

Safety and the Colonies, to combine the means of rendering this decree useful to humanity, without any danger to it.

We dishonored our glory by mutilating our works. The great principles developed by the virtuous Las Casas were misunderstood. We are working for future generations; let us send forth liberty into the colonies; to-day the English are dead. By casting liberty into the New World it will bring forth abundant fruit there; it will grow deep roots. Pitt and his accomplices will try in vain by political considerations to prevent the enjoyment of this benefit; they will be brought to nought. France will again assume the rank and influence which her energy, her soil, and her population assure her. We shall take pleasure in our generosity, but we shall not extend it beyond the limits of wisdom. We shall cut down tyrants as we have crushed faithless men who wished to keep back the Revolution. Let us not lose our energy let us launch our frigates, let us be sure of the benedictions of the universe and of posterity, and let us decree the sending back of measures for the examination of the committee.

[Specially translated by Helen B. Dole.]

DESMOULINS



UCIE SIMPLICE CAMILLE BENOIST DESMOULINS, French revolutionist, journalist, and pamphleteer, was born at Guise, Aisne, France, March 2, 1760, and was guillotined at Paris, April 5, 1794. After an education at the College of Louis le Grande, he studied law, but being seized with the revolutionary fever of the time, and partly because of a stutter in his speech, he never practiced his profession. Prior to 1789, he was wont somewhat guardedly to advocate the establishment of a republic for France after the ancient and classical type. Subsequently, on the dismissal of Necker from the office of Director-General of the Finances, Desmoulin urged the organization of the militia of Paris, and by his fiery harangues was instrumental in inciting the militia and mob of the capital to destroy the Bastille (July 14, 1789). Being at first in sympathy with the Girondists rather than with the Jacobins, his early idol was Mirabeau, but when that ruling spirit of the era died (April, 1791), Desmoulin attached himself to Danton and became with the latter and Marat a leading member of the Cordeliers Club, a secession from the Jacobin organization. Later on, he became a member of the National Convention, which was constituted in May, 1792, and there voted for the death of Louis XVI. Associated for a time with Robespierre, he however kept aloof from the excesses of the Reign of Terror let loose upon Paris by that malignant despot and his immediate associates, and attacked them scathingly and those of the relentless Committee of Public Safety. For this he was arrested at the end of March, 1794, and with Danton was guillotined a few days afterward (April 5), his young wife following him to the block a fortnight later. In his journal, "Le Vieux Cordelier," his clement spirit incited him to denounce with much ability and vigor the bloodthirstiness and wild tumult of the era. He also edited the "Revolutions de France et de Brabant." Appended is an example of his oratory.

LIVE FREE OR DIE

FEBRUARY, 1788

ONE difference between the monarchy and the republic, which alone should suffice to make the people reject with horror all monarchical rule and make them prefer the republic regardless of the cost of its establishment, is that in a democracy, though the people may

be deceived, yet, at least, they love virtue. It is merit that they believe they put in place of the rascals who are the very essence of monarchies. The vices, the concealments, and the crimes which are the diseases of republics are the very health and existence of monarchies. Cardinal Richelieu avowed openly in his political principles, that "the king should always avoid using the talents of thoroughly honest men." Long before him Sallust said: "Kings cannot get along without rascals. On the contrary, they should fear to trust the honest and the upright."

It is, therefore, only under a democracy that the good citizen can reasonably hope to see a cessation of the triumphs of intrigue and crime; and to this end the people need only to be enlightened.

There is yet this difference between a monarchy and the republic; the reigns of Tiberius, of Claudius, of Nero, of Caligula, of Domitian, had happy beginnings. In fact, all reigns make a joyous entry, but only as a delusion. Therefore the Royalists laugh at the present state of France as if its violent and terrible entry under the republic must always last.

Everything gives umbrage to a tyrant. If a citizen have popularity, he is becoming a rival to the prince. Consequently, he is stirring up civil strife, and is a suspect. If, on the contrary, he flee popularity and seclude himself in the corner of his own fireside, this retired life makes him remarked, and he is a suspect. If he is a rich man, there is an imminent peril that he corrupt the people with his largeness, and he is a suspect. Are you poor? How then! Invincible emperors, this man must be closely watched; no one so enterprising as he who has nothing. He is a suspect! Are you in character sombre, melancholy, or neglectful?

You are afflicted by the condition of public affairs, and are a suspect.

If, on the contrary, the citizen enjoy himself and have resultant indigestion, he is only seeking diversion because his ruler has had an attack of gout, which made his Majesty realize his age. Therefore he is a suspect. Is he virtuous and austere in his habits? Ah! he is a new Brutus with his Jacobin severity, censuring the amiable and well-groomed court. He is a suspect. If he be a philosopher, an orator, or a poet, it will serve him ill to be of greater renown than those who govern, for can it be permitted to pay more attention to the author living on a fourth floor than to the emperor in his gilded palace? He is a suspect.

Has one made a reputation as a warrior—he is but the more dangerous by reason of his talent. There are many resources with an inefficient general. If he is a traitor he cannot so quickly deliver his army to the enemy. But an officer of merit like an Agricola—if he be disloyal, not one can be saved. Therefore, all such had better be removed and promptly placed at a distance from the army. Yes, he is a suspect.

Tacitus tells us that there was anciently in Rome a law specifying the crimes of "lèse-majesté." That crime carried with it the punishment of death. Under the Roman republic treasons were reduced to but four kinds, viz., abandoning an army in the country of an enemy; exciting sedition; the maladministration of the public treasury; and the impairment by inefficiency of the majesty of the Roman people. But the Roman emperors needed more clauses, that they could place cities and citizens under proscription.

Augustus was the first to extend the list of offences that were "lèse-majesté" or revolutionary, and under his suc-

cessors the extensions were made until none was exempt. The slightest action was a state offence. A simple look, sadness, compassion, a sigh, even silence was "lèse-majesté" and disloyalty to the monarch. One must needs show joy at the execution of their parent or friend lest they would perish themselves. Citizens, liberty must be a great benefit, since Cato disembowelled himself rather than have a king. And what king can we compare in greatness and heroism to the Cæsar whose rule Cato would not endure? Rousseau truly says: "There is in liberty as in innocence and virtue a satisfaction one only feels in their enjoyment and a pleasure which can cease only when they are lost."

THE APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE

SPEECH DELIVERED DURING THE TRIAL OF LOUIS XVI

SHALL France become a republic, or shall she seek in a monarchy repose from her weariness of the never-ceasing treacheries of her representatives? Shall we become a part of the Prussian or Austrian monarchies, or shall France be divided into federated republics? Shall Paris, as the price of her civism and sacrifices, wade in blood? Will you decree her complete destruction, the depopulation of eighty-four provinces, and perhaps fifty years of civil war? What do I say! Will it be you yourselves who affirm that you merit the scaffold? Such is the extraordinary argument that, I maintain, has come to be the order of the day! Such are the days of peace, of order, of happiness that you propose to give to the worn-out nation, such the judgment you demand against your very selves!

I hear ceaseless talk of our appearance in the eyes of Europe

and of posterity; in all honesty let us understand ourselves! If it be true that the gaze of Europe and of future generations is to rest upon us, how can it refrain from being, I do not say on the part of Europe (for in her present state of degradation she has no right to despise any one), but on the part of posterity, with the utmost contempt?

What! We call ourselves the National Convention of France, that is to say, the revolutionary representation, and, until the veto of the Sovereign All-powerful, of twenty-four millions of men. There presides over us the image of the first Brutus, and searching among the ruins of antiquity we gather up the lightest words of his followers, the name alone being sufficient to cause the enthusiastic adoption of the most unjust motions.

Differing from each other in opinions, all are united in vying with each other for the name of Brutus, and yet here are four months that seven hundred and forty of us, each a would-be Brutus, deliberate gravely whether a tyrant be not inviolable.

The Brutus of Nancy, Salle, debates; listen, citizens, these are his words: "Whether it be not to tarnish his memory with an iniquitous regicide;" and the Brutus of Perpignan, Biroteau, not being able to imagine even why the Republicans demand the death of Louis because he is a king, elegantly characterizes the opinions of his ancestors as the croakings of frogs in a marsh.

These interminable discussions between our Brutus-like and Cassius-like members, the voice of whose conscience will not permit the putting to death of a perjured king who has been both a Cæsar and a Catiline combined, will have at least the good effect of allowing the so-called tyrants of debate to obtain a hearing.

What a strange part, during the rule of tyranny, of the triumvirate, of the dictatorship, has been mine in an assembly where, for four months, it has not once been possible for me to express my opinions without being called to order by the Convention.

I am permitted then once to mount the tribune, and to rise to the height of Lanjuinais and of Bizot, whose sole fault in the eyes of the insignificant Edmé consists in being too learned. I come in my turn, and I have no mind to let escape this unique occasion for showing you what I think of our political situation, so closely allied to this discussion that I shall not be obliged to depart from the order of the day.

I am far from being discouraged! Read the annals of all nations and you see how a few good men have sufficed to counterbalance the power, the intrigues, and the multitude of the evil-minded.

See the republic in Holland, so long hanging on the verge of ruin, sustained by a Barneveldt, the two Carneilles, and Jean de Witt; by Pym, Hampden, and John Hollis in England; by Cato and Cicero in Rome! See Cato alone bravely battling against the genius and victories of Cæsar solely by his probity and patriotism! Call to mind how in all times there has been this woeful dearth of patriots, unwavering and of noble character!

Behold the conspirators against Cæsar, on the morrow of the most glorious of tyrannicides obliged to seek shelter in flight from the fury of the populace! Look backward upon the last century in Europe; call to mind that it is not long since a man who had done nothing save travel all his life said that he would gladly have remained in some one city, had he found a single place where power and influence were in the hands of worthy men! Look again at the English

Parliament,—and not only at the crowds of pensioners of the Georges, but at the party of the Opposition,—that is but a comedy and a sham of Publicola to banish from the English people all idea of nominating champions for themselves by making them believe that defenders were already to be found in the House of Commons, and then say what hopes should the country and generation not cherish, when it counts in this assembly, not only one or two, but more than a hundred members, determined, as Robespierre has said, to defend the cause of liberty as did Hampden and Sidney, and to bring their own heads to the scaffold rather than betray her.

Nevertheless I must admit that I have never less desired the Republic than since we have the Republic. What is it in short that constitutes a republic? Montesquieu has told you that it is the equality of rights; and the Constituent Assembly that had proclaimed this equality had said, "The law, which, whether it protect or whether it punish, is equal for all," had made of France a republic, whatever name it had given to the constitution, for it is not the name that the notary gives to the document, but the substance of it, that determines its character. It was then correct to say that we became a republic in 1789, as it now appears true that we have once again become a monarchy in 1793, since while all of us have agreed that Louis was a traitor and condemned him to death you reserve to him the appeal to the people. Tell me no more that you are republicans, that you have in your hearts the hatred of royalty!

You, republicans! You do not believe it even yourselves! You well know that in the sight of republicans all men are equal! I deceive myself; you well know that there is but a single man that the true republican is unable to regard as a man in whom he is not able to see, like Cato and like Homer,

only an anthropophagous biped, and that this hostile animal is a king! We do not ask that, like Cato, you degrade Louis Capet below the human race and that you rank him with wild beasts, but that at least you do not make of him a privileged being and one by nature superior. Do not talk to me of "reasons of state," for since you have made of France a republic, and after you have condemned Louis Capet to death for his crimes, to bring into use for him the privilege of appeal that is denied to other malefactors is to lay violent hands on the doctrine of equality, is to overthrow the Republic and your work. Certainly the first "reason of state" is for us to maintain the Republic.

If, instead of feeling within the depths of our hearts that hatred which every republican has for a tyrant, you devise for him a privilege; if you can look upon the throne as an enchanted scaffold from which this brigand sees the miserable beings whom he plunders and assassinates prostrate themselves trembling at his feet, it is the base blood of slaves and not that of Brutus that runs in your veins, and I thrust you back among these aristocrats, these despicable Feuillants who on the 24th of September, having risen royalists, have retired to rest republicans.

You seek in vain to palliate this royalism by an alternative that has been widely proclaimed — either the nation desires the death of Louis or it does not desire it; in the first case the judgment will be confirmed, in the second the sovereign has the right to veto it.

At the first glance this alternative is its own answer to those who have brought it forward. Either they believe that the nation wishes the death of the tyrant and therefore appeal is useless; or they are in doubt if it wishes it; that is to say, whether all the citizens desire that justice shall be the same

for every one; it is to say whether the French people are republicans; but if they doubt whether the nation be republican, why do they, who pretend so great respect for the will of the sovereign people, why, I say, do they not fear to offend it in decreeing the republic? Why did they not at that time bring forward this alternative? Either the people desire the republic or they do not desire it!

Why, when it is a question of prosecuting this scoundrel, convicted of a thousand crimes, as they themselves avow, why this appeal of the Convention to the nation which has not demanded it, although it is a question of changing its government and uprooting a monarchy that has endured for fifteen centuries. Why? Here it is, and it is of the utmost importance that it should be known.

It is because on the 21st of September, 1792, the aristocrats were still held in check by fear—of all masters the one whose lessons are soonest forgotten—that to-day royalism everywhere begins to rear its insolent head; it is in one word that on the 21st of September the plot for civil war and federalism had not been matured.

Who cannot see between the two alternatives of the dilemma yet a third, which is inevitable and leads directly to civil war! The greatest absurdity of this alternative lies in the impossible supposition that the entire nation is united in its desire either for or against the death of the tyrant, and in not recognizing, what is incontrovertible, that while one portion of the nation will it, another portion does not. Rabaud, who finds the reasoning of Salle irrefutable, has not seen that the dilemma lacked this third fact without which it could not be sustained. It is impossible to dispute the possibility of this alternative that one section of a province will vote white while another will vote black — and from that

time behold us embarked upon a sea which has neither bottom nor shores.

For I can readily distinguish a minority in a tribunal, in a nation, in a convention, in a commission, in any assembly of delegates whatever, but in the chaos occasioned by the decay and dissolution of an ancient government, and when a people desires a new constitution, it is the greatest, the most difficult question of public rights to determine either majority or minority in the early and elementary assemblies.

All the speakers on the same side who have preceded me have not failed to point out the bad faith of these appellants who, glossing over, by a pretended respect for their sovereign, an edict for civil war, display themselves so shamelessly that in the same decree they do not scruple to circumscribe the people in the subjects of their deliberations, and to enclose the nation within the circle of Popilius.

How they are to be pitied, these delegates whose constituents impose upon them this order; how the primary assemblies will respond to Vergniaud, Gensonne, Buzot, and Brissot? "Who are you to-day? Do you not know that the power of representatives ceases from the moment that the represented appear, and that fiction disappears before reality?" This maxim of Jean Jacques Rousseau is so trite and so incontrovertible that even in the palmiest days of the reign of the aristocracy, that is to say in the time of the Roman senate, all the power of the conscript fathers was not able to conceal the fact that it was not possible to convene the Senate on the day of the comitia, the people not being able to recognize any other power or any other will co-existent with its own from the moment when it should rise and extend over the whole empire its sovereign hand.

Already, despite your decree that condemns to death who-

ever shall propose the re-establishment of a monarchy, are we not deluged with writings in which it is maintained that the republic is only provisional? Do you doubt that in your primary assemblies, at least in some of them, evil-minded men are not found to plead the cause of the kingdom along with that of the king? On the frontiers, where you had at least a hundred thousand, yes, two hundred thousand patriots who perished, are aristocrats who, no longer having hope from the enemy from without, hope everything from the enemy that is within, and return to their own provinces; or political exiles who return from all directions, until Paris is completely filled, and who, despoiled of everything, battle desperately for the restoration of the monarchy and their own fortunes. And take heed, citizens, in case this appeal to the people is made, that the people do not claim it again! It is the time when the tyrants of Europe behold their own danger, if they do not ruin us, seeing that, as Lord Longborough said recently in the House of Lords, "Your enactment of the 15th of November is hostile to all governments, and gives to all rebels daggers upon the blades of which is written, 'There shall be no kings.'"

Meantime I tremble when I reflect upon the extreme necessity on the part of tyrants to overthrow the republic, recalling the corruption of our manners, of our egotism. I seem to see these tyrants, with their evil minions, prowling about our maritime cities to gain influence among the Jacobins in our army, within our walls, and above all in the Convention, everywhere to purchase at any price whoever is not incorruptible, addressing themselves by turns to the love of royalty, to cupidity, to fear, to fanaticism, to self-love, to jealousy, to hatred, to patriotism itself, which they mislead, and unite all their interests, all their fury, against our country. How

much do you require, you, to prevent the condemnation to the scaffold and the execution, in effigy, of all kings in one, while you wait to pledge yourselves to the monarchy? And you, to betray the city before a million eyes, in the sight of which it will ever be impossible for you to frame a constitution for the aristocracy? And you, how much do you demand to ruin this city, the terror of intriguers? And you, to disaffect and disunite this coalition of Jacobin societies, the terror of kings? And you, popular agitators, sellers of patriotism, how much do you ask? And you, pusillanimous judges, who have in your view the tragic end of Charles I, how much do you require to cure your fear, to release you from responsibility by an appeal to the people, and in any case to procure for you a retreat in London, by aiding Pitt to obtain this appeal? And you, hypocrites of a disappointing and disorganizing philosophy, how much do you ask to gain over to your interests the hypocrites of religion? And, you, finally, whose complicity with the tyrant cannot fail to be discovered sooner or later, in fact has already become known, despite the precautions of Roland, what is the amount of your bribe?

Take heed, therefore, citizens, how our common enemies hasten to convoke these primary assemblies, and, in short, how favorable is the moment for them. It is when, by force of tactics obliging us by continual attacks to think of our own defence, by giving us no place on committees, by not allowing us to approach the tribune, that the impossibility of doing anything for the Republic has been forced upon us; it is when, for four months, the national convention, the hope of the universe, and which should be the theatre of its enfranchisement, has been seldom other than an arena for gladiators and a court-room where Master Scévola, holding thirty audiences until six o'clock at night to plead the inviolability of the

tyrant, has covered us with ridicule in the eyes of posterity. It is when, during four months, the real triumvirs who negotiated with the king have, with a perversity unparalleled, devoted themselves to the calumny of the most worthy citizens, and to the banishment from the tribune of all those respected on account of their good sense and unwavering patriotism, who have made themselves masters of all our deliberations and have drawn the assembly into the most impolitic measures.

We at least cannot be accused; and if the Convention has done nothing for the Republic we are absolved, since we have been made a powerless minority. Thanks, then, be rendered to Vergniaud and to those who, calling themselves the majority, have shielded us from public indignation, and have so nobly taken the pains to justify us, by this single word, before the primary assemblies, before Europe, and before posterity. Here is my draft for the proposed decree:

"The National Convention declares that Louis Capet merits death. It hereby decrees that, accordingly, a scaffold shall be erected in the Place Carrousel, whither Louis shall be conveyed, bearing a placard with these words in front, 'Perjured and a traitor to the nation,' and behind, 'King,' to show to all peoples that to it may not be ascribed the dishonor of the crime of continuing a monarchy which has endured even fifteen hundred years.

"Decrees further, that the vault of kings at St. Denis shall be henceforth the burial-place of thieves, assassins, and of traitors.

"Orders the Minister of Justice and the Commandant of the National Guard to render account to it within twenty-four hours of the execution of the foregoing decree."

[Special translation by Mary E. Adams.]