

RELIGION

5864

AND THE

REIGN OF TERROR;

OR,

THE CHURCH DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

PREPARED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. EDMOND DE PRESSENSÉ,

Author of "Histoire des trois premiers siècles de l'Église Chrétienne," "Jésus-Christ, son temps, sa vie, son œuvre;" "Le Pays de l'Évangile," and Editor of "La Revue Chrétienne."

BY REV. JOHN P. LACROIX, A.M.

God is as necessary as liberty to the French people.—MIRABEAU.
Free Church—free State.—CAYOUR.



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LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION.

[TRANSLATION.]



PARIS, *November 30, 1866.*

PROFESSOR JOHN P. LACROIX :

MY DEAR SIR,—I give you with true pleasure the authorization which you ask of me for translating my book entitled “The Church and the Revolution.”*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

E. DE PRESSÈNSÉ.

* The full title of the work is *L'Église et La Révolution française; Histoire des Relations de l'Église et de l'État de 1789 à 1802.*

PREFACE TO THE ABRIDGMENT.

THE book here presented to the American reader is, in the main, an abridgment of a work, recently published in Paris, by the distinguished Protestant divine M. Edmond de Pressensé, the object of which is to describe, from an enlightened Christian stand-point, the vicissitudes of religion and its relations to the civil power in France, during the eventful years from 1789 to 1802. Some of the motives which have influenced me in its preparation in English are the following: The intrinsic general interest of the subject; its special interest for Americans; the peculiar stand-point and personal qualifications of the author; and, finally, the careful criticisms of the religious character of certain world-historical personages, to which the nature of the work naturally leads.

Of the general interest of whatever throws light on this great revolutionary crisis of humanity, I need scarcely speak. Of the crisis itself Mr. Alison uses these words: "There are few periods in the history of the world which can be compared, in point of interest and importance, to that which embraces the progress and

termination of the French Revolution. In no former age were events of such magnitude crowded together, or interests so momentous at issue between contending nations. From the flame which was kindled in Europe, the whole world has been involved in conflagration, and a new era dawned upon both hemispheres from the effects of its expansion. With the first rise of a free spirit in France, the liberty of North America was established." Mr. Jones, the continuator of Russell's history, speaks in similar terms. "We are now brought," says he, "to enter upon a subject of such fearful magnitude, so portentous in its origin, and terrific in its consequences, that the annals of the human race scarcely present us with its parallel. The French Revolution introduced a new state of society in Europe." A standard German encyclopedia speaks as follows: "The French Revolution constitutes one of the grandest epochs in the history of human society. He who regards it as a mere incidental event has not examined the past, and is unable to look into the future. It is an event which came forth out of the womb of the centuries. So judges Madame de Staël; and she is right." M. Michelet says: "I define the Revolution as the advent of Law, the resurrection of Right, and the reaction of Justice. I see upon the stage but two grand facts, two principles, two actors, and two characters—Christianity and the Revolution. The Convocation of the States-General, in 1789, is the

true era of the birth of the people. On the eve of the opening of the States-General the mass of the Holy Ghost was solemnly said at Versailles. It was certainly that day, or never, that the people might sing the prophetic hymn: *Thou wilt create peoples, and the face of the earth shall be renewed.*" Such is the general manner in which this event is spoken of both by the friends and the enemies of France. The merit of M. de Pressensé's book is, that it presents an exhaustive view of one of the special phases of this Revolution, namely, the religious—a phase which, though among the most important, has yet had the misfortune either of being treated with neglect, or of being perverted and distorted by skeptics, to the prejudice of Christianity.

The special interest of the French Revolution for republicans lies in the nature of the interests that were at stake. It was, on the one hand, a struggle of liberty against absolutism, free thought against spiritual despotism; and, on the other, of Christianity against a godless philosophy; it was, therefore, a struggle in the interest of the very principles which lie at the basis of American greatness. But the great Revolution made shipwreck: the name of liberty was tarnished by the most atrocious crimes; Christianity seemed for a moment to have gone down in a night of blood and delirium, amid the triumphant orgies of a foul-mouthed Atheism; and, finally, political liberty was trampled in the dust, and forced to

give place to the most absolute of despotisms. How came this to be the result? Why did the principles which have succeeded so well in America meet only with disaster and failure in France? The question is interesting. For more than half a century the political and spiritual despots of Europe have been using the excesses of the French Revolution as a bugbear to frighten their ministers and subjects from every effort in favor of liberty and Church reform. "Unless you desire to renew the horrors of the *reign of terror*, and to be subject to the disgusting domination of an unwashed mob, do not limit the authority of your legitimate rulers; unless you wish the extinction of religion, and the triumph of vice and Atheism, do not question the pretensions of your priests, or presume to suppose that the Church can exist without being salaried and governed by the State." And, unfortunately, this argument has too often succeeded, to the detriment of enlightened liberalism. To the too common excessive censure of the French Revolution, and especially to the prejudices thereby created against the causes of liberty and free-churchism, the book of M. de Pressensé is a sufficient and convincing reply. These holy causes of liberty and free-churchism are triumphantly vindicated, and the true cause of the miscarriage of the Revolution assigned, namely, a radical misconception as to the extent to which a government may legitimately interfere with per-

sonal liberty, and as to the proper relations of the civil power of the Church.

As to the exact stand-point of the author, he has clearly enough expressed himself in his preface. "My book," says he, "is animated with a profound love of general liberty, but, above all, of the liberty of the soul and the conscience. I am thoroughly convinced that religion and liberalism are the natural allies of each other. I hope I have written in that impartial spirit which guarantees against passion and injustice. I am with the Revolution whenever it serves the cause of liberty, and against it whenever it violates it by so-called measures of public safety. I confess, in fine, that I cannot see the *dénouement* of this grand struggle, in the foundation of a despotism without caste, at the beginning of this century.

"The question of the relation of the spiritual to the temporal, so passionately debated by our fathers, is yet far from being settled. It is of the highest moment to the cause of the nation and of modern civilization. On its proper decision depends the triumph of a true over a false liberalism. Full liberty of worship guarantees the absolute independence of the conscience, and thus erects the surest barrier to the encroachments of the State on the rights of the individual. It therefore gives a mortal blow to that oppressive centralizing system of politics which sacrifices the citizen to the State, and the indi-

vidual to the collective sovereignty. The question is of wide scope. The solution which imposes itself on my mind is that which Mirabeau foresaw, which Lafayette and Madame de Staël openly adopted, and presented in vain to their contemporaries; and which, therefore, presumptively breathes of the true spirit of 1789. May the bitter experience of those who had the honor of proclaiming it, and the misfortune of so often violating it, enlighten our path! I trust I have succeeded in presenting the salutary lesson which is taught by our great Revolution, thus contributing my feeble part to the revival of a true public spirit in France, a cause in which no one takes more interest than myself." Such is the modest and yet high ambition of the author. His stand-point is essentially liberal—republican.

As to his qualifications for the task little need be said. Those who are conversant with the highest critical journals of the day know how eminent is his rank for learning and piety, not only in France, but throughout Europe. He stands at the head of the evangelical French clergy, and shares his energies between the functions of the pastorate and those of the critic and writer. He is the author of the best Church History in the French language, and has the honor of being the most successful antagonist of Renan. His *Life of Jesus* places him in the front rank among the recent champions of Christianity.

Last, though not least important, might be mentioned

as lending interest to the present work, the bold and candid criticisms of character which it contains. The brief fourteen years of the French Revolution witnessed the rise and fall of a succession of the strangest characters which appear on the pages of universal history. How grand, how weird, how ghostly are, in turn, the reminiscences which hover around the names of Mirabeau, Desmoulins, Danton, Hébert, Chaumette, Anacharsis Clootz, Marat, Charlotte Corday, Robespierre, Talleyrand, Bonaparte, and many others! Nor are certain associations of this epoch destitute of peculiar interest: such are the Girondists, the Jacobins, the Atheists, the Deists, and the Theophilanthropists. All of these characters and associations are taken up, discussed, dissected, and, finally, weighed in the balance of a philosophic Christian judgment. I will mention as of special importance, the chapters which treat of the civil and religious policy of Napoleon. If any one thing more than another could shake one's confidence in the justness of the severe verdict of the author as to the baneful, the anti-liberal tendency of the Napoleonic system, it would be that so bold, so free-spoken a book has been permitted to be published under the present *régime*.

As a whole, and apart from the intrinsic worth of its subject-matter, the work leaves on the mind the most salutary impression. It breathes of a generous cosmopolitan spirit, and brings the reader into closer sym-

pathy with the great suffering heart of humanity. It discloses the frightful depths of degradation to which society inevitably sinks when it breaks loose from the authority of God. It reveals in the bosom of a Church which seemed to be dead in ritualism and sin, as soon as the hour of trial came, examples of Christian heroism and devotion which have not been surpassed since the days of the apostles.

A word as to the manner in which the work has been prepared in English. The original is an octavo volume of four hundred and seventy-five pages. The present is not strictly a translation, but rather a digest. Some portions, not so interesting to the non-French reader, have been closely condensed, while others have been slightly enlarged by additions of historical or elucidating details. As to the essence of the book, however, its spirit, its doctrines, its judgments, I have endeavored to be faithful to the author.

The biographical notes which I have subjoined to the volume will not, I trust, be devoid of value.

J. P. LACROIX.

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INTRODUCTION.



SITUATION OF THE CHURCH OF FRANCE AT THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION—STATE OF OPINION AS TO LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE AND THE ORGANIZATION OF WORSHIP.

I DESIRE to review the history of the relations of Church and State during the French Revolution, from the moment when this great movement broke out over France and Europe, drunk with youth and enthusiasm, and inspired with an inexperienced ardor for universal reform, to the unpropitious hour in which it seemed organized forever in force and glory in a spirit the very contrary of the principles which had animated it at its onset. Napoleon has been fondly styled the heir of the French Revolution; nevertheless, the great and generous spirit of 1789 had most decidedly ceased to live before he became master of France. Because the blood of the ancient races did not course in his veins, because he did not re-establish the privileges of caste, it has been the fashion to view him as the armed representative of that Revolution, and as its triumphant missionary. It has been pretended that he caused it to enter the capitals of absolutist Europe at the gallop of his war-horse; and yet the fact is, that the first capital he entered as all-powerful general, was Paris itself—Paris submit-

ting to absolute power, rejuvenated by victory, and thus renouncing the very principles which had animated it with enthusiasm ten years previously. For, whatever may be said by hired sophists, ever ready to laud and beautify servitude, the essence of 1789 was the great principle of general liberty. Civil equality is only one of its consequences. And as soon as this is detached from the vigorous trunk which produces it, one of two things is certain to result—either it withers and perishes, (for privilege springs most generally from the arbitrary,) or there remains thereof merely a vain semblance, a mass of dry leaves driven at the will of every capricious breath. This sudden abortion of one of the noblest movements of humanity continues to be the most worthy and interesting problem of contemporary history. The problem has been treated, as a whole, by many eminent minds. My ambition is less vast. I desire to confine myself to a single one of its many phases—to write the history of religion during the French Revolution, to mark the real progress accomplished at the opening of the new era, to signalize honestly the faults committed, to indicate the fatal mistake which gradually led to the legalized enslavement of the Church, and, without excusing the final excesses of a power which knew no control, to seek in anterior history the causes which almost necessarily led to them. Such is my design. There is no surer means than this of comprehending the cruel disappointments from which we are still suffering; for I am thoroughly convinced that nothing contributed more fatally to the downfall of liberty than the errors of our fathers as to the mode of organizing religion in

France. An attentive study of the progress of the French Revolution demonstrates that that which checked the chariot of liberty, so grandly sent forth at the start, and finally precipitated it into the bloody disgrace of terrorism, was precisely an inadequate comprehension, and a too hasty decision, of the question of religion.

Though the French Revolution had proclaimed immortal truths, and recognized sacred rights, yet when it attempted to infringe on the sacred domain of conscience it excited the most invincible opposition. This opposition exasperated it, and turned it aside from the path of fruitful and lasting reforms. It irritated its proud and formidable genius, and led to the extinguishment of its benefits in a long paroxysm of wrath. This eighteenth century, which seemed so thoroughly skeptical, was really troubled more deeply by the question of religion than by any other. It is well to recognize this to the honor of humanity. In spite of appearances the heart of mankind is more profoundly moved by spiritual than by material interests. This explains the paramount importance of questions of this class, even when they relate merely to the civil organization of religion, for the question of form is readily confounded with the question of essence. And to defend the absolute liberty of the conscience is one of the first duties of religion.

In the France of to-day the problem which was broached in 1789 is still unsolved. The concordat which Napoleon imposed on, or rather, extorted from, the Pope, has resolved no difficulty. Like every arbitrary act, it has only served to complicate the situation.

Our own blunders, however, are much less excusable than those of our fathers, for we cannot overbalance them by real and signal reforms. In fact of tolerance, they had said every thing from the very start. To-day we enjoy their conquests, which no reaction has been able to compromise, so securely are they based on eternal right. But let us temper with discriminating criticism the admiration they so legitimately inspire. Giving them due credit for the great truths they proclaimed, let us frankly signalize the elements of falsehood and injustice which their system involved. And for this we are the better prepared, inasmuch as we can now clearly see that in their mistakes they were much rather timid conservatives than daring reformers. They were influenced by the ideas of ancient France at the very moment when they thought they had constructed against them the most formidable instrument of war. It is from this source that the Revolution had learned to strengthen beyond measure the central power, and to give to the State what belonged alone to the individual. It is no wonder that the new wine could not be confined by the old vessels. I shall hope to have rendered a real service to my country if I can clearly point out the shoals on which, for a short time only, as we assuredly believe, one of the noblest of revolutions has made shipwreck.

In attempting to understand the mutual relations of the Church and the State, at the eve of the French Revolution, the first thing which strikes us is their close association as to politics, and their profound separation as to theory and aspiration. This contrariety becomes

more and more violent the further we advance. It led finally to the fatal blunder which divorced liberalism in France from the Christian religion. It was precisely the political union that provoked and envenomed the moral separation. The Church was, so to speak, incrustated in an order of things which shocked the public conscience; the altar had been the strongest support of the ancient and now hated system of government. Every reformatory and progressive aspiration, meeting in this system an obstacle and barrier at its very start, was naturally led to attack it with unmeasured violence. The result was, that the liberal cause soon became alienated from the Church and identified with irreligion. All who were young of heart and ardent for the vindication of right and liberty, were in so far predisposed to reject Christianity without hesitation. Life, profound conviction, conquering proselytism, were all on the side of a skeptical philosophy. The Church was not only stationary in the midst of this life, but even undertook the vain task of arresting and beating back the rising flood of enthusiasm. The eighteenth century was imbued with one of the grand ideas born of the Gospel. I mean the idea of humanity, the idea of human right vindicated in the face of those caste privileges which are its negation. It was found that the Church had taken sides in advance against the very principles which it should have been the first to proclaim, since it had in its own hands the book which had disseminated and caused to triumph in the Roman empire the immortal words, (the chart of equality and true liberty,) that *in Christ there is neither bond nor free.*

Thus by the fault of its representatives, the very religion which had taught the world the ideas of humanity and right, came to be regarded by liberal spirits as the very foe which they must first conquer in their work of vindicating principles which itself had first proclaimed. In the confusion of the age, the ancient pagan view was defended by the pretended successors of those who had once overthrown it; and the social and humane principles of Christianity were defended by those who were resuscitating the naturalism of the pagan world—the impure source of all the injustice and abuses of despotism. Thus the most discordant elements were mingled together; justice and religion, which should have been indissolubly joined, were violently and perniciously separated. They fought in opposing armies, and every stroke dealt by the one on the other weakened them both. This fatal divorce, though dating far back in the past, had been renewed and consummated at the close of the seventeenth century by one of the greatest crimes of history—by the murderous expulsion of that portion of the religious public which was not bowed under the yoke of Romish unity. The ruins of the Jansenist community of Port Royal, and, above all, those living remains of the Protestant Church who were bound as slaves, and forced to row the galleys of the Mediterranean, or who sought at the risk of life to meet together in the desert for worship, reminded continually an emancipated and indignant generation of the pernicious union of religious with civil despotism, and of the severe discipline they had suffered under the ferule of that devout and all-powerful Papist, Madame

de Maintenon, during the last years of Louis XIV. This ferule had been too long the scepter of France, and France had been compelled to too bitter a penance for the early sins of the most selfish of monarchs.

The seventeenth century had not been content with transmitting these sad remembrances to the succeeding age—remembrances which were yet visible realities, since the proscription of Jansenism and Protestantism was still in full force. It had even defended its theory and sanctioned its practice by the immortal eloquence of Bossuet, its greatest preacher. His book *Politics drawn from the Bible*, consecrates the maxims of a twofold despotism, and was destined to excite the intensest wrath in the coming generation. This cunning catechism, in which an unlimited monarchy and an uncurbed priesthood learn how, by uniting their power, to control and entirely subjugate a great nation, may be regarded as the testament of the age of Louis XIV. This testament was broken and scornfully repudiated in that brilliant and powerful but scoffing literary parliament of the eighteenth century, which was presided over by the genius of Voltaire.* The book of Bossuet is the apotheosis of the ancient *régime* and its worst abuses. It presents the king as a deity, whose appearance rejoices the people as the sun, and whose unquestionable volitions should be received on bended knees. It is a deity, it is true, somewhat like those of Homer, exposed to all the passions of men, and rather inclined to fall into them. The counsels which the eloquent bishop gives to the prince are good enough; they show to how many

* See Appendix, note 1.

crimes absolute power is exposed, and what terrible consequences they may have in the world to come; but these counsels terrify rather than assure, for they reveal the possibility of evil for which, when once committed, there is no remedy; since there is no resource against the royal will, and since his subjects, after timidly remonstrating, have only to kiss the dust into which his foot has crushed them. There is no right in face of the royal right. I mistake; there is the right of the clergy, for whom alone Bossuet makes a haughty exception. All the property of the kingdom belongs to the monarch, except that of the clergy; with this he has nothing to do, except to increase it. A king who understands well his duties is not content with opening his treasures and enriching the Church. He remembers that it, though detesting bloodshed, yet has need of it, and, using his sword to execute its will, banishes its enemies, or immolates them at the stake for the greater glory of God, as at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Heresy is not tolerated in the happy land which he governs: "Those who maintain that the prince should not use force in matters of religion, for the reason that religion should be free, are in an impious error." Bossuet recalls and insists on the solemn oath given by the Most Christian King, the day of his coronation, for the extirpation of heresy. All these fine theories are supported by texts of Scripture, whose meaning is entirely distorted; for the learned bishop applies to modern states that which related only to the Jewish theocracy, which was essentially of a transitory character. Thus he brings about this double result of

making monarchy and Christianity seem both hateful alike, and of preparing inevitably a most dangerous revolution. One might suppose the effect of such a book in some measure counteracted by the humane political system of Fénelon, which, though clothed in a pagan form, was much more Christian than that of Bossuet; but such was not the case. His book, *Télémaque*, was but a poetic Utopia, the splendid dream of him whom Louis XIV. had styled the most chimerical spirit of his kingdom. On the contrary, Bossuet's *Politics drawn from the Bible* was the faithful portraiture of the organization of religion in France down to the very moment when the most daring vows were made for the entire renovation of society. Let us present a review of that organization.

The Catholic Church of France enjoyed the highest privileges. Since the proscription of the Protestants it was without a rival, and possessed full sway in the whole of France. It possessed all the edifices for worship, while the most secret retreats could not shield the Protestants from the cruel hirelings of bigotry. They had not only lost the right of professing their creed, they had lost the right of existing. As soon as they were discovered they fell under the vengeance of the laws. Neither their births nor marriages were recognized as legitimate; all public offices were closed against them, and their children were considered as belonging to the Catholic Church. The people of Alsace alone, thanks to special treaties made at the time of the conquest of that province, enjoyed liberty of conscience. As to Jews, they were barely tolerated; for

they were oppressed by special taxes and a very severe police, and were likewise excluded from public functions. The Catholic Church, therefore, possessed the whole field. By the monopoly of the marriages and baptisms the entire state was in some measure in its hands. Its voice alone was heard from one frontier to the other. If one wished to publish a book which might give it offense, he was necessitated to go to Holland. It enjoyed almost complete control of the education of the youth. Thus the minds, the souls, of the whole population were officially in its power. To accomplish its work the clergy possessed immense riches, and a considerable portion of the soil. They had received them from the piety of the faithful, and from the terrors of the death-bed. The kings of France had given largely in their favor; and if one may estimate the number of their sins by the quantity of their donations, the list was frightful indeed. The following is a low estimate of some of the branches of the revenue of the clergy. At the head stand 11 Archbishops and 116 Bishops, with an aggregate annual income of 8,400,000 francs. The income of the Grand Vicars and Canons was at least 13,400,000; that of seven hundred and fifteen abbeys 9,000,000; that of seven hundred and three priories 1,400,000; that of several hundred other monastic institutions 7,042,000. The curates and their vicars formed the secular clergy who served the 35,156 parishes. They were supported by tithes and various casual receipts. The regular clergy filled the convents, and numbered about 51,000 in the aggregate. One half of the income of the French Church arose from

tithes, and the whole of its acknowledged revenue amounted to nearly 130,000,000 francs; and if to this we add the casual receipts, it would not perhaps fall below 200,000,000 francs, or 40,000,000 dollars annually. The property of the clergy was exempt from taxation, but they contributed to the support of the State by a voluntary donation of 16,000,000 francs every five years, though much of this was usually employed in liquidating previously contracted debts.

Certainly the State had been sufficiently prodigal of privileges and riches toward the Church; but, in return, it had reduced it to a state of cramping dependence. The eldest and cherished son of the Church had taken precautions against his mother, and had bound her hands with cords which, though golden, were none the less galling. The king felt her ascendant as often as the fear of damnation stirred in his breast, or age or disease reminded him of the tolling funeral bell of St. Denis, where his bones were finally to rest; but the laws, restrictive of the liberty of the Church, none the less continued in force. These laws constitute what it has seemed proper to term the *liberties of the Gallican Church*. These famous maxims, full of a spirit of just suspicion against the encroachments of Rome and of a rich and ambitious clergy, were the work of the founders of a despotic monarchy, and tended to enslave the Church and reduce it to a mere instrument of government. To forbid the clergy to assemble in convention without special royal permit, or the bishops to communicate freely with the spiritual head of Catholicism, was evidently to put the religious conscience rudely under the

hand of the State. It is true, however, that it was dangerous for the civil authority, in view of the power and wealth of the clergy, to relax this control. It is thus that the riches which tended to corrupt them began by reducing them to subjection. To appreciate this situation of the French Church, we must first have a clear view of its relations with the Roman See.

It was in the Middle Ages that these relations were most wisely regulated; I mean, by the pragmatic sanction made between St. Louis and the Pope, in 1268, and confirmed at Bourges by Charles VII. in 1434. These wise arrangements, which secured to the Church the right of electing its own dignitaries, and guarded against the encroachments of the Roman See, were, however, abrogated by the concordat concluded with the Pope by Francis I. in 1516. It was a most grievous abuse of power for the king to make this arrangement with the ambitious Leo X. without consulting the Church. He arrogated to himself the right of making nominations to the parishes and bishoprics, and left in the hands of the Pope the formidable power of confirming them by bulls. A refusal of these bulls was enough to convulse the entire nation. This was perceived too late—during a crisis in the reign of Louis XIV. On the one hand, one saw the clergy bowed at the foot of the throne, and defending its privileges with their utmost ability; on the other, the proud monarch was forced, after a long refusal of the bulls had deeply agitated the whole land, to humiliate himself and yield to the Holy See.

Assuredly the maxims of the Gallican Church, as strengthened by the famous declaration of the clergy,

drawn up by Bossuet in 1682, had wisely guarded against the interference of the Pope in the government of France, but they had none the less consecrated the subjection of the Church to the State. In the eighteenth century the royal council could declare, without raising opposition, that the government had the right, before authorizing the decrees of the Church, to examine them, and to interdict any thing that might agitate or disturb the public tranquillity. We admit the merits of the Gallican Church for her resistance to Ultramontanism; we recognize her virtues, talents, and patriotism, but we cannot forget that she has sacrificed more than one precious liberty to the great French idol—I mean the State. She allowed to be forged for herself a heavy yoke, which, as soon as it ceased to be of gold, and was imposed, not by royal hands, but by a popular assembly, became utterly intolerable. We will see, in fact, that in order to enslave the Church, the French Revolution had only to act consistently with the principles laid down by Bossuet and Louis XIV. Constantly associated with all the iniquities of the ancient *régime* in the eighteenth century, and even surpassing them by her own, the Church of France was destined to excite the most intense opposition, without signaling herself by noble virtues. For nothing is sadder than her moral condition previously to the time when, in the reign of terror, she arose by martyrdom, and purified herself in her own blood.

The state of things we have just described was but the continuation of what had existed in France for centuries. The only change that had taken place was in public opinion; but this sufficed to present abuses

which, in the past, had been tolerated or connived at, in their true light. The public conscience, once awakened, grew indignant at that which for a long time had excited no scruples; and it was enough that the Church should remain as in the past, to arouse the most vehement indignation. Unfortunately she was much more occupied with her internal strifes and pecuniary interests than with the formidable attacks of a skeptical philosophy.

Nothing is sadder than the religious history of the eighteenth century. Piety languished, and science, at least on the side of the Church, was null. In England and Germany a withering breath brooded over hearts and souls. In Protestant pulpits a religion without grandeur and without mysteries was languidly preached, which had neither the boldness of philosophy nor the enthusiasm of faith. A cowardly compromising spirit prevailed. In the French Church the declension was visible to all eyes. Since the death of Massillon, in 1742, no eloquent voice had been heard in the evangelical pulpit, if we except the few trumpet tones of studied vehemence of Father Bridaine. The priestly spirit had full career. Having little to persecute without, the dominant party began the work within the Church, attempting to impose the ultra Papal bull *Unigenitus*, which the Jesuitical courtiers of Louis XIV. had induced Clement XI. to issue against the good Quesnel and the feeble remnants of Jansenism, on all who had not yet bowed to the Ultramontane yoke. The death-bed of the most estimable priests was jealously spied, and clerical persecution ceased only with the last breath. But the Jansenists obtained little glory in the strife. There is

something, in fact, sadder still than the destruction of the noble establishment of Port Royal—I mean the moral degeneracy of Jansenism itself. That grand school which had given to France St. Cyran and Pascal had really fallen into dotage. It was now occupied chiefly with apocryphal miracles, and the fanatical convulsionaries of St. Médard passed for the genuine disciples of the saints and heroes who had defended the liberty of the Church and produced some of the noblest masterpieces of literature. These quarrels of the Catholics were freely talked about in the court and the world. The persecutors excited indignation, but the persecuted were only pitied and laughed at. Could there be a more deplorable condition for the Church?

At the same time the attacks of philosophy were growing more pressing, and making a deeper impression on the public mind. It was necessary to answer them. With one or two exceptions these replies were mere monkish balderdash, and evinced neither logical ability nor deep learning. To succeed in this work, it would have been necessary to separate the Gospel from the chaff with which a rich and privileged Church had corrupted it. As it was, the apologists did little more than furnish excellent matter for the wit of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. Recourse was had to strokes of authority and official condemnation. It was easier to refute error by documents affixed to the doors of cathedrals than to meet it in honorable fight. The reunions of the clergy in the eighteenth century had not failed, every time they occurred, to anathematize philosophism, and denounce it to the authorities, at the same time recom

mending for promotion such priests as had signalized themselves in this inglorious contest. This attitude of St. Michael crushing the demon produced no very salutary effect: in the first place, because the enemy was already in legal chains; and, secondly, because the champions of the celestial cause were far from possessing the necessary immaculate purity. While the official faith continued the same, the real faith was growing weaker and weaker, even in the ranks of the clergy. They seemed to vie with each other in rendering their order as vulnerable as possible. Those who retained the pure faith, and led good lives, were hidden in the obscurity of convents or country parishes; while those who appeared in public, in the court and at Paris, were frequently implicated in deplorable scandals. Too often they celebrated a mass in which they no longer had faith, and appeared at the altar redolent with the perfumes of the boudoir. The race of free-thinking and gallant abbots was only too numerous. They encumbered the drawing-rooms, and called to mind one of the most crying abuses of the Church—the right of absence, which allowed the noble titular of a benefice to enjoy in the capital, or where he pleased, all the emoluments of his office, and to turn over all its duties and labors to the miserable substitute whom he had hired for a mere trifle. The nobility enjoyed largely the high places of the Church, receiving immense incomes, but giving in return only their sounding names. The clergy who did the work received but little pay and lived miserably. Thus the salaries were in inverse proportion to the labor performed.

In 1785 the scandalous lawsuit of the diamond neck-

lace had gravely compromised a prince of the Church. The Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg, and Grand Almoner of France, had doubtless been duped by the intriguing and unworthy Countess de Lamotte. She had persuaded him that by means of a certain very costly ornament he would be able to obtain the favors of the Queen, and had surreptitiously obtained it for him. This affair, when it came to the light, and was brought into the courts of justice, produced a profound impression on society. The world saw in it something worse than the filching of a diamond necklace; namely, its use by a prince of the Church for such a purpose. When we recollect that all the infamous laws of persecution of Louis XIV. were scrupulously enforced by this musked and discredited clergy; that with sleek faces and joking lips they attempted to play the zealous heresy-hating Dominican of the Middle Ages without having a particle of his sincere faith, it is easy to conceive the contempt into which they fell in the public mind. The condemnation of the Protestant father Calas, through their influence, by the Parliament of Toulouse, on the false charge of having hanged his son for wishing to go over to Catholicism, gave a powerful impetus to the opposition and indignation. In the year 1761 the eldest son of this unfortunate man had been found strangled in his father's own house. The Catholics had Calas arrested on the charge of having himself committed the unnatural deed on his own son. Numerous witnesses appeared against him. It was impossible for the father to prove a negative, and it was in vain that he appealed to the facts of his parental ten-

derness for his children ; of the restless melancholy temperament of his deceased son ; of his not having opposed another of his sons who had gone over to the Catholics ; of the impossibility of his committing such an act of violence in his sixty-eighth year on a vigorous young man ; and of there having been in his house at the time a Catholic servant girl, who yet knew nothing of his alleged crime. He was condemned to the wheel by eight voices against five, and in March, 1762, put to death. He endured the torture with calmness and patience, and on mounting the scaffold uttered the following words : " I die innocent ; my judges have been deceived. Christ, however, who was innocence itself, died even a more painful death than mine." The remaining members of the family removed to Geneva, where Voltaire became acquainted with them and with their terrible misfortune. He immediately determined to investigate the matter thoroughly, and to submit it to the judgment of the world. The iniquity of the affair becoming thus notorious, the widow and children applied for a revision of the trial. The result was that fifty judges, after a thorough investigation of all the circumstances, pronounced the father entirely innocent of the charge for which he had suffered. This service of Voltaire in the cause of justice was a terrible blow to the Catholics ; but his wrath did not stop within the bounds of justice. Seizing every plausible pretext, he increased the indignation to the extent of his power.

Thus we have, near the close of the eighteenth century, the spectacle of two great irreconcilable powers

mutually driving each other to the last extremes. It is easy to foresee how difficult will be any conciliation when the hour for great social reforms arrives. There had gradually arisen in the minds of the liberal portion of the laity an unwillingness to allow to remain on the same footing the vast and expensive establishment of the Church. True, these opinions were rather insinuated than openly advocated. Sometimes it was by way of allusion, as when Mably discussed the origin of tithes and of the property of the Church; sometimes by sarcasm, as when Montesquieu exposed so masterly the uselessness of the monastic life; and sometimes by the inexhaustible and terrible raillery of Voltaire, which attacked even the bases of Christianity. As early as 1749 public functionaries had maintained the right of the nation to lay hands on the property of the Church for the good of the public treasury. But though public opinion so strongly disfavored the accumulation of so much wealth in the hands of the clergy, the government manifested no inquietude. France, naturally more enthusiastic for ideas than for particular interests, needed the pressure of a great crisis to induce her to interfere in earnest in secularizing the property of the Church.

It was not thus with the second object of the public desire, namely, liberty of opinion. This the new generation was determined to have, even at the price of overthrowing the former social fabric. It shall be to the eternal honor of Voltaire to have truly and sincerely loved tolerance. I am not sure that he had the fever at every anniversary of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; I do not know that any one felt his pulse

regularly on that occasion; it is certain, however, that he had the fever of the soul and heart, that noble fever of an unfeigned indignation against the crimes of intolerance. It is false, however, to attribute to him the founding of the doctrine of tolerance. Not to mention the first apologists of Christianity, who are so pointed on this subject, William Penn had inscribed the doctrine of religious toleration at the head of the constitution of the State he had founded in America at the close of the preceding century. The little State of Rhode Island had honored itself with the most intelligent practice of the same principle. We must add also that only in America had it been embraced in all its consequences. In France the boldest and freest thinkers had fettered it with strange restrictions.

We applaud Montesquieu for putting into the mouth of a young Jewess the following words: "You wish us to be Christians, and you are not such yourselves. The characteristic of truth is its triumph over the heart and mind, and not this feebleness which you admit when you attempt to force it on others by punishment. The chief honor of a religion is its being believed; that of laws, their being feared." Instead of being consistent with these noble maxims, however, Montesquieu violates them himself by refusing to a new religion the right of propagating itself. "Inasmuch," says he, "as scarcely any but an intolerant religion can have a zeal to propagate itself in other lands, since a religion which can tolerate others has little of the missionary spirit, it would be well for the government, when satisfied with the existing religion, not to permit the establishment of

others. When it is equally practicable to receive or not receive a new religion it should be forbidden, but that which is already established should be tolerated." One seems to hear in these words a voice from the age of Trajan and Pliny the Younger. Is this not simply the old Roman and French idea of a religion for the State and for the public order? Montesquieu adds, "When the laws authorize different religions they should also oblige them to tolerate each other. They should be required not only not to trouble the State, but also not to trouble each other." Thus religion is made to exist only at the good will of the State and during its good pleasure.

In Rousseau* this germ of a system received its full development. The eccentric citizen of Geneva was surely a friend of tolerance. He had learned this in severe lessons from the Parliament of Paris, which had ordered the public burning of his philosophical romance *Emile*, and from the official blasts of Beaumont the anti-Jansenist Archbishop of Paris. It was Rousseau who had given to the ancient *régime* the most terrible blow, for it was he who had given to the reformatory movement his earnest passion, and to the young generation the fire which raged in his own heart. He has the sad honor of having molded the French Revolution according to his own image. By his writings he was the ruling spirit in its most violent and devastating period. It is easy to perceive the influence of his ideas on the organization of religion in the acts of our first national assemblies. His *Contrat Social* contained the

* See Appendix, note 2.

formulæ which by them were made into laws. Strange to say, this chart of the impending revolution, this programme of the boldest of reforms, was full of the favorite ideas of Bossuet. It was a sort of deistical Gallicanism, with a very short catechism, it is true, but as implacable toward its foes as if it had had to enforce the creed of the Council of Trent. The sword, though drawn for so feeble a formulary, is none the less terrible against all dissenters. The *Contrat Social* is, so to speak, Louis XIV. in a Jacobin's coat. It is true, the supreme power, instead of being a single man, is called Legion. Instead of at Versailles, it presides in a noisy forum; but it is none the less absolute, none the less destructive of all real freedom; it is a pure despot. Rousseau, of course, desires that this despot be a good prince, and allow all his fellow-citizens to believe as they please. The concession, however, is very small, for it does not permit dissenters to manifest publicly their faith. Let Rousseau speak for himself: "There is a profession of faith purely civil, of which it is the sovereign's duty to fix the articles, without obliging any one to believe in them; but he may banish from his State whoever does not believe them. He may banish him not as impious, but as unsocial, incapable of sincerely loving law and justice, and of sacrificing, if need be, his life to his duty. If any one, after publicly recognizing these dogmas, acts as if not believing them, let him be put to death; he has committed the greatest of crimes, he has lied against the laws."

At the reading of these words, published about the year 1764, I seem to see in the distance Robespierre

celebrating the festival of the Eternal in the presence of the guillotine. Rousseau, doubtless, would have been first in detesting the practical working of his theory; but when we remember that it was his doctrines which had done most in educating the young generation, we can easily account for the grievous mistakes which were made in adapting the relations of the State to religion. The eloquent teacher had poorly instructed his disciples on the subject of liberty of conscience.

What we have above said of the moral condition of the clergy in the eighteenth century, explains the attitude they took as to the property of the Church, and as to the principle of tolerance. In 1788 the Assembly of the Clergy was called to vote on the resolutions of the Assembly of Notables which levied a tax on all lands, including the possessions of the Church. They protested with great energy against a project which seemed to them to overthrow all laws, human and divine. They declared to the King that their goods had been irrevocably vowed and consecrated to God, and that their conscience and honor forbade them to change into a legal tribute, what could only be their free gift to the national treasury. They prayed God to guard their ancient immunities against the license of revolutionary opinions. Nor were their feelings as to the liberty of the press any more honorable. From 1781 up to 1789 they had done their utmost to suppress whatever publications attacked their privileges.

Worst of all was the attitude of their later assemblies toward the Protestants. The persecuting laws of Louis XIV. were still retained. A Protestant Pastor, Francis

Rochette, had been executed in 1762, and the judicial murder of Calas belonged to the same epoch. The explosion of indignation excited by this crime, and its eloquent exposure by the genius of Voltaire, had done more for the Protestant cause than a half century of obscure sufferings. Men did not yet dare to demand for it toleration as a religion, but they were at least ashamed of the entire proscription of one of the noblest classes of society. For some years the magistrates, shocked at the injustices encouraged by the lack of a legal recognition of the Protestants, had sought in divers ways to evade the difficulty. The friends of tolerance pressed openly for a legal recognition, if not of Protestantism, at least of the Protestants as citizens. The great statesman, Malesherbes, had drawn up on the subject, in 1785, a project of a law. In the Assembly of Notables, in 1787, Lafayette, who had breathed the air of liberty in the United States, took the initiative in a formal proposition which resulted in an edict of toleration. Imperfect as it was, it was hailed with the warmest satisfaction. It declared in its preamble that the King would continue to use all his influence in the interests of the Catholic religion; it provided that the Roman Catholic religion *alone* should enjoy the right of public worship; that non-Catholics might live in France and exercise professions or trades without being molested on account of religion; that they might be legally married before the officers of justice, and have the births of their children regularly registered; that, in fine, they might enjoy the privileges of honorable sepulture. These concessions, though interfering in no way with the domination of

Catholicism, met with the intensest opposition from the clergy. Even the Parliament of Paris made some objection to their registration. Espréménil, holding up an image of Christ, cried out, "Will you crucify him afresh!" But nothing responded better to public opinion than these concessions to the persecuted, now that their cause had been pleaded by the philosophers. It had needed the noise of a public discussion to render their condition a subject of interest to France. The high clergy alone continued their protests. At the coronation of Louis XVI., in 1775, a prelate, less known for his virtue than for his ambition, Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, had assumed to address the Monarch thus: "We conjure you, Sire, do not delay to take from error the hope of having among us temples and altars. It is reserved to you to strike the last blow to Calvinism in your dominions. Order the dispersion of the schismatic meetings of the Protestants; exclude them, without distinction, from all public functions, and you will assure to your subjects the unity of the Christian worship."

From the accession of Louis XVI. on, the clergy, in their assemblies, continued to rail against the Protestants. In a report presented by them in 1789 we find these words: "This sect, which in the midst of its ruins preserves the spirit of audacity and independence which it has shown from the beginning, wishes to arrogate for falsehood the rights which belong only to the truth." And yet all the rights they sought were, not to be treated like wild beasts, and hunted down in the forests. "This sect," continues the report, "presumes to demand

a civil and religious existence; hence the necessity of vigorously resisting all its efforts." The Archbishop of Arles raised a more authoritative voice. According to him both country and Church were in great danger, and he uttered the cry of the disciples in distress: "Lord, save us or we perish." The country was in danger forsooth, for some Protestants were admitted to public offices. This, however, does not hinder the good Archbishop from declaring his love for his erring brethren: "They are our fellow-citizens and brethren. We will always love and cherish them. Far from us the thought of the sword. The warfare to which we are called is purely spiritual." The orator forgot the winged words which Bossuet charged, in his funeral eulogy of the abominable persecutor Letellier, with the duty of conveying to subsequent ages the knowledge of the exploits of this saintly man in extirpating heresy. The sabers of the dragoons and the ax of the executioner would not pass, at the opening of the French Revolution, for the pacific crosier. The Archbishop protested that he put all his confidence in the touching instructions and luminous examples of the Church. Nevertheless the Assembly of the Clergy, held in 1788, was unwilling to dispense with the temporal arm, but made to the King a formal petition to revoke his edict of toleration. This was its last public act, and, as it were, its will and testament. Happily there was no one in France who received the legacy.

We have not cited these facts to throw discredit on the ancient Church of France. Large bodies like it are slow to receive light, for they are dominated by their

traditions. The more we study history the more are we convinced of the astonishing facility with which human nature embraces the strangest contradictions. It is ever leavened with inconsistency. The noblest sentiments exist in the same bosom along side of the most pernicious prejudices. The high clergy of France embraced more than one enlightened and liberal spirit; as a body, however, they labored under the weight of centuries of error.

Having thus characterized the tendencies which were about to enter into conflict, we shall not be surprised at the Revolution which broke out in 1789. We shall often have to regret that their opposition was not, at bottom, more radical, and that both the party of the Church and the reform party acted too often from the principle of mutual intolerance. For, the reformers were often guilty of defending the cause of tolerance by intolerant measures, and of outraging the liberty of conscience in their opponents under pretext of serving it in general. On the other hand the Church party, assailed in their interior sanctuary and in the sacred rights which, in their prosperity, they had not respected in their brethren, arose through opprobrium and persecution to an unconscious, but none the less real, defense of this sacred liberty against the despotism of the civil power which they had once themselves used against the Protestants.

This exposition of the condition of the French priesthood would give an incorrect idea of the general state of the Church, if we spoke only of the higher clergy. It is true, the nobility held all the high and lucrative positions, and that a breath of reform was then prevalent

among the aristocracy. Some of their number had taken part in the glorious work of the American Revolution. Nevertheless this had not shaken the ecclesiastical prejudices of the gentlemen prelates. They all remained true to them, with the exception of Pompignan, Archbishop of Vienne, and Talleyrand,* Bishop of Autun; and of these the latter had the churchly vocation only to a very feeble degree. But it was not so with the lower clergy. Poorly paid, and held in subjection to their superiors, these were in a state of perpetual discontent. Belonging mostly to that energetic and wide-awake middle class, who felt that the time of their disinthralment was dawning, they shared in the same feelings. To this number belonged the still remaining Jansenists, who were already predisposed for change, inasmuch as for a century they had been suffering severely at the hands of the State Church. Also the convents, encumbered as they were with men without active religious duties, hid in their cells more than one dangerous agitator, as yet unknown to himself. On the whole, the opinions of the inferior clergy were not beyond a firm but moderate liberalism, at least in the center and east of France. The west and the south were still imbued with the prejudices of the past. It was an Abbot, namely, Sieyès,† whose eloquent words decided, at the time of the convocation of the States-General, the difficult question as to the manner in which the three orders should be represented in the coming National Assembly. Another of these earnest priests, Abbot Gouttes, published a work *On the Injustice of the Pretensions of the Clergy and*

* See Appendix, note 3.

† Ibid, note 4.

Nobility. Abbot Pacot published letters on *Political Liberty*; and Abbot Gregory,* who was afterward to play so noble a role, issued a series of *Letters to Parish Priests*. As an exceptional case, we might mention the pamphlet of a priest of Auxerre, entitled the *Gloria in Excelsis of the People*, which presented in embryo all the excesses of the spirit of Jacobinism. Such was the state of public opinion on the religious question at the moment when all the secret aspirations were on the point of bursting into active attempts at practical realization, without meeting any other obstacle than their own bitter rivalries. The Church was so inwoven in the State that the one could not be touched without affecting the other. We shall therefore see, from the very outbreak of the Revolution, the question of Church and State distinctly presenting itself, and marching through manifold perils and mistakes to its own proper solution.

* See Appendix, note 5.



RELIGION

AND THE

REIGN OF TERROR.



BOOK FIRST.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.



CHAPTER I.

LEGISLATIVE PRELIMINARIES — FIRST DEBATE ON THE LIBERTY OF WORSHIP.

A UNIQUE hour in our history had arrived. France, in seeing herself honored with a worthy national representation, felt the throbs of a new life. She saw the future in the brilliant colors of that May sun which saluted the opening of the so long and so earnestly desired States-General. "Despise not your youth," said a great poet. Let us likewise respect this season of genuine enthusiasm for the public good. It had sprung up in a race which had seemed in dotage. Let us not deride this readiness to hope for every thing; this unlimited confidence in the future. If the harvest answers not to the spring, that does not say that the spring was deficient in vigorous sap. Had it not been for these

brilliant illusions, nothing at all would have been accomplished, nothing even undertaken. If there exists to-day earnest opposition to the general abasement, generous aspirations for improvement, it is because something remains of the illusions of 1789. They remain, after all, the ideal of our history; and the moment they are lost sight of by the public, that moment the condition of the nation will be similar to that of falling Rome.

| The clergy partook largely of the universal enthusiasm. The Bishop of Nancy, in preaching the inauguration sermon of the States-General in a church at Versailles, so touched the chord of patriotism as to be interrupted by cheers, notwithstanding the sacredness of the place. However, from the very first day it was easy to observe profound differences of sentiment. On several weighty points, however, there was general harmony, such as the equal distribution of taxes, the regular assembling of the States-General, and the reformation of the abuses of the feudal system. The clergy were liberal on every subject except the privileges of the Church. M. de Tocqueville, in saying that they were fully as favorable to civil liberty and political rights as the members of the Third Estate, doubtless goes too far, and attributes to them as a body what belonged only to certain sections of them. Nevertheless it is true that as to politics they fell behind none in liberalism, and were in advance of the nobility. Still they were much divided on the question as to whether the voting in the Assembly should be by individuals instead of by orders. To their honor be it said, that they insisted earnestly on the suppression of slavery

and the slave-trade. But there was great variety of sentiment on important subjects. The representatives of the high clergy generally insisted on the divine right of kings, while those coming from among the parish priests invariably plead the rights of the people.

But even the high clergy were divided. While the Archbishop of Lyons spoke only of the anarchical and subversive tendency of the new ideas, the Bishop of Blois offered the half of his income to the public treasury, and the Archbishop of Bordeaux preached self-sacrifice to the great, and concord to all. But this liberalism did not extend to a recognition of the liberty of conscience. The clergy insisted on the necessity of maintaining the Catholic as the religion of the State, and demanded a priestly surveillance of the press. They favored reforms in the education of the youth, but insisted that it be confided to the Church. While admitting the need of reforming the discipline of the convents, they insisted on maintaining the monastic orders. Certainly these views were widely different from those of the Third Estate. In the election of many of the deputies to this body, an anti-Church feeling had openly prevailed. At the Paris election the cry was heard on every hand, "No more priests! No more priests!" The opinions of the Paris delegation were very pointed. They held that, religion being a matter of persuasion and not of force, every citizen should be free to choose his own Church; that the sending of Peter-pence to Rome should be stopped; that every Church dignitary should live in the bounds of his official district; that plurality of benefices should

be forbidden; and that thenceforth monastic vows should not bind devotees to remain in their convents. Principles so widely discordant as these, were destined to break out in the Assembly in open conflict.

The expenditures of Louis XIV., and the improvidence of the government since his death, had brought the nation to the brink of bankruptcy and ruin. As a last expedient it was decided to summon a meeting of the States-General, a body which had not been called together since the year 1614. This body consisted of delegates from the three orders of society—the nobility, the clergy, and the people, or Third Estate. The delegates of the people numbered a few more than the sum of those from the other two classes. The Assembly convened at Versailles in the beginning of May, 1789.

An all important question now arose, namely, How should the members of the Assembly vote? Should it be by orders, or by individuals? Should the noble, the priest, and the deputy of the people stand on an equality in privilege and power, or should each order vote separately? If the latter, then farewell to all hope of effectual reform, for no measure could pass without the vote of at least one of the privileged orders. The Third Estate would, therefore, be powerless, inasmuch as the two orders of the nobility and clergy could combine and defeat all its measures. The question was, therefore, one of life and death. The existence of the established order of things depended on its decision. Should the demand of the Commons for a union of the three orders be acceded to, then every thing would be in

their power, for they were in the majority. It was natural that ancient France was not willing to die without a struggle. Though the nobility and clergy were willing, under the pressure of the times, to cut off from the old oak all excrescences and parasitical branches, still they were by no means favorable to tearing it out by the roots. The union of the orders was especially distasteful to the clergy. The basis of the constitution of the priesthood was a principle of isolation. Based on the order of the Levites, they felt themselves to be separated from the laity in every respect—in their office, in their property, even in their garments. To bow under the sway of the common law, and to debate their rights with laymen, was to abandon all their cherished notions of special privilege. It would, therefore, be unjust to condemn their long hesitation before consenting to a fusion of the orders. This step, however, they were finally compelled to take.

During the weeks of contest which preceded the fusion, the Third Estate gave proof of consummate political genius. They aimed at a definite point, and were ready to yield in any thing that was not essential to their object. When it became necessary, they exhibited a sublime and heroic force of determination. Such was the hour when, shut out of the former place of meeting, they assembled in the empty saloon of a tennis-court, and, raising their hands, took a solemn vow not to separate till they had given the nation a new constitution. They were more fortunate than their privileged brethren, moreover, in having in their ranks the prince of modern orators—one who, despite his vices, was

abreast with the noble enthusiasm of the time, and whose winged words were like lightning flashes in the faces of his foes. Mirabeau* was an intellectual king, and dominated in the Assembly by the divine right of genius.

The victory of the Third Estate was certain from the first day. They were united, while their opponents were divided. On the first vote a large minority of the clergy favored the fusion of the orders. As this minority, however, contained only three Bishops, it is clear that it consisted chiefly of the inferior clergy. The majority itself was less firm in resistance than the nobility. They treated the delegations which were sent to them from the Third Estate with deference and respect; still they could not turn aside the inevitable democratic drift of things, which every-where stared them in the face. No stroke of policy or cunning was left untried. The most ingenious of all was the attempt to carry their point by surprise. Prices of food were enormously high, and the people in some places were on the point of famine. What could therefore seem more patriotic than, for a season, to adjourn their long political dissensions and attend at once to the furnishing of bread to the starving? Accordingly, under pretext of attending to this duty of charity, the body of the clergy voted unanimously, on the sixth of June, to appoint a committee to take into consideration the scarcity of grain, and invited the other two bodies to second them in this good work. Doubtless the minority voted for this measure with perfect honesty and patriotism;

* See Appendix, note 6.

as to the majority, however, it is perfectly evident that it was a cunning design to avoid the fusion of the orders by surprising them in advance into separate action. The scheme could not succeed. Bailly, the wise president of the Third Estate, replied to the proposition as follows: "The most ardent wish of the deputies of the people is to procure them relief. The resolution of the clergy justifies them in believing that that order shares with them in this wish, and will therefore not long delay to unite in a body with them, without which union the public distress must go on increasing forever." Thus, beaten on their own ground, the higher clergy looked elsewhere for help, and urged the King to despotic action. But fresh chagrin awaited them here. Commissioners had been appointed by the three orders to confer with those of the King, but their deliberations resulted in little. By this time the spirit of the hour had so far made progress among the clergy as to gain a majority. This majority now resolved on the first occasion to put their views into practice.

A royal session took place June 23. The King, surrounded by all the pomp of royalty, appeared in the Assembly, expressed much displeasure at the obstinacy of the Commons, made sundry threats to provide for the good of the nation without their help if they persisted in making trouble, enjoined the continuance of the separate action of the three orders, and on retiring ordered the Assembly to disperse. The nobility and clergy obeyed, but the Commons retained their seats. "That day," says Mignet, "the royal authority was lost." It was successfully disobeyed. "The Assembly

remained," said Sieyès, "what it had been from the first, that is, sovereign." The proud words of Mirabeau declared that the new right was stronger than the old. The King, urged on by the higher clergy and the nobility, had gone too far, and lost every thing. It was in vain that, in conformity with his direction, they persisted in meeting separately. Within a day or so the majority of the clergy and a large number of the nobility had joined the Commons, and the King, under the pressure of public opinion, ordered the remaining ones to do likewise.

The disaffected members of the clergy sought to provide for the future by protesting against the union they had reluctantly consented to. This was met by the withering words of Mirabeau, that no one could be a member of the Assembly who did not recognize its sovereignty. The former system of things had passed away. The only authority remaining consisted in the sovereignty of a deliberative assembly. By the 27th of June, we may say, the Revolution was consummated. Nothing of a more radical nature remained to be done than had already been accomplished.

As regards the Church of France, the changes were of a deep and wide-reaching nature. It was no longer an isolated order in the bosom of the State. Its organization was now to fall under the criticism and direction, not of its own ministers, but of the deputies of the nation. The great danger was that in the confusion of the temporal and spiritual spheres, the sanctity of the conscience might be violated.

As to the National Assembly, it seemed that it now had

nothing further to do than to enter on its great work of preparing a constitution for France. But it was necessary, first of all, to provide for its own safety. At this point a dangerous power came to its protection. This was the power of the populace, the mob. We do not censure all uprisings of the people; they are sometimes sublime and of good result. But in the state of the ignorance of the masses at the close of the eighteenth century, these explosions of public sentiment had the character of savage and intractable forces. The instructed classes breathe the fire of a legitimate indignation into the hearts of the brawny-armed masses, and imagine that they will stop their violence at the proper bounds; but this is rarely the case. The mad waves of wrath roll higher and higher, until both friends and foes are submerged in the general wreck. Moderate liberalists will always perish in the impure waters of demagogism, so long as they will not be wise enough to busy themselves fraternally with the elevation of the masses in times of peace. It is the just chastisement of their careless selfishness. Such is the great lesson to be learned from the stormy beginnings of the French Revolution. Certainly, when foreign troops were in camp at Versailles, ready brutally to disperse the National Parliament, it was right to seek protection in the populace of Paris; but the same element which saved the Assembly was destined afterward to constrain and crush it. The despotism of the street, once called into play, stopped not till it was the ruling power of the nation. We applaud the people who destroyed the Bastile; but it was the same people that afterward rev-

eled at the foot of the guillotine. We will see that the influence of the mob was never more imperious than at the time when the question of religion was discussed in the National Assembly.

Not that the people of Paris, at the opening of the Revolution, were hostile toward religion. On the contrary, they even mingled with the taking of the Bastille a vein of religious zeal. In destroying a prison which stood in connection with a convent, the mob spared the Sisters of Charity and respected their character. Irreligious passion was so far from being yet excited, that after the victory of the Bastille the people of Paris committed the opening Revolution to the patronage of St. Geneviève. They made a religious procession in gratitude to God for his help. Men, women, and children flocked with garlands and votive offerings to the tomb of the patroness of Paris. The citizens of the faubourg St. Antoine repaired to church preceded by young ladies in white and a large number of the clergy, and piously celebrated funeral services for those who had fallen at the Bastille. These dispositions, it is true, soon changed; but they show that at this point the hostility which was afterward so bitter against religion, and so destructive to liberty, had not yet penetrated the masses.

The night of the 4th of August will remain forever a glorious epoch in our history. It presented to the world an unprecedented example of patriotic enthusiasm and noble self-sacrifice—we might call it a sort of worldly Pentecost—so sudden and so great was the change. It presented the French character in one of its brightest, but also most perilous aspects. The nobility and high

clergy vied with each other in sacrificing on the altar of the country the privileges they had enjoyed from time immemorial. The scene was sublime; still we cannot forget that it is not by such exhibitions of momentary devotion that permanent changes are generally brought about in society. What one hour can do, another hour may undo. Despite all this, however, the night of the 4th of August remains an admirable moment.

The nobility had just renounced their feudal rights and privileges. Then the Bishop of Nancy arose to speak for the clergy. He declared that if any redemption was given in exchange for the privileges they were about to relinquish to the nation, it was his wish that it should not be to the profit of the ecclesiastical proprietor, but rather that it should be used as a public fund, in feeding and clothing the destitute. After him, the Bishop of Chartres demanded the abolition of the laws of the chase. The generous Gregory proposed the abrogation of the *annats*, an occasional tribute heretofore paid to the Pope. Several priests offered to the country the whole of their incomes. This grand session was terminated by an approval of the proposition of the Archbishop of Paris to sing a *Te Deum* in the chapel of the King. It was fitting that the name of God should be pronounced at the close of such a session. All that is grand or noble is from him. His breath had brooded over an assembly, the majority of whom were far from believing in his providence.

The clergy were scarcely aware of the gravity of the events just accomplished. This lay not so much in the sacrifices they had already made, as in the fact that the

whole question of the Church property was intimately connected with questions already settled. The clergy had unconsciously submitted the whole subject to the arbitration of a deliberative assembly. The day after the memorable session of August the 4th, the question of tithes presented itself in all its difficulties. It is true they were included among the other exceptional taxes which had been renounced forever; but the question remained, whether the renunciation was to be understood as absolute, or whether the tithes were to be redeemed in money or otherwise. Many of the clergy were of the latter opinion. Much troublesome discussion arose on the subject. Finally Deputy Buzot arose and uttered the following insolent words: "The best thing the clergy can do is to save appearances, and to seem to make, of their own accord, the heavy sacrifices which imperative circumstances will force upon them." Mirabeau pronounced, on the occasion, one of his finest speeches, in favor of the unconditional abolition of the tithes, and of the direct payment of the ministers of religion out of the general treasury. He was ably responded to by Sieyès, who, however, could not gain the majority. Finally the clergy saw that their cause was hopelessly lost. They yielded, and made the necessitated renunciation by the mouth of the venerable Archbishop of Paris. His words were worthy and noble. "We remit," said he, "all these ecclesiastical tithes into the hands of a generous and just nation. That the Gospel be preached, that divine worship be celebrated with dignity and propriety, and that the poor be provided for, these are the objects of our ministry. We have confidence in the Na-

tional Assembly." To imagine that the Church property could, after this, be saved to any degree whatever, was the most vain delusion—the cause was lost before the battle.

Let us terminate this chapter by a review of the opinions of the Constituent Assembly as to the liberty of conscience. The subject came up in connection with the declaration of the rights of man. The work of framing a constitution would not have been in harmony with the French genius had it not been prefaced by a chapter of philosophical generalities. One would suppose it to have been more necessary to enact good practical laws than to proclaim abstract rights, which are never a barrier to tyranny. Such a document has, moreover, the disadvantage of reducing past history to an abstraction, and of taking too little account of circumstances. It would have been better to follow the sentiment of Mirabeau, who said, "Liberty is never the fruit of principles drawn from metaphysical axioms, but rather of such as are drawn from the experience of daily life." But it was not to be expected that philosophy, which had made the Revolution, would retire from the field the very day of its own triumph. However, when the work of prefacing the constitution with these abstract rights was once undertaken, it would have been better, as Gregory reminded the Assembly, to make the work complete, and to remember, that "man was not cast into the world by chance; that if he has rights, it would be well to speak of Him who gave them; and that if he has duties, some mention should be made of Him who has established them." The declaration of rights was incomplete, and even dan-

gerous, without the declaration of duties. It was silent as to the rights of God. It was an attempt to be free without being just. If it is objected that a declaration of duties would have approached too closely the domain of religion, we answer, That is true. The safer way is, for political assemblies to abstain entirely from such philosophical abstractions. Their tendency is generally evil.

We are astonished, however, that these abstract statements should be so ambiguous on the point of the rights of conscience. But our astonishment ceases as soon as we reflect, on the one hand, on the influence of Bossuet on the opinions of the clerical members, and, on the other, on that of Rousseau on the philosophical party. The words of the declaration of rights which relate to the general subject of religion were as follows: "The law not being able to take cognizance of secret wrongs, it is for religion and morality to supply the defect. It is therefore essential for the good order of society that both be respected. The existence of a religion requires a public worship. Respect for the public worship is therefore indispensable. Every citizen who does not disturb the established worship should be unmolested." This statement admits one national religion, and only one. The vague reserve as to non-molestation was, in no respect, protection to dissenters. It was the application to Catholicism of the principles of the *Contrat Social*. The high clergy were very well satisfied. A bishop, in expressing his pleasure, observed that "religion is the basis of empires," and cited the words of Plutarch, that "it would be easier to build a city

in the air than to found a republic on any other principle than the worship of the gods." A lay deputy, La Borde, understanding the full drift of these words, uttered his earnest protest. "I avow," said he, "that I am afflicted at seeing Christians invoking the civil power in behalf of a religion which should be maintained only by the purity of its doctrine. Surely, earthly powers have nothing to do with religion. Liberty of religion is a right of every citizen. Let us respect other worships, that our own may be respected in return. Our worship should in no way interfere with the exercise of other religions." But the Assembly was not yet ripe for such opinions. At this point the powerful words of Mirabeau came to the aid of the good cause. The objectionable articles were rejected. M. de Castellane proposed to substitute the following: "No man shall be disturbed for his religious opinions, nor troubled in the exercise of his worship." This excited a violent opposition on the part of the Conservatives and Catholics, but it was bravely defended by Mirabeau and others. One of the most touching incidents of the debate was the appearance at the tribune of Rabaud St. Etienne,* the worthy son of the heroic and persecuted Protestant minister, Paul Rabaud. When he spoke the words, "I am the representative of a great people," one seemed to hear in him the voice of that vast multitude of Protestants who for ages had been oppressed, imprisoned, banished, and often put to death, by a State Church and an intolerant clergy. "He who attacks the liberty of others," said Rabaud, "deserves to live in slavery. A worship is a dogma; a dogma is a

* See Appendix, note 7.

matter of opinion, and opinions should be free. Instructed by the long and bloody experience of the past, it is time, finally, to break the unnatural barriers which separate man from man, Frenchman from Frenchman." He honored himself by joining to the cause of his own people that of the Jews. He concluded with the words, "My country is free; let her show herself worthy by according equal rights to all her children."

The Assembly closed the discussions by adopting an ambiguous half-way measure. It was to this effect: "No one shall be disturbed for his opinions, even religious ones, if their manifestation does not disturb the *public order established by law.*" Mirabeau expressed his displeasure at this resolution in a vehement newspaper article: "We cannot dissimulate our sadness that the National Assembly, instead of smothering intolerance in the germ, has placed it among the articles of the declaration of rights. Restrictive laws in matters of religion are absurd in themselves, for they require men of different intelligence to see evidence in the same dogmas, and truth in the same doctrines. Such laws are immoral; they create corrupt men who traffic in their faith. They are impious. What greater impiety than to interpose between man and God, and say to man, 'We forbid you to worship in this or that manner;' and to God, 'We forbid you to receive homage offered under any other form than our own?'" But we will not quote further. The great orator did his work earnestly and well, but in vain. Many of the abuses he exposed are still prevalent in France.

We have now finished what we had to say on the

treatment of the Church question in the first period of the Constituent Assembly. Most surely the majority of that great body was animated by a true love of liberty. Would to Heaven that this love had been as intelligent as it was ardent and sincere! The results obtained were very important. The Church was no longer a separate order in the State, and tolerance had been inscribed on the frontispiece of the constitution; but neither the independence of the Church nor the liberty of conscience had been truly understood or guaranteed. These first errors were destined to react in a most injurious manner on the deliberations of the succeeding year as to the organization of the Church.

CHAPTER II.

DISCUSSION ON THE PROPERTY OF THE CLERGY—ATTITUDE OF THE DIFFERENT PARTIES—SUPPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

THE reforms already made in Church matters naturally led to others of a more radical character, so much the more as the legislators of 1789 were governed, not by precedent, but by abstract principles. This method of procedure, so different from that of the English, leads often to chimerical and impracticable measures. The Church was the greatest proprietor of fiefs in the kingdom; she fell, therefore, under the influence of all the new laws which weakened and abrogated the feudal system. We must also take into account the financial distress of the nation. Every hour was bringing the country nearer the gulf of bankruptcy. The nation had in its hands an immense property, the title to which was not fully settled. Every temptation was, therefore, inciting the Constituent Assembly to examine the title of this property; and, if possible, to obtain it for the relief of the national treasury.

To a better understanding of the debates on this subject let us notice the condition of the Church property under the ancient monarchy. The primitive Church, in the heroic age of persecutions, lived simply but gloriously from the free gifts of the saints, content with

what was strictly necessary, and seeking abundance only in order to increase its acts of charity. These unconstrained donations amounted to large sums as soon as the Gospel obtained footing in large places, like Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome. With Constantine Christianity became an official religion, with rights of proprietorship, and was the recipient of imperial donations. It soon began to receive rich heritages from dying saints. Augustine cries out against the undue persuasion, so commonly practiced even in his day, to obtain testamentary gifts. It is well known how favorable to the increase of the wealth of the Church were the fears of an approaching end of the world, about the year 1000. It seemed very convenient to escape the wrath of God by gifts of lands, which the fires of the last judgment were soon to consume. The development of the monastic life also opened to the Church exhaustless sources of riches. As a result, the Church became the richest proprietor in all Catholic States. This was especially so in France. But the more these possessions increased the more they were bound up and inwoven in the civil government by an embarrassing net-work of special laws. We are less astonished at the acts of the French Assembly when we see to what an extent the Church possessions had for centuries been under the control of the chief of the State.

In former ages the King was the virtual bestower of many of the richly paid Church offices. To the most important of the benefices he made the appointments, since his nominations to the Pope were equivalent to elections. But it was especially in the administration

of the Church property that the hand of the State was felt. "The Church," says Fleury, "has neither the same liberty to purchase nor to sell real estate as is enjoyed by individuals." In the seventeenth century, it required a special authorization by the King to legalize either the alienation or the acquisition of real estate by the Church. We will see that the action of the Constituent Assembly in laying hand on this vast property was perfectly in harmony with precedents given in the reign of Louis XIV.

One month had elapsed since the famous night of the fourth of August. The decrees of the Assembly had excited, rather than satisfied, the passions of the people. The war against the castles had broken out on all sides. Insufficient harvests added to the public distress. The fearful debt increased from day to day. The financier Necker* was at his wits' end. His cry of alarm, taken up and resounded by the eloquent mouth of Mirabeau, revealed an appalling danger which admitted neither delay nor half measures. In the interval between two of Mirabeau's finest orations an unknown orator arose and proposed to demand of the clergy the sacrifice of the precious ornaments of the Church. This he declared would amount to 140,000,000 francs. Contrary to all expectation, the Archbishop of Paris arose and declared that the clergy was ready to sacrifice all except so much as was necessary for the dignity of the worship. The clergy wished at any price to avoid the debate on the title of the real estate of the Church. The cry of distress of a whole people, however, overcame the hesita-

* See Appendix, note 8.

tion of the Assembly, and the dreaded question was broached. Unfortunately, views of expediency and immediate utility prevailed too much to the detriment of justice and safe policy.

In an address drawn up in the name of the Assembly by Mirabeau, soliciting patriotic donations, it was argued at length that the wealth of the Church, in being turned to the defense and safety of the country, would not be perverted from its original destination, namely, that of benefiting the people. It was but a provision laid up for such a time of need as the present. It was, therefore, only an act of piety for the clergy to come to the public relief. On the eleventh of October, 1789, the formal proposition to take possession of the property of the Church was for the first time submitted to the Constituent Assembly; and by a curious freak of destiny, the motion was made by one of her own sons, a youthful Bishop, who represented in his own person the two privileged orders of the nation. It was from the disdainful mouth of Talleyrand that the bold words fell, to the great scandal of his caste, but to the applause of all the representatives of young France. Talleyrand was the mouth-piece of the Committee of Twelve, which had been appointed to discuss the securities for a loan of 80,000,000 francs. He declared that the other resources of the nation were insufficient; that it was necessary to appropriate the property of the Church; that the State had the same right over the clergy as over other corporations; that it might revoke their privileges if need be; and that if the State provided for the maintenance of the clergy in a direct manner, the

design of the donors of the Church property would not be interfered with, nor the dictates of justice violated. Two days afterward Mirabeau, unwilling to see himself outdone in radical measures, proposed the decreeing of the following principles: "First, that the ownership of the property of the clergy belongs to the nation on condition that it provides for the support of the clerical order; and, second, that the disposition of this property be such that no curate shall receive annually less than 1,200 francs, with lodging." It was well that the question was thus presented in all its completeness. The debate lasted three weeks. It had previously, however, been thoroughly discussed by the press. The able pens of Turgot, Sieyès, and Servan had shared in the work.

The discussion in the Assembly began, as usual, with philosophical generalities, and this was perhaps its most dangerous feature, for what property is it whose original title will bear the test of metaphysical examination? The Abbot Maury replied to the Assembly with pertinence: "I will prove to you that with these principles you will bring us to an agrarian law. In fact, as often as you go back to the origin of property the nation will go back with you. The people will place themselves at the epoch when they left the forests of Germany, and demand a new division of lands."

Three groups of opinions were presently observable in the Assembly: first, the party which opposed all concession and real reform; second, the extreme radical party, which took no account of circumstances, and saw only the danger and wants of the government; and,

third, the cautious reformers. These groups are known as the parties of the right, the left, and the middle. The right was, naturally, formed of the higher clergy, together with the nobility. They committed too often the fault of confounding the cause of the Church property with that of religion itself. "The sale of our property will remedy nothing," said the Bishop of Clermont. "Soon there would remain neither ministers nor religion." The Archbishop of Aix was of the same opinion, but he admitted the necessity of important reforms, provided they could be made canonically. One is at first astonished to find on the extreme left, in opposition to the high clergy, quite a number of curates. But the lower clergy had suffered enough in the past at the hands of the high dignitaries to dampen their zeal in defense of privileges from the enjoyment of which they had been carefully excluded. The Abbot Gouttes said in plain terms that the riches of the clergy had done much evil to the cause of religion "by extending the contempt, due only to certain Church dignitaries, to all the Pastors without distinction." The Deputies of the left maintained that the clergy were not the possessors of the Church property, but only its administrators. The honest and eloquent Barnave* declared from the start that the clerical order existed only for the State; that the State could dissolve it at its will, and seize and administer the property at its pleasure. The discussion made a rapid advance when the juriconsult Thouret entered the arena. He raised the gravest objection to the title of the Church to its property, in maintaining

* See Appendix, note 9.

that it differed entirely from the title of individuals. "Individuals, existing before civil law, have rights which they hold from nature; such is the right of property. All corporate bodies, however, exist by civil law, and their rights depend on law, and may be modified by law. The legislative power has consequently complete power over them." The inferences from these principles were soon drawn by the whole Assembly. A Deputy declared that the State was not only the competent master of religion, but that it even might abolish the Christian religion, together with its worship, and establish another more moral one in its place, provided such a one could be found. "It is fitting," said he in finishing, "that the priests be salaried by the nation; if they are proprietors they may be too independent." In these opinions we find a strange mingling of truth with error, the whole showing how much the evil genius of the *Contrat Social* prevailed in the Legislature. Petion* produced a breeze in the Assembly by boldly exposing the moral disadvantages of the riches of the clergy. "Is it not," asked he, "the immense wealth of the priests which has corrupted their morals?" Cries of "order" were heard; but Camus, the Jansenist, who was presiding, declared that he could not call a speaker to order for uttering what was printed all over the nation.

Between these two extreme parties a third opinion, wiser and more moderate, was held and defended. The statesman Malouet, and the Abbots Gregory and Gouttes, were the chief speakers. Malouet expressed great fear of the evil effects of alienating the affections of the

* See Appendix, note 10.

clergy from the popular cause, at a time when the Assembly so much needed their aid to make the passage easy from the old to the new state of things. He argued that it was precisely because of the popular fury against the property of the Church that the legislative Assembly should be more cautious in its action. He proposed to leave to the Church as much as was strictly necessary to support the expenses of the clergy, and to appropriate all the rest to the uses of the State. This proposition was surely a wise and just mean between the radical extremes, but it found little favor amid the passions of the hour. It must be confessed that the priests did many things to irritate and excite their opponents. They circulated, for example, a pretended petition of the poor of various parishes, against any sale of Church property on the plea that thus they would be shut off from the abundant alms which from time immemorial they had received from the hands of the Church. To bring the discussion finally to a termination it was necessary that Achilles should come out of his tent. It was for Mirabeau to close the debate, and carry the majority with him. It is to be regretted that his weight was thrown into the ultra-radical scale. Had his voice been for conciliation he might have saved his country from many misfortunes; but he was the chief of a party, and, therefore, very dependent. He pleaded with great eloquence and dialectical skill for the popular cause; but he was not careful enough in guarding the rights of conscience, and could not get rid of the notion, that it was necessary to have an official religion under the surveillance of the State. His mo-

tion was carried on the fifth of November, under the following form: "All the property of the clergy is at the disposal of the nation on condition that it shall provide in a fitting manner for the expenses of worship, the maintenance of its ministers, and the necessities of the poor. As to the dispositions to be made for the ministers of religion, they shall be paid each not less than one thousand two hundred francs, not including lodging and the use of a garden."

Before pronouncing judgment on the justice of this revolutionary decree, let us remind the detractors of the French Revolution that in this measure it did nothing which is not justified by the principles of the ancient monarchy. We have the proof in a remarkable work which was compiled by the Master of Requests, at the express order of Louis XIV., for the purpose of ascertaining the rights of the crown in ecclesiastical matters. The conclusion reached by this author is, that except in cases of pressing necessity the goods of the Church cannot be alienated without the concurrence of the Church itself. But these restrictions fall entirely away in cases of urgent necessity. "For example," says he, "when an invasion of an enemy is to be repulsed, it cannot be denied that the King has the right to use the property of the Church as well as other property for the defense of the State." It is well known that, acting on these principles, Michault proposed an alienation of a portion of the property of the Church in the year 1749. The Constituent Assembly, in its boldest decrees, did nothing more than act on the same principle; it simply laid hand on the property of the Church in a case of most

urgent national necessity. Talleyrand and Mirabeau acted on the principles of Louis XIV.

We cannot deny the special right of the State to control the Church so far as it is a corporate body. If the State gave to corporations the same immunities as to individuals, they would soon become master of the State itself, from the fact that their property, not being liable to the vicissitudes of inheritance, would accumulate very rapidly, and to an unlimited extent. They would absorb the chief part of the wealth of the State. For this reason religious corporations have always been placed, in France, under the strict surveillance of the laws. They have existed only by special royal permits. Now it cannot be denied that the State has the right, if it sees fit, to withdraw its authorization, and dissolve these small corporate bodies. Of course, however, it has not the right to suspend an essential liberty; the general good does not permit it to interfere with the rights of the conscience, or to forbid the individual or collective manifestation of the religious belief of its citizens. Thus religion in none of its forms should depend on the pleasure of the State. The State should neither authorize nor interdict it, for in so doing it interferes with an original right of the conscience. The priests, who were indignant at the alienation of the goods of the Church, ought much more to have manifested their holy horror at the alienation of the rights of conscience, by a State Church, under the ancient monarchy. This was a much greater profanation than that committed by the Constituent Assembly. Religion, however inviolable in itself, is so no longer when it

becomes a vast political corporation, and the proprietor of a large portion of the soil of a nation. In this respect it falls under the power of the State, and grows in dependence as its possessions increase. The political element in its constitution subjects it to the fluctuating influence of political systems. When every thing about it is undergoing reform it surely cannot remain untouched, unless it be true that one age can establish institutions which no future generation can change, and, as M. Laboulaye well observes, unless it be a fact that the earth no longer belongs to the living, but to the dead. It is not less evident that one generation should not have to bear all the expenses of reforms which it could not avoid, and which centuries of abuse have rendered necessary. If, therefore, in the present case the State had a right to alienate the goods of the Church, it remains to be seen whether it used its right wisely, and, above all, whether it chose the best means of providing for public worship.

It was to the interest of the Revolution, while intervening in the affairs of the Church, to avoid as much as possible the alienation of the affections of so powerful a class as the ministers of the altar. Those who thought that at the close of the eighteenth century the Christian Church was incapable of deeply agitating and endangering the peace of the country, were sadly mistaken. They judged the whole of the nation by the frivolous drawing-rooms of Paris. Despite the scandals of the high clergy, and the incredulity of the educated classes, the religious sentiment was still the most powerful element with which the Revolution had to contend. And

now that the people had fallen into trials and sufferings, it was sensibly regaining its natural strength. The radical measures of the Assembly were well fitted to strengthen both the real religion and the fanaticism of the people and clergy, for now they could plausibly believe themselves the objects of injustice and persecution. Religion is always instinctively sought by the suffering and wronged. It was not in the power of the Assembly to give the people a new religion in place of the old one. It was, therefore, a great political blunder to take at once such a radical step against the time-honored immunities of the clergy. The needed property could have been obtained in a much more conciliatory way. It is assuredly to the interest both of Church and State that they be independent of each other. Now had some such proposition as that of Malouet been adopted, the most of the property might have been obtained for the relief of the country, and the rest set apart for the support of the ministers of the Church, leaving the management of it to the clergy, and thus freeing the State from its troublesome and dangerous connection with the Church. A willingness to such a step had finally been expressed, even by the high clergy. Thus the question of Church and State would have been wisely and at once settled, and religion in France would have been in the happy condition it has so long enjoyed in the United States. This is the solution for which Cavour, the great statesman of modern Italy, strove so earnestly—namely, a free Church in a free State.

It was not so much to establish a principle as to raise funds that the Assembly had voted the alienation of the

goods of the Church. The work, therefore, of putting the decree into practical effect soon began. The Committee which had been formed on the twentieth of August, 1789, to prepare the part of the constitution which had relation to the Church, was now furnished with an immense increase of business. It had to prepare plans for the sale and management of the Church property, and for the support and reorganization of the Church. Composed at first of fifteen members, it was afterward increased. It embraced men of every shade of opinion. This Committee was subdivided into three sections, the one being charged with the reconstruction of the Church constitution, and the other two with the administration of the confiscated property. These sections went to work with great zeal, and it is in accordance with their recommendations that those measures of the Assembly were decreed which threw the Church into distress and anarchy.

In November the Assembly ordered the Church property to be put under the charge of the King and of the courts, and advised the King to make for the present no more appointments to benefices. On the motion of an Abbot a decree was issued requiring all who possessed benefices to present, before the courts, a detailed list of all the chattels and real estate of the Church in their possession. This declaration, after having been posted in the parish churches, was to be returned to the Assembly. These motions indicated the firm intention of the nation to make use of the new resources which had fallen into its hands.

After a hot debate, in which some of the high clergy

distinguished themselves in vain, the Assembly decreed, on the 20th of December, the immediate sale of Church property to the amount of four hundred million francs, to serve as a basis for the issue of paper money. It was observed facetiously by some of the Deputies, that this disembarassing the clergy of temporal cares would facilitate the return of the Church to her golden age. The Assembly now took possession also of the royal domain. Truly may we say, a great gulf had been created between ancient and modern France.

One of the first cares of the Ecclesiastical Committee was to recommend to the Assembly the abolition of the monastic orders, which at this time covered the entire country. It was a complex question. The laws had covered the religious vows with their powerful sanction. But public opinion urged to the reform. The monastic life, once useful in converting and enlightening the people, had fallen into a decline which its most eloquent apologist, Montalembert, has had the frankness to admit and bewail. Living in idleness, the monks had too often led lives of vice and shame. Those employed in education shared more indulgence than the others. Still, it is quite certain that they taught Latin better than religion. Voltaire and the infidels of his age had been taught in their colleges. Doubtless there remained yet in the cloisters some genuine piety; still, the opposition to the convents increased from day to day. Voltaire had attacked them with power. Diderot had satirized and turned them into ridicule. His influence was manifest in more than one discourse in the National Assembly. The abolition of the order of Jesuits in France, and the

numerous suppressions of monasteries in Austria by Joseph II., had prepared the way for a more radical reform in France.

The debates on this branch of reform were opened in the Assembly on the 22d of February, 1790. Camus, Gregory, and all the Jansenists, pleaded the cause of the orders. The high clergy protested that the monks were the most useful auxiliaries of the Church. The Bishop of Nancy attempted to turn attention from the main question by moving that the Assembly declare the Catholic religion to be the national religion, but he only succeeded in calling upon his head a shower of wrath from Charles Lameth.* Pétion and others spoke of the convents almost in the strain of Diderot. It was finally decreed that the law should no longer recognize the monastic vows, and that the monks should thenceforth be free to abandon or to remain in the convents, as should seem to them best. On motion of Thouret the religious orders were suppressed, and new ones forbidden to be introduced into France. This was a violent infringement of the rights of conscience; it was forbidding the free exercise of certain forms of religious association.

The convents of women had not yet been touched. It now remained to fix the pensions of such monks as should break their vows and leave the cloisters. It was for some time debated as to whether all should be paid the same sum, or whether account should be taken of their previous incomes; whether the rich Benedictine should receive only as much as the mendicant Capuchin. Before the matter was settled, Robespierre † had shown

* See Appendix, note 11.

† *Ibid.*, note 12.

how much justice was to be expected from the demagogue party by declaring that, in his opinion, if any distinction was to be made, it should be in favor of the begging orders—that is, inversely to their previous receipts. The pension was finally fixed at eight hundred francs for the mendicant monks, and nine hundred for the non-mendicants. It is a remarkable fact, that on motion of Gregory, the Jansenist, and Barnave, the Protestant, the Jesuits were included in this arrangement. The same principle was subsequently applied to the monks who should remain in the cloisters not confiscated.

There remained yet to be discussed in the Assembly a question which was destined to excite the most violent storm, namely, to determine into whose hands should be placed the administration of the alienated Church property. The memorable debate opened on the 9th of April, 1790. Chasset read a report from the Ecclesiastical Committee. It was the death-knell of the ancient constitution of the Gallican Church. It recommended the appropriation of the whole of the Church property, on the plea of the pressing wants of the nation, and on condition of the payment of the clergy by direct tax. "Worship," said he, "is a duty of all. All are supposed to share in it, for the temple of the Lord is open to all. The sacred police, just like the army of defense, is maintained for the benefit of all. It is just and constitutional to make all contribute to the expense of worship by means of a tax on all." Chasset proposed that the Church property be administrated for the time being by the provincial Assemblies, that all tithes cease to be paid from the first of January of the next year, and that from

the same date the clergy be salaried by the State. He stated that the Committee had already estimated the sum total of these salaries at 133,884,800 francs; a sum which showed that the Assembly would make a large saving on the former amounts indirectly paid to the Church, and at the same time suppress many crying abuses.

The high clergy regarded these propositions as in the highest degree inimical to their order, which had hitherto lived on the income of its own domains. They therefore attacked them with as much passion as if they had involved the subversion of religion itself. Some of them indulged in such extravagant cries of holy horror, and in such invocations to God, as to make the impression that they thought more of their rich incomes than of the essence of religion itself. An obscure Deputy had scarcely begun to point out the happy effects of freeing the clergy from their temporal cares, when his voice was drowned by the murmurs of the Conservatives. Abbot Gregory argued, in a very sensible discourse, in favor of leaving to the Church enough to support itself, but such moderate opinions had no chance of success. The contest was between the right wing, which wished to preserve the Church as a rich corporation, and the radical left, which desired to reduce it to a mere department of the government. The latter spoke with the cold defiance of those who are assured, in advance, of the victory. "When religion," said Thouret, "sent forth into society her ministers, she did not say to them, Go, prosper and get rich. No! she said to them, Preach my word and my principles. As to their temporal subsistence, she simply said, It is right that the priests shall live of the altar.

Now we, the legislators of France, have said, in strict conformity to these words, The public functionary shall live of his functions." This expresses exactly the essence of the new State Church scheme. It is its greatest condemnation that it reduces the clergy to the condition of mere hirelings. We see here, in germ, the whole civil constitution of the clergy, which was afterward to do so much harm.

As the discussion advanced, the opposition and excitement of the Church party grew more intense. They trembled with indignation, rather than argued. Appeals to the God of their fathers were heard on every hand. The Archbishop of Aix terminated his harangue by quoting to the Assembly the words of an ancient bishop, "You may rob us of our goods, but we will not give them to you." At this point in the debate an incident occurred which threw all Paris into the wildest excitement. Dom Gerle, a Carthusian monk, perfectly sincere in his religion as well as in his attachment to the Revolution, undertook to conciliate the parties by moving that the Assembly quiet the fears of the Church by decreeing that the Catholic religion was, and should always remain, the sole authorized and national worship of the French. The gravity of such a decree could not escape the attention of the Assembly, for it involved an absolute denial of the rights of conscience. The motion was hailed by the party of the right with the warmest enthusiasm. Abbot Maury was heard, on retiring from the hall, to exclaim, in confidence of the success of the motion, "We have them!" It was attempted to carry it without discussion, and, as it were, by surprise. The Bishop of

Clermont, forgetting that he was not in his pulpit, declared that a Christian ought to be ready to confess his faith as soon as called on, and that a Catholic assembly ought not to wait to discuss that which should spring from spontaneous feeling. One of the members invoked to aid, on this important occasion, the venerable names of Clovis, Charlemagne, and St. Louis. Charles Lameth rose and sarcastically asked where was the necessity of demanding a profession of faith of an Assembly "which had realized the first principle of the Gospel by humiliating the proud and taking under its protection the lowly and the feeble. Has it not verified the words of Christ, that the first should be last?" This taunt was in no way calculated to calm the partisans of Dom Gerle's motion. They insisted on the putting of the motion, and so much the more as they saw Mirabeau about to arise to speak. The majority had the greatest difficulty in adjourning the question till the next day. The members of the right would not leave their seats, and it was long after the adjournment before they left the hall. When they did go, it was to concoct a theatrical stroke for the coming session.

The news of the affair ran like wildfire throughout the city of Paris. The magic pen of Camille Desmoulins* denounced the scheme of the clergy in language which caused, at the same time, laughter and terror. His journal, scattered widely through the city by the "three hundred patriotic trumpets of the newsboys," informed the people of Paris that the Deputies of the right were assembled in the church of the Capuchins, to concert a

* See Appendix, note 13.

plan for obtaining a decree, in to-morrow's Assembly, which would establish anew the alliance of the Throne and the Altar. And in fact such a meeting did take place. It was decided that if the motion of Dom Gerle was rejected, the party of the right would in a body leave the Assembly hall, and, traversing the Tuileries, place in the hands of the King a solemn protest against the wicked refusal. To give greater eclat to their protestation they agreed to repair to the coming session habited in black, and with swords at their sides. But the Court feared the effect of such a step, and informed them that the King would not receive them. At the same hour the excitement was not less at the headquarters of the party of the left, namely, at the Jacobin Club, at the Palais-Royal, and at the coffee-houses.

Bailly and Lafayette, fearing a bloody collision, doubled the police, and stationed large bodies of troops around the hall of the Assembly. But the crowd occupied every spot that was left vacant. The deputies of the right, on approaching the hall, were saluted with jeers and hisses. The populace were indignant in the extreme. It is impossible to reproduce the varied features of this stormy debate, the sharp cross-firing, the countless interruptions, and the endless calls to order. Sometimes large fractions of the Assembly sprang to their feet as one man, and vociferated the same cry. Amid all the confusion, however, it was plain that only two leading opinions were uttered, namely, that of the adherents of a national Church, and that of the friends of religious liberty. A few noble words fell from the lips of Baron Menou. He said that however much he

loved the Catholic religion for his own part, yet it would not follow from that that he should wish to impose it on all his fellow-citizens. "My opinion," said he, "is my own. Why should I wish to make *my* religion the dominant one? Open your annals and see what evils have come of religious wars. Shall the National Assembly become the instrument of the misfortunes of the people? Ministers of religion, return to your functions. Proclaim a system, to the glory of which human laws can add nothing. Do not put carnal weapons into the hands of God."

Amid the increasing storm an attempt was made to calm the spirits. It was moved to declare "that the majesty of religion and the honor due to it are such as to forbid making it the object of a legislative debate;" but the right regarded this as adding hypocrisy to insult. When a member, in the interest of the Church party, called to mind the oath made by Louis XIV. in 1675, to maintain the Catholic religion to the exclusion of every other, the great Mirabeau could not restrain his indignation. "I am not surprised," said he, "that references are made to a reign in which the Edict of Nantes was revoked. Doubtless it affords examples of all sorts of intolerance; but consider. From this tribune from which I address you I see that fatal window where a King, the murderer of his people, mingling worldly with religious matters, fired the signal gun for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. I will say no more; there is no ground for hesitation." After further discussion the motion of Dom Gerle was withdrawn, and the Assembly declared by a vote that, having no authority over the

conscience, or over religious opinions, and having given sufficient proof of its attachment to the Catholic Church in agreeing to salary its ministers out of the public treasury, it would now proceed to the legitimate business of the day.

In the evening the popular excitement was again intense. The democratic press teemed with contemptuous onslaughts on the clergy. Another clerical reunion took place. It was proposed formally to denounce to the nation the un-Catholic temper of the Assembly. A mob, however, surrounded the Church, and under pretext of serving the cause of liberty, violated one of its sacred rights by insulting the priests as they retired. They had not had time to draw up a formal protest, but they went forth, each determined to use to the utmost his personal influence.

The debate as to the Church property continued. Several priests frankly admitted the abuses which riches had caused to religion. An Abbot had the shamelessness to say in reply to them, that a religion of poverty, like Christianity at the start, might be good enough for a people of slaves cowering under the lashes of their master, and needing the consolations of heaven as an offset against the sufferings of this life, but that none but a wealthy religion could obtain consideration in a flourishing kingdom like France. The result of the whole deliberation was, that the Assembly adopted the recommendations of Chasset, and sanctioned the principle of salarizing the priests.

The conclusion thus arrived at was self-contradictory. The Assembly had rightly refused to proclaim a na-

tional religion, and yet it had adopted measures for creating a civil, a state religion. In treating religion thus, like the magistracy or the police, it did almost the very thing it wished to avoid when it refused to proclaim a national Church. But the principle of the distinction of the spiritual and the temporal powers had been emphatically consecrated. Mirabeau admirably resumed the result of the deliberations, when he exclaimed "that the Assembly was no longer theological, but national." We shall have frequent occasion to refer to the evils resulting from an imperfect solution of these religious troubles. The abolition of a powerful system, which had lived by privilege and oppression, was surely a precious conquest; but the infringement of the principle of religious freedom, committed by the Assembly when it entangled the Church again in the meshes of politics by salarizing its ministers, exerted an unfortunate influence as well on the Church as on the cause of liberty in general. The principle of religious equality for all Churches had, however, been sanctioned, if not in point of salary, yet in point of fact.

The Assembly could not have adopted the motion of Dom Gerle without putting itself in flat contradiction with itself in respect to the action it had taken in favor of the Protestants, and another still more misused class of society, the Jews. A decree had been adopted in December, 1789, declaring the Protestants eligible to all civil offices without exception. Subsequently, rights of citizenship were decreed to all the descendants of refugee Protestants who would return to France. In March, 1790, Rabaut St. Etienne, the worthy son of the

aged Huguenot preacher of the desert, on whose head a price had so often been set, wrote a letter to the latter which contained these words: "The President of the National Assembly is at your feet." He had been elected to the chair of that great body, but it was some time still before all barriers against the Jews were broken down. Why should we wonder at this? Had not free England still refused them a real part in political life by imposing an oath at the doors of Parliament which no Jew could take? Let us recognize it, to the honor of Robespierre, that from the very first he refused to favor any law of exception to the disadvantage of this despised people. In December, 1789, he said: "The vices of the Jews spring from the debased condition into which you have plunged them. I think we should deprive no individual of this class of the sacred rights which belong to him as man. His cause is the general cause. We ought to decree the principle." Another Deputy uttered these noble words: "Let us leave the conscience free. Either do not make it a civil offense to direct the thoughts and feelings to Heaven in this or that manner, or be consistent—proclaim a national religion, arm it with the sword, and blot out your declaration of the rights of man." The sharpest opponents of the Jews were the clergy. Even Mirabeau was carried over into the opposition. It was only after many delays, after receiving and rejecting many petitions from Jews in all parts of France, that in September, 1791, the Assembly braved the current of prejudice, and did full justice to this class of society. The Comedians did not have to wait as long as the Jews to be

recognized as citizens; but Abbot Maury could not avoid the temptation to make a display of opposition. He forgot that the most contemptible of all comedians is he who hides under a priestly garb the whole nest of worldly passions.

Such was the general position of the Constituent Assembly on the question of religious liberty and the rights of conscience.

CHAPTER III.

THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY—THE ASSEMBLY TRANSFORMED INTO A COUNCIL.

THE day the Assembly decreed to salary the priests as officers of public morality it assumed the obligation of giving to the Church a new civil constitution. The first fault led to the second. It was a deplorable mistake for a political assembly to meddle with the work of a Church council. The civil constitution given by the Assembly to the Catholic Church of France was the joint offspring of the Jansenists and the free thinkers. On the one side it was a just chastisement of a haughty establishment, which, though having lost the fervor of its primitive faith, yet persisted in all its former bigotry and intolerance; but on the other, it was a violent infringement on religious liberty, and occasioned as well as justified a most earnest and dangerous opposition. The Jansenists, who were numerous in the Assembly, taking advantage of the occasion, undertook, in league with the politicians, to frame a constitution for the Church which should embody all of their favorite notions as to the only proper and primitive Church system. They exerted the preponderating influence in the Ecclesiastical Committee, and the plan of the new Church constitution was presented to the Assembly by Martineau, one of the most respectable adherents of

that sect. The Assembly now became a theological battle-field. The combatants were the two parties which for ages had divided the French Church, and the audience and judges of the contest were the disciples of Voltaire and Rousseau. Surely it was a strange place to determine questions of Christian doctrine.

Before noticing the debate let us give the outlines of the proposed Church constitution. It interfered with the old bishoprics, and gave entirely new boundaries to the ecclesiastical districts, adopting the new political division into eighty-three departments. All bishoprics lying outside of these limits were suppressed. The kingdom embraced only ten metropolitan districts. It was unlawful for any French citizen to recognize in any way the authority of any Bishop or Metropolitan, in person or by delegate, whose see lay in the jurisdiction of any foreign power. This article amounted almost to an abolition of the Papal authority over the French Church. Many titles and offices were suppressed. The cathedral church became a mere parish church. The seminaries were reduced to the number of bishoprics. A much more radical measure was that which took from the bishop the sovereign power in his own diocese, and associated with him a permanent council composed of the vicars and the seminary directors, without whose co-operation he could perform no official act. The parishes were reduced also. Towns containing no more than six thousand inhabitants could have only one. The plan was very revolutionary as to the mode of distributing church offices, for it substituted, in place of the canonical forms, the method of popular election at the ballot-

box. No religious test was required, and the same ticket might contain candidates for civil as well as for religious offices. Protestants and Jews could vote as well as Catholics. The vote was to take place immediately after the Sunday morning mass. The Metropolitan had the right to examine the Bishop elect; and the Bishop, the newly elected Curate. But neither of them could hinder the candidate elected from entering upon his functions, except by consent of his council; and even then the rejected ones enjoyed a large liberty of appeal. The Bishop could choose his colleagues or Vicars only within the bounds of his own diocese, and on fixed conditions. He could eject them from office only after deliberation with his council, and by a majority of the votes. As to the salaries, they were considerably reduced from the customary figures. The Bishop of Paris alone received fifty thousand francs. The salaries of the other Bishops varied from twenty to twelve thousand francs, according to the importance of the bishopric. Every Church officer was required to reside in the field of his labors, and was placed under the surveillance of the municipal authorities.

This sketch of the proposed civil constitution of the clergy, is enough to show its deeply revolutionary character. It is in vain that the apologists of the French Revolution attempt to excuse it. In vain is it urged, that much of the plan is in harmony with the practice of the primitive Church. It was an excuseless abuse of power for a political assembly to impose it on the Church. But the blame should fall partly on the Church herself. She was too slow in undertaking the work of self-refor-

mation. What a misfortune for the Church of France, that she did not sooner share the spirit of reform which animated the generation of 1789!

The discussion of the project of the Church constitution opened May 29th, 1790. Little dignity of temper was manifested. The High-church party had expended their sublimest flights of eloquence in supporting the motion of Dom Gerle. It produced little effect to go through the same protestations a second time. It was equally vain for them, on different occasions, to rise in a body and leave the hall. These sudden secessions to the Sacred Mount, and equally sudden returns, became at last ludicrous. The Archbishop of Aix expressed, with deep emotion, the grief and indignation of his party. He said, with justice: "Religious truths are at stake. The purely spiritual jurisdiction is involved. The Church alone can govern the spiritual." Treilhard sustained the project with his cold and relentless argumentation. He pointed out the justice of a scheme which abolished some of the crying abuses of the old system. It was much better to elect the Bishops by simple vote than to subject their appointment to all the scandalous intrigues of a corrupt court. The successor of Judas had been elected by popular vote. All of this was true enough, but it did not touch the essential part of the question, namely, the right of a political assembly to impose its laws on the Church. Several Curates argued in favor of the project with a great show of patriotic texts and of citations from Church history. An important feature in this debate was the intervention of Robespierre. He supported the proposed plan on the principles, and with

all the intolerance, of Rousseau. A civil religion was one of Rousseau's most cherished ideas. Desirous of securing to the multitude an unlimited sovereignty, which he mistook for liberty, he saw that the greatest danger thereto would arise from those free beliefs of the soul which are beyond the reach of the despotism of the majority. He had, therefore, in his ideal republic, sacrificed the liberty of conscience to his hundred-headed idol the populace, and conferred on the latter the right of imposing a religion on the whole population on pain of banishment or death. Robespierre defended these fine maxims at the bar of the Assembly with all the assurance of a popular demagogue. He argued that it belonged to the Assembly to determine what and how many churchly functions should be permitted in the land. He even went so far as to insinuate that the people had the right to give wives to their priests, in order to identify their interest more closely with that of the nation. This was to commit the highest outrage on the religious conscience; and it was easy to see how little would remain to God when the Cæsar of demagogism had obtained all that he claimed.

After the usual amount of discussion, the proposed civil constitution of the clergy was adopted almost as at first presented. The article forbidding to recognize the authority of foreign Bishops was so modified as to work no prejudice to the unity of the faith, and to the communion with the visible head of the Church. But the only communion now possible was of a mystical character. When it was objected that the primitive popular elections were held among the members of the Church,

and not among a confused mass of the populace, it was ruthlessly replied by Robespierre, that the people of France were fully competent to elect their priests, and that they were equally as pure as the clergy. One of the articles, which was voted almost without debate, was pregnant with trouble and commotion. It required the newly elected clergy to swear fidelity to the nation, and to support with all their power the National Constitution voted by the Assembly. This Constitution was not simply political, but involved also the organization of the Church; and such an oath was calculated to awake the most serious religious scruples. The thought which pervaded the whole of this Church scheme was well expressed by Camus when he said: "The Church is in the State, the State is not in the Church. We are a National Convention; surely we have a right to change the religion." But this was to forget that liberty consists, not in extending the sovereignty of the State, but rather in limiting it, in checking it to the profit of personal liberty. The result will show that the most democratic of governments cannot infringe with impunity on the sacred domain of private belief.

A question remained to be settled, namely, whether the article relating to the salaries of the priests should be retroactive, or whether it should affect only those who should be elected in the future. Should it be applied to high functionaries who had entered orders on conditions the abrogation of which they could not have foreseen? After a lively discussion, and despite the ridiculous protest of a certain Deputy, in favor of a financial compensation for the unfortunates who had vowed an eternal

isolation from the fair sex, the article was pronounced retroactive. It was decreed that from the 1st of January, 1791, such salaries of Archbishops and Bishops as did not exceed twelve thousand francs should suffer no reduction, and that those exceeding that sum should be reduced to twelve thousand francs *plus* the half of the excess of the previous amount over that sum, provided that the whole should not exceed thirty thousand francs. The only exception was the Archbishop of Paris, who was allowed seventy-five thousand francs. Such was the famous Constitution of the Clergy as finally amended and adopted. We may add that it was put into operation as soon as decreed.

It is just to offer, in excuse of the Revolution, the fact that this scheme of Church organization is nothing more than a rigid application of the maxims of the ancient monarchy. It was simply ultra-Gallicanism. An examination of the report already mentioned, concerning the power of the King in Church affairs, which was drawn up for Louis XIV. by one of his masters of requests, M. Le Vayer de Boutigny, furnishes sufficient evidence of this fact. This wise lawyer distinguishes in the Church two bodies, the mystical and the political. All that relates to the latter belongs to the King without dispute. But the King is not only magistrate, he is also protector of the Church. In the latter character he has a wide sway over the mystical body also. He does not touch the creed so far as it is merely theoretical, but as soon as it manifests itself in public acts it falls under his direction. He must watch that the Gospel be not so preached as to work detriment

to the laws or to the loyalty of his subjects. The precise time and manner of preaching is not essential to salvation, therefore "the King has the power to regulate the choice of the person who preaches, as well as the place and hour of the preaching." Prayer is necessary, but it must be regulated and authorized by the King. Church councils are necessary, but it is the right of the King to authorize them, to convoke them, and even to dissolve them, when they cause trouble. In fine, there is scarcely a single function of the Church which does not, in one way or other, fall under the power of the King. What he cannot do as magistrate he may well assume to perform as protector. According to this royal counselor the Church is like a ship; the helm is in the hands of the spiritual authority, but the captain who gives the orders is the State. The comparison is worthy the age of Louis XIV., and reveals the spirit of the system. The boldest measures of the French Revolution in regard to the Church were thus justified, in advance, by abundant governmental precedent.

No one, however, thought of this, or acted from these reasons. The parties were divided into two hostile camps. On the one side were the sticklers for the old order of things; on the other, the reformers, who were still too much under the domination of tradition. The former imagined that the foundations of society were overturned, when in fact only the maxims of their fathers were turned against them; but their exasperation knew no bounds, and an opposition sprang up in all France which was destined to provoke the Assembly to further injustice and violence.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST RESISTANCE OF THE CLERGY—TROUBLE AT NIMES AND MONTAUBAN—POLITICAL OATH IMPOSED ON THE CLERGY—PATHETIC SCENE IN THE ASSEMBLY—ADDRESS OF MIRABEAU TO THE NATION—PAMPHLET OF CAMILLE DESMOULINS.

THE spirit of liberty had, at the close of the eighteenth century, visited more than one cloister, and found welcome from not a few of the dignitaries of the French episcopate. We firmly believe that the Revolution, had it not violated the sanctuary of religious scruples, might have rallied to the cause of reform the greater part of the French Church. The majority of the Chamber of the Clergy had joined the Third Estate even before the King's willingness thereto was known. This fact should surely have counseled a conciliatory policy; but we have seen that the Assembly rushed into the opposite extreme, and thus awoke an opposition which was the more dangerous as it was completely armed and organized. This opposition irritated the Assembly, and led it to persist in and multiply its faults. It came to regard the clergy as an enemy, to crush which any and every means was lawful. In order to understand the events which induced the Assembly to impose the political oath on the clergy we must notice the progress of the religious reaction in the provinces.

It was the Revolution which began the contest. The

people of Paris, at first favorable enough to the priests, soon began to regard their peculiar costume as the symbol of the old *régime*. After the stormy debates on the Church property, the clergy were often exposed to insult in the streets. In October, 1789, Gregory had complained that the people of Paris, ignorant of the patriotism of the Curates, outraged them, and addressed to them the most furious threats. In the same month the Archbishop of Paris was compelled publicly to defend himself against the accusation "of having in the presence of the King supported the interests of the rich and powerful against the poor and feeble." He demanded a passport, and initiated the flight or emigration of the clergy. About this time an impassioned letter of a Brittany Bishop excited the fanaticism to a flame. He assumed openly the martyr role of a Thomas à Becket. It was a veritable war clarion. "Religion is annihilated," cried he; "its ministers are reduced to the sad condition of hirelings appointed by brigands." Religious liberty was openly execrated in this episcopal assault, and the nobility and peasantry were summoned to a coalition against the Third Estate. This imprudent provocation occasioned a lively debate in the Assembly, and an order for the Bishop to appear in court to answer a charge of treason. The clerical opposition increased with each new invasion of the old organization of the Church. The decree confiscating the Church property was a signal for a general active opposition. In several provinces the nobility and clergy held their Assemblies just as if no changes had been made in the laws. The National Assembly thereupon

ordered, that until further authorization no provincial Parliament should be called together. The order was resisted at Rouen and Metz. In the latter city the high clergy held factious meetings. Civil war was imminent in Provence. The Bishops were busy kindling the irritation in the excitable hearts of the South. The order to make an inventory of the property of the monasteries set the whole South on fire. The convents seemed on a sudden to have become the asylum of every human and divine virtue. Every-where the magistrates had to press their way through a dense mass of furious populace, to whom their work seemed an abominable profanation. It needed but a spark to kindle an open insurrection. And it soon actually broke out, especially in places where Protestant societies existed. The fervid Catholics of the South could not pardon to Protestants the crime of daring to exist, and of being no longer under the ban of proscription. For this populace the proclamation of religious equality was the great crime of the Revolution.

Civil war broke out openly as soon as the Assembly refused to declare the Catholic religion the Church of the nation. The ignorant and superstitious masses of Nimes, Uzès, and Montauban showed as much fury against those who had abolished an odious privilege as the people of Paris had exhibited against its champions. But violence was the law of both parties, and liberty was destined to be enfeebled and wounded in the contest. As soon as the defeat of the motion of Dom Gerle was known in the South, the clergy began to excite the people to send violent protests to the Assembly. In

April, 1790, a large meeting was held at Nimes in the church of the White Penitents. They petitioned unanimously in favor of the ancient state of things. This meeting was preceded and followed by exhibitions of Catholic effervescence. Wherever they caught sight of a Protestant the cry was, "Kill him! kill him!" Similar scenes took place at Uzès and in Alsace. In the latter province the Jews were sadly maltreated. Surely the Catholic party was unfortunate in its mode of procedure. It strove to obtain the rights of conscience by petitioning that these rights should be blotted from the constitution of the country; but this inconsistency will surprise no one who understands how manifold are the tortuosities of the human heart. The Assembly ordered procedure against the abettors of the troubles at Nimes, and summoned to its bar (despite the invocation in their favor, by Malouet, of the rights of meeting and discussion) the chief signers of the petition. But the trouble did not cease. The news of the adoption of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy intensified the displeasure of the South. In the months of May and June it took, at Nimes, all the features of earnest war. The opposition arose not from fanaticism alone, but rather from fanaticism used as a tool by the party of the old *régime*. This is clear from the declaration of Froment, the chief exciter of these troubles. "One strong passion," said he, "cannot be quenched except by exciting a still stronger one; consequently the republican mania can only be counteracted by calling into play a zeal for religion." The struggle broke out at the municipal elections. The Catholic party at Nimes,

always fanatical and determined not to tolerate religious equality before the law, firmly resolved to prevent the election of Protestants. Their rage knew no bounds when they learned of the honor conferred by the National Assembly in April on Rabaut St. Etienne. A placard was put up bearing these insulting words: "The infamous National Assembly has just capped the climax of its iniquities by electing as its president a Protestant." A league was formed. Troops of zealous Catholics, with a special badge, calling themselves the Companies of the Cross, were formed in opposition to the National Guard, which latter was composed of all classes of citizens. Every means was used to work up the feelings. Nocturnal meetings were held in the churches, and violent harangues delivered. Incendiary pamphlets representing religion as proscribed, and the King as in captivity, were spread abroad. In these libels the Protestants were described as venomous serpents, whom numbness alone had hitherto kept from harming, but who, now that they were recalled to life by favors, were engaged in plotting vengeance and death. The struggle broke out June 13, by an assault of the champions of the cross on the troops of the Guard. The day previous the peasantry had rushed in from the country, but had mostly returned home as soon as they learned that they were desired to defend the counter-revolution. The Protestants of the neighborhood had also taken the alarm and flocked to the city. They would also have returned, had they not been violently attacked from the convent of the Capuchins. Furious at this assault, they rushed upon the Catholic companies. Finally a parley

for peace was entered upon. This was interrupted at the order of the royalist Froment, who was posted at the castle, by an attack with musketry. This traitorous act broke up all hope of peace, and delivered the city to the rage of the justly exasperated Protestants and republicans. More than three hundred Catholics were slain in the city; while in the neighboring country the scale was reversed, and the blood of Protestants was freely shed. Impartial history must admit that the misfortunes at Nimes were the natural fruit of an abominable plot worthy the days of St. Bartholomew. The party which provoked them was not defending the liberties of the Church, but rather its odious privileges and intolerance.

Similar events had taken place previously at Montauban. The civil officers had succeeded in selling the suppressed convents only at the risk of their lives. They had been compelled to face the rage of a multitude rendered furious by the exhortations of a Bishop. They met, at the threshold, crowds of groaning women on their knees to defend the sanctuary. The city hotel had been assaulted, and six guards, of whom five were Protestants, massacred. Others had been dragged to the cathedral, waxen tapers in their hands, to do satisfactory penance. The Assembly, on hearing report of these proceedings, was exasperated to severe measures, and tempted more and more to view the Church as its enemy.

These small skirmishes, however, were of much less consequence than the general resistance which, under the leadership of the high clergy, was organized all over

the land. However justly the Church may have felt herself aggrieved, it was a great blunder for her to identify the cause of her liberty (which was, in fact, attacked) with the cause of monarchical despotism and churchly intolerance. Her struggle for her well-grounded rights was fully equaled by her struggle against the liberties of the people. In this period, we must distinguish between what was really plotted and what was actually accomplished. The latter was infinitely less than the former. The violent official charges of the French Bishops were of much less importance than the influences which were sent out from Rome. Pope Pius VI. was in frequent correspondence with both the King and the high clergy. From the month of March 1790, he assumed an attitude openly hostile to the Revolution, not only defending his just rights, but also combating at the same time all reforms, even the most legitimate. At this date he expressed, in an official meeting, great grief at every thing which had taken place in France since the convocation of the States-General, and declared that the ancient monarchy had been brought by its own children to the very brink of ruin. He condemned the National Assembly for having decreed liberty of conscience, and grew indignant that non-Catholics had been declared eligible to office. He treated political liberty as a vain phantom, and deprecated the limitation of the royal authority as incapacitating the Most Christian King for revenging the rights of the Church. Thus he was guilty of condemning the simplest principles of modern civilization, and bewailing the abolition of odious ancient abuses. This subtracted greatly from the force of his just com-

plaints, for the cause which he anathematized was immeasurably more just than that which he defended. He cursed the cause of young France, and put himself at the head of the political reaction. During the next year it was believed at Rome, for a few days, that the King had escaped from France. Immediately the Pope wrote him a letter expressing great joy that he had succeeded in escaping from that abominable city of Paris, and his firm belief that he would soon be able to return as conqueror, and restore the ancient state of things. During the interval between the adoption of the civil Constitution of the Clergy and its sanction by the King, the letters of the Pope to the latter and to the Bishops of France, were very numerous. They uniformly counseled hostility to the decrees of the Assembly. The sanction of the Clerical Constitution by the Pope had been earnestly sought. His hesitation and long delay irritated the Assembly to fresh acts of imprudence. The putting into practical execution of the new Constitution of the Clergy was the occasion of intense opposition on the part of the high clergy. They exhorted the people to resistance, declared that in such matters God should be obeyed rather than man, and branded all priests who should take office under the new system as intruders. Riots broke out at various places. Vengeance on the Protestants for the blood shed at Nimes was loudly called for. The civil officers were resisted in many places.

In these circumstances a very unfortunate step was taken by the Assembly. A Deputy, after reviewing the hostility of the clergy, uttered these ruthless words:

“Ministers of religion, cease to seek pretexts; acknowledge your weakness. You regret your former opulence, your marks of distinction and pretended pre-eminence. Recollect that the Revolution has made all of us men. It is yet time; disarm, by a prompt submission, the popular resentment against your order. The decree I am about to present is less a law of severity than a measure of indulgence.” This indulgent measure consisted in requiring all who held positions in the Church to take an oath to support and obey, not only the laws of the land in general, but also to maintain with all their power the Civil Constitution of the Clergy as decreed by the Assembly, and that, on pain of ejection from office, forfeiture of pension, and loss of French citizenship. Nothing could have been more impolitic than this. It would have been just to require an oath of submission to the civil laws, but to extend it to the new Constitution of the Clergy was to outrage the conscience of many respectable priests. But the hour of reason and justice was well-nigh past. The radicals of the Assembly wished to crush their enemy. The debate opened in a perfect tempest of passion. Its most important feature was a magnificent, but illogical and unfortunate oration, of Mirabeau. Left to himself in the calmness of solitary reflection, he rarely went astray. But he was capable of being swayed by the storm of the popular fury. He seems not to have seen that the Constitution of the Clergy, and especially this proposed oath, were in violation of his own cherished principles of the liberty of conscience. He pretended that the priests had been so recreant to the cause of religion

that the National Assembly was compelled to take the Church under its own patronage, not perceiving that the greatest compliment a government can make to religion consists simply in letting it alone. "It is," said he, "at the very moment when we have confessed, in the face of all nations and of all ages, that *God is as necessary as liberty to the French people*, that our Bishops are pleased to denounce us as violators of the rights of religion." His power was terrible in the part of his discourse where he exposed the scandalous corruptions of the clergy under the old system. The true intruders into the ministry were, thought he, those courtier priests who lived in luxury and intrigue. Toward the close he grew too violent even for the radical left, and Pétion opposed some of his arguments. Among the warmest advocates of this oath was the Jansenist Camus. He loved it because it trampled under foot the pretensions of Ultramontanism and the power of the Papacy, from which his sect had suffered so much. During the debate, a certain priest had cried out to the Assembly this pregnant warning: "Take care, it is not wise to make martyrs." Finally, the decree requiring the oath of the clergy was passed on the 27th of November, 1795. This is a sad date in the history of the Revolution. It consummated the divorce between young France and religion, and led to still more flagrant violations of liberty by the very party whose most earnest desire was to establish and sanction it. The cause of right cannot be served by the arbitrary.

This decree set all France into ferment. The revolutionary press brandished it as a sword in the face of all

reactionary priests. The King, who thus far had tried to reconcile his duties as Sovereign with his conscience as a Catholic, saw himself reduced to the desperate dilemma where any decision was equally fatal, and where resistance was as impossible as concession. To sanction the decree was to break with Rome; to veto it was vainly to attempt to brave the triumphant Revolution. The unhappy prince stood between excommunication on the one hand, and dethronement on the other. In his despair he now formed a plan of escaping from France, and calling to the support of his throne the arms of foreigners. In December he wrote to the King of Prussia, imploring aid against his factious subjects. It is at this period that the force of circumstances led him into that course of double-dealing toward the Assembly which was so foreign to his generous nature. The Assembly would not tolerate his veto; its President, at two different times, demanded in imperious terms that he should sanction it. The King was conquered. His letter of sanction may be regarded as his moral abdication, so thoroughly is it imbued with the spirit of humiliation. But he still cherished hope. That same day he had let drop the bitter words, "I would rather be King of Metz than remain King of France under these circumstances."

Scarcely had the decree been sanctioned when the Assembly took measures for its immediate execution. It forthwith summoned the clerical members of its own body to take the oath. This was to lay the corner-stone of the counter-revolution, for it provoked a soul-trying scene in which all the honor was on the side of the high clergy. No description can do it justice. A vast mul-

itude, ready to break out into riot, surrounded the doors of the Assembly. The voice of the tribune was drowned in the applause or hisses of the spectators. The wrath of the left was only equaled by the impassioned indignation of the right. Words of moderation stood no chance of a hearing. It was in vain that at different times Gregory and some other priests attempted so to explain the oath as to render it palatable to the main body of the clergy. They could not be persuaded that it did not conflict both with the rights of the Pope and with the essential honor of the Church. On the 2d of January, when the Bishop of Clermont attempted to present a temperate protest, his voice was covered with hisses. It was then decreed by the majority, in the midst of stormy altercations, that no opponent of the oath should be allowed to explain his reasons at the tribune, but that the oath should be taken or declined purely and simply. At this the Bishop of Clermont exclaimed, "I cannot in good conscience;" but his noble words were greeted with cries of rage. However, this *Non possumus* of the outraged conscience was destined to make a powerful impression throughout the community. That same evening the Bishop published to France the words which he had not been permitted to utter in the Assembly. When rudely interrogated in the session of the next day, he replied in words which cannot be too well considered, "It will be an eternal infamy to have inflicted punishment on those who refuse this oath; for it is saying to them, Whatever your conscience may say to the contrary, take the oath anyhow." To put an end to the delay, Barnave moved

That the clerical members be allowed only till the next day to consider, and that their refusal to take the oath be regarded as equivalent to resignation of office. The members of the right could delay the vote only a few minutes. The spirit of the majority may be seen in the incident that, when a member stated to the Assembly, that by this precipitate action they might be under the necessity of expelling sixty or eighty members, a large number of voices exclaimed, "So much the better!" It is plain that the ultra-radicals were only too willing to find a pretext for driving from the Assembly every representative of the ancient order of things. The motion of Barnave was carried.

It was in the session of January 4th, 1791, that the grand scene of refusing the oath commenced. It was the counterpart of that which had immortalized the tennis-court at Versailles. None but a prejudiced spirit can fail to see its moral grandeur. I know that conservative political passions and an unfortunate love of the old abuses and privileges of the Church were mingled with the nobler principles which led to a refusal of this iniquitous oath; still, it is none the less true that on that day religion vindicated and safeguarded its right and honor, in the midst of great danger and at the cost of great sacrifices. The effervescence of the populace was extreme. At the moment when the President of the Assembly summoned the clerical members to take the oath, one could plainly hear in the silence which ensued the ominous clamor of the multitude without, whose only idea of liberty was the indulgence of their own good pleasure. No one having replied to the general

call of the President, the call by name began. The Bishop of Agen was the first one called. When he rose and began to speak, several voices from the radical side cried out, "No words! Take the oath, yes or no." The Bishop remarked calmly and respectfully, "You have made a law requiring all clergymen holding office to take a certain oath, on pain of exclusion from office. I regret neither my position nor my income; I only regret that I must incur the loss of your esteem, which I faintly would merit. I beg you, therefore, to take in good part the testimony of the regret which I feel in not being able to take the oath." The next priest called was a simple curate. He uttered only these words: "I shall say with the simplicity of the first Christians, I think it all glory and honor to follow in the footsteps of my Bishop." It was clear that the call by name was turning to the disadvantage of the majority, and serving only to give more *éclat* to the refusals. The President resorted again, therefore, to the general call, but only a single oath was obtained. A member of the right asked that the Assembly explain the oath, by decreeing that it had no wish to infringe on the realm of the spiritual. "It has not so done," exclaimed Mirabeau, "and that is enough." The time for conciliation was past. The Bishop of Poitiers arose and spoke in these terms: "I am seventy years old; I have been thirty-five years a Bishop; I have sought to do all the good in my power. Weighed down with years, I am not willing to dishonor my old age; I cannot take the oath." But these words were greeted only with murmurs. The radicals found it necessary to close the scene. It was voted that the

President should repair to the King and urge him to enforce the law against the refractory clerical Deputies. The affair of the oath was for many days a subject of ever-recurring trouble. For some it was a subject of remorse, for others a pretext for indulging in venom against the clergy, and for all an occasion of embarrassment and discord.

In view of the vacancies in the Church, which the refusal of the oath would inevitably occasion during the year 1791, Mirabeau induced the Assembly to decree the eligibility to the episcopate of every one who had served five years as curate in France, and to the curacy, of any priest who had held any Church office whatever. Some days later, Barnave, always ready to attack the Bishops, clamored for positive procedure against the refractory priests, and was impolitic enough to denounce the political association, or club, which the members of the right had founded, as perfidious and factious. These strange and inconsistent words in the mouth of a friend of liberty excited just indignation in the Assembly. "I demand," said Malouet, in an earnest protest, "that in the very bosom of the Revolution, in the midst of this city which saw the framing of the Constitution, and which has done so much for liberty—I demand that liberty and public and personal safety be not outraged with impunity at this tribune." The decree demanded by Barnave did not pass without exciting firm opposition. Some of the clergy opposed it from patriotic motives, but others, who had lost all hope of justice, took an attitude of simple defiance. Abbot Maury exclaimed, "Go on, gentlemen, go on; it will not be long. We have need of

this decree ; one or two more of the same kind, and the work will be done." It served no good purpose, however, to assume this defiant attitude. Cazalès spoke in a much better spirit, for the same party, when he candidly explained, that the great majority of the clergy firmly believed that the principles of religion forbade them taking this oath. "These principles," said he, "are of a higher order than the laws you may enact. If you drive the Bishops and Curates from their posts you will inaugurate a course of persecution. You will see the Catholics wandering over the face of the kingdom, and following their deposed ministers into deserts and caves, to receive from their hands the only sacraments which they will believe to be valid. Then all the Catholics throughout the land, who cannot accept your laws, will be reduced to the state of misery and persecution into which the Protestants were formerly plunged by that act which you so justly detest, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Even if the Church of France should be mistaken, still there are laws which, though good in themselves, should not, under all circumstances, be enacted. If your laws cannot be executed without violence, it would be prudent to hesitate before plunging France into bloody civil convulsions." Mirabeau elicited applause by observing, cynically, that the speaker probably mistook his wishes for his fears. The sequel, however, showed that Cazalès was the better prophet.

About this time Mirabeau wrote, on the subject of the relations of Church and State, an address which cannot be too highly prized by posterity. But it is in part inconsistent with itself. It consecrates the great princi-

ples of the necessary freedom of religion and of spiritual interests in general from the domination of human law, and yet justifies the Revolution in its interference in the organization of the French Church. "Religion," said he, "is not, cannot, be a mere social relation; it is the relation of the individual mind to the mind of the Infinite. As it is absurd to speak of a national conscience, so it is absurd to speak of a national religion. Religion is individual and personal. You cannot establish a national religion, for the reason that truth is not established by votes. Though men may be externally united by laws, yet in their thoughts and conscience they remain forever separated. Religion, being but the harmony of the thoughts and heart of man with the divine thought and heart, cannot be subjected to a civil or legal form. Jesus Christ is the only sage who, in teaching men how to be good and happy, has not viewed them from a political stand-point, and mingled in his instructions the principles of civil legislation. Whatever the influence of the Gospel on general morality, neither Christ nor his Apostles gave to understand that the evangelical system was ever to enter into the civil constitution of nations. The Gospel, in its conquest of the world, simply asks of men that they accept it, and of nations that they suffer it." After uttering these noble sentiments, the great orator, illogically enough, attempts to justify the decree requiring a political oath of the priests.

The Assembly seemed now to come to a consciousness of danger, from the largeness of the party which its measures had offended. Consequently it issued to the

nation a conciliatory document, explaining the reasons which led to the enactment of the offensive laws. It was a mere palliative, however, which subtracted nothing from the measures which had given umbrage. And the little good effect of this was more than counteracted by the insulting violence of the demagogic press. Menacing documents and tracts, slanderous of the refractory or non-juring clergy, were scattered broadcast over the nation. From the 9th of January, 1791, the journal of Marat had been encouraging the populace to hiss and insult all priests who should be found in caucus, and the masses were but too ready to obey such counsel. Camille Desmoulins devoted his sharp satirical talent to bringing the high clergy into disrepute. He published a pretended sermon of a country priest, which was a merciless and biting assault on the party of the Bishops. These light but keen arrows produced, under the guidance of a steady hand, in the one camp a ravishing delight, which was equaled only by the rage of the other. He had taken for the text of his derisive sermon, the following words, attributed to an aged Cardinal, namely: "The Bishops were on the throne, and religion prostrate in the dust; France has now put the Bishops down, and raised religion to her true place." Nothing can surpass the sarcasm of the passage which shows up the corruption of the former clerical elections. He compared the *concordats* to the compacts of robbers, dividing the booty which does not belong to them. He cited the following profound saying of James I.: "So long as I shall have the power of nominating the Judges and the Bishops, I shall be sure of having laws and a gospel

which will please me." "How little," exclaimed Desmoulins, "does the gilded crosier of our Bishops resemble the shepherd's staff of the Apostles." Do you remember how St. Ambrose chastised the impiety of Theodosius? It was because that Bishop had been elected by the people of Milan. But cite me a Bishop of France who has reproached our tyrants with their worthlessness, their cruelties, or their wars. The gentlemen in violet, however much they may have assumed a sanctimonious visage and frowning brows in their dioceses, yet when they come to court, could not be surpassed in affability and sweetness of words." As to a council, which many of the clergy had demanded to settle the pending difficulties, Camille Desmoulins remarked, "The council of 1791 would not fail to imitate that of 1179, which granted as means of transportation, to a rural Dean two horses, to an Archdeacon seven horses, to a Bishop twenty horses, to an Archbishop twenty-five horses, to a Cardinal forty horses. As to the Pope, the Fathers of the Council, who held their session in his Lateran palace, and who dined from his Lateran kitchen, did not presume to trace, with their crosiers, the limits of his stable, but allowed him as numerous a supply as that of King Solomon. But though the Holy Father was at this time very rich, he was yet not rich enough to have as many horses in his stables as asses in his council." Toward the close of his discourse, Desmoulins counsels the people not to tear the robes of the refractory Bishops, but to be content with withholding their salaries. "Let them sit," said he, "upon their episcopal thrones, like Simeon Sty-

lites on his column. We will see if Heaven sends them manna, or a daily visit of a raven with a bill large enough to bear them a pound loaf of bread. When they are no longer salaried, you will see very soon, my dear brethren, that that sort of demons generally called Pharisees, or prince-priests, *non ejicitur nisi per jejunium*, go not out but by fasting.”

A pamphlet like this belongs to history, for it presents the popular opinion of the moment under its most lively coloring. It served as a violent stimulus to the party attacked. The high clergy might have fallen back on the sentiment of honor, so powerful in France, to belie these sarcasms, and to prove that they were able to endure privation and even persecution. But before resigning themselves to martyrdom, they desired to organize and resist. They soon received the word of order from Rome.

CHAPTER V.

SCHISM IN THE CHURCH — CORRESPONDENCE WITH ROME —
DEBATE ON THE LIBERTY OF WORSHIP — DISCOURSES OF
SIEYÈS AND TALLEYRAND — DISSOLUTION OF THE CON-
STITUENT ASSEMBLY.

THE Pope* delayed long his official answer to the Bishops who had consulted him on the subject of the new Civil Constitution of the Clergy, though his private letters gave, clearly to be seen, what that answer would finally be. Perhaps he awaited events, in the hope that some sudden reaction in politics might save the necessity of an official decision which would inevitably create a schism in the French Church. The counties of Avignon and Venaissin had, since the thirteenth century, formed a part of the temporal possessions of the Holy Father, though the title had more than once been disputed by the Kings of France. In the light of the ancient laws of Europe, the Pope surely possessed them legally. But the new order of things, based on popular sovereignty, was destined to come in conflict with these ancient rights, and dispute the propriety of allowing this little establishment to remain chained to the usages of the Middle Ages, in the heart of a nation which had gone through a political regeneration. It was impossible to arrest the contagion of liberty. The agitation began

* See Appendix, note 14.

at Avignon in March, 1790. The citizens of the place had spontaneously given themselves a liberal municipal organization, against which the Pope had hastened to protest. They went a step further, and demanded formally their reunion with France. The friends of the reunion persevered in their purpose, in spite of bloody riots which, at three different places, broke out in the little territory. They were not discouraged by the hesitation of the Assembly, which feared to disturb a subject involving grave diplomatic difficulties, and which might precipitate a European war. In August, 1790, the Pope had addressed to all the Sovereigns of Europe a pastoral letter, to prove that his possession of this hand-breadth of earth concerned the whole of Europe, and involved the most sacred interests of religion. He complained bitterly of the ingratitude of his subjects, upon whom he had heaped all the benefits of his paternal *régime*. This paternal rule, however, was precisely what the people of Avignon did not like. The majority of the Assembly favored the scheme of reunion, but it was only after they had entirely broken with the rest of Europe that they put their desires into effect.

The matter was discussed in the Assembly in November, 1790. The clerical party exhibited a truly Benedictine erudition, in attempting to justify the Papal thralldom of Avignon. The more clear-sighted of the radical party gave up the historical argument, and fell back on the new principle of popular sovereignty, maintaining boldly that rulers belong to the people, and not the people to rulers; and that the people of a territory alone have the right to choose their form of government.

After many delays, the Assembly finally voted, in September, 1791, to reunite Avignon to France, on condition of paying to the Pope an indemnity, the amount of which was not yet fixed. The little territory had already, for some months, been occupied militarily. The Holy Father had, therefore, a secular as well as an ecclesiastical grudge against the Revolution.

About this epoch three important documents emanated from Rome. The first is a Papal brief, touching the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, dated March 10, 1790. It is not yet definitive, though the real sentiments of the Pope are clearly indicated. It condemns flatly all the innovations in Church affairs thus far made by the French Assembly. To this is added a general tirade against the "so-called" new rights of man—the liberty of conscience, the liberty of thought, and the liberty of the press. The brief terminates with a violent assault on Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, in which he is denounced to the universal Church as impious, for having taken the oath to support the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The example of the recantation and martyrdom of Thomas à Becket is recommended to him, while the punishment of Heliodorus is denounced against the spoliators and profaners of the sanctuary. The Assembly is compared to Henry VIII., and an approaching excommunication is denounced against all who persist in the evil ways to which his Holiness takes exception.

This brief was accompanied by a letter to Louis XVI., perfectly adapted to disturb the Prince's timorous conscience. It expressly condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. "Your Majesty," said the Pope, "is en-

gaged by a solemn promise to live and die in the Catholic religion. But, Sire, this promise will be to you henceforth an inexhaustible source of bitterness and remorse; for, by your sanction, you have detached from the Catholic unity all those who have the weakness to take the oath required by the Assembly." These and like words tended to render impossible any conciliation, to hasten the overthrow of the throne, and to bring on the mad excesses of an irritated revolution.

The Bishops deputed to the Assembly hastened to reply to the Pope. They could but agree in condemning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, but they did not join in his crusade against all the great principles of the French Revolution. They held to political liberty and equality, to the distinction of the civil and the spiritual powers, and so on. At the close of their letter, they spoke of the embarrassments and perils of their situation. "But, said they, "we will submit," to our destiny, whatever it may be, with that courage which religion inspires. Exalt yourself, Holy Father, to the wisdom and liberty of your mission. Rise above all those personal considerations which perish with us. We occupy but a small point in time and space, and our own fate ought not to have the least weight against the interests of empires, and the promises of the Church. We know the examples the Church sets before us, and we know how to suffer for her. Only let not principles suffer." The Bishops closed by promising to resign, if schism might thereby be avoided. This letter constitutes a noble document in the religious history of France; it breathes the spirit of the Christian conscience.

On the 13th of April the Pope gave his definitive decision in a brief addressed to the whole Church of France. He pronounced the new Constitution of the Church heretical, protested against the consecration of Expilly, the new Bishop of Quimper, and against all the new elections, alleging that the churches belong, not to the people, but to their chief Pastors. The Pope then solemnly abjured all Catholics, in the name of their eternal salvation, to remain faithful to the ancient laws of the Church, and to the Holy See.

The matter now assumed a new aspect. There were henceforth two Churches in France: the one, constitutional and protected by the State; the other, refractory and persecuted. To rescue the honor of the former, the hour of persecution was soon to come; for, the bastard system on which it was organized was impracticable. And besides, the wrath of the people, excited at first against the non-juring clergy, soon forgot the difference of the two Churches, and turned its fury against all religion whatever. Out of one hundred and thirty-one Bishops, only four accepted the new Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and a vast multitude of the inferior clergy remained faithful to the Pope. The movement of opposition took immediately a wide scope and an organized form throughout the land. The charges of the Bishops to their clergy, and their responses to the summons of the Assembly to submit themselves to its decrees, had been filled with matter of an inflammatory character. Most of the high clergy fled the country, but before emigrating they laid plans for exerting a perpetual influence when they themselves should be absent.

Only four of the former Bishops, as already remarked, had decided to take the oath and accept the new order of things. These were Loménie de Brienne,* Archbishop of Sens; Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun; Jarente, Bishop of Orleans; and Savines, Bishop of Viviers; these, of course, remained in possession of their dioceses. The other dioceses had now to be provided for by new elections and consecrations. Gobel,† Bishop of Lydda, was chosen Metropolitan of Paris. Expilly and Marolles, clerical Deputies, were elected to provincial dioceses, and consecrated, at Paris, by Talleyrand. Gregory, Claude le Coz, Lamourette, and Moses, were elected to other principal places. On the whole, the Constitutional high clergy were honorable men, though of only moderate rank and talent. The most eminent of them was doubtless Gregory, whose firm character was proof against both the bloody orgies of demagogism, and the menaces and promises of despotism. His new position accorded perfectly with his convictions. He was thoroughly attached to the Revolution. He loved it with an ardent enthusiasm, which, though sometimes leading him to imprudent language, yet never induced him to a culpable act. He was neither a profound thinker nor a great orator, but he was of that solid practical stuff, out of which new social fabrics are most readily built. He had faith and heroism. Lamourette had already figured as a feeble apologist of religion against the philosophers, and was, on the whole, one of those gentle spirits which make no mark in a time of strife. Claude le Coz honored himself by a noble defense of the non-juring

* See Appendix, note 15.

† Ibid., note 16.

clergy, and by his devotion to the person of the King. He defended the new Constitution of the Church with all the earnestness of thorough conviction. As to Gobel, Bishop of Lydda, he was one of those shallow, vacillating spirits who are driven hither and thither by the popular current, as sea-weed is washed by the waves. At bottom, he had grave scruples as to the new Constitution of the Church, and defended it but feebly; and yet he was destined subsequently to dishonor his name forever by the most shameless of apostasies. Of the former Bishops who had not abandoned their places, two, Jarente of Orleans, and Savines of Viviers, were poor and obscure; and two were talented and celebrated, though but little esteemed, namely, Talleyrand, (a politician rather than a Churchman, who was soon to enter the ranks of the laity, and there find a more congenial field for his gifts,) and Loménie de Brienne, who had been equally frivolous as minister and as prelate. The Pope, in reply to a letter from the latter, had charged him with inflicting the greatest possible dishonor on the Roman purple by taking the civil oath, and by consecrating new Bishops. "Such acts," said the Holy Father, "are detestable crimes." Brienne answered by resigning his office of Cardinal. The Pope announced its acceptance in a secret consistory held September the 26th, 1791. After enumerating the acknowledged services of the Archbishop of Sens, he passed in review his censurable acts, and hesitated not to class among the worst of them, that which he had done, as Minister of State, in assuring tolerance for Protestants. He reproached him for having restored, in part, the fatal Edict of Nantes.

The Pope, in thus apologizing for persecution in the same breath in which he defended the liberties of the Church, chose the surest way of defeating his own cause. Talleyrand had been expressly condemned in the brief of April 10th, but he paid little attention thereto, as his ambition far surpassed the ecclesiastical sphere. The elections to new bishoprics and curacies were not made in all places with equal facility. In some parishes the balloting had to be repeated seven or eight times. The most absurd and ridiculous rumors were circulated. It was pretended that at the moment of the election of Expilly it had thundered terribly, and that the skies were covered with clouds the day of his arrival at Quimper.

The first public acts of the new clergy were not of a nature to make a favorable impression. A new Bishop, in presenting his homage at the bar of the Assembly, pronounced a violent discourse against the refractory clergy, intimating that their fanaticism might resort to torches and poniards. He closed by a pompous apology of his conduct in accepting his new position, and exclaimed, most ridiculously out of place, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." Nothing could be more flat than the pastoral letter of Gobel, the Metropolitan of Paris. It was written in the weak sentimental style of the day. It spoke of the pure and precise divine morality which disclaims sectarian quarrels. "Let us preach to our flock," said he, "that after the divine law there is nothing more sacred than the law of the State, and that to disobey the latter is to violate the former." Thus, in his opinion, all that is given

to Cæsar is given to God; there is neither distinction nor reserve. France, at the first venture, had struck on a model of a mere clerical functionary. Gobel surpassed himself in absurdity in the speech he pronounced on the occasion of the death of Mirabeau. He regrets bitterly the death of the great man to whom he owes the privilege of exercising canonically, on the flowery banks of the Seine, the ministry which he had previously exercised drearily and without glory, amid the eternal snows of Switzerland; for it was the pure hand of Mirabeau that had placed him in the See of Paris. "Who could have imagined," he exclaimed, "that a venerable Archbishop would be proscribed to make place for Gobel! What a striking illustration of the wonder-working ability of the great man whom we mourn to-day!" At this thought the sensibilities of the Bishop knew no bounds. "We must have," said he, "civic priests, civic bishops, and a religion entirely civic." That nothing might be wanting to the ridiculousness of this farce, it terminates with a eulogy of the domestic virtues of Mirabeau, whose life had been notorious for excessive debauchery. He was proclaimed the *father of the new Church*. This wonderful piece of rhetoric was signed by the Bishop and his secretary, and sent into every parish in the kingdom. One may easily imagine the impression such a document made on the adherents of the ancient clergy. Some months later, Gobel presided over a ridiculous farce, which mingled the Carnival with the most sacred ceremonies of the Church. A company of children, to whom he had administered the first communion, were paraded with great display in the

streets of Paris. At the Jacobin Club they gave a specimen of the principles they had been taught. "You have brought clearly to the light of day," said their spokesman to the Jacobins, "that sublime truth, so often repeated by Voltaire in vain, under the reign of the despots, that *the virtue of man does not arise from his belief.*" It is clear that Gobel did not have to advance much further in order to inaugurate the worship of reason. These interesting neophytes were then presented to the Assembly. Their spokesman recited, in their name, a stupidly pompous speech, laudatory of the Revolution, and demanded finally that these children of religion might be made the children of the country by the adoption of the National Assembly; after which they were caused to recite in chorus the civic oath. The grave Treilhard, who was President at the time, replied in the same style. "Infancy," said he, "exists no longer when the native land is at stake, and the ices of age melt away and assume new life for the defense of the empire." The radicals applauded, and demanded the printing of these rhetorical masterpieces, whereupon the conservatives burst out in roars of ironical laughter, viewing the whole affair as a simple farce. A very stormy debate followed, in which it came near passing from harsh words to fisticuffs—a fit termination of this exhibition of the young communicants of Gobel. Truly the Constitutional clergy were poorly represented at Paris, the center of light.

The popular irritation against the priests who had not taken the oath increased from day to day. Ignoble caricatures exposed them to the contempt of the masses.

The solemnities of Holy Week presented afresh to the conscience of every Catholic the grave questions which were rending the land. Among the masses there were two classes, the scoffers and the devout. At the beginning of April some unsuppressed convents had suffered shameful violences, on the pretense that refractory priests had there been allowed to administer the sacraments. Nuns had even been publicly whipped. To stop these hideous and disgraceful scenes, the municipality had been compelled to publish a proclamation, promising that the official Churches should be interdicted to the non-juring clergy. These troubles occasioned in the department of the Seine a decree declaring that the temples not regarded as necessary for the Constitutional worship might be sold and appropriated to any use whatever. It was also expressly stated, that private individuals might obtain such and such religious edifices for the celebration of any worship whatever, on condition of placing on the main door an inscription indicating its use, and distinguishing it from the national Churches. It was required that this inscription be approved by the officers of the department, at least during the year 1791. Doubtless it was feared that it might contain something calculated to offend the populace and incite to riot. In the provinces the agitation was not less intense. The days appointed for taking the oath were fearful occasions. The magistrates in scarf, followed by an armed force, repaired to the churches at the hour of service, and demanded, willing or unwilling, the taking of the civic oath. In Champagne a priest was shot dead at the altar at the

moment he was explaining why he could not take the oath required.

Already most of the high clergy, especially the Bishops, had left France. From their foreign retreats they kept up communication with their former dioceses, and contributed greatly to foment sedition. As to the King, it availed him nothing that he had sanctioned the decrees. The Assembly knew well that he was conscientiously opposed to taking the sacraments from the hands of a Constitutional priest. But as he made no parade of his private sentiments, it would have been wise to ignore them, though it would have been inconsequent to allow him a private chaplain who had refused the oath. The matter caused trouble. A popular riot had prevented the King from going to the church at St. Cloud, on Easter, to take the sacrament. It had been provoked by a handbill of the Cordelier Club. The placard, after mentioning the reports that the King had been keeping in his palace refractory priests to officiate in a way forbidden by the laws of the Assembly, "denounced to the representatives of the nation, this first subject of the laws as himself a violator of the law." Previously to this the King had been under the necessity of repairing to the Assembly to obtain permission of "freely going and coming." "It is astonishing," he had said, "that after having given liberty to the nation, I cannot free myself."

In accordance with a municipal decree, that certain churches might be used for any worship whatever, a few citizens had hired the Church of the Theatins for the use of non-juring priests. The authorities had accepted the

following inscription: "Edifice dedicated to religious services by a private society. Peace and liberty." The people of Paris had here a fine chance of showing their love of true liberty, by conceding it to a minority whose principles they detested. Unfortunately the madness of the press and the intemperance of the political clubs wrought too fatally on the popular passions. The day appointed for the first worship of these non-juring Catholics a menacing and insulting paper had been affixed to the door of the church. A mob assembled in the street, determined to do violence to whoever attempted to pass the threshold. Thus the most sacred of liberties was violated on the very first occasion. It was a direct outrage on the glorious frontispiece of the Constitution, the Declaration of Rights; which amounted to nothing but a vain and dead letter, if it could not protect a minority against an insensate mob. The conduct of Lafayette in these circumstances was highly honorable. He had seen in America the working of the largest religious liberty, and had hoped for France the same happy system. In his memoirs he says: "The proposed remedy of allowing each society to support its own temple and ministers, as is done in the United States, was rejected on every hand." Though hostile to the high clergy party, he was willing enough to respect their rights and conscience; he even allowed non-juring priests to open a chapel in his own palace. When the populace prevented the King from going to the Church at St. Cloud, Lafayette was so incensed at this violation of religious liberty as to tender his resignation. And he withdrew it, only on the assurance that no similar

outrage would be committed. He espoused with enthusiasm, the cause of the Theatine non-jurors, and besought them to celebrate their worship despite the populace. "For two days," wrote he on this occasion, "I have been absorbed in discussions and arrangements relative to the full and immediate maintenance of religious liberty. The real aristocrats are offended at our shielding religion against their hostility. The Ecclesiastical Committee spoke to me to-day of measures to be taken against the non-conforming Catholics. I told them that the National Guard was an instrument which would play any tune they pleased, provided only that they did not change the key, which was the Declaration of Rights."

These matters gave rise to a discussion in the Assembly which turned, on the whole, in favor of religious liberty; though the enjoyment of the right was very insecure so long as it was liable to be infringed by the mob. It was contended by some that the refusal to take the oath had the effect only to deprive of public office and salary, but not to hinder the non-jurors from officiating in the national Churches. Others denied this inference. The cause of the non-juring priests of the Theatine Church found able defenders in Talleyrand and Sieyès; Mirabeau was no longer there. "It is time," said Talleyrand, "that the people should know that this liberty of opinion is not a vain and meaningless part of the Declaration of Rights; that it is a real, full, and entire right, to which all protection is due." He showed that it was entirely illusory if it was not respected outside of the official worship, and if it was not so far respected as to be allowed the right of manifesting itself in acts of public

worship. "We do not combat fanaticism," said he, "to substitute in its place a culpable indifference. It is the *respect* for conscience that we wish to consecrate. We wish to insure the triumph of true religion by leaving to it no resort but persuasion, and by showing that it has nothing to fear from the emulation of rivals." After expressing lively regrets that the people of Paris had to such an extent infringed the liberty of conscience, he continued: "Conscience must be respected, even in our bitterest adversaries. Those who believe it must be allowed, if they wish it, to stigmatize us as schismatics. Their worship, whether it be like or different from ours, must be perfectly free, otherwise religious liberty is only a name, and we become an intolerant and persecuting people. Let us show that this liberty is one of the great benefits of our Constitution, which will grow stronger from day to day, and soon or late command the homage of mankind."

The Abbot Sieyès maintained the same principles with his accustomed directness and precision. "Citizens have been disturbed," said he, "in their reunion; this reunion had a religious object. Now is there any law forbidding assemblies of the people when they have a religious object, provided that otherwise they violate no law? I know of no such law. The National Assembly has substantially said to all, 'You shall not be disturbed for your religious opinions; you are subject only to the law. Your liberty is guaranteed to you; rely on it, it shall be protected.' If any one objects, saying that opinion is free, but only in the mind, or when one is alone, or in a small company, what more has the As-

sembly granted than existed under the former *régime*? Is it possible for a liberty or right to exist in principle, but not in action or consequences? When you say the citizens are free, what can you mean but that they are free to put their rights into effect? This must be so, unless liberty is a mere abstraction. If such is the liberty meant, it is not worth the trouble of the Revolution." To those who objected that religious liberty was full of peril, because it gave scope to popular agitation, Sieyès replied, that the same objection might be urged against every kind of liberty. The simple fact was, that the majority was in favor of universal tolerance so long as it was enjoyed only by sects to which they were indifferent; but as soon as it turned to the profit of an enemy, for example, the non-juring Catholics, they opposed it.

Lanjuinais,* who subsequently distinguished himself by his firm defense of liberty and justice, took the question this time by its small side, and called upon himself a sally of contemptuous laughter by his ill-timed railing against the privileges enjoyed by the non-juring Catholics and the Protestants. The result of the debate was, that the National Assembly pronounced itself fully in favor of the great principles advocated in the speeches of Talleyrand and Sieyès. Thus the great principles of 1789 were interpreted anew by this sovereign Assembly, as consecrating the largest religious liberty. The pretended liberal of to-day, who does not favor entire liberty of worship, is no disciple of 1789. Unfortunately this great right, together with all others,

* See Appendix, note 17.

was soon destined to be submerged by the waves of the all-devouring Revolution; nevertheless, in spite of its temporary defeat, it still remains, like a rock imbedded in the earth, the great principle which is to form the cornerstone of our constitutional edifice, when it is definitely built.

It is easy to see how greatly the Assembly was in advance of the people of Paris in point of real liberalism. Notwithstanding the fine discussion in the Assembly on religious liberty, the Church of the Theatins had scarcely been opened when the non-juring Catholics were driven away by a mob, and their altar demolished. Lafayette had to come in person to stop the riot, and Bailly,* the astronomer, wrote, in the name of the municipality of Paris, a letter of thanks to the National Guard, which had lent its strong hand to the law. He here pleaded the cause of conscience, and deprecated fanaticism, whether under the banner of the Revolution or of religion. But the men of 1789 were fast becoming unable to control the passions of the populace, on which they had already too much relied. They could call them to their aid, but they could not place a limit to their excesses. Moreover, they were not free from passion themselves, and it was in spite of themselves if they respected religious liberty in their enemies of the non-juring clerical party.

The opposition of this party grew from day to day, and spread like wild-fire over the whole land. The calm North was affected as well as the fanatical South. Riots broke out in several provinces. The Bishop of Senes courageously resisted all commands to obey a law which

* See Appendix, note 18.

violated his conscience, and took, at the tribunal of Castillon, the attitude of an ancient confessor. His firmness had an extraordinary influence on the clergy. He obtained the recantation of a priest who had taken the oath, and ceased not to direct his shafts against the decrees of the Assembly. In several places priests had to be thrown into prison.

About this time, the translation of the ashes of Voltaire (who thirteen years previously had scarcely been allowed the most humble burial place by the Catholics of France) to the Pantheon, the national temple of the French, had given new offense. It had been accomplished in the midst of theatrical pomp and affected sentimentality. It was a fresh defiance of revolutionary France to the prejudices of Catholicism. One of the motives given by the Assembly for decreeing these highest honors to Voltaire was, that he had prepared the nation for liberty. But they were very soon to see, and literally to realize, how closely irreligion is allied to despotism. As yet, however, the majority of the Assembly showed no disposition to transgress the bounds of a wise moderation. An instance of this occurred at this time, in a case where they passed lightly over a serious disrespect of the laws, committed by the Archbishop of Rouen. Their patience was further tried by frequent briefs of the Pope, which were circulated widely, and which created much mischief in the land. In the session of June 9th, 1791, Thouret proposed a decree forbidding in the future, under heavy penalty, the circulation of any act of the Papal See which had not previously been approved by the Assembly. This would have infringed on

the liberty of the press, for it would have hindered, in one of its most sacred forms, the free expression of thought in a large class of citizens. The furthest they could properly have gone, would have been to forbid the circulation of Papal acts as binding in France. Malouet and other speakers ably exposed the injustice of such a law. The decree, as finally passed, was limited in its application to the official or constitutional clergy. This moderation was imitated by some of the provincial authorities. In one locality, the Sisters of Charity had manifested disapprobation of the new *régime*, and the populace had menaced them. The authorities took up their defense; but while allowing them the liberty of still taking care of the sick, they forbade them the right of teaching, which was now a civil function. The Minister of the Interior wrote them a sensible letter, advising them to concede to the sick, whom they nursed, the same liberty they claimed for themselves.

But the attempted flight of the King, June 21, 1791, rendered moderate measures any longer impossible. The revolutionary passions became irresistible. The emphasis laid by the King on the violence he had suffered from the Revolutionists in matters of conscience, was a noteworthy feature of the manifesto which he had designed to explain to France and to Europe the cause of his flight. We thus read these words: "On his recovery from sickness the King made ready to go to the Church at St. Cloud. As a pretext for arresting him, advantage was taken of the respect which he was known to entertain for the religion of his fathers. Thereafter he was compelled to order the discharge of

his private chaplain, to approve the letter of the [revolutionary] ministry to the foreign powers, and to attend the celebration of mass by the new Curate of St. Germain l'Auxerrois." This document set in the plainest light the intimate alliance between the counter-revolution and the non-juring clergy. It is not surprising that the opposition of the clergy henceforth excited more discontent and displeasure. The fugitive King had openly espoused their cause in the eyes of all Europe. On the fourth of August an obscure Deputy had gone so far as to propose, in the interest of the public safety, the suspension of the laws of justice and liberty, in order to crush the opposition of the refractory clergy. He had dared to propose, in the midst of the great Assembly which had voted the Rights of Man, that all the non-juring priests of certain departments in which great trouble then existed, be required to retire to a distance of thirty leagues, on pain of imprisonment. This would have been to inaugurate general proscription, for which the moment had not yet arrived. The men of 1789 could not be led to so flat a contradiction of their own principles, even under the pressure of their own passions and the raging fury of the masses. This proposition was destined to reappear under an aggravated form in the next Assembly. On the last day of September, 1791, the Constituent Assembly handed over its powers to that stormy Legislative Assembly which accomplished the sad work of sweeping away the monarchy and establishing the republic on the ruins of liberty.

Let us not be unjust toward this great Assembly, which, in the midst of a society full of abuses and preju-

dices, had the hard task of laying the foundation of a new order of things. Assailed by difficulties on every hand, a prey to contrary and mutually-exasperating passions, having to deal with a royalty which it could not trust, urged on by an uncultured people who were tired of their yoke and impatient to humble those who had so long held them in the dust, it was compelled to deal at once with all sorts of questions, and to resolve them under the pressure of the most urgent necessity, and amid the heat of the most ardent party strife. It was not possible, in such circumstances, to erect a durable edifice, for too often laws were made as one erects batteries—against the enemies of the day. The true constitutionalists, who desired to preserve both liberty and power, and to conciliate the future with the past, had no chance of success in so violent a crisis. Mirabeau, who was really on their side, saw fit to render palatable his reasonable and sober discourses by the excesses of the demagogue. It must also be confessed that the stubbornness and plots of the reactionary party rendered the practice of wisdom very difficult. In these circumstances the system of Rousseau had fine scope for its daring theories, its democratic parade, (which, nevertheless, admitted of the most arbitrary measures,) and its marked tendency to sacrifice liberty to equality. Although restrained by the English school and the great talents of its opponents, still this system contributed largely to drive the Revolution into extremes, and to deprive the governmental machine of that counterpoise, without which it is unable to resist the assaults of passion. The system of Rousseau, in

league with Gallican Jansenism, led the Assembly to its greatest errors in ecclesiastical matters. Under this influence the Constituent Assembly committed the mistake of salarizing the Churches from the State treasury, and organizing a functionary clergy. It sought to subordinate this clergy to the government by means of the civil constitution and the political oath; it carried constraint even into the conscience. Thus in the very temple of liberty the old idol of the State had been replaced on the altar by legislators who, while believing themselves bold innovators, were in this matter mere revivers of the most obsolete pretensions of the ancient monarchy. They had, however, proclaimed liberty of conscience outside of the official worship; but this the people would not peaceably suffer, and its shadow even was destined to disappear in the storm which was already muttering in the distance, and which was in the sequel to overturn both Throne and Altar. Nevertheless great rights had been invoked. A noble enthusiasm, though doubtless mingled with imprudent indignation, had animated this great Assembly. And it is upon the doctrines which it proclaimed that all development of liberty in this country must ever be based; for, though it unfortunately compromised every-thing, yet it divined and aspired after every-thing, and nothing can ever surpass the intense patriotic ardor which consumed it. A terrible ordeal was soon to separate the good grain from the chaff. The struggles which ensued were to be the implacable proof of the errors it had committed as to the proper relations of the temporal to the spiritual power.

BOOK SECOND.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE NATIONAL CONVENTION UNTIL THE PROCLAMATION OF THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE Constituent Assembly had maintained till the last the principle of the liberty of conscience ; but the Declaration of Rights was a bond far too frail to restrain a land agitated by bitter religious strife. What could an abstract idea avail against popular passion ! Let us also forget not, that though the Assembly had remained true to the liberal idea, yet it had but too often yielded to the pernicious pressure of the populace. Still the men of 1789 could not be so inconsequent as to suspend the freedom of worship. In the Legislative Assembly, where they formed only an insignificant minority, they pleaded earnestly in its defense ; but their resistance was neither long nor very efficacious. The fatal theory of the *public safety*, much more pernicious in a republic than in an absolute monarchy, annulled for a time the most precious conquests of the Revolution. Violent hands were already preparing to disfigure the statue of Liberty, though it had but just been placed on its

pedestal. The rude insolence which the new Assembly showed to the King from its very first sittings was a violation of the spirit of the Constitution ; for to debase a royalty already so dependent was really to destroy it. This open disrespect was to inflict on it a sort of moral death. The Constitution was also in other respects little better regarded. In fact, the work of the Legislative Assembly was less to govern and found than to combat and destroy. Composed mostly of new and very young men, chiefly signalized by their revolutionary fervor, and whose official duties had brought them in contact with the reactionary spirit in the provinces, it was imbued with a feeling of distrust and defiance. Every thing impressed on it the great duty, as it thought, of crushing every obstacle to the Revolution, and more especially the religious reaction, which was now assuming alarming proportions throughout the land. Driven by its own inclination in the direction of the arbitrary, and not having, as aids in checking its excesses, the great orators and politicians whom an unwise measure of the first had shut out from this second Assembly, there was little to hinder it from rushing to its own destruction. The conservative members of the first had no representation in the second, and the moderates of the new Assembly corresponded to the radicals of the old. The middle party of the Legislative Assembly, without courage or fixed principles, were ever ready to throw their weight on the side of the strongest and most violent. Trembling and hesitating royalty passed, for a moment, from the concessions which had been wrested from its weakness, to a show of resistance

which served only the cause of its enemies, and endured only sufficiently long for the current to gain head enough to sweep it away entirely. An insensate press, which could attack private or public character with impunity—an organized mob constantly collected in and about the hall of the Assembly—the increasing violence of the debates in the clubs—the intoxication of combat—the constant suspicion of treason on the one hand and of conspiracy on the other—what was lacking to produce on the Assembly a most unfortunate and irresistible pressure? The radicals of the Legislative Assembly, as is well known, were the brilliant group of Girondist* Deputies. Behind them stood, as their natural heirs, the future extremists of the Mountain party, now only distinguished from them by a ruder energy and a more cruel disposition. We will see that the Girondists showed in the religious struggles as much violence and injustice as their enemies, and that if they did not erect the political scaffold, they at least laid its foundation by measures of illiberal proscription. They sacrificed right and liberty to “reasons of State;” and this is the essence of the political catechism of the terrorists. Their eloquence, their youth, their generosity, and especially their courageous death, tend to blind us as to their faults. But we must not look at them simply in this last hour; for that liberty which they then proudly and heroically invoked, they themselves had too often violated in their own political career. They had tried to found liberty by the arbitrary, a sure way of destroying both it and themselves. They left it bleeding in

* See Appendix, note 19.

the hands of barbarous men who stained its name with the stigma of their own dishonor. Docile and passionate disciples of an unbelieving age, the Girondists displayed in their opposition to the reactionary clergy all the prejudices of a materialistic philosophy which was incapable of respecting God as manifested in the human conscience. They gave to the world the shameful spectacle of persecuting disciples of Voltaire. Let us, however, in judging them, not forget how much there is to be pleaded in their excuse; for to their eyes religion was identified with politics, and behind the crowd of suffering confessors, who have all our admiration, was to be seen the long line of political reactionists, who made use of every thing, even to religion and martyrdom, for their pernicious purposes.

Let us take a brief glance at the situation of the country at the opening of the debates of the Legislative Assembly. The matter of the oath, and the displacement of the non-juring priests, gave continual trouble. Where the revolutionary party was the stronger, the refractory clergy suffered all manner of ill treatment. Where the contrary was the case, the new clergy often suffered personal violence from the populace. The non-juring clergy, though deposed from their official stations, yet enjoyed their salaries as private ecclesiastics, and could as such celebrate the rites of the Church in the official temples. They also had the right of renting, under certain conditions, private halls for their own worship. But in this right they were constantly frustrated by the outrages of the mob, and by the unfairness of the local police, who often held them responsible for riots of which they

had only been the victims. Though in many rural districts they preserved their ancient ascendancy, yet in the cities they were generally at the mercy of the populace. At Paris the opposition against them was surprisingly great. Lafayette, in resigning the command of the National Guards, recommended earnestly respect for religious liberty. "Liberty," said he, "will not be firmly established among us so long as intolerance of religious opinions, under pretext of I know not what kind of patriotism, shall presume to admit the thought of a dominant and a proscribed worship." The authorities published a severe proclamation, on the occasion of the assault on the Irish College to prevent the non-juring worship. It was declared that the assault had been a violation both of religious liberty and of the rights of hospitality. The local authorities of Paris were recommended to safeguard, in the future, the fullest religious liberty. But they were strongly disposed to do the very opposite. New violence followed. At the Irish College women had been assaulted on leaving the church. At the Irish Seminary a female had been brutally torn from the confessional. The house of English nuns, at the *Jardin des Plantes*, had been the theater of similar scenes. The police had intervened only to gratify the mob by shutting up the churches attacked. A magistrate to whom complaint was made, satisfied himself with remarking that the people *were not ripe*.

On occasion of these persecutions the non-juring Catholics of Paris sent a remonstrance to the King. "Sire," said they, "the Catholics of Paris for more than six months have been exiled from their temples, deprived

of their worship, and exposed to all the outrages of fanaticism, without uttering a single complaint. Disciples of a Master who, while dying on the cross, prayed even for his executioners—children of a religion whose first law is charity, and whose first benefit is peace—they thought fit at first to stifle their complaints and hide their sorrow in their own bosoms; but now, taking courage from the promulgation of the constitutional laws, we have presumed to speak to you of our rights to the common liberty, and to ask, for the exercise of our worship, the protection of the laws. All we desire is peace; the Constitution gives us rights; it is time that we enjoy them.”

In the provinces the attitude of the old clergy was more bold, for they were in general better sustained by the populace. Messrs. Gallois and Gensonné had been sent, in July 1791, by the Assembly, into the west of France. They found the people of La Vendée, where such a terrible civil war soon broke out, very favorably disposed to the new *régime* in every thing that did not concern their religion. “These people,” said they, “remote from the common center of resistance, disposed naturally to a love of peace, of order, and of law, were enjoying the benefits of the Revolution without experiencing its storms. Nothing would have been more easy than to attach them to the Constitution, if their religious faith, which is very positive and lively, had only been respected. Their religion has become very strong, and, as it were, the one moral habit of their existence.” Not being able to distinguish between religion and the priest, they thought themselves deprived of their faith when

they saw the priests turned out of office whom they regarded as the sole mediators between Heaven and earth. They clung to them with a sort of wild affection which could easily be brought to believe insurrection a sacred duty. And the non-juring priests were not backward in taking advantage of this disposition. The refractory Bishop of Luçon multiplied his pastoral letters, to keep his flock true to the old faith. He forbade his clergy to enter the churches profaned by the new priests, and counseled them to open new places for worship. "In parishes," said he, "where there are few who are rich, it will doubtless be difficult to find a suitable locality, and to procure sacred vessels and ornaments. In such cases a mere barn, a portable altar, a surplice of calico, and vessels of tin, will suffice to celebrate the sacred mysteries. This simplicity and poverty, by reminding us of the first ages of the Church and of the cradle of our holy religion, will be a powerful means of exciting the zeal of the priests and the fervor of the faithful. The first Christians had no other temples than their own houses." The Bishop ordered that secret registers of baptisms, marriages, and interments should be kept, and that if any one could not avoid entering a cemetery of which a government priest had the charge, at least he should retire with all possible haste as soon as the offensive Curate had defiled, with his presence, the holy ground. Zealous missionaries, going out from a central point, fanned the flame of fidelity to the old Church, and spread abroad popular catechisms which denounced the most terrible vengeance of Heaven on whoever had any thing to do with the heretical priests.

No marriage celebrated by them would be legal, and every ceremony in which they should officiate would be a sacrilege. These teachings bore their harvest. Families were divided, and municipal boards torn with discord. The substitution of the new for the old clergy was very slow and very incomplete. Wherever it was accomplished great discord resulted. The adherents of the refractory clergy could not behold without indignation, the venerable Church of their fathers delivered over to a small and, in their eyes, infamous minority, while they were often condemned to make journeys of many miles to celebrate their worship. On Sundays and festivals whole villages went on these long journeys. It is easy to imagine with what feelings of bitterness the fatigued peasants returned to their homes at night. The agitation of the land was so great that the Assembly had judged well to back their exhortations as to the excellence of the new Church system, by stationing in the most refractory quarters detachments of troops. But the best of soldiers, even under the command of Dumouriez, could not re-establish tranquillity. What was needed was not soldiers, but liberty. The Commissioners, finding the district of Chatillon all on fire, assembled the people in all the chief places, and were astonished at the moderation of a population which had been denounced as rebellious. They demanded simply that the government should leave to them the Pastors of their choice. The report of the Commissioners says: "The people desired to enjoy liberty of religious opinion. We received from numerous deputations this same prayer. 'We only desire,' said they, 'to have priests in whom we have confi-

dence.' Many of them desired this so much that they assured us they would freely pay for the favor the double of their assessment. They left us with peace and contentment when we assured them that it was a principle of the Constitution to respect the liberty of conscience." These words of a chief of the Girondists contain the severest condemnation of all the innovations of the Revolution in ecclesiastical matters. They prove that civil war might have been prevented by a faithful adherence to the Constitution. What a condemnation for all the so-called measures of public safety! If they violate right, they cannot contribute either to safety or honor.

While La Vendée was preparing for revolt, like causes produced the same effects in other places. At Montpellier the mob had interrupted the mass of a non-juring priest, in a church which had been officially assigned to both forms of worship. The Catholics had repulsed this attack by the cry of "Liberty of worship," which was in fact to appeal from the Revolution mad to the Revolution liberal and wise—to that one which had eloquently proclaimed universal tolerance. Unfortunately, while the Catholics were sincere in their defense of this great principle, and were sustained by a good number of priests who, for the sake of their flocks, courageously exposed themselves to many dangers, the chiefs of the Royalist party abroad sought to turn this feeling to their own political profit. Their sole aim was to restore the ancient *régime*, with all its abuses. This is clearly evident from a document which Abbot Maury about this time sent to the Pope. It reveals the secret designs of the leaders of the Catholic party at a time

when multitudes of the simple and pious, unacquainted with the thoughts of their chiefs, were winning for themselves so pure a glory by suffering and dying for the liberty of conscience. This liberty is cynically denied in the letter of the incorrigible Abbot. Instead thereof, he openly pleads for a restoration of the old system, with all its abuses, and especially for the maintenance of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He declares that Louis XIV. justly regarded the French nation as so a unit that it could not admit of more than one religion; in this respect the nationality was somewhat like the nature of the Supreme Being—as soon as a division is admitted he ceases to exist. He argues that the share the Protestants were taking in the French Revolution justified the policy of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and that the only safe course was to return to the examples of Louis XIV., and trample under foot the teachings of a vain philosophy. He pleads for refusing civil rights to the Protestants, and for denying them the protection of the laws. This admirable plan was to be backed by a Papal bull of excommunication against the Jansenists and philosophers; and the people were thus to be brought back to sound reason, and to the yoke which for a moment they had shaken off.

Such was the programme of the counter-revolution. Surely it was fully as absurd and foolish as that of its foes, the extreme revolutionists. The suggestions of Maury were well received at Rome. The Pope, not content with pleading for the sacred rights of religion, put himself at the head of the political reaction in Europe,

and proclaimed himself the champion of the ancient *régime*. Already he had hurled his anathemas against the elementary principles of modern society. Unfortunately, he was now surrounded by a cabinet of Absolutist counselors, who persisted in involving and confounding the most sacred with the most detestable of causes. Under their influence, he gave much more attention to the temporalities of the Church than to the interests of religion. Instead of being simply the father of the faithful and the defender of Christianity, he played the earthly sovereign, and espoused, against the people, the cause of his brethren the kings. The causes of despotism and of religion being thus identified, the Revolutionists believed themselves justified in all their extreme measures against the refractory Catholics, seeing in them only the champions of the despotism against which they were struggling—a view which was true, however, only of a portion of them. Moreover, it is never safe nor politic to imitate the faults of one's foes. To understand the action of the Legislative Assembly, it was necessary for us thus to present clearly the complicated state of the religious question. Neither party was in the right purely and simply, and each pleaded in self-justification the excesses of the other. The sole sublime characters in these deplorable struggles were the humble martyrs, whether priests or peasants, who, strangers to all political intrigues, suffered and died simply for their faith.

The Legislative Assembly had scarcely begun its labors when it heard of the massacres at Avignon. We have stated already how this little Papal territory had been reunited to France; but a decree of the As-

sembly could not cool the rage of the over-excited passions of this southern city. As the result of a violent contest of the two rival parties, an officer of the governmental army had been killed in the church of the Cordeliers. The people, furious at this, had thrown into prison more than two hundred persons, men and women, who were suspected of disliking the new *regime*. Crowded into a dark recess of the ancient Papal palace, they had been massacred on the sixth of October, 1791, by a band of brigands, at the head of which figured a man well known for his cruelty, the revolutionist Jourdan, afterward known as the Beheader. This act was accomplished with an unheard of barbarity, and the blood-stained walls remained for a long time its speaking witness. The indignation of the Assembly at the news of these crimes was intense. The feelings of the Deputy who read the report overcame him before he could finish the horrible recital. Nothing was more earnestly insisted on than the punishment of these inaugurators of terror. However, the Girondists attempted to save them, and, thanks to a miserable legal technicality, succeeded in it to their own shame. Vergniaud was guilty of lending to this execrable cause the charm of his grand eloquence. He was indignant only against the victims of the massacre. "Let not hangmen," said he, "be the first gift you make to the people of Avignon." He forgot that there is something worse than to execute great criminals, namely, to sharpen the daggers of assassins by a scandalous impunity. It was an encouragement to crime, and the precursor of the horrors of the coming September.

This result gave the measure of justice that might be expected from the Legislative Assembly by the persecuted adherents of the ancient Church. The whole tendency was toward the arbitrary and the tyrannical. Once in awhile, however, the real cause of the trouble, and the true solution of the difficulties, were clearly caught sight of by the better members of the Assembly. It was seen and felt that in establishing a civil religion the first Assembly had committed a grave error. This opinion was clearly and boldly expressed in the *Moniteur* by an illustrious poet, André Chenier, who was at that time the honor of French letters, and subsequently one of the noblest martyrs of liberty. With the intuition of genius he saw at once the cause of the tyranny on the one side and of the revolt on the other. This cause was the meddling of the government in matters of religion. Chenier was not a Christian; he thought and wrote as a philosopher; and yet we find in him much more respect for the rights of conscience than in those reactionary Catholics who wished nothing so much as to go back to the old *régime*, under which they themselves had treated their opponents with the same hard fate against which they now so loudly complained. "We will only be delivered," said he, "from the influence of insurgent priests when the National Assembly shall assure to every one the full liberty of following and inventing whatever religion he may choose; when every one shall pay for the worship he prefers, and for no other; and when the courts shall punish with severity the seditious and persecutors of every party. If the Assembly objects that the French people are not ripe

for such doctrines, then we say, it is for them, by means of their example, their discourses, and their laws, to prepare and ripen us for them. Priests do not trouble those states which let them alone, and they never fail to give trouble where they are meddled with." The gifted writer proved his positions by ample references to universal history. He closed his arguments by recommending the entire banishment of religious matters from the sphere of legislation, and the quenching of the quarrels of priests by an attitude of indifference. This indifference is in fact, thought he, the greatest mark of respect which a political body can show to religion; but this opinion was very far from the teachings of Bossuet and Rousseau. The poet, on this occasion, was a true *vates*, a prophet. Unhappily he was not in the Assembly, and his sentiments found there but a feeble echo.

The question of the non-juring clergy was perpetually the order of the day in the Legislative Assembly. The continual disturbances in the provinces ever brought it up anew, and it was ever resolved with increasing harshness against the refractory clergy. The emigrants were openly preparing for war against the Revolution, and it was perfectly clear that the obnoxious priests were their strongest allies; therefore as often as one decree was hurled against the former, another was forged against the latter. The debates were for some time carried on by the mediocre members, and with little ability. The Assembly was at first very inexperienced, and the most ridiculous resolutions were constantly presented. For example, Deputy Duval, after having proclaimed him-

self a child of nature *by the grace of the plow*, (as could readily be proved by the *oxen, those pure and incorruptible witnesses* of his labors,) moved that every priest who would not take oath to obey all the new laws be required, on pain of imprisonment, to wear upon his left shoulder a badge bearing the words: *Priest suspected of sedition.*

The question which finally presented itself was whether the constitution should not be suspended in order to crush the opposing clergy; whether, in addition to refusing them liberty of worship, they should not also be denied civil rights. The problem therefore was whether liberty was to be founded by liberty, or by the arbitrary and the unjust. As early as the seventh of October, 1791, the too famous Couthon* raised a sort of yell of fury against the non-juring clergy. He insinuated that the forms of justice should be refused to them, for the reason that in the districts under their influence it would be difficult to find proof against them. Some days later the unknown Deputy Lejeune intensified these views, and declared that the country had no worse enemy than a fanatical priest, and that the sole question was, how to stop his pernicious influence. "It is not a question of religious liberty," said he, "but of safety of the country." He then proposed that all non-juring priests be required within two weeks to fix their residence in the chief town of their province. A constitutional Bishop, Fauchet, had the sad honor of seconding these measures of intolerance. He was a man of ready, impassioned speech, and had won a name

* See Appendix, note 20.

for eloquence in the court, where he had preached in his youth. His enthusiasm for the Revolution had procured him the bishopric of Caen, and a seat in the Assembly. He there exhibited the fire of a democrat and the bitterness of a priest whose authority was contested in his own diocese. He was not naturally a bad man, but he had been spoiled by the clubs, and now he gave himself up to the current of the moment. He was unmeasured in his invectives against the non-juring clergy, and declared that liberty was incompatible with fanaticism. His own revolutionary fanaticism, and the unjust measures which he pleaded for against his former colleagues, furnished the best proof of his assertion. "Atheists," said he, "are angels in comparison with these priests." Fauchet demanded the suspension of the salaries which had been accorded to the non-juring priests, on the ground that it was not right to pay them for keeping the country in a ferment. He asserted that poverty would soon chase away those who remained "cuirassed in their pretended conscience;" for the people would soon weary of paying for a worship which they could have more easily and more majestically in the government churches. Sad language for a Bishop—this speculating on the baser sentiments of human nature. Happily for the honor of man this calculation has always proved false; the conscience can neither be bought by gold nor cowed by the sword. Fauchet was too fast; the time was not yet come for such action. His discourse displeased the Assembly. He was justly reproached with having preached vengeance in the name of the Gospel. A brother Bishop, Torné, refuted his

positions, and was applauded when he invoked religious liberty in favor of the non-jurors. "Let us beware," said he, "of regarding their errors as a political crime; fanaticism only increases by opposition. The refractory priest who propagates his faith only makes use of his natural liberty. Under the *régime* of liberty let us have no punishment without judgment, no judgment without trial." Such language saved the honor of the new clergy, so gravely compromised by Fauchet. Torné's discourse was ordered to be printed "in expiation of the intolerant speech which had preceded it." In vain Fauchet returned to the charge. He was laughed at when he invoked the pity of the Assembly for a salaried priesthood, on account of a few stones which had been cast at a Curate by some women who disliked him. The majority of the Assembly was against him. Davignon demanded that the non-juring worship be put on the same footing as that of the Protestants and the Jews; Monneron, that the factious be punished not as priests, but as rebels. Others showed that the only alternative was either to guarantee religious liberty, or to turn persecutor. A few Deputies caught a clear view of the only remedy for the difficulties, and proposed informally the leaving of the support of all worship to the free gifts of the faithful. Ducos, in his earnest pleas for liberty of conscience, showed himself a true disciple of Mirabeau. "It is unjust and impolitic," said he, "to give a preference to any worship whatever. Let us, therefore, separate State matters from matters of Church, treat the manifestation of religious opinions as we treat other opinions, regard

religious meetings as we regard other reunions of citizens, and allow every sect to choose whom it please, whether it be a bishop or an iman, a minister or a rabbi, just as we allow popular assemblies to elect whom they will for president and secretaries." Ducos went on to make inferences from his principles, and severely condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the political oath.

The capital speech on this subject was pronounced by Gensonné. He had just claims on the confidence of the Assembly, for he had traversed the disaffected districts and obtained a thorough knowledge of the troubles. He showed that all that the people wanted was religious liberty, and that the Revolution had committed a grave error by regarding all as disloyal who, by error or by conscience, had remained attached to their former Pastors. He declared that a grave mistake had been committed in identifying love of country with the acceptance of this or that form of worship, a course which had subjected the ignorant but honest people of the country districts to innumerable vexations and persecutions. The only remedy possible was simply the guaranteeing of full religious liberty. And yet at this very moment the radicals were pleading for the imprisonment of all non-conforming priests. Their arguments, based on the plea of the public safety, were ably refuted by Gensonné. He showed that such general proscriptions involved every injustice, confounded the innocent with the guilty, and established an inquisition of the conscience. "Remember," said he, in closing, "that respect for individual liberty is the surest guarantee of public liberty, and that

one must never cease to be just even to an enemy." The orator carried the Assembly with him; but it was rather from sentiment than from conviction. His discourse was ordered to be printed, and a report to be made within the next eight days on the propositions which he had made. A faithful following of the counsels of that day would have saved infinite misfortune. Unfortunately, the news of fresh troubles in the provinces quickly turned the majority to the side of arbitrary and despotic measures.

Two days after this speech a special courier informed the Assembly of grave troubles in the West. He bore a report which deeply incriminated the non-conforming clergy. It declared that meetings of people to the number of four thousand had been held in several places for the purpose of nocturnal processions and other religious rites, and that when it was attempted to disperse them they had armed themselves with guns, or pikes and scythes. Conflicts with the National Guards had taken place, and the popular fury had attacked the constitutional clergy, and reopened churches to the non-juring priests. This report, though admitting that the people had armed themselves only after having been disturbed in their religious rights, caused equal alarm and indignation in the Assembly. The storm was evidently muttering in the distance. Isnard cried out that moderation had compromised every thing, that toleration might work well enough in times of calm, but that no indulgence should be shown to those who would not tolerate the laws. "It is time," said he, "that every thing should bow to the authority of the nation, that

tiaras, diadems, and censers should yield to the scepter of law." While this matter was pending, news of serious troubles at Caen arrived. Numbers of the old nobility and of the emigrated French had returned and assisted with parade at the services of refractory priests. Tumults, in which blood was shed, resulted. The local authorities had then taken measures which conflicted with an existing law. Isnard urged the Assembly to suspend the ordinary processes of the law, in order the more quickly and the more terribly to strike down these enemies of the Revolution. He spoke from the midst of the Girondists, in the very tones of a St. Just and a Robespierre. The time, however, was not yet ripe to put his recommendations into practice.

A little later we find Isnard again at the assault. Under pretext that the priests had in their hand the most powerful means of seducing the people, he urged to the greatest severity, and plead for nothing less than a decree of exile against all who would not take the oath. "Do you not see," said he, "that we must separate the priests from the people whom they lead astray, and send the pests to Italy and to Rome?" He argued that if the arbitrary is criminal in the service of despotism, it becomes a great act of justice in the cause of liberty—not seeming to see that the arbitrary is itself the very essence of despotism. He argued that the complaint of a single person should be sufficient to justify the exile of a priest, and regarded as excessive indulgence the pretention not to condemn him except on proof. Such principles passed for liberal in November, 1791, at the same tribune where Mirabeau had so nobly defended the rights of conscience. The

speeches of Isnard produced a profound impression despite their sophisms and excesses, for they gushed out of a heart on fire with enthusiasm. He was thoroughly convinced and perfectly sincere. His discourses would have been printed had he not shocked the religious sentiment by exclaiming, "My God is the law; I acknowledge no other." This deity was for him, however, a very indefinite character, being nothing other than the public safety—or rather, the will of the populace.

On the 6th of November, 1791, François de Neuchateau presented, in the name of the Legislative Committee, a project of law which involved, in itself, all sorts of iniquities. After manifold modifications it became the law of the nation. The civil oath, which included an approval of the new Church Constitution, was to be taken within one week by all non-functioning ecclesiastics, on pain of forfeiture of the salaries allowed them by the first Assembly; every priest convicted of having excited religious tumults was to suffer imprisonment for two years; extraordinary penalties were reserved for those convicted of intriguing with foreigners; and the priests were to be regarded as responsible for all pillage or murders committed by riots excited by them, or on their account. This law is the shame of the Legislature which enacted it, and finds its only shadow of apology in the use which the enemies of France were then busy in making of the religious sentiments of the non-conforming Catholics. To require such an oath was to violate the conscience; to refuse the salaries was to break a solemn pledge; and to hold the priests thus responsible was to make them liable for mobs which, in some cases,

they themselves could not even have prevented. This law received a worthy crowning in a supplementary article which indirectly and hypocritically suppressed the liberty of worship. It required the civil oath of all who rented a locality for the celebration of religious rites. The law, as a whole, was a violent outrage on the declaration of rights in the Constitution, and the King, in vetoing it, was really more liberal than this democratic Assembly.

The most of the historians of the Revolution, in viewing this decree, commit the wrong of judging it in the light of the public dangers, and not in the light of justice, which is synonymous with liberty. This is the case with Louis Blanc and Michelet. When the decree was brought to the royal council the ministers approved it, but they found an invincible resistance in the King. It is of no avail to say that this unhappy prince had courage in nothing but the defense of the priests; in this case he assuredly obeyed his profoundest and most sacred convictions; and, had the Assembly yielded, the result would have been infinitely better for the liberal cause. But this body, rendered furious by the war which the Kings of Europe were preparing against France, thought only of crushing every obstacle, and, meeting the royal veto in their path, they rested not till they had overturned the throne itself.

The royal veto deeply agitated the nation. It checked the legal persecution, but it increased the popular rage. It was around this question that the great battle was fought between the Constitutionals of 1789 and the hot radicals of 1791; between the friends of liberty and

the champions of mad democracy. The victory fell to the latter, for the fever of the moment and the danger of foreign war played into their hands.

The struggle began at Paris. A majority of the Directory of the Seine consisted of members and partisans of the former Assembly. They stood up earnestly for the great principles of 1789. They regarded the recent decree of the Legislative Assembly as a violence against true liberty, and solemnly petitioned the King to refuse his sanction. This petition, which the apologists of the Revolution generally condemn as an attempt at reaction, bears throughout the impress of the highest and most consistent liberalism. It is the language of right and justice themselves. After protesting their love of the Revolution, and their hatred of fanaticism, they charge the Assembly with unintentionally voting measures which conflicted equally with the Constitution, with justice, and with prudence. They objected to the decree that it broke the national faith by taking from the non-functioning priests the salary they had been promised; that it created a sort of proscribed class, and unjustly incarcerated the priests wherever troubles might break out; and that it violated the rights of conscience by refusing to non-jurors the liberty of worship. They showed with as much eloquence as reason, that in thus treating with injustice a whole class of citizens, the Assembly was only opposing fanaticism to fanaticism, and restoring the odious principles in the name of which the Cæsars had persecuted the first Christians, and Louis XIV. proscribed the Protestants. "Has a whole century of philosophy," asked they, "sufficed only to

bring us back to the intolerance of the sixteenth century? Since no religion is required by the law, why should any religion be a crime? For these reasons, and in the sacred name of liberty, of the constitution, and of the public good, we beg you, Sire, to refuse your sanction to the decree." This noble petition is taxed by Louis Blanc with arrogance, and by Michelet with being a vain abstraction. It met with violent opposition in the populace of Paris. It was attacked in the clubs and by the press. The Leaguers of former times reappeared at the close of the eighteenth century as intolerant, in a contrary sense, as they had once been under the Guises. The demagogues got up a scene to counteract the influence of the petition. Deputations from various sections of Paris appeared at the bar of the Assembly, with protests against the petition of the Directory. The most of these protests bear the impress of a disgusting coarseness. An orator of one of the faubourgs cried out thus to the refractory priests: "You monsters, who suck the milk of crime, your God is the god of the passions, but ours is that of clemency." Strange introduction to a demand for proscription. But the honors of the occasion fell to the incomparable pamphleteer of democracy, Camille Desmoulins, who could so well translate into caustic wit the rage of the populace. He charged the Directory with having drawn up a subscription paper for civil war, ready for the signatures of all the fanatics, all the idiots, all the slaves, all the *ci-devant* thieves of the eighty-three departments, at the head of whom stood the petitioners themselves. Appealing to the sovereignty of the popular will, and re-

marking that no royal veto could have prevented the taking of the Bastille, he called for the immediate execution of the decree, in spite and in defiance of the King. He demanded procedure against the Directory for having signed a paper which tended to oppose the legislators of the people. He closed thus: "Fathers of the country, disdain all sophisms. Doubt no longer the omnipotence of a free people. If the head sleeps, how shall the arm act? It is the leaders who must be attacked. Strike at the heart. Use the musket against conspiring princes, the rod against an insolent Directory, and exorcise the demon of fanaticism by fasting." Surely it would have been enough to commit injustice, without making merry over it. The proposition to deprive the priests of what had been solemnly guaranteed to them did not become the less odious by this stroke of pleasantry. That nothing should lack to the scandal, it was a bishop, Fauchet, who lent his voice to Desmoulins by reading this perfidious piece. It was ordered to be printed and spread over the country. It is surprising that after more than half a century we have still apologists for such demagogism. Let it teach us at least never to prefer revolution to liberty.

The King persisted in his veto. His agreeing with the Directory increased the popular ill-will, and from this moment he became the central object of attack. Nothing can equal the insults and outrages which the democratic press now heaped upon him. Prudhomme compared the royal veto to a chain and ball, which the Assembly were slavishly dragging about. He was held up to derision as one who was *beset night and day* by a

vindictive wife and a bigoted sister. He was rudely told that the Bourbons owed to the nation all their importance.

The effects of the veto were different, according to the departments. At Paris, in spite of the Jacobins and the mob, the Directory remained for a time the stronger. Some churches were opened for the non-juring priests, and the service unmolested. Still the cause of irreligion made progress day by day, and the Jacobin club was constantly the theater of violent declamations against Christianity. In the departments the greatest anarchy reigned. Some followed the example of the true liberals of Paris; while others, ignoring the royal veto, executed the decree as if it had had the force of law. In some places considerable numbers of priests had been thrown into prison, where they endured, without a hearing, the severest captivity, and would certainly have died of hunger had it not been for the charities of the faithful. This created the greatest indignation in the parishes thus deprived of their Curates. In other places, though not imprisoned, they were violently hurried to the chief place of the district, put under a suspicious police, and, worse still, forbidden to celebrate mass. At Nantes they were forced to appear at a roll-call twice a day. In one place they were forbidden to assemble more than three in the same spot. In various places the persecution fell on private persons also. At Rennes they were fined six francs for every attendance at an interdicted mass. Their worship was disturbed by force. It was in vain that the non-juring priests retired to the most obscure recesses; they were hunted out, and if discovered with a chalice, or any

sign of a priestly ornament, were exposed to severe penalties and popular insult. In some localities where the accused priests were brought before the judges they received justice; generally, however, they were the objects of arbitrary measures on the part of all branches of the police. The resistance of the truly liberal authorities served only to give greater pretext to the violence of the populace. We may judge from what took place in Paris in March, 1792, of the severe sufferings in other parts of France of all who remained faithful to the old-fashioned Catholic faith. A band of ruffians had burst into the convent of Dominican nuns, threatening to demolish the whole establishment if the constitutional priest was not immediately received. "I would fear," writes the Prioress to the Pope, "too deeply to affect your paternal heart were I to describe to you all the violent measures which have been used to shake our fidelity, the hostile mobs which surrounded us, the continual menaces of nocturnal pillage, and all our fear and terror. No; I will not speak of these things, for we rejoice to be found worthy of suffering somewhat for the name of Jesus Christ and the honor of the Church, our mother."

The Prioress of the schools of St. Charles in Paris describes in an equally touching letter, the outrages she suffered for having refused to receive the new priest, whom she regarded as simply an intruder. The latter had applied to a club, and secured a crowd of ruffians to enforce his claim. On Sunday, followed by these fellows in procession, he approached the convent, and cried out, "Open your chapel and ring your bell." "I

refused both," writes the Prioress. "The cries were redoubled, the axes distributed, and the walls scaled. My faithful companions and I, prostrate at the foot of the cross in a retired room, lay expecting death, and offering our lives to God." The Prioress had the chagrin of seeing one of the sisters finally open the door to the new priest. She vainly resisted for three days the new order of things, and was ultimately compelled to disperse the society and take flight. If such things took place at Paris, it is easy to imagine to what greater violence the revolutionary fury was carried in the provinces. At Rochelle and elsewhere the nuns had been whipped with rods. The same outrage had been suffered by some young ladies who had attended the proscribed worship. The Minister of the Interior cited a case of a man whose corpse had been exhumed from the cemetery and buried in the public cross-roads, for the reason that he had refused to attend the mass of a State-Church priest. In some cases, municipal officers forcibly seized children from their parents and had them baptized by the new priests; in others they had inflicted fines on parents who had not presented their children for such baptism.

This persecution did not meet every-where with gentle lambs, ready to submit without murmur. It was manfully resisted, and came near involving the land in civil war. Still, if prudent measures had been adopted, quietude might have been restored even at the beginning of the year 1792. All that was necessary to restore harmony between the Assembly and the King, and to pacify the provinces, was simply full liberty of

worship, honestly granted and faithfully guaranteed. The non-juring priests expressly denied, in a public document, all the charges of disloyalty which had been heaped upon them. "You accuse us," said they to the government, "of being the authors of all the dissensions of the country, of neglecting to pay our taxes, of being in intelligence with the foreign enemy, and of inviting war with all our influence. How is it that of so many priests accused, you have found no one guilty? Surely the hostile surveillance of fifty thousand administrative corps, aided by more than ten thousand clubs, would have sufficed to detect plots if such had existed. We declare that we are subject to all the public authorities, and that, after the example of Christ, we regard it as a duty to pay tribute. We declare that our most ardent wish is for the return of peace between the Church and the State. Our sole resistance consists in believing that the new Constitutional worship is not the Catholic worship, and in so teaching. This one point excepted, we are entirely submissive to the civil order and to the laws; we are innocent not only in the eyes of God, but also in the eyes of the law." It would have been wise policy to take in good part these professions of so thorough-going a loyalty, and not to alienate by persecution the hearts of this powerful party.

Such was the opinion of the Minister of the Interior, Cahier Gerville, as expressed in a report which he presented to the Assembly on the 18th of February, 1792. After reviewing the condition of the land he closed thus: "On the one side we see fanatics, and on the other persecutors. It seems that tolerance is exiled from the

kingdom. In all the provinces the liberty of worship has been almost annulled. Now what matters it to the State, whether a citizen goes to mass or not? All that a good constitution can do is, to favor all religions without adopting any one. There is in France no national religion. Each citizen should enjoy freely the rights of conscience, and it is to be hoped that the time is not distant when each shall pay for his own worship. The country demands laws in harmony with the codes of free nations, and which will dispense with the necessity of pronouncing the words *priests* and *religion.*” This was well said; it was the pure spirit of 1789, and suggested the only remedy for the troubles of the country. It was applauded in the Assembly, though it did not succeed in turning it from its detestable public-safety policy. The next month the ministry was dissolved and a new one formed, the Girondists imposing their own men upon the King. Cahier Gerville gave place to the rude and austere Roland,* who was less a liberal than a democrat.

On the 19th of March, 1792, the Pope had issued another brief full of felicitations of the refractory clergy. The same day he sent another to the refractory Bishops, giving them for the time being extraordinary powers. The danger of excommunication seems to have had but little influence on the constitutional clergy. A few, however, hesitated. Gobel had had secret interviews with a Papal agent; his ignoble mind was equally capable of a vague fear and a bold resolution. The fear of hell brought him back to the Pope, as the fear of the popu-

* See Appendix, note 21.

lace afterward led him to a shameless apostasy. He was a vile, cowardly aspirant. The Bishop of Rouen, unwilling to be an agent of persecution, resigned office without leaving his party. The constitutional clergy was composed of two classes of men—a good number of respectable priests who earnestly labored to revive religion in France, and also a class of what was fitly called the offscourings of the old Church—some of them of bad morals, and others hot-headed clubbists. The question of the marriage of the priests had been agitated for some months. It had, in fact, been resolved legislatively; for the Assembly had decreed that pensions should be continued to priests who married. Several constitutional Curates had taken advantage of this authorization, but the Catholic sentiment, even in the new Church, had thereby been deeply wounded. Aubert, a Paris Vicar, had given special prominence to his marriage, but had succeeded only in creating a great scandal in his parish. He had had recourse to the noisy approbation of the clubs. From this resulted deplorable scenes, well calculated to bring into disrepute the new religion. The Assembly committed the ridiculous mistake of giving a public reception to the clerical couple. In his speech the husband insinuated that the Bastille had been taken in order to facilitate his nuptials. He was continued in his parish in defiance of his Bishop, by the grace of the clubs. Subsequently he was appointed to another parish, despite the protests of several Curates, and installed with great pomp; his wife occupied a place of honor in the choir. If the days of persecution had not come to its aid, the new Church could

not have risen above the discredit which the insulting patronage of the enemies of Christianity was fast bringing upon it. It is certain that the project had been formed of bringing religion into contempt, in order the sooner to get rid of it. But it was necessary first to crush the refractory priests, and from the entrance of the Girondists into the King's cabinet nothing had been spared to accomplish this result.

The butcher, Legendre,* had faithfully expressed the thought of the Jacobins when he cried out in the club, "Let the refractory priest be punished severely. Let him either take his head to the scaffold or his body to the galleys. When a farmer finds a noxious worm he puts it under foot." Easter day was an occasion for new outrages. At Lyons a mob had broken into the churches, and the police rewarded the rioters by closing the chapels of all the convents. The church of St. Claire, which had not been closed, was the theater of shameless violence. Women were covered with mud and then dragged through the streets of the city; and this was silently suffered by the magistrates. An attempt was made to violate, directly, the conscience of the King. Gaudet prepared an order asking him imperatively to take a new confessor. It was to be signed by the King's council and then presented; but Dumouriez refused, and defeated it. He would not allow the King to be troubled in his conscience by the consent of his own council. He said that he had a full right to take for his adviser an Iman, a Rabbi, a Papist, or a Calvinist, without consulting any one but himself. Wisdom would have ap-

* See Appendix, note 22.

plied this rule to the whole nation; but the Girondists, at the moment when they were doing all in their power to over-excite the revolutionary fever, were little disposed to respect religious scruples. The Assembly marched straight forward to the accomplishment of its two designs—the debasement of the royal authority, and the outlawing of the non-conforming clergy. It began by the destruction of what remained of the religious orders. The first Assembly had not presumed at once to abolish the corporations of monastic teachers, for they had well deserved of the nation. But the Legislative Assembly saw in them only a stronghold of the ancient Church, and hastened to crush them into the dust. Holy Friday was ruthlessly chosen for giving this bitter stroke to the hearts of the Catholics. Bishop Lecoz sought in vain to moderate the action and make its execution gradual. Deputy Lagrevol increased its severity by causing to be stricken out the exception in favor of the Sisters of Charity, whom he stigmatized as vermin. Torné claimed, at least, the respect of the Assembly for the illustrious orders which it was abolishing, but in the end aggravated the law by adding to it a clause suppressing the costume which the priests had worn from time immemorial. This latter measure was singularly impolitic. It ignored the wonderful influence which external signs have over an ignorant people. It was a useless irritation. As soon as the motion of Torné was adopted, the Bishop of Limoges rose and declared that he would sacrifice his episcopal vestments for the support of a national soldier; and Fauchet, more pliant still, took off immediately his little clerical cap and

put it into his pocket, to the great applause of the spectators.

Minister Roland knew well how to continue and increase the hostility of the Assembly against the refractory priests. On the 16th of April he announced to the Assembly that, troubles having broken out in a certain province, public opinion had charged them on the non-juring clergy, and had demanded their deportation. A municipality had decreed their expulsion, and thus had restored order, though the action was unconstitutional. The Assembly understood this recital as an advice. A few days later, Roland again called attention to the religious troubles. He gave a terrible picture of them, intensifying the colors at pleasure, and mercilessly described the non-juring priests as madmen, sowing everywhere, in neighborhoods and families, hatred and discord. He admitted frankly the illegality of the measures which had been taken against them; but, far from blaming these cruel acts and indignities from which they had already suffered, he, on the contrary, presented with manifest approbation the apology which their authors had offered. Roland asked, not the cessation of these unconstitutional proceedings, but that they should be rendered legal by the enactment of more severe measures, and by constraining the King to give his consent. He plainly counseled a measure of deportation against the non-juring clergy. Merlin warmly seconded the advice of the minister, and proposed, to the applause of the Assembly, that all the troublesome priests should be placed on vessels and sent to America. Vergniaud, after proposing the reference of the matter to a com-

mittee, said, "It is time to declare war on your enemies, since they declare it against you, but to declare it in the name of the law." On the 26th of April, 1792, Francois de Nantes reported the recommendations of the Committee. It was the most ridiculously declamatory document imaginable. It veiled, under the flowers of a tawdry rhetoric, an abominable project of proscription. The orator indulged in the most outrageous insinuations against religion. He regretted bitterly the times when primitive men erected altars of flowers to a primitive god, which in his opinion was equivalent to the god of gardens. It is impossible to form any other idea of this piece of sentimental bombast than that it is a formal condemnation of all positive religion, and especially of Christianity. But the poor Pope is the object of special assault. He is represented as a prince indulging in burlesque menaces, and ambitious of assuming the airs of Jupiter with his thunderbolts, but whose impotent shafts fall powerless on the buckler of Liberty, who now keeps station on the summit of the Alps. He announced thus his approaching downfall: "Soon the slaves of a priest will remember that they were once citizens of Rome. They will say, It is here that Brutus lived, and Italy will be free." He affected to despise the influence of priests, and yet he called them "the thirty or forty thousand levers of counter-revolution." He demanded that the non-jurors be confined at the head-quarters of the departments, and forbidden, on pain of banishment, to preach or to confess. The orator closed his monstrous project of proscription by calling for the fire of Scævola, that he might exhibit his love of country and liberty.

He would surely have given greater proof of this, if, instead of burning his hand, he had never used it to write a paper which was destined to lead to so many real sufferings of thousands of men.

The discussion opened on the sixteenth of May. For many of the orators the proposed decree was too mild. Vergniaud thought himself indulgent in offering to continue the salaries of priests who would go into exile themselves. He saw fit to indulge in the following ungenerous irony: "I doubt not that in Italy they will be received as holy and persecuted personages, and the Pope will be able to see in the present we make him of so many living saints how profound is our gratitude for the arms, the heads, and the relics of dead saints with which, for so many centuries, he has gratified our pious credulity." The cause of moderation and liberty had only two champions, Ramond and Moy. The latter, though a skeptical priest, and imbued with the current philosophy, had the honor, that day, of attacking the new Constitution of the Clergy as the cause of all the social troubles. "You will have done nothing for the public tranquillity," said he, "until you sweep this chapter of theocracy from the code of your laws. The best way to avoid religious troubles, is to preserve full religious liberty, and to render all religions equal in the eyes of the law." Ramond and Moy were violently opposed by an obscure priest by the name of Ichon, who denied the title of worship to the assemblies of the unsworn Catholics, and compared them to reactionary clubs. A Deputy then read to the Assembly the famous chapter from Rousseau, in which all liberty of worship is sacri-

ficed to the popular sovereignty, and where the creed of the majority is imposed on every citizen on pain of death. Another Deputy caught the spirit of the hour better still, and proposed flatly to convert the chapter into a law. But wherefore this? What else had been done for more than a year but simply to comment on it, and put it into practice? The matter resulted in a decree of deportation of every priest who should be complained against by twenty active citizens, except in cases where public sentiment opposed it. In the latter case the accused was to be brought to immediate trial. Such was the decree of the twenty-fifth of May, 1792. It was simply an aggravation of that of the preceding November.

The war between France and the Kings of Europe had now broken out on the frontiers. The French cause had not at first prospered, and the Assembly threw the blame on the court, suspecting it of secret intelligence with the enemy. On the twenty-ninth of May it took from the King his guard of honor, for it ordered the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men in the neighborhood of Paris, a veritable revolutionary force, which was master of the executive authority. This decree, and that as to the deportation of the priests, were presented to Louis XVI. at the same time. Of course both were vetoed. Upon this, Roland read to him in open council a haughty and imperative letter, giving him the severest lessons of red republicanism. Roland was perhaps excusable for disregarding court style, and appearing in the royal presence in shoes without buckles; but it was surely a great impropriety for him

to brave the King to his face. Doubtless the King had been strengthened in his determination to veto these laws by a pamphlet of the Archbishop of Aix. We read in it these noble words: "What is the crime of these fifty thousand Frenchmen against whom banishment is about to be pronounced? It is their religion. Their crime is, to wish not to perjure themselves. Conscience is concerned; but conscience will not obey decrees of every sort." Roland was dismissed from the ministry, but he received the open sympathy of the Assembly. A new ministry, composed of obscure constitutionalists, was formed; but they feebly represented a noble cause, and consequently played involuntarily into the hands of the extremists.

Lafayette, amazed and indignant at these events, wrote to the Assembly from his post in the army an eloquent letter, in which he denounced the influence of the clubs, and besought that the royal authority and religious liberty be respected. It was but coolly received. It was responded to by the riot which on the twentieth of June violated the palace of the King. This insurrection had been prepared by the municipality of Paris. It had met no resistance in the Assembly, and the royal Majesty had been odiously insulted without for a single moment receiving serious protection. The mob which invaded the Tuileries avowed openly its design. This was to manifest its ill-will against the King's veto. The unfortunate prince was caused to put on a revolutionary cap, and to suffer odious outrages, for having protected the liberty of worship. Indignant at this, Lafayette hastened to Paris;

but between the distrust of the Court and the wrath of the Jacobins he could effect no understanding. He returned to his army with a broken heart. The grand movement of 1789 was, for a time, ruined. Liberty had been drowned in a raging flood of demagogism, which was grand only on the frontier, where in truth it exhibited admirable deeds of martial heroism. At Paris and in the provinces it was soon defiled with brutality and blood. Already it had swept away the most precious rights of man, and its irresistible waves were now dashing against the throne of the outraged Louis XVI.

It was now that Vergniaud pronounced against this King the most eloquent oration which France had heard since the death of Mirabeau. His sole excuse was the great peril which the foreign invasion threatened against the nation, and he and the other Girondists were right in suspecting the Court of moral complicity with the enemy. But was the real guilt with the King, or with them? Had not they done every thing to drive to desperation an honest and irresolute prince, from whom they had taken away all means of legitimate defense, and whose constitutional rights and Christian conscience they had ruthlessly and violently trampled under foot? The orator pleaded for the vetoed decrees; charged all the internal commotions on the stubborn, non-juring clergy; and treated the King as an obstacle to the Revolution, and the occasion of the invasion from Germany. Deputy Dumas responded, with reason, that the true cause of the troubles was the suppression of religious liberty, and that the only safe course was to follow the politics of the veto; but it was

to little purpose to be on the side of right in July, 1792. The fever was too high. The grandiose and poetic eloquence of the Girondist carried the day, and, being read all over France, gave a fatal blow to the monarchy, and animated every-where the persecution of the non-juring priests. Bishop Torné, who thus far had defended the liberty of worship, now yielded to the current, and, like a violent Jacobin, attacked the King because of his vetoes, and urged the suspension of the constitution in the name of the public safety. Such views were but too strictly put into practice.

In several departments the most iniquitous acts were brutally inflicted against the non-jurors. The assault of the mob on the royal palace was responded to by corresponding violence against the priests throughout the kingdom. They were crowded together in the prisons of Lyons and other large cities. In some places they suffered terribly from want of air, and from heat. From some provinces they were lawlessly exiled. Not being able to find secure retreats in the country many of the refractory priests flocked to Paris. There they assumed all sorts of disguises, and tried to earn their bread by working at some trade, as gardening or bakery. Others, clothed in rags, took service on boats, and engaged in catching drift-wood in the Seine. Even before the great storm of September several priests were massacred. At Vans, Bravard was put to death for having refused the oath. Abbot Noir, a young priest of twenty-eight years, urged his father not to weep for him, saying, "It will be more sweet for you for your son to die as a martyr than to live as an apos-

tate." Thereupon he perished under the ax. At Bordeaux an aged priest, who had once held high offices, was thrown into a dark, unhealthy dungeon. He repeated continually the passage in the Acts: "They went out from the council, rejoicing to have been found worthy to suffer outrage for the name of Jesus Christ." He was afterward cruelly executed. Many of the persecuted priests were heard to exclaim: "These are the golden days of the Church; these are the times to try the courage of her true children."

The assault of the mob on the royal palace on the twentieth of June, led naturally to the greater violence of the tenth of August. The suspension of Pétion from the mayoralty of Paris, by the King, for his complicity in, or negligence during, the June riot—the debates resulting therefrom—his triumphant restoration to office—the approach of the foreign armies—the proclamation of the danger of the country—the arrival of the bands of revolutionary ruffians from Marseilles—every thing contributed to increase from hour to hour the anarchical fury of the people of Paris. It is now known, thanks to reliable documents, that the municipality of Paris, with the Mayor at its head, took the initiative in the storming of the Tuileries on the tenth of August. This terrible day bore away at once the monarchy and the Girondist party, for from that day the latter lost control of the Assembly. From September the Mountain party, the Terrorists, held supreme sway, though they hardly yet numbered a majority. The Girondists, who had opened the flood-gate of violence, were themselves the first to be submerged. Another unjust measure, how-

ever, must be laid to their charge. As soon as the poor King was deposed and out of the way, they carried, in the Assembly, another decree, more oppressive still than the former ones, against the non-conforming priests. Some days previously the convents yet remaining had been suppressed, and multitudes of nuns thrown upon the streets without family ties or shelter. On Sunday, August 17, a letter was read in the Assembly announcing that in one of the departments the non-juring priests had been banished. Hereupon a Deputy moved the application of a similar measure to the whole of France. Another proposed on the twenty-third that all priests who had not taken the oath be required to leave the country within fifteen days. Cambon thought this too mild still, and called for a decree banishing all the non-jurors to the swamps of Guiana; but Vergniaud and some others protested in the name of justice, a name which it would have been better had they plead for sooner. It was easy to foresee that just as 1792 had overturned in great part the work of 1789, so 1793 was destined to sweep away what remained. The policy of the Girondists was to be pushed to its legitimate excesses, and this was their own severest punishment. The violent measures proposed in the Assembly scarcely needed to be passed. A riotous people aggravated and executed them only too faithfully not many days afterward.

The Legislative Assembly, before wholly losing control of the political movement, realized one reform which was destined to survive all its other decrees, for it answered the true wants of new France. Heretofore,

when the Catholic was the State religion, it had been necessary to apply to the priests for the verification of the chief events in the lives of the citizens—such as birth, marriage, and death. As the constitution now regarded all religions as on the same footing, the Assembly decreed “that for the future the civil authorities should receive and keep the records of the births, marriages, and deaths.” The country was fully ripe for this change, and it is to be regretted that the Legislators who made it, themselves so often denied its spirit, by confounding the spiritual with the temporal, and by punishing not only treasonable plottings, which was their duty, but also religious opinion, which was their unpardonable crime.

The terrible massacres of September, 1792, may rightly be called the St. Bartholomew of demagogism. It does not enter into our plan to describe, after so many eloquent historians, these frightful scenes. They show us an age, polished and benevolent on the surface, plunging itself into blood and crime, as if to remind us of what terrible passions lie asleep in the human heart, and are ready to burst into fearful activity at the first call. It was fondly thought that the harsh manners of the sixteenth century had been greatly softened in all classes, and that civilization had sufficiently worn away the claws of the tiger. What surprise, then, to see the masses of Paris rushing out of the alleys and suburbs, as cruel, as athirst for blood, as the people of the days of the St. Bartholomew massacre, who had been trained by bigoted monks. The fact is, that between a people without a God and a superstitious, fanat-

ical people there is very little difference. The Jacobin of the atheistical philosophy is the worthy heir of the Jacobin of the sixteenth century; he is but the accomplice of James Clement, the monk, who assassinated Henry III. in the name of religion. Instead of excusing one crime by another, and of justifying a second by the first under color of a just revenge, it is our duty to condemn wherever there is guilt, and to protest with all our power against that effemination of moral and historical truth which extenuates and explains away stubborn facts that deserve to be condemned without measure.

We will leave to others the task of painting the city of Paris, plunged into stupor, covered, like a vast prison-house, by the law of "the suspected" with a veil of unutterable terror, and traversed day and night by drunken bands, who violate and ransack private houses, and thus prepare the colossal massacre which the municipality had actually determined upon. As happens in all tragic events which deeply move society, so also here, the strangest contrasts of human nature came to the surface: women pushing heroism to its utmost limits; barbarous hangmen seized with sudden tenderness, and becoming as earnest in saving as they had been a moment before in destroying lives, and then returning with equal ardor to their cruel work; acts of the highest sublimity, as well as Saturnalian follies such as the past had never heard of; devotion of the purest order, and the vilest and most atrocious selfishness; even massacres for the sake of robbery. No possible horror was lacking; and no description will ever do

justice to the awful reality of those days of blood and crime. That which it mostly concerns us to mention, is the fact, that the massacres of September were at first and chiefly directed against the non-conforming priests. One of the precincts of Paris voted openly and in plain words the massacre of the priests. The resolution ran as follows: "In view of the imminent dangers of the country, and the infernal maneuvers of the priests, be it resolved that all the priests and suspected persons confined in the prisons of Paris, Orleans, and other cities, be put to death."

It is only necessary to read the sincere and moving account of Sicard to be thoroughly convinced that the non-conforming priests were the first and designed victims of the massacres. This apt expression of one of the rioters to a prisoner, namely, *If you are a priest you are done for*, is the best explanation of those abominable days. At a half dozen different prisons in Paris the priests were butchered *en masse*, and the provinces followed the example of the capital. Among the many of the massacred at Rheims, Abbot Paquet responded thus, to those who were pressing him to take the oath: "My choice is made. I prefer death to perjury; if I had two lives I might give one of them to you, but as I have but one I shall keep it for God." The non-juring priests showed in these circumstances the most noble courage. They refused, in the face of the sword and ax of the assassins, to pronounce against their conscience an oath which, in all cases would have saved their lives. Nothing is more glorious in all the annals of martyrdom than

some of these scenes. They combined an emulation of holy heroism with a heart-touching piety. The venerable Archbishop of Arles, thanking God for the duty of offering his blood for his cause—those priests confessing to each other, and giving each other the kiss of peace before laying their heads on the block—those answers, kind but firm, and worthy of the days of Irenæus—all those noble manifestations of a religion at that time in such ill repute—all this throws a truly celestial light on the close of an incredulous century, and reveals the presence of God with an extraordinary power at the very moment when an infamous attempt is about to be made to banish his worship from society. From the blood of all the multitudes of those massacred persons a warning voice arises. It says to all holders of civil power, *Beware of violating the conscience!* for it will surely rise pure and triumphant over your assaults, and leave you covered with defeat and shame. Many of the priests who had escaped the assassins fled to foreign parts, where they met in general with a large hospitality, especially in England. Many, however, still remained in France to celebrate secretly, and in the midst of the greatest perils, a proscribed and persecuted worship. The Legislative Assembly, which the voice of Vergniaud had not succeeded in awakening out of the torpor which had fallen upon it since the commencement of the massacres, was now soon to be replaced by the National Convention; that is to say, the Reign of Terror was about to come in its legalized and most fearful form.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH DURING THE NATIONAL CONVENTION UNTIL THE ABOLITION OF THE SALARIES OF THE CLERGY.

DURING the first period of the Convention the non-juring priests were involved in the general proscription which hung over all those who were attached by interest or conviction to the ancient *régime*. It was not necessary to take new measures against them; it was enough to enforce the decrees already passed by the Legislative Assembly. For this reason they became less a subject of debate in the Convention, although their positive sufferings were augmenting from day to day. It was evident from the first day that, feeling certain of crushing the non-jurors, the Convention was beginning to look with disfavor also on the Constitutional Clergy, whom it regarded as a sort of last rampart of the old system of superstition and privilege, which it was fully determined to destroy, root and branch. We shall see that when the time for striking the blow comes, the question of religion will again be agitated by the press and in the clubs. If we have been severe on the Legislative Assembly we will not be tempted to be indulgent toward the Convention. With it finished emphatically, and for long years, the reign of law. Its only business seemed to be to sanction the reign of the clubs and the faubourgs. It was

but the passive instrument of the imperative clamors of a seditious and cruel populace. I confess that I find nothing to admire in these revels of demagogism; I hate them as I hate the tyranny of the Cesars, which was likewise the reign of the mob. When historians, grave rather than serious, tell me that in the midst of these massacres the great French Revolution was advancing and establishing itself, I ask, what kind of a shapeless chimera it was that was making progress in the hands of Marat and Robespierre in 1793, and afterward under the direction of Napoleon. Surely it was not the *régime* of Mirabeau and Lafayette for that proclaimed right and liberty. It was only a *régime* of blind and terrible force, which replaced old iniquities by new ones, and reintroduced despotism instead of overturning it. If pointed to the vast portions of the soil which were taken from the few and distributed among the many and the poor, we reply that this good work was but the fruit of a measure taken already by the Constituent Assembly in the memorable night of August 4, 1789. Surely the torrents of blood which had flowed had not added much to the value of the newly parceled soil. But we are reminded of the philanthropic decrees of the Convention: and truly it did well in enlarging the hospitals; but is this a sufficient excuse for its having multiplied the grave-yards, and thrown into them daily the horrible offals of the scaffold? It laid well the foundations of our great establishments of instruction; but had it itself lasted long it would have rendered both science and public education impossible, by keeping the people in a perpetual fever of revolu-

tion. But after all these objections, we are pointed to the heroic resistance against foreign invasion. This, we admit, was truly sublime ; but it was done, as has been well said, by those who, saved from the crimes of the interior, escaped to the frontiers and purified themselves in the fire of the enemy. Let us admit that at this period of the Revolution there was one feature of real grandeur, I mean energy ; but it was an energy uninfluenced by any moral principle. It was the intoxication of a powerful race, who had many wrongs to avenge, and who were exasperated by an imminent peril. Beneficent and sublime in the face of the enemy abroad, the Revolution was terrible and merciless toward its imagined or real enemies at home. This energy brought forth miracles of courage on the Rhine and elsewhere, but it reveled in unheard-of crimes at Paris and Lyons. If we admire it without reserve in the armies, we curse it without reserve in the clubs and at the scaffold, where it satiated an ever-increasing thirst for blood. Let us not forget, however, that this energy was, after all, mere force, and nothing more, and that those who praise the Convention because it was energetic, will also praise Napoleon because he was strong—both phenomena equally fatal to liberty. Nor was the Convention simply energetic, it was violently fanatical. It had every feature of fanaticism ; its intolerance extended to the proscription even of thoughts and feelings. The broad sweep which was given to the law against “the suspected” was an attempt to strike not only acts, but also thoughts. Nothing could be more like the Spanish inquisition than the revolutionary pro-

cedure under the Convention. The punishment of death was constantly threatened, and executed, on such as thought in such and such a manner. Let us not be deceived; this period of the Revolution was a war of religion, a war of opinion, for demagogism became a sort of cruel and ferocious idolatry, fully as intolerant of schism or heresy as the Dominican of the fourteenth century. Hence the large proportions of the struggle. The Convention practiced also the ample and convenient morality of all fanaticism: the end at which it aimed justified in its eyes all the means it employed, even the most atrocious. The doctrine of the "public safety" caused all its crimes; and it no more hesitated to strike down its own members, and to immolate to the clamor of the clubs its most illustrious orators, than it hesitated, after the mock of a trial, to send to the scaffold the unfortunate King. It did not judge, it killed; and before killing, outraged. This was its whole policy, and as it united in itself all the powers of a government, it could pursue to their utmost extreme its own furious passions, or those of an unbridled demagogism, of which itself was the emanation, and often the instrument.

Despotism alone was destined to rise out of the weariness and disgust of such a *régime*. For a long time the hideous figure of the Convention has stood as a terrifying phantom between modern society and the realization of liberty. We should dispel this misconception which deceives the people, annuls the salutary lesson so dearly paid for, and is made to excuse all sorts of political reaction. Only render liberty hideous, and you have well merited of all despotisms. Now this is

precisely what those do who excuse the crimes of the Revolution, and compose for the public a sort of democratic martyrology, made up of names which, though terrible, are none the less infamous. I admit that in the Convention the Girondists change their course; but they can only be pardoned from the moment when, abandoning their own principles, they come to the defense of the right which for so long they had trampled under foot. At the trial of the King the conduct of the most of them is without courage. They lack the boldness to save him openly; they stop at a half-way measure, and finally sacrifice him to their parliamentary influence. If the whole party had spoken as Lanjuinais the Convention would not have passed out of their hands; they could have controlled it. The true way to triumph over Robespierre was not to hurl against him eloquent philippics, but to arrest him at once by a determined vote, the very day when he presumed to declare that it was the duty of the nation not to judge the King, but to kill him. Our heart is entirely with the Girondists when they struggle with the eloquence of Vergniaud, the energy of Guadet, and the just indignation of Ducos, against the pressure of the lawless clubs, and against that abominable municipality of Paris which, since the September massacres, is little else than a gang of assassins; still we cannot forget that these same men, under the Legislative Assembly, had had recourse to this dangerous force of insurrection, and that the austere Pétion favored the riot of August 10. It is only since the thirty-first of May, 1793, that our sympathies are wholly with the Girondists. They have

fallen victims to arbitrary principles to which they themselves had too much resorted. Proscribed as a body, those who could not escape fell under the ax of the executioner. The sudden loss of so much youth, talent, and noble though misguided zeal, will always be a source of grief to France.

But if we except a few names, such as the honest Carnot, (whose silence, however, in the face of so many wrongs cannot be excused,) what one of all the radical left which now controlled the Convention can be proposed as an object of admiration? Danton was the incarnation of the audacity which he preached, but he could never wash his hands of the blood of the September massacres. Camille Desmoulins is ever the terrible joker whose pleasantry kills, and a final gleam of courageous pity can scarcely undo the injustice of his life. Robespierre, when closely studied, will always appear as one of the worst enemies which liberty ever had. This sophistical tribune never loses an opportunity of offering incense to a false popular sovereignty, and of sacrificing to it all the rights which make men free. I know of nothing more hideous than the kind of fraternity which he proclaims, in speeches that smell both of the oil and of blood. He rises only upon the dead bodies of his opponents, and he never forgets that they are his rivals. This mixture of the proconsul and the soured academician is contemptible. His ideas are run mad; they are the reduction to the absurd of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. He is none the less odious for his austerity—for the plain wooden writing-desk of his study; for, the speeches there written were to bring

heads to the executioner's block. As to Marat,* "all dripping with gall, with calumny, and blood," if there was once a French Academy to listen to him, and a people to bear him in triumph, it is simply the shame of our history. Neither the fine figure of St. Just, the calm hangman, nor the sentimental Barrère,† with his two speeches in his pocket, ready to speak whichever way the popular wind should blow, nor the elegance of Garat, nor the bodily infirmities of Couthon, have any attraction for me. I ask, what liberty it is which the Convention did not resolutely, cruelly, and, in the end, uselessly, trample under foot? I ask, what one of the principles of 1789 did it not violate and suppress, from the liberty of assemblage and of the press to the liberty of worship? Did it not push to the extreme the system of centralization, so that when Napoleon came to the mastery he found, ready to his hand and fully mounted, the most perfect machine of despotism? Vergniaud, whose eyes were opened too late, had admirably defined the liberalism of the Convention. "It said to all," so runs his language, "You are free, but think as we think on questions of politics, or we will denounce you to the vengeance of the people. You are free, but bow your head to the idol which we worship, or we will denounce you to the vengeance of the people. You are free, but unite with us in persecuting those whose probity and talents we fear, or we will denounce you to the vengeance of the people." Surely one might well fear that, like Saturn, the Revolution would devour its

* See Appendix, note 23.

† Ibid., note 24.

own children, and engender in the end only despotism, with all the accompanying evils.

Before returning to the history of the Church in these stormy times, let us rehearse the principal measures adopted by the Convention for crushing all opposition. After the execution of the King, January 21, 1793, there had been created, March 9, in the midst of the commencing dissensions in the Assembly between the Girondists and the Mountainists, a terrible instrument of injustice, namely, a revolutionary tribunal, against whose decisions there was no appeal. This was defined by Lanjuinais as "a decree which was monstrous from the circumstances of the nation, monstrous in its violation of all the rights of man, and monstrous by the abominable irregularity of not admitting appeal in criminal cases." The courageous Deputy asked in vain that, at furthest, this terrible tribunal be allowed only in the department of the capital; for it was soon established all over France. It was simply a machine of irresistible and murderous proscription; for nothing was more derisive than the picked and sordid jury which was granted, but which was not even allowed to deliberate with closed doors. The Committee of Public Safety had been instituted, May 22, 1793, at the demand of the rash Girondist Isnard. The party of the Girondists had been expelled from the Convention and outlawed on the second of June, under the pressure of successive riots which had convulsed Paris. The radical left were then masters of the Convention, and had control of the Committee of Public Safety, which assured in their hands absolute power, and covered all their

measures with a cloak of legality. With these two formidable instruments, this Committee and the Revolutionary Tribunal, they could speedily crush all opposition whatever. The refractory clergy were of course the first to fall under the stroke of proscription.

The disposition of the Convention in regard to religion was similar to that of the Legislative Assembly. It contained a good number of declared Atheists, who desired to efface all remains of the ancient beliefs. The sole representatives of Christianity were a few lay and clerical Jansenists, and some Constitutional Bishops, of whom several apostatized openly and shamelessly as soon as the hour of trial arrived. The disciples of Rousseau stuck to their sentimental Deism, which was in perfect accord with intolerance. Robespierre was opposed to shameless moral impropriety, and lost no opportunity of rendering homage to the Supreme Being. The Girondists, with one or two exceptions, were fervent disciples of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and some of them professed a sort of irreverent disdain for all positive religion whatever. Such was Isnard, who denied any other God than the law. These sentiments were boldly expressed in one of the first debates of the Convention. A proposition to exclude religious instruction from the public schools had been opposed by Maillane, a Catholic, whereupon Dupont, a Girondist, responded with great earnestness, and professed an ardent hatred of Christianity. "What," said he, "shall thrones be overturned, scepters broken, and kings executed, and yet the altars of the gods remain untouched? When the thrones are overturned these

altars are left naked, and without support. Do you think, citizen legislators, to base the republic on any other altar than that of the country? Nature and reason, these are the gods of man. These are our gods." Dupont did not need after this to assert that he was an Atheist. He concluded by asking for the abolition of all tyranny, and the foundation of true liberty on the negation of all prejudices. The French, according to him, would be free only when they had fully thrown off the yoke of priests, and were able to die like d'Alembert, who wished only the philosopher Condorcet* to close his eyes. This discourse provoked, it is true, some murmurs, but it pleased the majority of the Convention. Ducos expressed the same opinions in more moderate language, saying that the return of prejudices was the true counter-revolution. One of his reasons for excluding religious instruction from the schools may be very easily reconciled with a respect for religion, for he said that as the schools should be for citizens of different Churches without distinction, the intervention of a priest would always be offensive to those of a religion to which he did not belong. But was it needful for the orator to go on and insult religion itself? "The first condition," said he, "of public instruction is to teach nothing but truth, and this alone is enough to exclude the clergy. For my part, I confess I would rather trust them with the finances of the nation than with the education of the youth. I would rather ruin the public treasury than pervert and corrupt the public spirit. I will cite as appropriate here the story which Plutarch

* See Appendix, note 25.

relates of a flute-player, who was paid simply for playing, and doubly for keeping silence, for the reason that he played false." Such were the sentiments of the Girondists on the subject of religion. It may easily be inferred that they would have little hesitation about violating the liberty of worship. The Constitutional Clergy could readily foresee that the day of trial would finally come for them also, for it was against religion itself that the hostility was directed.

By such manifestations, however, the Convention offended against public opinion not only in the West and South, but also in Paris itself. Fickle and ardent, the working class of this great city passed for the moment from their hatred of the clergy to a strange attachment for the ancient rites of the Church. Several wards complained bitterly against a decree of the municipality passed in December, 1792, forbidding the celebration of the midnight mass. The movement was so large that recourse was had to a pecuniary reward for such as would abstain from this mass. An attempt to abolish a festival resulted only in a great scandal. Some women attempted to hang a man, whom they blamed for this attempt. The festival of St. Geneviève was celebrated with great enthusiasm by a vast concourse of people. Many hundreds could not get inside of that church which, next year, was to be disgraced by the revels of the worship of reason. But it required the stimulus of demagogism and terror to effect this change in popular opinion. Impiety descended from the higher to the lower classes, rather than the contrary. And we shall see that when calm was restored in the govern-

ment the Catholic worship re-established itself with an astonishing facility.

During this period of the Revolution religious persecution did not cease for a single moment. It tended to reach all clergymen indiscriminately, but the non-jurors had for a long time the honor of the greatest sufferings. The formula of the oath had been modified since the abolition of royalty so as to read simply, *to liberty and to equality*; but this was very little more acceptable than that which required a formal acceptance of the new Constitution of the Clergy, since it involved an approval of the whole system of things which the Convention had founded on the immolation of the King, and supported by the terrible laws of proscription. The conscience was alarmed at such an approval. The number of non-juring priests did not diminish, and their sufferings continually increased. The revolts of La Vendée and Lyons occasioned increased harshness against them. They were regarded as the chief agents of counter-revolution at home and abroad. A severe decree was made against such emigrants as should be caught on French soil, and domiciliary visits were authorized in all houses where they might be suspected of lurking. In March, 1793, it was decreed that whoever recognized a returned emigrant or priest might arrest and bring him to the nearest prison to be executed in the next twenty-four hours. The priests who had left the country fell under the terrible stroke of the law against emigrants, which declared them banished forever, dead politically, and as having forfeited to the State all their property. The more the country was

threatened by invasion from abroad, and sedition in the interior, the more cruel and barbarous was the treatment of the non-juring priests.

The Legislative Assembly had decreed their extradition, and this was the occasion of several murders. The mob, infuriated by the clubs, attacked them on their passage, demanded of them the oath, and too often massacred them on the spot for their firm and heroic refusal. Sometimes they were robbed before embarkation. Cannon shot were even fired on the ships which were bearing them away. This happened at Havre, Dieppe, Rouen, and elsewhere. The journey of the priests to the place of imprisonment until they could be transported was a time of continued suffering. In March, 1793, a large company were sent to Nantes. On arriving in this city the unfortunate men were thrown pell-mell upon a boat, where they received the worst of treatment, and would have died of starvation but for the charity of certain citizens. The gangrene broke out among them, and their sole consolation consisted in taking with each other the communion twice a day. Finally they were conducted to a sea-port, but not till after death had greatly thinned their ranks. The Convention had decreed the deportation of the non-jurors to Guiana. In July, 1793, Danton asked a change in the order. "We ought not," said he, "to avenge ourselves for the poison we have received from America by sending thither another poison not less mortal. It is in the territory of the Holy Father that this sacerdotal mephitism should be concentrated." Lacroix proposed that the priests should be cast into prison, and made to

gain their bread by hard labor; but Robespierre insisted on the execution of the "wise decree" which would free France from the contagious pestilence of fanatical priests. He looked upon them as wild beasts, which the least change in the political tide might let loose on the vitals of the nation. The matter was referred to a committee, but lack of money rendered the deportation impossible. The refractory priests were crowded upon boats, or sent *en masse* to the scaffold. At Lyons, Collot d'Herbois* condemned to death one hundred and twenty of them in a single day. At Arras, Lebon † shed their blood in torrents, and large numbers of them were drowned at Nantes. The Revolution was equally cruel toward the nuns. A large number of them, who had been confined in a single prison, responded nobly in these words to their persecutors, who charged them with fanaticism: "It is fanatics who slaughter and kill, but we pray for such." "You shall be sent abroad." "Wherever we are sent we will pray." "Whither would you prefer to be sent?" "Where there are the most of suffering ones to console, and these are nowhere more than in France." "If you remain here it is to die." "Then we will die." These pious women sung aloud, and joyfully, sacred hymns at the foot of the scaffold. It required a courage fully equal to that of the young volunteers who marched out to death at the notes of the Marseillaise. Calamities like these exalt human nature, and render it either atrocious or sublime. This epoch engendered both heroism and crime; the heroism was found in both parties. Often simple lay Christians

* See Appendix, note 26.

† Ibid., note 27.

rivalled the courage of the priests and nuns. This was seen in a company who were once attending the prescribed worship, in a cavern. Some one announced that the soldiers of the republic could hear the songs of praise. The people simply said to the priest: "*That makes no difference, Father,*" and the song continued. To sing a hymn in such circumstances required as much courage as to serve a cannon under the fire of the enemy.

During the reign of terror the Convention had very little occasion to deal theoretically with the rights of conscience. It is true, it devoted some attention to the subject on the occasion of the Declaration of Rights which was to preface the new constitution it was preparing for France. Condorcet had prepared the first sketch of this ultra-democratic document. It rejected with disdain the idea of an Upper House, as well as every thing else which could impose a check or act as a balance of power in the government. The members of the Assembly, as well as all other officers of the nation, were to spring from the votes of the primary assemblies. Every citizen who could get fifty others to second his wish had the right to convene special primary assemblies. The legislative and the executive powers, as they sprang from the same source, were co-ordinate, and constituted a dangerous duality. Theoretically, the Declaration of Rights consecrated all just principles; but practically, these abstractions amounted to nothing. The discussion of these mere theories gave occasion to several eccentric speeches, which would be possible only in a time of extreme enthusiasm. Anacharsis Cloutz *

* See Appendix, note 28.

was allowed to develop in the Convention his fantastical ideas as to the divinity of the human race in general, and of the French people in particular. "The words French and universal," said Cloutz, "have become more truly synonymous than the names of Christian and Catholic. I hold that you have a very inadequate idea of the nature of the sans-culottes if you admit that there is a divine or creative Being. Whoever has the weakness to believe in God is incapable of believing in the divinity of the human race, the only sovereign." Despite his enthusiasm for the name of Frenchman, he proposed to substitute for it that of *German*, as being more comprehensive, and embracing a whole family of nations. He proposed seriously that the Convention should adopt his ideas, and decree that every individual and every society who should accept them should have right of membership in the republic of *men*, of *Germans*, and of *Universals*. And this speech of Cloutz was listened to without laughter! But why should we be astonished? We have witnessed in our own day the reappearance of this same apotheosis of the race, with a mysticism which far surpasses that of the "orator of the human race."

The constitution drawn up by Condorcet did not survive the fall of the Girondists. Robespierre concocted a new one, which, passing over in silence the guarantees of the former, deified not the human race in general, but the multitude. His speech, on presenting it, abounded from beginning to end with the most abject flattery of the masses, whom he declared to be impeccable and infallible. "Lay down as a first principle," said he, "that

the people are good, but that their delegates are corruptible, and that it is in the virtue and sovereignty of the people that we must seek for a preservative against the vices and despotism of the government." Such a plan was a suppression of the representative system, or, at least, its entire subordination to the primary meetings of the populace. Robespierre desired that the National Legislature should deliberate in the presence of the whole people, though it seems that the clamors of the galleries ought to have sufficed to turn him from such a thought. His project was an assault on all real liberties, and especially on the right of property, which he defined as the power to possess what the law grants. This strange constitution was presented on the tenth, and adopted on the twenty-third of June, 1793. Surely it was the lamest constitution ever given to a great people. However, it was destined never to be put into force. There is one feature of it which has met with much praise: I mean its so-called fraternal, social, and humanitarian color; and it does, in fact abound in that pretentious sentimentality which never and nowhere better blossomed than at the foot of the scaffold. Its conclusion has been thought to be admirable, namely: "The French republic honors loyalty, courage, old age, filial piety, and misfortune. It puts the treasure of its constitution under the guardianship of all the virtues." However, the most sacred of these virtues seems to have been the right of insurrection, at least if we may judge from the practice of the times. And in fact this was the only resource left to liberty; for the citizen was not protected effectually in a

single one of his rights. He was delivered over to the despotism of an irresponsible Assembly, which had no other check than the clubs of Paris. All the governmental powers were in its hands; the instrument of tyranny was perfect.

If we examine what concerns the liberty of worship in these two drafts of constitutions, we will find that of Condorcet little better than that of Robespierre, as recast by Hérault de Séchelles. The debates showed as little respect for this sacred right among the Girondists as among the Terrorists proper. In May an obscure Deputy had moved that the article in the constitution of Condorcet which conceded the rights of conscience should be stricken out, on the ground, that whereas the subjective liberty of the conscience could never be interfered with, the objective practice of worship would infallibly conflict with the spirit of an age which was soon to have no other worship than that of liberty and public morality. And Vergniaud supported the motion. To hear him, the days of intolerance were forever past; a strange position at a time when an unmerciful persecution was raging all over the land! Danton was of the same mind, and thundered against superstition, and in favor of fresh persecution. According to him the surest sign of progress in religious liberty was the hatred of the populace against the clergy. The priests are persecuted, therefore religious liberty is complete; a sophism which has often reappeared in France.

The discussion of the right of worship came up again on the eighteenth of June. Barrère demanded that liberty of worship be formally inserted in the Declara-

tion of Rights, and cited with approval the example of the thirteen States of North America. But Robespierre opposed the motion with great rancor. "I fear," said he, "that conspirators may find in the article which concedes liberty of worship, the means of overturning the public liberty. I fear that counter-revolutionists will disguise their attempts under religious forms. It would be a hypocritical mask in which conspirators would assault liberty." At furthest, however, these conspirators, whatever they did, would not be able more fatally and perfidiously to stab liberty than did this austere tribune, who himself also wore a hypocritical mask. Despite his efforts, the right of worship remained in the Constitution; but of course it remained a dead letter, at a time when the man who had combated it was omnipotent in France.

Some months previously a proposition had been made by Cambon,* in a committee of finance, which, had it been adopted, would have prevented many evils. It was, to leave every Church to pay for its own worship. But the motion was opposed. Danton, the Terrorist, said: "It has been declared that the priests should not be salaried out of the public treasury. Appeal has been made to philosophical ideas which are dear to me, for I recognize no other God than the God of the universe, no other worship than that of reason and liberty; but man, unhappy in the lot of life, seeks after eternal enjoyments, and imagines that in another life his joys will be multiplied in proportion to his miseries in this. After you shall have instructed and ripened the people

* See Appendix, note 29.

for some time, then it will be time to speak to them of morals and philosophy ; but until then it is barbarous, it is a crime, to take from the people the priests in whom they yet find some consolation. It would, therefore, be wise, I think, for the Convention to publish to the people an address, declaring that it has no wish to destroy but only to perfect, and that if it pursues fanaticism it is only because it wishes liberty of religious opinions." But Danton was greatly mistaken in imagining that Cambon's project of withholding the salaries of the priests would have quickly crippled Christianity. Had it been done respectfully, and had liberty of worship been honestly guaranteed, the Revolution would have been saved. Robespierre was of the same opinion as Danton. The piece of rhetoric in which he defends his position is perhaps the best we have from his pen, for it was written with the most thorough conviction. The separation of Church and State will always be a stumbling-block to the consistent disciples of Rousseau. Robespierre begins by expressing his disdain for the superstitions of the clergy. "I am," says he, "no fonder than others of the power of the priests. It is one more added to the chains of humanity ; but it is an invisible chain acting on the soul, and reason alone can break it. The lawgiver may aid reason, but must not take its place or anticipate it." Taking a rapid survey of the country, he rejoiced in the progress which philosophy had already made. "Even those who remain attached to Christianity," said he, "if we except the counter-revolutionists, teach now only the imposing dogmas which come to the support of the morality, the

virtue, and equality which were formerly taught by the Son of Mary to his Jewish fellow-citizens." Thus, according to Robespierre, France was already very near to that religion without mysteries, to that rational worship of the Supreme Being, which was the ideal of Rousseau. If there was yet mingled with this high philosophy an element of superstition, so much the better, for it rendered the system palatable to the people. He referred with approval to the policy of ancient legislators, in assuming for their systems the sanction of Heaven. But he forgot that from the time that the Roman augurs laughed, not secretly, as in the time of Cicero, but openly, and in the market-places, this pious trickery of philosophy to impose on the people, had very little success. Religion will have nothing to do with the hypocritical respect of politicians who support it from motives of State. Robespierre lays here the foundation of the Concordat system of Napoleon, who was in this respect his faithful disciple. He was likewise the teacher of Napoleon in that part of his writings which describes the dangers, to a strongly centralized government, of the independence of the Church from the State. "What could be more fatal to the public tranquillity," asked he, with all the sincerity of a partisan of despotic sovereignty, "than the realization of this theory of individual worship? You seem to fear the influence of the priests, but your plan would increase it; for as soon as they cease to be priests of the public they would become those of individuals, and have with the same the most intimate relations." He then proceeded to picture to the alarmed Jacobins the spectacle of in-

dividual liberty taking advantage of the separation of Church and State, and forming minorities into parties, to resist the sway of the majority. And he was not mistaken. The system of a non-salaried Church is in fact fatal to tyranny. Robespierre opposed, as was his custom, the poor to the rich, declaring that as the poor are the more religious, it would be a great hardship to them not to salary the Church. The only one of his arguments which had weight, was drawn from the public faith which had been pledged to the system of salaries; but not to mention that this faith had already been broken in the case of the non-jurors, it would have been easy to remunerate the priests individually so far as to satisfy the claims of justice, and yet leave the Church without salary from the State. It was important for our purpose to signalize the hostility of Robespierre to the separation of Church and State. It is a great honor for this principle, to have had for an adversary such a man, and for such reasons. However, the inconveniences of the State-Church system grew more and more apparent, and the separation could not be long postponed.

From now till the time of the abrogation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the Convention took advantage of it to make their authority bitterly felt by the State Church. The former Assembly had continued the salaries of such priests as took wives; this was equivalent to declaring their marriage legal. The Constitutional Bishops were mostly opposed to this, and especially was this the case with Fauchet. His opposition became a matter of debate in the Convention, in

July, 1773. Lacroix declared that the Bishops, being salaried by the government, ought not to oppose any of its laws. Danton was more emphatic: "We have continued to the Bishops their salaries," said he, "now let them imitate Christ and the Apostles. These rendered to Cesar what belonged to Cesar. Very well! the nation is greater than all the Cesars." It was in vain urged that the marriage of priests, being a matter of Church doctrine, a Bishop might withhold his nuptial blessing from the marriages of priests, and yet not offend against the civil laws. Matters went from bad to worse, and the height of the Reign of Terror was not far in the distance.

In order to understand the character of those orgies of impiety which were so fatal to the Revolution, it is necessary to cast a glance at the condition of the different parties. On the overthrow of the Girondists, June 2, 1793, the radical extremists remained masters of the whole machinery of government. And they were faced by dangers which led them to the exertion of all their power. The proscription of the escaped Girondists caused several insurrections. Lyons was in full revolt, and it required an army to reduce it. Toulon surrendered to the English. La Vendée, entirely in revolt, made common cause with the foreign coalition which was pressing upon France at the North, at the Alps, and at the Pyrenees. More than once the fate of the nation was at stake. At Paris itself the assassination of Marat by a pure and noble young woman, showed what enthusiasm the cause of the Girondists could excite.

It is well known by what miracles of energy the Rev-

olution made face to all their dangers. Lyons and Toulon were taken by rapid sieges. A new system of democratic tactics, which consisted in hurling heavy masses on a single point, drove back the allied armies. Finally, after a succession of battles, the upper hand was gained in La Vendée toward the close of 1793. The victories of Wattignies in Flanders, and Cholet in La Vendée, terminated victoriously the campaign. At the same time great reforms in civil matters evinced the unconquerable faith of the Revolution in the future. The Normal and Polytechnic Schools were established, and a vast plan of instruction elaborated. The foundations of the Civil Code were laid. Attention was given even to the fine arts, and vast museums opened. Uniformity of weights and measures was established, a great and lasting reform. This terrible energy of the Revolution on the frontiers, and these useful reforms at home, are its greatest glory. But with what different feelings do we view the bloody orgies which attended it. We shall always believe them to have been unnecessary. No, we will never admit that France could not rise to the highest courage without plunging herself into a cruel delirium. We do not see that victory deserted her flag the day when a single color ceased to swallow up the other two—the day when it ceased to bathe in the blood of the scaffold. Those judges bring dishonor on the country who pretend that it could not have been saved except at this price. Let them not forget that the crimes to which they attribute such honor excited many more dangers than they surmounted.

It is from the month of September, 1793, that the

Reign of Terror was fully in play. It came forth, full armed, from the sitting of the fifth of this month, on occasion of one of those imperious demands of a deputation from the people of Paris, which completely swayed the Convention. "Let us make terror the order of the day," exclaimed the unprincipled and cowardly Barrère. The decree which he proposed organized a revolutionary army of six thousand men, who were charged with the duty of crushing every-where the counter-revolution. The pain of death was pronounced against whoever should trade in *assignats*. To hasten its judgments the Revolutionary Tribunal was divided into four sections. The nocturnal searching of houses was authorized, terror became the sum of the politics of the day. It hung over the heads of the generals in the field. If they did not gain victories, or if they failed to make a good use of them, they were recalled and sent to the scaffold, as in the cases of Custine* and Houchard. If a Deputy showed signs of mercy, or hesitation, he was taken from his seat and executed. No home was safe day or night. No one knew when to feel secure from the lightning-stroke of terror. It fell on the middle classes as well as on the aristocracy. It filled the prisons with a crowd of prisoners, on whom the insatiable guillotine made its daily feasts. But even all this could not hinder the gayety so natural to the French, from making game of their fiendish hangmen. On the third of October the Convention decreed death within twenty-four hours on every returned emigrant priest on whom any counter-revolutionary sign might be found, or who should be suspected of relations

* See Appendix, note 30.

with the enemy. The evidence of two witnesses was declared sufficient. In February, 1794, it was declared that, in cases of arrested priests, no recourse to the Court of Appeals should be allowed. In October of the previous year Marie Antoinette, after having suffered all the shame of a terrible captivity, was dragged before a merciless tribunal, and quickly handed over to the executioner. Her noble dignity was unabashed before her outragers, and even touched the hearts of the female monsters who had assembled to rejoice in her disgrace. A few days later the noble bearing of the Girondists, who sang a patriotic hymn while on their way to the scaffold, struck fear to the hearts even of the Terrorists. Never had they appeared greater than on the car of death. The noble Bailly and Barnave followed them very soon. The first two generations of the revolution were thus swept away, to give scope to the third. It seemed not enough to strike the noblest of the living; the bones of the dead were insulted. The monuments and ashes of the long line of French kings, and other noble personages, were taken from their long resting-place in the Church of St. Denis and cast into a common ditch. We should not be surprised if, at this time, the revolutionists, in their rage to break entirely with the past, attempted to treat God as they had already treated royalty.

It was the municipality of Paris that in November, 1793, took the initiative in the atheistical movement. Its action was governed less by fanaticism than by calculating policy. The flattering Chaumette* and the vile Hébert had more at heart to out do Robespierre than

* See Appendix, note 31.

to serve the cause of Atheism. Anacharsis Clootz alone was sincere; he assaulted religion from personal hatred. Hébert* aspired to the role of Marat. He hoped to be borne to the highest place on the shoulders of the rabble. This coarse blasphemer was a mere sycophant who spoke the language of the gutters to please the sovereign mob. He and Chaumette imagined that the surest way to attain their purpose would be to attack the Supreme Being, who was supported by Robespierre with all the resources of his pedantry. In this way they might cast their foe into the shade, or distance and leave him among the apologists of the exploded past. The anti-religious furor had found, in the continued resistance of the priests of the old Church, the means of ever-increasing growth. This served as a pretext for the attack on religion itself. It was easy to involve the Constitutional priest in the general odium of his caste, and to represent God himself as the great enemy of *sans-culottism*. As the Convention had listened to, and even applauded the boldest attacks on the ancient faith, it seemed an easy task to gain it entirely to the cause of Atheism. With the Convention and the faubourgs on their side, the Jacobins would be obliged to follow also, and this would be the fall of Robespierre, or, in case he followed the movement, his moral abdication. The plan was well laid, as was proved by its several days of success; but neither Hébert nor Chaumette, nor both of them, were equal to Robespierre. They fell in the struggle, but not before they had succeeded in bringing about the most hideous scandal.

* See Appendix, note 32.

The Hebertists in their impiety did not go beyond the natural tendency of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Already this had exhibited itself more than once in the National Assembly. They simply abased it from the sphere of ideas into the unclean minds of the mob, and translated it into indecent orgies. It is certain that they could little shock an Assembly which had already decreed to abolish the Christian era, and, erasing the name of Christ, to make the new era date from the foundation of the republic. Nothing better than this proves that the Revolution was determined to enter into a war with the old divinities, and to propose itself as the new religion of the future. The new calendar, which had been presented by Romme, and adopted on the fifth of August, 1793, fixed the beginning of the new era on the twenty-second of September, 1792, a day which, curiously enough, coincided with the autumnal equinox and the foundation of the republic. Decades, or weeks of ten days each, took the place of the ordinary week. The months were called by philosophical names, such as *Justice*, *Equality*, etc. By way of exception June was called the *Oath of the Tennis-court*, and July memorized the taking of the Bastille. These names of the months were changed, on the third of November, on motion of Fabre d'Eglantine, who caused the Assembly to adopt a less abstract nomenclature—one which should recall the succession of the seasons. To the months were given poetical names. The first three, or autumn months, were named *Vendémiaire*, *Brumaire*, and *Frimaire*, recalling the vintage, the haze, and the hoar-frost. The next three, or those of

winter, were termed *Nivose*, *Pluviöse*, and *Ventose*, in reference to snow, rain, and wind. The spring months were *Germinal*, *Florial*, and *Prairial*, in allusion to germination, flowers, and meadows. The last three months, *Messidor*, *Thermidor*, and *Fructidor*, were those of summer, and marked the seasons of harvest, of heat, and of fruit. The motives which prompted this bold innovation were honestly explained by Fabre d'Eglantine. "Long use," said he, "has filled the memories of the people with a large number of long venerated images, which have been, and are yet to-day, the source of religious errors. It is therefore necessary to substitute for these fictions of ignorance the realities of reason, and for the prestige of priestcraft the truth of nature." He avowed his intention of counteracting the influence the priests obtained by the association of their festivals with the chief epochs of the year. "When the festival of the dead is to be celebrated," said he, "it is not amid the young life of spring that the priests play their farce, but it is at the close of the beautiful days, when a gray and dull sky fills our mind with a tender sadness. Then, taking advantage of the farewells of nature, they seize our attention, and, through the clap-trap of their festivals, paint to our minds all that their impudence has imagined of mystical and delightful for the predestinated, that is to say, the imbecile, and of terrible for the sinner, that is to say, the clear-headed." After mentioning other cases where the Church had taken advantage of the seasons in fixing its festivals, Fabre d'Eglantine opposed to the old religious system his new agricultural calendar, which was designed

equally, but in a contrary design, to fill the imagination of the people with grand images. The year was to close with five grand festivals, bearing the expressive name of *Sansculotides*, which were to occupy the surplus days beyond the decimal number 360. They were the festivals of *genius*, of *labor*, of *action*, of *reward*, and of *opinion*. The latter was a sort of political carnival of twenty-four hours, during which it was lawful for any citizen to write or say whatever he pleased about any public officer. It was for those in power, the last judgment of the year under the presidency of ridicule. The propositions of Fabre d'Eglantine were decreed with enthusiasm by the Convention. Thus the National Assembly changed itself into a council of philosophy, and made creeds by authority with as little regard for conscience as had ever been done by the councils of the Romish Church. To interfere thus with the religious habits of the people was to inaugurate the most intolerable of despotisms, to confound absolutely the spiritual and the temporal powers, and to inaugurate what might properly be called the Islamism of wickedness. The Convention thus resuscitated the most intolerant features of the former hierarchy, and fondly believed itself liberal because it had rejected, and sought to put down, the worship of the God of the Christians.

The municipality had some reasons for believing that it would be seconded, if it pushed even to the furthest extreme the irreligious movement. It broached the matter by provoking numerous and clamoring anti-religious petitions. On the 28th of August, 1793, a deputation of teachers presented itself to the Conven-

tion to plead for a system of gratuitous and obligatory instruction. One of the children who accompanied them demanded that, instead of being preached to in the name of the *pretended God*, they be taught the principles of equality, the rights of man, and the constitution of the country. Such a profanation of infancy should have excited the most lively indignation; but instead of that, the deputation, like all similar ones, was warmly applauded, whatever a few of the Deputies may have thought who yet remained attached to the religion of their fathers. These surely must have felt that silence on such an occasion was cowardice. Some days after this scandal a deputation from Nevers appeared in the Assembly bearing the spoils of churches, and demanding the suppression of the Catholic worship. At one of the clubs a renegade Bishop was heard to exclaim, "The priests are vile wretches; I know them better than others, for I have been one of them." Some days previously a Constitutional Bishop presented to the Convention "his spouse," boasting that he had taken her from among the sans-culottes. He was warmly applauded, and came near getting an addition of two thousand francs to his salary. Nothing would have been more natural, for he had well merited of the Convention by dishonoring his caste. Thus the movement was turned against all the clergy, the constitutional as well as the refractory. The Atheists sought in every way to obtain apostasies, and in that way defame religion through its own ministers. An ex-priest formally demanded of the municipality the privilege of changing his name from Erasmus to *Apostate*. Chaumette and Hébert planned, in secret

meetings with Cloutz, Momoro, Bourdon de l'Oise, and others, a great public spectacle. It was no less than the inauguration of the worship of reason in open Convention, by introducing certain priests, who were to cast at the foot of the national tribune the symbols of superstition. The farce was played on the seventh of November. As the Convention was presided over by Laloi, who was in perfect accord with the municipality, the leaders of the scheme had reason to expect favorable replies. The scene was opened by the reading of a letter from a country Curate by the name of Parens, who declared himself ready to abjure, provided that he was assured of a pension. "I am a priest," said he; "I am a Curate, that is to say, a quack. Thus far I have been quack in good faith; I have deceived, because I myself had been deceived. Now that my eyes are opened, I confess that I would rather not be a dishonest quack. However, poverty might constrain me to it. It seems to me that it would be well to assure a living to such as are willing to render justice to truth." This doughty confessor was unwilling to be impious gratuitously, and seemed disinclined to change his trade without assurance of salary. And this piece of debasement was applauded by a National Assembly! After the little farce was to follow the grand comedy. The president announced to the Convention that the regular authorities of the municipality of Paris were present at the bar of the house in company with Bishop Gobel, together with his vicars and several priests. Momoro declared with great parade that these citizens wished permission to regenerate themselves and become men. Under the

guidance of reason they had come to cast off the character which superstition had imposed upon them. "Thus," said he, "the French Republic will soon have no other worship than that of reason, equality, and eternal truth." Gobel arose amid a shower of applause. He was all the more contemptible on this occasion for the reason that he yielded to no momentary and overpowering gush of enthusiasm, for he was no more an Atheist than he was a Christian; he only desired to save his life amid the revolutionary tumult. "The will of the people," said he, "was my first law; submission to their will my first duty." It is, therefore, under the influence of fear that he abandons Christianity, and sacrifices to the idol of the moment, namely, the popular will, that God in whom he does not cease to believe. He had so expressed himself to Bishop Gregory a few days previously. The cowardly apostate floated continually between the fear of the scaffold and the fear of hell, the latter of course gaining the upper hand when he was taken to the guillotine. To-day, however, his words were greeted with unbounded applause, for he had well merited of the Atheists by dishonoring the first bishopric of France. "Citizens," said the president to Gobel and the other priests about him, "citizens, you have just sacrificed on the altar of the country these antiquated gewgaws; you are worthy of the republic." Thereupon ex-Bishop Gobel assumed the republican cap, and received the fraternal embrace. Ignoble sentiments may sometimes excite almost as much momentary enthusiasm as real heroism. Several priests now vied with each other, who should first resign their

character as clergymen. Bishop Lindet surpassed all. He pretended that he had accepted a bishopric only to serve his country, and that he had never been a quack, or the dupe of superstition. It was, therefore, very easy to renounce what he had never truly believed. He was followed by Julien of Toulouse, a Protestant Pastor, who spoke in a similar strain, and said that he had never been any thing but an officer of morality, professing the most absolute tolerance. "I have exercised," said he, "the functions of a Protestant minister; I declare that I shall profess them no longer, and that henceforth I shall have no other temple than the sanctuary of the laws, no other divinity than liberty, no other worship than civil order, and no other gospel than the republican constitution." It is thus shamefully that Julien represented in the Convention, a martyr Church which had never flinched before caresses or sufferings. Such is the lesson that this base mind brought from the wilds of the desert, where he had once had the honor of celebrating an outlawed worship. What a contrast between this day of ignominy and the glorious days of his youth, when he had suffered for his belief! He had doubtless long since fallen from his faith, and was thus unprepared for an hour requiring moral heroism.

It could not well be that amid all this turpitude the Christian conscience should remain without witness. It made its inflexible voice heard at a profaned tribune, and despite the cries of rage which fain would have hushed it. Its mere apparition was a terrible rebuke for the cowardly scene which had just been witnessed.

It was Gregory, Bishop of Blois, who gave this grand spectacle to his country. Of a mind ardent and generous, he had more than once pushed his enthusiasm to imprudence; and, though he had not voted for the death of the King, yet in an unfortunate moment of excitement he had rejoiced in his downfall. He was, nevertheless, a sincere Christian and a noble soul. He had never denied a single one of his convictions, much less his God. He still wore the ecclesiastical costume, which of itself was at this period an act of courage. Occupied on this occasion in the Educational Committee, he was entirely ignorant of what had taken place in the hall of the Convention. Immediately on his entrance he was besieged by a crowd of radical Deputies, who pressed him with frantic gestures to follow the "good example" of Gobel. Every-where the words were heard, "You must mount the rostrum." "And why?" asked he. "To renounce your character of Bishop, your religious charlatanism," was the reply. "Miserable blasphemers," said he, "I have never been a charlatan. Loving my religion, I have preached the truth, and shall remain faithful to it." Hoping to constrain him to follow the current, the president gave him the privilege of speaking without his asking it. He ascended the rostrum, and immediately a deathly silence took the place of the clamorous tumult. "I have entered the Assembly," said he, "with very vague notions of what took place before my arrival. I hear invitations to make a sacrifice for my country; I am accustomed to that. Is the question as to attachment to the cause of liberty? I have proved that by my life. Is my salary as Bishop

at stake? I abandon that to you without regret. Is my religion called in question? *That matter is outside of your domain*, and you have no right to attack it. I hear it spoken of as fanaticism and superstition. I have combated these always; but if you will define these words, you will see that fanaticism and superstition are directly opposed to religion. As to me, Catholic by conviction and by feeling, priest by choice, I have been selected by the people for the office of Bishop; but it is neither from them nor from you that I hold my mission. I have consented to bear the burden of the episcopacy in a time when it involved extraordinary difficulties. I was implored to accept it; I am implored to-day to make an abdication which will not, which cannot, be extorted from me. I have endeavored to do good in my diocese, acting from principles which are dear to me, and which I defy you to take from me. I shall remain Bishop to continue my work. I invoke the liberty of conscience."

This discourse was interrupted at almost every word. It excited cries of frantic rage. "I doubt," says Gregory in his *Mémoires*, "whether the pencil of Milton, accustomed as it was to depict demoniac spectacles, could have done justice to this scene. Descending from the rostrum I returned to my place. The Deputies shunned me as if I had been infected with leprosy. Wherever I looked I saw eyes glaring on me with fury; menaces and insults poured upon me in a torrent. Oppressed with the sight of the outrages committed against religion, I thanked God that he had sustained my feebleness and given me strength to confess Jesus Christ. I

declare that in pronouncing this discourse I believed myself to be pronouncing my death sentence." The same evening and the following days the residence of Gregory was besieged by emissaries summoning him to yield to the universal wish. A hostile placard was posted on the walls of Paris denouncing him to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Fourcroy, his colleague in the Educational Committee, blamed him publicly for having checked the current of opinion. He said, "We must crush this infamous religion." Gregory was an object of special dislike, for the reason that he wished to Christianize the Revolution. But he wavered not in the hour of storm. Deep down in the hearts the episcopal costume of the Christian Deputy was much more respected than the revolutionary cap of the apostate Gobel. And he received the confidence of some of the ringleaders of the atheistical movement, who trembled in secret at the thought of the God whom they were insulting.

In the sittings which followed that of the seventh of November, scandalous abjurations succeeded each other without interruption. That of the Bishop of Haute Vienne was distinguished by its abjectness. He strove to pass for a vile hypocrite in order to induce all to believe that he had always been impious. "And I aver," said he, "I was philosopher, though Bishop. If I did not long since reveal my secret, it is because the people were superstitious, and the government inquisitorial. Thanks to thee, august radical wing, it is finally permitted to say the whole truth above-board. Another provincial Bishop, Lalande, declared that henceforth he would proclaim only the eternal dogmas which

are traced in the great book of nature and reason Chabot, the married Capuchin, came to make, in his own name and in that of his wife, a very unnecessary recantation; for no one doubted his perfect impiety. Abbot Sieyès finally felt himself obliged to break the prudent silence which he had observed for so long a time. He said that he had been a victim of superstition. This, however, had not prevented him from accepting several benefices, and the pension which he still was receiving amounted to ten thousand francs. "No man in the world," added he, "can say he has been deceived by me." This meant that for a long time he had celebrated a mass in which he no longer believed.

After the abjurations came the patriotic offerings which had been torn from the treasures of the churches. Multitudes flocked to the Convention and to the municipality, bearing precious vases, copes, sacerdotal ornaments, and all objects of value which had been connected with worship. It was decided to open a public depot for them, and a committee was appointed to receive and classify the spoils of superstition. The bearers of these spoils generally took advantage of the occasion to make a speech. "Dionysius of Syracuse," said the orator from Sens, "took from Jupiter his mantle of gold, under pretext that it was too cold for winter and too warm for summer; we also take from our saints and their ministers the splendid vestments which, doubtless, are to them a matter of embarrassment. An orator from another locality brought, in guise of a patriotic gift, among other things, the reputed head of St. Denis, and felt constrained to say

that, for his part, he had never been tempted to kiss the fetid relic. He continued, in terms equally elegant, "This skull and these sacred tatters which accompany it are now to cease to be the ridiculous objects of the veneration of the people. The gold and silver which envelop them are to contribute to establish the empire of reason and liberty." It was a great harvest for *Père Duchène*, the infamous journal of Hébert; its obscene slang was heard in open Convention.

The Protestants of Paris saw fit to follow the impulse of the moment. Two of their number, representing the others, bore to the municipal authorities the vessels of silver which had served for the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper. The orator of the occasion said: "All ranks united drank out of these cups of equality and fraternity; my ministry has always had for its object to propagate such principles. Shame on all the clap-trap of falsehood and puerility which ignorance and cunning have clothed with the pompous name of theology." The President replied, saying that if any religion could be preserved it would surely be that one which had best guarded the principles of equality; but that as reason was now prevailing men would henceforth know no other worship than that of liberty and equality. After the Protestants, the Jews, unwilling to remain in the background, brought their offerings also. It was an emulation in wickedness that, for the moment, pervaded all classes.

The apostasies constituted the first act in the comedy gotten up by the municipality of Paris. It

was now necessary to pass to the second. It was not enough to have beaten down the ancient idols; it was found needful to inaugurate with parade a new worship, that of Reason and Nature. In other words, it was necessary to amuse and entertain the people in order to prevent them from returning, like a dog, to their vomit. Ex-Bishop Lindet had proposed, the very day of the abjurations, the replacement of the religious by civic festivals. To the poet Chénier was confided the task of filling the vacuum left by the fall of the ancient ritual, but it was soon perceived that something more was required than rhetorical flowers and academical strophes. One of the wards of Paris decided that on every tenth day, the festival which took the place of the old Sunday, there should be a patriotic homily on morality and the Constitution; but this was a recreation very insufficient for a people who were fond of spectacles. The municipality determined to get up a great theatrical parade which would speak to the eye and seduce the imagination. The opera was put in requisition. It furnished for the occasion a vestal, to represent the goddess of Reason, and give a little animation to this religion of nonentity. It was in the cathedral of Notre Dame that the municipality erected the stage for enacting this contemptible profanation. The Temple of Philosophy was constructed in the choir. It was ornamented with the effigies of the sages, and reposed on the summit of a miniature mountain. The Torch of Truth blazed on the corner of a rock. Young ladies in white, and crowned with oak leaves, surrounded the verdure-draped seat of the goddess of Reason, and chanted in her honor a

frigid hymn composed by Chénier for the occasion. It began thus :

“Descend, O Liberty, daughter of nature,
The people have reconquered their power immortal;
Upon the pompous ruins of ancient imposture,
Their hands erect thy altar.”

A poor lyric for the inauguration of a new religion! “To-day,” said Momoro in a journal, “we may say that the day of rest has slain the Sabbath. It has just received the death-stroke in the *ci-devant* metropolitan church, at present the Temple of Reason.” The members of the Convention, not having been able to be present at Notre Dame, were honored in the evening with a visit by the goddess. The trivial ceremonies of the morning were repeated. The President gave to the goddess the fraternal embrace. Thereupon the whole company shed tears, and sang, and acted odiously and ridiculously. There remained of that day only the remembrance of a stupid parody, which of itself was no small vengeance for that holy religion which had been trampled under foot. It was in vain that at Paris and in the provinces it was attempted to reanimate the fervor by replacing the actresses by prostitutes. Ennui and disgust struck a fatal blow at the new worship from the very start. It was attempted to enliven it by debauchery. The church of St. Eustache was transformed into a vast hall of revelry. Apostate priests were seen dancing with harlots around bright fires fed by holy books and rituals, copes and relics. And this delirium was propagated like a sort of death-dance throughout the nation. At Lyons an ass, clothed in sacerdotal robes, was led

in a procession through the streets. On the twenty-second of November the same masquerades which a few days before had disgraced the Convention, were re-enacted in its midst. A procession of persons, dressed in pontifical robes, was preceded by a number of sappers and cannoneers. This was followed by an immense crowd, marching in two ranks, and covered with mock clerical regalia, copes, and chasubles of gilded velvet. Upon hurdles were borne a number of *ciboria* and costly relic-caskets. Martial instruments executed national airs. A banner, waved to the melodious sounds of a popular song, pictured forth the vanishment of fanaticism, while the vigorous execution of the revolutionary dance announced the triumph of the new worship. At the sight of this edifying spectacle the President of the Convention exclaimed, in joy, that the deputation had in a single hour dashed into annihilation eighteen centuries of error. A young child paid its homage to the Assembly, and was overwhelmed with felicitations for having recited the Declaration of Rights. To it was voted the first republican catechism which should be published. This flow of sensibility for the poor little parrot of Atheism was a worthy climax to the ridiculous farce.

The municipality attempted to profit by the popular enthusiasm for Marat. "Several of the wards of Paris," said the base Hébert at the tribune of the Jacobin club, "are anxious to render homage to the ashes of the friend of the people. The population prostrate themselves before his statue. Very well, since the people must be amused by processions and religious ceremonies

why shall we delay to decree them to the martyr of democracy?" On the motion of David, who expressed himself in terms of the vilest enthusiasm, the Convention decreed that the remains of Marat should be transported to the Pantheon, a national Church dedicated to the great men of the nation. The veneration for this monster knew no bounds. Hymns were written in his honor. On divers stamps he was placed by the side of Christ. Men swore by the sacred heart of Marat. The new worship was complete: it had prostitutes for goddesses, and a man of violence and blood for a martyr and saint. All it yet lacked was to engage in persecution; and it failed not in this worthy business.

There had for a long while been no limit to the violations of the religious liberties of the non-conforming Catholics. It had now come to the point that religion in itself, after having been most cruelly outraged, was to fall under the wrath of the laws. It was to be spared under none of its forms. The municipality was emboldened in its persecutions by the favor with which the Convention had received the accounts of Fouché's atrocities in and about Lyons. This future minister of royalty wrote as follows to his colleagues: "The taste for republican virtues and austere forms has penetrated all classes, now that they are rid of the corrupting influence of the priests. Some of these impostors are inclined to continue playing their religious comedies, but the *sans-culottes* watch them, overturn all their stages, and plant on their ruins the tree of liberty. Long live the republic!" Fouché* had caused the cross to be

* See Appendix, note 33.

demolished in the grave-yards, and the statue of Sleep to be substituted in its place—a consoling image for men like him, who felt the need of believing that after death there would be neither resurrection, nor punishment for crime. The municipality judged that what had not been disapproved of in the provinces would be found good in Paris. It decreed like measures for the grave-yards of the capital. It ordered an officer, who should wear the republican cap, to be put in charge of all funeral processions. A standard was to be borne before the hearse, upon which were inscribed the following words: “The just man never dies; he lives in the memory of his fellow-citizens.” One of the wards of Paris complained that the devout and fanatical still persisted in visiting the fountains of consecrated water, and demanded of the Common Council that the scandal be stopped, and that the imbeciles be deprived of all hope of a revival of fanaticism. The municipality decreed that armed force should be used to put a stop to the practice. But this was not enough. A general decree was now wanted which should entirely abolish the liberty of worship, and erect the service of Reason into an oppressive religion of State. To strike the religious sentiment of the Catholics with the most defiant outrage, the municipality had sent to the mint the precious mantle of St. Geneviève, the cherished patron saint of Paris, and had ordered the destruction of all the images of saints which ornamented the churches. The two grand portals of Notre Dame were saved from mutilation only because Dupuis was pleased to see in their work of sculpture a representation of the planetary

system, by which he explained the origin of all religions. It was decreed to demolish the towers, for the reason that their prominence above the other buildings was a violation of the principles of equality. The motion of a "virtuous citizen," who desired to see all the priests incarcerated as suspected persons, was received with favor in the same sitting. One of the wards petitioned that the Church of St. Anthony be dedicated to Reason, and that an altar be erected in it on which there should burn a perpetual fire. Thus the practices of Asiatic paganism threatened to reappear, at the very moment when the Atheists supposed they were putting down all superstition for ever. The municipality profited by this occasion to decree that no material symbol whatever should be erected in any temple.

In the sitting of the 26th of November, 1793, the same council dared to strike with interdiction every other worship than that of Reason. Chaumette, in some prefatory remarks, denounced the priests and harlots as equally hostile to the interests of the republic. He painted in lively colors the dangerousness of the clergy. "They are capable," said he, "of all crimes, and avail themselves of poison; they will work miracles if you do not watch them. Consequently, I demand that the Council declare that to its knowledge the people of Paris are ripe for the religion of Reason, and that if there takes place in the city any movement in favor of fanaticism, all the priests shall be imprisoned, seeing that it has been declared that no other worship is recognized than that of Reason." The decree which followed this elegant discourse was as follows: "First,

all the churches and temples of all the religions and worships which have heretofore existed in Paris shall immediately be closed ; second, all the priests or ministers of all religions whatever shall be held personally responsible for all the troubles that may arise on account of religious opinions ; third, whoever shall demand the opening, whether of a church or of a temple, shall be arrested as a suspected person ; fourth, the Revolutionary Committees shall be invited to keep special watch over all the priests ; and fifth, the Convention shall be petitioned to pass a law excluding priests from every manner of public employment, as well as from all employment in manufactories of arms." A member of the Council moved to amend by excluding the priests from every employment whatever, which would have been equivalent to starving them to death ; but this was rejected. And surely the law needed nothing to complete its monstrous character. Such was this Chaumette, a man whom the great and popular historian Michelet dares to present to us as one of the founders of the religion of the future, and of true religious liberty. The fact that he sprang " from the holy mud of Paris " is not enough to constitute him a great servant of liberty. This decree remains for ever for him an indelible stain. It is true, he was incontestably a model of impiety ; but this glory will hardly justify his canonization. He was only a miserable copyist of Diderot and other worse men. By this famous decree the municipality had, to use a fashionable figure of the day, arrived at the summit of its capitol. But the Tarpeian rock was not far distant. Robespierre had sworn its

ruin, and he felt himself supported not only by the Jacobins, his subservient tools, but also by the Convention, which began to become jealous of this popular municipal power which affected to play the dictator. We have explained for what reasons he was the sworn enemy of Chaumette and Hébert. Every thing in them repelled him: their growing popularity wounded his vanity; their Atheism conflicted with his favorite Deism, and, with his correct and pedantic conduct, he could not but be affected with contempt for their shameless orgies of vice.

The struggle broke out at the Jacobin Club November 21, 1793. Hébert and Momoro, disquieted at the silent opposition of Robespierre, sought to turn the stroke which menaced them upon the heads of the priests and of the Princess Elizabeth. But Robespierre declared that the dangers of the republic at this hour came neither from the priests nor the impure remnants of the race of the tyrant. He manifested, in fact, the greatest contempt for the pious princess, and dared to style her the *despicable sister of Capet*. This expression is an indelible stigma on the name of the cowardly tribune, and wrings a cry of indignation even from his warmest apologists. Passing to the priests, he expressed lively pleasure that so many of them were ready to throw off their old character and take offices in the government, and even to become presidents of popular societies. "Fear not their fanaticism," said he, "but rather their ambition; not the garment they wear, but the new skin they have assumed. Fanaticism is a ferocious and capricious animal; it flees before reason. But pursue it

with boisterous cries, and it turns back upon you." Robespierre did not dare to blame the popular movement which had led to the abandonment of the old worship and the spoliation of the churches, but he attacked those who took advantage of it to gain personal importance. "By what right," asked he, "*do men, thus far unknown to the Revolution, seek in the midst of these changes the means of usurping a false popularity, and of exciting patriots to false measures which create discord and trouble? By what right do they degrade the solemn homage rendered to truth into ridiculous farces? Why allow them to abase the dignity of the people, and attach the trappings of folly to the scepter of philosophy?*" Hébert might well tremble at words which so distinctly designated himself. He might well see the edge of the guillotine hanging above him when the terrible orator brought against his party the dangerous charge of dishonoring the Revolution in the eyes of foreign powers. The political drift of the speech appeared more especially when Robespierre insisted on the maintenance of the liberty of worship. He declared that the Convention intended to defend this right both against its opponents and against its own abuses. Moreover, the priests would so much the longer continue to say the mass the more they were hindered. "He who wishes to hinder them," said he, "is more fanatical than they who say the mass." If the Revolution had to fight fanaticism it had equally to strive against Atheism, which takes from virtue its hope, from vice its punishment, and from liberty its glorious sanction. If God did not already exist, it would be

necessary to invent him. What, therefore, was to be feared above all, was the counter-fanaticism which degraded France in the eyes of her enemies, and was their surest coadjutor.

The municipality of Paris could not have asked a more explicit declaration of war. Robespierre had taken position. He closed his speech by demanding a purification of the Jacobin club. Each member was to be examined, and retained or rejected by a vote. No mistake needed to be made; lives were at stake in that tumultuous examination where Robespierre held the decisive balance of power. The municipality attempted to pay audacity with defiance. A few days later, it passed the decree of Chaumette suppressing all worship but that of Reason. This provoked from Robespierre a terrible speech in the Jacobin club. He renewed his accusation of intrigue with foreign enemies. He spoke as a master. "We will not suffer," said he, "the standard of persecution to be raised against any religion, nor aristocracy to be confounded with a religious opinion. The Convention will maintain the liberty of worship." But he hastened to prevent this liberty from being understood too seriously by adding, that the Convention would impose silence upon religious controversy. A strange contradiction, of which the absurdity is less flagrant than its duration in France persistent. Robespierre, to use his own expressions, tore without mercy the mask of patriotism from the hideous figure of the supporters of foreign despotism, who by their ignoble farces had desired to represent a free people as a people of Atheists, and to transform a political revolution into

a miserable religious quarrel. They had compromised the nation in the eyes of the world by giving the enemy good reason for saying, "See, the French have sworn to maintain universal tolerance and the liberty of worship, and yet they persecute all religions." Robespierre's success was complete and immediate. Hébert repudiated without shame, that very evening, the atheistical movement which he himself had been the foremost to inaugurate. He dared to speak as follows, in the face of Paris inundated with the numbers of his vile journal, *Père Duchêne*: "Already it has been said that the Parisians are without faith, without religion, and that they have substituted Marat in the place of Jesus. Let us refute these calumnies."

The same day, in the City Council, Chaumette had declared himself in favor of religious liberty, and exhibited as much unction in defending it as he had previously shown in suppressing it. The hall in which he spoke had scarcely yet ceased to echo the sounds of his atheistical harangues. He was consistent with himself in only one thing, his abuse of Christianity, for his main reason for upholding liberty of opinion was, that by abandoning the sect of the Nazarenes to contemptuous neglect, they would occasion it to die of itself; whereas if persecuted, it would revive to new life. Chaumette concluded by demanding that the Council should ignore all meddling with the different religions. "Inform us not," said he, "if such a one goes to mass, to the synagogue, or to the sermon; inform us simply whether he is a republican. Let us not meddle with his whims; let us govern, let us assure him the exercise of

his rights, even that of being superstitious. I ask, therefore, that the Council decree, first, that it will hear no proposition relative to any worship, or any religious or metaphysical idea; and second, that inasmuch as the exercise of worship is free, it *has never meant*, and never means in the future, to hinder citizens from renting buildings for, and paying the minister of, any worship whatever, provided that the manifestation of this worship does not disturb the public peace." Never before had Hébert in his younger days played in third rate theaters a more contemptible comedy than the one he that day played on the bloody stage of the municipality. His utterances excited violent opposition among his astonished associates. The sun set was too sudden, the conversion too hurried. However, his proposition prevailed. It was adopted without opposition, to inform Robespierre that henceforth he would have no trouble in crushing such contemptible foes.

The recantation of the municipality prepared the way for that of the Convention. In the sitting of November 26, Danton had expressed himself forcibly against scenes of abjuration in open Convention, and formally asked that no more anti-religious farces be allowed in the Assembly. He uttered this remarkable sentence: "If we have not honored the priest of error and fanaticism, we also do not desire to honor the priest of incredulity." This was the first word in favor of clemency which had fallen from the lips of Danton. It was in vain that he raised his thundering voice more than usual, and called for an increase of violence against the enemies of the republic; he had mounted the first step

of the scaffold. Robespierre did not pardon this first show of rival conservative sentiment at the moment when he himself was aiming at the destruction of the extreme Hebertist radicals. Before attacking Danton, however, he used his aid in the mean time for the destruction of the Atheism of the municipality. Some days later he inserted these significant words in a manifesto which he wrote, and which was sent by the Convention to the people of Europe: "Your masters tell you that the French people have proscribed all religions; that they have substituted the worship of mere men for that of the Divinity. They lie. The French people and their representatives respect the liberty of all religions, and proscribe none. They abhor intolerance and persecution under whatever pretext." Barrère, Robespierre, and Cambon now united, and finally succeeded in inducing the Convention to pass a decree which to some extent protected the general liberty of worship. It amounted to little more than a return to the state of things which existed before the orgies of Atheism had been inaugurated by Hébert and Chaumette. Though the proscription of religion was to some extent checked, still the liberty allowed was merely religious liberty as understood in 1793.

This sort of liberty was like the ancient gods of Mexico, it was bloodthirsty. After swallowing up the Girondists it called for the vile Atheistical clique of Hébert, and then the group of Dantonists. Only a word of indulgence, or perhaps a mere sigh of weariness in bloodshed, was needed to ruin Danton. Robespierre would not pardon him for having been the sublimest

revolutionist, the most terrible and striking embodiment of a nation aroused and in wrath. He pardoned still less Camille Desmoulins for having been the most sparkling writer of Paris, and for having, though after much pernicious excess, finally turned his brilliant wit to the service of clemency. His irony and eloquence at this period have not been equaled since Pascal, and the five numbers of the *Old Cordelier* may be styled the *Provincial Letters* of the Revolution. One may well imagine the delight they afforded to the oppressed. Yes, if Camille had been less great as a writer he would have been less guilty in the eyes of the cruel and plodding pedant of the Jacobins. At least, he might have been saved from the guillotine had he not declined, with a sarcasm, the insulting protection of his enemy. But to have pleaded in favor of pardon so inopportunately, at the very moment when Robespierre was about to develop in the Convention his famous theory of a republic based on the two principles of virtue and terror, was to have committed an unpardonable crime. The future high priest of the Supreme Being was ascending thus by bloody steps to the altar of his god. To arrive there he marched over the dead bodies of his friends, of those at whose table he had sat, and whose marriage contracts he had signed. Master in the Jacobin Club, and in the Committees, this most pure, this incorruptible saint of demagogism, was always ready with some furtive plan of conspiracy, in the elastic meshes of which he entangled all his adversaries, or, more truly, all his rivals. The procedure was infallible in the midst of a trembling Assembly. St. Just, the right arm of Robespierre,

would mount the tribune and read in his monotonous voice a report, every sentence of which fell heavy and terrible like the strokes of the executioner's ax. The report was, in the Convention, what the guillotine was in the judiciary. In both cases it was extermination at the instant. The machine of death worked as well in the hands of St. Just* and Barrère as in those of Samson.

The Hébertists were cast into prison March 13, 1794 after the attempted insurrection of the Cordeliers. Danton and his friends were incarcerated on the thirtieth St. Just was the accuser in both cases. As to the trial, we need not speak; it was the most infamous mockery of justice. By the end of April the guillotine had done its work, and Robespierre could breathe freely, for there was little to check the *régime* which could crush a Danton. Before whom should the Revolutionary Tribunal hesitate which had cut down him who first called for its establishment? Surely the blow which had fallen on the Dantonists was well merited in view of eternal justice; but that the instrument of punishment was Robespierre, and that his motive was simply that he wished to push crime further—this exasperates the conscience. The blood of Danton will silence for ever the apologists of his rival. It is in vain to try to color the act with policy, and to say that Robespierre thought he was serving the Revolution; it is none the less certain that on that day he obeyed the basest passion. It is not so much the fanatic as the man of envy that, in him, is supremely detestable.

* See Appendix, note 34.

He awaited till after this triumph before giving to France the religion which was dear to his heart. The republican armies had driven the enemy beyond the Rhine, and saved Alsace. The insurrection in La Vendée had been conquered by Kléber and Marceau at Mans. Toulon had been retaken, thanks to the skill of a young officer, then a very ardent Jacobin—Napoleon. On the frontiers France was at ease, but in the interior she was bowed under the yoke of terror. This terror, this prostration of the nation, was for Robespierre a mark of the goodness of Providence. He had no longer to fear the rhetorical battle-ax of Danton, or the keen, poisoned arrows of Desmoulins. He could now expatiate in the Convention as in the Jacobin Club, and play the high priest without being laughed at. Fouquier Tinville,* the remorseless public accuser, guaranteed him against ridicule. On the sixth of April, 1794, Couthon, who was a sort of John the Baptist to the new messiah of the Terrorists, announced that the Committee of Public Safety had decreed a festival in honor of the Eternal. On the seventh of May, Robespierre read his memorable report on this subject. It is his masterpiece. His whole soul is there exhibited with all his parade of virtue and morality, and his hateful passions. He pours insult upon the memories of his fallen rivals, the Girondists and Dantons. He exhibits here his enthusiasm for Rousseau, his antipathy for the aristocratic Atheists of the Encyclopedia, and gives us a good example of his oratorical style, rich in personifications, generally clumsy, but sometimes rising to real elo-

* See Appendix, note 35.

quence. Every line is imbued with that sentimental demagogism which always walks in company with suspicion and proscription. But what mostly concerns us in this discourse is, the pretension of the dictator to establish by legislation a new religion of State, an abstract religion, consisting of few but sharply defined dogmas, and which is to be officially professed by the country. Robespierre establishes in words which compel our admiration, the connection which has always existed between Atheism and the death of liberty. "Who," exclaimed he, "has given you the mission to teach to the people that the Divinity does not exist? What advantage in teaching man that a blind fate presides over events, and strikes alike virtue and vice? Does such an idea inspire him with purer and nobler sentiments, with more of patriotism and bravery against the foe, than the belief in the immortality of the soul? The thought of the Supreme Being and of immortality is a perpetual motive to just living; it is therefore social and republican. What have the conspirators put in the place of that which they destroyed? Nothing but chaos, void, and violence. They despised and depraved the people." Robespierre concluded that the Convention ought to decree the worship of the Supreme Being, and inaugurate it by a grand public festival. This was simply to revive the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and adapt it to his chilly system of Deism. It was the consecration of the theory of Rousseau as found in the *Contrat Social*. It was a new phase of the old Gallican theory of the unity of Church and State. In another part of his speech Robespierre develops the theory of

the utility of religion to the State. "In the eyes of the legislator," said he, "whatever is useful and good in practice is the truth. The greatest benefit to society would be to create in man a lively instinct on moral subjects, which should induce him, unaided by the slow process of reasoning, to do the good and eschew the evil. Now that which creates this instinct, and thus comes to the aid of human authority, is the religious sentiment, which gives to the precepts of virtue the sanction of a Being higher than man." From this it appears that Robespierre desired the State to recognize the idea of God, not because it is true, but because it is an effective aid in governing a people. In this the ardent demagogue fell back into the ancient tradition. He recognized the Supreme Being, as Napoleon soon after recognized the Papacy, for the good of the State, and the greater safety of the government. His discourse closed with an encomium of the liberty of worship, very much out of place at a time when he was calling for a national religion, and in a speech where he was prodigal of insults to fanaticism, that is to say, Christianity. Had the new worship only succeeded in establishing itself fully, it would soon have passed from sarcasms to open persecution, and thus put into full practice the whole system of the *Contrat Social*. Already some imprudent ones had spoken of a law of sacrilege, to be enacted against all who should speak evil, or profane the name, of the Supreme Being. A friend of Robespierre had even dared to call for a decree of banishment against all who would not believe in God. The Convention ordered translations of the

speech of Robespierre to be sent to all Europe, and, of course, decreed the festival of the Supreme Being. The municipality followed the example, and testified its zeal by ordering the name of God to be inscribed on all temples which had previously been dedicated to Reason. The festival took place on the 8th of June, 1794.

No pains had been spared to render it grand and sublime, and yet it was doomed to fall into ridiculous puerilities. Robespierre presided in the Convention on the occasion, and was dressed in a beautiful suit of blue. His head was covered with plumes, and in his hand he held, as did also all the Deputies, a bunch of flowers, fruit, and ears of grain. The morning was beautiful with sunshine. The Convention took seats in an amphitheater which had been erected in the court of the Tuileries. Robespierre kept them waiting a while, but finally made his appearance. His usually gloomy countenance wore that morning an expression of benignity and happiness. After a pompous speech, in which he told the republican Frenchmen that the Supreme Being had never before witnessed on earth a spectacle more worthy of his attention, he descended from his place, and seizing a torch, set on fire the images of Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness. From amid their smoke and ashes there arose triumphant the statue of Wisdom; but unfortunately, and, as some thought, ominously, it was sadly smoked. The high priest returned and delivered a second speech, after which the whole Assembly set out in procession to the field of Mars. The Convention was encircled by a tricolored ribbon borne by children ornamented with violets, by young persons girdled with

oak leaves, and by aged people crowned with ivy and olive. After the Delegates, came a rural car laden with implements of agriculture. It was drawn by the inevitable republican oxen with gilded horns, and followed by the equally inevitable young ladies in white. Robespierre's pride seemed to be redoubled, and he affected to walk far in advance of his colleagues. Some of them approached and lavished on him the keenest sarcasms; some laughed at the new pontiff, and said, in allusion to the smoked statue of Wisdom, that his wisdom had become darkened; others uttered the word *tyrant*, and remarked that there were Brutuses still. One said to him these prophetic words: "The Tarpeian rock is close to the capitol." Arrived at the Field of Mars, the Convention took position upon an artificial "mountain." The President expatiated, the young ladies in white chanted, the aged pronounced their benediction, the cannons thundered, and the whole affair closed with the cry of *Long live the republic!* From all this theatrical pomp, from these ridiculous symbols and chilly rites, France learned one lesson, namely, that it is easier to decree a change of religion than to effect it. Deism can never establish a worship, and all attempts in this direction will fall under the ridicule and contempt of the public. The festival was found by many to be dull and long, especially by those who were offended at the prominent role played in it by Robespierre. It is said that one of his colleagues, less patient than the rest, said to him in terms of profane emphasis, "You begin already to bore us with your Supreme Being." What vexed very many that day was, the

prospect of having in France a tyrannical dictatorship. That very day Robespierre seemed to be at the summit of power; and yet he was only and simply preparing his fall.

It is not our business to trace its history. The abominable decree of June the 12th, (24 Prairial,) by which he obtained of the Convention the suppression of all legal forms in the trials of the accused before the Revolutionary Tribunal, made to fall upon his own head all the crimes to which it led. It substituted in the place of evidence a mere "inspection" of the accused, and organized a sort of terror within terror. Though he was, designedly, much absent from the trials, he was none the less guilty, for the machine of death was of his own constructing. That he was overthrown by men no better than himself does not excuse him, and the 27th of July, (9 Thermidor,) the day of his fall, was none the less a deliverance. If the reaction toward arbitrary power began from that moment, where does the blame rest, if not on the detested demagogue who had disgusted France with liberty by changing it into a remorseless demon, which was only satisfied when feasting on massacres? It is at this period especially that the priests, both non-jurors and jurors, falling under the general title of "the suspected," were thrown into prison, and in large numbers delivered to the guillotine. The Revolutionary Tribunal sent also to the scaffold the crazy inventors of new religions, many of whom now appeared; for whenever a people is deprived of true religion, gross superstitions are sure to spring up among the masses. The ridiculous affair of Catherine Théot,

the aged prophetess, with her two acolytes, is well known. She claimed high intimacy with the Divinity, and celebrated a stupidly mysterious worship, in which a predominant role was given to Robespierre, though doubtless without his knowledge. For the rest, he had his devotees, especially of the female sex, who by their imprudence did him great harm. When once his destruction had been sworn, advantage was taken of the idolatrous devotion shown to him by the populace. Michelet seems astonished at the reappearance of these crude mystical mummeries after the nation had so long been under the healthful influence of Voltaire, and at the close of a century of light. He forgets that in reality any religion whatever seems to the masses better than the cold light of doubt, which reveals only the abyss of nonentity. Between total incredulity and the coarsest superstition, there is but a single step. A people deprived of their God will soon invent idols. With the fall of Robespierre closes the period of the civil religion. An attempt at a separation of Church and State immediately follows.

BOOK THIRD.

THE PERIOD OF THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.



CHAPTER I.

MEASURES OF THE CONVENTION IN REGARD TO RELIGION FROM THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE TO THE EXPIRATION OF ITS POWERS.

THE situation of France immediately after the fall of Robespierre was very peculiar. The party which had triumphed held in the main the principles of him who had fallen. It had long labored for their triumph, and largely put them into practice. It numbered in its ranks some of the most dreaded chiefs of the Revolution. Its most prominent leader, Tallien,* was not free from the blood of the great massacres. The party merely grew weary of terror a little later than Danton, and a little sooner than St. Just and Robespierre. This was the sole difference between it and those whom it had put down. Its policy was still arbitrary, and it was determined to enforce its own view of liberty. Though desiring to avoid as much as convenient the use of the guillotine, it by no means thought of discard-

* See Appendix, note 36.

ing it altogether for political offenses. However, it was no longer possible to continue the reign of terror. Public opinion, when once freed from constraint, took its natural course, and would not be satisfied with half measures. It had no difficulty, now that the men of strong conviction had been put down, in managing and shaping the measures of the intriguing democrats, who had a long list of crimes to be pardoned. Such men were Tallien, and many of his friends. Moreover, a large fraction of the Convention itself had now for some time been little more than an echo of the opinion without. Victims of terror rather than its instruments, these timid Deputies had cursed the necessity which had compelled them by cowardly silence, and even by votes, to sanction so many crimes. So great was the pressure exerted on many of the Deputies in the darkest days of terror, that, fearing to take seats with either party, on the right or on the left, they remained crowded together in the middle space at the foot of the tribune. They knew that the Moderates of to-day might be declared suspected as traitors on the morrow. These courageous gentlemen belonged, in advance, to the party of moderation. The moderation then in vogue, however, was far from a truly liberal *régime*. Though unwilling that the prisons should longer remain crowded with the innocent, and that the guillotine should receive its daily feast of human bodies, it still remained implacable toward all known foes. Public opinion was, therefore, earnestly on the side of the Convention in the famous insurrection of the 5th of October, 1795, (13 Vendémiaire,) and against the Royalist party. It is

true, it had also been with the Convention at the time of the closing of the Jacobin Club. Too often, however, the reaction which set in on the fall of Robespierre was but a continuation of the Reign of Terror. This was well seen in the South, where the vengeance of the so-called Moderates was almost equal to the crimes of the Terrorists.

As to matters of religion, the fall of Robespierre in Thermidor induced no very rapid change. Persecution was no longer so atrocious, but still all the laws of proscription remained unrepealed, even when liberty of worship had been theoretically re-established—a liberty which was suspended on the slightest suspicion. Public opinion had not yet returned to Christianity. The reaction of Thermidor was imbued fully with the infidel philosophy of the day. Frivolous and ardent for pleasure, it was more anxious to open the theaters and dancing halls than the temples of God. It was regarded as an eminently praiseworthy act to inaugurate the famous “ball of the victims,” and devote the memory of Robespierre to execration. While dancing to the honor of the dead, they thought little of the poor priests who were yet languishing in prison or exile. Madame Tallien, displaying at the opera her frail beauty and lightly attired classic form, was a fit symbol of the liberty in vogue. She was a fine personification of that liberalism, vain and without principle, elegant and without seriousness, which sought its manifestation in extravagance of costume and unlimited license. True greatness and heroism existed only in the armies. Had it not been for the incomparable troops and the able young generals

in command, the Revolution would have rapidly passed from blood and terror to a condition of moral corruption still more infamous. War purified and saved it, and in turn, itself overthrew it. It is precisely at this period, so gloomy in the interior, and seemingly unfavorable to a return to religious thought, that the Christian worship, under its various forms, sprang up of itself, and, taking advantage of an imperfect liberty, developed itself in an extraordinary manner. Let us take a survey of the difficulties with which it had to contend, and of the advantages it derived from its freedom from government protection. We will see that moral independence is so great a boon that it compensates, to some extent, for the greatest infractions of the rights of conscience.

We have mentioned, as they were enacted, the various decrees of the Convention against religious liberty. They formed a Draconian code, whose severity was not exceeded by that of the Jesuits against the Protestants under the old *régime*. During the hideous Hébertist movement both non-jurors and jurors fell under a common proscription, and the prisons were filled with priests of both Churches. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy existed only in the letter of the Constitution, and worship was rendered as impracticable for the jurors as for the non-jurors. Apostasy and persecution had thinned the ranks of the clergy; no salaries were paid, and many priests were on the point of starvation, inasmuch as they had been excluded from all public functions. The law of October 3d, 1793, which condemned to death within twenty-four hours, on the evidence of two

witnesses, every priest in any way connected with riots, or with the emigrants, was still in force. Every priest accused of "incivism" was condemned to deportation. Nothing could be more dangerous than the vagueness of such an expression, for in the time of Hébert and Chaumette it was incivism even to declare one's self a Christian. Priests who would not renounce their faith had for this reason been thrown into dungeons. However, the bloodier part of the law against the priests was virtually abrogated at the fall of Robespierre; but that clause inflicting deportation on obnoxious priests, and death on those who aided or concealed them, still remained. Immediately after this event multitudes of priests passed the frontiers and entered France. This fact was commented on in the Convention, and an effort made to revive against them the most cruel measures of terror, but with imperfect success.

While the *régime* of the prisons grew milder in Paris, the unfortunate priests who were waiting deportation in the roadstead of Aix were subjected to the greatest cruelties. Their intolerable sufferings were protracted more than a year after the fall of the great Terrorist. In February, 1794, the convoy of which they formed a part, was directed toward Rochefort. Their long journey was a continued torture. They were incessantly hissed and maltreated by a riotous populace. They were frequently insulted by infamous parodies of sacred things. At Limoges a procession was caused to pass before them consisting of donkeys arrayed in pontifical robes, at the head of which marched a huge swine wearing the triple crown. They

slept at night in prisons or other inadequate quarters, with very little bedding.

At Rochefort the priests were thrown pell-mell among the galley slaves, and shared their infamy, though not their food, for they received scarcely the meanest necessaries of life. Before going aboard the boats they were robbed of almost every thing they possessed, especially of whatever belonged to the practice of religion. They succeeded in saving only a single Testament and a Prayer Book, which they preserved carefully, and passed secretly from hand to hand. The sailors, having discovered an ivory image of Christ, decapitated it. These men were chosen from among the violent spirits of the Revolution. They insulted the priests at every meal by chanting a political song in mockery of the blessing. But the severest trial for these poor priests was the strict interdiction of all acts of devotion. They were forbidden to kneel down, and if they were seen to move their lips in prayer, they were loaded with irons. The officers inflicted on them hard task-service, which was all the more difficult for the reason that they had lost all physical vigor, and, on the impure and scanty food they received, could by no possibility repair it. At night they were confined in narrow and ill-aired dungeons. The scurvy and fever broke out among them, and the sick were thrown together into a boat which was a hospital only in name. The least resistance was cruelly punished by coarse under-officers. A priest was even shot dead without the form of a trial, and others were cast into irons for having sent a remonstrance to the city. To these physical evils, which were greatly

increased by the terrible winter of 1795, were added an intellectual and moral prostration which led more than one captive to a sort of brutish insanity. Such was the condition of these men at the time when the so-called Gilded Youth were filling Paris with their noisy license. Had the violent party been heard, new partners of their exile would have been sent out. Happily, their cause found in the Convention more than one generous advocate; but it was only after many efforts that a reparative decree was obtained.

Early in the fall of 1794 a Deputy had demanded a reprieve in favor of the two hundred priests awaiting transportation on the Loire, among whom were several of the Constitutional Clergy. The orator spoke with earnestness against their condemnation, and asked what was the difference between such a measure and the proscriptions of Robespierre, or even of Louis XIV. Some time later Gregory took the liberty, on occasion of a petition of an imprisoned priest eighty years of age, to express his indignation at the continued sufferings of the priests. He informed the Convention that out of the one hundred and eighty-seven who had been confined at Rochefort only seventy-six had survived their mistreatment. "If one should ask," said he, "in order to grant a man liberty, whether he is a lawyer or a physician, every body would be indignant. Why ask whether he is a priest? Whatever an individual may be, if he is a bad citizen strike him, if he is a good citizen protect him. So long as we act otherwise we will have only the *régime* of tyrants."

Some days subsequently, December 21st, 1794, this

noble Deputy mounted the tribune, not to plead for a particular petition, but to defend the right of conscience in all its extent. Gregory possessed not the higher gifts of eloquence; his speech lacked the brilliancy and passion which stir an assembly; but his unquestioned patriotism, and his known loyalty and intrepidity in the accomplishment of duty, had conciliated for him universal respect. The discourse of that day was one of the noblest acts of his political life. The defects of his gifts were redeemed by the strength of his principles; and by the nobleness of his convictions and the energy of his indignation, he rose to the height of true eloquence. His speech breathed the spirit of 1789, and, in addition thereto, was imbued with a truly Christian inspiration. Never was the great principle of religious liberty defended under more moving circumstances or with more largeness of spirit. "You have founded the republic," said he; "there yet remains a great task to accomplish—to consolidate its existence. To unite the hearts of the citizens, to strengthen the union of all the members of the great family, is a greater work than to gain a battle." The orator showed that the surest way to obtain peace abroad was to establish it at home, and that the surest way to perpetuate the internal dissensions was to continue and perpetuate, by persecution, the distinctions of caste which, under the new *régime*, ought altogether to disappear. And this was done so long as individuals were stricken down for the mere fact of belonging to the classes of nobles or priests—so long as particular shades of religious opinions were opposed by force. "To wish,"

said he, "to govern thought by authority is a chimerical undertaking, for it is beyond the sphere of human force. It is a tyrannical work, for no one has a right to assign bounds to the thoughts of another." Worship, being but the manifestation of religious thought, ought to be entirely free. No particular worship should be privileged, but all forms should be protected, however absurd in themselves, so long as they do not interfere with the public peace. Gregory showed with great force how much France had suffered from contrary principles under Louis XIV., and how, on the contrary, Holland and America had prospered under the *régime* of religious liberty. Persecution has never served any other end than to strengthen the opinions assailed. "Its inevitable effect," said he, "is to degrade a people; it is the first step toward slavery. A nation without the rights of conscience will soon be without liberty. The inexorable voice of history imprints on the brows of all persecutors the brand of infamy."

The orator had been heard with patience so long as he spoke of abstract principles; but this ceased as soon as he touched on the actual condition of the nation, and portrayed the sad effects of revolutionary persecution. "What," asked he, "is the actual state of things in this regard? Liberty of worship exists in Turkey, it exists not in France. Is this a fruit of that philosophy of tolerance of which the greatest representative was carried in triumph to the Pantheon? Is this the liberty promised to all nations, and which our armies bear to the enslaved of Europe? Let us beware. Revolutionary persecution will produce no better effects, than that

which banished the Huguenots ; it will expatriate citizens, and impoverish the land." Gregory warded off the charge of superstition and fanaticism by remarking that these terms are merely relative in their popular use, and that every one is always the fanatic of some one else ; for example, in the time of Cloomer one was a fanatic even for believing in God. He provoked a real storm of wrath among the extremists of the left when he defended the priests who had remained faithful to their religion, and exposed the cowardice of the apostates. "What is termed superstition," said he, "is surely as respectable as the declamations which, a year ago, were multiplied at our bar, and of which the substance was about this : I declare to you that for long years I have been an impostor and trifler ; for this reason I demand that you accord me your esteem, and give me a position." The warm applause of the spectators sustained the orator against the wrath of the extremists. He referred, with right, to his own example. If some had, through their eloquence, raised armies to quell the insurrection of La Vendée, he felt assured that, by his obscure correspondence and influence as priest, he had prevented insurrections of a like magnitude. When the Convention grew boisterous, and desired to quench the orator's voice, he cried out, "Has it come to pass that Charles IX. and Louis XIV. are about to rise from their graves ? Tell us whether, as the Protestants formerly, we are, now, to be forced to flee our country and beg an asylum and liberty on foreign shores ?" Drowning the clamors with his earnest voice, he continued : "What should we do so long as it is impossible to unite all

hearts in one Church? We must guarantee a full and unlimited liberty for all sects." Gregory terminated his discourse by rendering homage to Christianity, showing its salutary tendency to develop a solid patriotism and a spirit of obedience to magistrates and law. During the three quarters of an hour while he was pronouncing his speech the radical members were in a perfect paroxysm of rage; they seemed like criminals on the wheel of torture. The speech was not successful in immediately winning the Convention, but in pamphlet form it acted powerfully on the nation, and finally imposed its conclusions on the government.

We have seen that under the Constituent Assembly the great obstacle to the establishment of liberty of worship was, the salaried State Church which it itself had created. At the opening of the Legislative Assembly, and amid the difficulties arising from this Church system, and from the oath required of the priests, the true solution of the trouble was, at times, caught sight of both within and without the Assembly. We have cited the admirable letter of the Poet Chénier. But the country was too excited to hear the voice of wisdom which counseled the entire separation of Church and State. The same idea reappeared even in the Convention. It was pleaded for at the tribune by Cambon; but Robespierre, with the true instinct of revolutionary despotism, rejected it. Who knows what he might have obtained of the Convention, if he had not fallen in Thermidor? Perhaps he would have realized the dream of Rousseau, and given to his pale Deism the State treasury for support, and the guillotine for sanction. After

his fall, it sufficed that he had defended the salarizing of the worship to induce the Convention to reject it. In fact, this was done on the 20th of September, 1794, on a simple motion of Cambon. It would seem that such a measure should have excited considerable debate, inasmuch as it was very far-reaching in its effects, and swept away the whole system of the *Contrat Social*, which had caused so much of misfortune to the Revolution. But it did not; it was passed as a matter of course. And yet this motion caused to triumph, for the first time in France, the true notion of the State. It is impossible to exaggerate its importance. The reason why it excited so little attention in the Convention was simply that the question had already been resolved by events rather than by principles. The Convention saw that the State-Church system had been worse than a failure; that the whole subject was troublesome and expensive, and, as it were, in despair or disgust, or perhaps in mere indifference, it voted the following decree: "The French Republic pays no longer either the expenses or the salaries of any worship whatever." The most complete religious liberty was the legitimate consequence of such a measure. The Convention, however, was still too much irritated against the refractory priests to put a stop to the persecutions.

The discourse of Gregory, despite its seeming check, prepared the way for a return to more healthful principles, though it did not prevent the Convention from issuing a severe decree in January, 1795, against the non-juring priests who had returned into France. The cause so earnestly pleaded by the Bishop of Blois found,

a few months later, a more fortunate advocate in the person of Boissy d'Anglas, who succeeded all the better in the Convention for speaking, not in the character of a Christian, but in that of a skeptical philosopher. He wished to free the Revolution from the inconsistencies in which it had become involved by the entanglement of Church and State. He presented his famous motion on the 21st of February, 1795. His speech was received with as much applause as that of Gregory had excited indignation, though both pleaded for the same principles. Boissy d'Anglas knew how to pave his way by indulging in contempt for the whole system of Christianity. He gave clearly to understand that he was far from pleading for liberty of conscience in the interest of religion. This he treated as an idle chimera, destined soon to disappear in the light of philosophy. The new system of general education would dispel from the minds of the people these vain remnants of a time of intellectual slavery. "Soon," said he, "the religion of Socrates, of Marcus Aurelius, and of Cicero will be the religion of the world." The surest method, as he thought, to retard this happy change would be to use, against religion, any other arms than those of reason. It was in vain for the orator to express his unbounded contempt of Christianity; the action he was taking was an involuntary acknowledgment of the invincible power of the system. After the government had in vain tried to crush it by violence it was found necessary to make terms with it, and grant it peace. After Boissy d'Anglas had thus paid his homage to revolutionary passion, he presented with great force the

advantages of religious liberty, and of the separation of Church and State. He referred in direct terms to the fatal error of the Constituent Assembly on this subject. This body should have delivered the political realm from the influence of religion, allowed each citizen to worship as he pleased, and salaried no worship whatever; but it had wished to create instead of destroy, to organize instead of abolish. It had created for religion a pompous and expensive establishment, which itself had been destroyed by fanaticism. He painted in lively colors the recent religious persecution, so much the more shameful as it had been committed in regenerated France. He accused it of having crowded the prisons with women, children, and thousands of useful laborers. In these circumstances it was necessary to hold fast the principle, that the Church should be banished from the administration, and never allowed to return. The sole law for the Church was the common law. Let religious associations be treated as other associations, without any exception in their favor or to their detriment. Religious practices, however erroneous, should not be treated as crimes. The human heart is a sacred asylum, into which the eye of the government should not seek to penetrate. Such were the political principles advocated by this philosopher. The great principle of liberty of conscience could not have been more effectually defended. Despite some calls for an adjournment, the main principles for which he pleaded were, with some unfortunate modifications, made into law during that very sitting. The law, as passed, provided as follows: The exercise of no worship would be dis-

turbed ; no worship would be salaried, no buildings furnished by the government for any worship ; the ecclesiastical costume would not be tolerated ; the ceremonies of worship would not be permitted except in the locality chosen for that purpose ; no external sign designating the place of worship would be allowed ; no perpetual endowment of Churches would be suffered ; and every assemblage of citizens for worship would be subject to the surveillance of the regular civil authorities. Such is the substance of the decree which, despite its incompleteness and the opposition it encountered in the local authorities, allowed religion to spring up anew on the tormented soil of France. Under its favor all branches of the Church were allowed every-where to celebrate their worship. In another place we will describe this fine religious movement.

This law of February, 1795, (3 Ventose,) was far in advance of the real sentiments of the Convention. Revolutionary passion, ever ready to break out afresh, often silenced the voice of reason. Hence the many contradictory laws on matters of religion. Thus while one Deputy obtained a modification of the law of deportation, another complained bitterly of the open celebration of the non-juring worship, and boasted that he had *picked up* in a single night a large number of the offending priests. He asked that precaution be taken against the influence of these "infamous mountebanks." Jean-Bon St. André attacked the law itself. Fanaticism, he thought, was all the more dangerous as that it now demanded rights and justice. Tallien, though heaping upon the priests gross insult, asked that the

Convention give them not too much prominence by continually meddling with their cause. These instances show very well the general disposition of the Convention; for every measure proposed or taken against the refractory clergy reacted against liberty in general. In a Journal of the day, issued under the influence of Gregory, we are told that in the departments the public offices were filled with petty infidel tyrants; that the persecution was only diminished, but not stopped; and that every day the Catholics were insulted by the public functionaries. They found great difficulty in re-establishing their worship. In several towns the authorities refused them a place for worship, though they eagerly hastened to furnish quarters for theaters and other public amusements. In one province an officer overturned an altar as soon as it had been erected; in another some innocent priests were thrown into prison by a representative of the people. In Corrèze the officers charged the Catholics who wished to renew their worship, with incivism, and styled their religion an *absurd antiquated ceremony*. On pretense that it disturbed the public peace they banished all worship to private houses.

These and many similar details that might be given, show how imperfectly the sentiment of general liberty was as yet awakened. And yet the events which were now taking place in the west of France were sufficient to teach the partisans of the Revolution, that the surest means of pacifying and gaining to the republican cause the whole people, was simply to practice an unlimited religious tolerance. In the region of Cherbourg and

Brest the authorities had, with the happiest effects, decided to allow perfect liberty to all sects whatever. Similar measures had been taken by General Hoche in La Vendée. "It were to be desired," said he, "that the priests had not been incessantly cried out against; to deprive the people of them is to perpetuate the war indefinitely. If we do not admit religious freedom we must renounce the hope of peace in these parts. Let us once totally forget the priests, and there will soon be an end both of the priests and of the war. Persecute them as a class and you will have both priests and war for a thousand years to come. If a guilty priest is punished, as a priest, the inhabitants are shocked; if he is punished as a citizen, as a man, no one says a word." "The people of La Vendée," said Lamennais very justly, "did not revolt against liberty. I love to regard La Vendée and the republic as two sisters who combat, simply because of a misunderstanding. The one represents religious liberty, the other political liberty. If the Revolution had left to La Vendée her priests and Churches it would have found in her a warm partisan. The spirit of La Vendée is religious republicanism." What was thus true of La Vendée was true of all France. Unfortunately the revolutionists, in sacrificing at every occasion one of the most sacred of liberties, failed to see that they were rendering liberty itself hateful.

On the 1st of May, 1795, a proposed decree, very severe against the priests who had returned to France, was introduced into the Assembly. It contained one article which, on being referred to a committee, gave

occasion to an important report by Lanjuinais some weeks later. In the short debate which thereupon ensued the cause of religious liberty triumphed, and the law of February 21st, (3 Ventose,) received the most happy extension. It provided that the national Churches should be at the service of all the different worships at fixed different hours. The ministers who wished to celebrate worship had only to apply for permission, and take an oath of submission to the civil laws. In September, 1795, further important liberal measures were taken in regard to affairs of Church, so that on the whole religious liberty would have been securely guaranteed had not other measures of a contrary tendency been unfortunately enacted.

The most grave of these measures was the law of the Decade Festivals, the atheistical Sunday, which was in fact a sly attempt to undermine Christianity in France. It was Hebertism, so far as it could be revived after the fall of Robespierre. It sought its object in an indirect way, and substituted influence for violence. Its authors, however, did not attempt to conceal their design, and the Convention, in confiding the organization of the festivals to the Committee of Public Instruction, showed clearly the importance it attached to them. It was an attempt to shape the public spirit in a different mold. The fixing of the festivals on another day than the Christian Sunday, revealed a spirit of hostility to religion. This is clear from the words of one of the advocates of the law. "All prejudices," said he, "tend to destroy liberty, and the most dangerous are those which are founded on mystical ideas;" that is, religious doc-

trines. But how to destroy them was the question. Not by violence, for opinions are not put down by force. The surest method of opposing a dike to the prejudices which were springing up afresh in France was to inaugurate a system of grand and pompous national festivals, a sort of republican worship. A Delegate, writing to the Convention from Joinville, whither he had been sent on business, speaks thus against the cause of religion: "We must have a remedy which will produce a radical cure. Such a one exists only in public instruction. The decade festivals offer so much the better an opportunity, because instruction will then take the form of pleasure. Lose not a moment in organizing them." Some weeks later the following sentiments were uttered in the Legislature: "Let us take care; even as the superstition which we replace by our civic festivals charmed the mind and heart by its prestige, so should we impress on our festivals a grand and imposing character, in order the more effectually to destroy the dangerous illusions of fanaticism." In February, 1795, a committee exhorted the Convention thus: "Tyranny and superstition have desolated the earth; you ought to enlighten its ignorance. Upon the ruins of all errors you ought to establish the dominion of the truths of nature, by founding a pure worship, to be celebrated under the open heavens—the sole worship worthy of the Supreme Being and of free man."

This, as well as all previous attempts to supplant Christianity, was destined to fall into impotence and ridicule. The sentiment of the Infinite, alone, is capable of founding a worship. Outside of their pleasures and

interests, men assemble and form unions only under the influence of the Divine. They can never be brought together and moved by empty abstractions. Neither the patriotic hymns nor the lectures on politics and agriculture, were sufficient to conjure the incurable ennui of these festivals; the people grew weary even of the touching spectacle of Old Age contrasting with Childhood. The solemn Anniversary of Reproduction tended somewhat to un wrinkle the brows; but the inevitable homily on the rights of citizens or on the cultivation of potatoes, was a poor substitute for those sacred texts for which the soul is athirst, and in which it finds an echo from its celestial home. The Committee of Public Instruction relied much on the civic repasts; but it forgot that all the attraction of these depended on the refreshments therewith connected, and that the people were wearied to death of the republican tirades. Boissy d'Anglas, it is true, proposed to give a little variety to the pleasures of the day by presenting a symbolical rose to Innocence; but the remedy was very trifling. Of these festivals, which were really established only under the Directory, there was destined to remain only the remembrance of the most laughable of parodies. They had only one serious result; they gave occasion to infidel fanaticism to interfere with the free celebration of Christian worship.

One of the chief works of the last period of the Convention was the elaboration of a new constitution. The constitution of 1793 had become the platform of the Ultra-radical or Mountain party, a platform stained with blood and crime, and whose triumph had brought the

Reign of Terror. It was in the name of this constitution that the national representation had twice been violated. It bore the imprint of the hot demagogy from which it sprang. It had, therefore, now become odious to a nation desirous of repose. The new constitution was the work of the Moderate party, and was presented in the Convention by Boissy D'Anglas. It was easy to see that three years of contest had overturned many a revolutionary prejudice. Thus, the division of the Legislature into an upper and a lower house, so disdainfully rejected by the Constituents in 1789, was adopted almost without opposition. No one protested against the interdiction of great popular associations, which, during the first period of the Revolution, had formed a sort of permanent demagogic opposition to the regular authorities. There was no desire to resuscitate the Club of the Jacobins, or the too famous City Council of Paris. The communal assemblies were replaced by administrative boards of three or five members. The legislative power was intrusted to two councils, the *Anciens* and the *Cinq-cents*, (the *senate* and the *five hundred*,) and the executive power to a Directory of five members chosen by the councils.

This constitution, of which we give but the general features, was far better than its predecessors, though it was still disfigured by grave imperfections. The two councils were composed of elements too similar to secure a real counterpoise, and the executive power was a mere commission of the councils which was destined to struggle continually for an increase of its power. We will soon see how unfortunate for France was the

régime resulting from this imperfect constitution, and from the lack of moral honesty in the rulers.

As to religious liberty, the new constitution asserted the great principles which had triumphed in the Convention after the fall of Robespierre. It contained the words, *Every one is free in the exercise of his worship.* The words, *The republic salaries no worship,* consecrated one of the most precious and most dearly bought of the conquests of the Revolution.

The adoption of the constitution, which took place August 17th, 1795, changed in no respect the condition of the unfortunate non-juring priests. An officer in Haute Loire, who had suspended, to their detriment, the public law, was justified by the Convention. It was against these unhappy men that it directed one of its very last acts. After the riot of October 5th, which had been occasioned by the decision of the Convention, that two thirds of its members should have seats in the new councils, it passed, on motion of Tallien, a decree which excluded from public functions every ex-noble and every individual who had provoked or sanctioned illiberal measures, and required the summary execution of the laws against the refractory priests.

Thus closed the labors of this great and terrible Assembly, which had sat from September 21st, 1792, to October the 26th, 1795. It had, we must confess, saved the territory of France; but for, a long time, it had been compromising the Revolution by rendering it an object of terror to the world. It had consecrated glorious principles, and accomplished admirable works,

but it had left the nation weary and demoralized. Despotic in the extreme, it had disgraced its last hours by one of those measures of public safety which so often had led it to crime, and which had been more pernicious to liberty than all the united forces of the coalition. These decrees of public safety were destined to be followed by *coups d'état*; for the road for usurpation was already well prepared. Such must be the fate of every Revolution which, by putting God out of sight, and trampling under foot the rights of conscience, deprives itself of all lasting foundation upon which to build.

CHAPTER II.

RELATIONS OF CHURCH AND STATE UNDER THE
DIRECTORY.

THE constitution of the year III, despite its imperfections, might have given liberty and peace to the country; for in the two free legislative councils it had ample means of peacefully correcting itself. But woe to the country which in its impatience destroys this pliable instrument of reform! Respect for an assembly, however, is closely connected with respect for law, and the latter depends on the moral development of the people. Now the fact is, that from the first outbreak of the Revolution France had never been so deeply demoralized as at this time under the Directory. What had been lacking in 1789 was neither enthusiasm nor generosity; the weak point lay in too great an absence of those inflexible principles which are derived from a higher sphere than that of noble human impulses. With man there is no absolute stability except in the depths of the conscience, where the moral sentiment is blended with the voice of God. It is well known to what extent God was absent from a Revolution which was born of the eighteenth century. When, therefore, after years of struggle and fatigue, the impulsion of enthusiasm had died away, there remained in the hearts of the nation no firm principle which could serve as a rock to break the

force of popular or governmental passions. The country became a prey to insurrections and *coups d'état*, until finally a *coup d'état*, better planned than the others gave to these shameful crises the merited solution. A lawless republican hypocrisy characterized this sad epoch. To find complete sincerity anywhere outside of the ranks of the priests who suffered for their faith, it was necessary to descend to the low region of "Gracus" Babeuf and his accomplices, where an agrarian demagogue cried aloud with the savage ferocity of a famished wild beast. The Directory contained only two good men, Carnot and Barthélemy, but it soon rid itself of this anomaly. The other three were Barras,* Rewbell, and La Reveillère Lepaux. Barras was the leading spirit, and united in his character the vices of the aristocracy and the insatiable thirsts of demagogy; Rewbell was the politician, and La Reveillère Lepaux attempted to play the apostle in the name of his ridiculous and intolerant Theophilanthropy. It is easy to foresee what would become of the government in the hands of such men, surrounded as they were by a sycophantic courtier crowd, who saw no better means of flattering them than to improve on their vices. In the interior there was but one policy, the arbitrary. They resorted but little to the guillotine, for France was tired of that, but they were as daring in their contempt of law as the Committee of Public Safety in the worst days of terror. Abroad, the Directory showed itself to be lacking in good faith and moderation, and exceedingly unskillful in negotiation. It had the happiness of discovering th

* See Appendix, note 37.

greatest captain of modern times; it could depend on the sword of Bonaparte, however, only until he had acquired glory enough to justify him in despising its orders. Under the command of this incomparable general the French manifested the wonderful aptitudes of their genius for rapidly and skillfully conducted wars of conquest; but all of these triumphs did not remedy the abjectness and poverty of their civil and moral life. With few exceptions, no great citizens were produced in these armies which drove Europe before them. Most of the generals who had distinguished themselves in battle showed, when they returned home, a sneering contempt for right, and were ready, like Pichegru and Augereau, to become the instruments of betraying and oppressing the republic. The young Corsican hero, who had already fixed upon himself all eyes, and won all prestige, was beginning to manifest in his dealings with the parties, and in his negotiations with princes, that total absence of conviction, that contempt of right, that deep shrewdness which is moderate by calculation, and resorts to violence as soon as that will better serve the purpose—in fact all those qualities of force and cunning which, together, made him so dear and so fatal to France. Has he not given a full portrait of himself in the following confidential words, which he wrote in reference to the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, (4th of September, 1797,) by which the Directory violated the membership of the Legislative Councils? “Firmness,” said he, “would have sufficed. Let force be used when one cannot get along without it; but when one has the alternative, justice is preferable.” No, military glory,

the natural lot of a brilliant and energetic race, a glory which should be ennobled by a defense of liberty, constitutes in and of itself none of the true attributes of a great nation. There was reason, for awhile, to hope that the moderate and liberal opinion which was represented in the councils, and which manifested itself among the people as often as the ballot-box was respected, would rescue the country. But, unfortunately, too many of the chiefs in the government lacked honesty of purpose, and were ready to plot with the Directory against the republic.

It was the question of religion upon which took place the most violent shock between the liberty-loving party (which was composed of the newly elected third of the two Councils, together with the Moderates who had belonged to the Convention) and the violent party, the latter consisting of the majority both in the Councils and in the Directory. All who did not desire to keep the country in a continual state of revolution were very anxious to avoid troubling the conscience of the people. Worship had been revived throughout the land, and it was easy to see how indestructible is the religious sentiment. Simple common sense was enough to enable all who were honest to see that the best policy was to leave religion to itself, and to repeal all persecuting laws. The way to this course was open, since the Convention had dissolved the union of Church and State. There was no surer way of rallying to the new government the religiously-inclined inhabitants of the West and South, and of defeating the intrigues of the emigrated royalists, who had no better card in their hands

than republican intolerance. Such was the favorite policy of the moderate minority in the Councils, and multitudes of petitions for the same course of policy were sent by the people to the Council of the Five Hundred. But the majority of the Councils and of the Directory were far from sincerely respecting the liberty of worship. The pure Jacobins, like Barras and Rewbell, hated religion in itself, and regarded the God of ancient France, as well as the Supreme Being of Robespierre, as among the phantoms which had definitively vanished before the sunlight of revelation. They had no patience for doctrines which threw an unfavorable light over the future of the impious. We have already mentioned that La Reveillère Lepaux had his own special divinity to protect. He was a philosophical inventor of religion; that is to say, he belonged to the class of the most intolerant. To make place for a ridiculous worship which he patronized, he was ready to overturn every rival altar. But he had little confidence in the attractive power of that sentimental pastoral system which he wished to substitute for the worship of the God of the Bible; he relied much more on measures of proscription than on the flower garlands and the bowls of milk—those touching symbols of his new system of Theophilanthropy. Every thing indicated that there would be a violent struggle between the Moderate party, which honestly desired liberty of worship, and the Directory, which desired violently to deprive France of her ancient religion.

Scarcely had the two Councils passed, in August, 1796, a law against the extreme Jacobins on the one

hand, and the royalists on the other, when an abominable decree against the refractory priests was presented. The extremists seemed to wish to punish these men for a crime which was no longer possible, inasmuch as the Church *régime*, to which they had formerly refused assent, had months ago been abolished. The simple fact is, they wished to persecute for the mere pleasure of the thing. The reporting and discussion of the decree were accompanied by exhibitions of the most hideous and unjustifiable passions. The law itself required that every refractory priest, that is, the majority in the country, should leave France within twenty days on pain of being treated as a returned emigrant, that is, condemned to death. Such a law was among the most infamous violations of conscience that had yet been attempted. The debate which it excited was very lively. The radicals objected to an exception which it made in favor of priests of over sixty years. "These old, gray-headed priests," said one of the orators, "inspire all the more respect, exert a greater influence; their blessings are more highly prized. The women adore these grand lamas, these aged idols, and the wives react on their husbands; hence the greater evil." Despite the earnest efforts of the partisans of moderation, the decree, in its worst form, was voted by the Council of the Five Hundred. On being presented, however, to the Ancients, or Senate, it was delayed, and finally rejected.

The attitude of the Directory to the Holy See revealed the same violent and imprudent conduct which marked its home policy. General Bonaparte, after his

first victories in Italy, had decided to treat with the Italian governments, so as not to have enemies in his rear whom he was not yet able to conquer. For this purpose he entered into conference with a Court which had thus far been the bitterest enemy of the French Revolution. The young general was too consummate a politician to insist on conditions which could not be obtained, in a negotiation which he was personally interested in concluding. On condition of respecting, in some degree, the dominions of the Pope, he obtained one hundred precious paintings and statues for the museums of Paris, besides a large supply of provisions and money.

Bonaparte was much displeased at the conduct of the Directory after the armistice which he had concluded at Bologna in June, 1796. The Pope accorded without delay the sacrifice of sums of money, which he was then poorly prepared to sustain, and parted cheerfully with his treasures of art. But he could not accept the new conditions which were pressed upon him by the Directory. This body required him to retract the briefs in which he had condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This was most unreasonable. As temporal prince he might make sacrifices, but as head of the Church he could not, without dishonor, submit a doctrinal decision to the fluctuations of politics. The Directory had thus offended, and put in question the interests of, the whole Catholic Church. It was aiming to impose on the chief of the Church the same tyranny which had been attempted against the conscience of the non-juring clergy. In this it is easy to recognize the imbecile presumption

of a sectary like La Reveillère Lepaux.* The Pope, though sick at the time, convened his Consistory. It was decided unanimously that he could not grant the demands of the Directory without essentially compromising the interests of religion. The unhappy Pope exclaimed, in view of his troubles, "We regard the crown of martyrdom as of higher worth than that which we wear on our head." It was well understood at Rome that the Directory desired war, since it had asked what could not be granted. The Papal States were, therefore, put in a state of defense, though against all hope of success. Bonaparte, who had not yet won enough victories to despise the authority of the Directory, wrote in a tone of great harshness to this easily-frightened court of old men. He enumerated his victories, and threatened to crown them with the overthrow of the Papal power. Indirectly, however, through the mediation of Cardinal Mattei, he acted in a conciliatory spirit. The latter replied with great dignity to his haughty demands: "Sire, your prosperity and successes have blinded you. Not content with having shorn to the skin the flock, you now wish to devour them. You require that the Pope shall sacrifice both his own and the souls of those who are confided to him. You would destroy the foundation of the Christian religion. Consternated at this preposterous demand, the Holy Father has fled to the bosom of God for wisdom in this time of need. Doubtless the Holy Spirit will enlighten him, and remind him of the example of the martyrs." These were noble words.

* See Appendix, note 38.

The victories won over the wretched Papal troops conferred little glory, and Bonaparte hastened to conclude a peace, in spite of the angry suggestions of the Directory, who desired above all things the overthrow of the Papacy. In a dispatch from Paris to the general of the army of Italy, under date of February, 1797, we find the following words: "You have too much experience in politics not to have felt as deeply as we that the Roman religion will always be the irreconcilable enemy of the republic. The Directory invites you to do all that may seem to you possible, without rekindling the fires of fanaticism, to destroy the Papal government, either by putting Rome under another power, or, which will perhaps be better, by establishing for it a form of government which will render the yoke of the priests contemptible and odious." There could be no more frank an avowal of a design in the Directory to make war against an opinion, a doctrine; but Bonaparte knew too well the danger of a premature overthrow of the Papal throne. He, therefore, waved matters of doctrine, and on the 17th of February, 1797, signed with the Papal power a treaty of peace. By this treaty of Tolentino the Pope abandoned Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna, renounced his claims on Avignon, made a large contribution of military supplies, and yielded many precious objects of art.

The elections of 1797 had fortified in the government the party of moderation. Several of the new delegates, such as Camille Jordan* and Royer Collard,† were strangers to the violent measures of the Revolution.

* See Appendix, note 39.

† Ibid., note 40.

They were especially strangers to antireligious passions, and represented constituents who were attached to Christianity, and more and more weary of the intolerance of the Directory. The legislative session began with a revision of the revolutionary laws. On the 13th of June, a report was made which complained loudly of the neglect into which education had fallen. An increasing number of parents refused to send their children to schools which were under infidel auspices. Camille Jordan became the organ of the complaints which were every-where made against the infractions of the liberty of worship. He pronounced a memorable discourse in favor of indiscriminate liberty of conscience for all citizens, and feared not to borrow arguments from the excellency of Christianity. "Be not astonished," said he, "at the importance attached to religious ideas by men who are accustomed to find in them the nourishment of their souls. It is from them that they derive joys which are independent of the power of man or the strokes of fate. A need of these consolations is especially felt in times of revolution; then it is that the unhappy have great need of hope. Religion lights up the house of mourning, and even dispels the night of the grave. Legislators, how small are your benefits compared to this. For you it is an unspeakable advantage that religion exists. It exerts a powerful influence; it alone speaks efficaciously of morality to the people; it prepares your work; it could accomplish it without your help. Laws are but the supplement of the ethics of nations. If you desire to erect a dike against the fearful progress of crime and disorder, you must guarantee

complete religious liberty." Jordan then proceeded in the most reasonable manner to explain in detail how this liberty should be respected. He insisted with emphasis on the absurdity of the decree forbidding the priests to assemble the people for worship by the ringing of bells. "Why," said he ironically, "shall we oppose a superstition of philosophy to the superstition which attaches the women of our villages to the sound of their parish bells?" From the time of the Atheist delirium of Chaumette funeral ceremonies had been subjected to impious or ridiculous regulations. "Yes, I can conceive," said the orator with noble emotions, "I can conceive why those tyrants who covered France with grave-yards desired to despoil them of solemnity; why they threw, with so little decency, the last remains of man into an ignoble ditch. They felt a necessity of despising humanity, and of smothering those generous sentiments whose revival would be to them so terrible."

This discourse was a marked event. It excited the rage of the remnants of the Jacobins. The final discussion of the matter took place two months later, July 8th, 1797. General Jordan opened the opposition on the part of the extreme revolutionists, by a most violent speech against the proposed modification of the persecuting laws. He regarded the influence of religion as evil and only evil. But Boissy D'Anglas, skeptic as he was, stood up for the cause of justice. In the midst of this discussion was heard the grave voice of a young Deputy, who was destined to exert for long years on the liberal party a telling influence. Royer Collard made his *début* at the tribune in the defense of the

noblest of causes. One finds in this first discourse that austere vigor, that masterly breadth which were so characteristic of him, and which sometimes ran the risk of losing something of force by too much of abstractness. He showed very forcibly that the religious sentiment had proved itself superior to all the violence of the Revolution; that it had existed in France from before the foundation of the monarchy, and had now survived its downfall; and that to persecute it could only bring ruin upon the persecutors. He closed with these admirable words: "Justice, Confidence, Generosity, you who are so much decried by tyranny, you are not only the noblest sentiments of the human soul, you constitute also the most philosophic principle of government, the wisest combination of politics, the profoundest diplomacy. To the savage voice of demagogy, crying out, Audacity, more audacity, audacity still; let us respond by this consolatory and victorious cry, which will find an echo throughout the nation: Justice, more justice, justice still." The Assembly, by a strong majority, repealed the most of the intolerant laws which yet disgraced the code of France. Liberty of conscience obtained a signal triumph, and would have borne the happiest fruits had it not been suddenly checked by the *coup d'état* of September the 4th, (18 Fructidor,) in which the Directory, backed by military influence, triumphed over liberty, and violated the persons of the national representation. It is certain that one of the principal causes of this act of usurpation was the legislative re-establishment of the liberty of worship.

It is not our business to treat of the circumstances of

this monstrous conspiracy. This violation of the National Legislature, so coolly plotted by the holders of power, was infinitely more guilty than any popular insurrection. The combination of cool stratagem and violence, renders the crime the more odious. We will throw a veil over these ill-fated days, when a drunken soldiery made a mock of the right they were trampling under foot, and repeated without blushing the sentiment that *the saber was the law*. These events are a shame to the armies which countenanced them, and the country which endured them. The victims alone came out pure and glorious. The majority of the generals applauded the *coup d'état* of Fructidor; the reserve of Bonaparte was simply a phase of his ambitious calculations. It was simply the criticism of a consummate player on an ill-combined move, and not the indignation of a friend of liberty. The *coup d'état* had no plausible pretext. The Council of the Five Hundred desired to return to measures of moderation; the Directory wished to continue the *régime* of revolutionary violence. The question was, whether the republic should become liberal, or whether it should continue in an arbitrary course, which, as under the ancient *régime*, trampled under foot, on pretext of State necessity, all the principles of right. The act of violence was a victory of revolutionary dictatorship over reviving liberty. If it did not shed blood it was none the less cruel, for the banishment which it inflicted on its victims was nothing else than a condemnation to death—a long torture. From that day the republic was lost. The unjust and immoral Directory, which assumed to represent it, could not even maintain public

order. Preoccupied with the desire of remaining in power, it compromised the country. Accustomed to moderation in nothing, it rendered peace impossible, and broke the treaty of Campo Formio when it was scarcely concluded. With the finest armies and best generals in the world, it lost the fruits of many victories, because it was guided in its choice of officers solely by the desire of rewarding its creatures, and of getting rid of its rivals. Nothing but the unhopèd-for stroke of fortune in the victory of Massena, in 1799, over Suwarow at Zurich, averted a great disaster. The brilliant but sterile expedition of Egypt, after having served the interests of the Directors, who were disquieted at the proximity of the eclipsing glory of the Corsican, turned in the end to the profit of that absorbing personality, who soon possessed himself of all the forces of the nation. The Directory could preserve the fruits of the Fructidor *coup d'état* only by a series of similar and equally disgraceful strokes of policy. The elections of 1798, which had sent to the Councils a large number of Moderates and Liberals, were annulled by an infamous decree. It was in vain that the Directory multiplied its arbitrary measures, suspended the liberty of the press, and practiced the search of private houses. The country was tired of such a system. The new elections, in 1799, gave a majority in both Councils against the Directory.

La Reveillère Lepaux and Merlin submitted to the opposition, and retired from the Directory. Sieyès became the leading spirit. But soon, new disappointment was felt. The new Councils enacted the abominable law

of hostages, which made the relatives of the emigrated or suspected responsible for intrigues over which they had no control. In reality, the opposition to the Directory came not so much from the Moderate party which had been decimated in Fructidor, as from the disappointed Jacobins. It was not a collision of principles, but of ambitions. The country was weary of strifes of which it was always the victim, and was, therefore, ready to surrender itself to whoever would give it repose. Sieyès aspired to this role of pacificator, but was forced to take a secondary place as soon as Bonaparte had landed in France. The conqueror at the Pyramids, was admirably prepared for entering into the situation, and profiting by it. He possessed the prestige of glory, a genius for administration as well as for war, the gift of winning hearts, and besides was destitute of principles which could interfere with his unmeasured but profoundly-calculating ambition.

The *coup d'état* of the 10th of November, 1799, (18 Brumaire,) which overthrew the Directory, put Bonaparte in command of the army, and made him First Consul, was the merited solution of the crisis of Fructidor. It was not so much a deliverance as a chastisement with glorious compensations. But these compensations were soon to be lost; for the moderation which alone could preserve them was incompatible with the ardent genius of him who showed himself on the very day of his triumph unwilling to accept the restraint of moral law. I know of nothing more sad in all modern history than the scenes which preceded this fatal date: the conspirators vying with each other in violating the na-

tional representation, and adjourning its sittings to St. Cloud, that its dying voice might awaken no echo in Paris,—the Legislature itself, unable to cast honor on its defeat, and speaking only the noisy language of the Clubs, when it should have resounded with senatorial utterances of right,—General Bonaparte stammering at the Tribune of the Five Hundred, and trembling before the obscured image of liberty until he gave the concerted signal of rescue to his grenadiers,—all of this in the name of the principles of 1789,—what a pitiable comedy to introduce an epos! Happy the people which has not seen and reseen similar spectacles! Vaunt as much as you please the order established in the finances and on the highways—celebrate the miracle of Marengo—but go not further, and ask us not to applaud this violent act of Bonaparte, as the triumphant conclusion of the French Revolution. “Our fathers died in other hopes.”

As to the attitude of the Directory to religious liberty during the two years and two months which intervened between its act of violence against the National Legislature and its overthrow in the usurpation of Bonaparte in November, 1799, little need be said, except that it was intensely intolerant. It seemed to have nothing so much at heart as to have the late liberal laws repealed, and to inaugurate anew the severest measures against the refractory priests, that is, those who persisted in loyalty to their convictions. In his message to the subservient, mutilated Legislature, the Theophilanthropist Director, La Reveillière Lepaux, stigmatized in these words, the laws on liberty of conscience which had recently been

voted by the national representatives: "Superstition and fanaticism," said he, "have been called back by the very persons who, under the monarchy, had contributed to destroy them." An oath was now required of priests, which contained, in addition to a promise of submission to the laws, a declaration of hatred to all royalty. About two hundred priests, together with the fifty-three arrested moderatist representatives, were deported to the swamps of Sinnamari. Almost all of them died in a few months. In France the persecution was renewed with vigor. Search of private houses was instituted, and priests were again crowded together in the prisons and on the galleys. Genissieu proposed to treat as emigrants all priests subject to deportation who should not forthwith present themselves for punishment. "These eternal enemies of our laws and tranquillity," said he, "must be taught that death awaits them if they dare to remain on our territory." This proposition was received and referred to a committee. A fraction of the Legislature would have willingly extended the deportation to all priests whatever.

It was not simply as factions that the priests were persecuted, but as the ministers of a hated religion. The institution of the tenth-day festivals furnished a ready pretext for vexing the adherents of Christianity. Representative Duhot, who for his ardent and bitter zeal against the Sabbath deserves the title of Knight of the Decades, caused to be passed in November, 1798, a decree which rendered the observance of the Atheist festivals obligatory. The Jacobins of the Five Hundred, not content with exacting the celebration of these

days, desired also the formal interdiction of the observance of the Sabbath. But this was rejected on the observation of a few Deputies, that this would place France below the States of the Church in point of religious liberty. Duhot observed that "the closing of the shops was the exterior sign of a worship;" he therefore concluded that the observance of the Sabbath was an infraction of the laws of the country. "What," cried he with astonishment, "weeks after the great priest of Rome, long assaulted by philosophy, and now dethroned by your armies, has been obliged to carry from place to place his vagabond piety, do his servants dare still to exercise among us their insolent despotism! Yes, they forbid to labor on the Sabbath, and hinder Catholic laborers from working in the shops on that day." Such discourses show to what degradation the French tribune had fallen. The Assembly took into serious consideration a proposition to transfer to the tenth days all the religious festivals, and sent with approbation to a committee a motion forbidding the closure of shops on the sacred days of the Church. A decree was demanded which should severely punish any disrespect shown to the tenth-day festivals. An effort was also made to forbid fairs on these days, in order to shock the religious sentiment by forcing them upon the Sabbath. A Deputy was found who even proposed that legal protection should be granted only to such merchants as would take oath to use exclusively the new republican weights and measures, and to keep their stores open on the Sabbath. Thus one would have had the beautiful spectacle of non-jurors of the shop as well

as of the temple. Even this was not enough. An obscure Deputy demanded that instead of counting past ages from the birth of Christ, they should be reckoned backward from the foundation of the Republic. All of these odious propositions were heard and referred to a committee which would certainly have caused them to be converted into law, had not the storm of Brumaire and the usurpation of Bonaparte swept them away.

Moreover, the violent party were well able to bear in patience the slow process of legislation, for the Directory aided them and practiced in the whole country a vexatious and cruel persecution. In the fall of 1797 Gregory had complained of a circular of Gohier, the Minister of the Interior, which required the clergymen of all Churches to transfer to the tenth days the celebration of their worship. "How many unhappy priests," exclaims Gregory in his Memoirs, "have been pursued, imprisoned, and transported beyond the seas, for having refused to obey the orders of municipalities and administrations, requiring them to transfer their divine rites to the tenth days!" It is easy to imagine to what a height measures of this character, which affected the most minute details of daily life, and were continually repeated, must have wounded and exasperated the religious sentiment.

The events which had just taken place in Italy were of a nature to give the climax to the discontent and indignation of all friends of Catholicism. The treaty of Tolentino with the Holy Father, had proved to be only a truce. Doubtless it would have been otherwise had Bonaparte remained in Italy. The Directory, free from

all control after their *coup d'état* of Fructidor, 1797, pursued with ardor their favorite plan of overthrowing the Papacy. They began openly to favor the revolutionary party at Rome. General Duphot, Ambassador of the Republic to Rome, had been killed in a riot, though it has never been known whether he had striven to calm or to invite it. This furnished the desired occasion for rupture. General Berthier marched into Rome in February, 1798. The Vatican was plundered, and occupied by troops. The unhappy Pope, Pius VI., though weighed down with age and disease, was taken away from Rome, transferred to Tuscany, and afterward to France, where he died at Valence. His death was humiliating for his person, but glorious and useful for his cause; for his presence and sufferings excited the most lively enthusiasm and sympathy even in the land of his exile. The members of the Directory had occasion to learn that nothing is more dangerous than to make martyrs, for it was precisely these assaults on religion which did the most to dishonor and ruin them. They fell into infamy and impotence. Their policy had been so odious that some honest persons even thought the usurpation of Bonaparte to be a riddance. Nothing condemns them so severely as the satisfaction with which the country saw them displaced by a military dictatorship. It was necessary that they should have thoroughly disgusted France, before she could have condescended to applaud so sad a termination of the grand liberal movement of 1789.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALTARS RESTORED BY LIBERTY.

ENTIRE religious liberty did not exist a single day during the whole course of the Revolution. Even under the *régime* of the separation of Church and State it was seriously trammelled by the general government. And in many cases the legal impediments were rendered tenfold more severe by the passions and injustice of the provincial magistrates. These acted almost every-where in the interest of the anti-religious tendency. Notwithstanding these obstacles, as soon as religion became free from the civil administration, and was left to itself, it recovered itself with astonishing rapidity from the discredit into which it had fallen. France witnessed at the close of the eighteenth century the unexpected spectacle of a powerful revival of Christian faith. Nothing is more false than to attribute the restoration of Christianity in France to the happy policy of Bonaparte. No, when once freed from the State, it restored itself spontaneously on a soil yet trembling and covered with ruins. The First Consul, in his efforts to regulate and take into his service the influence of the Church, only succeeded in arresting one of the finest religious movements which our country ever witnessed.

Assuredly it was a very difficult task to re-establish religion without other aid than that of free convictions,

in a country where Sensualism seemed to be the goal of philosophy, and where a scoffing impiety had reigned in the refined circles, and, like an overflowing torrent, swept among the lower classes. The task was not merely to combat the vicious doctrines then in vogue, but to conquer the base passions which sprang from them. At the close of the Reign of Terror the moral condition of France was truly deplorable. The nation had begun by making of liberty a religion. Disgusted finally with the crimes committed in its name, and possessing no longer that faith which gives consolation in disappointment, and saves the soul from universal and morbid doubt, the people seem to have lost the faculty of believing in God. Thus the greatest bond of moral restraint was broken.

This skepticism, however, could not still the tumultuous vital force of the nation. From the moment that the restraint of terror ceased, Paris became inspired with a sort of frenzy for pleasure. She cast aside the red cap of terror, but bore into her festivals the enthusiasm which had rendered it so cruel. It was another illustration of how closely licentiousness and sanguinary violence are allied. The writers of the time agree in depicting Parisian society as possessed of a sort of feverish impatience for the ignoble pleasures of life, and as abandoning itself without shame to their pursuit. Never did debauchery parade itself with more audacity in open day. In its Palais Royal Paris possessed a veritable bazar of vice. Gambling and prostitution collected there a luxurious youth, who had all the corruption of the ancient *régime* without the redeeming trait of that

elegance which imposes a sort of outward restraint. What was graver still, the institution of the family was seriously undermined, thanks to the unheard of facility of divorce, and the almost equal footing of natural and legitimate children. There was one divorce to eleven marriages, and the bonds which were so easily dissolved were little respected while they did exist. A journal of the time gave the true explanation of this deplorable situation. "We are the only people in the world," said the *Eclair*, "who ever attempted to do without religion. But what is already our sad experience? Every tenth day [this Sabbath of the infidels] we are astounded by the recital of more crimes and assassinations than were committed formerly in a whole year. At the risk of speaking an obsolete language, and of receiving insult for response, we declare that we must cease striving to destroy the remnants of religion if we desire to prevent the entire dissolution of society." The restorers of religion found a great obstacle in the wide-spread prejudice, that Christianity is inconsistent with free institutions. Unfortunately the intrigues of the emigrated royalist clergy gave ample ground for the prejudice, and the revolutionists unjustly involved all the clergy in the same condemnation. But a main cause of the bitter and continued persecution was, the deep conviction on the part of the violent party that the only way to justify or efface the memory of its past cruelties was, to crush and destroy every trace of the object of its oppression. But in spite of all these obstacles Christianity was destined to win signal victories as soon as it obtained even partial justice and limited liberty.

As the reader will remember, the Catholic Church was yet divided into two hostile sections. Even after the abrogation of the too famous Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which had caused the schism, the strife between the jurors and the non-jurors had continued with equal ardor. The former had retained their semi-Presbyterian organization, the latter had redoubled their attachment to the Pope. This animosity shall not prevent us from doing justice to the glorious part which both clerical parties took in the revival of faith in France. In the ardor of their differences they were unable to appreciate and esteem each other; but it is the prerogative of history to overlook these sad misunderstandings, which separated and alienated noble hearts. The jurors were wrong in regarding their refractory brethren as wholly illiberal and royalist, and in overlooking their pious courage; while the non-jurors were unjust in refusing to recognize the pure and sincere zeal with which their opponents labored for the restoration of worship in France. It would seem that the common persecution they suffered during the Reign of Terror should have reconciled them; but this was not the case; their dissensions continued even on the galleys and in the prisons. It is our duty now to bring them together, and extend to both parties an equal respect for their heroic devotion to the service of religion. Others may ransack the tombs and revive posthumous calumnies; for our part, at this distance of time, we have only applause for their equally generous, equally diverse, efforts to restore to France that God whom she for a time had seemed to abandon, but whom she found her-

self unable to dispense with. In fact, no great nation can definitively abjure religious ideas; the madness which, for a moment, may lead thereto, is but the crisis of a fever which would bring death if it lingered any length of time. Moreover, the effort itself to destroy religion only increases its strength. Like the phenix, it rises in renewed youth out of its own ashes.

A philosophy hostile to Christianity attempted to turn to its own profit the revival of religious sentiments, but gained for its pains only the shame of failure. It attempted to establish a worship which should rival the ancient religion, but succeeded only in giving a pitiable comedy, which promptly vanished in the presence of empty benches and its own inanity. The complete check of Theophilanthropy demonstrates, practically and conclusively, the powerlessness of a belief without mysteries and dogmas, to found a religion. The worst mythologies of Asia have succeeded in uniting whole nations, for the reason that, notwithstanding their impure and bloody legends, they assumed to speak in the name of Divinity, and enjoyed in times of ignorance the prestige of revelations from Heaven. They satisfied, though in a very perverted manner, the natural and indestructible thirst of the human heart for direct supernatural communication with God. Hence their success. But a religion which is only a cold, theoretical system, a pure creature of the reason, is fit only to remain in that chilly sphere. Every attempt to warm it into life miserably fails. While the ardent apologists of the tenth-day festivals began anew underhandedly the shameful work of Hébert and Chaumette, the Theophilanthropists

attempted in a timid manner to resuscitate the worship of the Supreme Being, which had been interrupted by the fall of Robespierre; the former were the offspring of Diderot and Helvetius, the latter, of Rousseau and Robespierre. It is well known how numerous were the Deists at this time in France, England, and Germany. But it is only amid the confusion and fever of a revolution, when all creeds seem to be overthrown, that such an attempt would be made as that of substituting for Christianity the religion of the *Contrat Social*.

An attempt to prepare the public mind for the new religion was made by a free use of the press. The advantages of a worship wholly free from superstition, and consisting simply in the adoration of God and the practice of virtue, were abundantly set forth. It was at the close of the year 1796 that the passage from theory to practice took place. Among the five heads of families who united to establish the new religion was Haüy, a brother of the famous chemist, director of the asylum for the blind. A former chapel which was connected with the institution, served for the celebration of the first public worship. Soon they obtained permission from the government, which was very partial to the sect, to share with the Catholic priests the use of the churches, founding their claim on the ground that as the Constitution was not more favorable to one religion than to another, the churches, being public edifices, should belong equally to all opinions. The Theophilanthropists obtained thus the enjoyment of twelve churches, among which was the cathedral. The difficult task was, not to obtain, but to fill them. They,

therefore, strove to give to their worship all the attraction of which it was capable. They engraved on the walls of the temples choice maxims of natural morality from all schools of philosophy and from all religions. An altar was erected in the center of the edifice, and upon it were placed, sometimes flowers, and sometimes fruit, according to the season. But these pastoral rites were intermingled with grander solemnities. Infants were dedicated to the Supreme Being. At marriage the affianced were bound together by garlands of flowers, whose extremities were held by their relatives and friends. At Bourges it was contrived that during the nuptial ceremony two doves should be made to appear at the altar, a touching symbol of conjugal affection. At the obsequies of a Theophilanthropist, a flower was suspended from the funeral urn. But the essential part of the new worship was the reading and the discourse. The preacher was required to be married or a widower; but in addition to this guarantee of maturity, his discourses were subjected before delivery to the censorship of a committee. The new order of priests delivered their messages *extempore* or by reading. These consisted of homilies on tolerance, filial piety, probity in commerce, and similar subjects. Touching funeral eulogies of eminent citizens were a part of the programme. That the priests might have a pleasing aspect they were clothed in a white robe with a violet girdle. This flattering appearance not sufficing to redeem the monotony of their discourses, they were intermingled with hymns to the seasons and virtues. Fine opera singers were hired, whose voices might attract the multitude. When

the money failed, the members of the sect undertook the singing themselves, but their devotion was poorly rewarded, for they discovered by the empty seats that the audiences had come to hear the fine voices, and not for the edifying homilies. Theophilanthropy lived only from the patronage of the government. La Reveillière Lepaux, the Director, was its most useful adherent, and gained for it a certain number and prestige; for apostles who are in power are always sure to succeed in gaining proselytes. If the Directory insisted with so much earnestness on the outward observance of the tenth days, it was in part to shackle the liberty of Catholicism to the profit of the new religion. The latter, however, after having transferred its worship to the tenth days found itself compelled to return to the Sabbath, so strong was the force of habit among the people. The agents of the government aided the sect with all their influence. The Minister of the Interior pushed his zeal so far, as to distribute throughout the country at government expense the *Manual of the Theophilanthropists*. Pecuniary aid was also given to pay the orators, and to indemnify the public for the ennui of listening to them. Societies were established in and about Paris, at Bourges and Poitiers. In Yonne they furnished an intolerant administration, a pretext for persecuting the Catholics. But neither the favors of power nor the prestige which noted personages, such as Groupil de Prefeln, Julien of Toulouse, and Bernardin de St. Pierre, brought to the sect, sufficed to prevent this ridiculous religion from falling into neglect and abandonment. The order of the Consuls, of October,

1802, which closed the temples to the Theophilanthropists, did them the signal service of saving their worship from dying of mere inanition. It was fitting that a worship which had lived only by the smiles of power should fall by its disfavor. It had quieted and satisfied neither the ancient convictions nor the new passions. Its pastoral sentimentalism was incapable of awakening the religious curiosity of France, even when one of her chief magistrates had accepted the pastoral staff of the white-robed and violet-girded priests, which, however, was, after all, a singular way of appealing for favor to the land of Voltaire and Beaumarchais. It was the ancient religion, which the demagogues had vainly believed they had destroyed, that arose and defeated these efforts of its enemies. In losing its civil power and wealth, and in suffering, instead of inflicting, persecution, it arose and purified itself, and no longer gave just occasion for those terrible charges of guilt which in its prosperous days had so fatally shaken it.

We have seen that the revival of religion at the close of the last century was promoted by the efforts of the refractory as well as of the juring clergy. How great had continued to be the influence of the former not only in the South and West, where they were in the majority, but also in the great cities, and particularly in Paris, is perfectly evident from the multiplicity and barbarity of the measures that had been taken against them. They ceased not, however, to celebrate the sacred rites, often in a barn or a garret. Nothing was better fitted to animate their zeal than these dangers and difficulties. A thousand ingenious methods had

been contrived for conveying to the victims of the Terrorists the last consolations of religion. How often has a secret, furtively-exchanged sign from a disguised priest suddenly appearing at a window or along the passage of the death-car, conveyed to the victims the blessings of the Church! It would be false to attribute to political passions this attachment of the people for the refractory clergy. It is certain that it was shared by sincere adherents of the Revolution. The letters of Charlotte Corday, recently published by Casimir Perrier, reveal in this republican heroine a lively repugnance to the Constitutional Clergy. The political organization received by the latter from the revolutionists might well have excited grave religious scruples. It is, therefore, not astonishing that notwithstanding their unfortunate connivance at the counter-revolution, the refractory clergy retained an immense influence in the nation. This fact became visible as soon as any measure of liberty of conscience was guaranteed. Though still much trammelled, they re-established the ancient worship wherever it was at all practicable, and especially in the large cities. They acted strictly independently of the Constitutional Clergy, kept up against them a vigorous controversy, and obtained from their ranks many recantations. "The extraordinary earnestness," read we in a journal of the day, published by this party, "manifested by the faithful to profit by our recovered liberty—the holy joy they manifested, lightly esteeming the lack of exterior pomp in our worship, and regarding the inward glory as its chief ornament,—every thing proves how vital was the power of religion

in the hearts. The churches reopened, are very simple in their decoration; their brightest luster comes from the piety of those who fill them." At Paris the re-establishment of the non-jurors' worship encountered scarcely any obstacle. At Easter, 1796, the attendance on their churches was considerable, and at the same time next year still larger. About thirty churches and several oratories were given over to this recently persecuted worship. The Church of St. Roch was recovered in May, 1797. "Men, women, children, poor and rich, turned workmen, and the church quickly arose from its ruins." The Bishop of St. Papoul consecrated seventy priests. Thus the refractory Church restored itself spontaneously in open republic without the aid of Bonaparte. In the provinces it obtained equally great successes, though it met also serious opposition. At Versailles and Marseilles riots occurred, and many priests were thrown into prison. At Limoges the incarcerated priests were confined in solitude, and subjected to every sort of ill-treatment. Women were imprisoned for having heard mass. The tribunal of Versailles concluded to liberate the arrested priests, so fully were they found to enjoy the esteem of the population. Their prison had become a temple, so many were the people that flocked to it. In one place a priest was snatched from the altar at which he was officiating, but the populace rescued him. At Bolbec military measures were taken to prevent the midnight mass, but the body of troops sent to stop the service were so affected by it as to change their purpose, and take part in it with great reverence. Violence could not check the current of

public opinion, which pronounced itself continually with greater emphasis in favor of liberty of conscience. To this current the discourses of Camille Jordan, Royer Collard, and Portalis,* greatly added. But the Directory and the Jacobins strove all the more to check it. The following order, in regard to the refractory priests, was sent to the national Commissioners in June, 1796: "Wear out their patience, envelop them in your surveillance, disquiet them by day, and trouble them by night." Nevertheless had it not been for the Directory's *coup d'état* of September, 1797, the ancient Church would have been reorganized along-side of the Constitutional Churches, throughout the land. This turned back for awhile the happy religious movement. Barbarous decrees were launched forth, and many priests banished; but still the persecuted worship was held in secret, and counted its adherents by multitudes. If, instead of having been reorganized by Bonaparte after the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, (November, 1799,) the nation had been permitted to enjoy true liberty, there would have sprung up from her persecution and sufferings a self-regenerated and glorious Church. She had already erected her altars throughout the land; it was of liberty only, and not of forced governmental reorganization, that she had need. The escaped priests, who had lived of the charities of the English or of the Pope, would doubtless have returned in large numbers, and with many prejudices. The latter, however, would have soon died away under the benign influence of toleration. Of means for defraying the non-jurors' worship, there

* See Appendix, note 41.

was no scarcity, and had peace and any degree of prosperity returned, there would have resulted under the smiles of liberty a flourishing and well-disciplined Church.

And surely the enjoyment of liberty could not have been otherwise than favorable to the new, or Constitutional Church—to that one which, while holding fast to Catholic orthodoxy, had cheerfully sided with the cause of freedom. True, she had many wounds to heal, for in the days of trial she had suffered from apostasies. While enjoying the smiles of government patronage she had been disgraced by numerous bad priests, but the salutary ordeal of persecution had freed her from the hypocrites. Soon after the fall of Robespierre, when a measure of liberty was allowed, she engaged earnestly in the work of repairing her losses. The man who was especially active in this holy work was Gregory, the Deputy to the Constituent Assembly and to the Convention, and Bishop of Blois. He has been calumniated and outraged; the most vile malice pursued him even to his death-bed. We admit that he sometimes pushed his love of free institutions to an excess unbecoming a priest, or even a true liberal; but, to be just, we must make allowance for the circumstances. His clerical opponents were not less extreme. One may charge Gregory with unfortunate words, but never with a base or unjust action. He was pure of the blood of the King, though he carried too far his indulgence for his unjust judges. He never lost an opportunity of advocating liberty of conscience for his bitterest adversaries. He was always a champion of right and justice, whether

it was in pleading the cause of the slaves, of the Jews, or of his dissenting brethren of the clergy. His noble attitude on the day of the abjuration in the darkest hours of terror, would alone suffice to conciliate for him universal respect. His indefatigable zeal to reorganize the Constitutional Church merits equal admiration. Aided by several colleagues, and especially by Lecoq, a wise, moderate, and eloquent man, Gregory accomplished in a short time a truly important work. He combined firmness with wisdom; and no one has ever done more in France to reconcile religion and liberty.

The writings of Gregory contain a vivid description of the deplorable state into which religion had fallen during the Reign of Terror. The sufferings endured, were trifling in comparison with the disgrace of the apostasies. Most of the Churches had lost their Bishop, either by death or exile. The people had almost lost the habit of worship. But scarcely had any degree of liberty been allowed, when Gregory convoked at Paris, May 15th, 1795, a number of Bishops. These men in union published two encyclical letters, designed to obviate various disorders, set aside the unworthy priests, and provisionally organize the Church. In one of the letters these pious Bishops say, "Let those to whom God has given grace to remain faithful in the midst of the terrors of death, rejoice to have been worthy to suffer something for Jesus Christ. We Bishops especially, pastors of souls, are responsible to God, to the Church, and to posterity for our efforts to revive the faith." Elsewhere in this document, which is worthy of the first ages of the Church, we read, "Let the Pastors

show their zeal to proclaim Jesus Christ; let them exhort the faithful to a careful study of the New Testament; let them by their conduct render their ministry respected." The Bishops caused to be translated the fine treatise of St. Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, which seemed to have been written for the exigencies of that very time. Multitudes of answers were sent to the circulars, and the faithful Bishops and priests joined hands in the work of raising up the Church. A journal for mutual communication was established, and Gregory conceived the happy thought of establishing a society of Christian philosophy for the purpose of circulating works in defense of religion. In most of the cities the people flocked to the services with unprecedented ardor. The temples did not suffice to contain them. There seemed to be a desire to prolong indefinitely the acts of devotion, and tears filled the eyes of all. At Sens all labors ceased, and the Church of St. Peter was crowded with prostrate penitents bewailing their past unfaithfulness. One could have witnessed scenes as full of pathos as those which took place at Jerusalem when the Jews, on returning from exile, were able again to worship the God of their fathers in their own land. The Bishops, by their circulars, favored and directed the good movement. "Having no longer any political connections," so wrote Gregory to his colleagues, "you will not be tempted to stay yourself on the arm of flesh. God alone will be your strength. The splendor of the precious metals will no longer dazzle in our temples. Credulous simplicity will no longer confound with true piety that which too often was only its poison. Let

religion revive among us; let it revive pure as it came from the hands of Christ. We are placed as it were again at the origin of the Church." "We declare," wrote Bishop Lecoz, "that being subjects of a kingdom not of this world, we will not dispute for temporal interests. Christianity does not meddle with governments; it conflicts with none, and lives peaceably under all." This was the spirit that animated the Constitutional Church as revived by Gregory and his colleagues. Unconnected with the State, it was yet warmly patriotic, and spontaneously celebrated the victories of the republic. In honor of the peace established after the battle of Marengo more than thirty thousand persons attended the *Te Deum* which was sung at Notre Dame. This Church made no concessions to the prejudices of the day, and was marked by great moral strictness. Its firm attachment to the great doctrines of Christianity is unquestionable.

It is true, it was very free from an Ultramontane spirit, and it would have seen without displeasure the final overthrow of the temporal power of the Papacy, as appears from the following extract from the official journal in 1798: "The destiny of religion has for a long while been involved in all the passions which reign in courts. Christianity is henceforth to shine in its own glory, and since the Popes are happily to be nothing more than spiritual Bishops, the ministers of religion will be more sure than ever of attaching to them irrevocably the hearts of the nations." The new Church, though extremely Gallican in principles, never for a moment broke its communion with the chief of Catholi-

cism, nor ceased to pray the Holy Father to render peace to the Church by avoiding radical measures. Not that it had not felt a true spirit of reform, for it aspired to develop in its bosom a genuine piety which should lay less stress on forms than on substance, on symbols than on reality. Gregory strove to put a stop to superstitious pilgrimages, saying that it was "less praiseworthy to have visited Jerusalem than to have well lived at Jerusalem." He strove likewise to check the veneration of relics. It was very natural that at this time an effort should be made to render more strict and solemn the admission of the young to the first communion. It was decided to surround this rite with better guarantees, and to prepare for it by solid instruction. Gregory desired that the heads of families should daily use prayers in French, in their homes. He labored to multiply the means of instruction, founding many popular libraries. Thus was manifested an earnest protest against formalism, that plague of modern Christianity. The Bishops were indefatigable in their labors. Gregory had preached within a short space of time fifty episcopal sermons, and given confirmation to forty-five thousand persons, in the bounds of his own diocese. These were truly apostolical labors, and they were abundantly rewarded. We have the best of evidence for the fact, that within three years worship had been re-established in forty thousand communities in France. True, the ancient splendor was lacking. Many of the ministers lived in the greatest poverty. More than one endured privations similar to those of that aged priest who was found one day in his garret mending his black hose with

white thread. In an official letter to the people the Bishop of Blois said, "The disasters and evils which weigh down your Pastors force us to say to you, as St. Paul to the Galatians, 'Let him who is taught give to him who teaches.' But whatever may be the fruits of your thankfulness to those venerable Pastors who have lost and suffered all things for Jesus Christ, they, as we, will continue to hold to you the language of the Apostle to the Thessalonians, 'Such is our love for you that we desire not only to preach to you the Gospel, but also to give our lives for you, for you are very dear to us.'" This branch of the Church had expressly prohibited itself from receiving money for special services, prayers, blessings, and the mass, and confided entirely in the enlightened liberality of the faithful. And its confidence was rewarded, for though the Church suffered much at first, yet in the end the voluntary gifts proved sufficient. This ministry of labor and poverty rejoiced the souls of those who shared it. One priest, almost seventy years old, declared that in this work of toil and sacrifice he had as it were renewed his youth. To these trials of poverty are to be added the severer ones resulting from the intolerance of the petty local magistrates. Early in the Revolution one of the departments made the following decree: "Whereas there is nothing more impolitic and antisocial than the tolerance of any worship whatever, be it therefore decreed that all private and public signs of worship shall disappear." After the fall of Robespierre such an open outrage was no longer possible, though in many places the spirit of intolerance remained the same. In many provinces the

law of the tenth-day festivals was the occasion of great suffering to the Catholics. In Eure the Commissioner of the Directory expressed the will of the government thus: "All ministers are invited to transfer their festivals and religious services to the tenth days. For a republican this invitation is an order; to act otherwise would be an ill-timed return toward Ultramontanism, and a check to the progress of reason. Instead of killing fanaticism, you would give it new life. You would dig for the nation a gulf into which you yourselves would fall." This was the basest violation of conscience, and could not, therefore, reach its object. A priest in Yonne made the following noble response: "I cannot obey the invitation to transfer the Sabbath to the tenth days. As minister of the Catholic religion, I demand for it the free exercise which is guaranteed by the Constitution. As citizen, I demand of the magistrates of the people to be maintained in the enjoyment of my right." The obligation to share the churches with the Theophilanthropists was another sore trial. It is necessary to take into account all these, and many other obstacles, in order to arrive at a just appreciation of the progress which religion made under the auspices of devoted men in these troublous times. How much greater would have been the result had the Church been in the enjoyment of unrestricted liberty!

It is sometimes thought that the independency of the Church on the State is incompatible with order in its organization. This is abundantly refuted by the two National Councils which assembled at Paris in 1797 and 1801. More respectable assemblies were never held in

Christendom. They were not made up of opulent prelates; it was at the price of the severest sacrifices that most of the members had made the journey. They were men who had borne the heat of the day, and endured bitter persecutions. They were exposed to the hatred of the adherents of the ancient *régime* because of their liberal patriotism, and to the outrages of the fanatics of the new, because of their unconquerable attachment to the faith of their fathers.

Though it is not our business to write the history of these two Councils, we may, however, refer to the results. The first was convoked at Paris by the Bishops in 1797, and had been preceded by regular elections in the provincial synods. It was opened in Notre Dame in August by a sermon by Lecoz. The pious Bishop expressed his joy at the spectacle of the recently proscribed religion rising, like Christ, from its tomb. "Who of you," said he, "would have dared to indulge in the faintest expectation that in a little time one would see united in this holy place these venerable Bishops, these pious Pastors, all these intrepid priests who, lately the victims of a violent tempest, and the objects of a most horrible proscription, were wandering from cavern to cavern, or pining in dark and sickly prisons, and weeping, not over their captivity, not over the burden of their chains, but over the desolating cessation of worship?" Then, painting the joy that had been manifested throughout the country on the revival of worship, he closed with a touching exhortation to harmonious action, addressed to the refractory clergy. Among the first acts of the Council was the sending of

two letters, one to the Pope, and the other to the non-juring clergy, urging both to the necessity of conciliatory co-operation. It showed itself very moderate in its measures, and generously liberal toward all its opponents. It desired to introduce prayers in the vulgar tongue in the reorganized Church, and took stringent measures for introducing and securing strict morals both in the clergy and in the membership.

The second Council was opened on the 29th of June, 1801, in the presence of a vast multitude. The session, however, which was intended to complete the work of Church reorganization in France, had scarcely begun, when it was compelled to dissolve itself on the order of the First Consul, who had just concluded a Concordat with the Pope. This was an act of simple tyranny. The time had come when Bonaparte desired to prevent all freedom of speech both in Church and State. We will see, in a subsequent chapter, by what acts of dictatorial domination the pacification which this Council was designed to complete, was, I will not say, realized, but forcibly imposed. We will here merely state that on the eve of this Concordat the Constitutional Church was in full opening prosperity, and that it owed, most assuredly, its increasing influence to its independency of the State. The venerable President of the first Council spoke as follows, in his call for the second: "Some of you are alarmed that the Church has been despoiled of its property. For this let us rather adore Divine Providence. For a long time the wicked have dared to assert that the religion of Christ was supported only by the vast possessions of its ministers. For a

long time, also, the Church herself has groaned to see entering into her sanctuary men who seemed to be influenced only by her wealth. The Lord has desired by a single stroke to stop both the blasphemies of the unbelieving and the scandalous cupidity of his ministers. He has desired to perpetuate, without the influence or aid of wealth, a religion which was founded without it. When Christ called the twelve, to what was it that he called them? Wealth and honors? No; but to labor, pain, and self-denial; and to crosses, for their recompense. If then we, the ministers of Christ, are reduced to this apostolical condition, should we murmur? Ah, let us rather rejoice, and bless this admirable providence. The Lord has re-established the evangelical poverty of his ministers." Who will not recognize in this noble language, an echo of the primitive times, when the moral power of the Church was measured by her political and pecuniary insignificance?

The Protestant Churches had participated in all the fluctuations of religious liberty. After having obtained from the Constituent Assembly, all possible reparation for the great act of cruel oppression which Louis XIV. had inflicted upon them, they enjoyed the privilege of public worship as long as the right of conscience was respected. Protestantism was not regarded as favorable to the ancient *régime*, and encountered no prejudices on the part of the first revolutionists. With the exception of a few large cities, as Montauban and Nimes, the Protestants consisted, in good part, not of the peasantry, but of that liberal and energetic citizen-class which desired to found in France, not the demagogy of the Ter-

rorists, but the reign of true liberty. Barnave had represented and nobly served them in the Constituent Assembly. Rabaut St. Etienne had also acted there an equally honorable though less brilliant part. In the Convention, the young Pastor Lasource had stood among the first ranks of the Girondists, and had perished on the scaffold with Rabaut. Both in Alsace and in Gard the interests of Protestantism had largely suffered during the delirium of the Revolution. There is never a large body of men which does not include a few violent or ignoble individuals who hide their true qualities in times of peace, but who discover themselves when the hour of trial arrives. It is not, therefore, astonishing that Protestantism as well as Catholicism had to mourn over shameful defections and apostasies. It had lost much of the fervor which had once inspired it with a noble heroism. The pale and cold Deism which had invaded England and Germany began to affect it. Finding sympathy and tolerance only in the camp of the philosophers, it had to some extent yielded to their influence. The ancient belief of course remained, but it had been shaken. Many a heart once full of ardent faith, was filled with revolutionary passions. Matthew Dumas, in his mission of pacification, at the time of the troubles at Toulouse and Montauban in 1790, reports that he found not a little hinderance to his work in several violent Protestants. He mentions in particular a preacher at Toulouse, Jean Bon St. André, afterward a fanatical Terrorist member of the Convention, who responded thus to his prudent counsel: "It is now more than a hundred years that we have been waiting the

hour of vengeance." A man like this had already renounced the spirit of a religion which commands to forgive one's enemies. It was a colleague of him, Julien, who seconded Bishop Gobel on the infamous day of the public apostasies. And the example was not without imitators. The Protestant Church of Paris had freely sympathized with the Revolution. The Legislative Assembly had attended, in a body, a solemn service of thanksgiving held in his church by the Pastor Marron. Unfortunately, this Church did not remain faithful during the time of the orgies of Hébert and Chaumette; the sacerdotal cups, as well as the baptismal vases, were carried to the mint in the name of the Church officers. Thanks to God, these disgraces were neither many nor lasting. The majority of the clergy remained firm in the faith. Simple peasants often distinguished themselves by their fidelity. Rabaut the Younger cites a touching example. In Gard an aged cultivator had been thrown into prison for having ceased his labor on the Sabbath. The next Sabbath he presented himself in Sunday attire to the authorities, and asked them to imprison him again, saying that he could not work on that day. During the period between the establishment of the Directory and its overthrow by Bonaparte the Protestant Churches were in a state of reconstruction. They shared in the misfortunes of the times, but a revival of faith would have soon placed them in prosperity. It was surely not the Concordat which recalled them to life, for this served only to confine them in galling bonds. Protestantism was erect and active, as well as Catholicism, before the hour when Napoleon conde-

scended to meddle with religion only to put it into chains.

It seems to us that the facts of this chapter sufficiently refute the oft-repeated assertion, that it was the First Consul who raised the altars out of the dust into which they had been cast by the revolutionary infidels. The Bishops of the Gallican Church, in their assembly at Paris in 1799, seem to have foreseen this falsification of history, so obstinately maintained by sycophantic and inveterate prejudice, when they inserted these emphatic words in their circular letter: "*There is no more religion!* Let us efface this blasphemy." And it is in fact a blasphemy to make religion depend on politics, and falsely to attribute its revival to a happy calculation of reviving despotism.

BOOK FOURTH.

THE CONCORDAT.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION FOR THE CONCORDAT.

WHATEVER by its greatness transcends the ordinary standards of men and things is usually magnified still further, and as it were transfigured, by the imagination of the public; in respect to such phenomena the legend is almost contemporary with history. Such is the case with that marvelous epoch of our history which saw rise so suddenly out of the whirlpool of revolution a *ré-gime* of power and order, encircled at its very dawn with that radiant halo of military glory which is so dear to the French. From the very start to the final grand catastrophe of this incomparable reign which includes in itself all successes and all reverses, every thing tended to give it an ideal character, and to assimilate it to a sublime classic tragedy. In admiring what was great, however, we run into danger of excusing what was fatal, on the ground that punishment followed closely upon the faults, and that that which was but transitory should not be severely judged. In this we forget that the spirit of a reign may survive it, and that nothing is

more pernicious for a nation than a false ideal, than blind admirations which corrupt the moral sense and pervert history. The memory of Napoleon has too long floated between the indiscriminating extremes of adoration and hate—a proof that the just judgment is not yet attained. Idolatrous worshipers give occasion for fanatical enemies. The time has come for an equitable appreciation. We should not wait for disasters before denouncing wrongs, but rather signalize in the very start, in the midst of the splendid triumphs of this extraordinary man, the shadow which finally obscured every thing, namely, that insolent contempt of every superior principle, of all right, of all liberty. The partial outbreaks of despotism, however odious sometimes, are yet infinitely less grave than the active genius which inspires them. Now, never has this genius appeared more complete, more resolute, than in the person of the young general who overthrew the Directory by the *coup d'état* of Brumaire. This will appear clearly from the sketch which we propose to draw of his policy in matters of religion.

Ordinarily the period of the Consulate from November 9th, 1799, to May 18th, 1804, is set apart for special praise, because of the wisdom, patriotism, and reparative power which characterized it. Prominent among the acts of this period which have been highly lauded, is the Concordat which the First Consul made with the Pope. Both from this general appreciation of the period of the Consulate, and from the particular estimation of this special act, we beg leave to dissent. It is not a fact that the Consulate was truly reparative; it

prepared the way for all that followed; and if arbitrary power was not yet fully established, it is because the despot was waiting for the fruit to ripen before plucking it; but, like a skillful cultivator, he spared no pains to bring about this desired result. If by a reparative government is meant, a government which, putting a stop to tyranny, makes to be felt anew the curb of law, represses by a prompt and well-organized police the greatest of disorders, gives security to private individuals, restores prosperity to the finances, and in a word, gives to the country, with internal tranquillity, a peace crowned with the glory of a Marengo, we are ready to accord this praise to the Consulate. We understand very well that France, wearied and humiliated under the Directory, could feel deep and ardent thankfulness for these benefits, and overlook the price at which they were bought; could so ardently feel the necessity of social order and security as to accept with enthusiasm a despotism which was absolute from the very start. In fact, during this whole period the word republic was nothing more than an empty sound, one of those cunning deceptions of which Augustus made so skillful a use. To escape from revolutionary agitation was the deep, universal desire.

The new power satisfied perfectly this desire, though in a superficial and precarious way. It is at this point that it was not reparative; for military despotism substituted for anarchy is revolution still, with all its worst features, with its predilections and passions, all the more dangerous as they meet with no restraint to their ready indulgence. It is anarchy from above in the place of the anarchy of the masses; it is the principle of disorder in

the central force, which, because of the order that rules in the subordinate parts of the administrative machine, renders it so much the more easy for the errors or crimes of the chief of the State to be executed with a remorseless and irremediable facility. I know of no more perilous combination than arbitrariness in the directing chief, and regularity in the subordinate instruments. Now this was precisely the politics of the Consulate, as it was afterward the spirit of the Empire. The results of the reign of Napoleon suffice to convince us that there is no truly reparative *régime* but that of liberty, that is to say, the *régime* of law, under the control of the real representatives of the people. I call reparative the government of a William of Orange, or the presidency of a Washington, because these great men founded society on the respect for right, and gave to it for safeguard a well-regulated liberty, that is, a liberty which regulates itself; on the contrary, I call anarchical and destructive every *régime* of mere good pleasure, whether it be democratic, aristocratic, republican, or monarchical; and I regard it all the more dangerous in proportion as it has more cunningly organized the country it controls. Remorseless facts demonstrate these principles. France, conquered and humiliated so low as to treat with the enemy in her own capital, is a cruel and bloody lesson for those who separate order and peace from liberty, and who imagine that great military exploits suffice to regenerate and strengthen a nation. I do not deny that the government of Napoleon accepted and consecrated some of the precious conquests of the Revolution; it firmly maintained law

for all ranks and sects, the admission of all classes to the public service, the abolition of religious privileges, and equality as far as it could exist without liberty. But for liberty it had no tolerance whatever. It is, therefore, a mockery to describe the government of Napoleon as a representative of the principles of 1789. The First Consul has clearly enough explained himself on this head. At the time of the vote giving him the Consulate for life, Lafayette and La Tour Maubourg placed their votes on the condition that the liberty of the press should be guaranteed. "Judge from that," said Napoleon to one of his confidants, "how much is to be expected from those men who are always making a hobby of the metaphysics of 1789. Liberty of the press!" An ironical smile expressed well the extent of his respect for this great liberty.

The Consular Constitution is the masterpiece of that political school which puts the arbitrary at the head, and a cunning organization in the body, of the government, substituting for the parliament which controls, an administration which executes and gives to the will of the sovereign, not a counterpoise which checks, but a marvelous organism for the instantaneous realization of its volitions. A guiding head and strong, docile arms, a single will and supple instruments, such were the essence of the system. In the main this constitution was the work of Sieyès. It placed all real power in the hands of the executive chief, and based the government on the merest mockery of popular elections. It put a stop to all free parliamentary discussion, and the Council of the executive was powerless to do any thing but give

advice. But advice was of little avail. What was needed was not so much advice as a real limitation of the executive volition. As it was, the only man in France who enjoyed full freedom was he who had in his hands also absolute power. From this head every thing proceeded, and to him every thing returned. It would have been better not to interpose between him and the country that phantom of national representation which served only to give an appearance of legality to his merest caprices. The Revolution had given him a country entirely dissolved into its simplest elements, and without those great corporate bodies which always impose some check on despotism. The part of the Consular system most highly lauded is doubtless that which organized the internal administration, but it was precisely this which served so efficaciously to enslave the nation. The executive chief, by means of his prefects, sub-prefects, and mayors, was present in every part of the nation. This system made all the resources of the circumference converge to the center, and bore back from the center the decisions of sovereign power, thus establishing the most perfect order in servitude. The stroke of a single hand at the center was instantly felt in all the ramifications of the administrative organism. The wise management of the treasury would have been a signal benefit, had it in some degree been left in the control of the nation; but as it was, it became an occasion of evil by putting into the hands of an irresponsible master the means of daring every thing. The judicature was wisely organized, though it was powerless against absolutism. In fine, France possessed in this

system of centralization without counterpoise the most perfect organization of despotism which ever existed, a system which still continues to be the most formidable obstacle to a return to liberty. The Civil Code constitutes one of the brightest glories of this epoch, but this wise digest would have lost nothing in value had it given better guarantees to personal liberty. It is infected with the vice of the government. When taken in connection with the criminal code it furnished many resources to despotism.

From the beginning of the Consulate it was easy to foresee to what extremes the intoxication of absolute power would lead the ambitious chief. After the failure of an attempt at assassination, he declared in open State Council that he would put himself above the law in order to strike a grand blow at the Jacobins, though he knew perfectly that they had nothing to do with the conspiracy, saying in self-justification that royalist intrigues were a mere skin-disease, whereas the Jacobin spirit was an internal, deep-seated malady, which needed a radical cure. To those who opposed to these iniquitous measures the principles of simple justice, he exclaimed bluntly, "The metaphysicians are a class of men to whom we owe all our evils! I must treat this matter as a statesman." And he dared to say this in the hall where laws were made! Thus we find transmitted from the ancient *régime* to the Terrorists, and from the Terrorists to Bonaparte, this pernicious doctrine of public safety; which is nothing more nor less than the will of the stronger determined on accomplishing his own good pleasure. This malady of the interior

which the First Consul wished to cure, had never offered a worse phase than that of sacrificing eternal right to the passions of the moment, and had presented few more criminal manifestations than that armed abduction and murder in March, 1804, of Condé, the Duc d'Enghien, which was so coolly accomplished, and afterward, more coolly still, discussed and justified as an excellent measure for deterring the enemies of the new power. It was very fortunate that Bonaparte was not cruel by nature, for the nation had no other guarantee than his temperament. Every treaty which he signed was precarious. He made it for the moment for the sake of convenience, and when it was his pleasure he broke it. He was the genius of war, and the blood and treasure of France were at his disposal. For a man like Napoleon, the temptation to use to excess his power was almost irresistible. And his counselors seconded his natural proclivity. The spirit of the Consular government is well expressed in this saying of its chief, "There must be no opposition."

It is certain that from the day of the entrance of the First Consul into the Tuileries, he cherished only a single thought—to consolidate and perpetuate his absolute authority. The memoirs of the times abound in sarcastic allusions at the progress of the political comedy. Nothing could be more bungling than the first essays at a princely court at Malmaison and St. Cloud. Novice courtiers made sorry attempts at the toilet of dukes or counts. The coarse language of the Clubs contrasted sadly with fawning flatteries from the same mouth. On his return from a triumphal tour in

Belgium and Normandy, the First Consul remarked to his brother, "I have been able to learn all the abjectness of the French, and to assure myself that I can obtain from their servility all that it may please me to ask." His first demands, however, exceeded proper bounds. Jealous of personal power, he was unwilling even to found a dynasty, so that he might be perfectly free to transmit his crown to whomever he should please, and that there might not be a single regulation for the future before which he should have to yield. This determination raised the most violent storms in his family, and made him to be cursed in wrath by gentle and pacific men like his brother Joseph. These sad scenes are reproduced in the curious memoirs of Miot de Melitto. They enable us to understand the following sad words of the author, which, moreover, are but a true echo of the sentiments of many eminent men of that day: "What a sad end for that Revolution which was begun with such an enthusiasm for liberty, such a generous patriotism! What! so much blood shed on the battlefield and on the scaffold, so many fortunes destroyed, so many sacrifices of all that man holds dear, shall these only end in giving us a change of masters, in substituting a family unknown ten years ago, and which was scarcely French at the opening of the Revolution, in the place of the dynasty which has ruled over France for eight centuries! Is, then, our condition so miserable that we have no refuge but in despotism? Have we no resource against our evils but in giving to the Bonapartes every thing, without receiving any guarantee in return?" And what adds special force to these

words is, that they were written by a Counselor of State.

It was of importance for our purpose to describe the political situation which gave birth to the Concordat. It, as well as all the other measures of this epoch, was the offspring of personal ambition, and simply formed a part of that scheme of reaction and monarchical restoration which was so deeply conceived, and so energetically executed, by General Bonaparte. Lafayette expressed its true character the day he addressed to the First Consul, in allusion to his negotiations with the Pope, this playful remark: "You desire to get the little phial broken upon your head." "We shall see, we shall see," replied Bonaparte. Bourrienne, in relating this anecdote, adds: "Such was the real origin of the Concordat." And this can scarcely be doubted, when we consider the religious opinions of the First Consul, as gathered from his correspondence and from his occasional blunt remarks, whether in privacy or in open council. Religion is always regarded by him as an instrument of government, a means of controlling and winning the masses. He assigns to himself the first place in that domain which belongs to God alone. We cannot certainly accuse him of Atheism; his strong intelligence rejected the absurdity of supposing a world so marvelous as ours to be the offspring of chance. "It is the privilege of intelligence," says well the historian Thiers, "to recognize marks of intelligence in the universe; and a great mind is more capable than a narrow one of seeing God in his works." Moreover, Atheism is the enemy of order, subordination, and obedience in

the State as well as in the Church, and for this reason it could not fail to displease the intensely-governmental genius of Napoleon. Open rebellion against the Sovereign of the skies would have been a bad social example. The Consul was, therefore, sincere whenever he spoke of the Divine Majesty as it is revealed in the spectacle of creation, or in that starry heaven which, on one occasion, he pointed out to Monge with unfeigned emotion. But more than this we must not demand of the man of war and politics. This religious sentiment, which, vague as it was, made itself felt in his soul, he determined to make use of, not so much in satisfying it, as in making it contribute to his personal advancement. Now this was the surest way of misconceiving and violating it. Whenever religion is viewed not as the supreme end, but as a means of realizing temporal or personal ends, it is misconceived in its very essence. We love to believe that on the rock of St. Helena a divine ray penetrated the tormented heart of the great captive; but it is certain that up to the day of his fall, he considered religion only in its relations to his politics, and that he gave it his protection or disfavor according as he found it more useful to his interests. In religion, as in every thing else, he saw only himself, and himself alone. Before, as well as after, the Concordat, the same view pervades his discourses. The young man, who is yet only a general of fortune, expresses himself as the chief of a great empire. Of him in regard to religion we have acts and words of the most contrary character, according to the occasion.*

During his first campaign in Italy, when he had to

* See Appendix, note 42.

deal with the dignitaries of the Church, he spoke with profound respect of the beauty and of the spirit of the Gospel; but this did not hinder him on his return to Paris, when he was in the presence of an administration which was the sworn enemy of Christianity, and of a scoffing populace which held the same opinions, from ranking among the chief benefits of the Revolution the destruction of religion itself. The following words form the beginning of the discourse he pronounced when presented to the Directory, namely: "The French people, in order to obtain a constitution founded on reason, had to *conquer eighteen centuries of prejudice*. The constitution of 1795, and yourselves, have triumphed over these obstacles. *Religion*, feudalism, and royalty have successively governed Europe for twenty centuries; but from the peace which you have just concluded will date the era of representative governments." We see here religion placed on the same footing as feudalism and royalty, and classed among the scourges of the human race. The young general now passed with his army into Egypt. On his way he captured Malta, and addressed some pious words to the Bishop of the island, so as to render as palatable as possible his recommendations of a prompt submission to the new power. But scarcely had he set foot on the land of the pyramids when he addressed to his soldiers a famous proclamation, in which he recommended them to act among the people who believe the Koran as they had acted among Christians and Jews, and to show to their Muftis and Imans the same respect which they had shown to Bishops and Rabbis in Europe. "Show," said he, "the same

toleration for the ceremonies prescribed by the Koran, and for the mosques, as you have done for the convents and the synagogues, for the religion of Moses and that of Christ." In an address to the Egyptians he spoke of the sentiments of the French in these words: "We too are true Mussulmans. Was it not we who destroyed the Pope, him who said that war must be made upon the Mussulmans? Was it not we who destroyed the Knights of Malta, because those idiots believed that God had decreed that they should make war upon the Mussulmans?" He was not content with neutrality, but even desired that one of the great Mohammedan festivals should be celebrated at Cairo with more than usual pomp. Thus in some respect he realized the famous verse of Voltaire in his *Zaïre*, and was a Christian in Italy, a free-thinker at Paris, and a Mussulman on the shores of the Nile.

At a later time, even after the Concordat, he explained his views in open State Council with all desirable clearness. "As to me," said he, "it is not the mystery of the incarnation that I see in religion, but the mystery of social order; it attributes to Heaven the doctrine of equality which prevents the rich from being massacred by the poor. Religion is, moreover, a sort of vaccine inoculation, which, by satisfying our taste for the marvelous, insures us against becoming the dupes of quacks and sorcerers; the priests are of more account than the Cagliostros, the Kants, and all the dreamers of Germany." In the eyes of Napoleon this mystery of social order was simply submission to the civil power. This was for him the essential doc-

trine, the foundation itself, of religion. Now it was in the priests that he found the most efficient police for enforcing this dogma of civil submission. When the Emperor of Austria heard of the conclusion of the second Concordat, he exclaimed that he approved highly of Napoleon's policy, that he knew by experience that priests could not be dispensed with in a well-ordered State, and that, for himself, he needed, in order to make his authority respected, the services of two armies, one white, and the other black. On that day the two Emperors understood each other. To this same utilitarian view of religion Napoleon constantly recurred in his speeches and correspondence. While yet a republican general he praised those priests "who held that the political code of the Gospel consisted in the liberty and supremacy of the people, and who sought to quiet, instead of agitating, the masses." In fact, by holding this democratic position, they served his policy of the moment, which was to found republics in Italy, and he wearied not in praising them. He compared them to Fénelon, and declared that "such priests were the finest gift which Heaven could present to a government." The fact was, he loved this republicanism of the priests only as a sign of their readiness to accept what he dictated. He did not long require this particular political faith of them, and the cardinal virtue which he most admired in them was their willingness to conform to the changes of the civil power. "I know of no character more respectable, more worthy of the veneration of men," so wrote he to the Bishop of Malta after the conquest of the island, "than that of a priest who, full of

the true spirit of the Gospel, feels it to be his duty to obey the civil power, and to maintain peace in his diocese.”

The true thought of Napoleon, that which inspired the Concordat, is clearly revealed in the words which he addressed to the priests of Milan in June, 1800, on the eve of the battle of Marengo. He speaks for Paris and for Rome, and the discourse is a sort of preface to the Concordat. “I have desired to see you all in a body,” said he, “that I might have the satisfaction of informing you personally of the sentiments which animate me in regard to the Apostolical Roman Catholic religion. Convinced that this religion is the only one which can procure true happiness to a well-ordered society, and strengthen the basis of good government, I assure you that I shall apply myself to protect and defend it at all times, and by all means. You, the ministers of that religion, which is verily also my own, I esteem as my dearest friends. I declare to you that I will hold as a disturber of the public peace, and as an enemy of the common good, and that as such I will punish in the most rigorous manner, and even, if need be, *with the pain of death*, whosoever shall disparage in the slightest manner our common religion, or shall allow himself the least indignity against your sacred persons. My formal intention is, that the Catholic religion shall be preserved in its entirety, that it shall be publicly exercised, and that it shall continue in the enjoyment of this right as fully and as inviolably as at the time when I first entered these favored lands. Now that I possess full powers, I am determined to make use of all the means

which I shall deem most fit for assuring and guaranteeing that religion. Modern philosophers have striven to persuade France that Catholicism is the implacable enemy of all republican government. Hence resulted that cruel persecution which the republic inflicted on this religion and its ministers; hence all those horrors to which that unfortunate nation has been a prey. The diversity of opinion on matters of religion which reigned in France at the time of the Revolution was one of the chief causes of those disorders. Experience has disabused the French. For my part, I also am a philosopher, and I know that in any society whatever no man can pass for just or virtuous who is ignorant of whence he came, and of whither he is to go. Reason alone cannot teach him that. Without religion we continually grope in darkness, and the Catholic religion is the only one which gives man certain light as to his origin and ultimate destiny. No society can exist without morality; there is no sound morality but in religion; *therefore religion alone can give to a State a firm and durable support.* A society without religion is like a ship without a compass. France, instructed by her misfortunes, has welcomed back to her bosom the Catholic religion. I cannot deny that I have contributed to this good work. I assure you that the French churches have been reopened, that the Catholic religion is putting on its ancient splendor, and that the people behold with reverence the holy Pastors returning full of zeal into the midst of their abandoned flocks. When I shall be able to speak with the Pope, I hope I shall have the happiness of removing all the obstacles which may yet

interpose between France and her entire reconciliation with the head of the Church. Such is what I wished to say to you in reference to the Catholic religion. I desire that the expression of these sentiments may remain engraved in your minds, that you may see fit to put them in order, and that they be given to the public by the press, in order that my dispositions may be known not only in France and Italy, but also throughout Europe.”

The First Consul spoke like a true confessor of the faith. He was speaking, however, for the purpose of making an impression on Europe, and though he seemed so thorough-going in his orthodoxy, yet he did not rise above the sphere of politics. He made a conciliatory advance to the Catholic Church, and he counted on her responding to it. It was an affair of negotiation which was about to be engaged in; it was the act of a statesman, in which the Christian had nothing to do. If he, the armed representative of France, fears not to threaten the pain of death for the slightest religious offenses, it is because the orator, as was his custom, made himself all things to all men. For the Italian priests he made himself an Italian. His eye was on the momentary effect. If this is doubted, we have only to listen to him a few months later, not on a State occasion beneath the vaults of the cathedral of Milan, but at Malmaison, in familiar conversation with his friends. It was at the time when the negotiations with Rome were in full activity. The First Consul had turned the conversation to matters of religion. He had stigmatized purely philosophical opinions, such as Deism, with the epithet of ideology, which for him was the highest expression

of contempt. He had spoken of the emotion which he had recently felt on hearing the church bell of Rueil, and concluded with the words, "so strong is the force of habit and education!" A man so occupied as Napoleon does not speak of his ideas and emotions for the mere pleasure of expressing them. One might be certain that he had a hidden but definite object in view. In fact, these remarks were intended as a preface to a grave communication. "I said to myself," added he immediately, "what a deep impression must such things make on the simple and credulous! Answer that, you philosophers and theorists. A nation must have a religion; this religion should be in the hands of the government. Fifty emigrated Bishops who are in the pay of the English, rule now the French clergy. We must destroy their influence, and to this end the influence of the Pope is necessary. He shall depose them, or induce them to resign. It shall be declared that the Catholic religion being that of a majority of the French, the government prefers to regulate its exercise. The First Consul will nominate five Bishops, the Pope will appoint them; they will choose the Curates, and the State will salary them. An oath will be exacted. The priests who will not take it shall be banished. It may be said that I am a Papist. I am nothing. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt; I shall be a Catholic here, for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions, but the idea of a God—" And pointing to the skies he asked, "Who made all that?" He then proceeded to develop the advantages of his plan: "The educated classes will not oppose Catholicism. They are indifferent. I will

spare myself great obstacles in the interior, and abroad I will be able by means of the Pope to—” He arrested himself, and his silence was significant. He then closed the conversation abruptly with these words: “There exists no longer either good faith or religious belief. *It is an affair purely political.*” The new Cyrus took care by this frank avowal to show clearly in what sense he restored religion. He often repeated to his secretary Bourrienne: “You will see what profit I shall derive of the priests.” For the rest, he was fully determined to break the pride of “these sacred personages,” for whom he had expressed in Milan such an entire devotion. At the very moment when he was negotiating the Concordat he remarked one day to Carnot, on occasion of a slight show of clerical opposition: “The priests and nobles are at a great game. If I should let loose upon them the people, they would all be devoured in the twinkling of an eye.”

We have clearly enough shown the great political reason which led the First Consul to treat with the Pope: he wished to turn to his profit the power of the religious sentiment, the indestructibility of which he clearly saw. Moreover, he could not have left religion in the enjoyment of liberty, without limiting his own arbitrary power. Rather let us say, religious liberty is not possible except where public liberty, in its widest sense, exists also. For what is a free Church? Is it not an association which comes together from time to time, and uses the liberty of writing and speaking? It cannot dispense with the essential rights of a free people—the right of association and reunion, the liberty of the

press, and all the other attributes of modern society. It is to the honor of religion that it is incapable of enjoying liberty as a monopoly, and for this reason it is the interest of the Church to desire it for all. The dictator of Brumaire was logically bound to impose on religion the same claims which he was forging for the whole body of the nation. He could not tolerate the abominable disorder, that a free word should be spoken in any point of the country, and that in the presence of his creature Prefects there should be free Bishops. The sufferance of a single free association would have been a blemish on the map. It was necessary to hasten to erase it, in order to celebrate the jubilee of a perfected centralization, reaching in its potency from one frontier to the other. The same hand which re-established the throne was bound, not to re-establish the altar, (for that was already erect, and never had purer incense burned upon it,) but to chain it to the throne. In his mad desire for absolute dominion and omnipotence, the great Despot could not consent to let even the religious domain escape his grasp. But he was soon to see, that it is easier to attempt such a usurpation than to succeed in it. Judge of it by the following bitter words, which reveal the difficulties with which he met in his attempt to obtain the lion's share of every thing. "See," said he to his State Council, "see the insolence of the priests; in sharing their authority with what they call the temporal power, they reserve to themselves the right of acting on the intelligence, the nobler part of man, and presume to confine me to acting merely on the body. They keep the soul, and throw me the carcass!"

After these necessary preliminaries, we hasten to state the several steps in the negotiation of the Concordat. It was necessary to deal with the different phases of opinion at Paris and at Rome. For the first and most difficult negotiation the Consul used his personal influence; for the rest he made use of adroit agents, armed with ambiguous promises and efficacious threats.

We have seen in how prosperous a condition was the Gallican Church at the time when Napoleon overthrew the Directory. And the work was rapidly going forward. The refractory clergy were also at the good work, especially in the West and South. Though the two bodies were yet far from united, there is no reason to believe that, had the enjoyment of liberty been allowed, they would not have come to a speedy understanding. At all events the Pope could have brought it about by fewer concessions than were eventually exacted from him in the Concordat. The first measures of Napoleon's government were of a beneficent character. Commissions appointed to hear the complaints of the banished priests, indicated that the era of proscription was past. The ashes of Pope Pius VI. were delivered to his former subjects, and solemnly transported to Rome. Some days later a wise decree substituted, in the place of the politico-religious oath which had created so much trouble, a simple formula of fidelity to the Constitution, which would raise no conscientious scruples. A decree opening the churches to Christian worship was strictly enforced. For a moment there was hope that real liberty would be continued. We have shown how this hope was suddenly disappointed. Already

the liberty of the press was suppressed, and with it all those safeguards which it alone can preserve. It was evident that a religious as well as political reaction was now to be inaugurated.

Scarcely had the First Consul returned from his memorable Italian campaign when he interfered in affairs of Church in the spirit we have already indicated. He was a novice in such matters, but he had a resolute will, and the power to execute it. He hastily collected a little ecclesiastico-theological library, and as would seem, profited by it more rapidly still. He had the Latin works of Bossuet translated for his own use, and studied thoroughly the so-called liberties of the Gallican Church. The fact that he highly approved of them is sufficient to show how little of liberalism they really contain. But he presumed afterward to complete them, in a manner which would have shocked Bossuet, and which sanctioned the most exclusive Ultramontanism. This theological apprenticeship of General Bonaparte has been much admired. I cannot admire it any more highly than I can admire the role of Constantine at the Council of Nice. These essays at controversy in the mouths of the masters of the world make upon me a very sad impression. To present theological arguments when one has his hand on the sword, is to go out of one's sphere. You are not reason but force, therefore speak not the language of reason. You are able and determined to constrain, do not, therefore, attempt to persuade. To every one his role. Be a dictator, but, pray, do not confound the general who gives orders, with the Church father who cites texts. The parties are not equal.

The plan of Bonaparte seems to have been promptly conceived. He had long sought an occasion to treat with the Pope. It would be erroneous to suppose that the parish bell of Rueil, and the recollections of his childhood, had any thing to do in this matter. His letters at the time of the treaty of Tolentino are full of indifference and contempt for the same venerable Popish institution in which he now found so much to admire. In September, 1796, he wrote to Cacault of "playing tricks with the old fox;" whereas in February, 1797, he informed the Pope that his Holiness would have no more faithful ally than the French Republic, and on the same day he wrote to the Directory that the *old machine* would soon inevitably go to pieces of itself. It was the profound and cunning politician that afterward found this machine so useful.

The plan of the Concordat has often been lauded as a work of deep and original thought. Nothing is more false. When closely examined it reveals little else than the old Gallican tradition, that is to say, the entire subordination of religion to the civil power. It was the very system of Louis XIV. as revived by the Constituent Assembly. In fact, the Concordat was simply a sanction of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy *minus* its democratic elements, which were no longer in fashion. The elements which had displeased at the Vatican were now equally offensive at the Tuileries. A functionary clergy closely dependent on the State, and a sufficient salary paid by the State to the Bishops and Curates—such was the plan sketched out by the First Consul; or rather, borrowed from his Gallican library.

The Concordat was desired not, by France, but by Bonaparte himself. No current of opinion urged him to the step; on the contrary, public opinion was unfavorable to an official worship. But he arrogated to himself the right of settling a great question of conscience—a most grave usurpation. The worthy portion of the Constitutional Clergy asked only to be permitted peacefully and freely to pursue the work of restoring the Church in France. The men of 1789, the true liberals, regarded with marked disfavor the project of the Concordat. The illustrious Lafayette made an attempt to persuade the First Consul to abandon his project of creating an official religion, and “to accept in its integrity the American principle of perfect equality among the Churches, all remaining independent of the government, and the societies forming themselves at their pleasure under the direction of the Pastors whom they freely chose and paid.” Nothing could better show the wide difference between the spirit of 1789 and that of 1801, than the way in which Bonaparte received this counsel of Lafayette. Bourrienne records the following words, in which the First Consul expressed to him his impression of the interview: “Lafayette may be right in theory; but what is theory? It is a folly when applied to masses of men; moreover, he is always imagining himself in America, as if the French were Americans. It is not likely that he can teach me what is needed for this country. The Catholic religion predominates here, and besides, I have need of the Pope; he will do what I shall wish.” If the liberals were opposed to the Concordat, the masses cared little for it—were en-

tirely indifferent. "At the accession of Bonaparte," says Madame de Staël, "the most sincere partisans of Catholicism, after their long sufferings from political inquisition, aspired only after complete religious liberty. The general wish of the nation was, that persecution against the priests should cease, that no oath should be exacted of them, and finally, that the government should in no way meddle with private opinion or public worship. Hence, the Consular government would have satisfied the public by granting toleration as it exists in America. But the First Consul knew that by giving to the Church a political character, its influence would second the interests of despotism. What he desired was to prepare his way to the throne. He needed a clergy as he needed chamberlains."

To those who advised him to treat all religions alike, he replied, that in a religious country the government could not be indifferent. But what a sad doctrine is this, that the State should interfere in deciding religious disputes! History gives no more certain lesson than that the way to prolong for ever theological strifes is for the State authoritatively to decide them. And in fact it would have been quite unworthy the great warrior to renew the tragi-comedy of Byzantine history. His ambition was not so low. He cared very little about these disputes of religion. He himself explained his real motives: "There has never been a State," said he, "without religion, without worship, without priests. Is it not better to organize the worship and discipline the priests, than to have matters as they are? Instead of banishing the priests who oppose the government, is

it not better to win them over? I tell you that the priests who accept office will break connection with the former incumbents, and be interested in preventing their return." When urged to put himself at the head of the clergy, and by a single word make France Protestant, he replied, "Should I not on the contrary do the very opposite of Henry VIII. ? You do not understand the matter; the half of France would remain Catholic. We would have interminable quarrels." His continual answer to all opposers was, "I need a Pope, a Pope who will conciliate and not divide, who will unite the people, and give them to the government. And for this I need the real Roman Catholic Pope." *I need a Pope.* Such was the cherished thought of the First Consul. He needed a Pope on the earth as he needed a God in the heavens—a religion which would crown his power, impress on the people wholesome notions of authority, and enable him to keep up his police at less expense, and to collect his taxes with less difficulty! When it was suggested that the Roman clergy might be too much under the influence of the Pope, he replied, "With the armies and the good wishes of France I shall always sufficiently be the master. If I shall restore the altars, if I shall protect the priests, if I shall *feed them*, and treat them as the ministers of religion deserve to be treated in every country, they will do what I shall require of them in the interest of the public repose. They will calm the people, unite them under their authority, and *place them under my hand.*" To feed the priests, and in exchange therefor to have them put into the hands of the civil power by the Pope—

this was what the First Consul called restoring religion. The clergy are to kiss the hand which feeds them!

Bonaparte did not presume to hold such soldier language to Gregory. He condescended so far as to ask of him a report on religious affairs, though he was fully decided to make no account of it. We may judge of his sincerity by an expression which he made at the very time of the negotiations with Rome. "What we are doing," said he to a councilor of State, "will strike a mortal blow at the Papacy." He was, therefore, befooling the Pope; he was doing as he had some years previously advised the French minister at Rome to do: he was "playing tricks with the old fox." Such were the edifying preliminaries of this religious peace, whose not less edifying meanderings remain to be traced.

But all the French nation could not have the advantage of being directly persuaded by the forcible and original eloquence of the First Consul. It was therefore to be feared that public opinion might pronounce itself against him, unless it were carefully watched and controlled. The liberty of the press was consequently suspended, and it was easy to forbid all free discussion of religious questions. The word of order was given to the Prefects. A circular of one of these officers to the Journalists deserves to be placed among the annals of administrative curiosities. "The interests of earth," so wrote this functionary, "suffice for the aliment of your journals; prove your respect for those of heaven by abstaining from discussing them." In conclusion, he menaced immediate suspen-

sion against all journals which did not keep silence on religious questions. The moment for State communications to the official bodies had not yet arrived. It was in secrecy and silence that the so-called religious peace was preparing. *Silentium faciunt et pacem appellant.*

CHAPTER II.

CONCLUSION OF THE CONCORDAT.

WE already know the basis of the negotiation—the Civil Constitution of the Clergy slightly amended. The dioceses were to be reduced so as to correspond to the number of the Departments, each Prefect having a Bishop within his jurisdiction. The ancient Concordats were revived, giving the right of nominating the Bishops to the Prince, and that of confirming them to the Pope. The Pope was easily induced to change the bounds of the diocese, for thereby he was a great gainer, and received what he never before had succeeded in obtaining: it placed the episcopacy in entire dependence upon him, and realized what Ultramontanism had not even dreamed of. But there were two concessions demanded of the Pope which met with strong resistance. To the honor of the First Consul, let us admit that he firmly desired the equality before the law of all religious beliefs. He opposed a return to an exclusive and persecuting Church. Besides, such a reaction was no longer possible, even in enslaved France. But the Papacy held as a primary truth that *Catholicism alone should be tolerated and protected*. Such was then, is now, and will ever be, the doctrine of that Church so long as it retains a theocratic government. On this point it long resisted. The other point demanded of the Pope, and

which was not less bitter, was to confirm the nominations of Bishops who had belonged to the Constitutional Clergy, against whom the Church had exhausted her thunders. This would amount to a humiliating retraction. The Papacy never granted it frankly. Her resistance was long and obstinate. But the First Consul would not yield.

The occupant of the Papal chair at this time, Pius VII.,* was of a very respectable character, without arrogance, but possessing that gentle firmness which at times becomes invincible. His reputation was without spot; he had formed himself in the shadow of the cloister, and had deservedly obtained the highest post in the Church. His fine, regular features bore the impress of a pure and melancholy spirit. He could have well personated a persecuted Church, and become one of those living protestations which are so dangerous to despotism: it would have been dangerous to make a martyr of such a man. His head seemed crowned in advance with a nascent aureola; but this did not hinder him from possessing a good degree of Italian finesse. General Bonaparte had inspired him with warm sympathies, which the worst of treatment never wholly quenched. As Bishop of Imola he had published, at the time of the French invasion, a sermon full of republican sentiments. It was a rare good fortune for the First Consul that the choice of the conclave of Cardinals which was assembled at Venice to elect a successor to Pius VI. fell upon Cardinal Chiaramonti. The Prelate who had been most active in bringing about this choice

* See Appendix, note 43.

was the eloquent and shrewd Gonzalvi. He had been rewarded. At the opening of the transactions with Bonaparte he was Secretary of the Papal State. He was ardently attached to the interests of Pius VII. The Papal ambassador to France was Spina, Bishop of Genoa, a cunning, timid priest, deeply interested in preserving the temporal power of the Pope. This man was to treat at Paris with Talleyrand, the married ex-Prelate, and with Abbot Bernier, once the head of the revolt in La Vendée, now a very warm partisan of Bonaparte. The First Consul's envoy at Rome was Cacault, a disabused revolutionist, who knew perfectly the Papal Court, and who was almost an Italian in cunning. He was well fitted for the difficult role of mediating between the warm impatience of Bonaparte and the vexatious slowness of the Holy See.

Abbot Bernier opened the negotiation by communicating to Bishop Spina the plan of Bonaparte, which, besides the articles already mentioned, required the Pope to renounce his claim on the confiscated Church property. This and the two other points previously noticed, were persistently opposed by Spina. Weary of these delays, the First Consul sent his plan directly to Rome. He received in answer a direct refusal of the points of concession on which he insisted. He became in consequence violently irritated. He directed Cacault, his envoy at Rome, to demand of the Pope the ratification of his plan within three days, and in case of refusal, he was directed to leave Rome and retire to Florence. Cacault, who was a cool, prudent man, and earnestly desirous of reconciling the parties, was deeply perplexed

at this harsh dispatch. He knew that the friendship of the Church was of immense interest to Bonaparte. The brief time of three days having elapsed, he persuaded Pius VII. to send to Paris, with conciliatory proposals, Cardinal Gonzalvi, and leaving at Rome his private secretary, so as to keep up the negotiation, betook himself to Florence. The sequel proved that his counsel to the Pope was very prudent. The timid Gonzalvi had a great dread of passing the Alps. He felt as if he were passing into a land of barbarians. But his surprise was very great when he found himself warmly welcomed into a brilliant capital where the services of religion were in open practice. His spirits revived. His first interview with the First Consul was opened under the lowering frowns of the latter; but these marks of displeasure gave place before its close to that fine smile of satisfaction which was one of the warrior's greatest seductions.

The menaces of rupture being thus followed by a more conciliatory spirit, contributed greatly to incline Rome to the side of concession. Foreign agents, however, did all they could to counteract this tendency. Both in society and among the people the following biting satire was constantly repeated :

Pio (VI.) per conservar la fede

Perde la sede ;

Pio (VII.) per conservar la sede

Perde la fede.

Attempts were made to strengthen the yielding spirit of the Pope by showing him falsified proclamations of Bonaparte while in Egypt, wherein he boasted of

having destroyed the Holy See. But surely his authentic ones were heterodox enough to inspire fear. But counsels favorable to the French prevailed. The motives, however, which led to the necessary concessions were not of a very high order. The Pope was led to hope that Bonaparte would give him a larger temporal domain; moreover, as before has been stated, the proposed Concordat gave him an authority over the Bishops which the Papacy never before possessed. Such were the motives of the contracting parties.

The Concordat was signed July 15, 1801, by Cardinal Gonzalvi and Joseph Bonaparte, whom his brother had charged with that duty. Some of its language is as follows: "The government of the Republic recognizes that the Apostolical Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the great majority of the French. His Holiness recognizes likewise that this same Church has received, and expects yet at this time the greatest good and glory from its establishment in France, and from the personal professions of the same by the First Consul of the Republic. Consequently, after this mutual acknowledgment, they have agreed, as well for the good of religion, as for the maintenance of internal tranquillity, upon what follows, namely: The Apostolical Roman Catholic religion shall be freely exercised in France. Its worship shall be public, and in conformity with the police regulations which the government shall judge necessary for the public peace. The First Consul of the Republic shall, within three months after the publication of the bull of his Holiness, make nominations to the newly-circumscribed archbishoprics and bishoprics.

His Holiness shall confer on them canonical investiture according to the forms used for France before the change of the government." In other parts of the Concordat it was provided, among other things, that the Bishops might appoint to the curacies, though their choice was to be limited to persons acceptable to the government; that the Pope should in no way trouble those who had obtained confiscated Church property, and that a new Concordat would be necessary in case any of the successors of the First Consul should be Protestant.

The essential articles of this Concordat were simply a revival of the ancient treaties between the Popes and the rulers of France. The contracting parties, however, soon found in it occasion for bitter contention. As to the Church, it was completely enslaved to the two powers, the civil and the Papal. The civil power was master of a functionary clergy, and could use against all the displeasing efforts of the Pope the clause which subjected the worship to regulations of police. As to the Pope, he still possessed, as in ancient times, the important power of refusing his bulls. The result showed of how little value is a religious peace which is imposed by authority.

However powerful were the two contractors, the one politically, the other ecclesiastically, they found much difficulty in putting their treaty into effect. The Pope was slow and hesitating. The first work of Bonaparte was to cause the Concordat to be accepted by the Legislature as a treaty with a foreign power. But in this he met with decided opposition. Even the Council

of State, to whom it was presented August 6, 1801, received it coldly, and in silence. A second embarrassment arose from the Council of the Constitutional Clergy, which was just then in session in Paris. It was necessary to silence and dissolve this body in order to be able to say that before the Concordat religion was in the lowest decline, and anxiously awaiting the salutary appearance of the new Cyrus. The Council was dissolved on the 16th of August, before the Concordat was made public. The opposition of the Legislative corps, which had not the power of debating, but only that of voting, was very marked. It showed its displeasure at the Concordat by calling to the chair the infidel Dupuis. Moreover, the French generals made the Concordat the subject of open ridicule. The result of this opposition is well known. It was necessary to resort to a second *coup d'état*. Advantage was taken of an ambiguity of the Constitution to renew, out of such material as should please the Executive, the Legislative corps and the Tribunate. The subservient Legislature thus obtained ratified the Concordat without difficulty.

As to the Pope, besides his scruples, he met with more than one annoying obstacle. The ancient Bishops, who had fled to England and Germany, sent to him earnest protests against being deposed from dioceses which "had been confided to their care by the providence of the most high God." In the end, however, he disregarded their protests, and himself also committed a *coup d'état* in accepting a Concordat which, though in some respects disagreeable, greatly increased his power over the clergy.

It remained now only to have the Concordat ratified, and to put it into operation. At this point a grave measure, emanating from the First Consul, was taken, which showed how precarious was this so-called peace between Church and State. In fact, the Concordat was hardly concluded when it was set aside by one of the contracting parties—the one which had the power.

The *organic articles* which were presented to the Legislature at the same time with the Concordat, tended to the complete enslavement of the Church to the civil power. These Articles constitute a most perfect system of despotic centralization, as applied to the Churches to which the nation gave tolerance. A brief analysis of their scope will be of interest, as it will show what was understood by religious liberty by the French authorities in 1802.

At first glance these laws seem nothing more than a reproduction of the rules which regulated the relations of Church and State under the ancient *régime*. They do not surpass the extent of authority which Louis XIV. had claimed. But we must not forget, that whereas formerly the Church derived very great power, and even a sort of independence, from her vast and untaxable landed property, she was now reduced to a state of utter poverty and abject dependence. One of the good features of these laws was, the emphatic tolerance which they gave to dissenters from Catholicism. Protestants were put on legal equality with Catholics. Respect for the religious minority was pushed so far as to forbid, in all towns where asingle Protestant temple existed, the parading of the pompous Catholic ceremonies outside of

the church inclosures. In this respect the First Consul showed himself the true heir of the French Revolution. But this and a few other provisions aside, the Organic laws formed simply a net-work of administrative despotism. All direct correspondence with the head of the Church was cut off. The Holy Father could not address a single word to the French Bishops without getting it first countersigned by the government at Paris. His Legates had to obtain from the same source a special approval. No decree of a Council could be executed without first obtaining a civil sanction. The government assumed the right of forbidding whatever it should judge *not to be good for the public tranquillity*, a vague expression, which could be extended even to doctrinal decisions, since they might occasion controversial agitation. No national or diocesan convention, or other deliberative body of the clergy, could be held without special authorization. Even a private chapel could not be opened without governmental license. The right of freely going and coming, so dear to the French, was refused to the Bishops. They were not allowed to leave their dioceses without special permission. The government, full of paternal interest in providing for the service of the altars, required a list of all the students of theology, and prescribed that early in their studies they should be thoroughly instructed in the principles of Gallicanism as opposed to Ultramontanism. Even the costume of the priests was regulated by law. They were required to dress in black, and in the "French style." To all these laws were affixed suitable penal sanctions.

Such was the liberty of the Church as restored by Bonaparte. A clergy cut off from their spiritual head, forbidden free deliberation, curbed in their missionary activity, trained under the jealous eye of the government, nominated and incessantly watched over by the same, preaching only what shall please the same, depending absolutely on the hand which feeds them,—such is the Catholic Church of the organic laws. Now, all these infractions of religious liberty were ostensibly only so many precautions against a foreign potentate. And so long as the head of Catholicism shall be a temporal prince, governments will have a pretext for such infractions of religious liberty. The Pope, as a temporal ruler, will always have interests which conflict with those of this or that other power. Catholics will, therefore, be constantly exposed to violations of their liberty so long as the temporal power of the Papacy exists.

But the Organic laws were much more than precautions against the domination of a foreign power. They enslaved religion itself without cause. This is clearly seen in the fact that they oppressed Protestantism as much as they oppressed Popery. Protestantism, also, could not extend itself, or make doctrinal decisions, without the approval of the government. No mention at all is made in the Organic laws of Churches which might choose to remain free, and not receive salaries from the State. Protestantism, moreover, seemed glad enough to fall into the arms of the State, and enjoy even a restricted liberty, the liberty of a public legal existence. France, wearied of anarchy, seemed to be satisfied to receive a servitude gilded with glory in

lieu of that liberty for which she had so long fought in vain.

The Concordat and the organic laws were presented to the Legislature in April, 1802. The tribune who defended them most ably was Portalis. His polished discourse was but a digest of the views of the First Consul. He presented, at some length, the necessity of a religion of some kind, and the excellence of Christianity in particular, as a means of inculcating in the public a spirit of obedience. His whole speech, however, turned on this point of utility for the public peace. He forgot that it is first, and above all, obedience to God that Christianity teaches, and that for this very reason it is of all religions the most hostile to despotism. But there was little necessity of persuasion. The purged and subservient Legislature were willing to vote whatever was required of them by their master.

At Easter, April 18, 1802, the Concordat was published, and a solemn *Te Deum* chanted with great pomp in Notre Dame in honor of peace and the re-establishment of worship. Immense multitudes surrounded the Church and filled the streets. Acclamations were showered upon the Great Consul, as he was termed. Long lines of carriages, filled with the fair ladies of the official circles, followed the chariot of the First Consul and the Papal Legate. But the affair was very displeasing to many of the generals. Moreau, Lannes, Augereau, Oudinot, and others openly expressed their repugnance, and it required all the authority of Bonaparte to induce some of them to remain in the carriages when they learned that they were to go to mass. Many who

were present indulged either in ridicule or grief. The ceremony was cold and stately. The whole affair was but a solemn mockery, for the element of faith was entirely lacking in the chief actors. The attitude of the First Consul was calm, grave, and majestic, much as if he felt that in restoring religion he was performing an act of signal condescension, and rendering quite an honor to God. He forgot that it is not proudly upright and in the attitude of a great chieftain, but rather on one's knees and with heart conviction, that the interests of religion are advanced. Such official services are a great profanation of the temple of God. On his return from Notre Dame, and after the banquet which celebrated the peace of consciences, the First Consul, highly satisfied with the success of his Concordat, asked some of his generals their opinion of the ceremony. "Did it not to-day seem," exclaimed he, "that every thing was re-established in its ancient order?" "It was a fine piece of mummery," answered Delmas; "nothing was lacking but the two millions of Frenchmen who have died for liberty, which is now also dead."

With reference to this affair Bishop Gregory remarks: "The Concordat, a work of iniquity like that of 1516, was proclaimed in the Cathedral of Paris. Archbishop Boisgelin preached a sermon, in which he stated that religion, which had left France with the emigrating clergy, had also returned with them. This falsehood shocked the two classes of the clergy who had remained in France true to their duties through all the storms of revolution. The Concordat was celebrated in prose and verse by all the flatterers, and by all who were ambitious

of the favors of the government. There was no end to the laudation of him who had raised up the altars; he was called the envoy of the Most High, the man of right, the Cyrus, the Constantine, the Charlemagne, of modern times." These words of this faithful Catholic Bishop are very significant.

But the illusion that Bonaparte had been actuated by respect for religion in itself, could not be long entertained. It was in vain that he said to the Protestant clergy, that he would permit whoever of his successors in any way violated the liberty of worship to be treated as a Nero. His real motive was but too clearly revealed in the proclamation which accompanied the publication of the Concordat. "Ministers of a religion of peace," said he, "let the most profound forgetfulness cover your dissensions, misfortunes, and faults. Let that religion which unites you together, attach you indissolubly to the interests of your country. Use for your country all the influence which your ministry gives you over the people. Inspire the young citizens with a love for our institutions, and a respect for the authorities which have been created to protect them. Let them learn of you that the God of peace is the God of armies, and that he fights with those who defend the independence and liberty of France." The meaning of this is only too clear. Not content with placing religion under the hand of his government, he wished to put God under his banner also, and make him march with the French eagles. He desired to have a French, or rather, a Napoleonic god, whose ministers would docilely second his political ambition.

Vast numbers of Catholics had little confidence in, and still less enthusiasm for, the ecclesiastical measures of the First Consul. They were perfectly convinced that they did not spring from a respect for religion. It was futile and vain to attempt to deceive the people, and to reduce religion to a mere instrument of domination; she will not act such a dishonorable role. She will contribute to public peace, only when she is loved for her own sake, and when she is sufficiently respected to be herself served instead of being used as a mere instrument for other interests.

CHAPTER III.

EFFECTS OF THE CONCORDAT — CONCLUSION.

WE shall speak of events which took place after the conclusion of the Concordat only so far as they illustrate its true bearing. But it is of importance to show that this mischievous treaty, which was ostensibly designed to procure the peace of consciences, perpetuated in France on the contrary a most shameful violation of conscience, and excited between the two contracting parties difficulties which deeply agitated the Church.

We have seen that the Concordat made no provision for any Church which would not consent to a union with the State. The first effect of this treaty was, a more complete suppression of the liberty of worship than had taken place in the darkest period of the Reign of Terror. I know that religious liberty was at this time poorly represented, namely, by the Theophilanthropists. This sect still numbered a few societies which were not willing to be connected with the State, and which desired simply the liberty of worshiping according to their convictions. This worship, however objectionable from a theological stand-point, was entirely moral, and, therefore, should have escaped the oppression of the government. The Theophilanthropists were perfectly justifiable in claiming the liberty of worship. From this moment the ridiculous features of their funda-

mental theories disappeared, and the only point in question was, whether they should be allowed the enjoyment of one of the most sacred rights of man. The leaders of the sect, after being turned out of the national churches, applied in vain to the government for permission to celebrate their worship in a house rented by themselves. All their protests in the name of liberty of conscience were fruitless. Most justly they exclaimed, "What has become of the liberty of worship, if it is permitted only to follow one of the State religions?" But this was the will of the authorities. "I do not wish a dominant religion," said Bonaparte to his Council, "*nor do I wish that new ones should be established.*" The Catholics, the Reformed and the Lutheran Churches, which the Concordat recognizes, are religions enough." At the conclusion of one of his ill-humored speeches to the Council of State, he said abruptly, "Make a decree closing the Theophilanthropist worship." This same hostility to the liberty of worship is revealed, besides, in the harsh manner in which he treated the persistent applications of the Jews for the rights of conscience. "For the Jews," said he, "we must have *laws of exception.*" And the Jews escaped these oppressive laws of exception only by finally consenting to become a State religion—to be salaried by the State, and subjected to the surveillance and regulating intervention of the same.

As to the effect of Napoleon's salarizing the Protestant Churches, we are of opinion that it was decidedly pernicious. They had the same protection as the Catholics, but were also subjected to the same servitude. An account of the condition of the Protestant Churches,

published by Rabaut the Younger in 1807, shows that in the majority of them worship had been continued even during the fever heat of the Revolution. And the simple enjoyment of liberty according to the principles of 1789, would have sufficed to put them into a flourishing condition without any pecuniary aid from the State. But the Protestants did not feel at first all the cramping effects of the Organic laws of 1802. Happy in the modicum of privilege they enjoyed, they did not go even to the end of their chain. They were glad of the honor of possessing temples in the presence of the Catholic Churches. But less honor and more liberty would have been preferable. The Organic laws, however, were finally deeply felt. Protestantism was, as it were, decapitated in its interior organization by the privation of those large deliberative assemblies which had contributed so much to its glory in the past. This was an injury which all the persecutions of the Catholics had never succeeded in inflicting, for the Churches of the desert had never given up their synodal organization. The laws of Napoleon admitted that the Protestants might hold synods; but as the government reserved to itself the organizing of them, it was but a chimerical promise whose realization is yet awaited after a lapse of sixty years. The First Consul was no friend of deliberative assemblies; he never convoked them of any class whatever, except when he wished to obtain of them some signal act of collective cowardice. For this purpose the Legislative corps was an excellent tool; but the trial which he made of a Church Council in 1811 turned out too unfavorably to tempt him to con-

voke a synod. Notwithstanding all this, however, the Protestants remained sincerely attached to him. They showed him more thanks than were deserved, for more than once he made use of their Churches as a bugbear for frightening the Pope. In a letter to Pius VII., dated January 7, 1806, Napoleon enumerates his grievances against the Court of Rome. The letter contains these significant words: "I have experienced on the part of your Holiness only refusals on all subjects, even on those which were of the highest importance to the cause of religion; as, for example, when the question was, how to hinder Protestantism from raising its head in France." He regarded himself as the absolute master of the Reformed Churches. "I am the chief of the Protestant ministers," said he, "since I appoint them." Unfortunately the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches did but too much by their imprudent flatteries to encourage him in cherishing this delusion.

I know of no more disheartening reading than the ecclesiastical documents of this period. One finds in them the same profanation of holy things, the same perversion of sacred texts to purposes of servile flattery, which disgraced the Church of the Byzantine empire. The leader of this harmonious choir of sycophants in France was the Legate of the Pope. In the circular in which this Prelate established the festival of St. Napoleon on the 15th of August, he attributed openly to the Emperor the honor of having borne the ark of the covenant across the Jordan after its wanderings in the wilderness of revolution. "If your children ask of you," added the Legate, "who has so happily accom-

plished such great things for Christianity, tell them that it is our Emperor—he who has imitated the illustrious Cyrus and Darius in restoring the temple of God.” This theme of the new Cyrus was varied to heart sickness, in the episcopal charges. A grave sign of the depth of this servility was manifested in the belligerent tone of the ministers of a religion of peace, on the breaking out anew of war. The English were devoted to the wrath of the Most High. Perfidious Albion was compared to Tyre and Sidon, and the threats of the prophets turned against her with an astonishing dexterity. “The voice of the blood of our brothers,” read we in one of the episcopal charges, “cries for vengeance against the English.” The Cardinal-Archbishop of Tours declared to his diocese, that the war then breaking out was a *war of peace*. *The homage of the clergy to Napoleon was never surpassed in abjectness. “One cannot render too much honor,” wrote Portalis in an official paper in 1803, “or manifest too much thanks, respect, and love to the restorer of the Church and State.” The clergy received him at the threshold of the temple with the chanting of the hymn, *Behold, I send my angel who shall prepare my way*. After the aspersion he was conducted to the high altar, where the *Salvum* was intoned. On important occasions special protestations of devotion were exacted of the clergy. At the time of a heavy conscription Portalis, the Minister of Public Worship, wrote to the Bishops a circular, in which are found these words: “At a moment like this it is the duty of the ministers of religion to enlighten and instruct the citizens, and to make them more than ever feel how

much thanks, attachment, and love they owe to a government which has restored religion, protected the virtuous, and repaid the evils which for so long have afflicted France." The addresses of the clergy to Napoleon equaled those of the most fawning courtiers. In the audience which he granted them he expressed his lively satisfaction, and more especially the pleasure he felt in seeing them dressed in long gowns. The sacred militia had adopted the uniform which he had decreed, and in fact they received his orders generally with as much readiness as his soldiers. The Bishop of Dijon directed his Curates to charge the conscience of the young conscripts with the duty of fidelity to the State, as the civil officer charged their honor. "The latter," said he, "will attach their temporal interest to their fidelity; and you, their eternal salvation. Thus will be established a *régime* in which morality arises from legislation, and in which perfect unity of action will exist between the two powers, spiritual and temporal, which are in fact made for each other." Surely never was religion more servilely lashed to the chariot of State. What least asylum could be left for liberty in a country where the two powers were thus united together, the Bishop being no longer any thing else than a police officer in a long gown! How abject a position for the Church! And yet this was practically all the role she played after the conclusion of the so-much-vaunted Concordat, which, as some will have it, restored the honor of religion.

The chief of the State felt himself as much at home in the temples of God as in his own palace. He caused

the bulletins of the grand army to be read from the pulpits. When he desired to repair its losses by the formidable conscriptions which his Senate so subserviently voted him, he demanded of the Bishops that they should aid his Prefects in enrolling the refractory ones. The government severely blamed all who showed sympathy for the young boys, so many of whom were hurried off immaturity to the wars. It caused a conscript to be seized in the sacristy by a squad of soldiers at the moment when he was about to confess himself. For the rest, the priests frequently aided the military in this sad business. When we consider the degree of abasement to which the majority of the Concordat clergy stooped, we must heartily subscribe to these words of Bishop Gregory, notwithstanding their severity. "Is it not these same men," exclaimed he, "who ordered so many *Te Deums* for victories, and for every kind of scenes of carnage, even those of the sacrilegious war of Spain? Is it not these same men who at the fall of the potentate, spit upon him to whom so lately they had burnt incense, as did also so many Senators, Councilors, Prefects, and Judges? Is it not the same ones who, after having exhausted the vocabulary of servility, worn all liveries, professed all doctrines, and made court to all parties, finally managed to survive all the wrecks?"

The famous Imperial Catechism which was imposed by the new empire on the whole French Church, is but too well known. It was a new method of saying, *Sinite parvulos ad me venire*, Let the little children come unto me. The curious chapter on the duties of French Christians

to their Emperor has obtained a deserved notoriety ; it is, however, always profitable to recall these crimes against conscience, which combine the ridiculous with the odious. “ For the first time since the establishment of Christianity,” says Gregory, “ one witnessed the scandal of a Catechism gotten up expressly in the interest of one man, one family.” Let us make some extracts from this edifying book.

“ *Question.* What are the duties of Christians in regard to the Princes who govern them, and what are in particular our duties toward Napoleon I., our Emperor? *Answer.* Christians owe to the Princes who govern them, and we in particular owe to Napoleon I., our Emperor, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, *military service*, and the ordinary tributes for the preservation and expenses of the empire and his throne. To honor and serve our Emperor is, therefore, to honor and serve God himself. *Question.* Are there not special reasons which should attach us more strongly still to Napoleon I., our Emperor? *Answer.* Yes ; for it is he whom God has raised up in difficult times to re-establish the public service of the holy religion of our fathers, and to be its protector. He has brought back and preserved public order by his profound and vigilant wisdom ; he defends the State by his powerful arm ; and he has become the helper of the Lord by the consecration which he received from the sovereign Pontiff, the head of the universal Church. *Question.* What should we think of those who may be lacking in their duty toward our Emperor? *Answer.* According to the Apostle Paul, such persons would

resist the order established by God himself, and render themselves worthy of eternal damnation.”

It is thus that the new despotism profaned at once both religion and the youth, and showed itself doubly sacrilegious. Nothing was now lacking but to elevate on the Vendôme column the statue of the god Mars under the features of General Bonaparte, and to demand its adoration after the example of the Roman Cæsars. The Papacy pushed condescension so far as openly to approve the notorious Catechism, and the Legate recommended its use in all the dioceses.

But it is always a difficult and perilous task to undertake to control spiritual forces. The Spirit moves where it will, and mocks the most cunningly-contrived network of tyranny. Hence a perpetual inquietude for the despot who desires himself to regulate, to dominate, and to inspire every thing. Napoleon would have wished that no public word should be heard in all his empire without previously having received the seal of his Prefects. The latter were to watch very carefully the charges and other official acts of the Bishops. The government complained that the modern philosophy was too often attacked in sermons. The chief of the State corrected, himself, the documents which issued from the Archbishopric of Paris. The greatest vigilance was recommended to the Bishops as to those priests who entered the pulpit and enjoyed the so-much-feared right of addressing the people. They were forbidden all controversy. A preacher was thrown into prison for having made a philippic against Voltaire and Rousseau, and the higher authority did not blame the

act in itself, but only its administrative irregularity. A Prefect who was given to gustatory indulgence, blamed his Bishop for having insisted so strongly on fasting during Lent. Even the missions did not escape the watchful eye of the government. In 1807 the home missions were suppressed, on pretext that they agitated the people. As to foreign missions, Napoleon desired that they should be authorized only so far as they might be profitable to the State as well as to religion.

The Emperor was not content with keeping a vigilant watch over the official papers of his Bishops: as at times he turned journalist, so also on occasion he essayed to handle the episcopal crook. He wrote to his uncle, Cardinal Fesch,* who had recently been raised to the See of Lyons, a curious sketch of an edifying sermon, the object of which should be to restore peace in the diocese. "Preach to the people," wrote he, "that every sentiment which leads to pride is a sin; that to wish to humble one's neighbor is to violate the Gospel," etc., etc. This homily on humility did not, however, hinder this novice Church father from writing in the following spirit, a few days later, "As to certain stubborn refractories, as soon as they are discovered I will have them put out of the way." In his correspondence we find at times very curious specimens of despotism. On one occasion he ordered a Bishop to give such instructions as would *change the spirit of his diocese*. To change the spirit of a whole diocese seemed to him as easy as to change the uniform of his guard. He had but an imperfect conception of his impotence to rule in that

* See Appendix, note 44.

domain of *ideology*, for which he had indulged so much sarcasm and contempt. Finding himself unable to work changes of opinion by order, he resorted to the vulgar and arbitrary measures which characterize all tyranny. He arrested and incarcerated priests, and then inquired of his Minister of Worship for the canonical forms to degrade them. Later, and at the height of his contest with the Holy See, he spoke only of having the refractory priests shot. He formally declared that such would be the fate of all who respected the bull of excommunication. Happily these menaces were not executed, but it is not enough known that he treated the priests more than severely. Before the Concordat, a priest who had preached Ultramontaniam in the pulpit of St. Roch was thrust into an asylum as insane. The clergy of Paris having presented themselves at the Tuileries to make complaint to the First Consul, received this answer: "The Prefect has acted only by order of the government. I wished to show you that when I take the matter in hand it is necessary that the priests submit to the civil power." He took the matter in hand, it would seem, pretty often; for during his brief reign more than five hundred priests were imprisoned without trial. With the exception of shedding blood, he pursued in Church matters the worst revolutionary policy.

The Concordat had not reconciled the two hostile parties of the clergy, and this occasioned frequent arbitrary measures on the part of the government. It remains for us to show, that it succeeded no better in establishing lasting peace between France and the Holy

See. The Organic Articles were the first ferment of discord; for they had been made by one of the parties to the detriment of the other, without any antecedent understanding. We do not deny that the civil power was justifiable in taking precautions against the encroachments of the Papacy; this will always be necessary so long as the Pope is a temporal Prince. But what we do object to is, that the civil power should add at pleasure to the articles of a treaty just concluded, and thus profiting by its power, seize the lion's share. With his usual audacity the First Consul had pursued this very course, and had thus left in the heart of his late ally a bitterness utterly inconsistent with friendly relations. A treaty violated as soon as concluded, brings not peace but war. The good understanding continued so long as it seemed profitable to Napoleon, in order to obtain new concessions to the furtherance of his personal ambition. According to the playful expression of General Lafayette, he desired the *little phial*, and wished to astonish the world by causing to be consecrated by the hands of the Pope in Notre Dame, I will not say the representative, but the victorious son, of the French Revolution. He resorted to the same temptation to allure Pius VII. to yield to his views, by which he had induced him to sanction the Concordat. It is well known, the great positiveness which vague promises assume for those who are deeply interested in them. Nothing was easier than to delude the aged Pope, who felt conscientiously bound to use every effort to regain his lost territory. He would have run to the end of the world for the shadow of a lost province; he, therefore,

readily concluded, that to repair his losses was well worth the trouble of saying a mass in Paris, and so much the more as no sacrifice of conscience was required. It cannot be doubted that it was in the hope of regaining the territory which had been taken from him, that he resolved on the voyage to France; for, among other reasons, the petition which he presented to the government commenced thus: "We have a long while doubted whether, yielding to the repeated invitations of your Majesty to open to you the desires of our heart, we should make mention of the lands belonging to the Holy See." These words reveal the artfulness of the policy of the First Consul, who had induced the Pope to hope so much, without making any positive promise. The petition turns chiefly on the poverty of the Holy See, and the necessity which induced it to ask the restoration of its temporal dominions. The Holy Father promised Napoleon the glory of a Charlemagne, if he would imitate his munificence to the Church. Such were the hopes that procured the coronation of Napoleon. But Portalis respectfully declined the claims of the Pope, on the ground of the rights of the new government which had been established in Italy. These rights were, however, but very slightly respected when the Emperor wished to increase his own dominions. The Holy Father returned to Rome in bitter disappointment, and ill disposed to fresh concessions, which, however, the Emperor was soon going to ask.

Two incidents contributed to embitter the relations between Napoleon and the Pope. Joseph Bonaparte, *Joseph* the youngest of the Emperor's brothers, had married a

very beautiful and worthy American lady of Baltimore. This marriage had violently irritated the despot, who wished that henceforth his blood should be mingled only with that of the most ancient royal families. He asked the Pope to annul the marriage on the ground that it had been contracted with a Protestant. But the reasons for the divorce did not seem sufficient at Rome. The Holy Father showed himself more faithful to religious liberty than the so-called son of the Revolution. "The difference of worship," so wrote he to Paris, "considered by the Church as a reason for nullifying a marriage, does not verify itself between two baptized persons, even though one of them is not a Catholic." Napoleon insisted with emphasis, though without success.

The second incident was Napoleon's imperious desire of concluding between the new kingdom of Italy and the Pope, a Concordat which should be fully as favorable to the civil power as that of 1802. The Pope had a thousand reasons to be less in haste than he. Matters grew worse and worse. On the 13th of February, 1806, the Emperor wrote to the Pope a letter which was an insult to the whole Catholic Church. "Our relations ought to be such," so wrote Napoleon, "that your Holiness should have for me in temporal affairs the same regard that I have for you in the spiritual sphere. Your Holiness is sovereign of Rome, but I am its Emperor. All my enemies should be yours also. I am responsible to God, who has seen fit to use my arm for the restoration of religion; and how can I without bitter grief see its interests compromised by the mischievous

slowness of the Court of Rome? For the sake of worldly interests *you are letting souls perish.* Those shall answer for it before God, who are so zealous *in protecting Protestant marriages.*" The reader will not forget that it is the pretended representative of a revolution, made in the name of liberty, who speaks thus to the Roman hierarchy. What a strange change of role! The rest of the letter is in the same spirit. "Though at Rome whole days may be spent in guilty idleness," said he, "yet I, to whom God has given charge to watch over religion after its many assaults, cannot and will not remain indifferent to that which contributes to the weal and salvation of my people. I cannot allow to be delayed a whole year, that which should be done in two weeks." The Holy See responded with firmness, protesting especially against the claim of Napoleon of being Emperor of Rome. The Pope used the only powerful arm which remained to him: the refusal of bulls to confirm the newly-nominated Bishops sufficed to throw into commotion the whole Church of France. Already there was talk at Rome of excommunication. Napoleon determined to strike a grand blow. In a letter, which on this occasion he wrote to the Viceroy of Italy, he overpassed all bounds. He declared that the Pope who should excommunicate him would for him cease to be the true Pope, and that he would regard him only as antichrist, and thank God for his impotence. The following words reveal his disposition in regard to orthodoxy: "If such a thing should be done, I would separate my people from all communion with Rome, and I would establish such a

police as to stop all clandestine circulation of Papal documents. What does Pius VII. expect to gain from denouncing me to all Christendom, from excommunicating me? Does he think that then their arms will fall from the hands of my soldiers? The present Pope *took the trouble* to come to my coronation at Paris, but he wishes that I should restore him his lost territories. I could not and would not do it. The present Pope is even yet too powerful; priests are not fit for governing. Why will not the Pope render to Cesar the things of Cesar? Is he greater than Christ? The time may not be far distant, if he persists in giving me trouble, when I will no longer recognize his authority except as Bishop of Rome, and as only an equal to the Bishops of my government. I will not fear to call together in council the Gallican, the Italian, the German, and the Polish Churches for the purpose of *managing my affairs without a Pope*. The duties of the tiara are in fact only humiliation and prayer. Christ did not command pilgrimage to Rome, as Mohammed did to Mecca." This surely is admirable frankness. For the moment Napoleon is the representative of the Revolution, not that of Mirabeau, which proclaimed liberty of worship, but that which fabricated a State Church, and enslaved it beneath the foot of the State. For the nonce, he was but a crowned anarchist.

This was the precariousness of the condition created by the Concordat. The gravest interests of religion depended on the whims of a shrewd but changeable man, who earnestly espoused whatever policy the passion of the moment presented. His fertile genius was

expert in clothing his favorite idea of the moment with the most perfect reasonableness, and producing for the time being the most obstinate and sincere conviction. He thought himself fully justified in meddling with the delicate matters of the soul and conscience, and he settled them usually in such a rash and arbitrary manner as continually to involve himself in endless and dangerous strifes.

The result of the discussion of the Emperor with Rome is well known. The Pope, as soon as the general European war broke out, ceased to act as a faithful and reliable ally. And it would have been unreasonable to expect him to act otherwise—to espouse with warmth the cause of his oppressor. The enemies of France did not fail to intrigue with the Pope, but they only succeeded in compromising the little power which he still retained. The Papal city was occupied by French troops, at first provisionally, at the time of the invasion of Naples, and afterward definitively. On the 16th of March, 1808, the Papal troops were incorporated into the imperial army by virtue of an insolent decree. The Pope responded to these outrages in his Allocution of the 8th of July, expressing with emphasis his unshaken attachment to his people, and inviting the Emperor to give heed to wiser counsels. But this was only the prologue of the tragedy. The decree which united the Papal States to the empire accomplished the measure of bitterness which had been increasing from the day when the French soldiers crossed the threshold of the pontifical palace to arrest Cardinal Pacca, the secretary of his Holiness. The bull of excommunication, already a long

time prepared, was affixed to the walls of Rome. We regret to see in this bull complaints as to the non-restoration of the Papal territories. On that day it would have been wiser to forget the temporal prince, and to personate only the spiritual power in conflict with despotism. On this ground the Pope would have had a grand advantage over his enemy.

How profound the impression on the Catholic conscience which this violence of the Emperor must have produced throughout Christendom! But still worse than this military violence was the moral violence practiced at Savona, and afterward at Fontainebleau, on the aged and imprisoned Pope. By culpable persistency the Emperor succeeded, by the aid of some mercenary Prelates, in extorting from this captive Pontiff the disavowal of his own cause. The shameful Concordat concluded at Fontainebleau in 1813, which surrendered to the State all the liberties of the Church, is a much greater disgrace to the iron arm which imposed it than to the trembling hand by which it was signed. The authoritative dissolution of the Council held at Paris in 1811, on the day when it seriously recognized the spiritual sovereignty of the Holy Father; the banishing of the Cardinals who refused to violate the canon law by assisting at the second marriage of Napoleon; the captivity of Cardinal Pacca, as severe as the persecuted priests had previously suffered at Aix and Rochefort—all these intolerant measures reveal the triumph of the worst revolutionary passions under the monarchical restoration, and in the bosom of a servile but brilliant Court, presided over by an Austrian Archduchess.

The result of this Concordat is its own sufficient condemnation. We may apply to the profound politician who conceived it, the criterion which he himself always held as decisive, namely, that of success. Not only may we say to him, "You have trampled upon right and liberty; this we know touches you very little; but what is more, you have not succeeded." Moreover, he has confessed it himself, and in words which may well be cited at the close of this chapter. "When Napoleon," says M. de Pradt, "found himself involved in constantly-increasing religious strifes; when, after having labored to conciliate every thing, he found that he had only sown seeds of discord; when, after having counted on the support of the clergy, he found them full of prejudices against him; then he began to inquire why the result was so different from that which he had so confidently expected: and after collecting the sad fruit of his experience, he acknowledged with deep grief the mistake he had committed in occupying himself with religion otherwise than as an advocate of the liberty of worship. He often repeated, 'The greatest mistake of my reign is to have made the Concordat; but it is too late now to repent of it. One reaps only what one has sown.'"

While Napoleon was regretting the Concordat, one of the most intelligent representatives of the Papacy expressed singularly bold views as to the separation of the two powers, even at Rome. "However unwelcome might be the loss of the temporal domains of the Holy See," wrote Cardinal Pacca in his memoirs, "I was of opinion that the Lord would make it a great benefit to

the Church. I thought that the fall of the temporal power of the Popes would destroy, or at least enfeeble that jealousy and blind antipathy which exist almost every-where against the clergy and the Court of Rome; that the Pontiffs, delivered from the heavy-burdens of temporal cares, would consecrate thenceforth all their attention to the spiritual good of their flock; that the Church, deprived of the pomp of honors and riches, would no longer see the ranks of her clergy filled except by such as 'desire a good work;' and that the Popes would no longer have so much regard to rank and courtly recommendations in the choice of their councilors and ministers, and in the Papal promotions in general, of which one could often say that though the priesthood was multiplied, yet the joy of the Church was not increased. In fine, one would no longer have reason to fear that the ecclesiastical decisions might be influenced by unworthy political and material considerations."

Would to heaven that this experience, so dearly bought by both the contracting powers in the Concordat, had not so soon been lost! We would then not see as we do now, after the lapse of more than half a century, fully as many inextricable difficulties presented in the relations of the civil to the religious power, as existed at the close of the French Revolution.

CONCLUSION.

IN returning from Notre Dame after the solemnities in honor of the ratification of the Concordat, Napoleon made this remark: "Now the French Revolution is finished." This book has shown how erroneous was this view. Not only was the French Revolution not completed, but it had been arrested in the very net in which it had become entangled at the outset, and in some measure confirmed in its most fatal error. That which most decidedly had found its end, was the *régime* of intolerance and persecution; the legal equality of Protestantism with Catholicism was established irrevocably. But in respect to sincere religious liberty, the Revolution had scarcely begun. With the exception of a short and stormy period, during which the separation of Church and State had been proclaimed and realized with surprising success in the midst of great obstacles, the heavy hand of the civil power had not for a single moment ceased to weigh upon the religious conscience. And as this conscience is the ultimate fountain of liberty, despotism had taken the surest of precautions against all moral independence. Persecution had been succeeded by enslaving protection. The great corporations, which in the past had guaranteed some independence to the Church and nobility, had disappeared, and there remained as opposed to the State nothing but disarmed individuals, to whom all right of association and discussion was severely interdicted. Nothing was easier than for the civil power to shape at its pleasure this plastic

clay; but the State soon had reason to feel how fragile is every edifice constructed of such materials. The true cement was lacking, that of liberty, and liberty in its highest character, that of the soul. No, the Revolution was not complete in 1801.

Nor is it yet at this day. Neither general liberty nor religious liberty in particular, has received a sufficient consecration. On the first point, all disinterested friends of the liberal cause, of whatever school, are agreed, there being few indeed who are entirely satisfied with our present condition. The current of opinion in favor of larger and better guaranteed liberties is irresistible, whatever may be said or done to check it. Neither force nor favor will effectually check it for a single day. On the second point the interest is less lively; there is too much indifference as to religious liberty, and there are yet many so-called liberals who seem to fear it. It is certain that in the France of 1864 the liberty of worship does not exist. The Organic laws are still in force, and they put into the hand of the State a powerful means of cramping the Churches which it salaries. Every association for worship is under the necessity of procuring a previous authorization. And the government seems to regard it as among its sacred duties, jealously to watch over, and too often to check, all religious manifestations outside of the State Churches. The perplexing and vexatious contests which result from the traditional relations of the State and Church are incessantly renewed.

The experience of the reigns which preceded that of Napoleon III. would seem sufficiently conclusive. Was

not the Bourbon monarchy under Louis XVIII. and Charles X. in great part ruined by its close alliance with the ultra-Catholic party? Both the State and the Church lost credit by this pernicious political union. The monarchy of Louis Philippe cannot be admired either for its distrust of, or its concessions to, the same party. Its relations to the Catholic Church were often far from honest and frank, and it was rewarded by a disaffection which was very dangerous in the hour of trial. Under the present government the matter has been little better. A struggle, silent or open, and always dangerous, has from time to time broken out between the Church and the State, while the religious sentiment itself has either grown torpid, or been perverted too much to the defense of earthly interests. The clashing of personal interests in the midst of a sluggishness of convictions, a movement of intrigues in the absence of sober thought—such is the result of our abnormal condition.

The soul itself of France is bound and hampered by the administrative net-work which guards it on every side, and nowhere allows free expression, either by word or association, to political belief or to religious faith. Let the authorities beware. This moral captivity enervates the nation, and will finally either turn its activity into pernicious and base channels, of which a vile literature is the surest sign, or plunge it into the terrible distraction of war. It is time to emancipate this noble and generous soul of France, and to free the giant from the innumerable fetters with which it is bound, as if it were asleep in the land Lilliput. Such is the noble task

and the earnest aspiration of the true liberalism of to-day.

We could wish above all that it might escape from the grave misunderstanding which has induced it to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. Constitutional guarantees have high worth when there is any thing real to guarantee, namely, the positive liberty of the individual, his effectual protection in the exercise of all his rights and faculties. All effort will be in vain so long as our administrative system remains unchanged, so long as the citizen is sacrificed to the State. It is the sort of liberty that existed at Sparta, at Rome, and in the France of Napoleon I.; it is at bottom a despotism, all the more insupportable as it piques itself on being liberal. The first empire, though falling at Waterloo, yet left its political system deeply stamped on the national spirit. While retiring from the country it thrust back, like the Parthian, a mortal dart. This dart must be torn out of the vitals of the nation before we enjoy true liberty. Now as there is nothing more characteristic of this fatal system than the enslavement of religion, it is the safest course to begin the reform at this very point, and positively to arrest the empire of civil law as soon as it approaches the threshold of the domains of conscience. All liberalism which does not begin by enfranchising the conscience is counterfeit; it takes up and continues the fatal French tradition, that which prevailed from Louis XIV. to the time of the First Consul.

We have hoped to serve not only the cause of religion, but also that of liberalism in its highest interests, by disengaging from the confusion of facts, the great lesson

which results from the religious and ecclesiastical struggles of the French Revolution. This lesson is contained in that famous formula, *A free Church in a free State*, which imposes itself with more or less force on all generous spirits. Let it be well understood, there can be no free State without a free Church—I mean one that is entirely free, without salary, without fetters, without “organic laws,” and under the simple sway of the common law. Thus will be guaranteed against the encroachments of monarchical as well as of demagogic despotism, the sacred asylum of religious liberty, which is the fountain of all other liberties; and universal suffrage will be taught that for its tumultuous waves, as well as for the waves of the ocean, there is a higher authority which says, Thus far and no farther. The false idol of popular sovereignty, *Vox populi, vox Dei*, will be broken. Such a reform will react on the whole political organization, and will establish the true line of demarkation between the rights of government and the personal liberty of individuals. Then the Church, existing in its normal condition, and deriving its life from liberty, will find it to its highest interest to serve and defend the civil authority. Thus will be cemented that holy and fruitful alliance between religion and liberalism, the want of which was so fatal to the French Revolution, and the realization of which would inaugurate for our country the new and definitive era to which we aspire. Then, truly, the French Revolution will have been accomplished, for it will have emancipated the conscience, and made thereof the immovable rock upon which the whole State edifice

reposes. We will close by repeating the noble thought of Mirabeau: *God is as necessary as liberty for the French people.* The great orator was too much the child of his era to give to these words the whole of their significancy. It is for us, who have seen what he did not see, and who know how precarious is that liberty which is viewed only as a human right,—how prompt it is to grow feeble and venal;—it is for us, the heirs and admirers of that great Revolution which we desire to accomplish by correcting and completing it, to declare again with the fullness of absolute conviction, that God is indeed as necessary as liberty for the French people. Nothing but the Divine idea can safeguard liberty; and the necessary condition of this effectual guardianship is, that liberty itself be regarded as of God. Every thing, therefore, brings us back to the principle: A free Church in a free State.

A P P E N D I X.



These Notes are compiled from the "New American Cyclopedia," "Brockhaus's Real-Encyclopädie," "Herzog's Real-Encyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie," and various other sources.

NOTE 1.—VOLTAIRE. See page 25.

THIS notorious and profane wit was born at Paris, February 20, 1694. Educated under the direction of dissolute priests, his heart and mind were early perverted by the influence of bad examples and false philosophy. Subjected in his youth to several imprisonments for trifling offenses, he conceived a bitter hostility to arbitrary power, and gave abundant expression thereto both in his historical and in his anti-religious writings throughout his long life. Voltaire was not simply unbelieving, he was impious. His critical knowledge was superficial, and to supply this lack he resorted to ridicule and contempt, speaking of man without modesty, and of God without respect. He hesitated at nothing—lies, calumnies, or perfidious accusations; and so lacking was he in moral sentiment, that he was the first to laugh at his own unworthy acts. Though professing to believe in an eternal God, this being became in his hands a mere puppet, a blind fatality indifferent to the affairs of men. Condorcet says, "He remained in almost absolute doubt as to the personal existence of the soul after the death of the body." With all his bad qualities, however, he was not entirely destitute of virtues: he hated injustice, and loved humanity. Witness his efforts in behalf of the persecuted Calas and Labarre. When old age began to approach, sadness preyed upon his spirit. His popularity de-

clined, and strangers ceased to throng to his little court. The thought of death, which he could not always banish, was attended only with doubt and uncertainty. But he succeeded well in hiding his gloom under a laughing countenance; yet it was most real, and at times betrayed itself. "I have one thing more to say in my general confession," wrote he to a friend, "and that is, my gayety has always been forced." It was perhaps in one of these states of gloom that he became for a moment reconciled to the Catholic Church, and partook of the eucharist. Restored to health and hope, he was ashamed of himself, and represented the act to his friends as simply a daring parody on the mysteries of religion. But no one believed him; philosophers shrugged their shoulders and pitied him, while religious men were scandalized by the miserable profanation.

Wishing to see Paris again before he died, he set out from Ferney in his eighty-fifth year; but he arrived only to die, though he was welcomed with universal enthusiasm. From the streets, from the windows, resounded on every side, "Long live the savior of Calas!" "Long live the author of *Zaire*!" He was covered with garlands, and the people threw themselves at his feet and kissed his garments. But his triumph was of only a few weeks' duration. Princes and the great of the earth overwhelmed him with visits. "I am smothering," said he, "but with roses." Dr. Franklin, the American ambassador, visited him in the company of his grandson. "My son," said he, "fall upon your knees before this great man;" and Voltaire blessed the boy with the words, "God and liberty." He grew feebler, but was not suffered to die in peace. Priests surrounded him in his last agonies, and extorted from him a confession, in which he said, "If God disposes of me I die in the holy Catholic religion, in which I was born, hoping that Divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults; and if I have cast scandal upon the Church I ask pardon of it and of God." The expiring life flickered once more, and the sick man recanted. In his last moments he is said to have withstood a priest who asked of him, "Do you believe in the Di-

vinity of Jesus Christ?' "For God's sake," replied Voltaire, "speak no more of that man, and let me die in peace." Among his latest words are said to have been these: "I die worshiping God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, but detesting superstition." Though some of these details are contested, it is still certain that this great man died May, 1778, without the sacraments, and amid unspeakable convulsions.

The Archbishop of Paris forbade his burial in consecrated ground, and it was with the greatest difficulty that his friends were able to give his body secret interment in an obscure village church remote from Paris. The French government was equally ungenerous. It forbade the newspapers to notice his death, the theaters to play his pieces, and the Academy to pronounce his eulogy. But his old friend, Frederick of Prussia, caused the Berlin Academy to do him honor, and the Empress Catharine II. of Russia openly mourned the event.

The indignity offered to his remains by the priests and the government explains, and apologizes in part for, the extraordinary honor subsequently rendered to his name by the revolutionists. The obscure church in which he was buried was sold, and the cities of Troyes and Romilly contested for the honor of possessing his bones. Paris, where he had died, now petitioned the Constituent Assembly that his body might be brought back and buried in the Pantheon, that cathedral of philosophy. It was granted, and on July 11, 1791, the authorities went in a body to the city gate to welcome his mortal remains. The coffin was placed on the site of the Bastille, and exposed to the multitudes the rest of the day. The next day the body of Voltaire was mounted on a triumphal car drawn by twelve magnificently caparisoned white horses, and drawn in procession through the city toward the Pantheon. The National Assembly and all the chief official bodies of the city surrounded, preceded, or followed the sarcophagus. Nothing could surpass the enthusiasm of the day, or the fulsome laudations that were devoted to the memory of the great scoffer by the unbelieving generation of the Revolution.—See "Methodist Quarterly," October, 1866.

NOTE 2.—ROUSSEAU. See page 39.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, the French skeptic whose writings played such an important part in occasioning and in perverting the French Revolution, was born at Geneva, June 28, 1712. His father being an erratic watchmaker, and his mother having died at his birth, he was brought up by an aunt. Plutarch, Richardson, Grotius, and Tacitus were the favorite authors of his boyhood. An apprentice at the age of fifteen, he fled from his hard master, and finally found a home in the house of a Madame Warens, who gave him facilities for education, corrupted his morals, and induced him to renounce Calvinism, in which he had been raised, and embrace Romanism. In this home he spent several years in the study of Latin, music, and general literature. In 1741, at the age of twenty-nine, he came to Paris, led a life of shame, and supported himself by his pen. As yet, however, he was unknown to the great public. In 1749 the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for an essay on the question, Whether the progress of science and art had improved or corrupted the morals of mankind? Rousseau eagerly caught the subject, and assailed the cause of civilization in strains of impassioned eloquence. He gained the prize, and created an extraordinary sensation.

He was immediately regarded as one of the greatest men of the age, and, though awkward in manner, admitted into all circles of society. In 1753, returning to Geneva, he was welcomed to his native city with marks of the highest respect. Here, in order to regain his rights as citizen, he again changed his religion, and embraced Calvinism. But he was not long in the enjoyment of his happiness. His jealous disposition involved him in bickerings with Voltaire. Soon after, he quarreled with his infidel friends Grimm and Diderot. About this time, when fifty years of age, he published his two most celebrated works, *Emile* and the *Contrat Social*, in which he violently assailed the political principles of the day, as well as the cause of civilization in general. These brought upon him

a shower of what he regarded as unjust persecution. The parliament of Paris pronounced *Emile* impious and blasphemous, ordered it to be burned by the hangman, and called for the arrest of the author. He fled to Geneva; but Geneva, imitating Paris, expelled him from the Republic. Fleeing to Neuchatel, he was soon involved in quarrels with the Calvinists, and forced again to escape. Hoping to find rest in a little island in Lake Biene, he was, on the contrary, immediately ordered to depart by the Senate of Berne. He now accepted the invitation of Hume, who offered him an asylum in England. But suspicion toward his new friend soon arose in the diseased mind of Rousseau. Angry correspondence followed. Mr. Hume closed it with a letter whose last words were a cold, contemptuous, eternal farewell. How different the feelings of these two foes of religion, from those of Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley during and at the close of their temporary estrangement! Rousseau hastened to France, and after leading a vagabond life from city to city, ever imagining himself surrounded by spies and enemies, finally reached Paris. This was in 1770. Here he spent nearly the whole of the remaining eight years of his life. But he was very unhappy. His misanthropy continually increased, and occasionally led him to acts bordering on insanity. Desirous to escape the noise of the city, he accepted the offer of a friend, and retired to Ermenonville, not far from Paris, but lived only a few weeks longer. The accounts of his death, which occurred July 2, 1778, in his sixty-seventh year, are conflicting. Some say that he died of apoplexy after a morning walk, others that he shot himself; others that, dying in full possession of his senses, he asked to be borne to the window, and casting his eyes upon the luxuriant landscape and the serene sky, bade a calm adieu to the world.

As to the moral character of Rousseau there can be but one opinion—it was detestable. He was a lawless enthusiast, leading a life of open shame. His life was strangely inconsistent with his own favorite theories. A railer against the refinements of civilization, he was only satisfied when moving amid the artificiality of Paris. An opponent of theaters, he

wrote for them operas and dramas. An antagonist of religious persecution, he assigned the penalty of death for all who dissented from his new religion of Deism. A pretended discoverer of a more humane system of education for youth, he ruthlessly abandoned his five children to the uncertain and cold charities of the foundling asylum. The woman with whom he lived the last thirty years of his life was a dull, uninteresting person. After having lived together twenty years, they were finally married in form. Such was the man whose writings did so much toward shaping the French Revolution. As in the case of Voltaire, his bones were borne in triumph to the Pantheon.

NOTE 3.—TALLEYRAND. See page 46.

This brilliant statesman, but unworthy priest, was born at Paris January 13, 1754. The eldest son of one of the first noble families of Southern France, his childhood was neglected. Receiving in youth a hurt causing lameless for life, his birthright was given to a younger brother, and himself destined to the Romish priesthood. Neglecting his theological studies at the seminary of St. Sulpice, he was introduced to society in 1774 as an abbot, and soon manifested such lawless propensities as to occasion several months of imprisonment in the Bastille. Changing his course, however, he soon became a friend of Necker, Mirabeau, and Calonne, and in 1787 was a member of the House of Notables. The next year he was made Bishop of Autun, with a salary of sixty thousand francs. A clerical Deputy in the Constituent Assembly, he was a supporter of the most radical liberal measures. It was he who proposed the great patriotic festival of July 14, 1790; and on this solemnity, aided by two hundred priests, who wore the national colors over their white robes, he officiated at the great altar which had been erected on the *Champ de Mars*. His liberal course in politics and religion caused him to be excommunicated by the Pope. On the fall of the King he fled

to England, and thence to the United States, where he amassed quite a fortune, and studied American institutions. Through Madame de Staël's influence the Convention allowed him to return to France, and in 1797 he became Minister of Foreign Affairs. When Bonaparte returned from Egypt, he procured an interview between him and Sieyès, induced Barras to resign, and thus greatly contributed to the *coup d'état* of Brumaire 18, 1799, which laid the corner-stone of the Empire. Under Bonaparte he was Minister of Foreign Affairs for eight years. Released from excommunication and from his clerical vows in 1804, he formally took as his wife Madame Grant, with whom he had already lived the last seven years. Toward the close of Napoleon's career he became estranged from him, and in his hour of adversity contributed to his downfall. So skillful had been his management, that at the fall of the Empire he was perhaps the most popular man in France, and he came in for a large share of favor under Louis XVIII. and Louis Philippe. Toward the close of life he returned to religious practices, and in 1838 died, reconciled to the Church, at the ripe age of eighty-four.

The moral character of this actor in the Revolution is evidently none of the best. His great trait was flexibility of principle, or at least of conduct. Though it has been well remarked that, when personal interest did not forbid, he always remained true to the generous principles of liberty which inspired his youth. The weak point of his character was avarice. Many shrewd sayings are attributed to him, and among others this, which has become a sort of motto for diplomatists, namely, that *the principal object of language is to conceal thought*.

NOTE 4.—SIEYÈS. See page 46.

This revolutionary priest and statesman was born at Frejus in 1748, and died at Paris in 1836. Having taken orders, he received a canonship in Brittany in 1784, but as the Revolution drew near devoted his whole attention to politics and

philosophy. A member of the first Assembly, he contributed largely to the triumph of liberal principles. Though protesting against the trial of the King, he yielded to the current, and voted for his death. In 1799 he conspired with Bonaparte to overthrow the Directory, though between these men there existed a mutual personal enmity. On the restoration of the Bourbons he was banished as a regicide, and retired to Brussels; but after the Revolution of July, 1830, he returned to Paris, and after spending in retirement the last few years of his eventful life, died at the advanced age of eighty-eight.

Of the character and principles of Sieyès, Mignet expresses himself thus: "Matured by solitude and philosophical studies, he was adapted to create a sect and sway a wide influence in a time of commotion. He thoroughly knew the springs of society. Cool in temperament, ardent for truth, he was autocratic, disdainful, and impatient of contradiction. With him half truth was error. He imparted his ideas to others, and shrouded himself in a sort of mystery. He had more disciples than colleagues. The first Constitution was almost wholly of his own creation." As opposed to this opinion of the philosopher Mignet, Talleyrand is said to have regarded Sieyès as not profound; and Bonaparte is reported to have said that he would readily sell his visionary theories for a good round sum.



NOTE 5.—GREGORY. See page 47.

Henry Gregory, [Grégoire,] the radical republican, and perhaps the most noble evangelical Christian actor in the French Revolution, was born in 1750, and owed his early education to the Jesuits. After having studied at Nancy, and before taking orders, he served some time as a teacher. Having called to himself public attention by a book in the interest of the Jews, he was chosen in 1789 as a clerical Deputy to the National Assembly. A member of the Breton Club, out of which the Jacobin was afterward developed, he advocated radical changes both in Church and State. He even went so far as to

say once, that to be a King was a mortal sin. As Bishop of Blois in the Constitutional Church, his services for religion are a precious heritage of the universal Church. With him politics and religion were closely allied. He was liberal in politics, because he was warmly evangelical in religion. At the head of the French clergy when Bonaparte came to power, he would doubtless, by the aid of his colleagues, soon have introduced evangelical reforms in the Catholic Church of France, had not the First Consul, in his ambition to be crowned by the Pope, destroyed the happily-begun work; and reintroduced the full sway of the Papacy with all its abuses. When all the Bishops resigned, in order that Bonaparte might nominate them anew, or others in their place, Gregory's name was left out. Under Napoleon he was afterward a Senator, and on the restoration of the Bourbons lived in privacy, devoted to religious and scientific studies.

Gregory was true to his principles to the last, and died in Paris, May 28, 1831, at the age of eighty, without having recalled the oath which he took in 1791. Despite the prohibition of the Archbishop of Paris, faithful priests administered to him the last rites of the Church.

NOTE 6.—MIRABEAU. See page 54.

Of the life of this world-renowned character a mere note can contain but meager outlines. Born of noble parentage in Provence, March 9, 1749, he was treated by a tyrant father with great brutality, and his moral education was utterly neglected. For youthful crimes he was several times confined in gloomy dungeons. Disowned by his father, he turned to literature, and led a life of crime. From his career of unparalleled excess and wretchedness, the outbreak of the Revolution called him to a brief career of triumph and glory. Rejected by the nobility because he possessed no fief of his own, he threw himself upon the people, and was sent from Aix as Deputy to the States-General. His extraordinary activity now

soon destroyed his already broken constitution. On returning from the sitting of March 27, 1791, in which he had made five speeches, his physician, Cabanis, saw immediately that his end was at hand. He lingered but a few days. After a night of terrific sufferings, at day-break he addressed his friend Cabanis: "My friend, I shall die to-day. When one has come to such a juncture there remains only one thing to be done; that is, to be perfumed, crowned with flowers, and intoxicated with music, in order sweetly to enter into that slumber from which there is no awaking." Ordering his bed to be brought to the window, he looked with rapture at the brightness of the sun and the freshness of his garden. "If this be not God," said he, "it is like him."

He died at eight o'clock the same evening, April 2, 1791. All Paris mourned him. The funeral was, if we except that of Napoleon, December 15, 1840, the grandest which France has ever beheld. At the close of the services at St. Eustache, twenty thousand fire-arms were discharged at once. Every window was shattered, and the people feared that the church would fall in upon the coffin. The body of the great man was then borne in triumph to the Pantheon.

As to Mirabeau's character, Lamartine says: "At the foot of the tribune he was a man devoid of shame or virtue; in the tribune, he was an honest man. The chilling materialism of his age had crushed in his heart the expansion, force, and craving for imperishable things. Neither his character, acts, nor thoughts have the impress of immortality. If he had believed in God he might have died a martyr."

NOTE 7.—RABAUT ST. ETIENNE. See page 63.

Rabaut St. Etienne was a Protestant clergyman, and one of the most consistent and honorable of the revolutionists. He was born at Nimes in 1741, and executed at Paris, December 5, 1793. He was an eloquent speaker and writer, and had the courage to protest against the right of the Convention to try

the King. He was involved in the fall of the Girondists. He fell a victim to the cause of truth and liberty.

NOTE 8.—JAMES NECKER. See page 68.

James Necker, the famous French financier, was born of a German family at Geneva, in 1732. He amassed immense wealth as a banker, and obtained celebrity as a political and religious writer. A Protestant himself, he married the talented daughter of a Swiss Pastor, and became the father of the celebrated Madame de Staël. He died at Copet, near Geneva, in 1804.

NOTE 9.—BARNAVE. See page 71.

A. P. J. M. Barnave, born at Grenoble in 1761, was a Protestant, and became celebrated for his eloquence and liberalism in the early period of the Revolution. Foreseeing the Reign of Terror, he generously endeavored to save the King, but fell himself before the sweeping torrent of popular madness. Brought before the bloody tribunal of Tinville, he defended himself with such power as to bring even Camille Desmoulins to tears. Arrived at the scaffold, he raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed, "Behold at length the reward for all I have done for liberty!" He was guillotined November 29, 1793, at the age of thirty-one.

NOTE 10.—PETION. See page 72.

Jerome Pétion, born at Chartres, 1753, distinguished himself in the early part of the Revolution as a violent anarchist. Elected to the mayoralty of Paris over Lafayette, he participated in the insurrection of August 10, and made no effort to check the dreadful massacres of September. The first President of the Convention, he showed signs of a milder policy, and be-

came involved in the fate of the Girondists. Escaping from Paris, and failing to raise an insurrection of the people, he wandered about for some months, and, having either starved or shot himself, was finally found in a field half devoured by wolves.

NOTE 11.—LAMETH. See page 80.

Three brothers of this name took part in the Revolution. They had all taken service under Lafayette in the American war. 1. Alexander served in the first Assembly of France, fled with Lafayette, was imprisoned in Prussia, and returned and held office under the Consulate. He died 1829. 2. Charles, the next in importance, born 1757, among the first of the nobles to join the Third Estate, was a moderate revolutionist, and fled his country in 1792; but returning in 1800 he took military service under Napoleon, and died a partisan of Louis Philippe in 1832. 3. Theodore, like his brothers, a Constitutionalist, fled to Switzerland during the Reign of Terror. He died in 1837, aged eighty-one.

NOTE 12.—ROBESPIERRE. See page 89.

This notorious Terrorist was born at Arras in 1759. His mother dying in his childhood, and his father neglecting him, he was thrown on the public, and received his education from the charity of some priests, who enabled him to study eight years at the college of *Louis le Grand* at Paris. Returning to Arras he began the practice of law, and it is curious enough to notice that his first important case was a defense of the introduction of Franklin's lightning rods against the charge of impiety, (1783.) Lamartine describes him as of slight figure, angular limbs, shrill voice, forehead small and projecting, eyes sunken and blue, wide nostrils, large mouth, thin lips, pointed chin, and complexion sallow and livid. A Deputy of the Third Estate in 1789, he was marked from the beginning as a

theoretical radical. Of slender means, he occupied poor, ill-furnished lodgings, sent one fourth of his meager pay of eighteen francs a day to his sister, and appeared in the tribune in a threadbare olive-green coat, the only one he possessed. On the death of Mirabeau he rose rapidly in influence. From June, 1791, to April, 1792, he held the office of Public Accuser. Though not a member of the Legislative Assembly, he was none the less influential as an officer in the municipality, and as an orator of the Jacobins. In the Convention he led the Jacobins in bringing the King to trial and execution. From this time till his fall he was a sort of king of the Terrorists. Arrested and condemned by the Convention as a conspirator, he was rescued by the Jacobins and taken to the *Hôtel de Ville*. Disappointed in his expectation that the populace would enable him to overturn the Convention, he was arrested and guillotined July 29, 1794, at the age of thirty-six.

The closing scene of his life I copy from Alison: "Henriot descended the stair of the Hotel de Ville, but seeing the square deserted he vented his execrations on his faithless followers, who had for the most part abandoned the King in the same manner on the 10th of August, and hastened back to his comrades. The conspirators finding themselves unsupported gave themselves up to despair. The National Guard rushed rapidly up the stairs, and entered the room where Robespierre and the other leaders of the revolt were assembled. Robespierre was sitting with his elbow on his knees, and his head resting on his hand. Meda discharged his pistol, which broke his under jaw, and he fell under the table. St. Just implored Le Bas to put an end to his life. 'Coward, follow my example,' said he, and blew out his brains. Couthon was seized under a table, feebly attempting to strike with a knife, which he wanted the courage to plunge in his heart. Coffinhal and the younger Robespierre threw themselves from the windows, and were seized in the inner court of the building. Henriot had been thrown down the stairs by Coffinhal; but though bruised and mutilated, he contrived to crawl into the entrance

of a sewer, from whence he was dragged out by the troops of the Convention. Robespierre and Couthon being supposed to be dead were dragged by the heels to the Quai Pelletier, where it was proposed to throw them into the river; but it being discovered when day returned that they still breathed, they were stretched on a board and carried to the Assembly. The members having refused to admit them, they were conveyed to the Committee of General Safety, where Robespierre lay for nine hours stretched on a table, the same with that where he had signed the death warrant of so many noble citizens, with his broken jaw still bleeding, and suffering alike under bodily pain and the execrations and insults of those around him.

“During the whole time that this cruel torture lasted he evinced a stoical apathy. Foam merely issued from his mouth, which the humanity of some around him led them to wipe off; but his finger still with convulsive energy was fixed on the holster of the pistol which he had not had the courage to discharge. From thence he was sent to the Conciergerie, where he was confined in the same cell which had been occupied by Danton, Hébert, and Chaumette. At length he was brought with all his associates to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and as soon as the identity of their persons was established they were condemned.

“At four in the morning on the 29th of July all Paris was in motion to witness the death of the tyrant. He was placed on the chariot between Henriot and Couthon, whose remains were as mutilated as his own. The crowd, which had long ceased to attend the executions, manifested the utmost joy at their fate. He was conducted to the Place de la Revolution; the scaffold was placed on the spot where Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had suffered. The blood from his jaw burst through the bandage and overflowed his dress; his face was ghastly pale. He shut his eyes, but he could not close his ears against the imprecations of the multitude. A woman, breaking from the crowd, exclaimed, ‘Murderers of all my kindred, your agony fills me with joy; descend to hell covered with

the curses of every mother in France?' Twenty of his comrades were executed before him. When he ascended the scaffold the executioner tore the bandage from his face; the lower jaw fell upon his breast, and he uttered a yell which filled every heart with horror. For some minutes the frightful figure was held up to the multitude; he was then placed under the ax, and the last sounds which reached his ears were the exulting shouts, which were prolonged for some minutes after his death.

"Along with Robespierre were executed Henriot, Couthon, St. Just, Dumas, Coffinhal, Simon, and all the leaders of the revolt. St. Just alone displayed the firmness which had so often been witnessed among the victims whom they had sent to the scaffold. Couthon wept with terror. The others died uttering blasphemies, which were drowned in the cheers of the people. They shed tears for joy, they embraced each other in transport; they crowded round the scaffold to behold the bloody remains of the tyrants. 'Yes, Robespierre, there is a God,' said a poor man as he approached the lifeless body of one so lately the object of dread. His fall was felt by all present as an immediate manifestation of the Divinity."

NOTE 13.—CAMILLE DESMOULINS. See page 84.

This man, who was born in Picardy in 1762, and guillotined in Paris, April 5, 1794, was one of the most active and interesting characters of the whole French Revolution. He was a schoolmate of Robespierre, and an intimate friend of Marat and Danton. Scarcely equaled as a popular orator, he was yet more powerful as a satirical journalist. After contributing largely to bring the Revolution to the Reign of Terror he became finally sick of its excesses, and for the purpose of bringing about a milder policy, established in January, 1794, a journal called the *Old Cordelier*. His eloquent denunciations of the policy of the extremists now brought upon him the wrath of Robespierre and the Jacobins. When Robespierre

proposed that his writings should be burned, Desmoulins exclaimed in indignation, "To burn is not to answer," and from that hour his fate was sealed. Once condemned to death, he spent his remaining hours alternately in reading Rousseau and the "Night Thoughts" of Young, in making sarcastic allusions to his enemies, and in weeping at the thought of being separated from his worthy and beautiful wife, Lucile. When the executioners came, he demeaned himself like a madman. All the way to the scaffold he harangued the crowd, imploring rescue. Among his last words were, "Behold the reward of the first apostle of liberty. But the monsters who murder me will not survive me long. Send this lock of hair to my mother-in-law." His adored wife was executed a few days later.

NOTE 14.—PIUS VI. See page 119.

This unfortunate Prelate was born in Italy in 1717, and died in Valence, France, August 29, 1799. He was elected to the Papal chair in 1775. He had scarcely settled his difficulties with the Emperor of Austria when he found a greater enemy in the French Republic. Dethroned by the French general, Berthier, February 15, 1798, he was conducted to France, and imprisoned at Valence. He was graceful, affable, and learned. His reign had been mild, and, as compared to those of other Popes, even liberal.

NOTE 15.—BRIENNE. See page 124.

Loménie de Brienne, a French politician and Cardinal, born 1724, deceased in Paris February 14, 1794, was made Minister of Finance in 1787, but lost all credit in a few months, and was dismissed. He was arrested by the revolutionists in 1794, and treated with such barbarity that he died the same night of apoplexy.

NOTE 16.—GOBEL. See page 124.

This weak and cowardly Archbishop of Paris early embraced the Revolution, and often brought contempt both upon himself and his cause. He was seventy years of age when, under the pressure of fear, he abjured the Christian religion, and sacrificed in his own Cathedral Church to the Goddess of Reason. He was arrested and condemned to death as an Atheist in 1794. During his imprisonment his genuine convictions, as far as he had any, regained the ascendancy, and he sought consolation by returning to the religion which he had so shamelessly disavowed. On his way to the scaffold he earnestly recited the prayers for the dying.

NOTE 17.—LANJUINAIS. See page 134.

This French jurist and statesman was born at Rennes in 1753, and died in Paris in 1827. One of the most gifted members of the Constituent Assembly, and of the Convention, he was a thorough Republican; but siding with the Girondists, he was outlawed in June, 1793. He succeeded, however, in secreting himself for eighteen months in a closet in his own house until the storm had passed. Though faithful to his principles, he accepted favors from Napoleon, and afterward from Louis XVIII. He was versed in the Oriental languages, and among many other honors, was made a member of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia. Lamartine says of him, "He was a Christian philosopher, his revolutionary ideas being but a form of his evangelical faith."

NOTE 18.—BAILLY. See page 135.

This philosopher and statesman, whose abuse and sufferings in the hour of death will excite the indignation and sympathy of mankind to the latest generations, was born at Paris in 1736, and executed November 12, 1793, in the same city.

After having led a quiet, scholarly life till his fiftieth year, he was suddenly thrown into the tumult of politics in 1789. His noble conduct as first president of the Constituent Assembly, and later as Mayor of Paris, is well known. Retiring before the storm in September, 1791, he was arrested and brought to Paris in 1793. His execution is described by Lamartine in substance as follows: "His punishment was simply a protracted assassination. His head bare, his hair cut off, his hands tied behind him with a large rope, his body covered only by a thin shirt beneath a freezing sky, he slowly traversed the city of Paris, the scum of the capital raging like an insulting torrent around the death cart. Men carried at his side a red flag at the end of a long pole. This they dipped from time to time in the filth of the gutters and dashed it then into Bailly's face. Others spit upon him. His features, lacerated and soiled with filth and blood, almost lost the human form. This awful march to death lasted three hours. Arrived at the Field of Mars, which the populace had designated as the place of his sufferings, he was forced to walk around the field on foot, and even to kiss the ground itself. But here a new whim seized the mob. They ordered the guillotine to be taken down, and to be reconstructed close to the Seine upon a dung-heap accumulated from the sewers of Paris. The monsters loaded the old man's shoulders with beams, and compelled him to drag himself along under the weight. On the way he fainted. He was now compelled to watch for another hour the reconstruction of the scaffold. Meantime rain and snow fell, and his body was chilled with cold. But the soul of the martyr of liberty trembled not. He pitied his degraded persecutors, and confided himself to immortality." His history of astronomy is still a standard work.

NOTE 19.—THE GIRONDISTS. See page 143.

The severe fate of these rash, inexperienced, but sincere revolutionists will always render them a subject of tender

interest. As a whole they were not Christians. They were deterred from the Church as they then saw it, by their earnest love of freedom; but their hearts were full of noble aspirations. While in prison awaiting the hour of execution their thoughts were necessarily turned to the question of immortality. Some of their last words, as reported by Lamartine, are interesting. From him I select as follows: "What shall we be doing to-morrow at this time?" asked Ducos toward the morning of the last day. Each had a different reply. 'We shall sleep after the fatigues of the day,' replied some. Fonfrède, Gensonné, Carra, Fauchet, and Brissot spoke in confidence of the immortality of the soul. 'We are not sublime dupes,' said Vergniaud, 'but beings who obey their moral instinct, and who, when they have fulfilled this duty, suffer, or enjoy, in immortality the destinies of humanity. Let us die, then, not with hope, but with assurance. Death is but the greatest act of life, since it gives birth to a higher state of existence.' Daylight began to pour into the windows. 'Let us go to bed,' said Ducos; 'life is such a trifling thing that it is not worth the hour of sleep we lose in regretting it.' 'Let us watch,' said Lasource; 'eternity is so certain and so terrible that a thousand lives would not suffice to prepare for it.' A pious priest, Lambert, attended the prisoners. When Brissot saw him he sprang to him, but declined his offices. To the question, 'Do you believe in the immortality of the soul, and the providence of God?' he replied, 'I do believe in them, and it is because I believe in them that I am about to die.' Fauchet, the unfaithful Bishop, confessed his sins, and received absolution. Then he in turn heard the confession of Sillery, and pronounced his absolution. But the terrible death-cart arrived, and, each leaving some little legacy—a watch, or a lock of hair—to wife or friend, they went forth, and bravely perished for the cause of liberty.

NOTE 20.—COUTHON. See page 155.

Georges Couthon, one of the worst and most violent characters of the Revolution, was born in 1756, and executed July 28, 1794. He was one of the most extreme of the radicals. He was largely guilty of the blood of the Girondists, stood by St. Just and Robespierre in the Committee of Public Safety, and when the hour of trial came tried to stab himself, but, lacking the courage, was borne to the guillotine.

NOTE 21.—ROLAND. See page 170.

This stern, philosophic, political extremist was born at Lyons in 1732, and committed suicide November 15, 1793. He was involved in the fate of the Girondists. He escaped arrest, however; but a few days later learning of the execution of his gifted wife, he deliberately resolved not to survive her, and going out upon the public road, seated himself at the foot of a tree and stabbed himself with his cane-sword. In his pocket was found a paper with these curious words: "Whoever thou art that findest these remains, respect them as those of a man who consecrated his life to usefulness, and who dies as he has lived, virtuous and honest. On hearing of my wife's death I would not live another day upon this earth so stained with crimes." His wife's last words breathe a similar spirit: "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" Both of them were examples of ancient Roman, rather than of Christian, virtue.

NOTE 22.—LEGENDRE. See page 172.

Legendre was one of the coarsest actors in the Revolution. His previous life of sailor and butcher seem to have added to his natural ferocity. He was active in the taking of the Bastille, in the invasion of the Tuileries June 20, 1792, in the

founding of the Cordelier Club, and in the Committee of Public Safety. Subsequently becoming more moderate, he acted as a member of the Council of the Five Hundred. He died in 1797, and, by bequeathing his own body to the surgeons for dissection, made it seem less strange that he had proposed to cut up that of Louis XVI., and divide it among the eighty-six Departments of France.

NOTE 23.—MARAT. See page 193.

Marat was a sort of plebeian Nero. Born in 1746 in Switzerland, he had early obtained some reputation for proficiency in philosophy and medicine. In the early part of the Revolution he became noted as a demagogue journalist. His thirst for vulgar popularity was only equalled by his thirst for blood. His propositions, to hang at one time eight hundred Deputies on as many trees of the Tuileries, to execute two hundred and seventy thousand suspected persons to appease the people, and that all the towns of France should imitate the massacres of Paris, are simple examples of his general spirit. On the defeat of Dumouriez, he proposed trying all the generals *en masse* for treason. For various excesses he was at one time brought to trial, but the demagogue tribunal acquitted him. By his very excesses in wickedness, and by his pandering to the populace, he finally arrived at dictatorial influence, and disposed of the lives of men at will. At last courage arose out of despair, and a noble young woman, Charlotte Corday, assassinated him July 13, 1793, thus freeing the world of a monster, and France of a remorseless tyrant. But it is the shame of the human race that after his death he was for a time almost worshiped. After the fall of Robespierre, however, his remains, which had been placed in the Pantheon, were taken thence and cast into a public sewer.

NOTE 24.—BARRÈRE. See page 193.

Barrère, a brilliant but unprincipled revolutionist, was born in 1755, and died at Paris 1841, aged eighty-six. He was a leader of the Jacobins, and the author of several expressions which became very popular, such as, "The tree of liberty grows only when watered by the blood of tyrants," and "It is only the dead who do not come back again." A coward, he fawned upon Robespierre so long as he was powerful, but on his fall required only one day to go over to the other political pole. Rejected by Napoleon, he was compelled to live in exile in Belgium, but the Revolution of 1830 allowed him to return to France.

NOTE 25.—CONDORCET. See page 196.

Condorcet, a materialistic theorist, with unbounded confidence in the perfectibility of science, was born in 1743. He was involved in the fall of the Girondists, and poisoned himself in 1794 to escape the guillotine.

NOTE 26.—COLLOT D'HERBOIS. See page 200.

Collot d'Herbois, born in 1750, at first an actor, became afterward one of the most sanguinary of revolutionists. Sent to Lyons with Fouché to punish the inhabitants for revolting, he found the guillotine too slow, and, collecting the prisoners in ranks, caused them to be mown down by cannon shot. He confessed that on one occasion sixty were cut down by a single shot. He was a licentious drunkard, without a redeeming trait. Banished to Cayenne with other scoundrels in 1795, he died soon after in terrible torments from having drunk a bottle of brandy while suffering from yellow fever.

NOTE 27.—LEBON. See page 200.

Lebon, at first a humane priest, caught the intoxication of revolution, and finally became one of the worst of Terrorists, mingling beastly profligacy with unquenchable bloodthirstiness. He was guillotined in 1795 at the age of thirty.

NOTE 28.—CLOOTZ. See page 201.

Jean Baptiste Cloutz, self-styled Anacharsis, a Prussian baron, born at Cleves in 1755, and guillotined at Paris, March 23, 1794, was a fanatical revolutionist and maudlin philanthropist, for whom, in point of consistent absurdity, a parallel is scarcely to be found in the whole scope of history. Educated from childhood in Paris, and without any healthful restraint on his enthusiastic and imaginative nature, he early conceived the idea of reforming the human race, and actually made journeys in England, Germany, and Italy for its propagation. Returning to France in 1789, he was made a French citizen by the Legislative Assembly, and expressed his thanks therefor in the following words: "Charles I. had a successor, Louis XVI. will have none. You know how to appreciate the heads of the philosophers; it now only remains to set a price on the heads of tyrants." For the cause of the Revolution he lavished freely his immense income, and offered to raise, himself, a regiment of Prussians. As member of the Convention, he voted for the King's death "in the name of mankind," and added, "I condemn likewise the infamous Frederick William II. to death." To his political fanaticism he joined the intensest hatred of Christianity, declaring himself publicly the "personal enemy of Jesus Christ." Involved with Hébert and Chaumette in the charge of corrupting the public morals, he was guillotined by the very mob-régime for which he had shown so much fanatical devotion.

NOTE 29.—CAMBON. See page 205.

Cambon was a violent Jacobin, who contributed to the fall of Robespierre, and finally managed to outlive the Revolution. He died in exile at Brussels in 1820, aged sixty-six.

NOTE 30.—CUSTINE. See page 211.

Custine, a French nobleman, who ardently embraced the Revolution, had imbibed the spirit of Liberty with Lafayette in America. The reward he obtained for all his sacrifices was, death at the hands of the Terrorist tribunal on a groundless charge of treason. Whatever his life may have been, he died like a Christian.

NOTE 31.—CHAUMETTE. See page 212.

Chaumette was an obscene Atheist-Terrorist, born in 1765, who figured largely in the darkest period of the Reign of Terror. He rejected his Christian name, and played the high priest in the worship of Reason in Notre Dame. He boasted that he could recognize the traitors by their very looks as they passed in the streets. He was swept into eternity with the rest of the vile atheistic herd, March 24, 1794.

NOTE 32.—HÉBERT. See page 213.

This man, who gave his name to the atheistic party, and is generally classed with Cloutz and Chaumette for moral infamy, was born in 1755, and executed in 1794. He obtained notoriety as the editor of a low journal, *Père Duchêne*, proposed obscene questions to the Queen on her trial, and played a

large part in the great massacres. Atheism might well dispense with the honor of having had such a man for priest and apostle.

NOTE 33.—FOUCHÉ. See page 229.

Fouché, at first a teacher of philosophy, then a cruel, blaspheming Jacobin, and afterward a powerful instrument of tyranny in the hands of Napoleon, was born at Nantes in 1763, and died at Trieste in 1820. Brought up in a cloister, he became a bitter persecutor of the Church, having polluted many altars, and on one occasion even caused the Bible to be dragged through the streets at the tail of an ass. After the fall of Robespierre he changed his politics, (not his principles, for he never had any,) and played an important role during the whole of Napoleon's career.

NOTE 34.—ST. JUST. See page 240.

St. Just, the friend of Robespierre, the austere Stoic, the remorseless Terrorist, was born in 1768, and guillotined July 27, 1794. Of noble family, careful culture, great keenness of intellect, of unbounded enthusiasm for, and devotion to, what he regarded as the true principles of liberty, he was well fitted for the cruel role he played in the triumvirate of Robespierre, Couthon, and himself. Victim of the fatal doctrine that all justice and right must yield to what is regarded as for the interest of the "public safety," he was the organ of many of the worst crimes of the Reign of Terror. He was a sort of merciless, heartless incarnation of logic. He was executed at the age of twenty-six.

NOTE 35.—FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. See page 241.

Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Accuser of the revolutionary tribunal, who remorselessly sent thousands to the guillotine,

was born in Picardy, 1747, and executed on the fall of Robespierre in 1794. Without talent, and with a coldly sanguinary nature, he was a proper man to execute the purposes of the Terrorists.

NOTE 36.—TALLIEN. See page 249.

Tallien, born in 1769, known at first as an editor, later as a violent Jacobin, became finally the chief instrument in the fall of Robespierre. The rise of Napoleon threw him into the shade. He died in 1820.

NOTE 37.—BARRAS. See page 273.

Barras, of an ancient noble family of Provence, of adventurous youth, dissipated manners, reckless, daring character, at one time a Jacobin and Terrorist, and afterward an active agent in inaugurating the military despotism of Bonaparte, was born in 1755, and died in retirement in 1829.

NOTE 38.—LA REVEILLIÈRE-LEPAUX. See page 279.

This whimsical reformer and high priest of Deism was born in 1753. As member of the Convention, he defended in vain the Girondists, eluded the wrath of Robespierre, became a Director, refused to take the oath of allegiance to Napoleon, lived then in obscurity for a time, and died in 1824.

NOTE 39.—JORDAN. See page 280.

Camille Jordan, born at Lyons in 1769, was one of the few French revolutionists who united to radical republicanism a sincere respect for and faith in the Christian religion. He

opposed the anarchy of the Jacobins and the absolutism of Napoleon, but held office under the restored Bourbons. He died in 1821.

NOTE 40.—ROYER-COLLARD. See page 280.

Royer-Collard was a philosopher-politician, who joined constitutional liberalism to a deep reverence for religion. In philosophy he opposed the prevalent sensualism, and was the precursor of Cousin. He died in 1845, at the age of seventy.

NOTE 41.—PORTALIS. See page 303.

Portalis, a moderate liberal, the Minister of Religion under Napoleon, was born in Provence in 1746, and died in 1807.

NOTE 42.—NAPOLEON. See page 327.

We make the following extract from a critique on Napoleon's career by Dr. Channing :

“ We close our view of Bonaparte's character by saying, that his original propensities, released from restraint and pampered by indulgence to a degree seldom allowed to mortals, grew up into a spirit of despotism as stern and absolute as ever usurped the human heart. The love of power and supremacy absorbed, consumed him. No other passion, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness, divided his mind with the passion for dominion, and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Before this, duty, honor, love, humanity, fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him ; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity to make room for a stranger who might be more subservient

to his power. He was affectionate, we are told, to his brothers and mother; but his brothers, the moment they ceased to be his tools, were disgraced; and his mother, it is said, was not allowed to sit in the presence of her imperial son. He was sometimes softened, we are told, by the sight of the field of battle strewn with the wounded and dead. But, if the Moloch of his ambition claimed new heaps of slain to-morrow, it was never denied. With all his sensibility, he gave millions to the sword with as little compunction as he would have brushed away so many insects which had infested his march. To him all human will, desire, power, were to bend. His superiority none might question. He insulted the fallen who had contracted the guilt of opposing his progress; and not even woman's loveliness, and the dignity of a queen, could give shelter from his contumely. His allies were his vassals, nor was their vassalage concealed. Too lofty to use the arts of conciliation, preferring command to persuasion, overbearing and all-grasping, he spread distrust, exasperation, fear, and revenge through Europe; and, when the day of retribution came, the old antipathies and mutual jealousies of nations were swallowed up in one burning purpose to prostrate the common tyrant, the universal foe."

NOTE 43.—PIUS VII. See page 346.

Pius VII., born at Cesena in 1740, of the noble family of the Chiaramonti, was made Cardinal in 1785, and during the early period of the French Revolution manifested very liberal political sentiments. Soon after the death of the unfortunate Pius VI. he was elected to the Papal See by the conclave which met at Venice. His reign dates from March 13, 1800. His rule, from the fall of Napoleon to his death, which happened August 20, 1823, was not happy for his subjects. He was too favorable to the despotic principles of Austria.

NOTE 44.—FESCH. See page 368.

Joseph Fesch, Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons, brother of Napoleon's mother, was born in Corsica in 1763, and made Cardinal in 1803. He accompanied Pope Pius VII. to Paris in 1804 on the occasion of the coronation of Bonaparte, enjoyed the favor of the Emperor till 1809, and spent the latter part of his life in Rome. He died in 1839.

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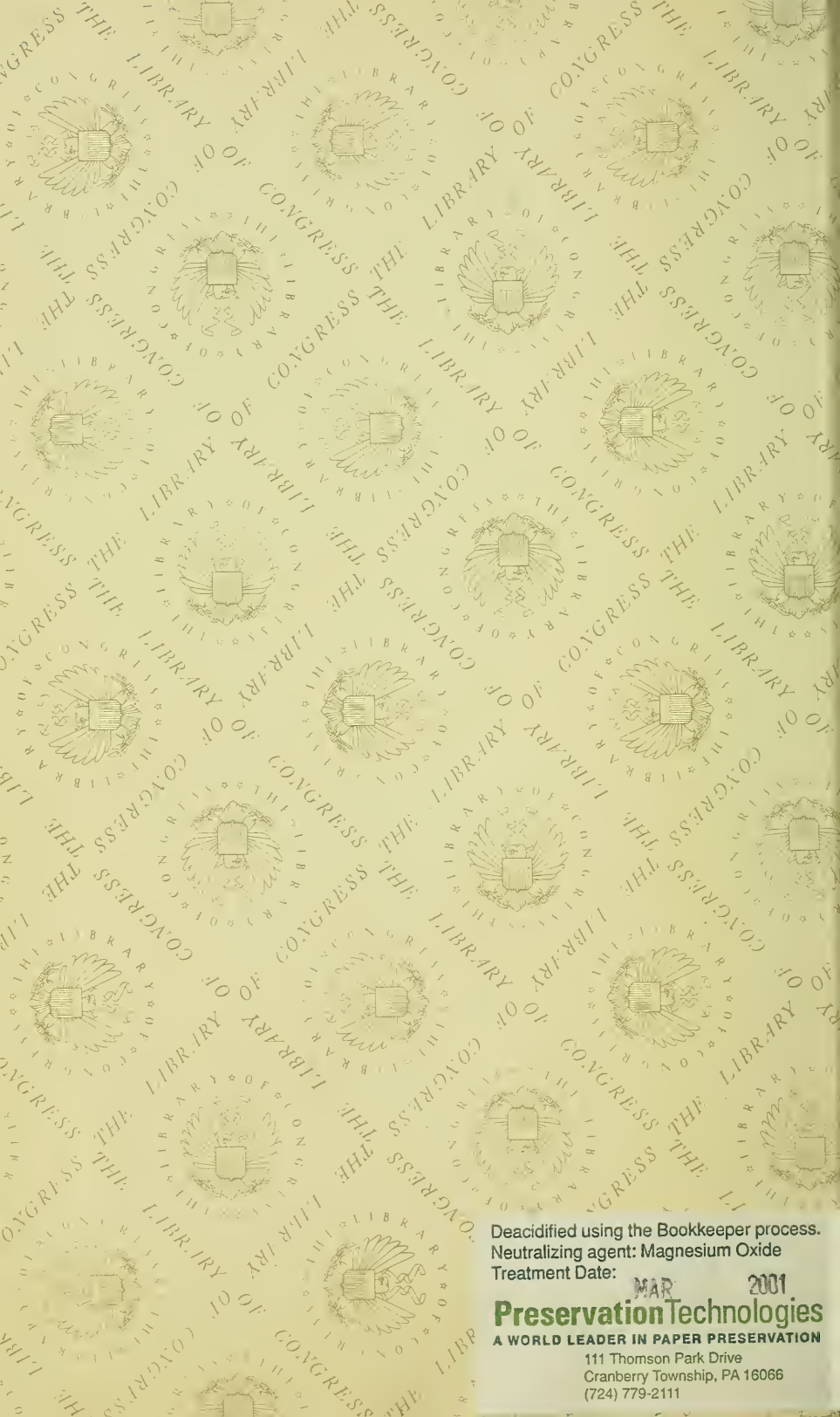
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