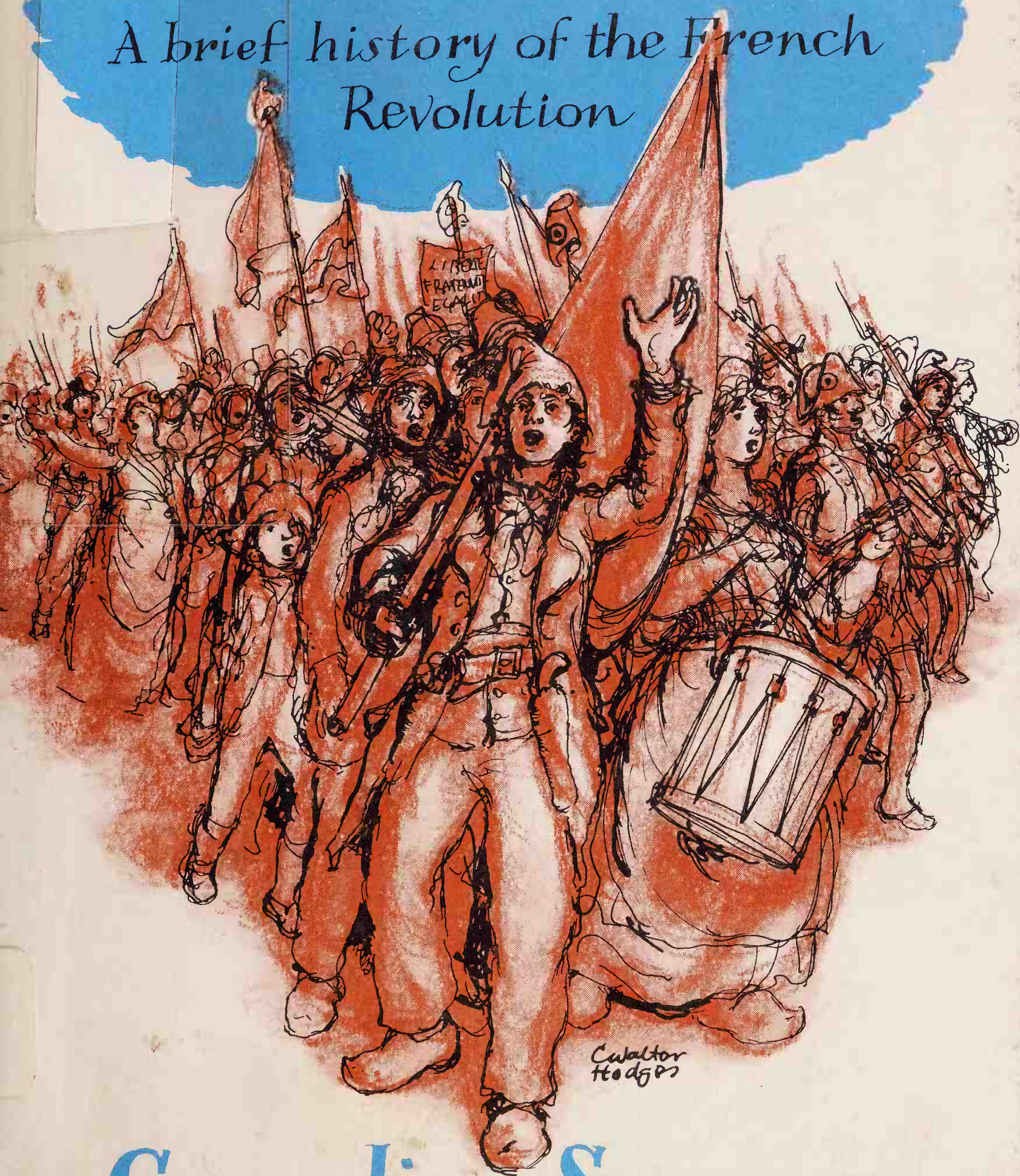


THE SONG IN THE STREETS

*A brief history of the French
Revolution*



Culston
Hodges

Cornelia Spencer

THE SONG IN THE STREETS

*A Brief History of
the French Revolution*

By CORNELIA SPENCER

Illustrated

As Abraham Lincoln is a symbol of the end of slavery, so the French Revolution stands for man's determination to be politically free. Its story needs to be told over and over. It should be told for the young and for the old, for people of the West and those of the Orient. It is the heritage of every generation.

In this book an author well known for her writings about many countries and individuals tells of those few fateful years and what they have meant to the world. In less than two hundred pages she describes the gathering discontent in the 1780's, the events that began with the fall of the Bastille, the

(Continued on back flap)

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THE SONG IN THE STREETS

A Brief History of the French Revolution

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The Song in the Streets

A Brief History
of the French Revolution

Cornelia Spencer ^{pseud.}
Yaukey, Grace (Sydenstricker)

Illustrated

The John Day Company, New York

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Foreword

The story of the French Revolution needs to be told over and over. It should be familiar to the young as well as to the old, and to the people of the Orient as well as to those of Western background.

Although the French were greatly influenced by the American Revolution, and although they played a large part in the struggle of the colonists, their revolution was a different one. They were not trying to win freedom from an outside power, but were determined, rather, to get freedom for themselves through setting up a democratic government. Their struggle toward this goal was to continue for a long time; republic after republic fell because it failed to meet the requirements of the people. For the French had rejected dictatorship forever and their repudiation of it was the beginning of mankind's continuing devotion to the ideal of free government.

The French Revolution could not possibly be kept within the boundaries of France. Its events inflamed men's minds in Europe and then in all the world, pointing to the hope and the belief that people everywhere must be able to choose how they will be governed. By now the French Revolution has long stood for a determination to be politically free, much as the name of Abraham Lincoln has been a symbol of the abolition of slavery. It has significance for each new generation because there are still those who are struggling to achieve its ends.

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Rouget de Lisle Singing "La Marseillaise"

1

PHILIP HENRIOT ran his hand over the surface of the small table top on which he was working. His sensitive fingers could scarcely tell where the inlay of golden satinwood joined the base of wine-red mahogany. True, he had not used any of the complicated patterns which were fashionable in France just now — no garland of flowers, no roses, no monkeys or Chinamen, not even cupids. These the more experienced men in his father's cabinet shop could undertake if they wanted to, and they did. But he preferred the simple lines which no more than curved with the table leg, and the woods which were so well joined that they would burnish as a whole until they shone like metal.

Philip was sixteen. The year was 1788. The place was the Saint-Antoine section of Paris. Here many master craftsmen had their workshops, often in the houses where they lived. The Henriot family, as did most of the others, lived on the two lower floors with their workers above them. Journeymen who went out to buy

and sell often came in with their orders and reports. And in the crowded workshop the fragrances of fine, exotic woods, many of them from distant parts of the world, mingled with the acrid pungency of varnishes and wax, of paint and lacquer.

The workshop was a busy place. It, and this whole house, made up Philip's world since he had stopped going to school and was apprenticed to his father. Though the stories which the journeymen brought of outside events in the villages and the city market places often made his blood run fast, the craft of the cabinet-maker was in the boy's blood, and he could forget everything else in the sensation of touching woods at their best.

There was a great demand for fine furniture. Styles were gradually changing from the burdened decoration of the great King Louis XIV to the simpler ones of the reigning King Louis XVI. Even yet, by Philip's standards, decoration was much overdone, and as for dyeing woods — which was often done in order to "paint" designs on the panels of cupboards and commodes and the rather new corner cupboard — he could easily dispense with it all. Gilding, too, he did not like. It only ruined the beauty of the wood for him and, Philip often suspected, for his father as well.

Sometimes as he worked, Philip thought about the way his father looked over at him when he was judging a groove or joining. Something passed between them, a kind of understanding which had never been put into words. Philip believed with secret joy that they shared pleasure as fellow craftsmen, and perhaps words would only interfere. But, husky fellow that he knew himself

to be when he caught his reflection in one of the fine mirrors standing ready to be mounted, he also knew that he was womanish when it came to his love for his work. He could almost weep when something went wrong with it, and it was this feeling that his father protected in their silent understanding. The women of the household were different. For one thing, it seemed to Philip that they were rarely silent, and for another, they did not understand or share the true meaning of craftsmanship. They could "Oh" and "Ah" over anything a journeyman told them, but to stand in silent admiration of a great block of mahogany imported from Haiti or Honduras and to visualize the swaying giant tree from which it had been hewn — this was beyond them. Much less could they see why a surface, burnished even more until the ultimate had been which was already burnished after a fashion, must be reached.

Of course Rosalie, his sister, was only fourteen. She was scarcely more than a child. Yet, there was that day not long ago when he had caught her posing and studying her reflection. She had pinned her curls on top her head, for all the world like the early pictures of Queen Marie Antoinette, while she swayed out one hip and placed her toes in mincing steps. She had blushed and laughed, turned and whisked away when she knew that he had seen her, almost before he could roar out, "Rosalie! You're not trying to look like *her*!" For it did not seem possible to him, that day or even now, that the little girl who had been his to tease and to torture, his to extract service from in small, annoying ways, was suddenly a woman, conscious of how she looked primp-

ing before a mirror. Even less could he think that she seriously wanted to look like that Austrian woman, the queen. But, having seen that Rosalie was becoming a woman, he was more than ever conscious that he was growing up, too. And so he had gone back to his work that day full of serious thoughts.

He was a Frenchman, one of a long line of French cabinetmakers, and he had come by his love of fine work honestly. He often looked proudly through the furniture designs which they kept stored in a case, and he liked to name the styles of the pieces in certain rooms of the palace at Versailles, in the rooms of the less pretentious Great Trianon and of the comparatively simple Petit Trianon. These had been built at the caprice of Louis XIV and Louis XV. He had never actually seen the furniture, but rumor made Versailles a kind of heaven where the very gods disported themselves, the gods being the kings and queens, especially Queen Marie Antoinette who had made the Petit Trianon a kind of fairyland.

But while Philip was interested in the beauty of furniture, he was more comfortable not thinking of the kind of life lived in these places of royalty. Perhaps this was because he could not keep from hearing what some people said when they visited the workshop. A kind of fury lay behind their words. The journeymen often reported disorder in the market places because of complaints against the taxes which everyone had to pay, unless they were clever enough to evade them. The standard joke was on the tax collector. No one could be less popular than he, and no one in a more dangerous position. He was ground between two millstones — the gov-

ernment's demand and the taxpayer's resistance. Tax collecting was a profession but the pressure was severe on those who practiced it. They often advanced a lump sum to the government and then collected to reimburse themselves. This method saved the government officers trouble and also protected them from the hatred of the people.

"No one pays taxes if he can possibly help it," Jacques Simon, one of the older journeymen, explained to Philip one day. He was just back from a tour of the villages. Now he slapped his thigh and laughed as he spoke. "Who would be so foolish as not to try to avoid paying the tax?" he asked rhetorically looking at Philip and then his father. "That would announce that something was wanting *here!*" and he pointed to his forehead. "No! If the king wants the taxes, then let him contrive to get them. The *taille* is for the poor and the stupid, not for anyone else. Unless you are far from being grown up, Philip, you already know this. Everyone is supposed to pay a certain percentage — but of what, no man exactly knows — but nonetheless a tax, the *taille*, for some reason or other. Besides this, there is also the *capitation*, or poll tax, which they say is actually based on what a man earns. Beyond these two, there is still the *vingtième*, the twentieth or income tax, but people who did not want to bother with this any more disposed of it long ago by getting rid of it in one payment." The man stopped and drew a deep breath. "The truth is that there are more and more taxes, even though they are often hidden ones imposed through government monopolies and customs duties. The salt monopoly, which requires the salt *gabelle*, is one of

these. Philip, in case you have not already heard a great deal about this, ask your mother about the salt gabelle — how much she has to pay in order to have the privilege of salting your food.”

Philip murmured, “I have heard much of this.” Jacques Simon’s face had reddened, his laugh fading suddenly while he spoke of the salt tax. Now he reached into his pocket for his wallet and came to abrupt silence. Philip was astonished at the change in him. He noticed that the man’s jaw was working hard as if in ill-controlled anger. Jacques studied the contents of his wallet and began to lay order slips and coins on the counter. “Taxes, pressures, restrictions — all against the people — and yet the royal spending goes on,” he said in a thick voice. “What I hear as I go about! Borrowing, borrowing, and still the queen wants more for this and that new beauty, for another wild party or for the gaming table, for some new decoration of the Petit Trianon, while in the market places the people are groaning under the burden and we — you, Monsieur Henriot — have to pay for it.”

Philip’s father drew a deep breath in and then let it slowly out through pursed lips. He was a slight, well-knit man. It seemed odd that he was father to such a tall fellow as Philip. Yet they were alike, especially in the expression of the eyes — that faraway look of one who is drawn to the present because he must be rather than because he wants to be. He filled his pipe and puffed thoughtfully once or twice before he spoke. Then he turned to the journeyman.

“Tell me, Jacques, did you hear anything about organized resistance to the taxes and the pressures of our

king?" Philip suddenly suspected that his father knew more about this than he had told anyone.

Jacques threw out his hands in a motion of ignorance. "A great deal of talking is going on, but that is all," he said. "Farmers and country people, workers such as you have here, lacemakers and weavers and hat-makers, those who run the wallpaper mills, milliners and clerks — they all complain. But organize . . . ? No, they are not organized." He paused and then went on hesitantly. "All they know how to do is to complain, complain. Still, they are paid a wage and they live somehow. They criticize their employers rather than the king, and they blame the times in general."

Monsieur Henriot was silent, stirring his pipe and drawing deeply. Philip wondered what he was thinking. Something was left unsaid between the three of them. At last the master craftsman looked up and caught his son's eye. "So, the people do not complain against the king but against those who employ them. Who do they think conspires against those who employ them but the king and his men? Do we — I ask you, Jacques Simon — make more than we should for bearing the burden of risk of rising and falling sales, of import taxes, customs, and the like? Do we oppress our workers who live under our own roof, and you, our journeymen? I ask you, are we growing fat with profits? I see you shaking your head and I see no fear or anger in your eyes. It is rather we, the craftsmen and the shopkeepers, who are the oppressed, who suffer from hidden taxes which we must somehow satisfy. You get your wage, please God, but who knows about *our* profits?"

"I do not understand all you are saying," old Jacques

murmured. "I am only an ignorant man when it comes to reasons behind our troubles. I know where to get orders for your cabinets and where to find the best woods. I know how to sell our small items through the markets, but when you ask me if there is organized protest among the people, I have to say I have not heard so, although I hear complaints against everything else from the weather down. And truly, it is the weather in the first place that prevents the grain from growing and ripening as it should. It is scarce grain that makes bread costly bringing on bad times. Who is going to say that this is the fault of the king and that Austrian woman, his wife?"

"Then there is trouble because of the shortage of bread?" Monsieur Henriot's eyes suddenly sharpened.

"Yes. You surely know that there is almost a famine," Jacques said harshly. "Floods and last winter's bitter cold ruined the grape crop, and when our vineyards do not produce . . . need I say more, m'sieur? Then, do you not remember the terrifying storms of this July 13th and the hail that followed, which completely ruined the fields of grain? Now with winter ahead people see a shortage of bread, though the price of wine is astonishingly low. The result is that there is more drinking than eating."

"You still have not told all you know," Monsieur Henriot said, his eyes searching the older man's face. "Others have told you what they have heard as they traveled — Peter, Anton, and the rest of the journeymen. What do they say about the feeling of the people?"

"The same thing, only that they are uneasy about the price of bread and that too many people are leaving the

country to come to the city to find work. Some almost wish that they did not belong to the *compagnonnage*, or union, so that they could strike against their patrons. But all this is only words, Monsieur Henriot. I have heard nothing about actual strikes, only anxiety. Surely one cannot blame those who fear."

"So," Philip's father said, "the problem becomes more complicated. At the top are the king and the aristocracy. Below are the employers and the craftsmen. At the bottom there are the workers and the peasants. The aristocracy slips the noose on all who are below it. The aristocracy serves only the king and queen, and their ignorant and evil ends. Perhaps they will serve them to the point of bringing in foreign armies for their purposes. So, *la belle France*, evil days lie ahead."

"Father," Philip put in suddenly, forced to words by the unexpected turn of the talk which he was drinking in, "you ought to know that in this house, too, some people complain. I cannot help hearing them as I work."

"What do they say?" Monsieur Henriot asked sharply. "None could be more just than I in the treatment of workmen. Tell me, what do they say?"

"Nothing against you personally, but once they discussed the strike of the carriers a few years ago when they were protesting the new organization called the *fourgons*. They remembered how the strikers marched to Versailles to appeal to the king and how angry they were when they found he had gone hunting."

"And their leaders were put in the pillory and that was the end of the matter," Monsieur Henriot added sharply. "Did they also remember that we in the wood-

working trade were at the same time restricted in the woods that we could buy, because of the new rules, so that we could not produce as fine or as varied furniture as before? That is the way it always is — one complains against the other, and that one complains of the one above him, and no one stops to find the truth. Least of all does that sweet one of the Devil, Marie Antoinette, stop to ask where the money is to come from that she throws away at the gaming table or spends carelessly on some new whim, if it does not, indeed, come from the pockets of such patrons and workers and journeymen as we are. It is an evil day when a king knows so little about his people, when hunting is more important than ruling, when a queen is like a child in her thoughtlessness and a demon when it comes to deceit. . . . But I ought not to let myself speak about them for I might have a stroke. One cannot bear to think of all that may happen before France is clean and new, free from the injustices of her own government.”

The other two listened silently. Their master spoke with rare emotion, as one who was deeply troubled, and they knew that he had not yet finished what he must say. Soon he went on.

“So, the men under my own roof think back to that strike of the carriers and secretly dream of casting off God-knows-what shackles, for they cannot name them because they cannot see the chains that fetter every craftsman and shopkeeper. Those chains are forged by the aristocracy, binding free people to a stupid king and an evil queen, and they will maintain their hold unless one day they are torn off.” Monsieur Henriot’s voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper. He looked at the

others with a startled expression now, almost as though he knew he had suddenly said aloud what before he had only been thinking secretly. "I have said too much," he murmured, straightening up. "Your accounts, Jacques. And you to your work, Philip."

Philip went back to his work. He had to design a leg for the table he was making. The top was already hardening so it would be ready for burnishing. The things he had just heard, as well as his own thoughts, were confusing. Why shouldn't the workers want a better life? He knew that the workmen's rooms in this very house did not have many of the comforts which his room and his parents' and his sister's had. And, was it not true that before the Henriot family had become cabinetmakers, they had been villagers doing no more than the simplest carpentry? And for generations had they not dreamed of moving higher and higher among the bourgeoisie? Would not men always want to stand on the shoulders of their fellows in order to elevate themselves?

He often heard talk about the Third Estate. The classification included everyone from just beneath the aristocracy to the humblest beggar. While there was a clear line between aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the divisions within the Third Estate, by far the largest mass of people, were indistinct and often merged into one another. Working men and professional people, and those who pretended a certain distant claim to freedom from any work at all — all were there, clamoring for titles and for rights. There was no end to it. As for him, just let him work with fragrant woods and watch beauty take its shape.

Yet while he worked, he went on thinking. All the people of France were worrying about their destiny that year of 1788. They were hoping for a change to better times, wondering about the stories they kept hearing about their queen and the slow, stupid, but well-intentioned king who did little but eat and hunt. "Freedom" was the magic word. The American Colonies had made themselves free of England. . . . But even Philip knew that their situation had been different from that which France faced. The Americans had cut themselves off from something outside. France had to free herself from something inside herself. She must cast off an inner bondage. How could it be done? It seemed impossible, and yet, it must come about, even if most of the French people could do no more than blame their queen who, after all, had come as a mere girl — only a merry, carefree girl — to be the Queen of France.

2

MANY A YOUNG GIRL like Rosalie Henriot must have thought secretly of what it would have been like to come from another country to be the Queen of France. Of course, Marie Antoinette was now no longer a girl but a middle-aged woman, and she looked quite cold and unconcerned, as if the stories about her could all be true. But it was still a fact that she had come when she was only fifteen.

To the cabinetmaker's daughter the stories about the queen were exciting, sad, and fascinating. "Now, suppose that I, Rosalie, went today to another country to marry a prince whom I had never seen. Suppose that I had to ride for many miles in a great cavalcade to a spot where the wedding ceremony would take place in a special pavilion built for the occasion, but without the prince there," Rosalie sometimes said to herself. She had often heard how the girl Marie Antoinette had borne up during the formalities until the moment when her own Austrian nobles left and the French took

her over after the marriage contract was read. Then, instead of being solemn and dignified, she had sobbed and flung herself passionately into the arms of the new lady in waiting. Then, tears or no, she had had to mount her chariot and start the long drive from Vienna to the Forest of Compiègne where her unfamiliar French family was awaiting her. And even there it was the king to whom she had to be attentive and not his son, her new husband. What a dull boy he had turned out to be, too!

When they started for Versailles, she had had to sit primly between royal father and son in the carriage and the older man was the one who had paid attention to her. A second wedding ceremony had to be gone through at Versailles. The story was that this had been such an exclusive affair that only members of the court were present. When the new dauphiness signed her name, "Marie Antoinette Josèphe Jeanne" that night, a great drop of ink blotched it — an evil omen, Rosalie thought as thousands before her had also thought. The public had expected to have a great parade with fireworks in the gardens of Versailles during the evening which followed. Instead it poured in torrents so that thousands of people fled homeward whipped by wind and blinding rain, while the wedding feast, lit by myriads of candles in the great, new drawing room of the palace went on unconcernedly. It was said that this was the last magnificent display of King Louis XV, and he had made the most of it.

But Rosalie felt sorry for the Marie Antoinette of those days. Her boy husband was most unromantic while she was lively and full of fun. He was not inter-

ested in doing things with her, while she was ready for every kind of pleasure as she grew accustomed to the place. Pictures of her as a young queen showed her slender, light in her movements, gracious and self-assured. Her blue eyes and her bright smile won her friends everywhere. Soon people complained that she was too vivacious and careless of her responsibilities. They said that her marriage had no meaning for her. She acted like a tomboy with some of her younger brothers-in-law. Rosalie did not think that this was so dreadful. After all, how dull it would be to live in palaces and to act forever like a queen. Why not romp and play when it was all within the royal family?

Right or wrong then, Queen Marie Antoinette was being severely criticized now. Everyone complained of her thoughtless spending. Everyone told stories about her, things that were whispered behind the hand with an upswing of the eyes. She was blamed for the bad times even more than the king because people said she managed him.

Rosalie had grown tired of the constant criticism of the queen. She heard it at table and she heard it often as she passed through the shop. Even her brother, that stupid, gangling fellow, made as if *he* could have done better. She had no patience with him, and as for his love of woods — it was simply silly. She avoided the shop when he was there or flounced up the stairs without looking down. But he often stared up at her with a strange, wondering gaze, although she thought he did not really see her at all. He had acted as if she had done something dreadful when she had pinned her curls up like the queen one day. Well, he was the silly one and

not she. After all, the queen was powerful. She was feared, and she was beautiful. If she was wicked, well — goodness was often dull, especially if Philip, her brother, was to be taken as a sample of it. She wanted prettier clothes and she wanted to go to parties, and she would do as she liked in spite of silly old Philip. Let him stay a craftsman forever. She would at least marry out of this shop into something better. Certainly she would with Mama to help her, for her mother felt the same way. "If one cannot move up any other way, then marry up," her mother sometimes said, half-laughing, as they sewed together.

Madame Henriot saw her daughter as a healthy, pleasant-looking girl. But she had no special gift of beauty unless it was her eyes which were unusually clear and bright and framed by well-shaped brows. She tended to be too plump, and this Madame Henriot tried to control by avoiding sweets at her table. But where was she to find the right husband for Rosalie? Philip could have helped, the mother pondered, if he had made friends in families a little higher in the bourgeoisie than they, and if he sometimes brought fellows from such homes to the house. They, seeing Rosalie, might invite her to parties in their homes. But Philip! He had few friends of any kind and certainly no gay ones. His friends were the craftsmen who came to discuss a pattern, or the crude journeymen who brought in their reports. He was such a serious fellow, and such a hard fellow to groom in the social graces! The mother sighed as she worked. How was she to make a good marriage for this one daughter so that she would eventually pull them all up a notch higher?

“Turn the ruffle this way before you sew it, Rosalie,” she said one day as they worked together. “Then it will stand out instead of lying flat. You must learn these little things. They make a difference; just as you must learn that it makes a difference how you sit, how your curls fall to one side, how you hold the expression of your face when listening to your elders. These small matters have a bearing on larger ones. Pay attention to what I say and we shall do our best to see that the future holds better things.” Madame Henriot continued her work with an expression of determination. Her husband was a good man and one who was competent professionally, she knew. Their shop grew busier all the time, and many gathered there to discuss the craft in an informal fashion. Their house was a solid one. But all these together were still not enough to advance them socially. There was only one lifetime to be lived and it passed so swiftly. Let Philip be what he must be. He would do little ever to lift the family. But Rosalie could lead them forward by providing an open door. She, her mother, would make use of that door and lead them all through it to a higher social level.

Madame Henriot had no patience with the rumbling of the people which she heard, against her will, wherever she went. Let them complain about everyone and everything. She was sure that progress was made, not by great movements or by the decrees of kings or queens but by each one looking out for himself. She often told her husband this as they talked at night when the household had gone to bed. “See to ourselves and let the rest see to themselves,” she put it in her quick way.

“But it is France, *France*, that is coming to bad

times," Monsieur Henriot replied. "What does it matter whether one craftsman, or even one guild, or one whole section of a city goes bankrupt, but when France goes bankrupt and her king and queen become a joke to the nations of Europe, then times are truly bad and we must be concerned."

"But who is to blame? Are we to blame?"

"It is not a question of blame but of cure," the husband said patiently. "We have to find a remedy as America found one. If she could, why can't we?"

"You are not one of those who make a new god out of Benjamin Franklin, I hope! I have not heard you speak like this before. You surely are not one who thinks that it was right for us to have poured out our life's blood to help the Americans?" Her voice was sharp with disbelief.

"I have not said anything about France's helping America because these times had not come upon us yet, and I could not see anything clearly. Now I know one thing, and that is that men who want freedom must stand together. We have to learn from others and be courageous enough to follow them," Monsieur Henriot said resolutely. "Yes, even if we are bowed down by debt, I am glad that we shared in the American Revolution and that Lafayette did what he did. After all, our debt came not only from doing this, remember."

"You have been reading some of the dangerous writings of Rousseau or of Voltaire!"

"I have been reading those and other writings. I have been thinking, and I shall do much more thinking."

Silence fell between them for that night, but many other nights the talking went on and on. The roots of

their country's problems were deep and reached far — to all classes of the French people. Monsieur Henriot could see his relationship to the broad scope of it quite clearly.

His household, made up of his family and his employees, was typical of many groups of master craftsmen, each group of which usually lived in its own section of Paris. Beneath the craftsmen were the workers who were not yet concentrated enough in large factories or groupings to organize themselves toward carrying out any purpose, although the factories were beginning to affect the handcrafts. But everyone was aware of the worsening times. Because of the bad situation, a great mass of angry people was — and had been for a long time — changing into an enormous force which could be channeled into almost any direction under able leaders.

The master craftsmen, who were over the workers and who directed them, had their own hatreds. The strongest and most bitter feeling was against the aristocracy. But the clergy were disliked almost as much as the aristocracy because of the tax situation. For while the clergy were supported by taxes, they themselves were exempted from paying many of them and they were also granted many privileges.

The clergy were unlike other groups in a number of ways. Though the French people were generally thought of as being made up of three great political classifications, actually there were only two political groups, the aristocracy and the Third Estate. The clergy, though usually listed as the first of three, was really a separate professional group. It had its own aristocracy, bishops,

abbots and canons, while its "commoners" were the parish priests and those who served under them. Even the general aristocracy resented the clergy because they had rights more exclusive than their own. The aristocracy or nobility had to pay road taxes, for example, while the clergy did not. Often persons belonged to the aristocracy only because of a faint prestige due to noble birth which brought no real assets with it, while the clergy were assured of certain goods as well as of definite prestige.

It was all very involved. Not even men as well informed as Monsieur Henriot could always bear the pattern of French society clearly in mind. The worst of it was that the king was almost altogether separated from his people and subject to bad, as well as to good, advisors. Now that the times were becoming so threatening he seemed to be led into one mistake after another. The real problem which faced the French nation now was that it was time for her to modernize in order to save herself, but there seemed to be no way of bringing about this change because the aristocracy killed every effort that was made. This crisis situation had at least been increased by the loans which France had made to the American Colonies during their revolution, now twenty years ago. When that war was over, France could continue to function only by borrowing money.

The Americans had affected France indirectly in another, perhaps even more important, way. They had fanned the idea of freedom and of representation in government.

When Madame Henriot now asked her husband if he were one of those who had made a legend of Benjamin

Franklin, her question implied a great deal, for though Franklin was an old man by 1788, he had first come to her country at the time when the struggle was going on in America. For a long time the ordinary people in and around Paris had not known of the part he was playing in working out an alliance between the two countries at war, so that it was possible for France to insure the success of the American Colonies and, at the same time, enhance her own trade. Later they had fallen in love with the personality of Benjamin Franklin. He was still their hero and idol, a man of great importance in the history of the French government, and, for all who were informed of the details of his life, a figure of enormous appeal. So, though he meant different things (some of which were good and some of which were not) to people such as Monsieur and Madame Henriot, to Philip and to Rosalie, Benjamin Franklin was still a heroic figure.

3

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN visited Paris during the sixteen years that he was agent for the American Colonies in London. When he went to France the first time, in the autumn of 1767, he was already well known there for his scientific discoveries. French officials welcomed him with great courtesy. One of them, D'Alibard, had himself tried Franklin's experiment of getting electricity from a cloud, and now he and his wife showed him special attention. Other admirers and friends gathered around him. Some of his friends wanted him to write a paper on the subject of lightning and the way Americans safeguarded their houses against it. He began it with a simple statement about the principles involved and ended with practical advice.

A person apprehensive of danger from lightning, happening in a time of thunder to be in a house not so secured, will do well to avoid sitting near the chimney, near a looking glass, or any gilt picture or wainscot; the safest place is in the middle

of the room . . . sitting in one chair and laying the feet up in another . . . where it can be had a hammock or a swinging bed . . . affords the safest situation a person can have in any room whatever.

The French people loved him immediately because he was simple, friendly and humorous; at the same time he always knew what was suitable in every situation. Franklin himself was delighted with the country and its people. He soon saw that France could play an important part in solving the problems of his beloved America for which he had been working in England. For the first time he wondered whether the idea he had been promoting, that of stronger union between Great Britain and the American Colonies with the colonists being self-governing and only owing allegiance to the mother country, was as wise as he had first thought. Perhaps basic differences would develop between life on the great American continent and life in the narrow British Isles. He began to see natural bonds between the French and the Americans.

In July and August, 1769, Franklin went to Paris again. By this time he was known all through the European world as the most eminent man of science and as a philosopher as well. He was fascinating to the French because of the variety of his interests which included such diverse things as lightning rods, smokeless stoves and alphabet reform. When John Bartram, the American Quaker, was appointed botanist to the British king, Franklin urged Bartram to publish an account of his botanical travels because they would tell of "living plants" instead of "dead monuments." When Bartram returned to America, Franklin sent him seeds of

the then unfamiliar rhubarb and kohlrabi as curiosities. He made observations on flies drugged with wine and noticed how they came to life after exposure to the warm sun. He said he wished that the experiment would have the same result when applied to human beings. Why oil should calm the ocean, the nature of the common cold, and a thousand other interests occupied him. But these were only the small things which diverted him while he played a dangerous and important role in the maneuvering going on between the British king and the American Colonies. The repeal of the Stamp Act was perhaps his greatest diplomatic achievement of the time. When he saw, at last, that war over America was inevitable and was convinced that complete independence of the colonies was the only right course, he returned to his country to help frame the Declaration of Independence. At that time he made a personal gift of \$20,000 to the young Congress.

France had been watching the actions of the American Congress and now sent its foreign minister, Vergennes, to Philadelphia to get in touch with Franklin. Six months before the Declaration was drawn up, Vergennes knew that it was planned, but that the colonies could not afford to declare their independence without the help of France and that, conversely, because of its relationship to England, France could not help them until they had declared independence. Through this delicate and confused negotiation, Franklin was the guiding hand, even though he sometimes made mistakes. He knew how to smooth and oil personal relations by continual exchanges of judicious gifts and by letters in fields of interest other than diplomacy. Al-

though the Declaration was the work of Thomas Jefferson, Franklin lightened the editing of the momentous document with many touches of humor, and what he said was in time reported in Europe and heightened the affection of people there for him. His humor and his puns were the kind that the French people loved and they repeated what he had said and passed it on to their children. So, in Paris, years later, such people as the Henriots in their workshops would recall and laugh over a story of Franklin's. It might be one like that of the hatter who was so foolish as to ask advice about how he should make his sign. Beginning with, "John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money," the story goes that the hatter ended with "John Thompson" above the figure of a hat. So, Franklin had implied, it might be with the American Congress as it worked on the editing of the Declaration of Independence.

In September 1776, Congress chose Franklin as one of three commissioners to represent it at the court of France. Franklin was already seventy and exhausted by responsibility. He sailed on the *Reprisal* which carried a cargo of indigo to pay for its voyage. He took two grandsons with him, one seven and one seventeen years of age. He knew that if the ship were seized he would almost certainly be hanged for treason, but this did not seem to worry him. He calmly studied the Gulf Stream, an avid interest of his, as they sailed. Though he wanted to arrive unheralded, he was welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm.

Franklin set up living quarters in Passy, a village near Paris, and here for the next ten years he was the



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

center of diplomacy, international intrigue, philosophical discussion, scientific hobnobbing, friendly and homey hospitality, and general advice. He had really transferred his home from Craven Street, London, to a quiet suburb of Paris. Here he became part of the French people and yet remained always uniquely American.

In 1777, Cochin first painted Franklin's portrait. The next year Duplessis painted him. His likenesses were sought after throughout the country and he wrote home that he was sick to death of sitting for his portrait. He was taken to be older than he was but age was venerated by the French. His clothes, sober by French standards, his fur hat, his spectacles and his crabtree cane were so much associated with him that they were almost a uniform. He had invented bifocals by simply having two pair of lenses used for near and far vision cut in half and then half of each joined in the frame for each eye.

His nearest neighbors were his closest friends. The parish priest and the village tradesmen were his loyal allies. He teased, entertained and claimed them as his own. He was gallant to the ladies and appropriated the children. He wrote endlessly in the various fields of his interests, yet all the time he was in a position of extreme importance to the American Revolution, which was then going on, also to France, to Spain and to England. The involved relations between these countries, the development of trade, and the philosophical discussion of freedom among French thinkers all seemed channeled through the household of Benjamin Frank-

lin in Passy. What he did and said and wrote would not be forgotten.

For a time everyone seemed to expect that the American revolutionists would be defeated. They had almost nothing with which to carry on the war, not even unity among themselves. They were secretly already getting some help from France in the form of money, cannon, uniforms and tents before any formal alliance had been set up. Events in America, added to the tense feeling existing between France and England, intrigued young military men in France. Several dukes, among them the Marquis de Lafayette, volunteered to serve under General George Washington.

Vergennes, the French foreign minister, signed a treaty of alliance in commerce and friendship with the Americans, after complicated negotiations through which Franklin was the guiding hand. Vergennes was also able to bring Spain and Holland to intervene in the war against England. Meanwhile Russia, Sweden and Denmark formed a league protesting the right to search ships. France then sent a squadron of ships with a corp of 6,000 men under Rochambeau to aid the Americans. With this help Washington laid siege to Yorktown, leading to the surrender of Cornwallis in 1781. This was the beginning of the victory which brought about American independence. Independence was further assured by French squadrons which engaged the British fleet in the Mediterranean, West Indies and the Indian Ocean. Peace was signed in Versailles in September 1783. The Americans, the French and the Spanish had combined to win against the British. France had played a great part in the independence

of a people outside of Europe, both through military help and because of what her own widely known thinkers had said about freedom.

Like the earlier alliance, the signing of the peace treaty was possible partly because of the understanding between Franklin and Vergennes. Only through interplay of wit and diplomacy could ill-feeling be avoided, and representatives of each country accept the fact that their motives might have to differ as they moved toward completion of the peace treaty.

One among several who influenced Franklin a great deal at this time, was Voltaire. Even though he was an old man when Franklin went to Paris to live and was destined to die only two years later, the American knew him well through his writings and recognized him as the voice of revolution. When they met, Franklin, though by now old himself, was not thinking of Voltaire as the frail elderly man that he had become, but as the keen, bitter, lashing young man who had hated tyranny and injustice all his life, who had been imprisoned and then banished for his beliefs, and who had believed as few of his day believed, in the right of man to think for himself. His thinking was, perhaps, the most powerful in all Europe. Franklin who was less bitter and cutting, and more tempered by humor, revered the aged Voltaire and saw him as often as he could. When they met on one great occasion at the Academy of Sciences, the audience applauded tirelessly and seemed to be demanding something of them. They were formally introduced to each other, yet it was clear that the audience was still not satisfied. The two old men took each other by the hand and beamed at the

crowd, but it only continued to roar and clap and wait for something more. At last they heard a demand that they embrace after the French fashion. Then, in that setting of the Academy, the two great ones hugged each other and kissed each other's cheeks as the people wished, and those who witnessed the historic event sighed their satisfaction — a sigh that was shared with all of France.

Benjamin Franklin seemed almost unaware of the significance of his part in what had taken place in America and in France. Musing over some intriguing scientific idea, interested in the development of some person, involved in the family matters of a relative or friend, he often "struck fire" as if accidentally. This happened about the year 1783 when he wrote a paper to interest emigrants in the new continent. He was convinced that the wrong people were wanting to go there and he decided to put them straight in "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America." He had set up a small printing press in his house about 1777, planning to use it only for official forms and documents connected with his mission. But he had long ago given up limiting himself to using it for only these. Soon he was employing two or three people to cast type and print, and was running off bagatelles on various subjects himself. One of these sheets had an enormous effect in the history of the American Colonies. It was "The Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle." In reality it was a hoax in which the British were indirectly accused of using savage Indian allies to further their military cause in America, but it served to turn public

opinion more than ever against the British at that crucial time.

His paper on emigration, however, was published in England, Italy and Germany and also translated into French. About the same time he prepared "Remarks Concerning Savages of North America" and the two papers together became enormously popular.

Then his thoughts turned to another subject. His daughter in America had recently written him a letter and had enclosed an article about the hereditary Society of the Cincinnati which had just been organized among former officers of the American army after the pattern of nobility. He had for a long time questioned the ideas of descent which were generally held in Europe. Nobility was based on the theory of inherited qualities. Franklin's mathematics made him discredit this idea because of the obviously smaller and smaller amount of the original stock in each generation. He was inclined toward the principle of ascending honor, rather than descending honor, after the pattern of the Chinese who revered their ancestors. Such a theory intrigued him increasingly as he watched the part noble birth played in European life. Even though this was no new idea, for he had thought about it long ago as a young radical in Boston and had expressed himself through *Poor Richard's Almanac*, he now wrote his daughter a long reply on the question. The ideas in what he had written were so important to him that he let a friend translate it into French and thought of printing it, but he was warned against that because what he had said was so critical of the French social system. Perhaps, then, it should not

be published until after his death, he thought. Yet the possibility of making it available to the public continued to tempt him.

It was not strange that craftsmen like Monsieur Henriot could have their imaginations so fired by Benjamin Franklin and so adore him, for while those who knew him most intimately were not the ordinary people but members of the nobility, he was fundamentally democratic himself. Although he lived largely removed from the pressures which were leading toward revolution, he was deeply at one with revolutionary principles as well as with ideas of freedom, and he was often a spokesman for them. He talked about the American Constitution with the philosophically minded and, at their suggestion, had it translated into French. At the request of the American Congress he sent two copies of the translation to each foreign ambassador in Paris and throughout Europe. He personally believed that what France needed first of all was a new constitution.

As Franklin grew older he was almost isolated from the currents of life in his little establishment at Passy. He seemed not to realize that what was brewing in France was a much more deeply rooted change than that which had taken place in the American Colonies. He failed to see that it would bring a new relationship between a ruler and his people, not only in his adopted country but all through Europe. Yet his face, crowned by the famous fur cap and framed by wigless, unpowdered, straight hair, was portrayed many times so that his personality was felt in thousands of homes through the reproductions which were plentiful. Because of the principles for which he stood, his influence was out of

all proportion to the actual demonstration of democracy which he made in his personal life.

Perhaps because it was a time when there was much discussion of theories of government and of the rights of man, such people as craftsmen, even young men like Philip Henriot, still talked about Benjamin Franklin after he returned to America for the last time in 1785. For in 1788, when famines in the countryside and unemployment in Paris stirred the people of France to a new sense of emergency, the figure of the old diplomat came back as the symbol of the common man — the runaway boy, fifteenth child of a most plebeian and nonintellectual candle molder and soap boiler of Boston.

The American Revolution, contributing as it did to France's hard times, now seemed to beckon to the French people and point them on. Madame Henriot could well ask her husband if he was one to make a god of Benjamin Franklin, for it was true that as men worshiped the idea of freedom, they paid homage to the American who had lived among them. What she did not see was that this new religion was so deeply rooted in the people of the Third Estate — her husband and her son, certainly, if not Rosalie and herself who aspired to move upward — that only death itself could free them from it. She remembered that the one time she had glimpsed Benjamin Franklin he had cut an odd enough figure to attract attention, but she had no taste for the stories which glorified him. Let each look out for himself and all would be well without a great upset because of high-sounding philosophies.

4

AMONG BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's friends while he lived at Passy was the Marquis Mirabeau, an eccentric man and a student of political economics. Franklin knew that his friend's greatest problem was his son, Honoré, a young count who led such a wild life that his father had finally, out of desperation, obtained orders from the king to have him imprisoned. This imprisonment occurred not through the usual kind of arrest based on a charge against him, but on a royal warrant known as a *lettre de cachet*. The young count directed one of his first pieces of writing against such warrants. By the time that Franklin was nearing his final return to America, the young Mirabeau was past his youth and, though still without conscience in his morals or activities, he had become a brilliant writer and speaker. He had been to England and he believed that France could avoid a revolution if she would set up a ministry after the pattern of England but make her assembly a

truly representative one instead of one like the British Parliament of that time. He was convinced that Louis XVI would have to realize that he had to create a new kind of relationship with his people, that the days of feudalism and kingly dictatorship were over.

A man like young Mirabeau naturally interested Benjamin Franklin. When he received from Philadelphia a brief called "Considerations upon the Order of the Cincinnati," prepared by one Aedanus Burke of South Carolina, he at once decided that Mirabeau ought to translate it into French. He and a friend listened while Mirabeau read the completed translation. In the process of translation the work had been expanded so that it was now an extensive satire against the nobility everywhere, not merely within the framework of the Society of the Cincinnati. Franklin was now reminded of his earlier letter to his daughter on the same subject, and he must, either then or soon after, have given a copy of it to Mirabeau. When the "*Considérations*" were published in London a few months later (through the help of Franklin, who with difficulty located someone willing to print the dangerous manuscript), the footnotes included the ideas he had expressed in his letter. Mirabeau's book was translated into English, and when Franklin returned to Philadelphia, he found it there. He was gratified that the content of his letter to his daughter, expanded by Burke and by Mirabeau, had now appeared in Paris, London and Philadelphia, the three leading cities of the western world.

But a discussion of inherited nobility, while important, was still theoretical in a country like France,

where by the time Franklin was returning to America, an old and weary man, restless minds like that of Mirabeau were asking whether change without revolution was possible.

Voltaire had been the first to raise this question and to express the ideas which would produce the revolution after a time. His influence was enormous. Even unlettered men who worked with their hands knew his name, had heard some of his sayings, and revered him as the "founder of the future." No wonder that the audience in the Academy of Sciences had hailed his meeting with Franklin as they had. All knew that he had done more than talk, too. When, because of his difficulty with his government over the brilliant and startling statements which he felt impelled to make, he could not live in peace in France, he settled near the boundary of Switzerland. Here he could dash across the border when the king issued a warrant against him. Here, also, he set up a kind of model community where he received visitors and travelers, started industries demonstrating his theories, ran a farm, and defended those who he felt had been unjustly sued. At the same time he was writing drama, history, poetry and philosophy in tremendous volume, and behind it all lay the unchanging conviction that man must be free to think as he wished. This was, perhaps, the most fundamental principle of freedom to champion, and Voltaire did so until at eighty-four he went home to Paris, beloved by all.

In the meantime, Jean Jacques Rousseau, born in Geneva, roamed through Italy, France and through his homeland as a vagabond, earning his way as secretary

or tutor, and teaching music. These occupations all took him into homes of the wealthy. He had come from circumstances which offered none of the niceties or luxuries of life, and now he made trenchant observations as he traveled. When he reached Paris, he was impressed by the fact that the French people were governed by an aristocracy which did not care whether they had what they needed or whether they were happy. He decided that the French system was an entirely artificial one. In a book about the origins of government, called *The Social Contract*, he expressed the opinion that laws were not binding unless they had been agreed upon by the people on whom they were imposed. This was an inflammatory idea, especially in a country where people were more and more alert to their suffering under a government which was separated from them and ignorant of their needs, and where a time of change was inevitably approaching.

Rousseau went further and attacked the French educational system. He thought that children were being treated like machines when they should be allowed to develop naturally, moving on in whatever direction they seemed ready to progress — sometimes altogether in bodily development, sometimes imaginatively, sometimes intellectually, and again socially. Many of his ideas were so reasonable that they have continued to affect education up to modern times, but in the France of his day, his principles of education augmented the wave of change which was already gathering force to sweep over the country.

It was natural, perhaps, that if Rousseau was ready to pull up the plants of political and social structure as

well as those of education, in order to examine their roots, he should also look into himself. In his *Confessions* he wrote of his feelings and emotions in what today would be called a clinical fashion. While he did not claim to have final knowledge or to make final judgments, he did have an enormous influence on the thinking, especially of young people, in his time. It became a fad to read Rousseau, and even the most conservative and the most religious studied him and talked of him, if for no other reason than to refute him. He died before he could really see the effect he had had either in the new democracy of America or in France.

While Rousseau was popular and inviting to those who wanted to justify new freedoms for themselves as well as for society, a group of writers known as the Encyclopedists, who had studied largely in Jesuit schools, came together. They wanted to plan or scheme out a new world. Perhaps they had gotten their idea from John Locke in England and from Montesquieu in France a generation earlier, but however their ideas originated, they were determined to work against some basic practices which they believed had a bad, rather than a good, influence on society. These were the trade in slaves, inequality in taxation, corruption in administering justice, the wastefulness of war, and organized religion. They were convinced that man was naturally inclined toward social cooperation and toward sound politics. The Encyclopedists were sincere, and under the leadership of Diderot, they tried to work out a system for a new kind of world. But they produced, for the time at least, only theories.

The Encyclopedists were only one among a number of groups which studied causes and effects in society as

it was and which hoped to improve it. There were also the Economists or Physiocrats, of whom the elder Mirabeau was one, who were trying to discover the laws governing production and distribution, and again suggesting improvements. Clubs or lodges either put forward ideas on the basic organization of society, or were purely intellectual or social. These groups differed in America and in France, for while American lodges tended to be rather local in scope and to emphasize social activities, in France they usually took on the controversies of the time; sometimes they were centers of free thinking and of opposition to any kind of absolute control. The Masons were important in Paris. Benjamin Franklin belonged to the Nine Sisters Lodge while he was at Passy, and he found many of its members useful to him in his diplomatic mission, for this was the most eminent lodge of the Masons in France. Its members were enormously interested in the American Constitution and believed that it pointed the way for France. Some of them suffered because of their opinions as time passed.

But the 1780's were years when the French were eagerly searching for outlets for their feeling of oppression, for some way of bringing about a change in the relations of their king to his people, and for relief to the economic situation which was bearing down more and more heavily upon them. They fell easily into whatever group seemed to provide even part of an answer to their problems. One result was a constant stirring of the brew of unsettledness, a straining after democracy and a building up of pressure in the hearts of men that would have to burst out in some form before much more time passed.

5

EVEN THE COMMON PEOPLE, such as the craftsmen and their workers and the growing numbers of the unemployed, knew that the king and his ministers could not but hear the growing roar of discontent. They were told that various methods of improving the financial situation were being tried, but they waited without real hope of results.

It was almost impossible to understand the queen. In the face of debt one usually became more cautious about further spending, but Marie Antoinette seemed to use more and more money as the government's debt increased. One of the most severe criticisms made against her was that she gambled. This pastime led her into all sorts of intrigue and questionable transactions. The publicity growing out of some of the difficulties in which she became involved harmed her personally. Because the king was a dull, unadventurous man and a person whom no one would ever imagine as being interested in great expenditures for personal pleasures, Marie Antoinette was blamed directly for the increasing national debt.

The charges that she used money carelessly were only too true. Hating the life at the palace in Versailles, she had soon come to spend most of her time at the Petit Trianon. The king gave her the little country house and grounds almost as one would give a child a toy. Small and gracefully designed, it looked out on beautiful lawns and gardens. With only seven or eight rooms in all, it could have a homelike quality that it was impossible for any palace to achieve, even the lovely one at Versailles, of which the Petit Trianon was in a sense a part. For the beloved house was close at hand in the Versailles park, though it seemed to belong to a different world. The queen loved this place, both because here she could escape her royal duties, and because here she could be as merry and spendthrift as she pleased. Soon, half-playfully, she began to think of things which would improve the Petit Trianon. These improvements were costly ones. Gradually the gardens came to include miniature landscapes copied after gardens around the world. Sometimes hundreds of workmen were busy there channeling water in to make lakes, streams, waterfalls, and fountains. Rocks had to be transplanted. Temples and pavilions were built, and finally a complete pastoral arrangement was created, suggested by Rousseau's theories of natural living. This required such additions as real cows, pigs, rabbits and sheep, and all who cared for them had to be costumed in storybook style. Then Marie Antoinette thought a stage ought to be built so that she could have evenings of drama, and this, too, had to be designed a number of times by the most well-known architects before a plan which satisfied her was found. What came to be famous as Hameau was the result of this undertaking. Seen

against history, the lovely ruins which survived to modern times serve as the unbelievable evidence of a whim which was carried out when a whole nation, almost without a government, lay burdened under insufferable debt.

The changes at the Petit Trianon, as well as other luxuries demanded by the queen, were all signs of the kind of person she was. A young girl like Rosalie Henriot might understandably still feel sorry for her but now, twenty years after she had come to France, that pity had in most cases been replaced by burning anger.

At first many people had said that young Marie Antoinette did not have enough to do and that once she had a child she would become more sensible in her behavior and more aware of her responsibility as queen. But year passed year without a child, and instead there were rumors of misbehavior. Then at last, in 1781, a prince was born, and all France heaved a sigh. Surely now things would be better! The throne was assured an heir and perhaps the queen could be expected to behave herself more suitably.

Yet, even when another son was born in 1785, and then a little girl, the queen failed to pay any real attention to her country's needs. Everyone knew long before this that although her husband intended well, he would never do anything of real significance for France. The queen was already the one who held the real power in the uneasy times.

The situation was that the king seemed unable, and the queen unwilling, really to comprehend what was taking place around them. The king did not have a keen mind or understanding, and the queen had never

wanted to put her mind to anything except amusing herself. She kept herself illiterate on world affairs as well as on the great changes coming about in France. She was well informed in only one field and that was in how to have a good time. The Petit Trianon, Hameau, her recent interest in plays, especially those of Beaumarchais which sometimes ridiculed France, always the gaming table and great parties, absorbed her. Paris by night and coming home very late, small intrigues among the ladies, the affairs of her own friends whether they were worthy ones or not, filled her time. Yet, she had the ability to comprehend affairs of state and to reign suitably if only she wanted to do so.

By contrast, everyday people such as the Henriots were stirred profoundly by the thinking of their day; mere boys were talking about America where, they had learned from returning volunteers in the war there, everything was different and there were no kings or nobles. But the court at Versailles behaved as if it did not hear or know anything of the ferment going on among the people.

One man had stood by the queen through the years, trying his best to help her. This was the Austrian Ambassador to France, Count Mercy d'Argenteau, who had been made guardian to the girl by her mother, Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, and who had done all he could to guide her and to shape her for the part she had to play. Though the Empress of Austria was dead he was still on hand doing what he could out of devotion to the queen and to his own country. Marie Antoinette had often fled to him for comfort as a young girl and then consistently refused to follow his advice.

Count Mercy had come to know long ago that there was no saving her from herself or from what he feared would play into disaster for France.

In the middle of the seventeenth century there had been uprisings known as the *Frondes* named after the slings with which protesting people had shot stones through the Cardinal Minister's windows. Now Count Mercy and others remembered these. Were they fore-runners of something even more ominous lying ahead? There was not a man in the streets who did not spell the word "Fronde" with a capital because of its historical significance.

Although many people dreamed of change such as had taken place in America, and certainly its desirability increased as time passed, not many seemed to realize that the situation in France was so unlike that in the colonies that, when her controls broke, a different kind of deluge would be released. Lafayette really believed that his country could imitate America, for he did not know what lay beneath the still-smooth and, for the most part, smiling exterior of the French people. He was a member of the aristocracy. He and others with him did not notice that here and there little intellectual and political clubs had opened which served to whip up feeling, while pamphleteers and printers were busy pouring out floods of material that was highly inflammatory to those who were already smarting under the times. Yet, in 1788, the general demand was still not for destruction of things as they were, but rather for steps toward real change and improvement.

A few individuals of the time had foreseen what was likely to happen in France and had tried to save her from violence by adjustments in administration and by

sensible expenditure of government funds. One of these was Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, who was a friend of Voltaire's, and who, as Minister of Finance, worked hard to bring in improvements with which the king would agree. As a demonstration of his serious intention, he reduced his own salary. He had already shown his ability in administration in the province of Limousin. But he was opposed by many strong forces during the two years that he was in office — by the queen because he watched her spending and because she had a friend of her own to fill his place, by the tax collectors and the bankers because they thought that his policies would cut down their profits, and even by the ordinary citizens who were worried by his theory of free trade in grains. Perhaps if the question of helping the American Colonies, whether secretly or openly, had not arisen at just this time, Turgot might have had a better chance. As it was, he was replaced by Jacques Necker.

Necker was another kind of man, though still as determined to improve the situation. But he hoped to please, first of all, even if he had to use unethical means to do so, and this he now did for he borrowed more and more heavily to keep the government running and to humor the queen. This further increased the national debt. When he was challenged on his bookkeeping, he published an accounting in 1781. Everyone read this with great excitement for it was the first time that the financial situation of the French Government had been made public. Unfortunately Necker's statement of the official finances was highly inaccurate, for it showed such large mistakes as a credit of ten million *livres* when actually there was a deficit of nearly five times that amount. This debt was further increased to a mil-

liard livres by participation in the American Revolution. Even though Franco-American relations were forever improved and France won her prestige in the colonial world and cleared her relations with Great Britain by this act, her home situation was worse than ever. Necker had to resign because the king would not enforce the reforms he suggested, because the public had been given the secret of the costs of the court, as well as of the pensions and special moneys, but he had to resign most of all because the court hated him personally.

Two less able ministers followed Necker and then the queen succeeded in putting in her man, Charles Alexandre Calonne. He was at first a kind of good-natured playboy. He managed to build up the impression that he knew what he was doing even though he was still adding to the debt by spending for new extravagances of the queen. The real trouble was that Calonne was neither a financier nor a patriot although for five years he tried to prop up the falling regime of Louis XVI. By then he was convinced that the national credit itself was failing and this would soon make it impossible to borrow. With the local government *parlements*, or courts of justice, constantly opposing him, the only way to keep the nation from bankruptcy was to bring its condition before an assembly of nobles (Assembly of Notables) in order to get real support from the aristocracy. This method had been used before in France's history and such men as Lafayette favored the idea now. The Assembly was called to convene in February, 1787.

In the meantime, behind the actual political events,

the versatile Beaumarchais had been needling the administration by his plays, sponsored carelessly and playfully by the queen in her little theater. If she was aware of the criticism of the state and of her personal behavior which these satires contained, she pretended that she was not; the king, though warned, was always like putty in her hands. The audiences raised their brows and laughed, but came away with a sober sense of impending disaster.

Then, in the electric atmosphere, Calonne, who was now seriously given over to trying to save France from bankruptcy and from discredit before the world, made a revolutionary speech before the sitting Assembly of Notables, which reminded those who heard him of Turgot twenty years before. They listened, outraged. He was suggesting six reforms which he had worked out with the advice of Lafayette. They smacked somehow of the new America. They spoke of provincial assemblies, of increased taxation of the clergy, of land taxes in kind rather than in money, of reformed poll tax, of freedom in trade of cereals, and of labor reform. He pleased no one and in a few months he was dismissed.

His effort had other wider results because it consolidated certain groups. The nobles drew more closely together to defend their rights against democratic reforms he had proposed; the common people joined to oppose talk of free trade in cereals. Calonne had also failed in that he had not taken his cause to the people. Instead, he had presented it only to the aristocracy through the king. The king had taken no position, announced no policy to the aristocracy but had, instead,

asked its advice. Now the aristocracy was in a stronger position than ever and the people of the Third Estate were greatly confused.

The moment Calonne was out of office, Marie Antoinette had a new person to propose for the position, Loménie de Brienne. Brienne soon found that his problem was still the same as that of Calonne. The nobles would not accept reforms. He tried to get new loans through foreign banks but was refused them, for now the national credit was gone. The king was helpless. In desperation Brienne decided to take the problem to the Parlement of Paris. He would propose raising a large sum, enough to cover or at least to help meet the enormous deficit, the amount to be collected over a period of five years. At the end of this time, in 1792, the Estates-General (General Assembly), representing all classes, Clergy, Aristocracy and Third Estate, should be called into session. When Brienne proposed this plan to the Parlement of Paris, the majority in the vote was uncertain, and he asked that the king present it at a "royal session." This kind of session was one where opinions were heard but where no voting was done. The date for the event was such an early one that there would be no time for opposition to organize, and when the registering for it began, the Duke of Orleans protested that the whole plan was illegal. His complaint gathered even more basis when the king cried, "That makes no difference! It is legal because I wish it!" The royal session broke up in confusion and the next day the duke and others were exiled.

From this time on there was constant conflict between the parlements and the royal court. The former

were supported by public opinion, because they were representative groups, and also by the intellectuals. By now the royal authority was so weak, however, that there was little of it left and the court itself was responsible for this state of affairs.

After the episode of the royal session, the Parlement of Paris, warned of the fact that protest against its failure was gathering in an armed force, drew up a declaration of rights for the nation. This included statements that were in odd contrast with each other for it said that monarchy was hereditary, a vote of taxes was in the power of the Estates-General, Frenchmen could be judged only by ordinary magistrates who were irremovable and could not be arrested or detained, and that customs and privileges of the provinces could not be altered. It seemed to be declaring the general rights of all and, at the same time, the special rights of the aristocracy. The document was probably influenced by the Duke of Orleans, a cousin of the king, and long hostile to him and to the queen.

In reply to the declaration, the king after some indecision was influenced by his government to use drastic measures. The Palais de Justice where the Parlement was meeting was locked so that no one could leave that night and two of the most active leaders were arrested at six the next morning. Besides this severe action, the king composed edicts announcing radical changes to be made in the parlements and clearly aimed at decreasing their power. This brought on even more resistance from the nobles, and the Parlement of Paris was hastily put on vacation to stop its activity. The Assembly of the Clergy, which met soon, opposed other edicts which

the king made at this time and even then demonstrations and rioting appeared. Here and there in the provinces outbreaks took place on various pretexts. Meanwhile, the provincial assemblies which Brienne had started in the hope that they would calm popular feeling, and in which he had cautiously maneuvered a control on the representatives who would be elected, only increased the general discontent.

Throughout the country a demand that the Estates-General be called into session began to be made and it was repeated more and more often. Brienne had promised that it would be called in 1792 at the end of the money-raising period for which he had asked, but now he saw that the demand would wait for nothing. Accepting his failure, he moved the date for the assembling of the Estates-General up to May 1, 1789, and then resigned.

The king reluctantly asked Necker, the former Minister of Finance, to return. This man was able to give the public a sense of confidence which was further increased when he presented the royal treasury with some of his personal funds. The atmosphere was so improved that the notaries were able to collect another large amount. The financial state was now more stable than it had been for some time. Perhaps the situation would at least not grow worse before the Estates-General met. But the rules as to how this body should be called still had to be decided upon, for it had not met since 1614. No one would have predicted that this in itself would lead to a great discussion, full of heat and danger.

6

MONSIEUR HENRIOT and many others, from the smallest clerk to the most comfortable and self-satisfied householder in Paris, were dumfounded when they heard that the king was going to summon the Estates-General. It was true that there had been rumors of it, and Monsieur Henriot had asked his journeymen what they had heard as they went through the nearby countryside. This gathering of representatives of all three groups of citizens had not taken place for a century and a half, and it was almost forgotten through disuse. But now Necker, once again Finance Minister, made the unmistakable announcement. The people took it as a sign of marvelous graciousness on the part of their king, quite undoing some of their bitter criticism of him. They shouted, shed tears of joy, and then settled down to think over the real meaning of the event.

“If people would try to understand the reason for this step, they would be less happy,” Monsieur Henriot

said to a few who had gathered in his workshop when they heard the news.

“Look at this!” one man said in a loud voice, stretching out his hand with a printed sheet. “‘What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now? Nothing. What does it seek to be? ‘Something,’ it says. And *we* are the Third Estate,” the man ended, thumping himself on the chest, his face ruddy with excitement.

“Who wrote that?” Monsieur Henriot asked sharply.

“Abbé Sieyès.”

“A clergyman,” someone muttered in a disgruntled voice. “What’s he after?”

“There is a big argument about how the representatives ought to be chosen,” a young man put in quickly, and hurried on to say more. “You see, fellow citizens,” he explained in a loud, clear voice, automatically taking the center of the stage, “it makes a great deal of difference how the representation is arranged. The king has graciously asked that the matter be studied, and the press is taking advantage of this opening to present us with different points of view. For example —” He cleared his throat and quickly went on, noticing the intense interest in the faces turned toward him. “There are the three orders to be thought of, are there not?” He did not pause for an answer to the rhetorical question. “But shall the votes be by Clergy, Aristocrats and Third Estate, or shall they be by the head?”

“How was it done in 1614?” a voice asked.

“Even that is not clear yet,” the young man answered, “and this is the matter that is causing the discussion. The king asks his people how it shall be done.”

Someone pushed his way into the room now, as though he had been listening at the door, and spoke with authority in a quiet but audible voice. "If voting is by the head, the Third Estate vote can be a majority without the support of the other two groups. If it is by body, then of course it can only be one in three."

"It must be by the head," several said at once.

"So it will be argued in many places," the voice replied, and the man disappeared as quietly as he had come.

"He is probably going from place to place explaining the meaning of the decision," Monsieur Henriot said stirring his pipe. Rosalie appeared at the door, looked fearfully in, and then disappeared. She wished people would not collect in their shop to argue; it made it into a kind of hangout.

Monsieur Henriot raised his eyes from his pipe and glanced over those who still stood there uncertain what to say or do. The young fellow was ready to orate again, but the master craftsman felt that he had said enough and he did not want inflammatory talk to begin here.

"What has stirred us all up so much?" he asked, and then answered his own question. "A traditional body is to be assembled to try to work out some national difficulties, and if I read the news correctly and hear clearly what is being said and guess rightly at what is being thought, it is as though a great wind were sweeping over us, ruffling and whipping us. Suddenly we seem to be different people. We see others with new lenses that show them to be another color than we had thought. Some of the nobility seem to be standing with the bourgeoisie. They talk of a national or patriot party. They

will use their position and power to forward it. And the Third Estate — we, the commoners — now seems to include so many that we practically are the nation.” He chuckled softly and his eyes shone for a moment. “We shall see. We shall see,” he said. “Now perhaps we had all better get back to work, not that you aren’t all welcome,” he added quickly. “Maybe one day we shall be passing glasses of wine in celebration of the decisions made by the Estates-General.”

Yet when the people gradually went away with a sign or a word of farewell, Monsieur Henriot could not get to work himself because there were so many things on his mind. Hmm — so the Estates-General was to be called. What had brought France to such a pass that the government could not go on normally? He was certain that this stage had already been reached some time ago, and for a long time he had secretly been afraid of what might happen. But now that events were moving forward, he had to think some things through for himself.

France was the most powerful country of all Europe. Of that he was certain. Her part in the American war had helped her prestige on both sea and land. Her philosophers and her artists were highly regarded all over Europe, too. The king and the queen had surely failed but in their failure some outstanding men had tried to bring about a more liberal policy — men like Turgot of the last generation, Necker, and even Brienne. Calonne, too, though light-minded, had really tried before he was dismissed.

What had brought about such a condition? It could not be due only to Louis and Marie Antoinette. After all, they had followed the set pattern of government

and could not change it much. The pattern must be wrong, it seemed to him. A few months ago he was ready to blame all the trouble on the royal couple, but now he saw that the problem lay deeper than that. The system of their government simply would no longer work in the present day. People were changing and their ideas were evolving. The government, however, had tried to stay the same and those who were in it had become like puppets; they performed but nothing happened.

Perhaps even the constitution was so out of date that it was of no further use. Parlements, which had been intended to administer justice, had fallen into the hands of privileged people and were used in a biased fashion. The nobility had largely left its lands, and the laws which had been set up to control them were now only relics of a day that no longer existed. The clergy were not as religious as they had been, and some were even liberal, such as this man Sieyès who spoke now for the Third Estate. Who could tell how many were really looking for freedom?

Monsieur Henriot shook his head over a book of designs which he did not really see. This king would never be his people's protector. He could protect no one, not even himself. His only hope had been, and perhaps still was, in his nobles, the aristocracy, for he had no contact with anyone else. The aristocracy? What good could come from them? They were rotten to the core, playing about at Versailles, forsaking Paris their capital, and neglecting their duties as well. They even seemed to have forgotten what true prestige meant. They had abdicated, and in a sense the king had also,

for he seemed unable to see that the only hope now lay in the hands and hearts of the people of the Third Estate. Yes, Monsieur Henriot thought with a sense of satisfaction, let his friends come here and drink and talk, for a great deal of it would have to be done in the time just ahead.

What method to use in choosing representatives to the meeting of the Estates-General became a more discussed question each day. Pamphlets and broadsheets and electioneering filled the air and when the electoral gatherings of the three groups met, feelings were hot. Even meetings of the clergy ended sometimes with mud-spattered priests. Mirabeau tried to take the lead in the gathering of nobles in Provence, but they would not accept him — although he was a brilliant man who understood history and was more acquainted with the government of Great Britain than anyone else in France — because of his scandalous life and because he was too immoderate in everything he did. Now when the nobles spurned him, he turned to the Third Estate and gave up his claim to aristocratic birth. “Granted that I am a mad dog; all the more reason for electing me; despotism and privilege will die at my fangs,” he said. Both Aix and Marseilles chose him to represent them.

On the whole, the deputies who were chosen were of high quality, and though they came from three different social backgrounds, France’s culture was uniform enough to make the members of the Estates-General homogeneous.

But now a foolish argument began over the choice of the place where the session should be held. Paris was

so tense that it seemed unwise to hold it there. The king preferred Versailles. Everyone knew that this was partly because he did not want his hunting to be interrupted too much. Versailles was a bad choice for two reasons. It was too near Paris, and it was also the heart of the luxurious living which so many people criticized and which was one of the reasons for the discontent they felt. Besides, it was hard to find enough lodgings there.

On the momentous day, May 5, 1789, when the Estates-General opened formally, the members of the Third Estate, who were required to dress in black and sit in an enclosure, felt suddenly angry when they saw the brilliant robes of important people who were moving around the king. Still, the great occasion was here, and a shout of "Long Live the King!" went up. The Third Estate had 500 deputies; the Clergy 247; the Nobility 187. The question of how the voting was to be done, still unsettled, was to be decided in the first session.

When preliminary formalities were over, the king gave a speech which turned out to be very dull. Necker followed with many promises that he would balance the budget. This was all only too familiar and all spirits began to slump. The time had come when the question about voting procedure could not be put off any longer. Envoys went back and forth between the three bodies with various proposals while the Third Estate invited the other two bodies to join in verifying credentials, a usual process. But this was a time-consuming business and day passed day without many responding. At last, after ten days, the Third Estate, together with those

who had joined them, proclaimed itself the National Assembly replacing the old Estates-General.

This was an illegal assembly and no one expected that it could function long. Surely it would soon be dissolved. But this did not happen and it continued to meet and to transact business. The question of taxation was first on the agenda and it was decided that no other taxes except those which it authorized could be considered legal. In other words, it applied the principle of no taxation without representation.

Such action really amounted to a seizure of power by the new Assembly. The nobles and the clergy became greatly excited, but their own liberals showed their real feelings by moving over to the National Assembly, much to the joy of the Third Estate. In the meantime the conservatives begged the king to put a stop to this usurpation. In an effort to do this, he had the hall closed where the Assembly had been meeting, and he announced a royal session for June the 23rd, trying again to get around the difficulty. But the deputies of the National Assembly met in an indoor gymnasium and took a mutual oath not to be dissolved until the new constitution was written and established "on solid foundations." This historic event has come down in history as the Oath of the Tennis Court.

When the royal session convened, the king announced that the Estates-General would meet to discuss taxes but not privileges, intending in this way to protect the nobility and the clergy. When the announcement had been made, the king and the two groups mentioned marched out leaving the Third Estate behind. It was a deeply discouraging moment

and the Grand Master of Ceremonies stepped forward to give the order to withdraw. As it was given, Mirabeau leaped up dramatically and answered it in a resounding voice, "Sir, go tell your master that we are here by the will of the people and that we shall leave here only at the point of the bayonet." The king avoided the issue by letting them stay there, and stunned by his acquiescence, the Third Estate thought that the change in government must be over and that they had come off the victors. What was all this talk of revolution?

No one yet realized how weak the king really was. He was soon influenced to dismiss Necker by a group in the court. This decision drew hot protest from the public, which held a great demonstration and carried through the streets the bust of the deposed minister draped in crepe. When foreign troops were sent in to bring order, they were stoned. This incident was only part of the much larger situation underlying the great general excitement that was felt over the meeting of the Estates-General — the winter famine which had left many without food or work, and the hazard of thousands of beggars who had been pouring into the fabulous city to get help. A real shortage of bread lay beneath everything else. Meanwhile, pamphleteers showered the crowds in the streets with inflammatory demands that the foreign troops be withdrawn and that regular soldiers be alert to their duties as citizens as well as soldiers. Some of the gardens became places for informal meetings where anyone mounted a soapbox and harangued the crowd.

One of these soapbox speakers on a July day was

Camille Desmoulins who, without thinking of the consequences, shouted, "To arms!" and stuck a cockade made of a horse-chestnut leaf in his hat. The green cockade became the sign of "belonging," and soon the only way to avoid injury in the quickly gathering mob was to wear one. The crowd swelled, collecting arms from shops and smiths as it went through the streets. As the mob rushed forward, someone said that the powder supply for the city had been moved to the Bastille. As if at an order, the mass of hurrying people wheeled and set out in that direction, urged by unreasoning mob spirit.

7

THE BASTILLE had peculiar significance for the French people. It was a relic of feudal days which stood as a symbol of despotism. In their minds it was connected with royal warrants, unexplained imprisonments, and a kind of general horror. Its bristling cannon pointed threateningly out over the city and its wide, water-filled moat implied that it was impregnable. Hundred-foot-high walls added to the impression. Although sometimes its removal was talked of, it seemed to defy demolishing hands.

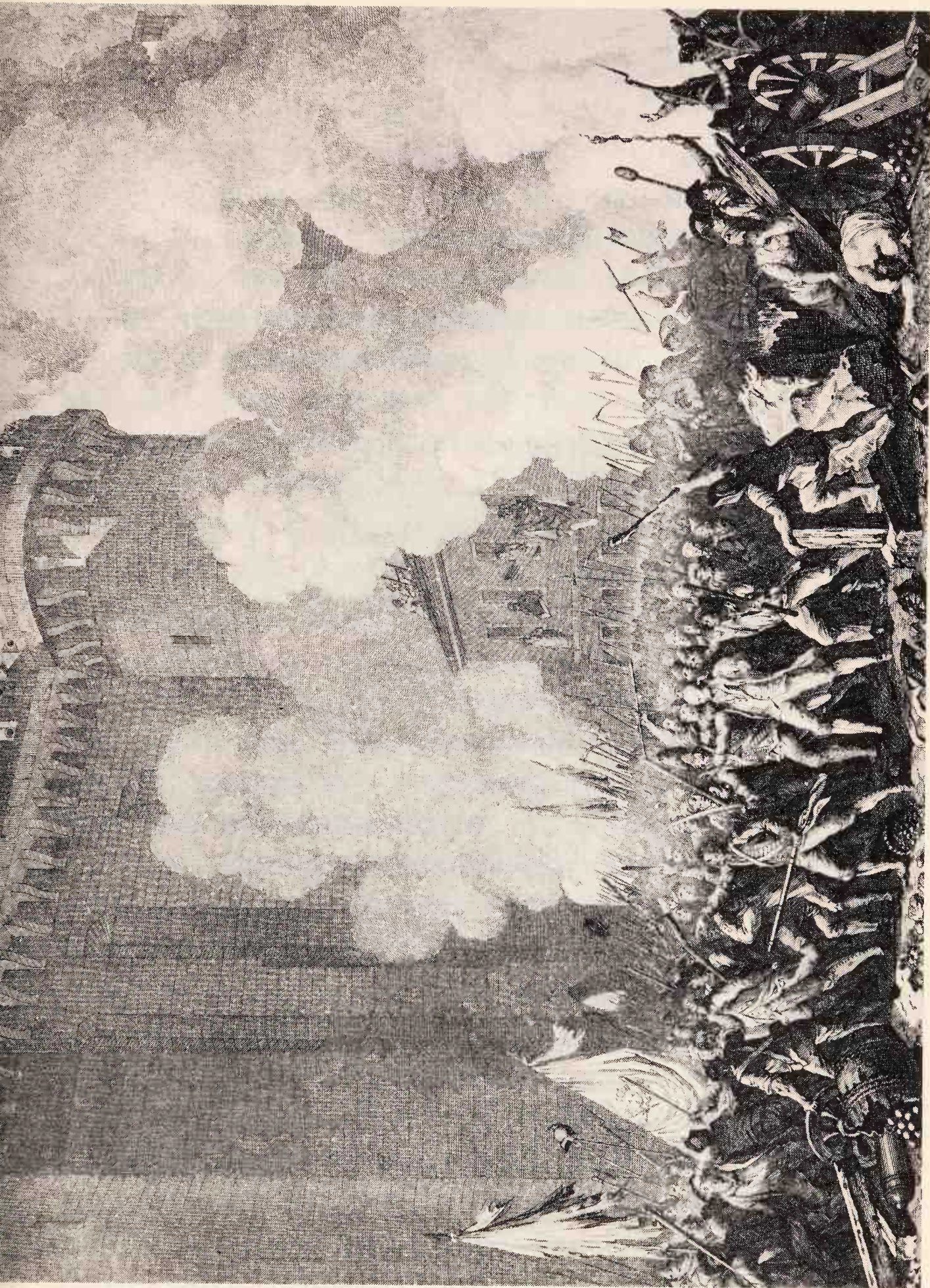
When the crowds rushed to its gates on the morning of July 14, 1789, they probably had in mind demanding that those imprisoned there be released, that the menacing cannon be withdrawn, and that the arms and ammunition stored there be given out.

They could not have known the true situation inside the ancient fortress. The prisoners consisted of only seven persons, of whom two were mentally ill and a third maladjusted, who was kept there at the request of

his family. The forces which were entrusted with the defense were made up of eighty retired soldiers and a Swiss Guard with whom they were not on friendly terms. Provisions had almost run out and nothing had been done to cover an emergency. The governor of the Bastille, Monsieur de Launay, was an indecisive kind of man. Already that morning the Permanent Committee of the Assembly had sent three delegates to warn De Launay of the gathering storm and to suggest that he withdraw the cannon to avoid an issue about them. When the delegates arrived, the governor greeted them cordially and invited them to a meal. Meanwhile, the crowd in the outer court grew greater and the uproar more thundering. The outer court was separated from the inner court by a long drawbridge as well as by a small drawbridge. While the bridges had been raised, the inner gate to the small bridge had been left unlocked.

Thuriot, a barrister from an adjoining district, tried to avoid a clash by taking a summons to De Launay which asked him to surrender. He felt that this might succeed because he noticed that the cannon had already been removed and that the old soldiers were ready to give in, and De Launay seemed much less disposed to resist than his staff. But it failed, and soon after Thuriot came out, two men climbed the wall separating the courts, pushed the small drawbridge into place and the crowds swarmed in.

Now De Launay lost his judgment; without thinking of the consequences he gave the order to fire. As some of the attackers fell, others shouted "Treachery!" believing that they had been tricked into the Bastille so



Arrest of Monsieur de Launay, Governor of the Bastille

Courtesy Library of Congress

as to be shot. Outright battle began and, although great efforts were made to stop the wild disorder, it went on. Even when De Launay offered to surrender and threatened to blow up the Bastille unless the attackers gave terms, the fighting continued. Most of the garrison was saved. Only three officers and three of the old soldiers were killed, but De Launay was in a hopeless situation. Even though some of the leaders got him as far as the Hotel de Ville, there a band of men broke up the escort, killed him, and soon were parading his head through the streets along with that of Flesselles of the Permanent Committee. The Bastille had fallen before a few hundred attackers, and though not especially important itself, it came almost at once to stand for one of the most significant events in history — the birthday of French liberty.

Beneath the event itself lay fear of what might be afoot. It grew quickly, spread by rumor among the people. Had De Launay been in a conspiracy with the aristocracy, and was this the beginning of a civil war? Such a suspicion did not die easily and reappeared many times. Few were able to see yet that the fall of the Bastille was the first step in revolution and that Paris was already lost to the king. Possibly the provinces would follow the lead of the city.

At Versailles the king did not know what was happening in the city on July 14th. He had been hunting. When he came home he went to bed, tired. The next morning the Duke of Liancourt woke him and gave him the news, but he seemed to be too sleepy to realize that revolution was on him. By night he began to see that he had to decide on some course. He could think

of only two possibilities — to flee with the royal family and let things go as they would, or to submit. It never seemed to enter his mind that he could still maintain leadership, try to work constructively in the changing times, and attempt to become the new kind of king that the day demanded.

On the 15th of July he went before the National Assembly, stated that he wished to cooperate and announced that he would withdraw the troops from their emergency positions. The deputies did not know what to make of his behavior. They had expected that he would maintain his authority and give them the changes that they wanted, but he seemed instead to be going through empty motions. When he went to the Hotel de Ville a few days later with deputies and accepted the new tricolored cockade invented by Lafayette, made up of the red and blue Paris emblem with white for the king set between (so symbolizing the meeting of the old and the new), it was unbelievable. Was the king simply accepting the revolution in the same dull fashion that he did everything else, without realizing the fundamental changes that it meant?

In the meantime the revolution, which was still limited to Paris, began to organize itself. Bailly, who was dean of the Third Estate, was made mayor of the city. Lafayette was put in command of the National Guard. But even though these definite steps were taken, suspicion of what the aristocracy might be planning secretly continued. The masses of people felt themselves at sea with the authority suddenly in their hands. Was this not reason enough to suspect that the aristocracy was up to some plot? Rumors spread wildly — that

the Comte d'Artois, the king's younger brother, special friend of the queen, was having a tunnel dug from his stables to the meeting place of the Assembly, so as to have it blown up; that grain was being intentionally withheld from people near starving; that brigands were actually being hired to pillage villages; some of the aristocrats were leaving France to get foreign forces to help them; a British squadron lay off the coast at Brest. Panic gripped many of the outlying areas of Paris and no one could find out whether there was any real reason for it. The press, instead of trying to unearth the truth and bring some reasonableness to the situation, whipped up more excitement by publishing sensational statements. Although Bailly and Lafayette held the power in Paris, they were unable to bring about any kind of order. The Permanent Committee was really the governing body of Paris until a new city assembly could be elected, and now it tried to show how baseless much of the rumor was. In another effort to clear the confused state of affairs, Bailly asked that local electoral districts of the city elect a common council, or Commune, of 120 members to take the place of the electors to the district assemblies. This was done but the electors went right on meeting in their district assemblies as though the Commune did not exist, for they said that there was much about the municipal government to be discussed.

The district assemblies were made up largely of craftsmen and shopkeepers, the lesser bourgeoisie, and they hoped to be able to start a democratic government directly through their own channels. The fact that many of the deputies in these bodies also served in the National Guard increased their hope of this. Monsieur

Henriot and his friends, for example, watched this development with approval. It would not do to let things get out of control and into the hands of those who knew nothing but grasping at bread for themselves. Steady, responsible people had to assert themselves for already some of the lower class people were murdering nobles in an irresponsible way.

But it was hard to carry out any ordered plan now because of the urgent events which took place every day. Special committees were set up to evaluate charges of an aristocratic plot and to handle streams of petitions. A court of sixty sworn jurymen, one from each district of Paris, was given power to act as a tribunal until a new local government was organized — the same purpose which the district assemblies were intended to serve. This court came to be known as the Committee of Investigation and then the more famous Committee of General Security.

The National Assembly was at least gaining time, and a great deal of secret criticism of the new appointees to the various bodies had time to settle before it added too much to the generally inflammatory situation. Weaving through the events there was still the unproven fear of aristocratic conspiracy. No one would undertake to point it out, but in the same way, none dared to wager that it did not exist. It grew to such proportions that the people called it the Great Fear.

In many parts of France, now, the people began to follow the example of Paris and organize their own municipalities so that they would be able to resist what they thought of as the encroachments of absolutism, or the orders of the king's officers. But once they were so

organized, it was almost certain that disturbances would increase because they were so ready to resist what before would have passed without much notice. In trying to stop and to avoid outbreaks, the government withheld mails and this only added to rising tempers. The news of the fall of the Bastille did not reach outlying areas for several days, but when it did, the shout of delight that greeted it gathered volume at high speed. Processions, bonfires and the presentation of the new national cockade to officials, who were not at all glad to receive it, were part of the reaction.

In many places the change from the old to the new came about without violence, for the bourgeois were taking the lead and the nobles often simply combined with them or accepted the new committees and the new National Guardsmen without question.

Up to this time the commoners, or the masses of people, were still trailing in the movement of the revolution, but here and there they broke through the bourgeoisie leadership and made demands for lower prices for bread in such a violent manner that the authorities fled and the militia or the garrison had to put an end to their actions. Wherever a new permanent committee was set up, the revolution was thought of as complete, and so the progress in the municipalities was uneven. Sometimes the change was from the roots up; more often it only meant demoting the nobles and replacing them with bourgeois of varying prestige. But the people of the lower classes were slowly consolidating behind this front of new organization. What did they want? They wanted to end hidden or indirect taxes and the controls on grain trade. Both of these were related

to the cost of bread. Feeling on these two questions was so strong that salt offices and toll places were often sacked and their records destroyed; grain could not be moved from one place to another without a heavy body-guard because rioting crowds would seize it. The National Guard which was supposed to suppress such behavior often did so half-heartedly, for the men shared some of the feeling of the people. Poverty and high prices were bringing on a new phase of the revolution.

Three quarters of the population were peasants, yet what they needed had scarcely been thought of in the National Assembly in which they were not even represented. These peasants were no longer serfs though a few serfs were still to be found in some areas. Many of them owned some land, if only small pieces of it. Altogether they probably held one third of France's agricultural acreage. Even so, the peasants who were land owners did not have enough of it to support themselves and their families. Fields were always being subdivided and in many of them the soil was already exhausted by intensive use. Taken altogether, French agriculture had reached a state of crisis by this time. Whatever their special situations might be, all peasants opposed the pressures put on them by the king and by the aristocracy. They had better reasons for such opposition than the people in the cities. Before the events of July 14th, peasant revolts and seizures of grain had taken place, but no organized agrarian revolt existed.

When the Estates-General was convened, the peasants supposed that now their case would be heard. What did the king call such a meeting for if not to hear the grievances of his people? And what followed only

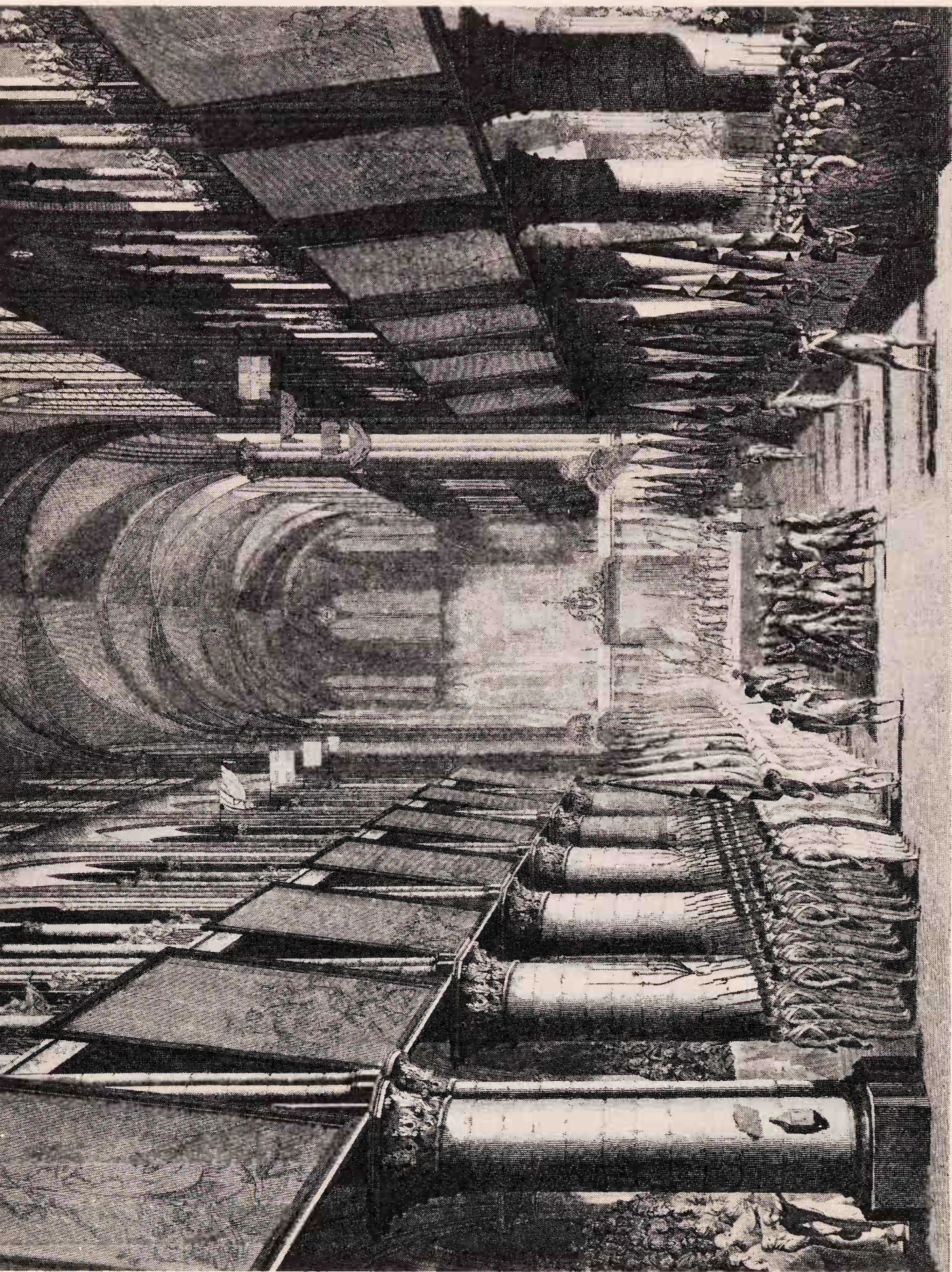
made them believe that the king was joining the opposition to the aristocracy and so accepting their position. He did not even try to stop their revolts and riots. Surely he was their man; surely he saw that a new day had to come.

But the growing violence which constantly harried the National Assembly had to be controlled and solved in some way. Some representatives of the nobility believed that what still remained of feudalism was the cause of the trouble. Perhaps if some leaders renounced their feudal rights, it would have a calming effect. On August 4th, in a great gesture of democracy, a cardinal and an archbishop relinquished their tithes. Others gave up hunting privileges, monopolies and other special prerogatives. A good many were shamed into joining in the demonstration. One of these was a brother-in-law of Lafayette. That was a dramatic moment in the night session of the Assembly and, when word of it spread from Paris to the countryside, the peasants were greatly reassured. Though some later claimed that the whole affair had been carefully staged so as to have the right atmosphere for the proceedings at that meeting, it was, nonetheless, useful in introducing a spirit of cooperation. In a wild outburst of joy, Frenchmen in Paris and in the villages embraced each other and wept or laughed in typical fashion.

But the clergy were not eager to give away their privileges and the fact that certain noblemen had renounced the tithe which went to the support of the clergy was frightening. Still, church reform began in small ways. The question of the tithe would have to be debated at

length in the Assembly. When at last it was abolished, the change was made without too much difficulty.

This meeting of the National Assembly, highlighted by the events of August 4th, was a most important one. In a few hours the nation had been drawn together in definite ways as far as its judicial system was concerned. The principle of feudalism had been renounced, the superiority of the aristocracy undermined, reforms in finance, law and the church were begun. Those few nobles who had been willing to give up personal privileges were most useful in bringing this progress about. The Assembly now set to work to set down clearly and unmistakably its convictions about the rights of man.



The Blessing of the Flags of the National Guard of Paris,
at Notre Dame

Courtesy Library of Congress

8

BUT THE CONSTITUTION was not easy to write. Feelings were running high and opinions differed. The Estates-General had appointed a committee to begin the work in July and its first report was made within a few days. Lafayette submitted a draft of a Declaration of the Rights of Man which would become part of the Constitution. This was strongly influenced by the American statement of the same kind, for Lafayette had talked it over with Thomas Jefferson who was representing America at the French court earlier that year. Lafayette personally hoped that France would learn from the experience of the American Colonies and did not seem to realize the difference in their situations.

On August 12th the Assembly set to work on the final text of the Declaration — for by this time many drafts of it had been prepared. On the 17th Mirabeau presented it to the Assembly. The discussion which developed was hot and centered on a statement about freedom of religion which he proposed. He felt strongly

that individuals should be allowed to be entirely free in the matter of their religion and he spoke eloquently to this opinion. Mirabeau himself finally suggested that this question be left out of the Declaration but that it be considered again in connection with the Constitution as a whole at a later date, if that was necessary.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man was passed by the Assembly on August 26, 1789, with the understanding that it would be reviewed with the whole Constitution at an appropriate time. The Declaration had become so important and so familiar to the people of France within two years that when this decision was remembered at the time of the consideration of the Constitution no one wanted to change it. It stood as it was.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man stated that:

All men are born with equal rights

All citizens have the right to take part in electing the representatives to make laws

Every person shall be free to speak, write, or print his opinions provided he does not abuse the privilege

The amount of taxes which a person is called upon to pay shall be based upon the amount of wealth he possesses

It was not an abstract statement but one which had important and immediate meaning for the people of France. Surprisingly soon it began to affect other peoples of Europe. Then it spread around the world. For what it really said was that France was no longer the property of the king. No one had to obey anything except the law; the king and his ministers and agents could not command obedience. No one could be arrested by any authority except that of the law, and the

accused was innocent until he was proven guilty. All citizens were equal before the law; there were no longer special privileges. One could resist oppression. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man really ended the old regime and, although not even Mirabeau, even less Lafayette, was thinking of a republic instead of a monarchy yet, a great step had been taken in that direction by the passing of the Declaration.

Many brilliant minds were at work on the Constitution. Opinions often clashed, but leading in the discussion were such men as Robespierre and Danton who had really given themselves to their country.

Still the king did not change. He would not recognize what was happening in his government and among his people. While he made outward motions of complying with the demands made of him, he was secretly upset by the events of the August night when nobles and clergy had renounced their privileges before the Assembly. "I will never consent to the spoilation of my clergy or my nobility," he said plaintively. He was non-committal when the Assembly abolished feudalism and he had to approve the decree. Again he seemed impassive when the oath which officers and soldiers had to take now stated that it was made to the *nation*, the king and the *law*. His failure to approve or even to express his opinion created a deadlock and raised a question as to just what power the king still had. The Assembly had expected that he would cooperate since he had made motions of cooperation. Now they did not know what to do. If he resorted to veto it would at least show that the old regime was still alive, but complete inaction was hard to deal with. To overlook the king's opin-

ion would bring a new step in revolutionary action.

Mirabeau explained the complications to the Assembly in his brilliant manner. He said, however, that the decrees before the king were constitutional in nature and that they did not require royal approval but that what was needed was the king's agreement to "promulgate" them. Convenient as this point of view was, the Assembly could not accept it and still waited for the king's actual approval.

Such waiting was disastrous to orderly progress. Whether or not the king now had the right to veto became a heated argument. It led toward the revolutionary leadership's becoming divided into what became known as the Constitutional Royalists and the Democratic Republicans. The moderate group, that of the Constitutional Royalists, proposed solving the matter of the veto by creating two chambers after the pattern of England. Membership in the upper one could be by appointment by the king and his heirs, or its members could be elected by a small party. This upper chamber would have the power to decide whether the king had the right of veto. Once the Assembly had decided upon how this chamber should be elected it could disband and leave the next steps to it. The Democratic Republicans, however, would not agree to any such system regardless of how it was carried out, for it was soon clear that it would support the aristocracy and leave those who sincerely wanted to find a middle-of-the-road plan without help. This progressive group had further difficulty in that the king would not accept the form of veto power which they proposed. Contingent on this, he would be expected to agree to the decrees which had

started all the trouble and not to oppose constitutional laws. They were trying to work with the king and yet curb his royal powers. He refused their plan and the feeling that something drastic had to be done now grew quickly. A first step certainly had to be that of moving the court from Versailles back to Paris so that the king would be closer to what took place. His long holiday was over.

Paris was already seething with a wish to demonstrate against the king's having veto power and against the proposal of having the two chambers. People said that the district assemblies ought to be consulted about any such plan before it was really considered. Two hundred men started for Versailles in protest one August evening, but the National Guard stopped them. When they went before the municipal authorities the next day, they got no support for the demonstration there, either, but the idea did not die. It grew inside the Assembly as well as on the streets, for the possibility of the veto had begun to mean a checking of the revolution, and a sign that the long-suspected aristocratic conspiracy was a reality. As so often happened, the press encouraged emotional reactions.

The people were by now impatient. They were ready for something definite to be done. The unsettled times had put many out of work. Many of the nobility and foreign visitors had left Paris because they were afraid of what might happen. More than 200,000 passports had been issued in less than two months. Because money was scarce, those who left took cash with them. Merchants who could transferred their accounts to safer places in England and Holland. In numerous

households the servants had been dismissed and those who had been employed in luxury trades found it very hard to keep going. In rural areas the peasants were often so disturbed that they did not bring their harvests to market as usual and Paris was short of supplies. The price of bread, if it was to be had at all, went higher and higher and, despite this, lines formed outside of bake-shops. Demonstrations for work and for better wages began. Tailors, wigmakers, shoemakers, servants and butchers took part. Then the bakers threatened to close their ovens. Some people secretly hoarded for themselves and their families and so added to the shortages.

Bread has been the symbol of life for a long time. During the summer of 1789 in France it was not only a scarce necessity but also a weighted symbol in the minds of the people. Because it was hard to get, they were ready for some form of action. An incident pointed the way for them.

The king unintentionally brought the affair about in this way. In September he summoned the Flanders Regiment of a thousand men to Versailles to maintain order, he said. The king and the queen put on a showy welcome and also invited the National Guard to take part. The National Guard now included the French Guards at Lafayette's order and had, in addition, been increased in number. After the men from Flanders came, the French Guards had thought of going back to their old post in Versailles where they had always been until they were displaced by the king's bodyguard during recent events. However, they had not done this before the king's bodyguard held a magnificent dinner in the opera house in Versailles in honor of the Flanders

Regiment. The royal family was there and circled the great table while musicians played the popular air, "O Richard, O mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne." As the drinking went on, humor took the form of insulting the new national cockade. It became a game to pass around instead the black cockade of Austria, the queen's homeland, and the white of the Bourbon nobility.

When Paris learned of this banquet of October 3rd, it was enough to spark action. The next day, Sunday, people milled around the royal palace in the city. Thousands of women who were among them announced that the next day they were going to march to Versailles to demonstrate against the queen. The National Guard broke up the crowds in a half-hearted way; Lafayette seemed unexcited and planned to take no special precautions.

On Monday movement surged through the streets of Paris. Women began to gather in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and around the public markets. Some of the Henriots' neighbors, like thousands of others, were swept into the excitement and stopped at their house as they went to ask if none of his household was going.

"No," Monsieur Henriot said for them all, standing solidly in the doorway. "Nothing good comes of mobs. There must always be a sensible leader to ask clearly for what is wanted and for no more. No. I urge you to stop and think before you rush into this. Such action is not the way to bring the changes that we all want."

"You are not for change!" one woman said rudely. "Like your wife, you want to stay by the old ways because you are comfortable enough!" Her voice suggested a threat.

As she hurried on, Monsieur Henriot thought sadly how true it was that his wife was still not ready for any great change, nor was Rosalie — but there was Philip. He had had to restrain the boy to keep him out of trouble once or twice even though he was a gentle fellow. He was too easily moved by the needs and suffering of others.

Most of the master craftsmen like Monsieur Henriot were moderates. They believed that an end to heavy taxes and other injustices had to come, but they drew back from extremes. Perhaps the very preciseness and artistic quality of the work they did made them react against anything that was uncontrolled. They had watched every step of the past few months carefully and read the Declaration of Human Rights, as it was officially called. It ought to be said that they not only read it but that they clipped it from papers or picked up the broadsheets on which it had been printed for distribution, and carried them in their pockets to study again and again with a growing warmth around the heart. Though this was the case, they still did not favor disorder, mob violence or demonstrations of hatred.

Monsieur Henriot had heard of the Great Fear. He knew of the coming of the Flanders Regiment, and someone had already dropped by to describe a little of what had gone on at the great welcoming party in Versailles two days before this Monday. But — these women rushing together, and these threatening voices, this atmosphere of violence — No! He did not want to have any part in it. Perhaps if a few remained steady it would moderate at least a few of those who would otherwise do foolish things.

When the women began to gather before the Hotel de Ville, they were surprised to find that neither Bailly, the mayor, nor Lafayette, who was in charge of the National Guard, was there. A man named Maillard who had led the attack on the Bastille was on hand, however. He tried reasoning with the women and when he could not get anywhere in that, he made himself their leader and was astounded to see how quickly the crowd swelled in size. Some, he noticed, were forcibly pulled into the marching body from those who stood watching. It began to rain and soon it came down in torrents, but in spite of this, there were six or seven thousand people in the procession which moved steadily on toward Versailles.

Lafayette appeared at the Hotel de Ville about noon, but by then only a few people were still there and he sent them home. Then the tocsin began ringing throughout the city. The city guardsmen asked to go to Versailles and the National Guard arrived shouting, "To Versailles!" The people gathered steadily now. Lafayette on horseback tried his best to disperse them and to stop the plan of the march on Versailles. What he said had no effect at all. At four o'clock the Commune sent him word to agree to the march and to proceed. In another hour an estimated 20,000 persons including the National Guard were on their way. Lafayette stayed in Paris but he at once dispatched a message to the king.

At the meeting of the Assembly in Versailles that morning, argument had again broken out over the question of whether the king had to approve decrees. The women marchers under Maillard arrived at the

doors of the building before the larger group organized under the direction of the Paris Commune and before Lafayette's message to the king had had time to get there. Maillard acted as spokesman for the women and said that they had come to demand bread as well as the removal of the Flanders Regiment. The Assembly hoped to keep out of direct involvement so it asked its presiding officer to request the government to see that the demand for food was met in Paris.

Again, at this critical moment, the king had gone hunting, but this time the situation promised to be so dangerous that he was alerted. Meanwhile, the body-guard and the Flanders Regiment took up stations at the royal château. As soon as the king returned he called a council meeting.

Late in the afternoon some of the women came to the palace gates and were allowed to speak to the king. He promised grain for Paris and bread in Versailles, but a verbal statement did not satisfy the body of women marchers. They sent their spokesman back to get a written promise. When this was in hand, they turned toward Paris. The king believed that this was the end of the affair. The atmosphere lightened and the troops which had been called out were ordered back to their barracks.

At nine o'clock that evening, the officers sent by Lafayette arrived bringing his warning against resisting the will of the people. He implied that the king would be well advised to return to Paris. On the other hand, Saint-Priest, one of the ministers, urged flight at once. The king agreed to flee and then almost immediately changed his mind. He seemed to have a sense

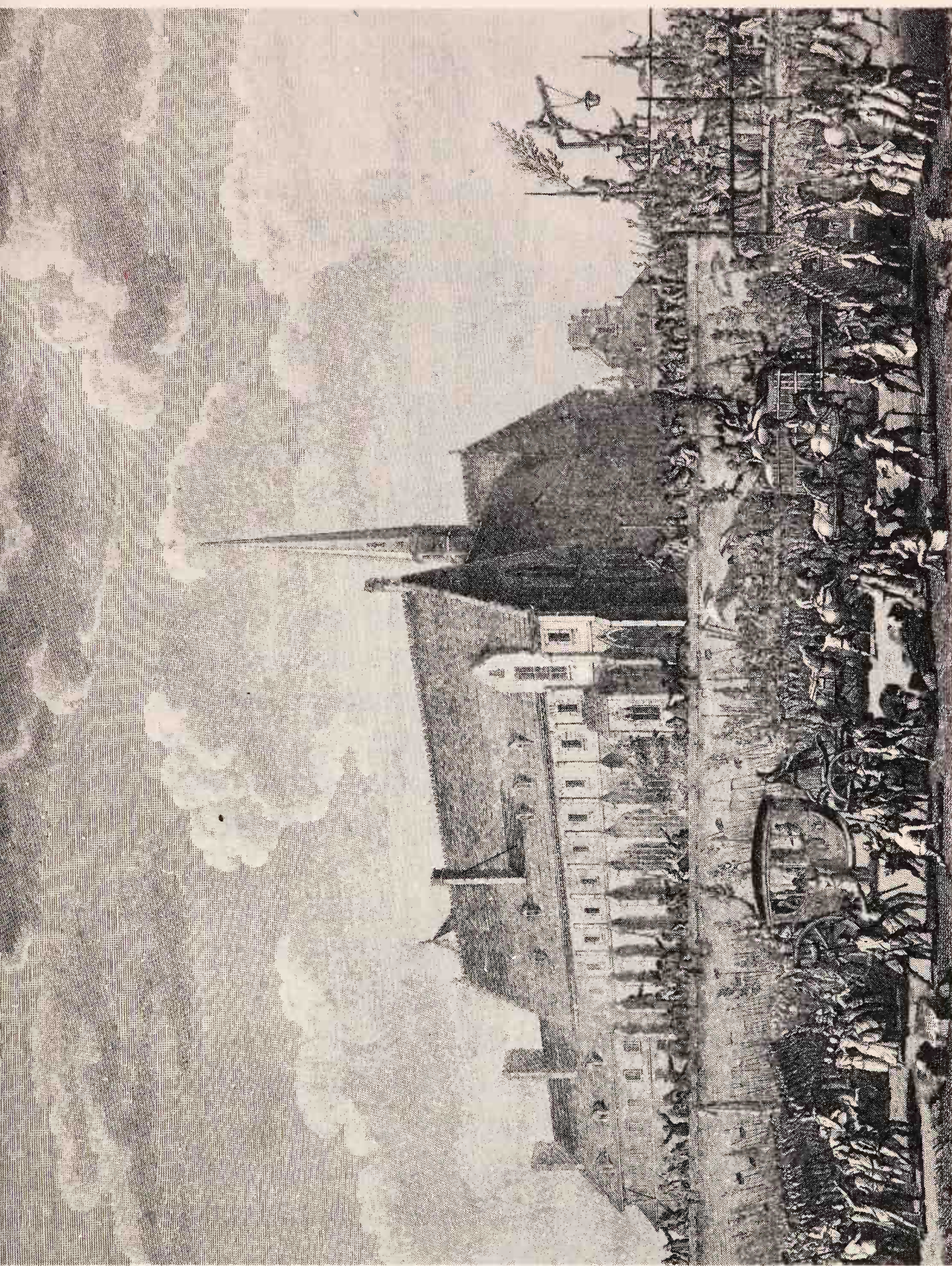
of pride about not being a fugitive king, although he may not have fully realized the danger he was in. Now he thought that if he simply agreed to the demands of the Assembly on the question of the decrees, it would be enough to settle the situation. At ten o'clock he sent word of his compliance.

Although some of the crowd that had come from Paris had returned by this time, several hundred people stayed on all through the night, milling around the meeting place of the Assembly which continued in session until three o'clock in the morning. The rain did not stop; when dawn broke the miserably wet petitioners were ready for almost anything. One door leading to the palace courtyard was found open. They stormed in and a few of them were killed. Others pushed on to the stairs which led to the queen's apartments. She escaped to those of the king. The National Guardsmen seemed powerless and Lafayette, who had arrived during the night, slept peacefully. After this terrifying incident, however, he appeared and stood with the royal family on the balcony in a gesture of unity intended to satisfy the people. But the crowds only used the opportunity to shout, "To Paris! To Paris!"

The procession to the city started in the early afternoon, led by the National Guard. As if to underscore the king's promises, the Guardsmen carried loaves of bread on their bayonets and were followed by wagons loaded with grain. Some of the people half-playfully plucked branches from the trees as they went along and decorated themselves and the nearest horses or vehicles. It was an impressive procession for it was made up of the grenadiers, the disarmed bodyguard in their charge,

the Flanders Regiment and the Swiss Regiments next to the king, and the royal family in their carriage with Lafayette riding beside them. A hundred deputies representing the Assembly and more of the National Guard brought up the rear. Thousands of citizens followed. It was still raining and the mud was deep in many places, but the people were hilarious with victory. They sang and pantomimed as they went. When they reached the gates of Paris, Bailly was there to meet them. He greeted the king and took him at once to the Hotel de Ville where there was a long evening of formal speeches. At last the royal family went to the Tuileries. Built for royalty, none had lived there now for more than a hundred years, and on this fateful night it had a gloomy chill like that of an abandoned house.

The Assembly followed the king to Paris soon and tried to show him courtesy. He was now really a prisoner of the revolution, and, after all, he had finally given in to their demands.



The King arriving at Paris with his family, escorted
by more than 30,000 persons

Courtesy Library of Congress

9

ON FEBRUARY 4, 1790, when the king came to the National Assembly, which now met in the riding school of the Tuileries, to announce that he accepted the principles of the revolution, it really seemed that the change in form of government had been completed. All that remained to be done was to reorganize in order to meet the new day.

The National Assembly was made up of different kinds of men, most of them genuinely devoted to their country. Some dreamed of changes that would make France into the American ideal and some were more conservative, though they could scarcely make themselves heard among the liberals. Mirabeau was certainly the greatest speaker of them all. He knew how to use words with pungency and clarity that made everyone tingle, even though they might despise him personally. Fully aware of the danger France was in, he warned: "When you undertake to run a revolution, the difficulty is not to make it go; it is to hold it in check."

Again he said, cruelly, "The king has only one man, and that is his wife," and again, describing the king, "Imagine some ivory balls slippery with oil which you vainly seek to hold together." Yet he was immensely loyal to the king because, still unconvinced that a republican form of government was workable for France, he believed that monarchy had to be saved. He had tried to handle the problem of the veto so that the Assembly could make progress without leaving the king too much power. He advised the king that the best thing for him to do was to leave Paris and appeal to the people across the country for their support, assuring them that he would cooperate with their wishes. Mirabeau wanted Louis XVI to prove that he had stature by working with the people rather than against them, for it was the last hope, as he saw it.

Mirabeau's own condition was at this time a desperate one. His wasteful and dissipated living had put him into deep debt. He was ill and he had many bitter enemies. Few could really admire him in spite of his brilliant mind. But although he was often suspected of selfish aims, the records seem to show that he was sincerely devoted to his country. In July 1790 he tried to solve two great problems in one master stroke. One problem was that of his personal debts; the other, the tragic need of his country for a strong, guiding hand. The court asked for his services and offered to pay off his debts in return for them. It seemed an ideal solution. Many said that he was selling his soul and that he was not sincere. But he said, "I am the man for re-establishing order, not for re-establishing the old order."

But even Mirabeau failed to realize what he would have to confront in the Assembly. The members of the

Assembly were still toying with the idea that they could create a government like that of America but keep their king. They were unorganized; their meetings were noisy and undisciplined. With the intention of being really democratic they had made a ruling that the king could not choose his ministers from their membership. This meant, of course, that some of the ablest and best-informed persons were not available. One of these was Mirabeau himself.

It was a curious state of affairs for the king still had legal power of the veto but he did not have the authority to dissolve the Assembly. The result was that it could always hold him in check regardless of vetoes by simply refusing to vote funds for purposes to which they did not agree. The Assembly ruled that the royal army had to stay at least thirty miles from the city; that only citizens who paid their taxes could vote; that the provincial system should be changed into the basic plan of the commune which set up its own government, had its own national guards, and collected its own taxes. Mirabeau saw that the system which this set up was dangerous because it left the central government too weak and made the communes too strong.

One popular group, the Jacobins, developed fantastic power. They had organized as the Breton Club, made up of members who had originally come from the country district of Brittany. They convened in Versailles as long as the king and the Assembly were there. When these moved to Paris, they also moved and took up headquarters in an old monastery, which had belonged to Jacobin monks but which now was abandoned. They took on the name of the monastic order and gradually began to accept as members those who

were not from Brittany. In the early days of the Jacobins, Mirabeau had been their president for a time, for they had still believed in monarchy then.

The club grew rapidly and soon opened branches in many large towns and even in villages. Before very long there were about twenty-four hundred clubs, even though they were quite unlike each other. Perhaps they could best be described as a mighty, multiple Robin Hood who was out to redress every wrong to the people and who was, at the same time, trying to forward principles of democracy. For what had begun as a small, conservative group, moved over into broad liberalism. Conservatives either left of their own accord or were expelled from membership.

Now the Jacobins were making patriotism fashionable. In many private drawing rooms or on the stage, liberty and civic virtue became sentimentally popular. When the king appeared before the Assembly, the Jacobin representatives were so friendly to him that he must sometimes have thought that his being a prisoner was all a mistaken idea on his part.

But the state was still bankrupt. The clergy held many large properties though they had given up the tithe. Then on April 10, 1790, ecclesiastical holdings were made federal property in one sweeping move. Though no one really wanted these extensive lands, they now came near being disastrous to the French situation. This happened because in transferring them to the nation, municipalities were to be allowed to buy them, and to make this possible paper money known as *assignats* were printed in large amounts. This money was good for as long as the revolution was in progress. If it failed and the old regime returned, the *assignats*

would be only so much paper. This instability in currency created great tensions among the people and so the question of the church properties resulted in ill-feeling.

But there was other ill-feeling, too. A kind of creeping disorderliness passed through the army. Some of the regiments arrested their commanding officers, and those who had been counted upon as reliable leaders resigned because they could not maintain discipline. Something had to be done to put new life and dignity into the military organization and to produce greater unity.

It would soon be a year since the fall of the Bastille. Commemorating this event by a huge celebration might rally the people, both military and civilian, to a new sense of patriotism and to pride in what had been accomplished.

Such a plan caught the imagination quickly. It could be called a Festival of the Federation and held on the Champ de Mars. As the people began to talk about it, they announced that everyone would be represented at the occasion, and by this they meant everyone "just like the Americans." The words went from lip to lip.

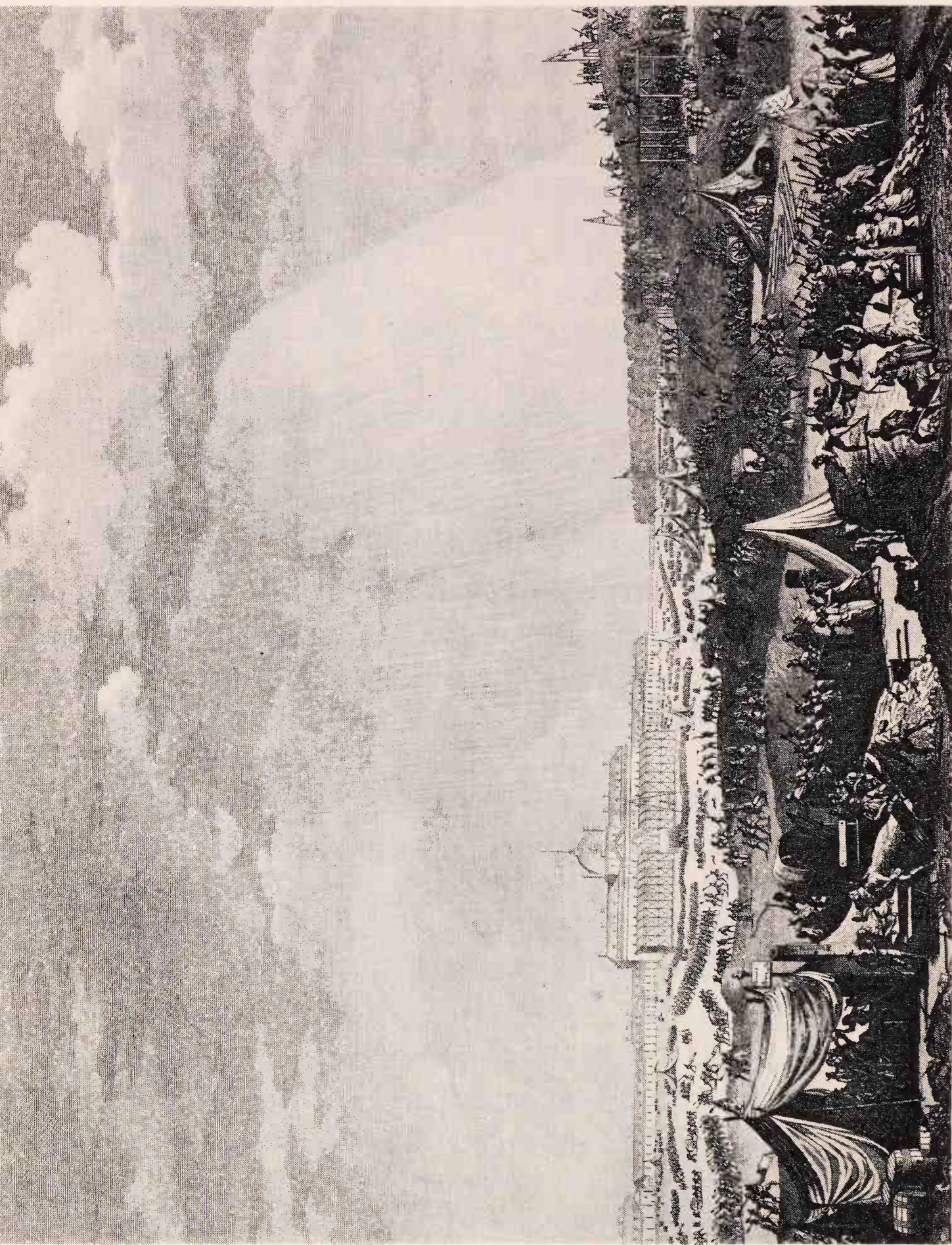
The great undertaking involved digging out a special amphitheater which would remain as a permanent monument. Thousands took part in the ambitious project. Thomas Carlyle, writing of it in his history a hundred years ago, described it in this way:

Fail for want of spadework, however, it shall not. He that has four limbs and a French heart can do spadework; and will! On the first July Monday, scarcely has the signal cannon boomed; scarcely have the languiscent mercenary Fifteen

Thousand laid down their tools, and the eyes of the onlookers turned sorrowfully to the still high sun; when this and the other Patriot, fire in his eye, snatches barrow and mattock, and himself begins indignantly wheeling. Whom scores and then hundreds follow; and soon a volunteer Fifteen Thousand are shovelling and trundling; with the heart of giants: and all in right order with that extemporaneous adroitness of theirs whereby *such* a lift has been given, worth three mercenary ones; — which may end when the late twilight thickens, in triumph-shouts, heard or heard-of beyond Montmartre!

All sorts of people began to dig the amphitheater and to trundle the earth away in a great display of patriotism. Even Lafayette came out to dig for two hours because the idea appealed to him as something dramatic and symbolic. But Mirabeau grumbled of him beneath his breath, “Clowning Caesar . . .” Some had thought that if Mirabeau and Lafayette would combine in leadership, Mirabeau of the Assembly and Lafayette of the military forces, then France might get along very well, indeed. But Lafayette did not like Mirabeau’s reputation and shrank from teaming up with such a person. Besides, though Lafayette had been lit by sparks of freedom in America, he had sometimes been strangely absent when the king most needed him to keep things in order, as when the women marched on Versailles, because he was struggling with his own convictions. How far should one go in supporting the kind of revolution that was beginning to lay hold of France? How loyal to the king should one remain?

Yet the great preparation for the commemoration of Bastille Day went on. It was taking on added significance as time passed. For now it was to celebrate the writing of the Constitution as well, even though that



Work at the Champ de Mars for the festival

Courtesy Library of Congress

document was still incomplete. Delegates chosen from the local volunteer militia in villages and towns and from all the different sections of state bodies were to be there. It was as though the people were going to demonstrate their unity with each other and with their king — a new king, a new people.

What a day July 14, 1790, was! Philip Henriot and many like him, from all the sectors of Paris, were on hand and straining forward in the crowd to see. "Will you go?" he had asked his father that morning, but Monsieur Henriot had shaken his head. "It is only a gesture," he had said. "It does not solve anything. It only hides what is ahead." What *was* ahead, Philip wondered. "What has to be before men are free," his father continued, his voice touched with sadness. He turned back to his work. "Go if you will," he said over his shoulder, "but you are young. Remember that bravery is not always in demonstrations or real courage in the waving of flags. Think twice before you act, especially today." Philip went alone from his house to the Champ de Mars.

The grassy amphitheater was complete now. It seated the two thousand Parisians who had been chosen in some way or other to sit there. In the center was a large dais, the Altar of France, at each corner of which stood a hundred priests. Twelve hundred musicians provided music for the occasion. Between the altar and the seats were the people who had come from all over the nation. The king had a special throne in front of the altar and the royal family and the Assembly had their own grandstand. The king made a speech in the form of a covenant with the nation, and the people, greatly moved, shouted, "Long Live the King!" Delegates

from Touraine came forward to present him with a gift. It was a ring that had belonged to Henry IV, a symbolic act in the unsettled times. Even Marie Antoinette, who was bitter because of the miserable year spent in the chilly Tuileries and full of dislike toward Mirabeau as well as many others, was touched today. On an impulse she picked up her little son, sprang to her feet and held him out to the crowds. "Here is my son! He and I share all the feelings of the king!" she said.

By now it had begun to rain, but no one paid any attention to the weather. Again everyone was happy; everyone was thinking that the revolution was over. For Paris was the center of it, and today the celebration demonstrated its completion.

There was good reason for the French people to come to a conclusion of this kind. By this time Paris *was* France, according to some of her greatest historians. She had grown so large during the last two centuries that many royal edicts had been issued to restrict new building, to specify sites that might be used, and even to dictate the type of house that must be built. While the city had been growing physically, in spite of efforts to control her size, she had become without question the center of the intellectual life of the country. Meanwhile, crafts and factories had multiplied and, during the half century before the revolution, the number of workers was thought to have doubled. By the day when the fall of the Bastille was celebrated for the first time, she was a great business and commercial center with large numbers of workers, a city of pleasure seekers and consumers, a gathering place of the intellectuals and artists, as well as the center of government.

Perhaps so much power being concentrated here, rather than being scattered throughout the country, was one of the problems.

Paris was certainly leading the revolution. The citizens of the city brought great pressure to bear on the Assembly in its deliberations. The Jacobin Club was powerful, and the working people who had formed their own club, the Cordeliers, grew stronger every day. Every decision of the Assembly was closely watched and sharply criticized. When it voted for changes in the organization of the clergy, there was immediate excitement. At this time a civil constitution for the clergy was set up so that the Pope no longer conferred vesture on the bishops. Instead, it was done by the local bishops or metropolitans. This really meant that the revolution had at last invaded the very organization of the church. It was much more significant than merely tampering with church lands, and uproar followed. The Assembly then passed a law that ecclesiastics should take a civic oath, but almost half of the clergy refused to do so. The religious group was divided by this and those who refused the oath started an anti-revolutionary movement.

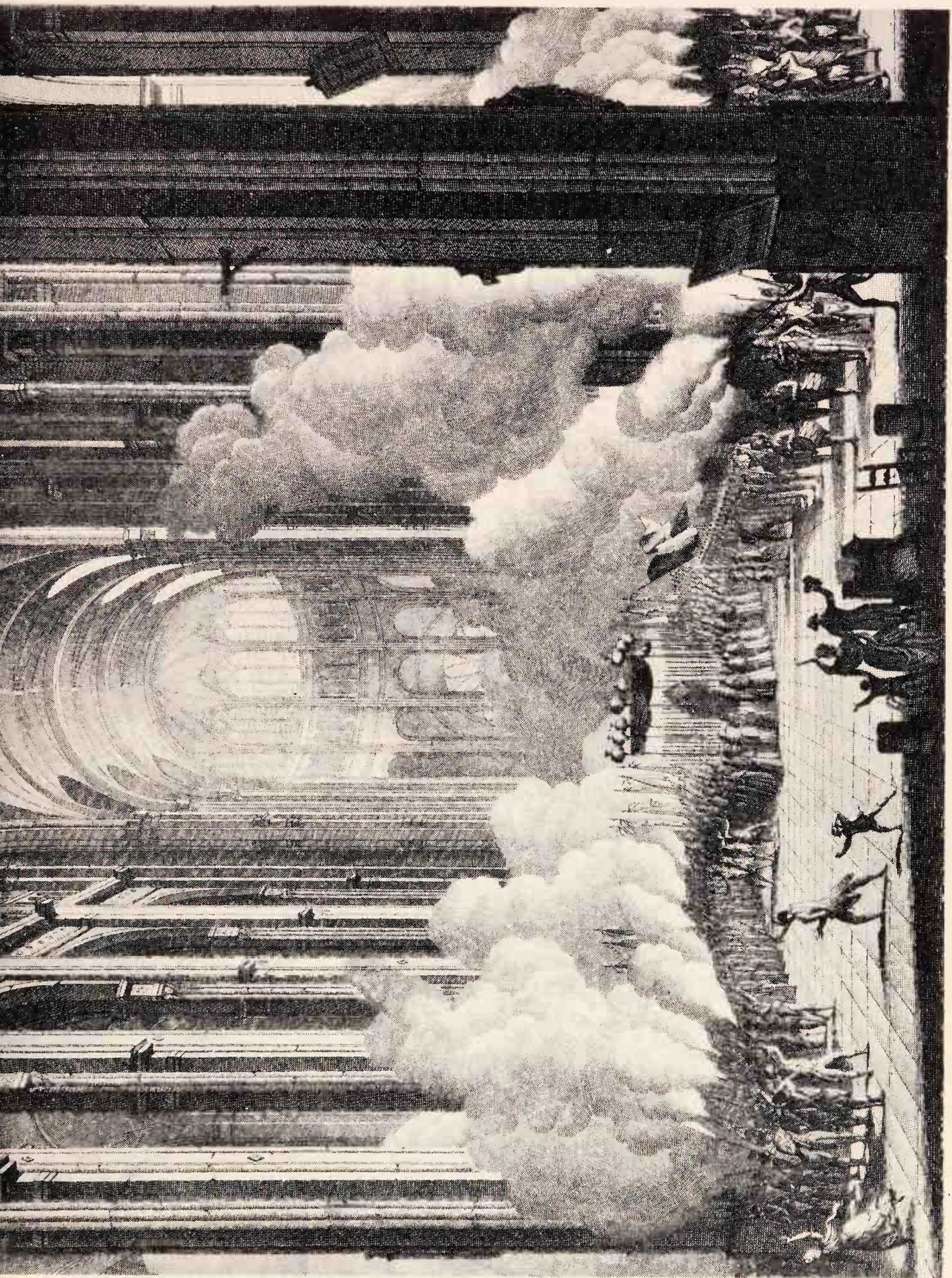
In the spring of 1791, the Pope condemned the Civil Constitution. This disturbed the king very much because his conscience was involved. He felt that the clergy had been greatly wronged in the decisions of the Assembly, and yet he had tried to find a way between the two pressures that were upon him — that of the Assembly and that of his own sense of what was right. He knew that it was logical that the clergy should be thought of as employees of the government now, and that as such they should be elected by their parishes

and dioceses. Logic did not improve his religious feelings. He was so depressed that for the first time he really considered withdrawing from the revolution, giving it up as something he could not cooperate with, something that was simply too much for him. It was a bad time all around, following so closely on the glorious events of the Champ de Mars. For outside of Paris, too, conditions seemed to be disintegrating unexpectedly. Reports showed that often people who now could vote, were failing to do so. Moreover, unemployment did not slacken.

Then, suddenly, in March, Mirabeau lay dying. He knew that his hope of saving the French monarchy was going to die with him. Thousands of people gathered in the street outside the house where he lived, and waited silently for the end. For them he had become the revolution itself. He was buried in the Pantheon with three hundred thousand people following his ashes.

The full significance of the fact that he died at this moment came later. Now no one stood between the king and the revolution. He had been the only one who had succeeded at all in bringing the king and the Assembly together. Although Marie Antoinette had hated him with every power she had, he had still done all he could to save her for he foresaw the disaster ahead if the revolution ran wild.

Now the time had come when the court of France had to make a final choice. It had either to accept the new day fully and cooperate with the Assembly in every way, or it must retreat in full flight.



Funeral ceremonies for Mirabeau

Courtesy Library of Congress

10

EASTER 1791 took on a strange significance. The king could see that he was going to have to accept Holy Communion at the hand of a priest who had conformed to the system which the Pope rejected. Louis XVI was a religious man and this worry, combined with his hopeless feeling about the revolution, made him more favorable toward the idea of flight. He had loyal friends elsewhere who would welcome him; there were other places where one could commemorate Easter as one pleased. He could, for example, join General Bouillé who was in charge of loyal troops in Metz on the eastern frontier. His own brothers, the Count of Provence and the Count of Artois, had left the country to be safe themselves, but he distrusted their secret ambitions. They talked of a foreign invasion to save France, but he was not altogether sure just what they wanted to save her for . . . But Metz was a possibility. He could return from there with loyal troops and try to make

peace with Paris in that way. Certainly the best thing to do was to escape.

But having made this decision, the king left all the arrangements to the queen. It would have been an impossible undertaking for her if she had not had a faithful personal friend, Count Axel von Fersen, a Swede who had known her for years and who also loved her. Now he set about the complicated business of seeing how the royal family could safely and secretly be gotten out of Paris. He started a clandestine correspondence with General Bouillé and with a few other nobles who he knew could be trusted. He ordered a special carriage built for the occasion — unfortunately, one much too heavy and ornate for such use — collected large sums of money by mortgaging two of his own estates, bought disguises and smuggled them into the Tuileries a piece at a time at night, and in the same way brought out priceless jewels for safekeeping. He knew that what he was doing was highly dangerous and, if he should be discovered, he would probably lose his life. But he was completely devoted to Marie Antoinette and to her family.

When, after months of work everything had been arranged, the king was not sure that escape was the best plan, after all. He did not want anyone to think that he was running away because of cowardice. The people ought as a first step to realize that he not only felt like a prisoner but that he really was a prisoner, an intolerable situation for their king. He thought that perhaps some sort of incident might demonstrate his problem to them.

He decided to announce to the National Assembly

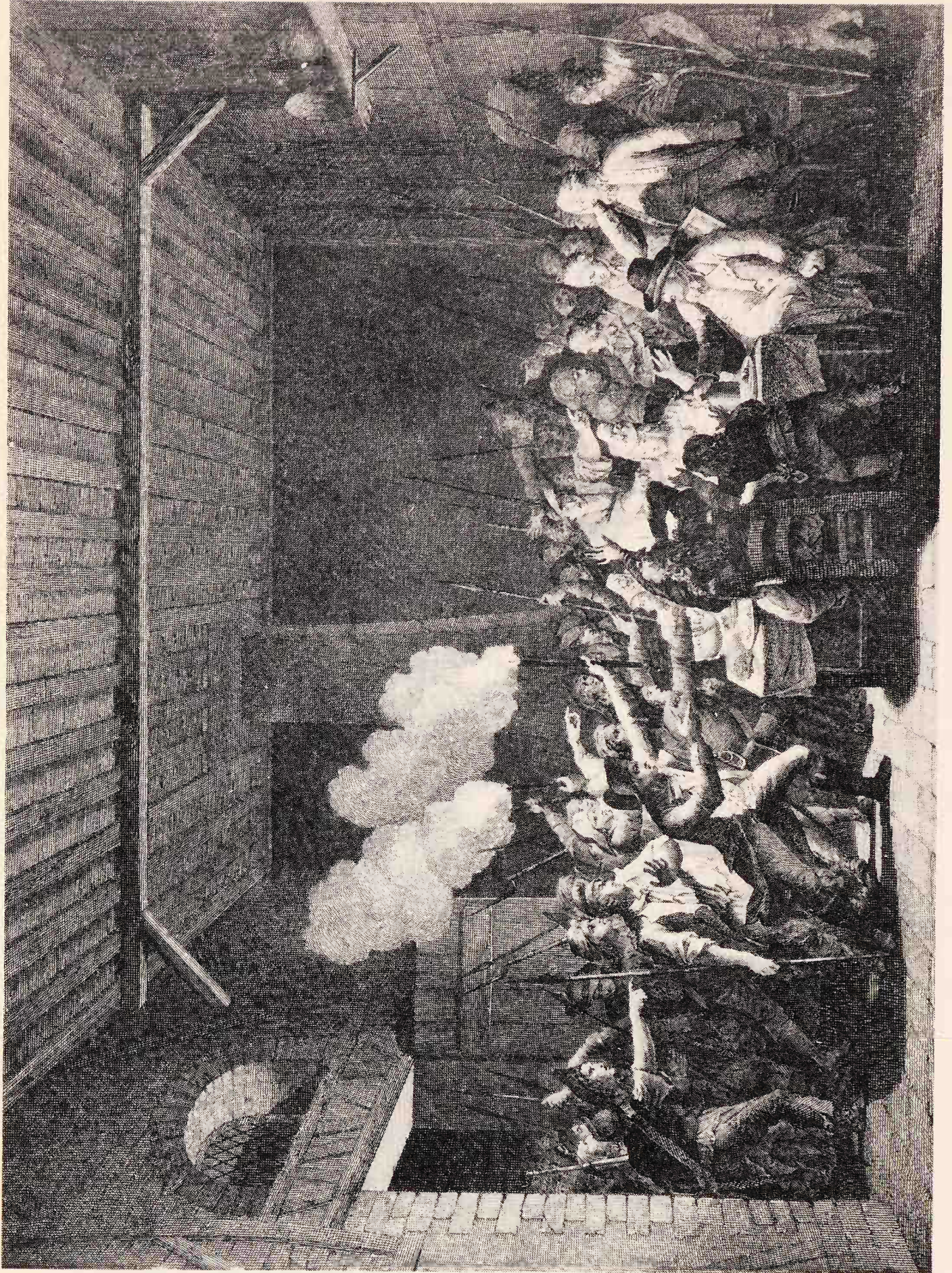
that he wanted to leave the city and go to Saint-Cloud, a suburb, for a change and for the Easter ceremonies. After all, he had been suffering from colds and laryngitis. This announcement succeeded in getting all the attention he had hoped for. But Jacobin papers at once interpreted the request as a way of having the Easter Mass said by a priest who had not conformed to the recent changes. They complained that this amounted to getting around the reforms that had been made.

On April 19, when the king tried to enter the royal carriage to start on his trip, crowds of people pressed in and made it impossible for him to do so. He was not allowed to leave the Tuileries. This ought to be demonstration enough that he was a prisoner. Meanwhile, the queen and the rest of the royal household entered carriages without a word and sat waiting. The crowds rapidly changed into a mob which refused to let the coachmen take the horses from the stables even though the National Guard was on hand. Lafayette who was still their commanding officer had not appeared. When at last he did come, he demanded that the king be allowed passage, but no one paid any attention to him. He ordered Bailly, the mayor, to raise the red flag of revolution as a warning, but he also paid no attention. Now desperate because he saw that things were out of hand, Lafayette tried in every way he could to get the crowd to come to its senses. No one seemed to hear him. For more than two hours this went on while the queen sat with a satisfied expression, watching the drama around her. Surely this was proof enough that the revolution was only a wild, disordered affair, with no one in control and no plan or authority. Surely the

king would not be asked to stay in a city like this, and his request for a little vacation was more than justified by the demonstration. As if playing into the conclusion which the queen had reached, the king ordered the carriage back in the carriage house and announced that he had to give up the idea of leaving the city. But there the matter stood.

Instead of slipping quietly away some night in an ordinary vehicle, after a month's delay the royal family gathered from two directions on a night in June to try escape again. It filled the special carriage built for this occasion, while ladies in waiting to help the queen with her dressing took another. The royal carriage, so carefully designed, was far heavier than it should have been. Followed not only by the carriage of the attending ladies, but by Fersen, trusted servants and coachmen, it headed a procession which would be easily identifiable. Cases of fine clothes piled on top the carriages added to the difficulties, for all horses had to be changed often because of their heavy loads. It seemed as if everything possible had been done to make the escape difficult even though the getaway from the Tuileries had been cleverly contrived.

As the party went on through the night, it met with fantastic problems. Escorts failed entirely at one point and during the delay caused in this way, a posting master by the name of Drouet, a member of the Jacobin Club, grew suspicious and followed the carriages as they lumbered along. He then raced ahead to Varennes to alert the authorities there before they arrived. The little town scarcely knew what to do with the royalty thrust upon it. Some of the people were not even sure



Arrest of Louis Capet at Varennes

Courtesy Library of Congress

that the face they saw was actually that of Louis XVI. The inn where the party stopped, at last, was most reluctant to take them in.

The National Assembly in Paris had already sounded the alarm and sent commissaries in pursuit. They arrived in Varennes with an order which made it perfectly clear that the royal pair was considered subject to the governing body. When the queen read it, however, she only crumpled it and threw it on the floor, but the king was more restrained for he still hoped to find a way out. If they could tarry here long enough, surely Bouillé would appear with his cavalry, followed soon by infantry and artillery.

The two commissaries who had come after the royal family differed in what the next step ought to be. One of them was reluctant to go as far as arresting the king and queen. They had had orders to stop the flight, and this they had done. The second commissary felt no such hesitation. He stepped outside and aroused the people by a treacherous statement. They rushed forward to make their way up the steps of the inn and were restrained with difficulty.

Inside, the king and queen were trying to delay in any way they possibly could. A lady in waiting even helped by pretending to faint so that a doctor had to be called. Still Bouillé did not come, and at last nothing could longer postpone the return to Paris.

The carriages were turned around and the royal party entered. By this time several thousand people had gathered. They started to shout and sing revolutionary songs as the procession set out for Paris. The king's defeat was complete . . . When Bouillé accompanied

by his men came thundering down the dusty road within half an hour's time, he knew that he was too late. He could not now snatch the king back from his own weakness. The return trip took three days to complete though it had taken only twenty-four hours to go from Paris to Varennes. Each stage of that trip back was worse than the preceding one because the nearer they drew to Paris, the more hostile the people became. At last progress was so dangerous that the National Assembly sent their representatives with a bodyguard to protect the king the rest of the way. In order to really assure the safety of the royal family, these two men finally squeezed into the carriage with them. In this crowded situation an odd kind of friendship developed between the royal children and the representatives. Exhausted by traveling for three days and two nights everyone grew sleepy. At last they leaned on each other unconsciously, forgetful for a little while of political views and all that the future might bring. But the queen was always on the lookout for those who might be able to help her, and even during this discouraging journey she won a kind of promise from one of the Assembly men that he would explain to that body that she really was interested in democratic methods, and that he would also keep her informed of the decisions that were made.

Finally, they were at the gates of Paris. Instead of going straight to the Tuileries as they had hoped, the procession had to go a long way around because the crowds demanded to see the "captured rulers," even though they had been warned that anyone who either shouted, "Long Live the King!" or who embarrassed

them would be severely punished. As a result of this warning, the people were utterly silent while the bedraggled carriages and their escorts passed among them. The only enthusiasm that was allowed, and that broke out in loud cries, was for Drouet, the posting master who had recognized the king and who had raced ahead to meet him at Varennes.

When they had come to the Tuileries, the people were pressing so dangerously close and were so barely restrained from violence, that the question of how to get the royal family safely from the carriages to the buildings was a hard one. But the king and queen and their children were not touched, although the mob rushed forward to seize three of the bodyguard and would have murdered them then and there if some of the National Guard had not rescued them. The king and queen were pathetic sights when they stepped out of the carriage. Dirty and drenched with sweat because of the hot trip in the stuffy carriage, and exhausted by fear and excitement, they were also sick at heart with utter disappointment. Murmurs of "That Austrian woman!" came from one and then another as the queen passed as quickly as she could through the palace gates without looking to either side.

Inside, the table was laid for dinner as though nothing had happened. All the usual ceremony of the royal meal was observed. But even Louis who was slow to see the meaning of events, knew that he was no longer even an imprisoned king of France; he was simply a political prisoner.

The attempted flight of the king was more significant than anyone realized at first. It was near the time

for the election of new members to the Assembly. Until now that Assembly had been made up chiefly of bourgeoisie who still believed in a monarchical form of government, if an improved one. The events connected with the attempted flight had provided the masses of the Third Estate, the proletariat, with an opportunity to demonstrate and to flex their power as they might not have been able to do otherwise. It was as though some new unmeasured force had been unleashed, and the present members of the National Assembly were afraid of what might happen if they did not carry through the elections quickly and in such a way as to keep the force under control. They wanted to find some way of keeping alive a relationship among the embarrassed king, the people and the Assembly. One way would be to excuse the attempted flight by starting a story that he had been kidnaped. But this effort did not succeed at all, for before it got well started, the Jacobins held a public meeting at the Champ de Mars and demanded that the king abdicate. The crowds which attended were ready for action and were dispersed only when Bailly and Lafayette gave the Guard the order to fire on them. This was enough to set all the city buzzing and arguing.

As usual, the little groups of craftsmen such as those in the Saint-Antoine district were slow to discuss outbursts of any kind. So now they did not say much about the affair at the Champ de Mars. Some of them were not sure where they stood, or if they were sure, they preferred to keep it to themselves. Certainly many of them were not in favor of the mob action that was increasing noticeably. They had not yet come to the point

of saying, "Long Live the Republic!" if this meant a leveling down of everyone to the position of the factory worker. They had been painfully climbing up into the higher brackets of the bourgeoisie and they had no wish to join the proletariat. Freedom, yes — they believed in freedom for every man and they thoroughly hated the aristocracy, but they loved order and they knew that violence could turn in any direction once it was released.

The situation really was out of hand, even for the National Assembly, for the days of monarchy were certainly over and yet the next step was not clear. In the confusion, one dealt against another. The Jacobins themselves were split on the issue of republicanism and of what the king should do. Some of the most brilliant leaders were clouded with disappointment and uncertainty. But the move to complete the Constitution continued, even though many were already of the opinion that it did not make much difference what it said because there would not be any authority to enforce it.

One group which took the lead from now on was led by Danton and included Camille Desmoulins, Marat and Hébert. These few were the real heart of the movement toward a republican form of government for the Assembly was by now lacking in vitality.

A great deal of discussion was going on in the royal family over the question of whether the king ought to accept the Constitution. Marie Antoinette believed that two great dangers were threatening the monarchy. These were republicanism which would certainly end royalty, and the fact that the king's two brothers, the Count of Provence and the Count of Artois, were just

waiting for a chance to get rid of the king in any way they could. The only hope that she could see lay in pretending to follow the advice of Barnave, the representative from the Assembly who had promised to help her. He wanted to have the two conspiring counts come back to France so that they could not continue to plan an invasion from outside. He also wanted to persuade Marie Antoinette's brother, Emperor Leopold of Austria, to recognize the new Constitution. So she wrote letters which sounded as if she honestly wanted these things accomplished, and then at once secretly countermanded what she had written. She was putting Barnave and those who were really trying to help her in a dangerous position because, if things turned against her and their cooperation with her was discovered, they would certainly lose their lives. When she wrote her brother saying that he ought to recognize the Constitution of France, she was really implying that there was justification for him to go forward with a plan he had for an "armed congress" against France, and this she did not have to countermand. Marie Antoinette herself was in the most dangerous situation of anyone, for she was the only one who was playing a double game.

At last, on September 4, 1791, the writing of the Constitution was finished. The king came before the Assembly to accept it though it made the people sovereign. From this time on no order of the king was effective unless it was signed by the appropriate minister as well as by him, although he could still delay the enactment of laws by refusing to sanction them for two consecutive sessions. The office of the king was no longer hereditary. Those who had a right to vote were deter-

mined by the rate of taxes they paid. From now on the middle class would predominate in the affairs of France.

When the king accepted the Constitution, however, it was only a gesture. The queen told her old advisor, Count Mercy, that he had no intention of keeping his pledge. Yet this gesture gave the royal pair time, and again, as before, the people reacted favorably and the old shouts of "Long Live the King," and "Long Live the Queen!" went up. The National Guards were removed from the Tuileries and the palace gardens were again open to the public. The king and queen were no longer prisoners. Everyone felt a sense of relief. Surely gradual changes could be made without bloodshed.



Commemoration of the Capture of the Bastille

Courtesy Library of Congress

11

THE NEW ASSEMBLY had to be made up of men who had not served before because the old one had passed the ruling that no members could be re-elected to office. They did not realize what a disastrous decision this was for it removed many of their best leaders. It made the moderate Jacobins, or the Feuillants, the most powerful group in the Assembly, and they were in favor of keeping the monarchy. The liberals, or Cordeliers, on the other hand, wanted a republic. Besides these two groups there were the Girondists, theorists rather than political leaders, who now began to talk of a campaign against feudal Europe, and the Center or the middle-of-the-roads.

The actual leadership soon sprang up outside the Assembly altogether in the Cordelier group. Robespierre, and again Marat and Danton, were especially powerful. These three men had widely different personalities. Danton was captivating, enjoyed life, and easily won the affection of the common people. He

married his coffeehouse keeper's daughter and loved her devotedly. He was not as hostile to the monarchy as he was convinced that the revolution had to come. He was so witty and so self-assured that he made Robespierre, who was exactly his opposite, cringe, even while he envied him. Robespierre was an intellectual, cold, proud of himself, certain that his opinion was always right, and longing to be admired. Yet he leaned on Danton because, while the people respected Robespierre, he did not draw the intimacy and love which Danton's broad group of friends poured out on him. Marat was still another type. He was a doctor and a scientist who had strong convictions about the rights of the masses. As the editor of a small paper called *The Friend of the People*, he sincerely wanted to improve the condition of the lower classes. He suffered from a miserable skin ailment which may have added to his impatience and irritability, making him more extreme in his point of view and in what he said than he would otherwise have been.

The king spoke about the defense of France before the Assembly and proposed strengthening the army. He really believed that if it came to war and the army were successful, the monarchy would be saved. The queen, though she wanted the monarchy rescued by the invasion of foreign forces, was less certain of the outcome. If France were victorious, she and the king would still lose the throne in this new day; if she were defeated they might lose their lives because such a result would be possible only through the help of those who undoubtedly wanted the throne for themselves. Meanwhile, the Minister of War, Count Narbonne,

avored military action more and more. Robespierre countered sagely with the prediction that the triumphant general would become the new enemy of the people.

The trend toward war was increasing steadily because Francis II of Austria had by now taken the place of his father, Leopold, who had recently died. He agreed with the Girondists and found excuses wherever he could for the beginning of hostilities. Actually, he paid little attention to Marie Antoinette's communications or to those of the National Assembly because his real intention was to extend his own authority.

Narbonne was the only one of the king's ministers who was in close touch with the Assembly, and now the king foolishly dismissed him. He found it hard to find another suitable man because of the ruling that ministers must be chosen outside the Assembly membership.

Suddenly events began to move swiftly to a climax. Intrigue among the ministers and their ambitious wives, as well as incidents tinged with hate for the queen combined in a confusing fashion. On April 20, 1792, France declared war on Austria. The King of Prussia immediately joined the Emperor of Austria in the defense.

What now took place is hard to believe. The French army, to begin with, was made up of two main groups — the old troops now much weakened because 6,000 of their officers had emigrated and 30,000 men had deserted, and the National Guards who were new and untried men. The first move was an invasion of Belgium. This failed and the troops fell back in panic. In the meantime, the Assembly had decreed that priests

who did not accept the new rulings and swear loyalty to the Constitution should be deported, that the constitutional guard of the king should be licensed, and that a camp of 20,000 volunteers should be set up near Paris. The king accepted only the licensing of his guard, vetoed the other two rulings, and dismissed his cabinet. He appealed to the Feuillant, or moderate, group to support him. Fear that he had some sudden move in mind took hold of popular thinking. People strongly suspected that the queen wanted foreign powers to succeed. They were convinced that the Tuileries was hostile to what was going on. They were altogether right in their suspicion, because Marie Antoinette, in spite of her doubts and because she had little choice, was carefully informing her nephew, the Emperor of Austria, of all developments. It was soon clear to the Assembly that France's hope did not lie in foreign wars but in settling for once and all the question of authority at home. The fact that the king had vetoed its ruling about the clergy was a last straw. While he possessed the veto power, he had not used it before; by using it now when feelings were already at a breaking point, he gave it unexpected significance.

The Paris Commune under the leadership of Pétion, the new mayor of the city, went into action. June 20th, the anniversary of the attempted flight of the royal family to Varennes, was selected as a day to threaten Louis XVI for the purpose of making him call back his ministers. A strange mixture of tragedy and comedy resulted. A mob of several thousand people wearing red caps invaded a session of the Assembly and then went to the Tuileries and forced the gates. The king was

jostled around, asked to put on one of the caps and to drink the health of the nation. He did all this with astonishing good sportsmanship, but he still refused to withdraw his veto or call back his ministers. Pétion, perhaps out of a kind of pity, saw to it that the king and queen were not actually harmed when things grew rough, and put an end to the demonstration. The moderates were furious because the king had been embarrassed. Lafayette who was away with the army, hearing of the episode, came back to protest what was going on. When he appeared before the Assembly, the Feuillants applauded and the Center supported them. This was a chance for the court to get help through Lafayette, but the queen detested him and would reject any assistance he might offer.

Events moved at headlong speed. The Duke of Brunswick who was in command of the Prussians, Austrians, Hessians and those troops who had emigrated from France or who had deserted, was thought to be the originator of a manifesto which was highly insulting to the French. Later it was proven that he had not issued it, rather that he had opposed it. But it was the spark for the waiting tinder of revolution. The cry that rose in answer was, "To arms, citizens!" A new song rang through the streets of Paris. Rouget de Lisle in Strasbourg had written "La Marseillaise" and tried it out on a group of friends there, but almost at once it was the property of the French people. So now, on August 6th, six hundred patriots marched in from Marseilles singing the song that was to become immortal, not only for the French but for people who were in search of freedom anywhere in the world. Those who



GEORGES JACQ. DANTON.

were in sympathy with the revolution all over France had been waiting for this moment when they could come to help the Parisians overthrow the monarchy. Now they were exultant.

While the Assembly still hesitated as to what move to make next, Danton and his friends set up a Commune of Insurrection which acted independently of the Paris Commune. It deliberately planned for the day when, at last, the king would be removed.

The night of August 9th seemed an unusually quiet one in Paris. Even in the sections of the city where factory workers and where craftsmen lived, there was none of the usual laughing and talking of the people who lingered out-of-doors. The side streets were deserted early. Only here and there one could see someone darting swiftly along as though he carried an important message. A careful observer would have noticed that behind drawn curtains in certain houses, small groups of men were talking earnestly together. It was a quiet night; it was also a sleepless one.

The Henriot family and many others like them were sitting at their open doors until late, but this evening friends did not stop to visit as they usually did. There had not been much of that lately, anyhow, and tonight, as the dusk crept in and then the darkness fell, each little group seemed isolated.

Madame Henriot was in the shadow of the doorway. She had long ago given up saying anything about the horrible events that had taken place — all, she believed, because of the foolish talk of freedom and equality when God Himself knew that He had not made everyone alike. But she no longer said anything of her con-

viction to her husband or to Philip. Nor did she say any more to Rosalie, for with things as they were, and with the future outlook what it was, she had begun to lose hope that Rosalie could pull them upward by a fortunate marriage. Actually, if there were real war, the young men would be killed off and it would be lucky if Rosalie married at all. The mother grew more silent every day and was only grateful that her husband was not swept into the foolish actions of many men with whom he shared belief in freedom, even though he did not share their ideas about ways of getting it.

Tonight she drew back into the deeper darkness of the room whenever there was the sound of a footstep passing near them along the street below the doorway. A strange tenseness was in the air. She felt a premonition. But she would not say anything about it, nor would she ask any questions. It was better to let things come as they must and not anticipate them. Besides, she did not want to discuss the revolution in front of Philip. If only that boy would behave sensibly, if only he could be kept from going headlong into something ill-considered. Tonight, even though she used to complain about it, she was glad that he loved his work so well and that he did not seem to need to rush about in a gang getting into mischief of one kind or another.

He was sitting on the topmost step now and she noticed that his gaze was fixed on the limited stretch of street which was within their line of vision. He scarcely stirred when someone passed. Rosalie, however, whisked her skirts this way and then that, settled herself over and over, and did not seem to want to sit here with the rest of them. This was true, but she was reluctant to go

in by herself tonight and to turn up the lights indoors. Because of all the things that had been going on, it was certainly not possible to go out with any of her friends, or to have a visitor here. Even to hum a tune and tap her foot to the measure, as she often did when she was bored, seem strangely out of keeping. A pall hung over everything and she hated it. Gloom and foreboding had turned life gray. Why did things have to be so unhappy just when she wanted happiness! Those men from Marseilles had looked positively joyful when they came marching in the other day — all tanned and strong and singing a new song at the top of their lungs and in rhythm to their steps. She had been taken unaware and could only press back into the enthusiastic crowds as they passed. Now, remembering the event, she began humming the refrain of the song under her breath before she realized what she was doing. Philip turned his head quickly and a beam from the distant street light caught his eyes and made them gleam.

“*You singing that!*” he exclaimed. “Since when have you become a patriot?” There was a touch of scorn in his voice.

“Hush,” his father said quickly. “We are all patriots in our own fashion. But tonight it is best not to speak. Something is afoot — some great change — some event. We cannot tell what it will be so let us be silent and listen.”

Monsieur Henriot was thinking of the manifesto that had come with the name of Brunswick upon it. Of course he had not seen it, but news of it had gotten around. It sounded unbelievably foolish. It presented a threat of the very kind that would cause a city like

Paris to rise in an instant — referring to the “sacred person” of the king, saying what would happen if the Tuileries were stormed, criticizing the National Assembly. What fool had written it? Surely no military man, for it was a challenge to battle.

Dread of bloodshed was already gnawing in him tonight, as in many another. It would be a miracle if a terrible massacre was avoided with that fellow Danton at the head of things now. It looked as if the king and queen were going to be punished beyond their due. What a time to be alive in, though!

Hour passed hour and scarcely a waiting person seemed to move. Down the street from the Henriots there were others sitting in the same paralyzed anxiety. Stealthy footsteps still passed occasionally. The moon rose high in a clear, hot night sky, and even the moonlight seemed strong enough to warm the air. Rosalie leaned her head against the lintel of the door and fell asleep, her breath coming lightly. Philip dropped his head on his hands and knees, but he was too wide awake and sensitive to the danger of the night to think of sleep. Madame Henriot was almost dozing. Though she so often disagreed with her family, tonight she did not want to leave them. Somehow they must stay together through these bad times. Somehow they would come through to better ones.

A distant clock struck midnight, then the half hour, and then one. Surely it was foolish to sit here any longer. Madame Henriot began to stir, then stiff from sitting so many hours, she put her hand on her husband's shoulder to help her rise. At that moment a tocsin sounded a great distance away. She faltered and

took her seat again. "Did you hear it?" she asked in a soft whisper. "Listen!" Monsieur Henriot answered, straining forward. Another, another, and then a fourth tocsin sounded. They sat frozen, waiting.

A man ran by, hesitated, turned and leaped up the steps and when he saw for certain who they were, whispered, "Mandat of the National Guards has been murdered!" Then he was gone as quickly as he had come. That meant that the Tuileries would be more easily taken because Mandat was a brave man and a good leader of the Guards. It was the beginning of the day that lay ahead. A roll of drums came on the heels of what the man had said. Far in the east the first glow of dawn was touching the sky. It was August 10, 1792.

No one in the Tuileries had slept that night, either. Ever since the men from Marseilles had marched in, an attack had been expected. The grounds were full of armed guards in addition to the usual sentries, and more than two thousand soldiers were encamped in the vicinity. Officers and noblemen who had been invited to come jostled each other in the passages of the palace itself. The nine hundred men of the Swiss Guard and the best men of the National Guard were there, while artillery bristled from the entrance gate. But the king had foolishly ordered Mandat to go to the Hotel de Ville when a message came requesting it. Mandat obeyed knowing too well that he would never return.

By now the king was utterly confused. He was brave enough, but for what was he being brave? The queen suggested in desperation that perhaps if he would go out to the troops in the early light and talk to them in an encouraging way, he could put spirit and loyalty

into them. They might be stronger when the attack came. Yet she knew her husband well enough to realize that it was expecting too much of him to ask for this kind of a demonstration. It was entirely out of keeping with his dull nature. But there was no other hope, so let him try.

When he went awkwardly down the steps to face the troops, what he said had such an uncertain, hesitant tone that they were instantly contemptuous. It would have been better if he had stayed out of sight. As if in response, the crowds around the encampment outside the palace grounds shouted, "Long live the *people!*"

Standing in the crowd and merely looking that morning when the King of France humiliated himself before his subjects, was a young Corsican, a lieutenant who was out of a job. Napoleon Bonaparte could scarcely believe what he saw. Why, if *he* had been in charge, he could have rallied his men and scattered that oncoming attack like leaves before a storm! All that was needed was a firm will, the respect of his men, and a steady shower of artillery. Now, seeing that none of these was present, he said, "What a weak fool!" and turned away, disgusted.

A disorderly, partially armed mob made the attack about seven o'clock that morning. Roederer, the public prosecutor, begged the king to take his family and go to the National Assembly and throw himself on their care. The king was undecided as usual, and the queen impatient. But at last the little group of royalty left ignominiously, the queen leading the prince by the hand. Not a suggestion of respect was to be seen in any face as they passed.

It was only a short distance to the old riding school where the Assembly met. When they reached there, the deputies sitting in session were suddenly meticulously careful about the formalities, one of them going so far as to make a grandiose statement about loyalty to the king. They decided that according to the Constitution he could not be present during their deliberations and so they put the royal pair in a tiny reporters' room or alcove adjoining and overlooking the hall. The king and queen with other members of the royal family had to stay for eighteen hours in a space too low to stand erect in and without adequate ventilation. They were stifled by lack of air and by the heat. The deputies either stared at them with disdain or altogether ignored them.

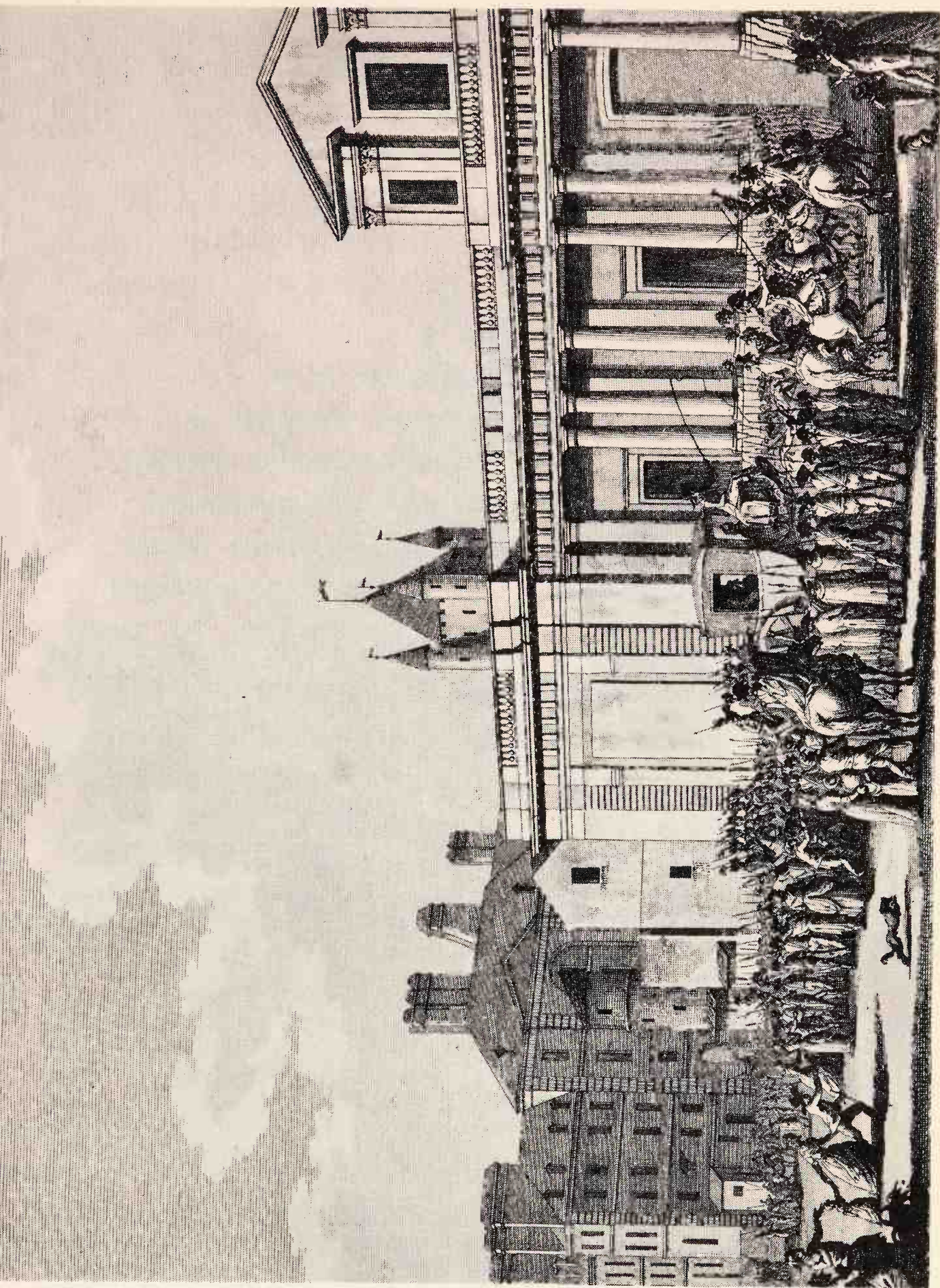
When the king had left the Tuileries, complete disorder followed, for he had failed to give any orders and only later remembered to send word to stop the defense. Soon he and the queen, watching the proceedings of the Assembly from their crowded lookout, were horrified to see men splattered with blood rush into the hall to report a massacre. Heads of royalists were again being paraded up and down the streets on pike points. Again the streets were "running red," they said. Then they began bringing loot in and piling it on the president's table. Many familiar objects which the royal family had used were heaped before their eyes. The most bitter thing of all, however, was to hear these vandals being praised for what they were doing, and to know that the facts of what had happened were often being misrepresented. They said, for example, that the

palace had ordered the tocsin sounded and that the Tuileries had started the attack.

Some decision of what to do about the king had to be made, at last. His authority was altogether gone now. The Assembly decided that the royal household should be moved to the Luxembourg Palace under the protection of the law. This simply meant imprisonment.

They spent that night in a cell of the convent of the Feuillants, but during the next two days they were taken back to the Assembly and put in the reporters' room where they again had to listen to the proceedings. Danton was a noisy leader and the Commune he had set up obviously had the upper hand.

It was finally decreed that the king and his family should not go to the Luxembourg Palace after all but to the Temple, an old fortress of the Knights Templar. A small and beautiful palace stood near the fortress. Marie Antoinette knew it well because she had visited it when the Count of Artois, one of her brothers-in-law, had lived there. He and she had been jolly friends when she was young and the queenship had been too serious for her. All that was long ago. Now they were going, not to the palace but to the fortress which stood grim and uninviting.



Transfer of Louis XVI and his family to the Temple

Courtesy Library of Congress

12

WHILE THE ROYAL FAMILY was going through these terrifying and humiliating experiences, the government of France took on new form. The Commune of Insurrection, with Danton as its leader, had become the body with real power in Paris. Outside of Paris, elections to the new convention, which would take the place of the National Assembly, were going on. The men chosen in the country areas often did not share the violent feelings of Parisians. They were even opposed to some of the extreme measures that had already been taken. When the new National Convention gathered in the theater of the riding school where the Assembly had met, the Girondists, still clearly the moderates, sat on the right. They made up about one hundred and sixty-five of the seven hundred and fifty deputies. Opposite them, on the left, were the liberals, called the "Mountain" because they occupied the high seats in the amphitheater. Des Moulins, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Jean-Paul Marat all sat here with Danton, the

leader. Between the Girondists and the Mountain were those who belonged to the "Plain" or the "Swamp" who watched the other two bodies and usually took a middle ground. There was, besides these, a fourth group which was more extreme than the Mountain. These were the Rabids who were ready for a kind of communism.

The real contest lay between the Girondists and the Mountain, between a political theory of equality and an actual crusade of enforcement. At first it seemed that the Girondists would run the Convention, but Robespierre and others of the Mountain believed that they could get rid of the king and the aristocracy if they succeeded in setting the common people against the Girondists. Public opinion would carry forward the ideas of the Commune of Insurrection without much prodding.

Meanwhile, life in the Temple was comfortable for the king and queen, if they did not let themselves remember the past or think of the future. They were safe at last from the annoyance and abuse of the public. If the tocsin sounded, they knew it could not mean an attack on them. Sentries guarded them. They were provided with fine clothes, excellent food, a small library, amusements, and a garden where they could walk. It was a relief just to be safe.

But they were never out of sight of the sentries except when they were in bed at night. The man in charge was Hébert who was one of the most extreme of the republicans. He was thought of as almost too repulsive to be endured even by Danton's group, but he could serve the cause. He loved bloodshed and he

was willing to stoop to anything. With him over them, the sentries did not dare to be as gentle as they would otherwise have been. Hébert was smooth and friendly to Marie Antoinette but he was meanwhile secretly writing the most malicious lies about her in a small paper which he edited.

Life in the Temple was a strange thing, the sentries sometimes thought. They watched the heavy, mild-mannered king while he walked or played with his little boy, and they could not keep from seeing that, though royal, he was not in any way different from them. He was the kind of person with whom they could easily have sat down for a drink of wine or a game of cards. Sometimes they were so touched with sympathy for him that they had to make themselves whistle in order to keep up a jovial and impersonal front.

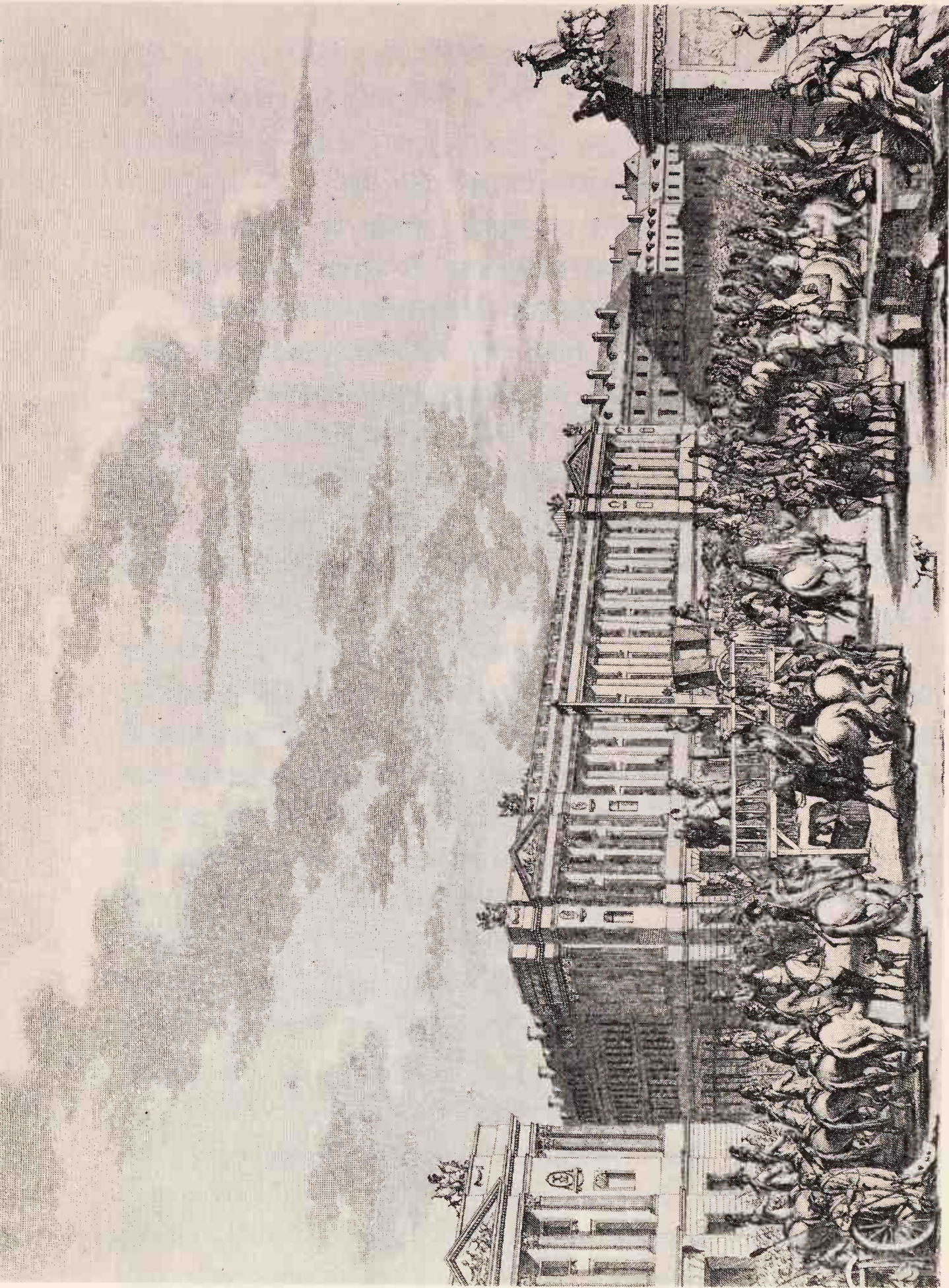
But life in the Temple was only a period of waiting. Time moved on and change had to come. Since the prisoners could get no news from outside, they did not know that Lafayette had given up the revolution and left France for Belgium, or that food was so scarce in the city and feelings so high that the word "treason" was being whispered around. In September the order to assassinate was given and, for three days and three nights, prisoners about whom there was any political suspicion were massacred. More than 1,200 died at the hands of 300 paid assassins. Only Danton could put an end to it and he would not do so until he thought something had been accomplished. One of those killed was a dear friend of the queen's. The spirit of the crowds at this time is shown by the fact that they dragged the mutilated body of this woman to the Temple in order

to show it to the queen. The mob was kept from crashing into her presence only by swift action. Hearing the uproar the king and the queen asked the guard what was going on, and when he told them what the people wanted to do, Marie Antoinette fainted.

France was declared a republic on September 21, 1792. The day began a new era. A calendar year announced as Year One of the Republic started off with the institution of a ten-day week. Once more the prisoners in the Temple heard shouting and soon deputies came to announce the momentous event to the king, but nothing shook him from his quiet abstractions now. For a time he was called Louis the Last, and then the people referred to him more contemptuously as Louis Capet, simply using his family name.

After the invasions of France, and after the excesses of murder which had been authorized for the purpose of whipping up the spirit of the people as well as of stopping the so-called treason, Brunswick's men met defeat at Valmy. Coming to the narrow valleys of the Argonne, they came face to face with the French troops under Dumouriez and Kellermann. The Frenchmen held firm with unexpected strength so that the Austrians and Germans, astonished at their vigor, turned back in rout. The soldiers of the new France could move swiftly because they traveled light and ate off the country as they went. But there was more to their success than this. They had a new spirit and a new motivation. They were free men.

With the end of the monarchy, the time to be rid of its symbol had arrived. More and more thought was given to the question of what to do with the king.



Execution of Louis XVI at the Place de la Révolution

Courtesy Library of Congress

Whatever course was decided upon, first of all he would have to be tried. This was done in December. An inkling of what was going to happen next came when the king and queen learned that an order had been given to remove all cutting instruments from the Temple. When the king was separated from his family and housed on the floor below them they knew that time was short. Marie Antoinette could hear his heavy pacing back and forth. She had no way of getting any news and was allowed no interview with him or with his defender. But in January, one of the officials of the Commune called upon her and told her that by special arrangement the family would be allowed to visit the king that night. She was certain that this meant that he had been sentenced to death and that this was the last time they would see him. They stayed together until ten o'clock that evening and then the king himself rose from his chair to dismiss his wife and children. He promised to come and see the queen early the next morning, but both of them realized that this was only a gesture to avoid facing the fact that they would never see each other again. All that night, Marie Antoinette lay awake. Early Sunday morning, January 21st, she heard the wheels of a carriage and the sound of steps in the building. Silence followed; then came a roar of drums in the distance. When they, too, were silenced, she knew that she was the Widow Capet.

Now the revolution had to go forward or fail. A new kind of desperation, a ferocity, seized its leaders. The Girondists had allowed the king to be executed; Danton had voted for it; Robespierre had believed that the king ought to pay with his life. The men of the Moun-

tain had had their way. But on the very day of the execution, there began a chain of threatening events which there was no way of stopping.

The removal of the French king united those powers of Europe which opposed France. The Mountain had to assume fresh authority to meet the emergency. It was permitted to set up the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Committee for Public Safety. When the Committee was organized in April 1793, Danton was at its head and there were no Girondist members. Belgium was already lost. The English fleet was at Toulon. There were military reversals. More dangerous than these specific situations was the fact that the people were weary of the revolution. The cure used before — of pressure, intrigue, and bloodshed — was tried again.

It started with a violent campaign against the Girondists. They in turn planned to stir up an insurrection in the provinces and in the departments of the government. A march on Paris took shape. But the Commune knew that it was stronger than any such army that could be gotten together. To make doubly sure of this, it again set up one of those special days which before this had succeeded in changing the course of events. It was planned in this way.

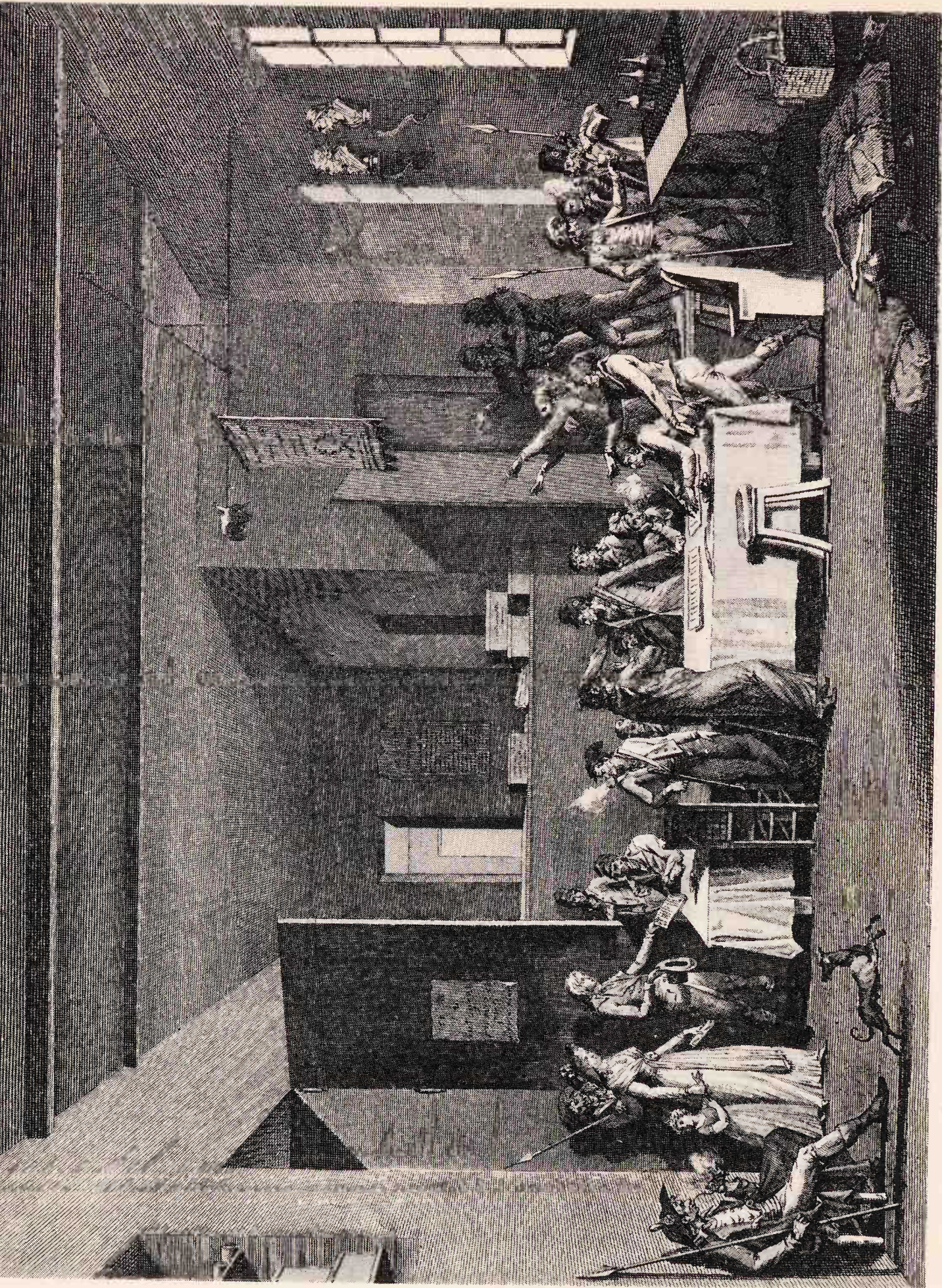
The Girondists were still the core of the Convention and would have to be challenged. On June 2nd, 80,000 men surrounded the place of meeting and the commander of the National Guards ordered up sixty cannon. Robespierre drew the issue by calling for the indictment of twenty-two Girondist deputies. The body of the Convention tried to walk out of the situation by leaving the building, but an order to man the cannon

was given and the deputies reluctantly returned to their seats. Then Marat read the names of the twenty-two, the greatest of the Girondist leaders. Action followed at once.

Some of these men escaped into the provinces after their indictment, and there succeeded in stirring up local uprisings or gathered small armies. Though a movement known as Federalism grew out of their efforts, it was not aggressive enough for the times. Frenchmen as a whole were now either monarchists or revolutionists. There was little middle ground.

The policy of purge by bloodshed which had been used more than once had gradually come to be known as The Terror. Danton, after he became a leader, had never agreed to employ it except to remove or threaten those elements which would not join the revolutionary movement, and he was ready to halt it much sooner than Robespierre, for he realized that moderation had to return. Although he was now the brilliant leader of the revolution and the one responsible for many steps of progress, Robespierre continually opposed him, for Danton did not, as his opponent did, love power for its own sake. His heart was with France and his work was for her rather than for himself. His nature was against bloodshed and when he realized that he was about to be arrested because Robespierre would not give up his personal power, he said, "That means the shedding of blood, and I am sick of it. I would rather be guillotined than guillotine." Others urged him to fly, but he said, "Whither flee? You do not carry your country on the sole of your shoe."

Robespierre thought of Danton more and more as an



A Committee of the Revolution at work during the
Revolution

Courtesy Library of Congress

obstacle in his own path. He had him brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal and condemned to death in July. Danton, towering and courageous to the end, said at that moment, "I am Danton, sufficiently known in the revolution. I shall soon pass to nothingness, but my name will live in the Pantheon of History."

The second Committee of Public Safety was led and wholly dominated by Robespierre. Reverses in military expeditions made the leading group of Jacobins in the Committee more and more dictatorial, for now enemy troops were closing in from all sides. Saint-Just, the young orator of the Committee, said that the government of the republic owed only death to the enemies of the people. Marat was killed in his bath by a girl from Caen, Charlotte Corday. Every incident gave the Committee of Public Safety excuse to use harsher and harsher methods.

In September the popular assemblies asked that the Convention make The Terror the order of the day. A purge of those who were guilty or even suspect began. All who had not displayed concrete loyalty for the Republic were in danger. Nobles and their relatives, those who had emigrated and then returned, those who had ever said a word against what was going on or had not done something to cooperate in it, were on the black list. Massacres in Paris mounted to nearly 3,000 and in the provinces to 14,000.

The purges became so extreme that it was a virtue to inform on someone. And to send someone to the new instrument of execution, the guillotine, was a kind of virtuous act. The Revolutionary Tribunal sat in judgment for fourteen months without taking a recess. The

public prosecutor called for heads and the heads rolled. The queen was at last sentenced to death at the demand of this tribunal.

Much has been written about the way Marie Antoinette went through the last events of her life. Thomas Carlyle says of it:

Marie Antoinette, in this her utter abandonment and hour of extreme need, is not wanting in herself, the imperial woman. Her look, they say, as that hideous Indictment was reading, continued calm; "she was sometimes observed moving her fingers, as when one plays on the piano." You discern not without interest, across that dim Revolutionary Bulletin itself, how she bears herself queenlike. Her answers are prompt, clear, often of Laconic brevity; resolution, which has grown contemptuous without ceasing to be dignified, veils itself in calm words. "You persist, then, in denials?" "My plan is not denial: it is the truth I have said, and I persist in that!" . . . At four o'clock on Wednesday morning after two days and two nights of interrogating, jury-changing, and other darkening counsel, the result comes out: sentence of Death. "Have you anything to say?" The Accused shook her head, without speech. Night's candles are burning out: with her, too, Time is finishing, and it will be Eternity and Day. . . .

It is true that while Marie Antoinette was certainly guilty of treason, the documents to prove it were not available when she was accused of it. So the trial went on for the two days and nights because her actual implication could not be verified since the necessary documents were not found until much later. Every member of the Tribunal knew that she was actually dangerous to the state. They also knew that if they did not get her to the guillotine, they themselves would end there.

On the last night of her life, spent in a tiny cell of La Conciergerie which was thought of as the death house, Marie Antoinette was allowed to have candles and writing materials. In a firm hand she addressed a letter to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, who had spent many years with the family and in whose care she hoped and believed her children might now be. When the governor of the prison came in the early morning to take her to the scaffold, she gave it to him for delivery. But he was afraid to have anything to do with getting it to Madame Elizabeth because so many heads were falling. So, for years it was filed away, stolen, and then hidden as something to be guarded because it would bring a large sum of money. Twenty-one years after it had been written, it was discovered again. Madame Elizabeth had been guillotined a few months after the queen; the prince had disappeared. He was either dead or living incognito. Fersen, the queen's special friend, perished in 1810. But through the years after she was gone, his belief in her and his love for her stayed clear and strong.

The Terror did not end with the death of the queen. It went on with Robespierre at its head. He made his personal enemies into the enemies of France and abolished them on political grounds. He was a strange man. Although he was the most outstanding member of the Committee of Public Safety, he often did not attend its meetings. He was a close follower of the ideas of Rousseau except that he believed in God. He finally had Hébert, who had been in charge of the royal couple when they were in the Temple, put to death because he was an atheist and had set up the worship of the

Goddess of Reason. In order not to let this idea spread among the people, Robespierre instituted a strange religion of his own based on the Reign of Virtue and the worship of the Supreme Being. Most of the members of the Committee did not really respect him and many were growing tired of his constant preaching about virtue, but he was so powerful that they were secretly afraid of him, for they, too, might lose their lives through him as Danton had.

As head of the Committee of Public Safety and as leader of the Mountain in the Convention until 1794, Robespierre was actually a dictator and the master of France for those few years. He believed that everyone was a potential enemy and his cure for this was a continued execution of bishops, monks, tax collectors, atheists, or whole families even if only one member seemed to have been disloyal. Everyone who had the slightest courage or conviction was in jail. More than 10,000 innocent people were said to have been condemned. It was dangerous for anyone to oppose Robespierre for by this time he had the power to indict personally without waiting for action by the Convention.

Yet one man did dare to begin a quiet opposition. This was Fouché, one of the members. A few more joined in his conspiracy. Only after they had begun did they discover how many others in the Convention were ready for an end to the bloodshed. The plot grew strong.

Victories by the troops abroad made it no longer necessary to whip up support for the Republic by The Terror at home. The army of the Republic was now made up of 800,000 well-trained men. Scientific devel-

opment had brought in such innovations as the semaphore which was a great help in communications. Morale was high because the men knew they were the best army in Europe. They were full of convictions about the freedom for which they were fighting, and they had an able leader in Carnot who was intelligent and courageous. He knew how to make use of old, experienced officers who were also genuinely republican, and yet how to attract new men of ability. A natural leader, he inspired respect and obedience. The battles which won Belgium for France in the second year of the Republic were under his direction.

Meanwhile, Fouché was finding more and more members of the Convention to support his opposition to Robespierre. But that one caught scent of a move against him and decided to seize the offensive. He called for a purge of the Committee of Public Safety — a purge of the purgers. This was too much. The next day when the Convention was in session, Saint-Just, a member of the Committee, tried to save the day for Robespierre by suggesting innovations that would lessen his dictatorship, but he was interrupted by cries for more violent changes. When Robespierre tried to take the floor, he was shouted down. Someone said, "Put his arrest to the vote!" A few friends went forward to support him and his brother stood beside him. It was a useless demonstration. The police came and took the two brothers away together.

When the Paris Commune heard about what had happened, it decided to try to rid the Convention of those who had opposed Robespierre and sent word to the prison not to receive him there but to send him on

to them at the Hotel de Ville. Early the next morning, Barras, the commander of the armed forces in the city, marched to the Hotel de Ville under orders to oppose the Commune. In the fighting which resulted, Robespierre's jaw was shattered by a shot from a policeman's pistol. He and his brother were guillotined that day, July 27, 1794, the second year of the Republic.



MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE

13

THE TERROR had its effect on the people of Paris. No one could experience its suspicion and fear, bloodshed and callousness, without being sickened and hurt by it. Older people were able to relate it somewhat to the larger aspects of the times because, even though they regretted the destruction of life, they could envision the new France that was coming. But the young people, who joined in the excitement of going to watch the executions and of reading the releases so full of libel and of the hideous details about those in public life, were scarred by what they had gone through.

The Terror invaded every part of Paris. Arrests and guillotining often involved relatives and friends who did not even know what it was all about. For a long time small groups dared not gather, much less discuss what was going on. Each person went his own way, fearfully, in silence. In the Saint-Antoine district where the Henriots lived, this was certainly the case. These people were only trying to follow their own trades.

They were deeply interested in better times and in freedom, but they had no sympathy for the madness which was evident around them.

Not since the night when the king and queen had been taken to the Temple two years ago and they had sat listening in their doorway, had the Henriot family been drawn together in that way by fear. As the queen's death sentence became more and more taken for granted, that certainty seemed rather to divide them. Other families experienced the same thing, for many people had a private compassion for her even though they condemned what she had done. But no one dared talk about this question even in their family groups.

Marie Antoinette had pulled the Henriot family in different directions. Rosalie, who was now a young woman of nearly twenty, had grown more tender toward the queen as time passed. When she had gone to her execution about a year before (October 1793), Rosalie had refused to speak to anyone for several days and had lost her appetite. No one had said anything about it or paid any attention to her. Yet each guessed at the reason for her behavior. Her mother, in particular, knew that the queen had for a long time been a kind of goddess to the girl — an idealized creature, beautiful, powerful, and daring — if also a traitor to France. But Rosalie had not been thinking of her in relation to France. She had been thinking of Marie Antoinette as woman and mother, a symbol of womanhood.

Madame Henriot kept her own thoughts about all that had happened to herself, because she knew that what she would say would not be welcome in her own family. She had never approved the movement to end

the monarchy, for she truly believed in the inequality of men and the fact that if one rose to a better position than another it was because of his ability, his breeding and his cleverness. Look at what the rabble had been doing, the rabble in the streets and the rabble sitting in the Convention, the so-called Mountain! What could better prove her theory than the events of these last months? No, she could not say anything for she would sound like a traitor, and this was not the case. She loved her country with all her heart, but the France she loved was a country where men proved themselves by their ability.

Monsieur Henriot said nothing because the times had proven even worse than he could have dreamed. He was a visionary who loved freedom, but an orderly freedom where everyone, regardless of his class or condition, could be counted upon to try to improve it, and where there was justice and men were paid what they earned and hard work had its value. It was his craftsman's nature to want progress to come as it was planned for and not to be carried out by the clutching of power by men of bad name, miserable disease, and cruel mind like Danton and Marat and Robespierre. Why must a new nation be built on the bones of thousands of people who had perished innocently in order that a few might wield the power in a moment of crisis? Good ends came from a good beginning, so the means was as important as the end for him, and the new day was already much tarnished by the way it had been brought about. Yes, the king and the queen of France had gone to the guillotine, and perhaps there was no other way — but could not even that have been done in

a less barbarous fashion? Did they have to be humiliated and charged with wrong behavior? Did they have to be cooped in the cage of the pressmen, hot and breathless, day after day, while the Assembly met? Need they have been taunted and jeered at on the way to their imprisonment? Might the queen not have been allowed the decency of silence when she went to her end, instead of the loud and hateful outcries along the street — all the sounds of a crowd gathered for a good time? To him all of it was out of keeping with the significance of the events taking place. Though he looked forward to a new day now, he looked back with shame and horror. He could not say what he felt to his family because Rosalie would be the more upset, his wife would be tempted to condemn the revolution and Philip — Philip would probably leave the room, the house, and wander through the streets to come back in the early morning hours, gray with exhaustion.

For Philip had gone to the execution of Marie Antoinette. When he thought about it these days as he worked, it seemed impossible that he could have brought himself to do it. Yet when he reasoned with himself that he had not gone out of idle curiosity but because for such a long time she had stood for all that was wrong with France, he felt less troubled. He had always tried to think of nothing but his work, but as he had grown older he could not keep from knowing what was happening in Paris. He had had to throw himself into it with all the passion in him as far as his feelings went, but he had taken no active part in any of it because something had cautioned him and held him back. Often he was in a crowd that stood by, watching. He

had sometimes been an observer when swift steps invaded a home to take away someone for trial or for guillotining without a trial, but he had not joined in the parades, nor had he shouted with the others. Fear and reticence and uncertainty had paralyzed him.

Yet he had slipped away to see the queen executed and it seemed to him now that he would relive it for the rest of his life. He had gone early in the morning and was surprised to find that there was already a great crowd there. Good, he could be lost in it and find some comfort in the fact that there must be others who, like him, had only come to see this as the end, the last step in the death of monarchy. He found a place to stand and waited, not speaking to anyone.

It seemed to be hours — it was hours — before at last the tumbrel, or wagon, bearing the queen came near the thousands waiting for it at the Place de la Concorde, then known as the Place de la Révolution. Meanwhile, the bright sunshine highlighted the uprights of the guillotine itself with its freshly sharpened knife. Nearby stood the Statue of Liberty. For a short while Philip's thoughts were diverted to her. Liberty sat in her place so calm, so unseeing, so symbolic — but, he asked himself, was what he had come to see a necessary price of liberty? He could do no more than raise the question for now all the laughing and talking that had been going on died suddenly away, and there was utter silence. A shout rang out sharply from the Rue Saint-Honoré, and the queen was close at hand.

Philip looked, and then turned his head away. Was this the queen whom he had seen pictured a thousand times, the beautiful woman with tumbling curls, the

one he had charged Rosalie with copying one day years ago? This was a middle-aged woman in a plain white dress, her hair cut off unevenly, some kind of a mob cap on her head, her shoulders pulled back because her hands were tied, her face bitter, silent, unseeing, and ashy white. The crowd gazed, smitten, holding its breath because of what had to happen now.

Nausea crept into Philip's empty stomach. He had not realized that he would have to wait so long, and even if he had, the idea of bringing food to an execution was repulsive to him. Now he held back his discomfort and mastered it.

The tumbrel drew up at the foot of the scaffold. He watched the queen go lightly up the steps and noticed that she was wearing incongruous high-heeled shoes. Then he could not look any more. But he could not keep from knowing when the final moment came. A sigh went up from the thousands like a long-held breath being released. Then there was a quick, nervous upsurge of ordinary conversation about small and inconsequential things, and everyone began to hurry away. Many of the people often came to executions, and to them it was scarcely more than a matter of its being over again. They just came to be amused, and the victim was not always a queen! It maddened Philip to think of it. It made him more depressed than he had ever been in all his life. He stood there until he saw them wheel away the wilted body. Even then he could not leave the place. A queen could not be snuffed out like that — a queen though she had been feared and hated by many! He had been against all that she had upheld, yet she was a human being, a woman, a mother,

and a person who would go down in history. This morning she had died here unbelievably, before a hate-filled crowd.

At last he moved slowly away. So this was revolution — this was the end of kings and queens in order that the people might have their rights. He hated it all from the bottom of his heart.

He went along unconscious of everything but at last the voice of someone singing broke into his awareness. The person was singing a snatch from “*La Marseillaise*” and this startled him awake. He turned to see who it was and quickly dropped his eyes, for it was a young girl, and he knew from the basket she was carrying that she had been one of those who had waited for hours to see the execution, taking her breakfast with her. Now her eyes, though shadowed by lack of sleep, were shining, and her steps fell naturally into the tempo of the music. She was carrying herself erectly in a kind of pride and the autumn breeze was pulling at her hair. She — how could she feel like this after the terrible event that she had watched, he wondered. Was his trouble the fact that he could not keep his eyes on the distant goal of it all? Was he, like a child, too absorbed by the events at hand?

He could not answer his own questions, but he turned quickly down a bystreet at the first chance that came, for he did not want to hear that song this morning. He loved it but he would not have it spoiled by setting it in the framework of the field of execution — battle, yes, but not this!

No, he could not speak about the revolution to his parents or to his sister, for they would not be able to

guess at the tumult in his brain when he remembered the morning the queen was guillotined. He would not have been able to explain even to them how he could believe so clearly in the rightness of freedom and yet so hate the ways in which it had been gotten. The best thing for him to do was to keep at his work. Perhaps when time had passed, when he was, say, past twenty-two, he would be able to accept the murder of human beings as sometimes necessary for an end, but this was not possible for him yet.

Many were divided from their closest friends and relatives by what had taken place during the days of The Terror, but now that Robespierre was gone, perhaps the blood would stop flowing.

14

CHANGE AT THE TOP came swiftly. The Committee of Public Safety was stripped of its special power within a month, the Revolutionary Tribunal was weakened by losing some of its most influential members, and the Convention controlled the Commune. The Jacobin Club closed in November. All these changes were reassuring as they indicated an end of the extreme measures that had been the practice, but some people wondered how far back things were going to swing.

A popular reaction was certainly going on. The very day after the death of Robespierre, women had thrown roses at the Convention deputies as they passed through the streets, as if to thank them for the decision they had made against him.

Yet with Robespierre gone, a strong hand of reason had been removed from the unorganized government. During his time a maximum wage had been established, and now it was wiped out with the result that prices shot up and were soon entirely out of control.

Freedom of worship was re-established, the most hated terrorists had been condemned to death, and trade was again free — all of these changes again encouraged the royalists. They demonstrated in the streets, while the scattered Jacobins organized insurrections against them among the people — a thing easy to do because of the rising prices. Soon black markets began to function and bourgeois profiteers became the new rich, while the poor workers who still did not have the right to vote, were poorer yet. The truth was that the royalists actually wanted the old days back, while the profiteers of the revolution, some of them Jacobins, wanted things kept as they were so that their gains would continue. The people of the lowest economic group were the ones who suffered.

To get the old regime back it would be necessary to discredit the National Convention and to instigate the people to demand its end. The Convention had provided a reason for a popular reaction against it because of some of the measures it had passed. In 1793 it had proposed a Republican Constitution which had some democratic aspects, but that Constitution was never put into effect. That same year the Convention had drawn up the Great Book of Public Debt. This was intended to start a systematic taxation of luxury, but it had not been possible to apply it because of the deflation of currency. One good effect of the deflation, however, was that peasants were often able to buy up feudal lands at low prices since feudalism had been outlawed. This was gradually bringing about a redistribution of lands.

The Convention had also laid down new rules about inherited money and lands through its Legislation

Committee. Its Committee on Public Instruction made a plan for broad elementary education and for the encouragement and founding of institutes of higher education, many of which still exist today. But these measures were then still only planned and the people could not judge what would come of them. Promises were great; practices small.

In the matter of how the government should be organized and function, the Convention met strong opposition. The Constitution which they had drawn up required that two thirds of the members of each new Convention should be taken from the expiring one. The people opposed this plan. The royalists and the Girondists interpreted it as a way for the old terrorists to stay in office and keep the power. The new democratic group among the people declared that they would have none of this. They would start a counter-revolution. They declared that as sovereign people they had the right to change their government.

Feelings grew so hot that it was feared that the next meeting of the Convention would bring violence. But the members of the Convention did not give way easily and they prepared themselves for an attack. They engaged Barras who had the reputation of being a military genius to make some plan. Perhaps a sound way of defending the Convention against royalist opposition would be through the terrorists now in jail. Barras had thousands of these hotheaded republicans released and put under Jacobin officers. One of these officers was the young Corsican who had watched while the king and queen left the Tuileries to go before the Assembly, and wondered at the lack of resolve and leadership that

Louis XVI had had. Brigadier General Napoleon Bonaparte had since then been involved in the military affairs of France abroad. Now he was about to start on a mission to Turkey. But the call to defend the Convention was the kind of challenge that he liked. A man of twenty-six, too thin, sallow, with straggling hair, and piercing eyes set deep beneath a protruding forehead — he could easily have been overlooked. What caught the attention was his gaze which seemed fixed as much on inward as outward things. He was often silent for a long time, again so talkative and so full of ideas that he could not be stopped. Now that the deputies of the Convention, the representatives of authority, had sent for him, he would do his best.

First he must create an impression of power to rebuff any who might attack. Cannon would help in this. Murat, who was his friend in the Cavalry, was sent to fetch some. He brought forty which they installed at intervals around the Tuileries, where, in the riding school, the Convention always met. The streets leading to the palace were in those days very narrow and so could easily be barricaded by batteries established in such a way as to intercept any who approached. On October 5, 1795, 40,000 of the National Guard attempted to attack the Tuileries but were quickly pushed back. The insurrection was over by nightfall. The Convention praised Napoleon from the rostrum when it next met, and made him Commander in Chief of the Army of the Interior.

In three weeks' time the Convention declared itself dismissed, leaving its authority in the hands of a Directory of Five. These were Barras, Reubell, La Révellière,

Letourneur and Carnot. Barras, in spite of the services he had given, was a dissolute and sadistic person, while the other four who were supposed to be loyal to republicanism were badly chosen as far as a sense of responsibility was concerned. The Directory soon came to be despised by the people who were ready now for a serious rebuilding of their society. They were tired of destruction, poverty and hatred. Money and the assignats were becoming worthless. As if they did not realize the temper of the public, the Directors were so foolish as to appear dressed in outrageously rich costumes and to assume aristocratic airs which seemed at first ridiculous and then infuriating. When they did wake up to how perilous their position was, they turned to the old device of beginning conquests abroad to bolster popular support. They announced that France would strike at Austria in Italy and England in Ireland. Hoche was the military leader chosen for Ireland and Bonaparte for Italy.

Leadership of the Italian campaign was a great honor to put on the young Bonaparte, but he had both a sense of the dramatic and a gift for organization and leadership. In Italy he quickly won the obedience and loyalty of his subordinates and led them from one victory to another in the name of France. Within a month the invasion was completed. At home the Directory was astounded as well as pleased, for not only was the young military leader presenting them with victories, he was also collecting the riches of the cities he conquered. The Italians, moreover, were overjoyed to be freed of their Austrian invaders.

But again the question of elections, this time to the

new Convention of 1797, brought difficulties. Those who had taken office in 1793 had already been so much in control that there had not been much outcry against them. Now in what was to be for the first time a truly free election, most of the men, it seemed likely, would be against the Directory — some of them even royalist. When this proved true, there was confusion at home as well as abroad. The Directors hurried to strengthen their position. Napoleon still supported the Directory and came to their rescue by sending them General Augereau who was aggressive and had a subduing effect on the Convention. Next, the Directors fomented a *coup d'état* which the two most popular generals, Hoche and Bonaparte, supported. This was the Coup d'État of Fructidor (September 1797), when because of growing fear of royalist power and disproportionate representation in the parliamentary bodies (the Council of the Elders and the Council of Five Hundred), these bodies were called to meet in special session. There a revolutionary law was passed which annulled the operations of forty-nine departmental assemblies and condemned sixty-five citizens to deportation. Seventeen of these were exiled to Guiana in Africa. An oath of hatred toward royalty and anarchy, and of fidelity to the Republic and the Constitution was required of all ministers of religion. Indeed, The Terror seemed to have returned.

Napoleon saw that what the people really wanted most of all was peace and order. He was now so powerful that he did not need to care about the opinions of the Directory. In Italy he signed the Treaty of Campo Formio by which France accepted the Rhine as her

eastern frontier, and acquired Belgium and the Cisalpine Republic which he had established in northern Italy. He gave Austria the old Venetian Republic which he had largely laid waste. The Directory opposed his signing this treaty, but Napoleon could see great things ahead and this led toward them. Yet he was clever enough to know that he must wait for the right moment to advance his personal interests. Hoche had by now died and this fact might point the way for progress in military advancement. Meanwhile, the first step of all must be a return to Paris.

The city greeted him in a way that far surpassed the welcome provided for any other general of the revolution. It was a triumph from beginning to end. Tempted though he was to make use of it at once, he knew he must not do so. It would be a good idea for him to disappear again, to undertake some new conquest abroad so as to avoid conflict with opinions and methods here at home.

Success and the drive to conquer which seemed to control Napoleon Bonaparte, had led him to dream of breaking the power of England, long before now. In view of the fact that the death of Hoche gave command of the army against the British Isles into his hands, he concentrated more and more on some plan to undermine them. Why not begin with an invasion of Egypt? While it was true that Egypt at this time belonged to Turkey, he could, with luck, cut the English trade route to India there, and India itself could even be the next objective.

He was supported in this dream by Talleyrand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Talleyrand believed that

new colonies were necessary and he had already chosen Egypt as a logical next objective in a line of stepping stones.

Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt has come down in history as a fantastic undertaking. Both he and the Directory must have known that it would be impossible to conquer England's sea power by such means and that India would still be thousands of miles away. The cost of the invasion would be terrific and Napoleon would be taken from the area where his military genius might be seriously needed at any moment.

Still, the invasion was decided upon and carefully planned. It was to be more than a purely military expedition. It was a scientific expedition as well, and Napoleon's imagination really blossomed. Mathematicians, geologists, chemists, archaeologists, astronomers, architects and even poets were included in the party. Not only was Egypt to be invaded; it was to be culturally analyzed. Altogether 400 vessels carrying 54,000 men set sail from Toulon in May, 1798.

Probably Napoleon was thinking of Alexander the Great as he began his adventure. But his soldiers were soon disappointed that so much time had to be spent over the study of ruins which they had to unearth in the hot sands. Not even the uncovering of a stone covered with some kind of queer writing, later to become famous as the Rosetta Stone, stirred any excitement in them. They wanted to see strange and exotic people — not their relics! But the scientists were delighted with what they found and one of them, Champollion, using the inscribed stone, later discovered the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The first battle of the invasion, the Battle of the Pyramids, which was fought near Cairo, was a victorious one. This put Egypt at the mercy of France. But the French fleet was destroyed by the British under Nelson at the Battle of the Nile and in Syria British troops combined with Turkish ones to defeat Napoleon. The French were now blockaded in Egypt, and even though Bonaparte assumed the title of Sultan of Egypt, setting up a protectorate in order to have a front of sovereignty, it was obvious that he was in an untenable position. To move out of it he decided to occupy Syria. He conquered El Arish, Gaza, Jaffa, killed 1,200 prisoners of war in order to get rid of them and then moved on to Acre. But he found British troops waiting for him there so that there was nothing to do but to return to Egypt. On the way back his troops were stricken by plague. At last, in July 1799, a little more than a year after the expedition had begun, they were again in Cairo.

He had had enough of the Egyptian expedition by now. He repulsed an attack of a Turkish army which landed at Abukir on the twenty-fifth of that month, and began to plan to return to France. He had announced to the Directory that he would come home by way of Constantinople and Vienna. Instead, on August 22nd, he and some of the scientists and a general slipped away secretly on a frigate one night, without letting Kléber who was in command of the men know of his plan. Almost miraculously, they eluded a British cruiser and reached Fréjus just off the coast of Provence. Two days later the Directory in Paris learned that he had returned.

15

CONDITIONS IN FRANCE called for Bonaparte's return now, but scarcely for the way he came. The country was in a desperate state as far as her foreign relations were concerned. The great powers were joined in their opposition to her. Even Russia had now become one of the group which included Great Britain, Austria, Naples, Portugal and the Ottoman Empire. While Napoleon was on his way home, two victories, one at Bergen, Holland, and another at Zurich, Switzerland, had barely saved France. Even so, the British and Russians had succeeded in landing in Holland.

In spite of the bad state of affairs which had grown worse while Napoleon was carrying out his grandiose scheme in Egypt, he returned like a hero. The people seemed to be able to remember his victories and to forget the dangers of the present. This trip from Fréjus where he landed, to Paris, was like a long triumphal march, for he was a strong man and the time had come

when the French people wanted a strong leader above all else.

He had, too, a certain personal charm. This won the others to him and made them believe in his ability, in spite of themselves. So when he arrived in Paris now, the streets were filled with shouting people — the older, experienced ones, those who had suffered, beginning to take hope in him; the young and impulsive ones, dazzled by his military and personal performance.

Little groups of people, families, had come to welcome the hero — some of almost every variety the city had to offer. There were many young men like Philip Henriot. Perhaps there were others who like him, too, had hung back from taking an active part in what had been going on during the years they were growing up because they were doubtful and fearful, but who now thought that surely here was a leader to be counted upon. Philip knew that good men like his father who sincerely wanted freedom and rights for everyone, and who genuinely loved France above all else, had hoped for leadership from the Jacobins, and then from the Girondists, and then, out of disappointment, the royalists again, and all had failed. Hope had to come from somewhere else, from someone who had a strong hand and also real ability, someone who would put an end to the constant shifting of plan and of leadership.

Philip watched Napoleon Bonaparte the day he came down the streets of Paris in victory. He had not actually seen him before. Now he saw a short man of imperial carriage, of seeming humility, and of a piercing gaze. He had all the qualities that Philip Henriot, the craftsman, did not have. Without really knowing

it, the young Parisian claimed the young Corsican as his personal hero. He instantly believed that Napoleon could save France.

The young craftsman was so inflamed by his sudden adoration of the leader that he scarcely noticed who was standing beside him, or that someone pushed him from the rear in order to get a better view himself. At last a man pounded him on the shoulder and almost shouted in his ear, "Make way! Do you have to stand broadside to see the Great One? Can't you look as well standing sideways?"

"Sorry," Philip said quickly, realizing that he was truly taking more room than he needed in the front line of the viewers. He turned at once. Then glancing at the man who had spoken, and seeing how excited his eyes were, he said in a low tone, "It's a great day, isn't it! Now things will be as they should for we have a leader."

The other was already gazing at what was happening in the street and scarcely heard. "What's that? What did you say?" he asked without moving his eyes. Then he remembered and finished by adding, "Oh, yes. True, and from the troublesome little island of Corsica."

Philip did not try to say any more. The crowds and outcries were increasing, for Napoleon had almost reached the point opposite to which he stood. How short he was — how truly unimpressive in all the usual masculine qualities except for the uncannily sharp look of the eyes! But what did his height matter? His record said everything, victory after victory, and then the daring invasion of Egypt. What a fellow, what a dreamer, what a conqueror! It was his brain that led him on,

Philip thought to himself, condemning himself. *He* had physical strength and even good looks, but courage and self-confidence he did not have. His strength was good only for the tools of his craft.

Now Napoleon Bonaparte passed on so that only his back and high upturned hat were visible among the men who accompanied him. "It's time someone came to straighten things out," a woman muttered close by. "Money brings less than nothing."

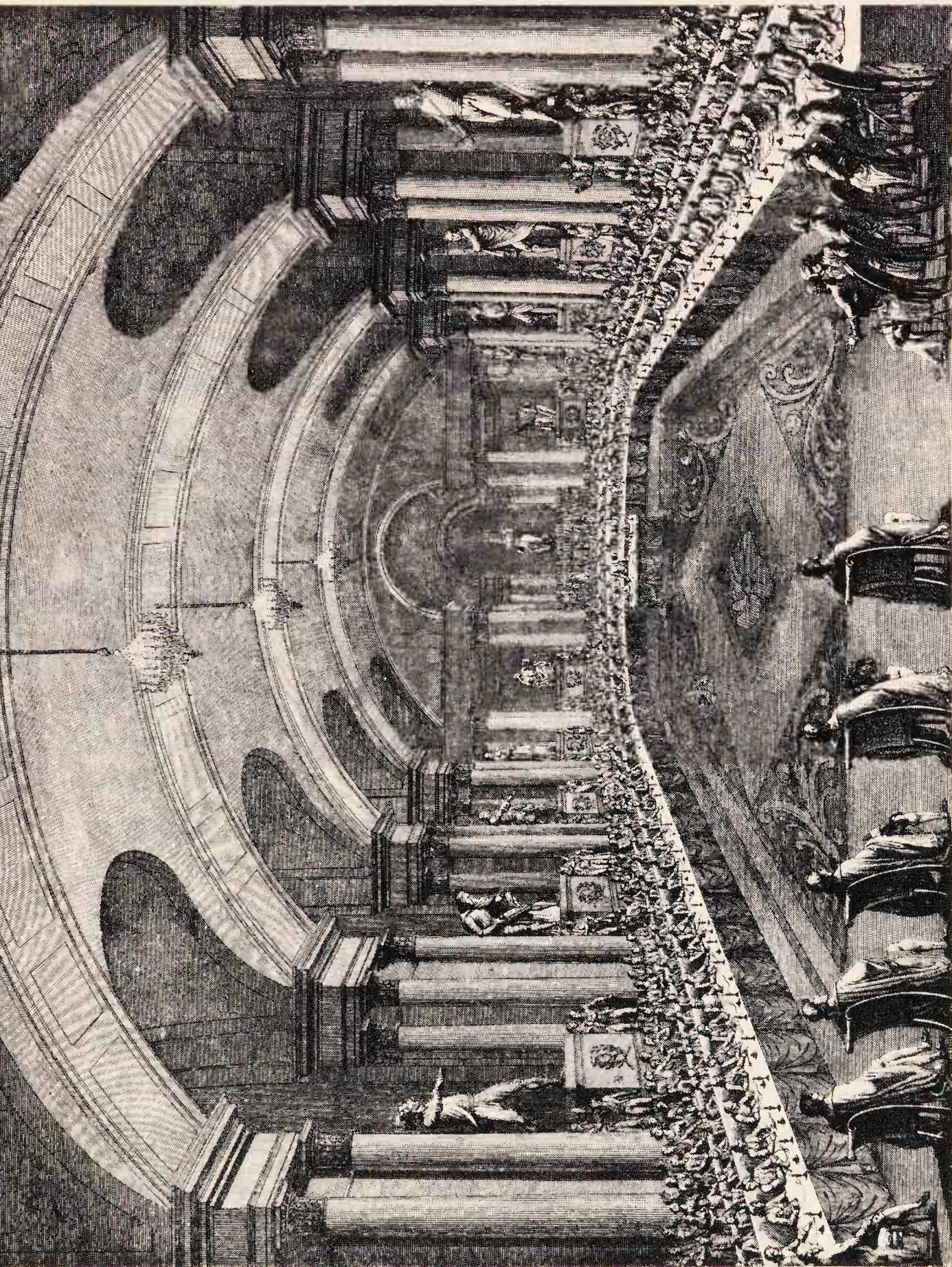
"You may say that in Paris," another woman answered, "but my relatives in the country think that conditions are much better than they used to be. They're only peasants, but they have more lands — used to be church lands."

"Humph, it's not so here," the other retorted. "I am sick of these Directors." A man beside her nudged her sharply and she was silent.

It was so hard to get the straight of anything. It seemed to Philip that all during the years that he had been growing up, conditions had been confused by terrors, by changes, and by depressions. Worst of all had been the silences when no one dared to say what he thought. One still did not dare to speak, just as the woman behind him now had been hushed by her fearful husband.

Philip turned to leave the crowds and go back to his work. The styles in furniture were changing and he was eager to finish a set of chairs that he had begun. As he worked he would remember Napoleon Bonaparte striding down the heart of Paris — their new leader — their new hope.

But for days Philip did not hear anything more of



First meeting of the National Institute

Courtesy Library of Congress

Napoleon. He searched the papers and listened to the conversations around him. News was strangely missing and at last he could not bear it any longer.

“Where is Napoleon?” he asked his father one morning while they were studying designs together. “No one speaks of him. No one seems to see him. And only a short while ago people talked of nothing else.”

“He hangs about at the Institute with the archaeologists because of those he took along with him to Egypt.”

The Academy of Sciences, which everyone called the Institute, was revered by all Frenchmen as the final authority of learning. For Napoleon to be spending his time among the scholars only added to his stature for Philip. “I didn’t know that he was that kind of a man. I didn’t think that he was so highly educated,” he murmured now.

“We shall see how highly educated he is in matters that have to do with the welfare of the people,” his father said quietly.

Philip was astonished at the implication of his words.

“Don’t you think that he is *really* great? Don’t you think that he is just the leader that France needs, that he can straighten things out, stop the Directors —” He broke off.

“We’ll have to wait and see,” the older man answered. He felt a quick pity for his son. Solutions did not come easily, and he knew from observation that a man as powerful and as ruthless as the young Corsican could easily be as selfish as he was patriotic. He had learned that Napoleon had left Egypt secretly, deserting Kléber — not an admirable thing to do. In fact the whole expedition into Egypt seemed to him like the behavior of

a small boy with a swelled head. But he did not want to discourage Philip too much, so he said no more.

Philip took a design and went to work. He was thinking to himself that people were too ready to be critical, always discouraging, never willing to go all out for anyone. It was quite maddening, and he resolved to say nothing more about Bonaparte. Let him prove himself and then everyone would see what he was!

But in spite of his resolve, what his father had said worried him. He guessed that there was more he had not said. He and his father had been close to each other during the bad years and he had to admit that the older man's judgment was usually good. He had often been tempted to burst out against his moderation, his middle-of-the-road attitude, but his father was the one who had succeeded in keeping their family together through these hard times. He was the one who had created such a reasonable atmosphere in the shop that the neighbors had nearly always felt safe to drop in and talk things over together there. This had meant a great deal to them, and they often said so.

Besides, as he thought about it today, he could see that his father's quiet manner and his unwavering belief in working for liberty in reasonable ways, had gradually affected his mother and sister, and perhaps some others like them. His mother and Rosalie were certainly less ambitious for the family than they used to be. It was possible, too, that the execution of Marie Antoinette had had something to do with the change in Rosalie. But he could only guess at that.

Not only the Henriots and others like them, but everyone in Paris could be said to be waiting now to see

what Napoleon Bonaparte was going to do. They had given him a magnificent welcome. Times had been bad and the situation abroad had been saved by a narrow margin while Napoleon was on the way back from Egypt, still no one could bring himself to even think of who the next king would normally be. People clearly wanted a leader who knew his way and yet who would not destroy what had been gained since 1788.

Napoleon realized only too well what the people were thinking. He was also aware that great power was almost in his reach. If he made a mistake now, the results would be clear. He must think his plans through carefully and take pains not to antagonize anyone. A following in the government and also among the military leaders could be counted upon. Dread of a new purge was in everyone's mind and yet, only something sudden and final could give him the absolute control of France on which he had set his heart. Such authority he was determined to get by some means or other.

The Constitution of 1793, or the Year III of the Republic, had set up two legislative bodies which have already been mentioned. The higher one known as the Council of Elders, or simply the Ancients, was made up of 250 members; the lower one was the Council of Five Hundred. Above these two bodies stood the Directory of Five.

The present Directory was a moderate one and wanted to end the power of the Jacobins, but the Council of Five Hundred was strongly Jacobin and was opposed to anything which resembled a dictatorship. The people as a whole wanted something between the two extremes — that is, between Jacobin and royalist — a

moderate government under an able leading body, devoted to the new nationalism.

Three members of the Directory knew how the public felt and decided to make use of the feeling. They were Sieyès, the abbé who had circulated the broadsheet about the Third Estate at the time that the Estates-General was called; Fouché, the former enemy of Robespierre; and Talleyrand. They talked the situation over with Bonaparte. How could they appear to carry out the wishes of the people and yet actually give him greater power? He believed that the only sound step was to put any measures they proposed to the vote in the two bodies of government. The point of view of the Ancients could already be counted upon but this was not the case with the Council of Five Hundred.

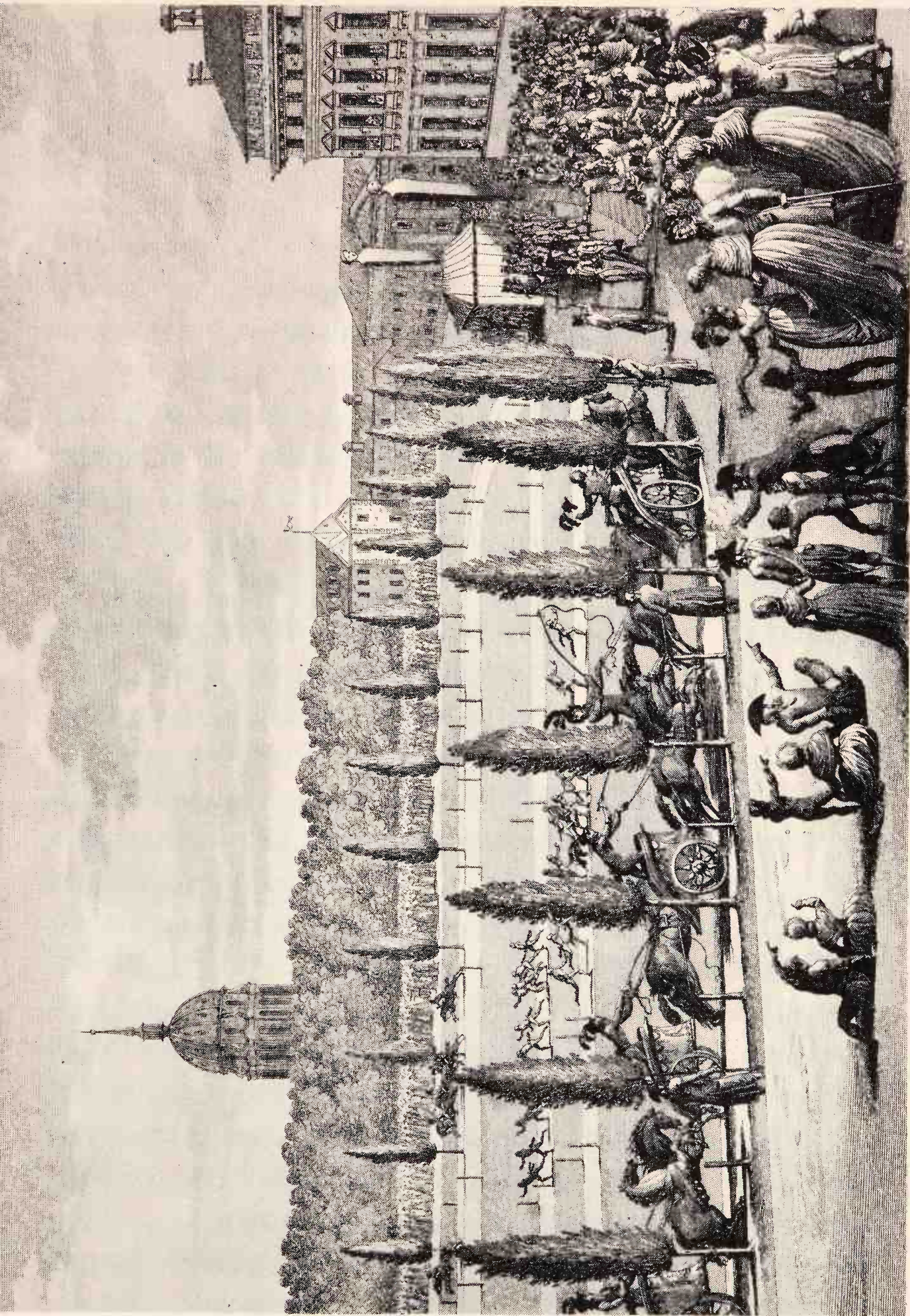
Sieyès decided that they would be more likely to get approval for the proposals that they were planning from the larger body if the sessions for both were held where the public was not too much on hand. This would be possible if they were called to meet in such a place as Saint-Cloud, a suburb of Paris, where royalty had often vacationed. This plan was decided upon. Another fortunate development to help the plot along was the fact that Napoleon's brother Lucien was elected chairman of the Council of Five Hundred. Meanwhile, Napoleon was put in charge of the city troops. These would be stationed in Saint-Cloud at the time of the meetings to see that nothing disturbing happened — this was, at least, the ostensible reason for their being there.

The Five Hundred, however, were used to maneuvering to carry out their own plans, and now they sus-

pected a coup. As the sessions began, and then dragged on, Napoleon, who with the troops was outside the building where the two bodies were meeting separately, grew first impatient and then jittery because he could not tell what was going on. The action of the Five Hundred was what he was worrying about. At last, unable to restrain himself any longer, he burst into their hall.

Shouts of "Down with the dictator! Outlaw the tyrant!" greeted him. He fell back, astounded at the outcry for he knew that a threat of outlawry could mean the death sentence without trial. Grenadiers rushed in from behind and hurried him off to save him from angry assailants.

But Lucien Bonaparte could appeal to law and save the day yet. As chairman of the Council of Five Hundred he had the right to call for troops to be used against any deputy who disturbed the body's deliberations. He sent for them now and they came at once led by Murat, the same daredevil who had brought cannon for the defense of the Tuileries in 1795. At sight of them the deputies scattered hastily, pouring from windows, as well as doors, since they opened just above flower beds outside. But this chance for action could not be lost. Lucien quickly halted enough deputies to press for a vote on the plan he had ready. This was a proposal that three Consuls succeed the Directory of Five. Under such pressure the vote was hurriedly taken and the measure declared passed. The three Consuls chosen were Napoleon Bonaparte, Roger Ducos who had known of the coup, and Sieyès himself.



Festival of the Founding of the Republic

Courtesy Library of Congress

16

SOMETIMES THE STORY of the French Revolution ends when Napoleon Bonaparte takes the center of the stage as one of the Consuls, but that was not the end of it for the French people.

At first, it really did not make a great deal of difference to the people whether they had a Directory or a Consulate. The middle classes were much encouraged by the Consulate because they hoped for greater stability at once. The value of government bonds did increase immediately. Everyone thought of Napoleon as the most important of the Consuls and imagined that he would do just what they wanted. They attributed many desirable abilities and qualities to him in those rosy days. He played his part with a flair that would win the heart of any people, especially that of the French, for he made a great show of being anything but dictatorial. He dressed simply and answered no important question himself but deferred to the leadership of Sieyès. Meanwhile Sieyès was drawing up a new Con-

stitution, one which the early revolutionaries would not have recognized at all. It gave the vote into selected hands, and what was left of a democratic framework was merely nominal.

Sieyès now offered Napoleon the title of Proclaimer-Elector, but he rejected it instantly because it was only an honorary post. Sieyès then created instead the position of First Consul, and this Bonaparte accepted. In doing so he assumed the real leadership of the government. He chose assistants who represented the two groups that had to be unified, the Jacobins and the royalists. He was clever in taking men who had been so moderate in their points of view in each faction that they really were close together on policy, although they appeared to represent widely opposed groups.

The Constitution of the Year VIII of the Republic, as it was known, was approved by plebiscite two months after it was proposed, because the people were so eager for peace. When the new Consuls took office on Christmas Day, 1799, they announced, "Citizens, the Revolution is anchored to the principles which began it. It is completed." Even though thinking people realized that the immediate objectives of the revolution had really been lost, that actually they had a new aristocracy rather than real democracy, they were by now in a mood to accept any well-organized direction.

This organized direction Napoleon was ready and waiting to give. Almost at once his name and his authority were all that counted. The press wrote only what was acceptable to him; able men in their various government bodies had no power and moved only as he directed. Administration was so centralized under the

Consulate that it chose all local government officials. (The city of Paris, as an exception, had its own police.) Even while many people who held office did not approve of the increasingly dictatorial shape of things, they were silent because they so wanted order after disorder, and because the system as set up was a moderate one.

Perhaps some people were surprised when Napoleon went to live in the Tuileries, but he made even this move sound logical by saying something to the effect that there should be continuity in power and that, after all, it was not good to have the palace stand there empty waiting for the royalty to come back.

He knew that his success thus far was partly due to pure good luck, and that the most important thing for him to do now was to please the French people, whether by ways that seemed to preserve their freedom or by those that brought glory to France. To please the people, he asked to be called "Citizen Consul." He had statues of great leaders such as Mirabeau and George Washington put in the Tuileries, and he included some of the aristocratic leaders so that everyone would be pleased. He continued to go to the Institute, or Academy, which was then strongly liberal. He had Lafayette brought home from Belgium, where he had been exiled in 1792 because of his royalist tendencies. He was making a continuous series of plays for the approval of first one side and then the other, and all were at some time gratified — all except Lafayette, who, though he admitted conditions were better than when he left the country, would not have anything to do with Napoleon's government. Though he had been impris-

oned by the Austrians in Belgium, his exile had really been an escape from the French government, for he had been protesting the extremes of the revolution. Now he was once more questioning what went on instead of being flattered by the First Consul's attention.

It was all very well to settle things at home and to work for good public relations. France's foreign affairs needed attention. Napoleon hoped that he would now be able to make peace with England and Austria by agreement rather than in battle. He sent them a letter proposing this plan, but it did not find acceptance.

In May 1800, Napoleon himself set out on a second Italian campaign, crossed the Alps at the Great St. Bernard Pass, and at the beginning of June entered Milan. On the 18th he met the Austrians at Marengo. It was almost a defeat for the French; their leader, Desaix, was killed. But Kellermann, son of the victorious leader at Valmy, saved the day. Even though there were other battles to be fought, Marengo proved decisive for the French. Other important events followed — Moreau's victory at Hohenlinden against the Austrians; the peace treaty signed at Lunéville; and, at last, the Peace of Amiens in 1802. Ten years of war had ended and the credit had to go to Napoleon Bonaparte, the genius, the idol of France.

Perhaps many French people asked themselves what the revolution had really been and what it had accomplished for them. It was now a dozen years since it began. Boys had become men during that time. The strange thing was that as years passed, the struggle in

France seemed less and less just their own, and more and more that of all Europe, perhaps of an even greater part of the world. It was as if France were the lead actor, standing in the spotlight, though there were other actors and other stances on the stage where the drama of freedom was being played.

Why did France have the spotlight if other peoples, too, were thinking about the change in relationship between lord and serf, master and servant, owner and worker, king or emperor and citizen? Perhaps most of all, it was because the French peasant had already been largely freed from serfdom and was often a landowner, and he was not willing to stay at that point but wanted to move on toward a new social order and a new freedom. Owning his small or scattered lands, free from his lord, he had tasted freedom and he liked it. But the basic organization of France was still a feudal one and it had become, by the close of the eighteenth century, no more than an unbearable and unworkable vestige.

Thoughtful people, like the Henriot family, shared in the events of the great revolutionary outburst, even though they were not active in the revolution itself. Because they looked on, instead of involving themselves, they were able to see the wider meaning of what was happening, as those who threw themselves into action were not. They saw that France was a demonstration of a feudal nation moving into a new period of history, a nation struggling for its own inner liberty. Letters they received from relatives and friends outside France, newspapers from abroad, reports brought back by travelers, all made it clear that what was happening in France was very important to many other peoples.

When days of physical violence had passed, Monsieur Henriot's workshop again became a gathering place for craftsmen and journeymen and neighbors. Even though often for many months at a time it had been impossible to carry on the trade at all, it began to flourish in the time of Napoleon's first popularity. New styles were about to come in and the craftsmen and designers competed in introducing their original ideas. Everyone needed to recover himself while he could.

Even Madame Henriot joined the informal group in the workshop now. All her hopes of ascent in the social scale through a good marriage for Rosalie had had to be given up, and the girl had married a small merchant in the lace trade. Many of the horrors of The Terror had touched her personally through those she had known. It was natural that she should have lost much of her old aggressiveness. For though she had been bewildered, as many had been bewildered, she had gradually swung to a moderate liberalism and then to a sympathy with those who were fighting to change the social situation. If one could no longer improve his condition by adroitness and by using every toe hold of advantage, perhaps when society as a whole was improved and the aristocracy was less powerful, then even people like themselves would be nearer the top.

These days she often stood in the doorway or sat in a chair near her husband's drafting desk, and joined in the conversation. Though she still felt that it had been foolish for France to take part in the American Revolution, and certainly it had been too costly, and though she still felt that the French people had been ridiculous over Benjamin Franklin, she accepted the French Rev-

olution as a necessary result of the causes which had led to it. But now the great discussion was less about causes than about results.

Most people agreed that revolt against feudalism was a major cause of a demand for change. Feudalism had depressed the livelihood of the people. The Royal Council with its representatives had become all-powerful. Agents of the central power were never challenged until the French people had begun to question the whole situation. Even the police were under central control. Truly, looking back, one could see that some change had had to come, whether in the form of a revolution or not, because individuals had become only a tiny part of a structure of authority that towered over them, making them subject to pressures and fears and demands.

The group of men and women in Henriot's workshop, like many another such neighborhood group, often remembered the political framework of the past and described instances of injustice and oppression of which they had had firsthand experience. But Monsieur Henriot himself believed, and some others agreed with him, that it was a deeper need than this that had been at the roots of the revolution of the past few years.

"It was in our minds," he said one evening. "We were all inflamed by the idea of liberty, of a new and better France, of more righteousness among leaders — leaders whom *we* would choose."

"We were sick of the aristocracy," another man put in shortly, as if to cut off language that was too involved and ideas that could easily become too complicated for him. "They had become soft, self-satisfied,

useless parasites. We had to rid ourselves of them. That was what it was."

"If it hadn't been for the Austrian woman, the king might have been willing to listen to change," a younger man said, half-timidly.

"Nonsense — *him?*" still another added. "He let that woman lead him by the nose. He wasn't willing to stand up for anything, and the change we wanted was going to take some standing up for."

The group fell silent.

"Yes, some standing up for," Monsieur Henriot repeated slowly. "It may take that yet. It isn't over yet. There's more."

"No. No more!" a woman's voice cried. "We can't have more bloodshed."

"Perhaps not bloodshed," Monsieur Henriot replied firmly, "but changes."

"It doesn't matter what lies ahead," a young man said in a ringing voice. "We've started a fire that can't be put out. If it ever dies down so that it is only smoldering in one place, it will spring up in sudden life somewhere else in the world, for its sparks have flown high and far already, and people who suffer too much will always fan them to flame."

Several people turned to see who was speaking and among them was Philip Henriot. He was now a man of nearly thirty, but still quiet and retiring and in some way wounded in spirit. But these startling words made him look up and around. If he could ever accept even The Terror as part of France's, perhaps even Europe's, struggle for freedom — as having advanced his country toward a new day in everyday living and everyday

crafts and occupations, in arts and their expression — then, wrong though he would always feel the bloodshed to have been, he could begin to hope for a right result.

He could not identify the speaker. It was as though there had been only a voice.

“He’s right,” a woman said from the doorway to the passage. Philip was astonished. Surely it was Rosalie! She stood framed in the doorway, a handsome woman with a child in her arms, her face alight with understanding. “He’s right. He ought to know, for he is the only one of his family who is left. You don’t begin to see the right meaning of things or know what is worth dying for until you have children of your own. His are gone, and he knows — and I know even if I still have my child. You begin to see how long life is, and how far everything you do reaches out and touches others, and how France is not only France but France spread out over all the world — to America and to the colonies on this side of the world and the other.”

Suddenly aware that she had been making quite a speech, she disappeared into the shadows of the interior. But silence had come over the group, a silence of agreement with what she had said.

Philip looked at his father, sitting at his desk as he usually did during these informal gatherings. He caught his eye and saw the glistening of what could have been tears, but his expression was one of great happiness. He coughed a little, as if to pretend that he had not been moved at all, and glanced around at the others.

“Come,” he said, “it’s time we had a toast to what

lies ahead — to the new France, the new day. Most of us have known each other in bad times and in good. We're old friends. Madame Henriot, wine for us all, the best that we have, though it be not as good as it once would have been."

Madame Henriot went quickly to fetch the wine and soon jovial talking broke out. When they had all drained their cups, they murmured their thanks and slowly scattered. What would they have done without Monsieur Henriot's shop these years!

Monsieur Henriot went to the window, turned his back to the empty room, and gazed out into the street. How many things he had seen there, how many people had passed along it never to return.

Now, in the growing dusk, down near the corner someone was singing the first few lines of "La Marseillaise." The words which had become so much a part of all their lives reached him faintly.

*Allons, enfants de la patrie!
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé,
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes
Mugir ces féroces soldats? . . .*

He smiled to himself and then, suddenly, he was weeping. Yes, it was France's glory that she had risen to demand freedom not only for herself, but for all. Her song would be heard around the world and these bitter years would never be forgotten because of what they were to mean to generations yet unborn.

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