

PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française, ou Journal des Assemblées Nationales depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1815; contenant la Narration des Evénemens, les Débats, &c. &c. (Parliamentary History of the French Revolution, or Journal of the National Assemblies from 1789 to 1815; containing a Narrative of the Occurrences; Debates of the Assemblies; Discussions in the chief Popular Societies, especially in that of the Jacobins; Records of the Commune of Paris; Sessions of the Revolutionary Tribunal; Reports of the leading Political Trials; Detail of the Annual Budgets; Picture of the Moral Movement, extracted from the Newspapers, Pamphlets, &c. of each Period: preceded by an Introduction on the History of France till the Convocation of the States-General). By P. J. B. Buchez and P. C. Roux. (Tomes 1^{er}—23^{me} et seq.—Paris, 1833—1836). 5
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It appears to be, if not stated in words, yet tacitly felt and understood everywhere, that the event of these modern ages is the French Revolution. A huge explosion bursting through all formulas and customs; confounding into wreck and chaos the ordered arrangements of earthly life; blotting out, one may say, the very firmament and skyey load-stars,—though only for a season. Once in the fifteen hundred years such a thing was ordained to come. To those who stood present in the actual midst of that smoke and thunder, the effect might well be too violent: blinding and deafening, into confused exasperation, al- 15
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most into madness. These on-lookers have played their part, were it with the printing-press or with the battle-cannon, and are departed: their work, such as it was, remaining behind them;—where the French Revolution also remains. And now, for us who have receded to the distance of some half-century, the explosion becomes a thing visible, surveyable: we see its flame and sulphur-smoke blend with the clear air (far *under* the stars); and hear its uproar as part of the sick noise of life,—loud indeed, yet embosomed too, as all noise is, in the infinite of silence. It is an event which can be looked on; which may still be execrated, still be celebrated and psalmodied; but which it were better now to begin understanding. Really there are innumerable reasons why we ought to know this same French Revolution as it was: of which reasons (apart altogether from that of ‘Philosophy teaching by Experience,’ and so forth), is there not the best summary in this one reason, that we so *wish* to know it? Considering the qualities of the matter, one may perhaps reasonably feel that since the time of the Crusades, or earlier, there is no chapter of history so well worth studying.

Stated or not, we say, this persuasion is tacitly admitted, and acted upon. In these days everywhere you find it one of the most pressing duties for the writing guild, to produce history on history of the French Revolution. In France it would almost seem as if the young author felt that he must make this his proof-shot, and evidence of craftsmanship: accordingly they do fire off *Histoires, Précis of Histoires, Annales, Fastes* (to say nothing of Historical Novels, *Gil Blases, Dantons, Barnaves, Grangeneuve*), in rapid succession, with or without effect. At all events it is curious to look upon: curious to contrast the picturing of the same fact by the men of this generation and position with the picturing of it by the men of the last. From Barruel and Fantin Desodoards to Thiers and Mignet there is a distance! Each individual takes up the Phenomenon according to his own point of vision, to the structure of his optic organs;—gives, consciously, some poor crotchetty picture of several things; unconsciously some picture of himself at least. And the Phenomenon, for its part, subsists there, all the while, unaltered; waiting to be pictured as often as you like, its entire meaning not to be compressed into any picture drawn by man.

Thiers's *History*, in ten volumes foolscap-octavo, contains, if we remember rightly, one reference; and that to a book, not to the page or chapter of a book. It has, for these last seven or eight years, a wide or even high reputation; which latter it is as far as possible from meriting. A superficial air of order, of clearness, calm candour, is spread over the work; but inwardly, it is waste, inorganic: no human head that honestly tries can conceive the French Revolution *so*. A critic of our acquaintance undertook, by way of bet, to find four errors per hour in Thiers: he won amply on the first trial or two.¹ And yet, readers (we must add) taking all this along with them, may peruse Thiers with comfort in certain circumstances, nay, even with profit; for he is a brisk man of his sort; and does tell you much, if you knew nothing. 5 10

Mignet's, again, is a much more honestly written book; yet also an eminently unsatisfactory one. His two volumes contain far more meditation and investigation in them than Thiers's ten: their degree of preferability therefore is very high; for it may be said: Call a book diffuse, and you call it in all senses bad; the writer could not find the right word to say, and so said many more or less wrong ones; did not hit the nail on the head, only smote and bungled about it and about it. Mignet's book has a compactness, a rigour, as of riveted rods of iron: this also is an image of what symmetry it has;—symmetry, if not of a living earth-born Tree, yet of a firm well-manufactured Gridiron. Without life, without colour or verdure: that is to say, Mignet is heartily and altogether a *prosaist*; you are too happy that he is not a *quack* as well! It is very mortifying also to study his philosophical reflections: how he jingles and rumbles a quantity of mere abstractions and dead logical formulas, and calls it Thinking;—rumbles and rumbles, till he judges there may be enough; then begins again narrating. As thus:— 15 20 25 30

'The Constitution of 1791 was made on such principles as had resulted from the ideas and the situation of France. It was the work of the middle

¹ Thiers says, 'Notables consented with eagerness' (Vol. I., p. 10.); whereas they properly did not consent at all; 'Parlement recalled on the 10th of September' (for the 15th); and then 'Séance Royale took place on the 20th of the same month' (19th of quite a different month, not the same, nor next to the same); 'D'Espréménil a young Counsellor' (of forty and odd); 'Duport a young man' (turned of sixty), &c. &c. 35

class, which chanced to be the strongest then; for, as is well known, whatever force has the lead will fashion the institutions according to its own aims. Now this force, when it belongs to one, is despotism; when to several, it is privilege; when to all, it is right: which latter state is the ultimatum of society, as it was its beginning. France had finally arrived thither, after passing through feudalism, which is the aristocratic institution; and then through absolutism, which is the monarchic one.

‘The work of the Constituent Assembly perished not so much by its own defects as by the assaults of factions. Standing between the aristocracy and the multitude, it was attacked by the former, and stormed and won by the latter. The multitude would never have become supreme, had not civil war and the coalition of foreign states rendered its intervention and help indispensable. To defend the country the multitude required to have the governing of it: thereupon (*alors*) it made *its* revolution, as the middle class had made its. The multitude too had its *Fourteenth of July*, which was the *Tenth of August*; its Constituent, which was the Convention; its Government, which was the Committee of *Salut Public*; but, as we shall see,’ &c.²

Or thus; for there is the like at the end of every chapter:—

‘But royalty had virtually fallen, on the Tenth of August; that day was the insurrection of the multitude against the middle class and constitutional throne, as the Fourteenth of July had been the insurrection of the middle classes against the privileged classes and an absolute throne. The Tenth of August witnessed the commencement of the dictatorial and arbitrary epoch of the Revolution. Circumstances becoming more and more difficult, there arose a vast war, which required increased energy; and this energy, unregulated inasmuch as it was popular, rendered the sway of the lower class an unquiet, oppressive, and cruel sway.’ ‘It was not any way possible that the *Bourgeoisie* (middle class), which had been strong enough to strike down the old government and the privileged classes, but which had taken to repose after this victory, could repulse the Emigration and united Europe. There was needed for that a new shock, a new faith; there was needed for that a new Class, numerous, ardent, not yet fatigued, and which loved its Tenth of August, as the Burgherhood loved its Fourteenth of,’ &c. &c.³

So uncommonly *lively* are these Abstractions (at bottom only occurrences, similitudes, days of the month, and such like), which rumbled here in the historical head! Abstractions really of the most

40 ² Chap. IV. vol. i. p. 271.

³ Chap. V. vol. i. p. 371.

lively, insurrectionary character; nay, which produce offspring, and indeed are oftenest parricidally devoured thereby:—such is the jingling and rumbling which calls itself Thinking. Nearly so, though with greater effect, might algebraical x 's go rumbling in some Pascal's or Babbage's mill. Just so, indeed, do the Kalmuck people pray: quantities of written prayers are put in some rotatory pipkin or calabash (hung on a tree, or going like the small barrel-churn of agricultural districts); this the devotee has only to whirl and churn; so long as he whirls, it is prayer; when he ceases whirling, the prayer is done. Alas! this is a sore error, very generally, among French thinkers of the present time. One ought to add that Mignet takes his place at the head of that brotherhood of his; that his little book, though abounding too in errors of detail, better deserves what place it has than any other of recent date. 5 10

The older Desodoardses, Barruels, Lacretelles, and such like, exist, but will hardly profit much. Toulangeon, a man of talent and integrity, is very vague; often incorrect for an eye witness: his military details used to be reckoned valuable; but, we suppose, Jomini has eclipsed them now. The Abbé Montgaillard has shrewdness, decision, insight; abounds in anecdotes, strange facts and reports of facts: his book being written in the form of Annals, is convenient for consulting. For the rest, he is acrid, exaggerated, occasionally altogether perverse; and, with his hastes and his hatreds, falls into the strangest hallucination;—as, for example, when he coolly records that 'Madame de Staël, Necker's daughter, was seen (*on vit*) distributing brandy to the *Gardes Françaises* in their barracks;' that 'D'Orléans Egalité had a pair of *man*-skin breeches,'—leather breeches, of human skin, such as they did prepare in the tannery of Meudon, but *too late* for D'Orléans! The history by *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, if the reader secure the original edition, is perhaps worth all the others, and offers (at least till 1792, after which it becomes convulsive, semi-fatuous, here and there, in the remaining dozen volumes) the best, correctest, most picturesque narrative yet published. It is very correct, very picturesque; wants only *fore-shortening*, shadow and compression; a work of decided merit: the authors of it, what is singular, appear not to be known. 15 20 25 30 35

Finally, our English histories do likewise abound: copious if not in facts, yet in reflections on facts. They will prove to the most incred-

ulous that this French Revolution was, as Chamfort said, no ‘rose-water Revolution;’ that the universal insurrectionary abrogation of law and custom was managed in a most unlawful, uncustomary manner. He who wishes to know how a solid *Custos rotulorum*, speculating over his port after dinner, interprets the phenomena of contemporary Universal History, may look in these books: he who does not wish that, need not look.

On the whole, after all these writings and printings, the weight of which would sink an Indiaman, there are, perhaps, only some three publications hitherto that can be considered as forwarding essentially a right knowledge of this matter. The *first* of these is the *Analyse du Moniteur*, complete expository Index, and Syllabus of the Moniteur Newspaper from 1789 to 1799; a work carrying its significance in its title;—provided it be faithfully executed; which it is well known to be. Along with this we may mention the series of Portraits, a hundred in number, published with the original edition of it: many of them understood to be accurate likenesses. The natural face of a man is often worth more than several biographies of him, as biographies are written. These hundred Portraits have been copied into a book called *Scènes de la Révolution*, which contains other pictures, of small value, and some not useless writing by Chamfort; and are often to be found in libraries. A republication of Vernet’s Caricatures⁴ would be a most acceptable service, but has not been thought of hitherto. The *second* work to be counted here is the *Choix des Rapports, Opinions, et Discours*, in some twenty volumes, with an excellent index: parliamentary speeches, reports, &c., are furnished in abundance; complete illustration of all that this Senatorial province (rather a wearisome one) can illustrate. *Thirdly*, we have to name the Collection of *Memoirs*, completed several years ago, in above a hundred volumes. Booksellers Baudouin, Editors Berville and Barrière, have done their utmost; adding notes, explanations, rectifications, with portraits also if you like: *Louvet*, *Riouffé*, and the two volumes of *Memoirs on the Prisons* are the most attractive pieces. This Baudouin Collection, therefore, joins itself to that of Petitot, as a natural sequel.

And now a *fourth* work, which follows in the train of these, and deserves to be reckoned along with them, is this *Histoire Parlemen-*

⁴ See *Mercier’s Nouveau Paris*, vol. iv. p. 254.

taire of Messieurs Buchez and Roux. The Authors are men of ability and repute: Buchez, if we mistake not, is Dr. Buchez, and practises medicine with acceptance; Roux is known as an essayist and journalist: they once listened a little to Saint-Simon, but it was before Saint-Simonism called itself ‘a religion,’ and vanished in Bedlam. We have understood there is a certain bibliomaniac military gentleman in Paris, who in the course of years has amassed the most astonishing collection of revolutionary ware: books, pamphlets, newspapers, even sheets and hand-bills, ephemeral printings and paintings, such as the day brought them forth, lie there without end.⁵ Into this warehouse, as indeed into all manner of other repositories, Messrs. Buchez and Roux have happily found access: the *Histoire Parlementaire* is the fruit of their labours there. A Number, two forming a Volume, is published every fortnight: we have the first Twenty-two Volumes before us, which bring down the narrative to January, 1793; there must be several other Volumes out, which we have not yet seen. Conceive a judicious compilation with such resources. Parliamentary Debates, in summary, or (where the occasion warrants it) given at large; this is by no means the most interesting part of the matter: we have excerpts, notices, hints of all imaginable sorts; of Newspapers, of Pamphlets, of Sectionary and Municipal Records, of the Jacobins’ Club, of Placard-journals, nay of Placards and Caricatures. No livelier emblem of the time, in its actual movement and tumult, could be presented. The Editors connect these fragments by expositions such as are needful; so that a reader coming unprepared to the work can still know what he is about. Their expositions, as we can testify, are handsomely done: but altogether apart from these, the excerpts themselves are the valuable thing. The scissars, in such a case, are independent of the pen. One of the most interesting English biographies we have is that long thin Folio on Oliver Cromwell, published some five-and-twenty years ago, where the editor has merely clipt out

⁵ It is generally known that a similar collection, perhaps still larger and more curious, lies buried in the British Museum here,—inaccessible for want of a proper catalogue. Some eighteen months ago, the respectable sub-librarian seemed to be working at such a thing: by respectful application to him, you could gain access to his room, and have the satisfaction of mounting on ladders, and reading the outside titles of his books, which was a great help. Otherwise you could not in many weeks ascertain so much as the table of contents of this repository; and, after days of weary waiting, dusty rummaging, and sickness of hope deferred, gave up the enterprize as a ‘game not worth the candle.’

from the contemporary newspapers whatsoever article, paragraph, or sentence he found to contain the name of Old Noll, and printed them in the order of their dates. It is surprising that the like has not been attempted in other cases. Had seven of the eight Translators of Faust, and seventy times seven of the four hundred four-score and ten Imaginative Authors, but thrown down the writing instrument, and turned to the old newspaper files judiciously with the cutting one!

We can testify, after not a little examination, that the Editors of the *Histoire Parlementaire* are men of fidelity, of diligence; that their accuracy in regard to facts, dates, and so forth, is far beyond the average. Of course they have their own opinions, prepossessions even; but these are honest prepossessions, which they do not hide; which one can estimate the force of, allow for the result of. Wilful falsification, did the possibility of it lie in their character, is otherwise out of the question. But, indeed, our Editors are men of earnestness, of strict principle; of a faith, were it only in the republican Tricolor. Their democratic faith, truly, is palpable, thoroughgoing; as it has a right to be, in these days, since it likes. The thing you have to praise, however, is that it is a quiet faith, never an hysterical one; never expresses itself otherwise than with a becoming calmness, especially with a becoming brevity. The hoarse deep croak of Marat, the brilliant sharp-cutting gaiety of Desmoulins, the dull bluster of Prudhomme, the cackling garrulity of Brissot, all is welcomed with a cold gravity and brevity; all is illustrative, if not of one thing then of another. Nor are the royalist Royous, Suleaus, Peltiers, forgotten; *Acts of the Apostles*, *King's Friend*, nor *Crowing of the Cock*: these, indeed, are more sparingly administered; but at the right time, as is promised, we shall have more. In a word, it may be said of this *Histoire Parlementaire*, that the wide promise held out in its title page is really, in some respectable measure, fulfilled. With a fit Index to wind it up (which Index ought to be not good only but excellent, so much depends on it here), this Work bids fair to be one of the most important yet published on the History of the Revolution. No library, that professes to have a collection in this sort, can dispense with it.

A *Histoire Parlementaire* is precisely the house, or say, rather, the unbuilt city, of which the single brick *can* form a specimen. In so rich a variety the only difficulty is where to choose. We have scenes of

tragedy, of comedy, of farce, of farce-tragedy oftenest of all; there is eloquence, gravity; there is bluster, bombast, and absurdity: scenes tender, scenes barbarous, spirit-stirring and then flatly wearisome: a thing waste, incoherent, wild to look upon; but great with the greatness of reality; for the thing exhibited is no vision, but a fact. Let us, as the first excerpt, give this tragedy of old Foulon, which all the world has heard of, perhaps not very accurately. Foulon's life-drama, with its hasty cruel sayings and mean doings, with its thousandfold intrigues, and 'the people eating grass if they like,' ends in this miserable manner. It is the Editors themselves who speak; compiling from various sources:—

"Towards five in the morning, (Paris, 22nd July, 1789), M. Foulon was brought in; he had been arrested at Vitry, near Fontainebleau, by the peasants of the place. Doubtless this man thought himself very guilty towards the people' (say, very hateful); 'for he had spread abroad a report of his death; and had even buried one of his servants, who happened to die then, under his own name. He had afterwards hidden himself in an estate of M. de Sartines'; where he was detected and seized.

"M. Foulon was taken to the Hôtel de Ville, where they made him wait. Towards nine o'clock the assembled Committee had decided that he should be sent to the Abbaye prison. M. de Lafayette was sent for, that he might execute this order; he was abroad over the Districts: he could not be found. During this time a crowd collected in the square; and required to see Foulon. It was noon; M. Bailly came down; the people listened to him; but still persisted. In the end they penetrated into the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville; would see Foulon, "whom," say they, "you are wanting to smuggle off from justice." Foulon was presented to them. Then began this remarkable dialogue. M. de la Poize, an Elector: "Messieurs, every guilty person should be judged."—"Yes, judged directly, and then hanged."—M. Osselin: "To judge, one must have judges; let us send M. Foulon to the tribunals."—"No, no," replied the people, "judge him just now."—"Since you will not have the common judges," said M. Osselin, "it is indispensable to appoint others."—"Well, judge him yourselves."—"We have no right either to judge or to create judges; do you name them."—"Well," cried the people, "M. le Curé of Saint-Etienne then, and M. le Curé of Saint-André."—Osselin: "Two judges are not enough; there needs seven." Thereupon the people named Messrs. Quatremère, Varangue, &c. "Here are seven judges indeed," said Osselin, "but we still want a clerk."—"Be you clerk."—"A king's Attorney."—"Let it be M. Duveyrier."—"Of what crime is M. Foulon accused?"

asked Duveyrier.—“He wished to harass the people; he said he would make them eat grass; he was in the plot; he was for national bankruptcy; he bought up corn.” The two curates then rose, and declared that they refused to judge; the laws of the church not permitting them. “They are right,” said some; 5
 “they are cozening us,” said others, “and the prisoner all the while is making his escape.” At these words there rose a frightful tumult in the Hall. “Messieurs,” said an Elector, “name four of yourselves to guard him.” Four men accordingly were chosen; sent into the neighbouring apartment, where Foulon was. “But will you judge then?” cried the crowd.—“Messieurs, you see 10
 there are two judges wanting.”—“We name M. Bailly and M. Lafayette.”—“But M. Lafayette is absent; one must either wait for him, or name some other.”—“Well, then, name directly, and do it yourself.”

‘At length the Electors agreed to proceed to judgment; Foulon was again brought in. The foremost part of the crowd joined hands, and formed a chain 15
 several ranks deep, in the middle of which he was received. At this moment M. Lafayette came in; went and took his place at the board among the Electors; and then addressed to the people a discourse, of which the *Ami du Roi* and the Records of the Town-hall, the two authorities we borrow from here, give different reports.’

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 Lafayette’s speech, according to both versions, is to the effect that Foulon is guilty; but that he doubtless has accomplices; that he must be taken to the Abbaye prison, and investigated there. “Yes, yes, to prison! Off with him, off!” cried the crowd. The *Deux Amis* add 25
 another not insignificant circumstance, that poor Foulon himself, hearing this conclusion of Lafayette’s, clapped hands; whereupon the crowd said, “See! they are both in a story!” Our Editors continue and conclude:—

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 ‘At this moment there rose a great clamour in the square. “It is the Palais Royal coming,” said one; “It is the Faubourg Saint-Antoine,” said another. Then a well-dressed person (*homme bien mis*) advanced towards the board, and said, “*Vous vous moquez!* What is the use of judging a man who has been 35
 judged these thirty years?” At this word, Foulon was clutched; hurled out to the square; and finally tied to the fatal rope, which hung from the *Lanterne* at the corner of the Rue de la Vannerie. The rope was afterwards cut; the head was put on a pike, and paraded,’—with ‘grass’ in the mouth of it, they might have added!⁶

⁶ Vol. ii. p. 148.

The *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, Camille Desmoulins's newspaper furnishes numerous extracts, in the earlier Volumes; always of a remarkable kind. This *Procureur Général de la Lanterne* has a place of his own in the history of the Revolution; there are not many notabler persons in it than he. A light, harmless creature, as he says of himself; 'a man born to write verses,' but whom Destiny directed to overthrow Bastilles, and go to the guillotine for doing that. How such a man will comport himself in a French Revolution, as he from time to time turns up there, is worth seeing. Of loose, headlong character; a man stuttering in speech; stuttering, infirm, in conduct too, till one huge idea laid hold of him: a man for whom Art, Fortune, or himself, would never do much, but to whom Nature had been very kind! One meets him always with a sort of forgiveness, almost of underhand love, as for a prodigal son. He has good gifts, and even acquirements: elegant law-scholarship, quick sense, the freest joyful heart: a fellow of endless wit, clearness, soft lambent brilliancy; on any subject you can listen to him, if without approving, yet without yawning. As a writer, in fact, there is nothing French that we have heard of superior or equal to him for these fifty years. Probably some French editor, some day or other, will *sift* that journalistic rubbish, and produce out of it, in small neat compass, a *Life and Remains* of this poor Camille. We pick up three light fractions, illustrative of him and of the things he moved in; they relate to the famous Fifth of October (1789), when the women rose in insurrection. The Palais Royal and Marquis Saint-Huruge have been busy on the King's *veto*, and Lally Tollendal's proposal of an upper house:—

'Was the Palais Royal so far wrong,' says Camille, 'to cry out against such things? I know that the Palais Royal Promenade is strangely miscellaneous; that pickpockets frequently employ the *liberty of the press* there, and many a zealous patriot has lost his handkerchief in the fire of debate. But for all that I must bear honourable testimony to the promenaders in this Lyceum and Stoa. The Palais Royal Garden is the focus of patriotism; there do the chosen patriots rendezvous, who have left their hearths and their provinces to witness this magnificent spectacle of the Revolution of 1789, and not to witness without aiding in it. They are Frenchmen; they have an interest in the Constitution, and a right to concur in it. How many Parisians too, instead of going to their Districts, find it shorter to come at once to the Palais Royal. Here you have not to ask a President if you may speak, and wait two hours

till your turn comes. You propose your motion; if it finds supporters, they set you on a chair: if you are applauded, you proceed to the redaction: if you are hissed, you go your ways. It is very much the mode the Romans followed; their Forum and our Palais Royal resemble one another.⁷

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Then a few days farther on,—the celebrated military dinner at Versailles, with the white cockades, black cockades, and ‘*O Richard! O mon Roi!*’ having been transacted:—

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‘*Paris, Sunday, 4th October.* The King’s Wife had been so gratified with it, that this *brotherly repast* of Thursday must needs be repeated. It was so on the Saturday, and with aggravations. Our patience was worn out: you may suppose whatever patriot observers there were at Versailles hastened to Paris with the news, or at least sent off dispatches containing them. That same day (Saturday evening) all Paris set itself astir. It was a lady, first, who, seeing that her husband was not listened to at his District, came to the bar of the Café de Foi, to denounce the anti-national cockades. M. Marat flies to Versailles; returns like lightning; makes a noise like the four blasts of doom, crying to us—Awake, ye dead! Danton, on his side, sounds the alarm in the *Cordeliers*. On Sunday this immortal Cordeliers District posts its manifesto; and that very day they would have gone to Versailles, had not M. Crèvecoeur, their commandant, stood in the way. People seek out their arms however; sally out to the streets in chase of anti-national cockades. The law of reprisals is in force; these cockades are torn off, trampled under foot, with menace of the *Lanterne* in case of relapse. A military gentleman, picking up his cockade, is for fastening it on again; a hundred canes start into the air, saying *Veto*. The whole Sunday passes in hunting down the white and the black cockades; in holding council at the Palais Royal, over the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, at the end of Bridges, on the Quais. At the doors of the coffee-houses there arise free conferences between the Upper House, of the coats that are within, and the Lower House, of jackets and wool-caps, assembled *extra muros*. It is agreed upon that the audacity of the aristocrats increases rapidly; that Madame Villepatour and the Queen’s women are distributing enormous white cockades to all comers in the Ciel-de-Bœuf; that M. Lecointre, having refused to take one from their hands, has all but been assassinated. It is agreed upon that we have not a moment to lose; that the boat which used to bring us flour from Corbeil, morning and evening, now comes only once in two days:—do they plan to make their attack at the moment when they have kept us for eight-and-forty hours in a fasting state? It is agreed upon,’ &c.⁸

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⁷ Vol. ii. p. 414.

⁸ Vol. iii. p. 63.

—We hasten to the catastrophe, which arrives on the morrow. It is related elsewhere, in another leading article:—

‘At break of day the women rush towards the Hôtel de Ville. All the way, they recruit fresh hands, among their own sex, to march with them; as sailors are recruited at London: there is an active press of women. The Quai de la Ferraille is covered with female crimps. The robust kitchenmaid, the slim mantua-maker, all must go to swell the phalanx; the ancient devotee, tripping to mass in the dawn, sees herself for the first time carried off, and shrieks *Help!* whilst more than one of the younger sort secretly is not so sorry at going without mother or mistress to Versailles to pay her respects to the august Assembly. At the same time, for the accuracy of this narrative, I must remark that these women, at least the battalion of them which encamped that night in the Assembly Hall, and had marched under the flag of M. Maillard, had among themselves a Presidentess and Staff; and that every woman, on being borrowed from her mother or husband, was presented to the Presidentess or some of her aides-de-camp, who engaged to watch over her morality, and insure her honour for this day.

‘Once arrived on the Place de Grève, these women piously begin letting down the *Lanterne*; as in great calamities, you let down the shrine of Saint Geneviève. Next they are for mounting into the Hôtel de Ville. The Commandant had been forewarned of this movement: he knew that all insurrections have begun by women, whose maternal bosom the bayonet of the satellites of despotism respects. Four thousand soldiers presented a front bristling with bayonets; kept them back from the step: but behind these women there rose and grew every moment a nucleus of men, armed with pikes, axes, bills: blood is about to flow on the place; the presence of these Sabine-women hindered it. The National Guard, which is not purely a machine, as the Minister of War would have the soldier be, makes use of its reason. It discerns that these women, now for Versailles, are going to the root of the mischief. The four thousand Guards, already getting saluted with stones, think it reasonablest to open a passage; and, like waters through a broken dike, the floods of the multitude inundate the Hôtel de Ville.

‘It is a picture interesting to paint, and one of the greatest in the Revolution, this same army of ten thousand Judiths setting forth to cut off the head of Holophernes; forcing the Hôtel de Ville; arming themselves with whatever they can lay hands on; some tying ropes to the cannon-trains, arresting carts, loading them with artillery, with powder and balls for the Versailles National Guard, which is left without ammunition; others driving

on the horses, or seated on cannon, holding the redoubtable match; seeking for their generalissimo, not aristocrats with epaulettes, but Conquerors of the Bastille!⁹

5 So far Camille on veto, scarcity, and the Insurrection of Women, in the end of 1789. As it is not fit that all our scenes should be of tragedy or low-tragedy, the reader will perhaps consent now to a touch of the moral-sublime. Let him enter the Hall of the Jacobins with us. All men have heard of the Jacobins' Club; but not all would
10 think of looking for comedy or the moral-sublime there. Nevertheless so it is. Ah! the sublime of the Jacobins was not always of the *blue-light* pandemonial sort; far otherwise once! We will give this passage from the *Journal of the Jacobins' Debates*; not as one of the best, but as one of the pleasantest for English readers. Fancy that high Hall,
15 with its seats for fifteen hundred, 'rising in amphitheatre to the cornice of the dome;' its Tribune elevated to mid-air; Galleries and Ladies' Gallery full; President seated; shrill *Huissiers* perambulating with their rods and liveries, sounding forth "*Silence! Silence!*" Consider that it is the 18th of December, 1791 (free monarchic constitution solemnly
20 accepted six weeks ago); and read:

 'The confluence of strangers was so great that besides the new gallery erected for them, the old ones were quite full, as well as those on the opposite side of the Hall; and nevertheless a great multitude of citizens who could
25 not find room or admittance on any terms.

 'The reading of the announcements and select correspondence was scarcely begun, when the Hall resounded with applauses at the entrance of the three united Flags, of the English, the American and French Nation, which were to be placed in the Hall; as the Society of *Friends of the Revolution* in
30 London had placed them in theirs.

 'Cries of "Liberty forever! The Nation forever! The three Free Peoples of the Universe forever (*Vivent les trois peuples libres de l'univers!*)!" are re-echoed with enthusiasm by the galleries and visitors: the expression, no less sincere than lively, of that ardour, of that love for Equality and Brotherhood, which
35 Nature has engraved in the hearts of all men; and which nothing but the continued efforts of despots, in all classes, have managed to efface more or less.

⁹ Vol. iii. p. 110.

‘A Deputation of Ladies is introduced; Ladies accustomed to honour the galleries with their presence: they had solicited permission to offer a pledge of their enthusiasm for Liberty to the Constitutional Whig, who came lately to the National Assembly with the congratulation of this class of free Englishmen.

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‘The Deputation enters, amid the applauses of the meeting: a young Citizeness carries in her hand the Gift of these Ladies, lays it on the President’s table, while the Lady-Deputies mount to the Tribune, to pronounce the following discourse.

‘*The Lady-speaker.* We are not Roman Dames; we bring no jewels; but a tribute of gratitude for the feelings you have inspired us with. A Constitutional Whig (*Wigh*), a Brother, an Englishman, formed, few days ago, the object of one of your sweetest unitings (*étreintes*). What a charm had that picture! Souls of sensibility were struck with it; our hearts are yet full of emotion (*Applause*). This day you afford to that Brother, and to yourselves, a new enjoyment: you suspend to the dome of our temple three Flags, American, English, French.

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‘*From all sides.* The Three Nations, *Vivent les trois nations! Vive la Liberté!*

‘*Lady-speaker.* The union of the Three free Peoples is to be cemented: forbid not us also, Messieurs, to contribute towards that. Your pure feelings prescribe it for us as a duty. Messieurs, accept a garland.—And you, English Brother, accept another from the hands of innocence: it is the work of sisterhood; friendship gives it you. Receive also, O good Patriot, in the name of the French *Citoyennes* who are here, this Ark of Alliance, which we have brought for our brethren the Constitutional Whigs (*Wighs*): within it are enclosed the Map of France, divided into eighty-three departments; the Cap of Liberty (*Applause*); the Book of the French Constitution; a Civic Crown; some Ears of Wheat (*Applause*); three Flags; a National Cockade; and these words in the two languages, *To live free or die*.

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‘*The whole Hall.* To live free or die!

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‘*Lady-speaker.* Let this immortal homage done to Liberty be, for the English and the French, a sacred pledge of their union. Forget not to tell our brothers how you have received it. Let it be deposited with the brotherliest ceremonial! Invite all Englishmen to participate in this family act. Let it be precious to them as Nature herself.—Tell your wives, repeat to your children, that innocent maids, faithful spouses, tender mothers, after having done their household duties, and contributed to make their families and husbands happy, came and made this offering to their Country. Let one cry of gladness peal over Europe; let it roll across the waters to America. Hark! Amid the echoes, Philadelphia and the Far West repeat like us, *Liberty forever!*

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‘*The whole Hall.* Liberty forever!

‘*Lady-speaker*. Tyrants! your enemies declare themselves. Nations will no longer battle with each other; straitly united, they will possess all Languages, and make of them but one Language. Strong in their Freedom they will be inseparable forever.—

5 ‘Universal applauses: the Hall resounds long with cries, repeated by the Galleries and the Society, of *Vive la Nation, vive la Liberté!* The Three Nations! The Patriot Women!

10 ‘*M. de la Source, Vice-president*. Since Nature has willed that the world should owe to you its sweetest moments, this enthusiasm of yours with which you fill all hearts shall never be lost, never forgotten in the flight of ages: it stands engraved on our hearts in indelible characters.—(*Then turning to the Deputies of the Whigs.*) As for you, Brothers, tell your countrymen what we are; tell them that in France the women too can love their country and shew themselves worthy of Liberty; tell them that the union, of which you see the emblems, shall be imperishable as the Free Peoples are; that we have hence-

15 forth only one sort of bonds, the bonds which unite us to the Free, and that these shall be eternal as virtue.

20 ‘*The Whig Deputy*. Mesdames and M. le Président, I really am not prepared to make a speech’ (how true to the “leg-of-mutton or postprandial style!”)—‘for really I did not expect such a reception; but I hope you will excuse me. I have written to England, I have described the reception I met with here: I have had answers, but not from our Society, because that requires time; the Society must meet first and then answer.—I wish it were in my power’ (postprandially!) ‘to express what my heart feels. This feeling

25 towards you is not the work of a day, but indeed that of a year(!), for in August last, our Society wrote to M. Pétion, who, however, assures me that the Letter never reached him; and therefore—’¹⁰

30 —and so on, in the postprandial style; bringing down matters to the solid business-level again. Few readers, it is to be expected, have witnessed on the unelastic stage of mere Earth anything so dramatic as this.

35 We terminate with a scene of a very different complexion, though but some few months farther on, that is to say, in *September 1792!* *Félémbesi* (anagram for *Méhée Fils*), in his *Vérité toute entière*, a Pamphlet really more veracious than most, thus testifies, after a good deal of preambing:—

¹⁰ Tome xii. 379.

‘I was going to my post about half past two,’ (Sunday, the 2nd of September, tocsins all ringing, and Brunswick just at hand); ‘I was passing along the Rue Dauphine; suddenly I hear hisses. I look, I observe four hackney-coaches, coming in a train, escorted by Fédérés of the Departments.

‘Each of these coaches contained four persons: they were individuals’ (priests) ‘arrested in the preceding domiciliary visits. Billaud-Varennes, Procureur-Substitute of the Commune, had just been interrogating them at the Hôtel de Ville; and now they were proceeding towards the Abbaye, to be provisionally detained there. A crowd is gathering; the cries and hisses redouble: one of the prisoners, doubtless out of his senses, takes fire at these murmurs, puts his arm over the coach-door, gives one of the Fédérés a stroke over the head with his cane. The Fédéré, in a rage, draws his sabre, springs on the carriage-steps, and plunges it thrice over into the heart of his aggressor. I saw the blood come out in great jets. “Kill every one of them; they are scoundrels, aristocrats!” cry the people. The Fédérés all draw their sabres, and instantly kill the three companions of the one who had just perished. I saw, at this moment, a young man in a white nightgown stretch himself out of that same carriage: his countenance, expressive, but pale and worn, indicated that he was very sick; he had gathered his staggering strength, and, though already wounded, was crying still, “*Grace, grace, Mercy, pardon!*” but in vain—a mortal stroke united him to the lot of the others.

‘This coach, which was the hindmost, now held nothing but corpses; it had not stopped during the carnage, which lasted about the space of two minutes. The crowd increases, *crescit eundo*; the yells redouble. The coaches are at the Abbaye. The corpses are hurled into the court; the twelve living prisoners dismount to enter the committee-room. Two are sacrificed on alighting; ten succeed in entering. The committee had not had time to put the slightest question, when a multitude, armed with pikes, sabres, swords, and bayonets, dashes in; seizes the accused, and kills them. One prisoner, already much wounded, kept hanging by the skirts of a Committee-member, and still struggled against death.

‘Three yet remained; one of whom was the Abbé Sicard, Teacher of the Deaf and Dumb. The sabres were already over his head, when Monnot, the watchmaker, flung himself before them, crying, “Kill me rather, and not this man, who is useful to our country!” These words, uttered with the fire and impetuosity of a generous soul, suspended death. Profiting by this moment of calm, Abbé Sicard and the other two were got conveyed into the back part of the room.’

Abbé Sicard, as is well known, survived; and the narrative which he also published exists,—sufficient to prove, among other things,

that 'Félémsesi' had but two eyes, and his own share of sagacity and heart; that he has *mis*-seen, miscounted, and, knowingly or unknowingly, mistated not a little,—as one poor man, in these circumstances, might. Félémsesi continues,—we only inverting his arrangement somewhat:—

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'Twelve scoundrels, presided by Maillard, with whom they had probably combined this project beforehand, find themselves "by chance" among the crowd; and now, being well-known one to another, they unite themselves "in the name of the sovereign people," whether it were of their own private audacity, or that they had secretly received superior orders. They lay hold of the prison registers, and turn them over; the turnkeys fall a-trembling; the jailor's wife and the jailor faint; the prison is surrounded by furious men; there is shouting, clamouring: the door is assaulted, like to be forced; when one of the Committee-members presents himself at the outer grate, and begs audience: his signs obtain a moment of silence; the doors open, he advances, gets a chair, mounts on it, and speaks: "Comrades, friends," said he, "you are good patriots; your resentment is just. Open war to the enemies of the common good; neither truce nor mercy; it is a war to the death! I feel like you that they must all perish; and yet, if you are good citizens, you must love justice. There is not one of you but would shudder at the notion of shedding innocent blood."—"Yes, yes!" reply the people.—"Well, then, I ask of you if, without inquiry or investigation, you fling yourselves like mad tigers on your fellow-men——?" Here the speaker is interrupted by one of the crowd, who, with a bloody sabre in his hand, his eyes glancing with rage, cleaves the press, and refutes him in these terms: "Tell us, Monsieur le Citoyen, explain to us then, would the *sacrés gueux* of Prussians and Austrians, if they were at Paris, investigate for the guilty? Would they not cut to the right and left, as the Swiss on the Tenth of August did? Well! I am no speaker, I cannot stuff the ears of any one: but I tell you I have a wife and five children, whom I leave with my Section here while I go and fight the enemy; and it is not my bargain that the villains in this Prison, whom other villains outside will open the door to, shall go and kill my wife and children in the meanwhile! I have three boys, who I hope will be usefuller to their country one day than these rascals you want to save. Any way you have but to send them out; we will give them arms, and fight them number for number. Die here, or die on the frontiers, I am sure enough to be killed by these villains, one day; but I mean to sell them my life; and, be it I, be it others, the Prison shall be purged of these *sacrés gueux là*."—"He is right!" responds the general cry.'—And so the frightful 'purgation' proceeds.

‘At five in the afternoon, Billaud-Varennes, Procureur-Substitut, arrives; he had on his sash, and the small puce coat and black wig we are used to see on him: walking over carcasses, he makes a short harangue to the people, and ends thus: “People, thou art sacrificing thy enemies; thou art in thy duty.” This cannibal speech lends them new animation. The killers blaze up, cry louder than ever for new victims:—how to staunch this new thirst of blood? A voice speaks from beside Billaud; it was Maillard’s voice: “There is nothing more to do here; let us to the *Carmes!*” They run thither:—in five minutes more I saw them trailing corpses by the heels. A killer (I cannot say a man), in very coarse clothes, had, as it would seem, been specially commissioned to despatch the Abbé Lenfant; for, apprehensive lest the prey might be missed, he takes water, flings it on the corpses, washes their blood-smearred faces, turns them over, and seems at last to ascertain that the Abbé Lenfant is among them.’¹¹

This is the September Massacre, the last Scene we can give as a specimen. Thus, in these curious records of the *Histoire Parlementaire*, as in some Ezekiel Vision become real, does Scene after Scene disclose itself, now in rose-light, now in sulphurous black, and grow ever more fitful, dreamlike,—till the Vendémiaire Scene come, and Napoleon blow forth his grape-shot, and Sansculottism be no more!

Touching the political and metaphysical speculations of our two Editors, we shall say little. They are of the sort we lamented in Mignet, and generally in Frenchmen of this day—a jingling of formulas;—unfruitful as that Kalmuck prayer! Perhaps the strangest-looking particular doctrine we have noticed is this: that the French Revolution was at bottom an attempt to realise Christianity, and fairly put it in action, in our world. For eighteen centuries (it is not denied) men had been doing more or less that way; but they set their shoulder rightly to the wheel, and gave a dead-lift, for the first time *then*. Good M. Roux! And yet the good Roux does mean something by this; and even something true. But a marginal annotator has written on our copy—‘For the love of Heaven, Messieurs, *humez vos formules;*’ make away with your formulas; take off your faceted spectacles; open your eyes a little and look! There is, indeed, here and there, considerable rumbling of the rotatory calabash, which rattles and

¹¹ Vol. xviii. p. 169.

rumbles, concerning Progress of the Species, *Doctrine du Progrès*,
Exploitations, *le Christ*, *le Verbe*, and what not; written in a vein of
deep, even of intense seriousness; but profitable, one would think, to
no man or woman. In this style M. Roux (for it is he, we understand)
5 painfully composes a Preface to each Volume, and has even given a
whole introductory History of France: we read some seven or eight
of his first Prefaces, hoping always to get some nourishment; but
seldom or never cut him open now. Fighting, in that way, behind
cover, he is comparatively harmless; merely wasting you so many
10 pence per number: happily the space he takes is small. Whoever wants
to form for himself an image of the actual state of French Meditation,
and under what surprising shackles a French thinking man of these
days finds himself gyved, and mechanised, and reduced to the verge
of *zero*, may open M. Roux's Prefaces, and see it, as in an expressive
15 summary.

We wish our two French friends all speed in their business; and do
again honestly recommend this *Histoire Parlementaire* to any and all
of our English friends who take interest in that subject.