

ately connected with the government. The lower orders began to feel and appreciate their own importance ; to be conscious of their right to greater freedom and happiness ; and, as these could not be immediately obtained, to nourish many pretensions, wishes, and desires, hostile to the established order of things. As their knowledge increased, their desires became the more vehement ; and gave rise, at length to a spirit of uneasiness, censoriousness, and disorder, which spread with astonishing rapidity. This spirit received a definite direction at the return of the troops who had enabled the Americans to achieve their independance. The people were entertained with golden dreams of transatlantic felicity ; and the soldiers accustomed to many indulgencies, and to an equality unknown in France, became turbulent and licentious ; insolent to their superiors, and furious for changes. Instead of meeting this spirit with a cautious firmness ; conceding what appeared necessary ; but opposing, with watchful energy, and circumspection, improper innovations ; the feeble administration of France, by changes too hasty, by unsteadiness of character ; sometimes conceding too much, then violently retracting what had been given up, irritated the people, and produced such a fermentation, as ended in the destruction of the government, and the establishment of the most licentious anarchy. When all the legitimate authorities were swept away, principles were adopted, with enthusiastic zeal, hostile to every regular government ; and propagated