

repulsion; if there was a just anxiety about the progress the enemy might make into the interior of France, and if a reserve camp would evidently be necessary to anticipate or stop their progress; if there was a decree making the formation of this camp infallible and immediate; if the king rejected this decree and substituted for it a plan the success of which was uncertain and demanded so much time for its execution that the enemy could make it impossible; if the legislative body should make decrees of general safety, that the urgency of the danger should allow no delay, that nevertheless sanction was refused or deferred for two months; if the king should leave the command of an army to an intriguing general, suspected by the nation through the most serious faults, the most characterized outrages to the constitution; if another general, bred far from the corruption of courts, and familiar with victory, should ask, for the glory of our arms, a reinforcement which it would be easy to grant him; if, by refusing, the king should clearly say to him: "I forbid you to conquer;" if, profiting by this disastrous temporization, so much incoherence in our political course, or rather such constant perseverance in perfidy, the league of tyrants should strike fatal blows at liberty, could it be said that the king made the constitutional resistance, that he fulfilled the vow of the constitution for the defence of the State, that he did the formal act which it prescribes?

Allow me to reason further in regard to this painful supposition. I have exaggerated several facts—I shall make a statement of them by and by—which I hope will never exist, in order to remove all pretext to applications which are purely hypothetical; but I need a complete development in order to show the truth without blemish.

If such was the result of the conduct of which I have just

drawn a picture, that France would swim in blood, that the foreigner would rule there, the constitution would be shaken, that there would be a counter-revolution, and the king would say to you in justification of himself:

"It is true that the enemies who are rending France in pieces pretend that they are acting only to rebuild my power which they think destroyed; to avenge my dignity which they supposed dishonored; to give me back my royal rights which they supposed compromised or lost; but I have proved that I was not their accomplice. I have obeyed the constitution, which orders me to oppose their enterprises by a formal act, since I have placed armies in the field. It is true that these armies were too weak, but the constitution does not designate the time when I ought to collect them; it is true that reserve camps could have sustained them, but the constitution does not oblige me to form reserve camps.

"It is true that when the conquering generals were advancing upon hostile territory I ordered them to stop, but the constitution does not prescribe that I shall win victories; it even prohibits me from making conquests. It is true that attempts have been made to disorganize the armies by the combined resignation of officers, and that I have made no effort to stop the course of these resignations; but the constitution did not foresee what I should have to do in case of such an offence. It is true my ministers have continually deceived the National Assembly about the number, the disposal of troops and providing for them; that I have kept as long as possible those who fettered the progress of the constitutional government, as short a time as possible those who tried to give it energy; but the constitution makes their nomination depend only on my free will, and nowhere does it order me to put my trust in patriots and to drive out counter-

revolutionists; it is true that the National Assembly has passed useful or even necessary decrees and that I have refused to sanction them; but I had the right to do so; it is sacred; because I take it from the constitution. It is true, finally, that the counter-revolution has taken place, that despotism is going to place its iron sceptre in my hands, that I shall punish you for having the insolence to wish to be free; but I have done everything that the constitution prescribes for me; no act which the constitution condemns has come from me; so it is not possible to doubt my fidelity to it, my zeal in its defence."

Yes, I say it was possible, in the calamities of a disastrous war, in a counter-revolutionary overthrow, that the King of the French should use this derisive language; if it was possible for him ever to speak to them of his love for the constitution with such insulting irony, would they not be right in replying to him:

"Oh, king! who without doubt believed with the tyrant Lysander that truth is not worth more than lying, and that men must be amused with oaths as children are with knuckle-bones, who pretended to love the laws only to acquire the power which would serve you in defying them; to love the constitution only that it might not hurl you from the throne, where you needed to remain in order to destroy it; to love the nation only to assure the success of your perfidies by inspiring it with confidence; do you think of abusing us to-day with hypocritical protestations of throwing us off the scent as to the cause of our misfortunes by the artifice of your excuse and the audacity of your sophisms?"

"Was it defending us to oppose foreign soldiers with forces whose inferiority left not even a doubt about their defeat? Was it defending us to defeat the plans for fortifying the

interior of the kingdom or to make preparations of resistance for the time when we should already have become the prey of tyrants? Was it defending us to choose generals who themselves attacked the constitution, or to fetter the courage of those who were serving it? Was it defending us incessantly to paralyze the government by the continual disorganization of the ministry? Did the constitution leave you the choice of ministers for our happiness or our ruin? Did it make you chief of the army for our glory or our shame? Finally did it give you the right of sanction, a civil list and so many important prerogatives to destroy constitutionally the constitution and the empire? No, no! man whom the generosity of the French could not move, man whom love of despotism alone could make sensible, you have not fulfilled the vow of the constitution: it is perhaps overthrown; but you will not gather the fruit of your perjury: you have not opposed by a formal act the victories which have been won in your name over liberty; but you will not gather the fruit of these unworthy triumphs; you are nothing any longer to that constitution which you have so shamefully violated, to that people whom you have betrayed in so cowardly a manner."

Coming to present circumstances, I do not think that if our armies are not yet wholly brought to completion it is through the malevolence of the king. I hope that he will soon increase our means of resistance by a useful employment of battalions so uselessly scattered in the interior of the kingdom; I hope also finally that the march of the Prussians through our national guards will not be as triumphal as they have the proud madness to imagine. I am not tormented by the fear of seeing realized the horrible suppositions that I have made; however, as the dangers with which we are

invested impose upon us the obligation to foresee everything; as the facts that I have supposed are not without striking resemblance to several of the king's discourses; as it is certain that the false friends surrounding him are sold to the conspirators of Coblenz; and as they are burning to ruin him in order to gather the fruit of the conspiracy for some one of their chiefs; as it is important to his personal safety, as well as to the tranquillity of the kingdom, that his conduct be no longer environed with suspicions; as only great frankness in his proceedings and in his explanations can prevent extreme measures and the bloody quarrels which they would give rise to, I should propose a message in which, after the interpellation which circumstances would determine to address to him, would be presented the truths that I have developed; it would be shown that the system of neutrality which they seem to be anxious to have him adopt against Coblenz and France would be arrant treason in the King of the French; that it would bring him no other glory than profound horror from the nation and signal scorn from the conspirators; that, having already chosen for France, he should loudly proclaim the fixed resolution to triumph or perish with her and the constitution.

But at the same time, convinced that harmony between the two powers would be sufficient to extinguish hatred, to bring together the divided citizens, to banish discord from the empire, double our forces against exterior enemies, secure liberty, and arrest the monarchy tottering on the declivity of the abyss, I should like the object of the message to be to maintain it or produce it and not to make it impossible; I should like to have displayed in it all the firmness, all the grandeur which belong to the National Assembly and to the majesty of the two powers; I should like it to show imposing dignity, not

irritating pride; the energy which moves, and not the bitterness which offends; in a word, I should like this message, to which I attach the highest importance, to be a signal for reunion, not a manifesto of war. After having shown that calmness which in danger is the characteristic of courage, if we are threatened by some catastrophe its instigators will be highly indicated by their conduct, and the opinion of the eighty-three departments will sanction in advance the precautions of the legislative body in order to assure the impotency of their efforts.

I pass to another provisory measure which I believe urgent to take; that is, a declaration that the country is in danger. You will see all the citizens rally at this cry of alarm, recruiting take on activity, the battalions of national guards completed, public spirit rekindled, the departments multiply their military exercises, the land covered with soldiers, and you will see repeated the wonders which covered several peoples of antiquity with immortal glory. What! why should the French be less great? Will they not have as sacred objects to defend? Are they not fighting for their fathers, their children, their wives, for their country and for liberty? Has the succession of centuries weakened in the human heart those sublime and tender affections, or enervated the courage which they inspire? No, surely not; they are eternal, like the nature from which they emanate; and in the French regenerated, in the French of '89, nature will not show herself degraded; but, I repeat, it is urgent to make this declaration. To feel secure much longer would prove the greatest of our dangers. Do you not see the smile of our interior enemies, announcing the approach of tyrants combined against you? Do you not foresee their guilty hopes and their criminal plots? Would you have no fear in regard to the character of ani-

mosity which our internal dissensions assume? Has the day not come to unite those who are in Rome and those who are on Mount Aventine?

Weary of the hardships of the Revolution or corrupted by the habit of grovelling around a castle and the insidious preachings of moderantism, will you wait until weak men become accustomed to speak of liberty without enthusiasm and slavery without horror? How does it happen that the constituted authorities are opposed to one another in their proceedings; that armed force forgets that its duty is to be obedient; that soldiers or generals undertake to mislead the legislative body and misguided citizens to direct, by the appearance of violence, the action of the chief of the executive power? Do they wish to establish a military government? That is perhaps the most imminent, the most terrible of our dangers. Murmurs are arising against the court: who shall dare to say they are unjust? It is suspected of perfidious plans; what facts can be quoted about it to scatter these suspicions? They speak of popular movements, of martial law; they try to familiarize the imagination with the blood of the people; the palace of the King of the French is suddenly changed to a stronghold; yet where are his enemies? Against whom are these cannons and these bayonets pointed? The defenders of the constitution have been repulsed by the ministry; the reins of the empire have remained floating at random at the moment when to hold them it needed as much vigor as patriotism. Everywhere discord is fomenting; fanaticism triumphing. Instead of taking a firm and patriotic direction to save it from torment, the government lets itself be carried away by the stormy winds which agitate it; its mobility inspires scorn in powerful foreigners; the audacity of those who vomit armies and swords against us chills the

good will of the peoples who make secret vows for the triumph of liberty.

The hostile cohorts are moving on, and perhaps in their insulting presumption they are already sharing our territory and crushing us with all the pride of a conquering and implacable tyrant. We are divided within; intrigue and perfidy are weaving treasons. The legislative body opposes the plots with rigorous but necessary decrees: an all-powerful hand tears them in pieces. In order to defend ourselves without, are our armies strong enough, disciplined enough, brought to sufficient perfection in those tactics which more than bravery decide the victory? Our fortunes, our lives, liberty are threatened; anarchy is approaching with all the scourges which disorganize political bodies. Despotism alone, lifting its long-humiliated head, enjoys our misery and awaits its prey to devour it. Call, it is time, call all the French to save the country; show them the abyss in all its immensity. Only by an extraordinary effort will they be able to clear it: it is for you to prepare them for it by an electrical movement which will give an impetus to the whole empire.

And here I will say to you that there will always exist for you a last means of bringing the hatred of despotism to its highest degree of fermentation, and of giving courage the exaltation which allows no uncertainty in our success.

This means is worthy of the august mission which you fill, of the generous people whom you represent; it can even gain some celebrity for that name and make you worthy to live in the memory of men: it will be to imitate the brave Spartans who sacrificed themselves at Thermopylæ; those venerable old men who, on leaving the Roman Senate, went to await death on their thresholds, the death which cruel con-

querors caused to march before them. No, you will not need to make vows to have avengers rise from your ashes. Ah! The day when your blood shall redden the earth, tyranny, its pride, its protectors, its palaces, its satellites, will vanish away forever before the national omnipotence. And if grief for not having made your country happy poisons your last moments you will at least carry away the consolation that your death will hasten the ruin of the people's oppressors and that your devotion will have saved liberty.

I propose to decree:

1. That the country is in danger;
2. That the ministers are responsible for whatever interior disturbances have religion for a pretext;
3. For all invasion of our territory, for want of precaution to replace in time the camp the formation of which you had decreed.

Then I propose a message to the king, an address to the French, to invite them to take the measures which circumstances make indispensable.

I propose in the fourth place that the 14th of July you should go in a body to the Federation to renew the oath of the 14th of January.

Finally I propose that a copy of the king's message, the address to the French, and the decree which you will make after this discussion, be carried into the departments by extraordinary couriers.

Above all I ask a prompt report on the conduct of General Lafayette.

CAMBON



PIERRE JOSEPH CAMBON, French revolutionist and notable financier, credited with having laid the foundation of the modern financial system of France, was born at Montpellier, France, June 17, 1754, and died near Brussels, Feb. 15, 1820. Elected in 1791 to the Legislative Assembly, and in 1792 to the National Convention, he became a member of the Committee of Public Safety and chief of its finances, on which he made several able reports. Opposed to the excesses of Robespierre, he voted for his downfall, and ere long withdrew to his native town, taking no office under the Empire. In 1816, on the return of the Bourbons, he was exiled, taking up his residence at Brussels, where he died four years later.

THE CRISIS OF 1793

FROM AN ADDRESS IN CONVENTION, JULY 11, 1793, REPORTING ON THE CONDITION OF THE REPUBLIC

THE Committee of Public Safety having charged me to apprise you of the actual condition of the Republic, and of the operations it has conducted, I shall try to acquit myself of the duty.

You will recollect that, at the period of the establishment of the committee, the Republic was betrayed; Dumouriez had disorganized the armies of the North and the Ardennes, and there remained but about two thousand five hundred men in the garrisons of that whole frontier. The strongholds lacked provisions and munitions to sustain a siege, and this general, after having delivered to the Austrians the stores and arms for a considerable sum, would also have delivered up the fortifications without defence.