

of power, and with the completion of this consolidation the existing corruption proportionally increased.

Being exempted from all taxes the clergy and nobility lived in luxury and wealth; but the common people became poorer and poorer, while struggling to supply the inordinate demands of a voluptuous court. Louis XV, even went so far as to establish a royal Seraglio in his palace, and La Pompadour was not only his mistress but also his counselor and even ruler—for he surrendered to her all his sacred rights as monarch. She, thus possessed of the reins of government, was not slow to take advantage of it in satisfying her personal ambition and womanly fancies. So energetic was she in performing her *responsible* duties, that the treasury was speedily drained. Thus was the government hurried on with quickened pace to its terrible doom.

To add to the weight of destructive evils the literature of the country was very degrading, since it ran in the channels of infidelity and licentiousness. The writers of the day were permitted to paint with glowing colors the enormous evils that were fast consuming the half decayed monarchy. This practise certainly did not prove very beneficial to that tottering structure—Monarchy. Least beneficial were the cutting satires of Voltaire.

One Minister after another was appointed to improve the deranged state of finances only to resign leaving it still more complicated. Finally after the nation had become totally bankrupt and the government had reached the verge of destruction, a meeting of the States-General, an ancient form of representation, was convoked for the purpose of investigating matters and adopting such measures as were consistent with the needful reforms. "This," says an eminent writer, "was indisputably the first day of the Revolution." And indeed it was; for from this time forth monarchy, with its two supports, the nobility and clergy, was gradu-

ally banished. This impetuous assembly tore away, as it were, the dykes of custom and royalty to let in that flood of despotic ruin, which soon rolled over the land, completely obliterating all the land-marks of monarchy.

The chief fault to be found with this assembly of the States-General is that it too radically changed the laws and customs then in vogue—not that its aim was strictly dishonorable, or indeed their legislation unimpeachable; but the too thorough renovation had at least a strong tendency to produce, if not the direct effect of producing, more confusion. And the two succeeding bodies, the Legislative Assembly and the National Convention, kept up the rapid revolution of affairs until the wildest confusion prevailed. The aims of these, and especially those of the National Convention—a convention that held sway during the most violent part of the Revolution, thus countenancing the atrocious deeds there enacted—can seriously be called in question.

The incarnate fiends, Marat, Danton and Robespierre were the principal instigators in those bloody tragedies. They incited the ignorant and brutal populace to overthrow every emolument that had the least semblance of right and order. Prisons were filled with the peaceful and prosperous citizens, who were seized solely because they did not show a sufficient amount of brutality. After a mock trial they were guillotined. Infuriated mobs rose up in all the principal cities, scattering death and destruction broadcast over the land.

It was indeed a time when,

“Sighs, and groans and shrieks that rent the air,

Where made, not marked; when violent sorrow seemed

A modern ecstasy; the dead man's knell Was there scarce ask'd, for who; and good men's lives

Expired before the flowers in their caps, Dying, or 'ere they sickened.”

But dark as is the stain the French Revolution has left upon the pages of