

nier: "Ah! who tells you that we do not wish a king? But what does it matter whether it be Louis XVI or Louis XVII?"

Here I will observe that the reporter whose partiality for the accused has been denounced to you is nevertheless far, I will not say from being favorably inclined towards me; but from being exact, from being just. It is solely because M. Mounier does not confirm this remark by the evidence that the reporter does not stop there. "I shuddered," he says, "I shuddered as I read, and I said to myself: If this remark was made, there is a plot, there is a culprit; fortunately M. Mounier does not mention it."

Well, gentlemen, with the high degree of esteem in which I hold M. Chabroud and his report, I maintain that he has reasoned badly. This remark, which I declare I do not recall, is such as any citizen might be proud of; and not only is it justifiable at the time when it is given place, but it is good in itself; it is praiseworthy; and if the reporter had analyzed it with his ordinary sagacity he would not have needed, in order to dispel the pretended offence, to be convinced that it was imaginary. Suppose an enthusiastic royalist, such as M. Mounier, consulting with a deliberate royalist and repelling all idea that the monarchy could run any danger in a nation professing in a way to worship monarchical government: would you consider it strange that the friend of the throne and liberty, seeing the horizon darken, judging better than the enthusiast the tendency of opinion, the acceleration of circumstances, the dangers of an insurrection, and desiring to rescue his too conciliating fellow citizen from a dangerous security, should say to him: "Ah! who denies that the French are monarchical? who disputes that France has need of a king and desires a king? But Louis XVII will be king as Louis XVI; and if the nation is persuaded that

Louis XVI is an abettor and accomplice of excesses which have wearied her patience she will invoke a Louis XVII"? The zealot for liberty would have pronounced these words with the more energy the better he knew his interlocutor and the relations which could make his discourse more effective; would you see in him a conspirator, a bad citizen, or even a poor reasoner? This supposition would be very simple; it might be adapted to people and circumstances. Draw from it at least this conclusion, that a conversation never proves anything by itself; that it takes all its character, all its force from the introduction and the foregone incidents, from the nature of the moment, from the sort of speakers,—in a word, from a multitude of fugitive shades which must be determined before appreciating it and deciding upon it.

Since I am speaking of M. Mounier I will explain another fact which, in the account he has made of it to himself, he has spoiled to his own disadvantage.

He presided over the National Assembly of October 5, when they discussed the acceptance pure and simple, or modified, of the declaration of rights. I went to him, it is said; I induced him to pretend an indisposition and to break up the meeting on that frivolous pretext. . . . I was doubtless ignorant at that time that the indisposition of a president calls his predecessor; I was ignorant that it is not in the power of any man to stop at his pleasure the course of one of your most serious deliberations.

Here is the fact in its exactitude and its simplicity.

On the morning of October 5 I was informed that the fermentation of Paris was increasing. I did not need to know the details to believe it; an augury which never deceives, the nature of things was sufficient indication of it. I went to M.

Mounier. I said to him: "Mounier, Paris is marching upon us."—"I know nothing about it."—"Believe me, or believe me not, no matter; but Paris, I tell you, is marching upon us. Be ill: go up to the Château, give them this warning: say, if you wish, that you have it from me, I am willing; but stop this scandalous controversy; time is pressing, there is not a moment to lose."

"Paris is marching upon us?" replied Mounier; "Well! so much the better, we shall be a republic so much the sooner." If you recall the prejudices and the spleen which agitated Mounier; if you recall how he saw in me the firebrand of Paris, you will see that this remark, which has more character than the poor fugitive has ever shown since, does him credit. I have not seen him since except in the National Assembly which he deserted as well as the kingdom a few days later. I have never spoken to him again, and I do not know how he could imagine that I wrote him a note the sixth of October at three o'clock in the morning to break up the meeting; I have not the slightest idea about it. Nothing, moreover, is more idle or more immaterial.

I come to the third accusation of which I am the object, and it is here that I promised the answer to the enigma: I advised, they say, M. d'Orléans not to go to England. Well, what is to be concluded from that? I deem it an honor not to have given (for I did not speak to him), but to have been the cause of giving him this advice. I learn, through public notoriety, that after a conversation between M. d'Orléans and M. de Lafayette, very imperious on the one side, and very resigned on the other, the former came to accept the mission, or rather to receive the order to leave for England. At the same moment the consequences of such a proceeding present themselves to my mind. To disturb the friends of liberty, to scat-

ter clouds over the causes of the Revolution, promise a new pretext to the malcontents, isolate the king more and more, sow new germs of defiance within and without the kingdom, these are the effects which this precipitous departure, this condemnation without accusation, must produce. Above all it left without a rival the man to whom the chance of events had just given a new dictatorship; the man who at this moment had at his disposal, in the bosom of liberty, a police more active than that of the old régime; the man who, through this police, had just collected a stock of accusations without accusing; the man who by imposing upon M. d'Orléans the law of departure, instead of having him judged and condemned if he was guilty, openly avoided by this alone the inviolability of the members of the Assembly. My mind was made up in an instant; I said to M. Biron, with whom I have never had any political relations, but whom I have always held in high esteem, and from whom I have several times received friendly services: "M. d'Orléans is going to leave, without a trial, the post entrusted to him by his constituents; if he obeys I denounce his departure and I shall oppose it; if he remains, if he makes known the invisible hand which is anxious to remove him, I denounce the authority assuming the place of the law; let him choose between these alternatives." M. Biron replied with chivalric sentiments, and I waited. M. d'Orléans, informed of my resolution, promised to follow my advice, but the very next day, in the Assembly, I received a note from M. Biron, and not from M. d'Orléans, as the procedure supposes; this note bore the crêpe of his grief and announced the departure of the prince. But when friendship was limited to suffering, the man of public affairs was permitted to be indignant. A shock of temper, or rather of civic anger, made me offer a resolution on the spot which the

reporter ought to have made known in order to have the right to charge indiscretion. Consider this insolent if you will; but at least acknowledge, since it does not take any relation for granted, that it excludes all idea of complicity. I charge it upon him whose conduct up to that time had seemed to me free from reproach, but whose departure was in my eyes more than a fault. Now this fact is explained; and M. de Lafayette can certify to it in all the details, which are perfectly well known to him. Now if any one dares, I will not say to make a crime of this, but to refuse me his approbation; if any one dares to maintain that the advice I gave was not in conformity with my duties, useful to public affairs, and done to my honor, let him rise and accuse me. My opinion, doubtless, is indifferent to him; but I declare that I cannot help the most profound scorn for him.

Thus disappear those atrocious accusations, those unbridled calumnies which placed in the number of the most dangerous conspirators, in the number of the most execrable criminals, a man who is conscious of always having wished to be useful to his country and of not having been always useless to it. Thus vanishes that secret discovered so late, which a tribunal, at the moment of ending its career, has just unveiled to you with so much certainty and complaisance. What does it matter now whether I discuss or disdain that multitude of contradictory reports, of absurd fables, of insidious reconciliations, which the procedure still contains? What does it matter, for example, if I explain that series of confidences which M. Virien pretends to have received from me and which he reveals with so much loyalty? This M. Virien is a strange man; but was he ever so fervent a zealot of the present Revolution; has he at any time shown himself to be so sincere a friend of the constitution that a man of whom everything

has been said except that he was a simpleton has taken him thus for his confidant?

I am not speaking here to amuse public malice, to attract hatred, to give birth to new divisions. No one knows better than I that the safety of everything and everybody is in social harmony and in the annihilation of all party spirit; but I cannot help adding that it is a sad way to obtain that reunion of minds by arousing infamous procedures, changing the judiciary art to an offensive weapon, and by justifying this kind of combat with principles that would horrify slaves. I ask your permission to sum up the case.

The procedure designates me only as an accomplice; so there is no accusation against me if there is no charge of complicity.

The procedure does not designate me as an accomplice of any individual excess, but only as a pretended prime mover in that excess. There is then no point of accusation against me unless it is first proved that there was a prime mover; unless it is demonstrated that the pretended charges of complicity which concern me were a secondary rôle connected with the principal rôle; if it is not established that my conduct has been one of the principles of the action of the movement, of the explosion, the causes of which are sought for.

Finally the procedure does not designate me as the accomplice of a general mover, but as the accomplice of such an one. There is then no accusation against me if everything is not proved at once, and that this mover is the principal criminal, and that the charges of which I am the object relate to him and announce a common plan dependent on the same causes and capable of producing the same effects.

Moreover, nothing of all that would be indispensable to prove is proved.

I do not wish to examine whether the events concerning which information has been given are misfortunes or crimes; whether these crimes are the effect of a plot or of imprudence or of chance; and whether the supposition of a prime mover would not make them a hundred times more inexplicable. It is enough for me to remind you that among the facts laid to my charge some several months before or after the events cannot be connected with them except by the logic of tyrants or their instruments; and that others, contemporary with the time of the procedure, are evidently neither cause nor effect; have not had, could not have had any influence; are exclusive of the rôle of agent, of mover, or of accomplice; and that at least to suppose that I was of the number of guilty by my own will, that I was not impelled by any outside action, by any impulse, by any movement, my pretended complicity is a chimera.

Again it is enough for me to make you observe that the charges brought against me, far from giving me relations with the prime mover designated, would give me entirely opposite relations; that in the denunciation of the fraternal repast, which I had not alone the pretended imprudence to call an orgy, I was only the auxiliary of two of my colleagues who had used the term before me; that if I had run through the ranks of the Régiment de Flandre I should have done no more, after the procedure itself, than follow the example of a multitude of members of this Assembly; that if the remark, "What does it matter whether it be Louis XVII?" was true, besides the fact that I was not supposing a change of dynasty, my ideas verified by a note to a member of this Assembly, in the possible case of a regent, only concerned the brother of the King.

What then is this great part which I am supposed to have taken in the events of which the procedure is the object?

What is this procedure all the events of which are explained without a plot, and which nevertheless has a plot for a basis, the first aim of which has been to conceal real faults and to replace them with imaginary crimes; which directed in the first place by self-love alone, then embittered by hatred, afterward taken possession of by party spirit, then seized upon by the ministerial power, and, thus receiving several sorts of influence one after another, finally took the form of an insidious protestation both against your decrees, and against the King's liberty of acceptance, against his journey to Paris, against the wisdom of your deliberations, and against the love of the nation for the monarch?

What is this procedure that the most desperate enemies of the Revolution would not have directed better if they had been the only authors of it, as they were almost the only instruments; which tended to stir up the most redoubtable party spirit, both in the bosom of this Assembly by opposing the witnesses to the judges, and in the whole kingdom by slandering the intentions of the capital in the provinces, and in every town by making detestable a liberty which might have shortened the monarch's life, and in all Europe, by painting there the situation of a free king in the false colors of a captive, persecuted King: by painting this august Assembly as an assembly of factious persons?

Yes, the secret of this infernal procedure is finally discovered: it is in the interest of those whose testimony and slanders have formed the tissue of it; it is in the resources which it has furnished to the enemies of the Revolution; it is—it is in the heart of the judges, as will soon be engraved in history by the most just and the most implacable vengeance.

[Especially translated by Helen B. Dole.]