

thon, Lebas and Coffinhal, clinking their glasses against Robespierre's. The rest kept an icy silence.

"Why that?" said Barrère, after a while, to break the uneasy quietness, and casting a glance of reproach upon Robespierre.

"Why?" replied he. "Because treason in the garb of friendship is more detestable than the malicious attack of an acknowledged enemy."

"Truly, to speak in this way, is challenging," burst forth Carnot, indignantly. "Perhaps, citizen Robespierre means to say that he is once again on the scent of traitors who are restraining him, the incorruptible, from making himself the tyrant of France."

"Ha, just see how he betrays himself!" broke forth Robespierre, his face becoming almost livid with anger, while his eyes incessantly winked.

"Or," continued Carnot, in a voice of thunder, "it is you that betrays himself, man of virtue. While you share with us this dinner, you have perhaps already doomed our heads for the headman."

These words produced an extraordinary sensation. The whole party was in an uproar.

"And would it not be a duty," cried St. Just, amidst the noise, "to sacrifice also his friends, if they were endangering the country and liberty?"

"Ah, you angel, with the insanity of Roman virtue," said Barras, tapping the shoulder of the little, boyish St. Just. "Is it for you to decide what is danger, and what not?"

"Yes, by right of his office," cried Coffinhal, the judge, in a rage.

"Well, I am not surprised," quoth Barrère; "this is a genuine republican dinner among friends. No sooner have I proposed an earnestly meant toast, then our good friends in a patriotic paroxysm fly at each other's throats. Eh, you may kill yourselves if you wish!"

"Oh yes, provided that Robespierre with his angels remain."

"The d... will take them afterwards," mocked Carnot.

"Who then raises suspicion?" said Lebas. "Is it not you that reproach us? Because we perform conscientiously our duties in the committees, we are in your eyes ambitious, aspiring to power. What can you prove against us? Nothing but your evil conscience incites you to accuse us of culpable ambition."

"This is the degeneration of the republican spirit," exclaimed Robespierre, visibly inclined to continue in this style the conversation. "If I do not appear publicly, the report goes at once that I am going to set up for a tyrant."

"You are a tyrant already!" cried Barras.

"Be it so, I will consult the convention about it," replied Robespierre with a threatening gesture. "I shall make the convention the judge of my actions, I shall prove to them that disloyalty spreads more and more within their own lines and extends even to the committees. Nothing shall be done but what the convention decides upon. I will never act otherwise than according to the will of the people."

"And I will report the inner condition of the republic," exclaimed St. Just, his compressed lips denoting that his report might not please several of the guests.

The last words of Robespierre had made on most of them an alarming impression which Tallien in secret understanding with Carnot quickly endeavoured to wipe out.

"That will be the old story, over again," said Carnot contemptuously.

"I suppose you will ask a charter for a new massacre amongst the delegates?" mocked Tallien. "Are there then still Lantons left?"

"Yes," cried Coffinhal; "a new purging in the convention is necessary."

"A general slaughter," continued Tallien sneeringly; "General Henriot with his whiskey-bottle may command the execution."

"Ha, Tallien!" now said Robespierre, closely approaching him; "I see you have deserted me. But take care—my friendship was your and Thérèse Cabarrus's protection."

Tallien provokingly smiled, so that Robespierre greatly surprised, tried to divine the thoughts of the young deputy.

"Dear friend," said Tallien, "how can I thank you? Well, the day after to-morrow being the ninth Thermidor I invite you as a witness to my marriage with Thérèse Cabarrus; adding with a demoniac laughter: "it shall be a bloody marriage."

Robespierre bounded back as though he was struck by thunder. He stared at Tallien as if he were in league with the evil spirit. Then a thought shot through his head, explaining to him every thing, even the allusions to the notes in his port-folio. In wild excitement he rushed out of the door, seized his coat and searched his breast-pocket. He found the port-folio and list which he had imprudently left in his coat. He now guessed the whole connection.

Putting on his coat, he entered the saloon again where the dispute among the guests, who had in the mean time risen from the table, and who were heated by wine, became more vehement and irritable, and betrayed their mutual distrust. Robespierre pressed forward to Tallien, and taking him aside, muttered in a voice trembling with anger:

"Wretch, you have robbed me."

"What can I have taken from you?"

"The secrets of my office."

"You should keep them better."

"You had arrived too late. We were already at dinner. Do you recollect?"

"And do you?" mocked Tallien with a tranquillity that provoked Robespierre.

"You have found our coats in the ante-room. Who can imagine that any one of good society would rifle pockets?"

"And who imagines that a man of virtue insidiously prepares a list for the headman, in which he has put down his best friends?"

"You have read it? You have examined my port-folio?" asked Robespierre who could not forget the trick played upon him.

"I know now what I have to do," said Tallien disdainfully, trying to break off the conversation.

"And I no less, citizen," replied Robespierre with determination. "It does not matter whether we come to-day, or to-morrow, to a clear understanding with each other. What you have obtained surreptitiously to-day you would have heard from my mouth to-morrow—I shall point out to the nation all those who are uncertain, that we may not suffer any longer by their lukewarmness."

"Do what you think best. At all events I have spared you one day of hypocrisy."

"You will be sorry for it, Tallien!"

"Not more to-day than to-morrow. Your thrust does not come now clandestinely; you have to fight openly with me!"

"I shall do so! Oh!" said Robespierre, feeling his superiority, "we yet enjoy the confidence of the nation, and will be credited!"

"I shall attempt to weaken this confidence."

"Fool! what can you do against me in the convention! To-morrow you will see how I crush you!"

"I shall know how to die."

"A good patriot like myself is always ready to die for the welfare of the country," said Robespierre aloud, looking around to observe if the others could hear it. He then beckoned St. Just, adding: "Let us now go to the Jacobins! It is time, and we are expected."

"We will all go with you," cried Barrère, wishing to reconcile the two opposite elements in this society of influential deputies of the convention.

"Not so," hastily whispered Tallien to him. "Let them go."

Barrère desisted the more readily from his purpose, as with the exception of the Robespierre faction, none seemed much inclined to take so late at night the long road to the Jacobin club, though they were its members.

"Let us remain," said Barras, "that the dispute may end to-night."

"Robespierre does not care for our company," quoth Carnot.

"No," cried Coffinhal in going away, "you are no more a Jacobin. No one trusts you."

"Nor we you," was answered back.

Robespierre was the last that took leave of Barrère at the door. "They will now make a conspiracy here," said he.

"Here? A conspiracy?" asked Barrère alarmed. "You are jesting. Are we not in truth all friends?"

"Fine friends you are!"

"Parbleu, such a quarrel at the present time is not of much consequence."

"Well we shall see to-morrow, Barrère, if you are of the same opinion."

Thus speaking, the advocate went away and joined St. Just, Coffinhal and Lebas, who were waiting for him to take a cab to Paris. The lame Couthon had been already carried to the carriage.

"This dinner among friends did not seem very friendly," muttered Barrère to himself, when he, shaking his head, returned to the saloon. "The crater is open, and the volcano spits fire."

Scarcely had he arrived in the circle of his remaining friends, than Tallien, his eyes flashing, approached him, crying: "Do you know, Barrère, that they have gone away to twist ropes for you?"

"Indeed?" said the surprised master of the house; "and they say that we are going to conspire here against them."

"They are right!" cried Tallien in a voice of thunder. "Listen, friends, to what I have to tell you! Robespierre carries all your heads away with him in his pocket—feel for your neck if your head is still on it: to-morrow it may perhaps belong to the headman."

Alarmed at these words, curious to hear more, they pressed all round Tallien.

"How?" was the general cry. "Are you in earnest? What do you mean? Explain yourself!"

"Very simply," Tallien stated. "I have come to the conclusion that Robespierre is meditating a bold stroke against us. Do you require me to tell you what you all anticipate and are afraid of, that this man aspires to the dictatorship, and that he will slaughter all those who do not show themselves his slaves? Do you doubt it? Have not several of you already heard him pronounce ominous words? Does he not hate you, Collot, because you have become popular by the murderous attempt made on you? Is he not enraged at you, Barras, and at you, Fréron, and at you Billaud, for having told him that he was tiring you with his supreme being? Well, I for my part have not trusted him since I noticed St. Just, who hates me, gaining so much influence over him. This morning, the idea suddenly struck me that I would defend myself if I should be slaughtered. Before I was aware how to act, I arrived here, entered the ante-room, saw your coats hanging, and by an instinct of self-preservation put my hand into Robespierre's coat-pocket and drew forth, beside his port-folio, a list, my friends, which contained also my name."

"Ah," exclaimed the greatly excited listeners. "And what other names?"

"Every one of you was mentioned, you Carnot, you Barras, you Billaud, you Fréron, Vadier, Cambon and others of our colleagues in the convention, even you Barrère!"

"How?" cried he. "And this monster first satisfies his hunger at my table?"

"Your name was struck out again, but you may judge how loose your head sits on your shoulders. Forty deputies of the convention were marked on the list; St. Just and the malicious Couthon have drawn up the list this very day, and that to-morrow he will prevail on the convention to have us arrested and impeached. Did you not hear him say before, that they will strike to-morrow?"

"Yes, there is no doubt of it!" said Barras in great excitement.

"Who has not anticipated this long since!"

"Be then prepared!" replied Tallien. "There is safety for us only by resisting the danger like men who are ready to die; not die like cattle, but like warriors. We have been silent long enough, and have trembled when this sneaking Maximilian had our friends dragged from our side, to deliver them to the headman. We have been cowards to allow Danton, Desmoulines, Fabre and many others to be slaughtered by the blood-thirsty tyrant who brags of his virtue, and lends a hand to his headman. Now he calls for our heads. On then, friends, let us strike, and whip this cat which with its bent back is sneaking around us; let us deliver the convention from this tyrant, and France from the ambition of a man like Robespierre. Defend yourselves, friends, and run the risk for the victory. If Robespierre conquers we fall with honour; if we conquer, the era of true liberty healing wounds and bringing bliss, will commence for our beautiful France."

So great an eloquence was perhaps not necessary to inspire even the most timid. When Tallien had concluded, they unanimously applauded him, warmly grasping his hands as a sign that they were ready to follow him.

"Let us go to Paris," said Fréron; "let us call together all our friends, let us recruit for our league. Victory or death be our watchword; liberty or dictatorship!"

"Yes, victory or death," affirmed Barras. "Let us act, no time is to be lost. The enemy is already in battle array."

"My house, friends," resumed Tallien, "will be our headquarters. Carry arms, to defend your lives against these villains. Swear that no one of us be unarmed in case of attack by whomsoever it may be."

"Yes, let us arm!" they cried. "Let us defend ourselves against brigands!"

"This is the first thing to be done," commanded Tallien, assuming the leadership of the band. "The next thing will be that to-morrow every one will be at his post in the convention."

"No one will be wanting," was the general reply.

"If Robespierre should speak, or St. Just, or one of his party, we will make a commotion, deride the assembly, and show to all that we are no more afraid of his malice, and do not bend to his hypocrisy."

"Just so, that will be catching," exclaimed Barras.

"Our purpose must be to rouse the honour of the convention," said Carnot.

"We must, by our example, restore the sovereignty of the convention. Robespierre must perceive that he can no longer domineer," added Fréron.

"Yes, they will confide in us if we are undaunted," continued Tallien. "No threats must intimidate us. Let us weary Robespierre with murmuring and laughter, and mock away his glory."

"And let us, at all times, be prepared to meet his accusations with protests and, if necessary, with force."

"We will push him from the tribune if he should attempt to threaten us."

"We will not let him speak, and make all resolutions impossible."

"Or when we gain the convention over to our side, we will have motions in readiness, to destroy our enemies."

"Then we will accuse and impeach them. Down then forever with Robespierre, St. Just, Couthon, Lebas and Coffinhal!"

"And liberty to all others, liberty to the prisoners!"

"On then!" cried Tallien. "Be off now, friends, and let us recruit as many of our colleagues as we can. We have a powerful enemy to vanquish."

They hastened to go and obey the request of Tallien. Every one felt that he had to call forth his full strength, should the threatened destruction be averted.

Tallien felt like growing young again; his newly awakened energy drove him in flying haste to the goal that suddenly appeared before him. Now it should become true what Thérèse Cabarrus had taught him to dream. And she should know it; she should hope and in imagination follow the deeds he was resolved upon. He hastened to the physician who attended the sick in the prison of the Luxembourg, he conjured him to go the next morning to the prison and deliver the last letter to Jeanne, who would hand it to Thérèse.

"Doctor," said he in parting from the respectable old man and thanking him for his great kindness; "prescribe to-morrow to your sick a dose of hope! The crisis is near. Robespierre either falls or becomes the dictator of France. But I believe, he will fall!"

To be continued.

A REMARKABLE REVOLUTION.

(From the London Daily News, Dec. 24.)

A remarkable religious revolution has taken place in Madagascar. We learn from a letter from Rev. W. Pool, dated from the capital on the 23rd of September, and published in a weekly contemporary, that the Queen has had the royal idols publicly burned, that she and her aristocracy have embraced Christianity, and that the whole province of Imerina, in which the capital is situated, has followed the example of the Government. The Queen embraced Christianity early in the year, and has all the summer been building a chapel royal. Meanwhile, the wooden fence around the temple of the great national idol had been pulled down, and the priests assumed a threatening aspect, even hinting that their god had a medicine which would avenge him on the heretic Sovereign. On the 8th September they came in force to the capital to claim their rights as nobles. A council was called, and it was decided to send the Chief Secretary of State and other high officials to the sacred village, seven miles from the capital, and burn the idol before its keepers returned. They set off the same afternoon, and by an authority from the Prime Minister seized the idol's house. The wood of the fallen fence was collected, and a fire was made, and the contents of the temple were brought out to be burned. First, the long cane carried before the idol in processions was thrown in; then twelve bullocks' horns from which incense or holy water had been sprinkled; then three scarlet umbrellas and the silk robe worn over the idol by the keeper who carried it. Then came the idol's case—the trunk of a small tree hollowed and fitted with a cover; and last of all the idol itself. Hardly any of the present generation had seen the god, and great was the surprise when he was produced. Two pieces of scarlet silk about three feet long and three inches wide, with a small piece of wood about as big as a man's thumb inserted in the middle between them, so that the silk formed as it were two wings, was the great god of Madagascar, whose touch was sanctifying, and whose nearness was preservative. "You cannot burn him, he is a god," said the people. "If he be a god he will not burn," said the officers; "we are going to try," and held it on a stick in the fire, that the people might see it as it was consumed. The victory was complete. Next day four other idols shared the same fate, and the rest followed. One was a little bag of sand; another consisted of three round pieces of wood united by a silver chain. The people looked on in wonder, and when the process was over, seeing that they had now no gods to worship, they sent to the Queen to ask what they were to worship in the future. The government, says the *English Independent*, adding to the information contained in Mr Pool's letter, thereupon appealed to the native Christians to send Christian teachers, and they at once responded. It was found that of 280 towns and villages in Imerina, 120 already had Christian churches, and teachers were at once found for all the rest. This movement, which is remarkable for its purely native origin, is another proof that in certain stages of civilization nations may be converted by authority. The conversion of Madagascar has been accomplished in the nineteenth century much as that of the Saxons was accomplished in the sixth. The iconoclast is the reformer's forerunner. To overthrow a fetish worship, the fetish itself must be first destroyed.