

one occasion ; his management was therefore continuous, while in all the other departments there were so many changes of ministers, from personal jealousy and accusations of treason, that the policy of no individual was ever pursued for more than a fortnight. The successive Ministers of War, Cluseret, Bergeret, and Rossel, were all imprisoned by their colleagues ; the last of them, Delescluze, died in office. Similar changes took place of the other functionaries of the Commune, all fearing the bitter suspicion of its members towards each other, and indicating that they were only prevented from fighting amongst themselves by the absolute necessity of temporary union against Versailles.

Some surprise has been expressed out of France at the relative security of life and property which existed under the Commune, and at the order which was maintained in the streets. It is true that, excepting during the first fortnight, there was no housebreaking, and that there was no rioting out of doors, notwithstanding the general drunkenness of the men. Civil order was replaced by political tyranny ; there was no robbery and no assaults ; and it is to the honour of the National Guards, that in the absence of all police and all restraint, they behaved so well. But if one imprudent Parisian was overheard saying a word against the Commune, or in favour of Versailles, he was instantly arrested. Fear was universal, not only of immediate imprisonment for *incivism*, or "want of sympathy," but still more of a coming terror, in which the massacres of 1790 would be renewed. Life in Paris under the Commune was dreary and ominous ; but with the exception of the *réfractaires* and the hostages, no one was absolutely in danger. Danger would evidently have come later on ; and it is possible that, if the entrance of the army had been delayed for another week, the number of innocent victims would have been vastly greater. The emptiness and dullness of the streets were scarcely credible ; a lady was literally never seen, and not a carriage was visible, unless it happened to contain an officer of the Commune. The upper and middle classes had entirely disappeared ; not a shutter was open in the richer quarters ;

the witnesses of the scene were reduced to those who, for want of means or other private reasons, were unable to go away. The emigration reached the immense total of 400,000 persons, which, added to the number who had left before and after the Prussian siege, reduced the population from 2,000,000 to 1,200,000. Never had such an exodus occurred before ; it must have shown the Commune the nature of the opinions entertained as to its intention, and have convinced it that it was rightly judged by those who would have suffered most by it had they remained in Paris.

The Commune ended by the death of about 14,000 of its adherents, and by the arrest of about 32,000 others. These are such large figures that the Government has been accused of undue severity, and even of needless cruelty ; but it should be borne in mind that the executions (which applied to about 8,000 men, 6,000 having been killed in battle) were ordered under circumstances of extraordinary provocation of many kinds. All the public buildings were in flames ; women and children were going about with petroleum, seeking to burn the private houses ! the troops were fired at from windows after all fighting in the neighbourhood was over, and in streets where no engagement had taken place ; officers were assassinated ; the defence took the form of savage destruction by every possible means ; numbers of quiet people insisted on the annihilation of the insurgents, exclaiming that there would be no safety whilst any of them remained alive ; there was a cry in the air for justice without mercy—for revenge of the murdered hostages ; and, finally, it must be remembered that the troops themselves were bitterly enraged, and were thoroughly indisposed to give quarter, or to hesitate at shooting their enemies against a wall. The gentlest-hearted Parisians saw men led out to execution, and had not a word to say. Surely this state of feeling, which was almost universal during the seven days of fighting, was excusable ; it is very horrible to hear at a distance that 8000 unhappy wretches have been summarily shot ; but the people on the spot, half suffocated by the smoke of a hundred flaming buildings, trembling for their own lives and homes,