

or their joy, as the symptoms became more or less favourable. Deputations from all the clubs in Paris waited upon him daily; the debates in the national assembly became languid and spiritless from his absence; and so alarmed were the inhabitants of the capital at the dread of the approaching catastrophe, that the fate of the new constitution seemed actually involved in his existence. Mirabeau, who preserved his senses to the last, was not insensible to these repeated marks of esteem; but grateful for the strong and general interest which his fate inspired, and finding the pains of death softened, as it were, by the attachment of the people, he repeatedly exclaimed, 'O how happy should I have been to have died in their service!' Even on his deathbed he acted the hero; for the physician who attended him, and for whom he had a particular regard, having expressed a wish to call in other assistance, his patient continually resisted his importunities, saying 'If I recover, you shall have all the glory of my cure!'

Perceiving his strength to fail him, he called M. Petit, a gentleman celebrated for his medical skill, to his bedside, and desired to know if there were any hopes of his recovery? On being answered in the negative, he, from that moment, assumed a more bold and determined countenance, and met his fate with a calmness and intrepidity, no where to be paralleled but in the dying moments of his illustrious countryman, the chevalier Bayard. The national assembly, and the rostrum, were never out of his mind; for while death was approaching with hasty strides, he called his friend, the abbe Talleyrand, to his bedside, and presented him with a paper to be delivered to the national assembly. 'This is my last legacy,' says he, 'for it contains my opinion on the law of testamentary devises, which they are now employed in discussing: I confide it to your friendship, and desire you will read it from the tribune. Remember too, that it is my dying sentiment, that nothing is so likely to perpetuate an odious and dangerous aristocracy, as the law in favour of primogeniture, which, by bestowing all on one son, introduces a dangerous inequality in regard to property!'

M. de Mirabeau, soon after, requested the key of his bureau; and a messenger having gone to his secretary's apartment for that purpose, found him weltering in his blood, in consequence of several stabs, which he had given himself with a pen-knife.

This circumstance, which excited the surprise of every one, until it was disco-

vered that he was the natural son of M. de Mirabeau, and had committed this rash action from excess of grief, was carefully concealed from the expiring patient, who continued to the last, to talk of public affairs, and, when no longer able to converse, made signs to the attendants for pen and ink, and actually expressed his sentiments in writing on the very threshold of eternity. In this situation he made several observations on the effects of the laudanum that had been administered to him; remarked how much more easy death was, than he had expected; and immediately before that last pang which was about to deprive him of his mortal existence, he pressed the paper with his dying hand, and, in legible characters, formed the word 'Dormer,'—'I am about to sleep.'

Thus expired, in the forty second year of his age, the celebrated Gabriel Honoré Riquetti de Mirabeau; the first man of noble birth, either in ancient or modern times, who ever spoke against the tyranny of the nobility. On this, which was his darling subject, he displayed all the masculine eloquence of a Marius; but it became infinitely more persuasive and forcible, when it was recollected that this Marius was himself a patrician! Such, indeed, was his consciousness that a distinction of ranks naturally tended to arbitrary power, and so deeply was he interested in the general happiness of mankind, that he wrote his celebrated essay against the institution of the American order of Cincinnati, on purpose to point out with what jealousy a free people ought to decry every innovation that may lead to unnatural and artificial distinctions in society.

The talents of this great and extraordinary man, were no less singular than his sentiments. By struggling against misfortunes, he had acquired courage and experience; the necessity of defending his character, and vindicating his actions, had taught him the art of public speaking, and made him an orator; while exile and compulsory solitude had given him a habit for study, a turn for inquiry, and a knowledge of books equally extensive with that of men. Ardent and impetuous in his disposition, fervently attached to the interests of his country, and the avowed and determined enemy of oppression, whatever shape or colour it might assume, he meditated to distinguish himself by an undertaking equally great and singular, and succeeded so far as to obtain a reputation, that will not be subject to the usual caprice of fortune.

Voltaire had produced a change in the empire of opinion, and Rousseau had regulated