it, and exerted themselves against it through the assistance of the assembly and the middle class, which the death of Mirabeau had left without a leader. At this epoch it was necessary promptly to fix the constitutional revolution; for to prolong it had only been to conduct to the republican revolution.

The mass of the assembly consisted of men of correct, well-trained, and even superior minds; its leaders were two men strangers to the *tiers-état*, and adopted by it. Without the abbé Siéyes, the operations of the constituent assembly had been less concentrated; without Mirabeau, its conduct had been less energetic.

Siéyes was one of those men who, in ages of enthusiasm, become the founders of a sect, and in an age of intelligence, exercise the ascendant of a powerful understanding. Solitude and philosophic speculation had ripened it for a happy moment; his ideas were new, vigorous, various, but little systematic. Society had in particular been the object of his examination; he had followed its progress, and decomposed its machinery. The nature of government appeared to him less a question of right than a question of epoch. Although cool and deliberate, Siéyes had the ardour which inspires the investigation of truth, and the passion which gives its discovery; thus he was absolute in his notions, despising the ideas of others because he found them incomplete, and only in his eyes the half-truth, which was tantamount to error. Contradiction irritated him; he was little communicative; he could have wished to make himself known entirely, and he could not do it with all the world. His disciples transmitted his systems to others, a circumstance which gave him a certain air of mysteriousness, and rendered him the object of a sort of adoration. He had the authority which complete political science bestows, and the constitution could have sprung from his head, all armed like the Minerva of Jupiter, or the legislation of the ancients, if in our times every one had not wished to assist in it, or to judge of it. Nevertheless, with some modifications, his plans were generally adopted, and he had in the committees far more disciples than fellow-labourers.

Mirabeau had the same ascendant on the tribune which Siéyes had in the

committees; he was a man who wanted only an occasion to be great. At Rome, in the prosperous days of the republic, he would have been a Gracchus, in its decline a Catiline; under the Fronde, a cardinal de Retz; and in the decrepitude of a monarchy, or in a state of things such as that he could only exercise his immense faculties in turbulence, he would have distinguished, by the vehemence of his passions, and his acts of authority, a life passed in committing disorders, and in suffering them. For this ceaseless activity he wanted employment, and the revolution gave it. Accustomed to the struggle against despotism, irritated by the scorn of a noblesse which did not value him, and which rejected him from its bosom; sagacious, bold, eloquent, Mirabeau felt that the revolution would be his work and his life. He was adapted for the wants of his age. His thoughts, his voice, his action, were those of an orator; in perilous circumstances he was capable of controlling the motions of an assembly; in difficult discussions he had the tact to terminate them; in a word, he had the power to keep down ambition, to silence hostility, to disconcert rivalry. This powerful man, in the midst of agitations, abandoning himself at one time with perfect ease to the impetuosity, at another to the playfulness, of strength, exercised over the assembly a sovereign sway. He soon obtained an immense popularity, which he never lost; and he who shunned all regards at his entrance into the states, at his death was carried to the Pantheon in the midst of the lamentations of the assembly and of France. Without the revolution, Mirabeau had failed in his destiny; for it is not sufficient to be a great man, it is necessary that he should come at the proper season.

The duke of Orleans, to whom a party has been assigned, had very little influence in the assembly: he voted with the majority, and not the majority with him. The personal attachment of some of its members, his name, the fears of the court, the popularity which his opinions gained him, hopes rather than conspiracies, have magnified his revolutionary reputation. He had neither the endowments nor the faults of a conspirator; he may have aided, by his money and his name, some popular movements which would have taken place without him, and which had other objects than his elevation. An error still common is, to ascribe this, the greatest of revolutions, to some secret and petty manœuvres, as if at such an epoch the whole people could serve as the instrument of one man.

The assembly had acquired the whole power, the municipalities supported its authority, the national guard obeyed it. It was divided into committees, in order to facilitate its labours, and to be sufficient for them. The royal power, though existing by right, was in some sort suspended; since it was not obeyed, and the assembly had the duty of supplying the royal functions by the exercise of its own. Thus independently of the committees charged with the preparation of its labours, it had others also nominated to exercise a useful surveillance without. A committee of subsistence was occupied on the supply of provisions, an object so important in a year of famine; a committee of relations corresponded with the municipalities and the provinces; a committee of investigation received the depositions against the conspirators of the 16th of July. But the special subjects of its attention were the finances and the constitution; subjects which the recent crisis had compelled them to adjourn.

Having provided for the temporary supply of the treasury, the assembly, although become sovereign, consulted, by an examination of the reports, the wish of its committees. It then proceeded in its regulations with a method, an extent, and a freedom of discussion which should have procured for France a constitution conformable to justice and its wants. America, at the moment of its independence, had consecrated, in a declaration, the rights of man and those of the citizen. It is always thus that we commence. A people springing from slavery feels the necessity of proclaiming its rights, before even laying the foundation of its government. Those Frenchmen who had assisted in that revolution, and who co-operated in their own, proposed a similar declaration as a preamble of the laws. This idea was pleasing to an assembly of legislators and philosophers, which was not controlled by any

limit, since there existed no institutions, and which proceeded on the primitive and fundamental ideas of society, for it was the offspring of the eighteenth century. Although this declaration contained only general principles, and confined itself to the exposition in maxims of what the constitution ought to enact into laws, it was very proper to exalt the views, and infuse a sentiment of dignity and importance into the minds of the citizens. Upon the proposition of La Fayette, the assembly had already commenced this discussion, when the events of Paris and the decrees of the 4th of August had compelled it to interrupt it; the assembly afterward renewed and terminated it, in consecrating the principles which served as a table of the new law, and which was the taking possession of the right in the name of humanity.

These general grounds being laid, the assembly occupied itself in the organization of the legislative power. This object was one of the most important: it had to fix the nature of its functions, and to establish its relations with the king. In this discussion the assembly had simply to determine the future condition of the legislative power. As to itself, invested with the constituent authority, it was placed above its own decrees, and no intermediate power could suspend or hinder its mission. But what should be the form of the deliberating body in future sessions? Should it remain indivisible, or should it be decomposed into two chambers? If this last form should be adopted, what ought to be the nature of the second chamber? Should it be an aristocratic assembly or a moderating senate? In a word, the deliberating assembly, whatever it should be, should it be permanent or periodical, and should the king divide with it the legislative power? Such were the difficulties which agitated the assembly and Paris during the month of September.

We shall easily understand the manner in which these questions were decided, if we consider the position of the assembly and its ideas respecting the sovereignty. The king was, in its eyes, only the hereditary agent of the nation, to whom belonged neither the right of canvassing its representatives, nor that of directing them, nor that of suspending them. Thus it refused him the initiation of laws and the dissolution of the assembly. It did not think that the legislative body should be dependent on the king; it was, moreover, apprehensive that in granting to the government too strong an influence over the assembly, or in case of the latter not keeping itself always united, the prince might avail himself of the intervals when he was alone, to encroach upon the other powers, and perhaps even to destroy the new order of things. They wished, therefore, to oppose to an authority always active an assembly always subsisting, and they decreed the permanence of the legislative body. On the question of its indivisibility or its division, the discussions were very animated. Necker, Mounier, Lally Tollendal, wished, besides a chamber of representatives, to have a senate whose members should be nominated by the king on the presentation of the people. They thought that this was the only means of moderating the power, and even of preventing the tyranny, of a single assembly. Their partisans were those members who entertained their ideas, or those who hoped to make a part of the upper chamber. The majority of the assembly would have wished, not a peerage, but an aristocratic assembly, of which it should elect the members. They could not then be heard, Mounier's party refusing to co-operate in a project which would have revived the orders, and the aristocrats rejecting a senate which would have confirmed the ruin of the noblesse. The greater number of the deputies of the clergy and of the commons advocated the unity of the assembly. It appeared illegal to the popular party to constitute legislators for life; they believed that the high chamber would become the instrument of the court and the aristocracy, and would then be dangerous, or that it would unite itself to the commons, and would then be useless. Thus the nobility from discontent, and the national party from the spirit of absolute justice, concurred in rejecting the high chamber.

This determination of the assembly has been severely censured. The partisans of the peerage have ascribed all the evils of the revolution to its absence, as if it were possible that any body, whatever it might be, could have arrested