

and on the day destined to be the last of his own life, proved the means of carrying to execution this crowd of unhappy and doubtless innocent persons.

On this eventful day, Robespierre arrived in the convention, and beheld the mountain in close array and completely manned, while, as in the case of Catiline, the bench on which he himself was accustomed to sit, seemed purposely deserted. Saint Just, Couthon, Le Bas (his brother-in-law,) and the younger Robespierre, were the only deputies of name who stood prepared to support him. But could he make an effectual struggle, he might depend upon the aid of the servile Barrere, a sort of Belial in the convention, the meanest, yet not the least able, amongst those fallen spirits, who, with great adroitness and ingenuity, as well as wit and eloquence, caught opportunities as they arose, and was eminently dexterous in being always strong upon the strongest, and safe upon the safest side. There was a tolerably numerous party ready, in times so dangerous, to attach themselves to Barrere, as a leader who professed to guide them to safety if not to honour; and it was the existence of this vacillating and uncertain body, whose ultimate motions could never be calculated upon, which rendered it impossible to presage with assurance the event of any debate in the convention during this dangerous period.

Saint Just arose, in the name of the committee of public safety, to make, after his own manner, not theirs, a report on the discourse of Robespierre on the previous evening. He had begun a harangue in the tone of his patron, declaring that, were the tribune which he occupied the Tarpeian rock itself, he would not the less, placed as he stood there, discharge the duties of a patriot. "I am about," he said, "to lift the veil."—"I tear it asunder," said Tallien, interrupting him. "The public interest is sacrificed by individuals, who come hither exclusively in their own name, and conduct themselves as superior to the whole convention." He forced Saint Just from the tribune, and a violent debate ensued.

Billaud Varennes called the attention of the assembly to the sitting of the Jacobin club on the preceding evening. He declared the military force of Paris was placed under the command of Henriot, a traitor and a parricide, who was ready to march the soldiers whom he commanded, against the convention. He denounced Robespierre himself as a second Catiline, artful as well as ambitious, whose system it had been to nurse jealousies and inflame dissensions in the convention, so as to disunite parties, and even individuals from each other, attack them in detail, and thus destroy those antagonists separately, upon whose combined and united strength he dared not have looked.

The convention echoed with applause every violent expression of the orator, and when Robespierre sprung to the tribune, his voice was drowned by a general shout of "down with the tyrant!" Tallien moved the denunciation of Robespierre, with the arrest of Henriot, his staff-officers, and of others connected with the meditated violence on the convention. He had undertaken to lead the attack upon the tyrant.