THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:
A HISTORY.

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Mέγα ὁ ἄρχων ἔστι, θείον γὰρ ἔργον ὑπὲρ βασιλείας, ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας, ὑπὲρ εὐρολας, ὑπὲρ ἀταραξίας. ARRIANUS.

Δόγμα γὰρ αὐτῶν τὶς μεταβάλλει; χωρὶς δὲ δογμάτων μεταβολῆς, τί ἄλλο ἢ δουλεία στενότων καὶ πείθεσθαι προσποιομένων; ANTONINUS.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GODS ARE ATHIRST.

What, then, is this Thing called La Révolution, which, like an Angel of Death, hangs over France, noyading, fusillading, fighting, gun-boring, tanning human skins? La Révolution is but so many Alphabetic Letters; a thing nowhere to be laid hands on, to be clapt under lock and key: where is it? what is it? It is the Madness that dwells in the hearts of men. In this man it is, and in that man; as a rage or as a terror, it is in all men. Invisible, impalpable; and yet no black Azrael, with wings spread over half a continent, with sword sweeping from sea to sea, could be a truer Reality.

To explain, what is called explaining, the march of this Revolutionary Government, be no task of ours. Man cannot explain it. A paralytic Couthon, asking in the Jacobins, 'What hast thou done to be hanged if Counter-Revolution should arrive?' a sombre Saint-Just, not yet six-and-twenty, declaring that 'for Revolutionists there is no rest but in the tomb;' a seagreen Robespierre converted into vinegar and gall; much more an Amar and Vadier, a Collot and Billaud: to inquire what thoughts, predetermination or prevision, might be in the head of these men! Record of their thought remains not; Death and Darkness have swept it out utterly. Nay, if we even had their thought, all that they could have articulately spoken to us, how insignificant a fraction were that of the Thing which realised itself, which decreed itself, on signal given by them! As has been said more than once, this Revolutionary Government
is not a self-conscious but a blind fatal one. Each man, enveloped in his ambient-atmosphere of revolutionary fanatic Madness, rushes on, impelled and impelling; and has become a blind brute Force; no rest for him but in the grave! Darkness and the mystery of horrid cruelty cover it for us, in History; as they did in Nature. The chaotic Thunder-cloud, with its pitchy black, and its tumult of dazzling jagged fire, in a world all electric: thou wilt not undertake to show how that comported itself,—what the secrets of its dark womb were; from what sources, with what specialties, the lightning it held did, in confused brightness of terror, strike forth, destructive and self-destructive, till it ended? Like a Blackness naturally of Erebus, which by will of Providence had for once mounted itself into dominion and the Azure: is not this properly the nature of Sansculottism consummating itself? Of which Erebus Blackness be it enough to discern that this and the other dazzling fire-bolt, dazzling fire-torrent, does by small Volition and great Necessity, verily issue,—in such and such succession; destructive so and so, self-destructive so and so: till it end.

Royalism is extinct; 'sunk,' as they say, 'in the mud of the Loire;’ Republicanism dominates without and within: what, therefore, on the 15th day of March 1794, is this? Arrestment, sudden really as a bolt out of the Blue, has hit strange victims: Hébert Père Duchesne, Bibliopolist Momoro, Clerk Vincent, General Ronsin; high Cordelier Patriots, red-capped Magistrates of Paris, Worshippers of Reason, Commanders of Revolutionary Army! Eight short days ago, their Cordelier Club was loud, and louder than ever, with Patriot denunciations. Hébert Père Duchesne had "held his tongue and his heart these two months, at sight of Moderates, Crypto-Aristocrats, Camillas, Scélérats in the Convention itself: but could not do it any longer; would, if other remedy were not, invoke the sacred right of Insurrection." So spake Hébert in Cordelier Session; with vivats, till the roofs rang again.¹ Eight short days ago; and now already! They rub their eyes: it is no dream; they find themselves in the Luxembourg. Goose Gobel too; and they that burnt Churches! Chaumette himself, potent Procureur, Agent National as they now call it, who could 'recognise the Suspect by the very face of them,' he lingers but three days;

¹ Moniteur, du 17 Ventose (7th March) 1794.
on the third day he too is hurled in. Most chopfallen, blue, enters the National Agent this Limbo whither he has sent so many. Prisoners crowd round, jibing and jeering; "Sublime " National Agent," says one, "in virtue of thy immortal Pro-
"clamation, lo there! I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is sus-
pect, we are suspect, ye are suspect, they are suspect!"

The meaning of these things? Meaning! It is a Plot; Plot of the most extensive ramifications; which, however, Barrère holds the threads of. Such Church-burning and scandalous masquerades of Atheism, fit to make the Revolution odious: where indeed could they originate but in the gold of Pitt? Pitt indubitably, as Preternatural Insight will teach one, did hire this Faction of Enragés, to play their fantastic tricks; to roar in their Cordeliers Club about Moderatism; to print their Père Duchesne; worship skyblue Reason in red nightcap; rob Altars, —and bring the spoil to us!

Still more indubitable, visible to the mere bodily sight, is this: that the Cordeliers Club sits pale, with anger and terror; and has 'veiled the Rights of Man,'—without effect. Likewise that the Jacobins are in considerable confusion; busy 'purging themselves, s'èpurant,' as in times of Plot and public Calamity they have repeatedly had to do. Not even Camille Desmoulins but has given offence; nay there have risen murmurs against Danton himself; though he bellowed them down, and Robespierre finished the matter by 'embracing him in the Tribune.'

Whom shall the Republic and a jealous Mother Society trust? In these times of temptation, of Preternatural Insight! For there are Factions of the Stranger, 'de l'étranger,' Factions of Moderates, of Enraged; all manner of Factions: we walk in a world of Plots; strings universally spread, of deadly gins and falltraps, baited by the gold of Pitt! Clootz, Speaker of Mankind so-called, with his Evidences of Mahometan Religion, and babble of Universal Republic, him an incorruptible Robespierre has purged away. Baron Clootz, and Paine rebellious Needleman lie, these two months, in the Luxembourg; limbs of the Faction de l'étranger. Representative Phélippeaux is purged out: he came back from La Vendée with an ill report in his mouth against rogue Rossignol, and our method of warfare there. Recant it, O Phélippeaux, we entreat thee! Phélippeaux will not recant; and is purged out. Representative Fabre d'Eglantine, famed Nomenclator of Romme's Calendar, is purged
out; nay, is cast into the Luxembourg: accused of Legislative Swindling 'in regard to moneys of the India Company.' There with his Chabots, Bazires, guilty of the like, let Fabre wait his destiny. And Westermann friend of Danton, he who led the Marseillesse on the Tenth of August, and fought well in La Vendée, but spoke not well of rogue Rossignol, is purged out. Lucky, if he too go not to the Luxembourg. And your Prolys, Guzmans, of the Faction of the Stranger, they have gone; Pereyra, though he fled, is gone, 'taken in the disguise of a Tavern Cook.' I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect!—

The great heart of Danton is weary of it. Danton is gone to native Arcis, for a little breathing-time of peace: Away, black Arachne-webs, thou world of Fury, Terror and Suspicion; welcome, thou everlasting Mother, with thy spring greenness, thy kind household loves and memories; true art thou, were all else untrue! The great Titan walks silent, by the banks of the murmuring Aube, in young native haunts that knew him when a boy; wonders what the end of these things may be.

But strangest of all, Camille Desmoulins is purged out. Couthon gave as a test in regard to Jacobin purgation the question, 'What hast thou done to be hanged if Counter-Revolution should arrive?' Yet Camille, who could so well answer this question, is purged out! The truth is, Camille, early in December last, began publishing a new Journal, or Series of Pamphlets, entitled the Vieux Cordelier, Old Cordelier. Camille, not afraid at one time to 'embrace Liberty on a heap of dead bodies,' begins to ask now, Whether among so many arresting and punishing Committees, there ought not to be a 'Committee of Mercy'? Saint-Just, he observes, is an extremely solemn young Republican, who 'carries his head as if it were a Saint-Sacrement;' adorable Hostie, or divine Real-Presence! Sharply enough, this old Cordelier,—Danton and he were of the earliest primary Cordeliers,—shoots his glittering war-shafts into your new Cordeliers, your Héberts, Momoros, with their brawling brutalities and despicabilities; say, as the Sun-god (for poor Camille is a Poet) shot into that Python Serpent sprung of mud.

Whereat, as was natural, the Hébertist Python did hiss and writhe amazingly; and threaten 'sacred right or Insurrection;'—and, as we saw, get cast into Prison. Nay, with all the old wit, dexterity and light graceful poignancy, Camille, translating
CHAP. 1. THE GODS ARE ATHIRST.


'out of Tacitus, from the Reign of Tiberius,' pricks into the Law of the Suspect itself; making it odious! Twice, in the Decade, his wild Leaves issue; full of wit, nay of humour, of harmonious ingenuity and insight,—one of the strangest phenomena of that dark time; and smite, in their wild-sparkling way, at various monstrosities, Saint-Sacrament heads, and Juggernaut idols, in a rather reckless manner. To the great joy of Josephine Beauharnais, and the other Five-thousand and odd Suspect, who fill the Twelve Houses of Arrest; on whom a ray of hope dawns! Robespierre, at first approbatory, knew not at last what to think; then thought, with his Jacobins, that Camille must be expelled. A man of true Revolutionary spirit, this Camille; but with the unwisest sallies; whom Aristocrats and Moderates have the art to corrupt! Jacobinism is in uttermost crisis and struggle; enmeshed wholly in plots, corruptibilities, neck-gins and baited falltraps of Pitt ennemi du genre humain. Camille's First Number begins with 'O Pitt!'—his last is dated 15 Pluviose Year 2, 3d February 1794; and ends with these words of Montezuma's, 'Les dieux ont soif, The gods are athirst.'

Be this as it may, the Hébertists lie in Prison only some nine days. On the 24th of March, therefore, the Revolution Tumbrils carry through that Life-tumult a new cargo: Hébert, Vincent, Momoro, Ronson, Nineteen of them in all; with whom, curious enough, sits Clootz Speaker of Mankind. They have been massed swiftly into a lump, this miscellany of Nondescripts; and travel now their last road. No help. They too must 'look through the little window;' they too 'must sneeze into the sack,' éternuer dans le sac; as they have done to others, so is it done to them. Sainte-Guillotine, meseems, is worse than the old Saints of Superstition; a man-devouring Saint? Clootz, still with an air of polished sarcasm, endeavours to jest, to offer cheering 'arguments of Materialism;' he requested to be executed last, 'in order to establish certain principles,'—which hitherto, I think, Philosophy has got no good of. General Ronson too, he still looks forth with some air of defiance, eye of command; the rest are sunk in a stony paleness of despair. Momoro, poor Bibliopolist, no Agrarian Law yet realised,—they might as well have hanged thee at Evreux, twenty months ago, when Girondin Buzot hindered them. Hébert Père Duchesne shall never in this world rise in sacred right of insurrection; he
sits there low enough, head sunk on breast; Red Nightcaps shouting round him, in frightful parody of his Newspaper Articles, "Grand choler of the Père Duchesne!" Thus perish they; the sack receives all their heads. Through some section of History, Nineteen spectre-chimeras shall flit, squeaking and gibbering; till Oblivion swallow them.

In the course of a week, the Revolutionary Army itself is disbanded; the General having become spectral. This Faction of Rabids, therefore, is also purged from the Republican soil; here also the baited falltraps of that Pitt have been wrenched up harmless; and anew there is joy over a Plot Discovered.

The Revolution, then, is verily devouring its own children? All Anarchy, by the nature of it, is not only destructive but self-destructive.

CHAPTER II.

DANTON, NO WEAKNESS.

Danton meanwhile has been pressingly sent for from Arcis: he must return instantly, cried Camille, cried Phélippeaux and Friends, who scented danger in the wind. Danger enough! A Danton, a Robespierre, chief-products of a victorious Revolution, are now arrived in immediate front of one another; must ascertain how they will live together, rule together. One conceives easily the deep mutual incompatibility that divided these two: with what terror of feminine hatred the poor seagreen Formula looked at the monstrous colossal Reality, and grew greener to behold him;—the Reality, again, struggling to think no ill of a chief-product of the Revolution; yet feeling at bottom that such chief-product was little other than a chief windbag, blown large by Popular air; not a man, with the heart of a man, but a poor spasmodic incorruptible pedant, with a logic-formula instead of heart; of Jesuit or Methodist-Parsen nature; full of sincere-cant, incorruptibility, of virulence, poltroonery; barren as the eastwind! Two such chief-products are too much for one Revolution.

Friends, trembling at the results of a quarrel on their part, brought them to meet. "It is right," said Danton, swallowing much indignation, "to repress the Royalists: but we should not strike except where it is useful to the Republic; we should not confound the innocent and the guilty."—"And who told you,"
replied Robespierre with a poisonous look, "that one innocent person had perished?"—"Quoi," said Danton, turning round to Friend Pâris self-named Fabricius, Juryman in the Revolutionary Tribunal: "Quoi, not one innocent? What sayest thou of it, Fabricius?"—Friends, Westermann, this Pâris and others urged him to show himself, to ascend the Tribune and act. The man Danton was not prone to show himself; to act, or uproar for his own safety. A man of careless, large, hoping nature; a large nature that could rest: he would sit whole hours, they say, hearing Camille talk, and liked nothing so well. Friends urged him to fly; his Wife urged him: "Whither fly?" answered he: "If freed France cast me out, there are only dungeons for me elsewhere. One carries not his country with him at the sole of his shoe!" The man Danton sat still. Not even the arrestment of Friend Hérault, a member of Salut, yet arrested by Salut, can rouse Danton.—On the night of the 30th of March Juryman Pâris came rushing in; haste looking through his eyes: A clerk of the Salut Committee had told him Danton's warrant was made out, he is to be arrested this very night! Entreaties there are and trepidation, of poor Wife, of Pâris and Friends: Danton sat silent for a while; then answered, "Ils n'oseraient, They dare not;" and would take no measures. Murmuring "They dare not," he goes to sleep as usual.

And yet, on the morrow morning, strange rumour spreads over Paris City: Danton, Camille, Phéliepeaux, Lacroix have been arrested overnight! It is verily so: the corridors of the Luxembourg were all crowded, Prisoners crowding forth to see this giant of the Revolution enter among them. "Messieurs," said Danton politely, "I hoped soon to have got you all out of this: but here I am myself; and one sees not where it will end."—Rumour may spread over Paris: the Convention clusters itself into groups; wide-eyed, whispering "Danton arrested!" Who, then, is safe? Legendre, mounting the Tribune, utters, at his own peril, a feeble word for him; moving that he be heard at that Bar before indictment; but Robespierre frowns him down: "Did you hear Chabot or Bazire? Would you have two weights and measures?" Legendre cowers low: Danton, like the others, must take his doom.

Danton's Prison-thoughts were curious to have; but are not given in any quantity: indeed few such remarkable men have

1 Biographie des Ministres, § Danton.
been left so obscure to us as this Titan of the Revolution. He was heard to ejaculate: "This time twelvemonth, I was moving the creation of that same Revolutionary Tribunal. I crave pardon for it of God and man. They are all Brothers Cain; Brissot would have had me guillotined as Robespierre now will. I leave the whole business in a frightful welter (gâchis épouvantable): not one of them understands anything of government. Robespierre will follow me; I drag down Robespierre. O, it were better to be a poor fisherman than to meddle with governing of men."—Camille's young beautiful Wife, who had made him rich not in money alone, hovers round the Luxembourg, like a disembodied spirit, day and night. Camille's stolen letters to her still exist; stained with the mark of his tears. I carry my head like a Saint-Sacrament?" so Saint-Just was heard to mutter: "perhaps he will carry his like a Saint-Denis."

Unhappy Danton, thou still unhappier light Camille, once light Procureur de la Lanterne, ye also have arrived, then, at the Bourne of Creation, where, like Ulysses Polytlass at the limit and utmost Gades of his voyage, gazing into that dim Waste beyond Creation, a man does see the Shade of his Mother, pale, ineffectual—and days when his Mother nursed and wrapped him are all-too sternly contrasted with this day! Danton, Camille, Hérault, Westermann, and the others, very strangely massed up with Bazires, Swindler Chabots, Fabre d'Eglantines, Banker Freys, a most motley Batch, 'Fournée' as such things will be called, stand ranked at the Bar of Tinville. It is the 2d of April 1794. Danton has had but three days to lie in Prison; for the time presses.

What is your name? place of abode? and the like, Fouquier asks; according to formality. "My name is Danton," answers he; "a name tolerably known in the Revolution: my abode will soon be Annihilation (dans le Néant): but I shall live in the Pantheon of History." A man will endeavour to say something forcible, be it by nature or not! Hérault mentions epigrammatically that he "sat in this Hall, and was detested of Parlementeers," Camille makes answer, "My age is that of the bon Sansculotte Jésus; an age fatal to Revolutionists." O Camille, Camille! And yet in that Divine Transaction, let us say,
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Germ. 13] April 2d.

there did lie, among other things, the fatalest Reproof ever
uttered here below to Worldly Right-honourableness; 'the high-
est fact,' so devout Novalis calls it, 'in the Rights of Man.'
Camille's real age, it would seem, is thirty-four. Danton is one
year older.

Some five months ago, the Trial of the Twenty-two Girond-
dins was the greatest that Fouquier had then done. But here
is a still greater to do; a thing which tasks the whole faculty
of Fouquier; which makes the very heart of him waver. For it
is the voice of Danton that reverberates now from these domes;
in passionate words, piercing with their wild sincerity, winged
with wrath. Your best Witnesses he shivers into ruin at one
stroke. He demands that the Committee-men themselves come
as Witnesses, as Accusers; he "will cover them with ignominy."
He raises his huge stature, he shakes his huge black head, fire
flashes from the eyes of him,—piercing to all Republican hearts:
so that the very Galleries, though we filled them by ticket, mur-
mur sympathy; and are like to burst down and raise the People,
and deliver him! He complains loudly that he is classed with
Chabots, with swindling Stockjobbers; that his Indictment is a
list of platitudes and horrors. "Danton hidden on the roth of
August?" reverberates he, with the roar of a lion in the toils :
"where are the men that had to press Danton to show himself,
that day? Where are these high-gifted souls of whom he bor-
rowed energy? Let them appear, these Accusers of mine: I
have all the clearness of my self-possession when I demand
them. I will unmask the three shallow scoundrels," les trois
plaits coquins, Saint-Just, Couthon, Lebas, "who fawn on Robes-
pierre, and lead him towards his destruction. Let them produce
themselves here; I will plunge them into Nothingness, out of
which they ought never to have risen." The agitated President
agitates his bell; enjoins calmness, in a vehement manner;
"What is it to thee how I defend myself?" cries the other:
"the right of dooming me is thine always. The voice of a man
speaking for his honour and his life may well drown the jingling
of thy bell!" Thus Danton, higher and higher; till the lion-
voice of him 'dies away in his throat: speech will not utter
what is in that man. The Galleries murmur ominously; the
first day's Session is over.

O Tinville, President Herman, what will ye do? They have
two days more of it, by strictest Revolutionary Law. The Gal-
laries already murmur. If this Danton were to burst your meshwork!—Very curious indeed to consider. It turns on a hair: and what a hoitytoity were there, Justice and Culprit changing places; and the whole History of France running changed! For in France there is this Danton only that could still try to govern France. He only, the wild amorphous Titan;—and perhaps that other olive-complexioned individual, the Artillery-Officer at Toulon, whom we left pushing his fortune in the South?

On the evening of the second day, matters looking not better but worse and worse, Fouquier and Herman, distraction in their aspect, rush over to Salut Public. What is to be done? Salut Public rapidly concocts a new Decree; whereby if men 'insult Justice,' they may be 'thrown out of the Debates.' For indeed, withal, is there not 'a Plot in the Luxembourg Prison'? Ci-devant General Dillon, and others of the Suspect, plotting with Camille's Wife to distribute assignats; to force the Prisons, overset the Republic? Citizen Laflotte, himself Suspect but desiring enfranchisement, has reported said Plot for us:—a report that may bear fruit! Enough, on the morrow morning, an obedient Convention passes this Decree. Salut rushes off with it to the aid of Tinville, reduced now almost to extremities. And so, Hors de Débats, Out of the Debates, ye insolents! Police-men, do your duty! In such manner, with a dead-lift effort, Salut, Tinville, Herman, Leroi Dix-Août, and all stanch jury-men setting heart and shoulder to it, the Jury becomes 'sufficiently instructed;' Sentence is passed, is sent by an Official, and torn and trampled on: Death this day. It is the 5th of April 1794. Camille's poor Wife may cease hovering about this Prison. Nay let her kiss her poor children; and prepare to enter it, and to follow!—

Danton carried a high look in the Death-cart. Not so Camille: it is but one week, and all is so topsyturvyed; angel Wife left weeping; love, riches, revolutionary fame, left all at the Prison-gate; carnivorous Rabble now howling round. Palpable, and yet incredible; like a madman's dream! Camille struggles and writhes; his shoulders shuffle the loose coat off them, which hangs knotted, the hands tied: "Calm, my friend," said Danton; "heed not that vile canaille (laissez là cette vile canaille)." At the foot of the Scaffold, Danton was heard to ejaculate: "O my Wife, my well-beloved, I shall never see thee more, then!"—but, interrupting himself: "Danton, no weak-
ness!" He said to Hérault-Séchelles stepping forward to embrace him: "Our heads will meet there," in the Headsman's sack. His last words were to Samson the Headsman himself: "Thou wilt show my head to the people; it is worth showing."

So passes, like a gigantic mass of valour, ostentation, fury, affection and wild revolutionary force and manhood, this Danton, to his unknown home. He was of Arcis-sur-Aube; born of 'good farmer-people' there. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of Cant. No hollow Formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, ghastly to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man: with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself. He saved France from Brunswick; he walked straight his own wild road, whither it led him. He may live for some generations in the memory of men.
CHAPTER IV.

MUMBO-JUMBO.

But on the day they call Décadi, New-Sabbath, 20 Prairial, 8th June by old style, what thing is this going forward in the Jardin National, whilom Tuileries Garden?

All the world is there, in holiday clothes:¹ foul linen went out with the Hébertists; nay Robespierre, for one, would never once countenance that; but went always elegant and frizzled, not without vanity even,—and had his room hung round with seagreen portraits and busts. In holiday clothes, we say, are the innumerable Citoyens and Citoyennes: the weather is of the brightest; cheerful expectation lights all countenances. Jurymen Vilate gives breakfast to many a Deputy, in his official apartment, in the Pavillon ci-devant of Flora; rejoices in the bright-looking multitudes, in the brightness of leafy June, in the auspicious Décadi, or New-Sabbath. This day, if it please Heaven, we are to have, on improved Anti-Chaumette principles: a New Religion.

Catholicism being burned out, and Reason-worship guillotined, was there not need of one? Incorruptible Robespierre, not unlike the Ancients, as Legislator of a free people, will now also be Priest and Prophet. He has donned his sky-blue coat, made for the occasion; white silk waistcoat broidered with silver, black silk breeches, white stockings, shoe-buckles of gold. He is President of the Convention; he has made the Convention decree, so they name it, décréter the 'Existence of the Supreme Being,' and likewise 'ce principe consolateur of the Immortality of the Soul.' These consolatory principles, the basis of rational

¹ Vilate, Causes Secrètes de la Révolution du 9 Thermidor.
Republican Religion, are getting decreed; and here, on this blessed Decadi, by help of Heaven and Painter David, is to be our first act of worship.

See, accordingly, how after Decree passed, and what has been called 'the scraggiest Prophetic Discourse ever uttered by man,—Mahomet Robespierre, in sky-blue coat and black breeches, frizzled and powdered to perfection, bearing in his hand a bouquet of flowers and wheat-ears, issues proudly from the Convention Hall; Convention following him, yet, as is remarked, with an interval. Amphitheatre has been raised, or at least Monticule or Elevation; hideous Statues of Atheism, Anarchy and suchlike, thanks to Heaven and Painter David, strike abhorrence into the heart. Unluckily, however, our Monticule is too small. On the top of it not half of us can stand; wherefore there arises indecent shoving, nay treasonous irreverent growling. Peace, thou Bourdon de l'Oise; peace, or it may be worse for thee!

The seagreen Pontiff takes a torch, Painter David handing it; mouths some other froth-rant of vocables, which happily one cannot hear; strides resolutely forward, in sight of expectant France; sets his torch to Atheism and Company, which are but made of pasteboard steeped in turpentine. They burn up rapidly; and, from within, there rises 'by machinery,' an incombustible Statue of Wisdom, which, by ill hap, gets besmoked a little; but does stand there visible in as serene attitude as it can.

And then? Why, then, there is other Processioning, scraggy Discoursing, and—this is our Feast of the Être Suprême; our new Religion, better or worse, is come!—Look at it one moment, O Reader, not two. The shabbiest page of Human Annals: or is there, that thou wottest of, one shabbier? Mumbo-Jumbo of the African woods to me seems venerable beside this new Deity of Robespierre; for this is a conscious Mumbo-Jumbo, and knows that he is machinery. O seagreen Prophet, unhappiest of windbags blown nigh to bursting, what distracted Chimera among realities art thou growing to! This then, this common pitch-link for artificial fireworks of turpentine and pasteboard; this is the miraculous Aaron's Rod thou wilt stretch over a hag-ridden hell-ridden France, and bid her plagues cease? Vanish, thou and it!—'Avec ton Être Suprême,' said Billaud,
"tu commences m'embêter: With thy Étre Suprême thou beginnest to be a bore to me." 2

Catherine Théot, on the other hand, 'an ancient serving-maid seventy-nine years of age,' inured to Prophecy and the Bastille from of old, sits in an upper room in the Rue de Contrescarpe, poring over the Book of Revelations, with an eye to Robespierre; finds that this astonishing thrice-potent Maximilien really is the Man spoken of by Prophets, who is to make the Earth young again. With her sit devout old Marchionesses, ci-devant honourable women; among whom Old-Constituent Dom Gerle, with his addle head, cannot be wanting. They sit there, in the Rue de Contrescarpe; in mysterious adoration: Mumbo is Mumbo, and Robespierre is his Prophet. A conspicuous man this Robespierre. He has his volunteer Bodyguard of Tappe-durs, let us say Strike-sharps, fierce Patriots with feruled sticks; and Jacobins kissing the hem of his garment. He enjoys the admiration of many, the worship of some; and is well worth the wonder of one and all.

The grand question and hope, however, is: Will not this Feast of the Tuileries Mumbo-Jumbo be a sign perhaps that the Guillotine is to abate? Far enough from that! Precisely on the second day after it, Cauthon, one of the 'three shallow scoundrels,' gets himself lifted into the Tribune; produces a bundle of papers. Cauthon proposes that, as Plots still abound, the Law of the Suspect shall have extension, and Arrestment new vigour and facility. Farther, that as in such case business is like to be heavy, our Revolutionary Tribunal too shall have extension; be divided, say, into Four Tribunals, each with its President, each with its Fouquier or Substitute of Fouquier, all labouring at once, and any remnant of shackle or dilatory formality be struck off: in this way it may perhaps still overtake the work. Such is Couthon's Decree of the Twenty-second Prairial, famed in those times. At hearing of which Decree, the very Mountain gasped, awestruck; and one Ruamps ventured to say that if it passed without adjournment and discussion, he, as one Representative, "would blow his brains out." Vain saying! The Incorruptible knit his brows; spoke a prophetic fateful word or two: the Law of Prairial is Law; Ruamps glad

2 See Vilate, Causes Secrètes. (Vilate's Narrative is very curious; but is not to be taken as true, without sifting; being, at bottom, in spite of its title, not a Narrative but a Pleading.)
to leave his rash brains where they are. Death then, and always Death! Even so. Fouquier is enlarging his borders; making room for Batches of a Hundred and fifty at once;—getting a Guillotine set up of improved velocity, and to work under cover, in the apartment close by. So that Salut itself has to intervene, and forbid him: "Wilt thou démoralise the Guillotine," asks Collot, reproachfully, "démoraliser le supplice!"

There is indeed danger of that; were not the Republican faith great, it were already done. See, for example, on the 17th of June, what a Batch, Fifty-four at once! Swart Amiral is here, he of the pistol that missed fire; young Cécile Rénault, with her father, family, entire kith and kin; the Widow of D'Espremenil; old M. de Sombreuil of the Invalides, with his Son,—poor old Sombreuil, seventy-three years old, his Daughter saved him in September, and it was but for this. Faction of the Stranger, fifty-four of them! In red shirts and smocks, as Assassins and Faction of the Stranger, they flit along there; red baleful Phantasmagory, towards the land of Phantoms.

Meanwhile will not the people of the Place de la Révolution, the inhabitants along the Rue Saint-Honoré, as these continual Tumbrils pass, begin to look gloomy? Republicans too have bowels. The Guillotine is shifted, then again shifted; finally set up at the remote extremity of the South-east: Suburbs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau, it is to be hoped, if they have bowels, have very tough ones.
CHAPTER VII.

GO DOWN TO.

Tallien's eyes beamed bright, on the morrow, Ninth of Thermidor, 'about nine o'clock,' to see that the Convention had actually met. Paris is in rumour: but at least we are met, in Legal Convention here; we have not been snatched seriatim; treated with a Pride's Purge at the door. "Allons, brave men of the Plain," late Frogs of the Marsh! cried Tallien with a squeeze of the hand, as he passed in; Saint-Just's sonorous voice being now audible from the Tribune, and the game of games begun.

Saint-Just is verily reading that Report of his; green Vengeance, in the shape of Robespierre, watching nigh. Behold, however, Saint-Just has read but few sentences, when interruption rises, rapid crescendo; when Tallien starts to his feet, and Billaud, and this man starts and that,—and Tallien, a second time, with his: "Citoyens, at the Jacobins last night, I trembled for the Republic. I said to myself, if the Convention dare not strike the Tyrant, then I myself dare; and with this I will do it, if need be," said he, whisking out a clear-gleaming Dagger, and brandishing it there; the Steel of Brutus, as we call it. Whereat we all bellow, and brandish, impetuous acclaim. "Tyranny! Dictatorship! Triumvirate!" And the Salut Committee-men accuse, and all men accuse, and uproar, and impetuously acclaim. And Saint-Just is standing motionless, pale of face; Couthon ejaculating, "Triumvir?" with a look at his paralytic legs. And Robespierre is struggling to speak, but President Thuriot is jingling the bell against him, but the Hall is sounding against him like an Æolus-Hall: and Robespierre is mounting the Tribune-steps and descending again; going and coming, like to choke with rage, terror, desperation:—and mutiny is the order of the day.¹

O President Thuriot, thou that wert Elector Thuriot, and from the Bastille battlements sawest Saint-Antoine rising like the Ocean-tide, and hast seen much since, sawest thou ever the like of this? Jingle of bell, which thou jinglest against Robespierre?

¹ Moniteur, Nos. 311, 312; Débats, iv, 421-42; Deux Amis, xii. 390-411.
pierre, is hardly audible amid the Bedlam storm; and men rage for life. "President of Assassins," shrieks Robespierre, "I demand speech of thee for the last time!" It cannot be had. "To you, O virtuous men of the Plain," cries he, finding audience one moment, "I appeal to you!" The virtuous men of the Plain sit silent as stones. And Thuriot's bell jingles, and the Hall sounds like Æolus's Hall. Robespierre's frothing lips are grown 'blue;' his tongue dry, cleaving to the roof of his mouth. "The blood of Danton chokes him," cry they. "Accusation! Decree of Accusation!" Thuriot swiftly puts that question. Accusation passes; the incorruptible Maximilien is decreed Accused.

"I demand to share my Brother's fate, as I have striven to share his virtues," cries Augustin, the Younger Robespierre: Augustin also is decreed. And Couthon, and Saint-Just, and Lebas, they are all decreed; and packed forth,—not without difficulty, the Ushers almost trembling to obey. Triumvirate and Company are packed forth, into Salut Committee-room; their tongue cleaving to the roof of their mouth. You have but to summon the Municipality; to cashier Commandant Henriot, and launch Arrest at him; to regulate formalities; hand Tinville his victims. It is noon: the Æolus-Hall has delivered itself; blows now victorious, harmonious, as one irresistible wind.

And so the work is finished? One thinks so: and yet it is not so. Alas, there is yet but the first-act finished; three or four other acts still to come; and an uncertain catastrophe! A huge City holds in it so many confusions: seven hundred thousand human heads; not one of which knows what its neighbour is doing, nay not what itself is doing.—See, accordingly, about three in the afternoon, Commandant Henriot, how instead of sitting cashiered, arrested, he gallops along the Quais, followed by Municipal Gendarmes, 'trampling down several persons!' For the Townhall sits deliberating, openly insurgent: Barriers to be shut; no Gaoler to admit any Prisoner this day;—and Henriot is galloping towards the Tuileries, to deliver Robespierre. On the Quai de la Ferrailerie, a young Citoyen, walking with his wife, says aloud: "Gendarmes, that man is not your Commandant; he is under arrest." The Gendarmes strike down the young Citoyen with the flat of their swords.²

Representatives themselves (as Merlin the Thionviller), who

accost him, this puissant Henriot flings into guard-houses. He bursts towards the Tuileries Committee-room, "to speak with Robespierre:" with difficulty, the Ushers and Tuileries Gendarmes, earnestly pleading and drawing sabre, seize this Henriot; get the Henriot Gendarmes persuaded not to fight; get Robespierre and Company packed into hackney-coaches, sent off under escort, to the Luxembourg and other Prisons. This, then, is the end? May not an exhausted Convention adjourn now, for a little repose and sustenance, 'at five o'clock?'

An exhausted Convention did it; and repented it. The end was not come; only the end of the second-act. Hark, while exhausted Representatives sit at victuals,—tocsin bursting from all steeple, drums rolling, in the summer evening: Judge Coffinhal is galloping with new Gendarmes, to deliver Henriot from Tuileries Committee-room; and does deliver him! Puissant Henriot vaults on horseback; sets to haranguing the Tuileries Gendarmes; corrupts the Tuileries Gendarmes too; trots off with them to Townhall. Alas, and Robespierre is not in Prison: the Gaoler showed his Municipal order, durst not, on pain of his life, admit any Prisoner; the Robespierre Hackney-coaches, in this confused jangle and whirl of uncertain Gendarmes, have floated safe—into the Townhall! There sit Robespierre and Company, embraced by Municipals and Jacobins in sacred right of Insurrection; redacting Proclamations; sounding tocsins; corresponding with Sections and Mother Society. Is not here a pretty enough third-act of a natural Greek Drama; catastrophe more uncertain than ever?

The hasty Convention rushes together again, in the ominous nightfall: President Collot, for the chair is his, enters with long strides, paleness on his face; claps-on his hat; says with solemn tone: "Citoyens, armed Villains have beset the Committee-rooms, and got possession of them. The hour is come, to die at our post!" "Oui," answer one and all: "We swear it!" It is no rodomontade, this time, but a sad fact and necessity; unless we do at our posts, we must verily die. Swift therefore, Robespierre, Henriot, the Municipality, are declared Rebels; put Hors la Loi, Out of Law. Better still, we appoint Barras Commandant of what Armed-force is to be had; send Missionary Representatives to all Sections and quarters, to preach, and raise force; will die at least with harness on our back.

What a distracted City; men riding and running, reporting
and hearsaying; the Hour clearly in travail,—child not to be named till born! The poor Prisoners in the Luxembourg hear the rumour; tremble for a new September. They see men making signals to them, on skylights and roofs, apparently signals of hope; cannot in the least make out what it is.\(^3\) We observe, however, in the eventide, as usual, the Death-tumbrils faring Southeastward, through Saint-Antoine, towards their Barrier du Trône. Saint-Antoine's tough bowels melt; Saint-Antoine surrounds the Tumbrils; says, It shall not be. O Heavens, why should it! Henriot and Gendarmes, scouring the streets that way, bellow, with waved sabres, that it must. Quit hope, ye poor Doomed! The Tumbrils move on.

But in this set of Tumbrils there are two other things notable: one notable person; and one want of a notable person. The notable person is Lieutenant-General Loiserolles, a nobleman by birth and by nature; laying down his life here for his son. In the Prison of Saint-Lazare, the night before last, hurrying to the Grate to hear the Death-list read, he caught the name of his son. The son was asleep at the moment. “I am Loiserolles,” cried the old man: at Tinville’s bar, an error in the Christian name is little; small objection was made.—The want of the notable person, again, is that of Deputy Paine! Paine has sat in the Luxembourg since January; and seemed forgotten; but Fouquier had pricked him at last. The Turnkey, List in hand, is marking with chalk the outer doors of tomorrow’s Fournée. Paine’s outer door happened to be open, turned back on the wall; the Turnkey marked it on the side next him, and hurried on: another Turnkey came, and shut it; no chalk-mark now visible, the Fournée went without Paine. Paine’s life lay not there.—

Our fifth-act, of this natural Greek Drama, with its natural unities, can only be painted in gross; somewhat as that antique Painter, driven desperate, did the foam. For through this blessed July night, there is clangour, confusion very great, of marching troops; of Sections going this way, Sections going that; of Missionary Representatives reading Proclamations by torchlight; Missionary Legendre, who has raised force somewhere, emptying out the Jacobins, and flinging their key on the Convention table: “I have locked their door; it shall be Virtue that reopens it.” Paris, we say, is set against itself, rushing

\(^3\) Mémoires sur les Prisons, ii. 277.

confused, as Ocean-currents do; a huge Mahlstrom, sounding there, under cloud of night. Convention sits permanent on this hand; Municipality most permanent on that. The poor prisoners hear tocsin and rumour; strive to bethink them of the signals apparently of hope. Meek continual Twilight streaming up, which will be Dawn and a Tomorrow, silvers the Northern hem of Night; it wends and wends there, that meek brightness, like a silent prophecy, along the great ring-dial of the Heaven. So still, eternal! and on Earth all is confused shadow and conflict; dissidence, tumultuous gloom and glare; and 'Destiny as yet sits wavering, and shakes her doubtful urn.'

About three in the morning the dissident Armed-forces have met. Henriot's Armed-force stood ranked in the Place de Grève; and now Barras's, which he has recruited, arrives there; and they front each other, cannon bristling against cannon. Citoyens! cries the voice of Discretion loudly enough, Before coming to bloodshed, to endless civil-war, hear the Convention Decree read: 'Robespierre and all rebels Out of Law!'—Out of Law? There is terror in the sound. Unarmed Citoyens disperse rapidly home. Municipal Cannoneers, in sudden whirl, anxiously unanimous, range themselves on the Convention side, with shouting. At which shout, Henriot descends from his upper room, far gone in drink as some say; finds his Place de Grève empty; the cannons' mouth turned towards him; and on the whole,—that it is now the catastrophe!

Stumbling in again, the wretched drunk-sobered Henriot announces: "All is lost!" "Misérable, it is thou that hast lost it!" cry they; and fling him, or else he flings himself, out of window: far enough down; into masonwork and horror of cesspool; not into death but worse. Augustin Robespierre follows him; with the like fate. Saint-Just, they say, called on Lebas to kill him; who would not. Couthon crept under a table; attempting to kill himself; not doing it.—On entering that Sanhedrim of Insurrection, we find all as good as extinct; undone, ready for seizure. Robespierre was sitting on a chair, with pistol-shot blown through not his head but his under-jaw; the suicidal hand had failed.4 With prompt zeal,

4 Méda, p. 384. (Médạ asserts that it was he who, with infinite courage though in a lefthanded manner, shot Robespierre. Médạ got promoted for his services of this night; and died General and Baron. Few credited Médạ in what was otherwise incredible.)
not without trouble, we gather these wrecked Conspirators; fish up even Henriot and Augustin, bleeding and foul; pack them all, rudely enough, into carts; and shall, before sunrise, have them safe under lock and key. Amid shoutings and embracings.

Robespierre lay in an anteroom of the Convention Hall, while his Prison-escort was getting ready; the mangled jaw bound up rudely with bloody linen: a spectacle to men. He lies stretched on a table, a deal-box his pillow; the sheath of the pistol is still clenched convulsively in his hand. Men bully him, insult him: his eyes still indicate intelligence; he speaks no word. 'He had on the sky-blue coat he had got made for the Feast of the Étre Suprême'—O Reader, can thy hard heart hold out against that? His trousers were nankeen; the stockings had fallen down over the ankles. He spake no word more in this world.

And so, at six in the morning, a victorious Convention adjourns: Report flies over Paris as on golden wings; penetrates the Prisons; irradiates the faces of those that were ready to perish: turnkeys and moutons, fallen from their high estate, look mute and blue. It is the 28th day of July, called 10th of Thermidor, year 1794.

Fauquier had but to identify; his Prisoners being already Out of Law. At four in the afternoon, never before were the streets of Paris seen so crowded. From the Palais de Justice to the Place de la Révolution, for thither again go the Tumbrils this time, it is one dense stirring mass; all windows crammed; the very roofs and ridge-tiles budding forth human Curiosity, in strange gladness. The Death-tumbrils, with their motley Batch of Outlaws, some Twenty-three or so, from Maximilien to Mayor Fleuriot and Simon the Cordwainer, roll on. All eyes are on Robespierre's Tumbril, where he, his jaw bound in dirty linen, with his half-dead Brother and half-dead Henriot, lie shattered; their 'seventeen hours' of agony about to end. The Gendarmes point their swords at him, to show the people which is he. A woman springs on the Tumbril; clutching the side of it with one hand, waving the other Sibyl-like; and exclaims: "The death of thee gladdens my very heart, m'enivre de joie;" Robespierre opened his eyes; "Scélérat, go down to Hell, with the curses of all wives and mothers!"—At the foot of the scaffold, they stretched him on the ground till his turn came. Lifted

aloft, his eyes again opened; caught the bloody axe. Samson wrenched the coat off him; wrenched the dirty linen from his jaw: the jaw fell powerless, there burst from him a cry;—hideous to hear and see. Samson, thou canst not be too quick!

Samson's work done, there bursts forth shout on shout of applause. Shout, which prolongs itself not only over Paris, but over France, but over Europe, and down to this generation.

Deservedly, and also undeservedly. O unhappiest Advocate of Arras, wert thou worse than other Advocates? Stricter man, according to his Formula, to his Credo and his Cant, of probities, benevolences, pleasures-of-virtue, and suchlike, lived not in that age. A man fitted, in some luckier settled age, to have become one of those incorruptible barren Pattern-Figures, and have had marble-tablets and funeral-sermons. His poor landlord, the Cabinet-maker in the Rue Saint-Honoré, loved him; his Brother died for him. May God be merciful to him and to us!

This is the end of the Reign of Terror; new glorious Revolution named of Thermidor; of Thermidor 9th, year 2; which being interpreted into old slave-style means 27th of July 1794. Terror is ended; and death in the Place de la Révolution, were the 'Tail of Robespierre' once executed; which service Fouquier, in large Batches, is swiftly managing.