

menfolk. But New Jersey admitted a few women to vote on a property qualification. Another point of great interest is the almost universal decision to have two governing assemblies, confirming or checking each other, on the model of the Lords and Commons of Britain. Only Pennsylvania had a single representative chamber, and that was felt to be a very dangerous and ultra-democratic state of affairs. Apart from the argument that legislation should be slow as well as sure, it is difficult to establish any necessity for this "bi-cameral" arrangement. It seems to have been a fashion with constitution planners in the eighteenth century rather than a reasonable imperative. The British division was an old one: the Lords, the original parliament, was an assembly of "notables," the leading men of the kingdom; the House of Commons came in as a new factor, as the elected spokesmen of the burghers and the small landed men. It was a little too hastily assumed in the eighteenth century that the commonalty would be given to wild impulses and would need checking; opinion was for democracy, but for democracy with powerful brakes always on, whether it was going up hill or down. About all the upper houses there was, therefore, a flavour of selectness; they were elected on a more limited franchise. This idea of making an upper chamber which shall be a stronghold for the substantial man does not appeal to modern thinkers so strongly as it did to the men of the eighteenth century, but the bi-cameral idea in another form still has its advocates. They suggest that a community may with advantage consider its affairs from two points of view—through the eyes of a body elected to represent trades, industries, professions, public services, and the like, a body representing *function*, and through the eyes of a second body elected by localities to represent *communities*. For the members of the former a man would vote by his calling, for the latter by his district of residence. They point out that the British House of Lords is in effect a body representing function, in which the land, the law, and the church are no doubt disproportionately represented, but in which industrialism, finance, the great public services, art, science, and medicine also find places; and that the British House of Commons is purely geographical in its reference. It has even been suggested in Britain that there should be "labour peers," selected from among the leaders of the great industrial trade unions. But these are speculations beyond our present scope.

The Central Government of the United States was at first a very feeble body, a Congress of representatives of the thirteen

governments, held together by certain Articles of Confederation. This Congress was little more than a conference of sovereign representatives; it had no control, for instance, over the foreign trade of each state, it could not coin money nor levy taxes by its own authority. When John Adams, the first minister from the United States to England, went to discuss a commercial treaty with the British foreign secretary, he was met by a request for thirteen representatives, one from each of the states concerned. He had to confess his inadequacy to make binding arrangements. The British presently began dealing with each state separately over the head of the Congress, and they retained possession of a number of posts in the American territory about the Great Lakes because of the inability of Congress to hold these regions effectually. In another urgent matter Congress proved equally feeble. To the west of the thirteen states stretched limitless lands into which settlers were now pushing in ever-increasing numbers. Each of the states had indefinable claims to expansion westward. It was evident to every clear-sighted man that the jostling of these claims must lead in the long run to war, unless the Central Government could take on their apportionment. The feebleness of the Central Government, its lack of concentration, became so much of an inconvenience and so manifest a danger that there was some secret discussion of a monarchy, and Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts, the president of Congress, caused Prince Henry of Prussia, the brother of Frederick the Great, to be approached on the subject. Finally a constitutional convention was called in 1787 at Philadelphia, and there it was that the present constitution of the United States was on its broad lines hammered out. A great change of spirit had gone on during the intervening years, a widespread realization of the need of unity.

When the Articles of Confederation were drawn up, men had thought of the people of Virginia, the people of Massachusetts, the people of Rhode Island, and the like; but now there appears a new conception, "the people of the United States." The new government, with the executive President, the senators, congressmen, and the Supreme Court, that was now created, was declared to be the government of "the people of the United States"; it was a synthesis and not a mere assembly. It said "we the people," and not "we the states," as Lee of Virginia bitterly complained. It was to be a "federal" and not a confederate government.

State by state the new constitution was ratified, and in the spring of 1788 the first Congress upon the new lines assembled

at New York, under the presidency of George Washington, who had been the national commander-in-chief throughout the War of Independence. The constitution then underwent considerable revision, and Washington upon the Potomac was built as the Federal capital.

§ 6

Primitive Features of the United States Constitution.

In an earlier chapter we have described the Roman republic, and its mixture of modern features with dark superstition and primordial savagery, as the Neanderthal anticipation of the modern democratic state. A time may come when people will regard the contrivances and machinery of the American constitution as the political equivalents of the implements and contrivances of Neolithic man. They have served their purpose well, and under their protection the people of the States have grown into one of the greatest, most powerful and most civilized communities that the world has yet seen; but there is no reason in that for regarding the American constitution as a thing more final and inalterable than the pattern of elevated railway that overshadowed many New York thoroughfares, or the excellent and homely type of house architecture that still prevails in Philadelphia. These things also have served a purpose well, they have their faults, and they can be improved. Our political contrivances, just as much as our domestic and mechanical contrivances need to undergo constant revision as knowledge and understanding grow.

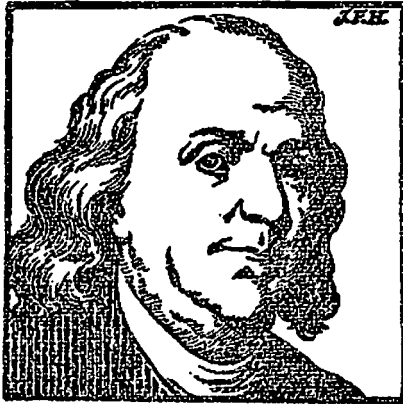
Since the American constitution was planned, our conception of history and our knowledge of collective psychology have undergone very considerable development. We are beginning to see many things in the problem of government to which the men of the eighteenth century were blind; and, courageous as their constructive disposition was in relation to whatever political creation had gone before, it fell far short of the boldness which we in these days realize to be needful if this great human problem of establishing a civilized community of will in the earth is to be solved. They took many things for granted that now we know need to be made the subject of the most exacting scientific study and the most careful adjustment. They thought it was only necessary to set up schools and colleges, with a grant of land for maintenance, and that they might then be left to themselves. But education is not a weed that will grow lustily in any soil, it is a necessary and delicate

crop that may easily wilt and degenerate. We learn nowadays that the under-development of universities and educational machinery is like some under-development of the brain and nerves, which hampers the whole growth of the social body. By European standards, by the standard of any state that has existed hitherto, the level of the common education of America is high; but by the standard of what it might be, America is an uneducated country. And those fathers of America thought also that they had but to leave the Press free, and everyone would live in the light. They did not realize that a free Press could develop a sort of constitutional venality due to its relations with advertisers, and that large newspaper proprietors could become buccaneers of opinion and insensate wreckers of good beginnings. And, finally, the makers of America had no knowledge of the complexities of vote manipulation. The whole science of elections was beyond their ken, they knew nothing of the need of the transferable vote to prevent the "working" of elections by specialized organizations, and the crude and rigid methods they adopted left their political system the certain prey of the great party machines that have robbed American democracy of half its freedom and most of its political soul. Politics became a trade, and a very base trade; decent and able men, after the first great period, drifted out of politics and attended to "business," and the sense of the State declined. Private enterprise ruled in many matters of common concern, because political corruption made collective enterprise impossible.

Yet the defects of the great political system created by the Americans of the revolutionary period did not appear at once. For several generations the history of the United States was one of rapid expansion and of an amount of freedom, homely happiness, and energetic work unparalleled in the world's history. And the record of America for the whole last century and a half, in spite of many reversions towards inequality, in spite of much rawness and much blundering, is nevertheless as bright and honourable a story as that of any other contemporary people.

In this brief account of the creation of the United States of America we have been able to do little more than mention the names of some of the group of great men who made this new departure in human history. We have named casually or we have not even named such men as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, the Adams cousins, Madison Alexander Hamilton, and George

Washington. It is hard to measure the men of one period of history with those in another. Some writers, even American writers, impressed by the artificial splendours of the European courts and by the tawdry and destructive exploits of a Frederick the Great or a Great Catherine, display a snobbish shame of something homespun about these makers of America. They feel that Benjamin Franklin at the Court of Louis XVI, with his long hair, his plain clothes, and his pawky manner, was



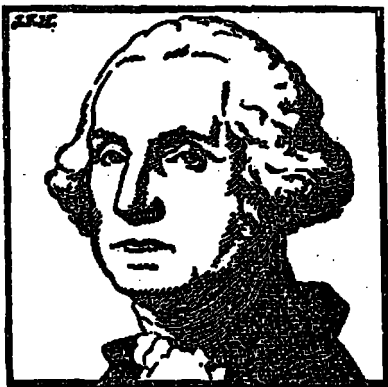
Benjamin Franklin—

sadly lacking in aristocratic distinction. But, stripped to their personalities, Louis XVI was hardly gifted enough or noble-minded enough to be Franklin's valet. If human greatness is a matter of scale and glitter, then no doubt Alexander the Great is at the apex of human greatness. But is greatness that? Is not a great man rather one who, in a great position or amidst great opportunities—and great gifts are no more than great opportunities—serves God and

his fellows with a humble heart? And quite a number of these Americans of the revolutionary time do seem to have displayed much disinterestedness and devotion. They were limited men, fallible men; but on the whole they seem to have cared more for the commonweal they were creating than for any personal end or personal vanity. It is impossible not to concede them a distinguished greatness of mind.

True they were limited in knowledge and outlook; they were limited by the limitations of the time. They were, like all of us, men of mixed motives; good impulses arose in their minds, great ideas swept through them, and also they could be jealous, lazy, obstinate, greedy, vicious. If one were to write a true, full, and particular history of the making of the United States, it would have to be written with charity and high spirits as a splendid comedy rising to the noblest ends. And in no other regard do we find the rich, tortuous humanity of the American story so finely displayed as in regard to slavery. Slavery, having regard to the general question of labour, is the test of this new soul in the world's history, the American soul.

Slavery began very early in the European history of America, and no European people who went to America can be held altogether innocent in the matter. At a time when the German is still the moral whipping-boy of Europe, it is well to note that the German record is in this respect the best of all. Almost the first outspoken utterances against negro slavery came from German settlers in Pennsylvania. But the German settler was working with free labour upon a temperate country-side well north of the plantation zone; he was not under serious temptation in this matter. American slavery began with the enslavement of Indians for gang work in mines and upon plantations, and it is curious to note that it was a very good and humane man indeed, Las Casas, who urged that negroes should be brought to America to relieve his tormented Indian protégés. The need for labour upon the plantations of the West Indies and the south was imperative. When the supply



Washington

of Indian captives proved inadequate, the planters turned not only to the negro, but to the jails and poor-houses of Europe, for a supply of toilers. The reader of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* will learn how the business of Virginian white slavery looked to an intelligent Englishman in the early eighteenth century. But the negro came very early. The year (1620) that saw the Pilgrim Fathers landing at Plymouth in New England, saw a Dutch sloop disembarking the first cargo of negroes at Jamestown in Virginia. Negro slavery was as old as New England; it had been an American institution for over a century and a half before the War of Independence. It was to struggle on for the better part of a century more.

But the conscience of thoughtful men in the colonies was never quite easy upon this score, and it was one of the accusations of Thomas Jefferson against the crown and lords of Great Britain that every attempt to ameliorate or restrain the slave trade on the part of the colonists had been checked by the great proprietary interests in the mother-country. In 1776 Lord Dartmouth wrote that the colonists could not be allowed "to check or discourage a traffic so beneficent to the nation." With

the moral and intellectual ferment of the Revolution, the question of negro slavery came right into the foreground of the public conscience. The contrast and the challenge glared upon the mind. "All men are by nature free and equal," said the Virginia Bill of Rights; and outside in the sunshine, under the whip of the overseer, toiled the negro slave.

It witnesses to the great change in human ideas since the Roman Imperial system dissolved under the barbarian inrush, that there could be this heart-searching. Conditions of industry, production, and land tenure had long prevented any recrudescence of gang slavery; but now the cycle had come round again, and there were enormous immediate advantages to be reaped by the owning and ruling classes in the revival of that ancient institution, in mines, upon plantations, and upon great public works. It was revived—but against great opposition. From the beginning of the revival there were protests, and they grew. The revival was counter to the new conscience of mankind. In some respects the new gang slavery was worse than anything in the ancient world. Peculiarly horrible was the provocation by the trade of slave wars and man hunts in Western Africa, and the cruelties of the long Transatlantic voyage. The poor creatures were packed on the ships often with insufficient provision of food and water, without proper sanitation, without medicines. Many who could tolerate slavery upon the plantations found the slave trade too much for their moral digestions. Three European nations were chiefly concerned in this dark business, Britain, Spain and Portugal, because they were the chief owners of the new lands in America. The comparative innocence of the other European powers is to be ascribed largely to their lesser temptations. They were similar communities; in parallel circumstances they would have behaved similarly.

Throughout the middle part of the eighteenth century there was an active agitation against negro slavery in Great Britain as well as in the States. It was estimated that in 1770 there were fifteen thousand slaves in Britain, mostly brought over by their owners from the West Indies and Virginia. In 1771 the issue came to a conclusive test in Britain before Lord Mansfield. A negro named James Somersett had been brought to England from Virginia by his owner. He ran away, was captured, and violently taken on a ship to be returned to Virginia. From the ship he was extracted by a writ of *habeas corpus*. Lord Mansfield declared that slavery was a condition unknown to English law, an "odious" condition; and Somersett walked out of the court a free man.

The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 had declared that "all men are born free and equal." A certain negro, Quaco, put this to the test in 1783, and in that year the soil of Massachusetts became like the soil of Britain, intolerant of slavery; to tread upon it was to become free. At that time no other state in the Union followed this example. At the census of 1790, Massachusetts, alone of all the states, returned "no slaves."

The state of opinion in Virginia is remarkable, because it brings to light the peculiar difficulties of the southern states. The great Virginian statesmen, such as Washington and Jefferson, condemned the institution, yet, because there was no other form of domestic service, Washington owned slaves. There was in Virginia a strong party in favour of emancipating slaves; but they demanded that the emancipated slaves should leave the state within a year or be outlawed! They were naturally alarmed at the possibility that a free barbaric black community, many of its members African-born and reeking with traditions of cannibalism and secret and dreadful religious rites, should arise beside them upon Virginian soil. When we consider that point of view, we can understand why it was that a large number of Virginians should be disposed to retain the mass of blacks in the country under control as slaves, while at the same time they were bitterly opposed to the slave trade and the importation of any fresh blood from Africa. The free blacks, one sees, might easily become a nuisance; indeed, the free state of Massachusetts presently closed its borders to their entry.

The question of slavery, which in the ancient world was usually no more than a question of status between individuals racially akin, merged in America with the different and profounder question of relationship between two races at opposite extremes of the human species and of the most contrasted types of tradition and culture. If the black man had been white, there can be little doubt that negro slavery would have vanished from the United States within a generation of the Declaration of Independence as a natural consequence of the statements in that declaration.

§ 7

Revolutionary Ideas in France.

We have told of the War of Independence in America as the first great break away from the system of European monarchies and foreign offices, as the repudiation by a new community of Machiavellian statecraft as the directive form of human affairs.

Within a decade there came a second and much more portentous revolt against this strange game of Great Powers, this tangled interaction of courts and policies which obsessed Europe. But this time it was no breaking away at the outskirts. In France, the nest and home of Grand Monarchy, the heart and centre of Europe, came this second upheaval. And, unlike the American colonists, who simply repudiated a king, the French, following in the footsteps of the English revolution, beheaded one.

Like the British Revolution and like the revolution in the United States, the French Revolution can be traced back to the ambitious absurdities of monarchy. The schemes of aggrandisement, the aims and designs of the Grand Monarch, necessitated an expenditure upon war equipment throughout Europe out of all proportion to the taxable capacity of the age. And even the splendours of monarchy were enormously costly, measured by the productivity of the time. In France, just as in Britain and in America, the first resistance was made not to the monarch as such and to his foreign policy as such, nor with any clear recognition of these things as the roots of the trouble, but merely to the inconveniences and charges upon the individual life caused by them. The practical taxable capacity of France must have been relatively much less than that of England because of the various exemptions of the nobility and clergy. The burthen resting directly upon the common people was heavier. That made the upper classes the confederates of the Court, instead of the antagonists of the Court as they were in England, and so prolonged the period of waste further; but when at last the bursting-point did come, the explosion was more violent and shattering.

During the years of the War of American Independence there were few signs of any impending explosion in France. There was much misery among the lower classes, much criticism and satire, much outspoken liberal thinking, but there was little to indicate that the thing as a whole, with all its customs, usages, and familiar discords, might not go on for an indefinite time. It was consuming beyond its powers of production, but as yet only the inarticulate classes were feeling the pinch. Gibbon, the historian, knew France well; Paris was as familiar to him as London; but there is no suspicion to be detected in the passage we have quoted that days of political and social dissolution were at hand. No doubt the world abounded in absurdities and injustices, yet nevertheless, from the point of view of a scholar and a gentleman, it was fairly comfortable, and it seemed fairly secure.

There was much liberal thought, speech, and sentiment in France at this time. Parallel with and a little later than John Locke in England, Montesquieu (1689-1755) in France, in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, had subjected social, political, and religious institutions to the same searching and fundamental analysis, especially in his *Esprit des Lois*. He had stripped the magical prestige from the absolutist monarchy in France. He shares with Locke the credit for clearing away many of the false ideas that had hitherto prevented deliberate and conscious attempts to reconstruct human society. It was not his fault if at first some extremely unsound and impermanent shanties were run up on the vacant site. The generation that followed him in the middle and later decades of the eighteenth century was boldly speculative upon the moral and intellectual clearings he had made. A group of brilliant writers, the "Encyclopædists," mostly rebel spirits from the excellent schools of the Jesuits, set themselves under the leadership of Diderot to scheme out, in a group of works, a new world (1766). The glory of the Encyclopædists, says Mallet, lay "in their hatred of things unjust, in their denunciation of the trade in slaves, of the inequalities of taxation, of the corruption of justice, of the wastefulness of wars, in their dreams of social progress, in their sympathy with the rising empire of industry which was beginning to transform the world." Their chief error seems to have been an indiscriminate hostility to religion. They believed that man was naturally just and politically competent, whereas his impulse to social service and self-forgetfulness is usually developed only through an education essentially religious, and sustained only in an atmosphere of honest co-operation. Unco-ordinated human initiatives lead to nothing but social chaos.

Side by side with the Encyclopædists were the Economists or Physiocrats, who were making bold and crude inquiries into the production and distribution of food and goods. Morally, the author of the *Code de la Nature* denounced the institution of private property and proposed a communistic organization of society. He was the precursor of that large and various school of collectivist thinkers in the nineteenth century who are lumped together as Socialists.

Both the Encyclopædists and the various Economists and Physiocrats demanded a considerable amount of hard thinking in their disciples. An easier and more popular leader to follow was Rousseau (1712-78). He displayed a curious mingling of logical rigidity and sentimental enthusiasm. He preached the alluring doctrine that the primitive state of man was one of

virtue and happiness, from which he had declined through the rather inexplicable activities of priests, kings, lawyers, and the like. Rousseau's intellectual influence was on the whole demoralizing. It struck not only at the existing social fabric, but at any social organization. When he wrote of the *Social Contract*, he seemed rather to excuse breaches of the covenant than to emphasize its necessity. Man is so far from perfect, that a writer who apparently sustained the thesis that the almost universal disposition, against which we all have to fortify ourselves, to repudiate debts, misbehave sexually, and to evade the toil and expenses of education for ourselves and others, is not after all a delinquency, but a fine display of Natural Virtue, was bound to have a large following in every class that could read him. Rousseau's tremendous vogue did much to popularize a sentimental and declamatory method of dealing with social and political problems.

We have already remarked that hitherto no human community had begun to act upon theory. There must first be some breakdown and necessity for direction that lets theory into her own. Up to 1788 the republican and anarchist talk and writing of French thinkers must have seemed as ineffective and politically unimportant as the æsthetic socialism of William Morris in England at the end of the nineteenth century. There was the social and political system going on with an effect of invincible persistence, the French king hunting and mending his clocks, the Court and the world of fashion pursuing their pleasures, the financiers conceiving continually more enterprising extensions of credit, business blundering clumsily along its ancient routes, much incommoded by taxes and imposts, the peasants worrying, toiling and suffering, full of a hopeless hatred of the nobleman's château. Men talked—and felt they were merely talking. Anything might be said, because, it seemed, nothing would ever happen.

§ 8

The Revolution of the Year 1789.

The first jar to this sense of the secure continuity of life in France came in 1787. Louis XVI (1774–93) was a dull, ill-educated monarch, and he had the misfortune to be married to a silly and extravagant woman, Marie Antoinette, the sister of the Austrian emperor. The question of her virtue is one of profound interest to a certain type of historical writer, but we need not discuss it here. She lived, as Paul Wiriath¹ puts it,

¹ Article "France," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

“side by side, but not at the side” of her husband. She was rather heavy-featured, but not so plain as to prevent her posing as a beautiful, romantic and haughty queen. When the exchequer was exhausted by the war in America, when the whole country was uneasy with discontents, she set her influence to thwart the attempts at economy of the king’s ministers, to encourage every sort of aristocratic extravagance, and to restore the church and the nobility to the position they had held in the great days of Louis XIV. Non-aristocratic officers were to be weeded from the army; the power of the church over private life was to be extended. She found in an upper-class official, Calonne, her ideal minister of finance. From 1783 to 1787 this wonderful man produced money as if by magic—and as if by magic it disappeared again. Then in 1787 he collapsed. He had piled loan on loan, and now he declared that the monarchy, the Grand Monarchy that had ruled France since the days of Louis XIV, was bankrupt. No more money could be raised. There must be a gathering of the notables of the kingdom to consider the situation.

To the gathering of notables, a summoned assembly of leading men, Calonne propounded a scheme for a subsidy to be levied upon all landed property. This roused the aristocrats to a pitch of great indignation. They demanded the summoning of a body roughly equivalent to the British parliament—the States General, which had not met since 1614. Regardless of the organ of opinion they were creating for the discontents below them, excited only by the proposal that they should bear part of the weight of the financial burthens of the country, the French notables insisted. And in May, 1789, the States General met.

It was an assembly of the representatives of three orders, the nobles, the clergy, and the Third Estate, the commons. For the Third Estate the franchise was very wide, nearly every taxpayer of twenty-five having a vote. (The parish priests voted as clergy, the small noblesse as nobles.) The States General was a body without any tradition of procedure. Inquiries were sent to the antiquarians of the Academy of Inscriptions in that matter. Its opening deliberations turned on the question whether it was to meet as one body or as three, each estate having an equal vote. Since the Clergy numbered 308, the Nobles 285, and the Deputies 621, the former arrangement would put the commons in an absolute majority, the latter gave them one vote in three. Nor had the States General any meeting-place. Should it meet in Paris or in some provincial city? Versailles was chosen, “because of the hunting.”

It is clear that the king and queen meant to treat this fuss about the national finance as a terrible bore, and to allow it to interfere with their social routine as little as possible. We find the meetings going on in salons that were not wanted, in orangeries and tennis-courts, and so forth.

The question whether the voting was to be by the estates or by head was clearly a vital one. It was wrangled over for six weeks. The Third Estate, taking a leaf from the book of the English House of Commons, then declared that it alone represented the nation, and that no taxation must be levied henceforth without its consent. Whereupon the king closed the hall in which it was sitting, and intimated that the deputies had better go home. Instead, the deputies met in a convenient tennis-court, and there took oath—the Oath of the Tennis Court—not to separate until they had established a constitution in France.

The king took a high line, and attempted to disperse the Third Estate by force. The soldiers refused to act. On that the king gave in with a dangerous suddenness, and accepted the principle that the Three Estates should all deliberate and vote together as one National Assembly. Meanwhile, apparently at the queen's instigation, foreign regiments in the French service, who could be trusted to act against the people, were brought up from the provinces under the Marshal de Broglie, and the king prepared to go back upon his concessions. Whereupon Paris and France revolted. Broglie hesitated to fire on the crowds. A provisional city government was set up in Paris and in most of the other large cities, and a new armed force, the National Guard, a force designed primarily and plainly to resist the forces of the crown, was brought into existence by these municipal bodies.

The revolt of July, 1789, was really the effective French Revolution. The grim-looking prison of the Bastille, very feebly defended, was stormed by the people of Paris, and the insurrection spread rapidly throughout France. In the east and north-west provinces many châteaux belonging to the nobility were burnt by the peasants, their title-deeds carefully destroyed, and the owners murdered or driven away. The insurrection spread throughout France. In a month the ancient and decayed system of the aristocratic order had collapsed. Many of the leading princes and courtiers of the queen's party fled abroad. The National Assembly found itself called upon to create a new political and social system for a new age.

§ 9

The French "Crowned Republic" of '89-'91.

The French National Assembly was far less fortunate in the circumstances of its task than the American Congress. The latter had half a continent to itself, with no possible antagonist but the British Government. Its religious and educational organizations were various, collectively not very powerful, and on the whole friendly. King George was far away in England, and sinking slowly towards an imbecile condition. Nevertheless, it took the United States several years to hammer out a working constitution. The French, on the other hand, were surrounded by aggressive neighbours with Machiavellian ideas, they were encumbered by a king and court resolved to make mischief, and the church was one single great organization inextricably bound up with the ancient order. The queen was in close correspondence with the Count of Artois, the Duke of Bourbon, and the other exiled princes who were trying to induce Austria and Prussia to attack the new French nation. Moreover, France was already a bankrupt country, while the United States had limitless undeveloped resources; and the Revolution, by altering the conditions of land tenure and marketing, had produced an economic disorganization that had no parallel in the case of America.

These were the unavoidable difficulties of the situation. But in addition the Assembly made difficulties for itself. There was no orderly procedure. The English House of Commons had had more than five centuries of experience in its work, and Mirabeau, one of the great leaders of the early Revolution, tried in vain to have the English rules adopted. But the feeling of the times was all in favour of outcries, dramatic interruptions, and such-like manifestations of Natural Virtue. And the disorder did not come merely from the Assembly. There was a great gallery, much too great a gallery, for strangers; but who would restrain the free citizens from having a voice in the national control? This gallery swarmed with people eager for a "scene," ready to applaud or shout down the speakers below. The abler speakers were obliged to play to the gallery, and take a sentimental and sensational line. It was easy at a crisis to bring in a mob to kill debate.

So encumbered, the Assembly set about its constructive task. On the Fourth of August it achieved a great dramatic success. Led by several of the liberal nobles, it made a series of resolutions, abolishing serfdom, privileges, tax exemptions, tithes and feudal

courts. (In many parts of the country, however, these resolutions were not carried into effect until three or four years later.) Titles went with their other renunciations. Long before France was a republic it was an offence for a nobleman to sign his name with his title. For six weeks the Assembly devoted itself, with endless opportunities for rhetoric, to the formulation of a Declaration of the Rights of Man—on the lines of the Bills of Rights that were the English preliminaries to organized change. Meanwhile the Court plotted for reaction, and the people felt that the Court was plotting. The story is complicated here by the scoundrelly schemes of the king's cousin, Philip of Orleans, who hoped to use the discords of the time to replace Louis on the French throne. His gardens at the Palais-Royal were thrown open to the public, and became a great centre of advanced discussion. His agents did much to intensify the popular suspicion of the king. And things were exacerbated by a shortage of provisions—for which the king's government was held guilty.

Presently the loyal Flanders regiment appeared at Versailles. The royal family was scheming to get farther away from Paris—in order to undo all that had been done, to restore tyranny and extravagance. Such constitutional monarchists as General Lafayette were seriously alarmed. And just at this time occurred an outbreak of popular indignation at the scarcity of food, that passed by an easy transition into indignation against the threat of royalist reaction. It was believed that there was an abundance of provisions at Versailles; that food was being kept there away from the people. The public mind had been much disturbed by reports, possibly by exaggerated reports, of a recent banquet at Versailles, hostile to the nation. Here are some extracts from Carlyle descriptive of that unfortunate feast.

"The Hall of the Opera is granted; the Salon d'Hercule shall be drawing-room. Not only the Officers of Flandre, but of the Swiss, of the Hundred Swiss; nay of the Versailles National Guard, such of them as have any loyalty, shall feast; it will be a Repast like few.

"And now suppose this Repast, the solid part of it, transacted; and the first bottle over. Suppose the customary loyal toasts drunk; the King's health, the Queen's with deafening vivats; that of the nation 'omitted,' or even 'rejected.' Suppose champagne flowing; with pot-valorous speech, with instrumental music; empty featherheads growing ever the noisier, in their own emptiness, in each other's noise. Her Majesty, who looks unusually sad to-night (His Majesty sitting dulled with the

day's hunting), is told that the sight of it would cheer her. Behold! She enters there, issuing from her State-rooms, like the Moon from clouds, this fairest unhappy Queen of Hearts; royal Husband by her side, young Dauphin in her arms! She descends from the Boxes, amid splendour and acclaim; walks queen-like round the Tables; gracefully nodding; her looks full of sorrow, yet of gratitude and daring, with the hope of France on her mother-bosom! And now, the band striking up, *O Richard, O mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne* (O Richard, O my king, the world is all forsaking thee), could man do other than rise to height of pity, of loyal valour? Could featherheaded young ensigns do other than—by white Bourbon Cockades, handed them from fair fingers; by waving of swords, drawn to pledge the Queen's health; by trampling of National Cockades; by scaling the Boxes, whence intrusive murmurs may come; by vociferation, sound, fury and distraction, within doors and without—testify what tempest-tost state of vacuity they are in? . . .

"A natural Repast; in ordinary times, a harmless one: now fatal. . . . Poor ill-advised Marie Antoinette; with a woman's vehemence, not with a sovereign's foresight! It was so natural, yet so unwise. Next day, in public speech of ceremony, Her Majesty declares herself 'delighted with Thursday.'"

And here to set against this is Carlyle's picture of the mood of the people.

"In squalid garret, on Monday morning Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-makers and bakers'-queues; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women! But, instead of bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter? *Allons!* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville; to Versailles. . . ."

There was much shouting and coming and going in Paris before this latter idea realized itself. One Maillard appeared with organizing power, and assumed a certain leadership. There can be little doubt that the revolutionary leaders, and particularly General Lafayette, used and organized this outbreak to secure the king, before he could slip away—as Charles I did to Oxford—to begin a civil war. As the afternoon wore on, the procession started on its eleven-mile tramp. . . .

Again we quote Carlyle:

"Maillard has halted his dragged Menads on the last hill-top; and now Versailles, and the Château of Versailles, and far and wide the inheritance of Royalty opens to the wondering eye.

From far on the right, over Marly and Saint-Germain-en-Laye; round towards Rambouillet, on the left, beautiful all; softly embosomed; as if in sadness, in the dim moist weather! And near before us is Versailles, New and Old; with that broad frondent *Avenue de Versailles* between, stately frondent, broad, three hundred feet as men reckon, with its four rows of elms; and then the Château de Versailles, ending in royal parks and pleasancess, gleaming lakelets, arbours, labyrinths, the *Ménagerie*, and Great and Little Trianon. High-towered dwellings, leafy pleasant places; where the gods of this lower world abide: whence, nevertheless, black care cannot be excluded; whither Menadio hunger is even now advancing, armed with pike-thyrsi!"

Rain fell as the evening closed.

"Behold the Esplanade, over all its spacious expanse, is covered with groups of squalid dripping women; of lank-haired male rascality, armed with axes, rusty pikes, old muskets, iron-shod clubs (*batons ferrés*, which end in knives or swordblades, a kind of extempore billhook); looking nothing but hungry revolt. The rain pours; Gardes-du-Corps go caracoling through the groups 'amid hisses'; irritating and agitating what is but dispersed here to reunite there. . . .

"Innumerable squalid women beleaguer the President and Deputation; insist on going with him: has not his Majesty himself, looking from the window, sent out to ask, What we wanted? 'Bread, and speech with the King,' that was the answer. Twelve women are clamorously added to the deputation; and march with it, across the Esplanade; through dissipated groups, caracoling bodyguards, and the pouring rain."

"Bread, and not too much talking!" Natural demands.

"One learns also that the Royal Carriages are getting yoked, as if for Metz. Carriages, royal or not, have verily showed themselves at the back gates. They even produced, or quoted, a written order from our Versailles Municipality—which is a monarchic not a democratic one. However, Versailles patrols drove them in again; as the vigilant Lecointre had strictly charged them to do. . . .

"So sink the shadows of night, blustering, rainy; and all paths grow dark. Strangest night ever seen in these regions; perhaps since the Bartholomew Night, when Versailles, as Bassompierre writes of it, was a *chétif château*.

"O for the lyre of some Orpheus, to constrain, with touch of melodious strings, these mad masses into Order! For here all seems fallen asunder, in wide-yawning dislocation. The highest, as in down-rushing of a world, is come in contact with the

lowest: the rascality of France beleaguering the royalty of France; 'iron-shod batons' lifted round the diadem, not to guard it! With denunciations of bloodthirsty anti-national bodyguards, are heard dark growlings against a queenly name.

"The Court sits tremulous, powerless: varies with the varying temper of the Esplanade, with the varying colour of the rumours from Paris. Thick-coming rumours; now of peace, now of war. Necker and all the Ministers consult; with a blank issue. The *Ceil-de-Bœuf* is one tempest of whispers: We will fly to Metz; we will not fly. The royal carriages again attempt egress—though for trial merely; they are again driven in by Lecointre's patrols."

But we must send the reader to Carlyle to learn of the coming of the National Guard in the night under General Lafayette himself, the bargaining between the Assembly and the King, the outbreak of fighting in the morning between the bodyguard and the hungry besiegers, and how the latter stormed into the palace and came near to a massacre of the royal family. Lafayette and his troops turned out in time to prevent that, and timely cartloads of loaves arrived from Paris for the crowd.

At last it was decided that the king should come to Paris.

"Processional marches not a few our world has seen; Roman triumphs and ovations, Cabiric cymbal-beatings, Royal progresses, Irish funerals; but this of the French Monarchy marching to its bed remained to be seen. Miles long, and of breadth losing itself in vagueness, for all the neighbouring country crowds to see. Slow: stagnating along, like shoreless Lake, yet with a noise like Niagara, like Babel and Bedlam. A splashing and a tramping; a hurraing, uproaring, musket-volleying; the truest segment of Chaos seen in these latter Ages! Till slowly it disembogue itself, in the thickening dusk, into expectant Paris, through a double row of faces all the way from Passy to the *Hôtel-de-Ville*.

"Consider this: Vanguard of National troops; with trains of artillery; of pikemen and pikewomen, mounted on cannons, on carts, hackney-coaches, or on foot. . . . Loaves stuck on the points of bayonets, green boughs stuck in gun-barrels. Next, as main-march, 'fifty cart-loads of corn,' which have been lent, for peace, from the stores of Versailles. Behind which follow stragglers of the *Garde-du-Corps*; all humiliated, in Grenadier bonnets. Close on these comes the royal carriage; come royal carriages; for there are a hundred national deputies too, among whom sits Mirabeau—his remarks not given. Then finally, pell-mell, as rear-guard, Flandre, Swiss, Hundred Swiss, other

bodyguards, brigands, whosoever cannot get before. Between and among all which masses flows without limit Saint-Antoine and the Menadic cohort. Menadic especially about the royal carriage. . . . Covered with tricolor; singing 'allusive songs'; pointing with one hand to the royal carriage, which the allusions hit, pointing to the provision-wagons with the other hand, and these words: 'Courage, Friends! We shall not want bread now; we are bringing you the Baker, the Bakeress and Baker's boy.' . . .

"The wet day draggles the tricolor, but the joy is inextinguishable. Is not all well now? 'Ah, Madame, notre bonne Reine,' said some of these Strong-women some days hence, 'Ah, Madame, our good Queen, don't be a traitor any more and we will all love you!' . . ."

This was October the 6th, 1789. For nearly two years the royal family dwelt unmolested in the Tuileries. Had the Court kept common faith with the people, the king might have died there, a king.

From 1789 to 1791 the early Revolution held its own; France was a limited monarchy, the king kept a diminished state in the Tuileries, and the National Assembly ruled a country at peace. The reader who will glance back to the maps of Poland we have given in the previous chapter will realize what occupied Russia, Prussia, and Austria at this time. While France experimented with a crowned republic in the west, the last division of the crowned republic of the east was in progress. France could wait.

When we consider its inexperience, the conditions under which it worked, and the complexities of its problems, one must concede that the Assembly did a very remarkable amount of constructive work. Much of that work was sound and still endures, much was experimental and has been undone. Some was disastrous. There was a clearing up of the penal code; torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and persecutions for heresy were abolished. The ancient provinces of France, Normandy, Burgundy, and the like, gave place to eighty departments. Promotion to the highest ranks in the army was laid open to men of every class. An excellent and simple system of law courts was set up, but its value was much vitiated by having the judges appointed by popular election for short periods of time. This made the crowd a sort of final court of appeal, and the judges, like the members of the Assembly, were forced to play to the gallery. And the whole vast property of the church was seized and administered by the State; religious establishments not

engaged in education or works of charity were broken up, and the salaries of the clergy made a charge upon the nation. This in itself was not a bad thing for the lower clergy in France, who were often scandalously underpaid in comparison with the richer dignitaries. But in addition the choice of priests and bishops was made elective, which struck at the very root idea of the Roman Church, which centred everything upon the Pope, and in which all authority is from above downward. Practically the National Assembly wanted at one blow to make the church in France Protestant, in organization if not in doctrine. Everywhere there were disputes and conflicts between the state priests created by the National Assembly and the recalcitrant (non-juring) priests who were loyal to Rome. . . .

One curious thing the National Assembly did which greatly weakened its grip on affairs. It decreed that no member of the Assembly should be an executive minister. This was in imitation of the American constitution, where, also, ministers are separated from the legislature. The British method has been to have all ministers in the legislative body, ready to answer questions and account for their interpretation of the laws and their conduct of the nation's business. If the legislature represents the sovereign people, then it is surely necessary for the ministers to be in the closest touch with their sovereign. This severance of the legislature and executive in France caused misunderstandings and mistrust; the legislature lacked control and the executive lacked moral force. This led to such an ineffectiveness in the central government that in many districts at this time communes and towns were to be found that were practically self-governing communities; they accepted or rejected the commands of Paris as they thought fit, declined the payment of taxes, and divided up the church lands according to their local appetites.

§ 10

The Revolution of the Jacobins.

It is quite possible that, with the loyal support of the crown and a reasonable patriotism on the part of the nobility, the National Assembly, in spite of its noisy galleries, its Rousseauism, and its inexperience, might have blundered through to a stable form of parliamentary government for France. In Mirabeau it had a statesman with clear ideas of the needs of the time; he knew the strength and the defects of the British system, and apparently he had set himself to establish in France a parallel