

just what it is they all want. He may not tell them perhaps what each man in the hour of cool deliberation would propose to himself; but he tells them what they all acknowledge to be in the aggregate true. They see that he is the one man who has the truth and nothing else in his heart, and has above all the innate power and fearlessness to work it out, and that their salvation is in following him implicitly.

In 1867 Gambetta was a young, struggling, advocate, quite unknown and poor—nothing but the clever son of the small grocer of Cahors. It happened that in that year an action was instituted by the government of Louis Napoleon against certain popular editors, who had advocated the erection of a monument in memory of Baudin, one of the martyrs of the barricade in the time of the *coup d'état*, and the young Gambetta was employed to speak in behalf of the defendants. Carried away by the impulse of the hour, and the indignation and hope, which the circumstances of the trial stirred within him, without paying the slightest heed to the subject in hand, the fiery young Gascon rushed off into a torrent of enthusiasm, and uttered a speech so full of burning invective, wild admonition and resistless logic, that in one day he was famous; his name became a household word and he was known to every patriot as the coming leader of the Revolution and the great enemy before whom the Empire trembled to its base. This was Gambetta's first oration, and it passed like a whirlwind over France. The whole republican element of the country was aroused and gathered round its hero, armed and steadied for the fight. In 1870 came the miserable collapse, in which all the boasted might and splendour of the "Napoleonic Idea" crumbled away like a layer of burnt paper at a touch and out of the confused and shapeless wreck, the genius, energy and eloquence of Gambetta succeeded in constructing the Republic. And with great, untold toil was it done. The general feeling among statesmen, and indeed in a great part of the country at the end of the war, and especially after the delirium and excesses of the Commune, seems to have been in favor of Monarchy, the revival of the Legitimist claim, and Gambetta saw that the establishment of a Republic upon the purely democratic basis of 1792 was at present altogether impossible; but he knew also that the foundation of a Republican system of popular government, of however imperfect a kind, if it were once firmly rooted in the affections of the people, would lead in the natural development of things to something better. So he sacrificed many of his own prejudices; he did not sit idly by in silent, sour inactivity like Louis Blanc and the other visionary leaders of rigid democracy who, because they could not gain everything at once, would have no hand in establishing a part; but went vehemently to work, organizing and repressing his own party working incessantly among his opponents and among all factions with bribes, industry and resistless eloquence, laboring manfully in a thousand intrigues—and the result of all

was that he so prevailed over his enemies that he brought most of them to his own view, and so drilled and handled his own uncompromising followers that the long-wished for Republic was at length gained by a compromise in which the Royalists sacrificed much more than the Democrats. In these events Gambetta displayed most unmistakably that main ground-work of his political theories, which has gained for him the admiration of Mr. Frederick Harrison and many other able writers, viz., his love of order, his active belief in the necessity of social development. He was not a man of the narrow order of "People's Friend" Marat, or the dreamer Robespierre, or even of the "irreconcilable" dogmatist, Louis Blanc; he would have no hand in an impossible endeavour to establish Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, all at once, as an uncompromising theory of government, or rather, of non-government—above all things he would have order and progress developed through order.

Again in 1877 when French freedom was menaced by McMahon's insidious conspiracy for the establishment of what, as men subsequently found out, really meant a military despotism, Gambetta saw the danger, though it was carefully concealed, and it was by his activity and marvellous skill, his absolute command of the popular party, which had grown wide and powerful under his hands, that McMahon was defeated and overthrown, and the Republic saved. In all such cases, if we consider the almost insurmountable difficulties against which he had to contend—in 1867, the mysterious sense of fear that an apparently firm-rooted authority must always inspire—in 1871, the astonishing apathy of the people, which was in part produced by a twenty years' endurance of the villainous Napoleonic system of centralization, the almost absolute power at that moment in the hands of the military commanders, who were mostly monarchists or imperialists, the prejudices of the Conservative party, the vehement and "irreconcilable" disposition of his own followers, the confusion and dismay attending the communistic outbreak of March—in 1877, the insidious character of McMahon's plans, the care taken to conceal their real purport from the people, and the blindly Conservative instincts of the peasant districts—if, I say, we consider all these enormous difficulties in his way, the genius, the self-command, the energy, the devotion and the intricate skill of the master-hand, cannot but fill us with wonder and astonishment, and we must agree unreservedly with those who rank him not only as one of the leading statesmen of his time, but as one of the greatest the world has ever seen.

A German writer in the February No. of the *Contemporary Review* objects to a comparison that has been made between Gambetta and Mirabeau. But to us it seems as just as any that can be made between two great historical characters. All comparisons of this kind fail if they are followed up in the least degree minutely; yet we often meet with famous figures in the world's story that bear to one another a sort of rude similarity in the