

PARISIAN MASSACRES IN 1792.

(From Alison's History of the French Revolution.)

The whole prisons of Paris had been filled with several thousand persons, arrested during the domiciliary visits of the preceding days. A band of three hundred assassins, directed and paid by the magistrates, assembled round the doors of the Hotel de Ville. Ardent spirits, liberally furnished by the magistrates, augmented their natural ferocity. Money was supplied to those who appeared behind their comrades in determination, and the savage band marched through the streets singing Revolutionary songs. Robespierre, Billard Varennes, and Collet d'Herbois, alternately harangued the multitude; "Magnanimous people," exclaimed the last, "you march to glory; how unfortunate are we to be unable to follow your steps; how the audacity of our enemies will increase when they no longer behold the conquerors of the August. Let us at least not become responsible for the murder of your wives and children, which the conspirators are preparing even in the prisons, where they are expecting their deliverers." Roused by these words, the mob became ready for every atrocity; and answered the discourse with repeated cries for the death of the imprisoned victims.

The prison of the Abbaye was the first to be assailed. The unhappy inmates of this gloomy abode had for some days been alarmed by the obscure hints of their jailers; at length, at three o'clock, on the morning of the 24 September, announced the shouts of the multitude, and their last hour was arrived. Four-and-twenty priests, placed under arrest for refusing to take the new oath, were in custody at the Hotel de Ville. They were removed in six coaches to the prison of the Abbaye, amidst the yells and execrations of the mob; and no sooner had they arrived there, than they were surrounded by a furious multitude, headed by Mailard, armed with spears and sabres, dragged out of their vehicles into the inner court of the prison, and there placed by a hundred weapons.

The cries of these victims, who were hewn to pieces by the multitude, first drew the eyes of the prisoners to the fate which awaited themselves; seized separately, and dragged before an inexorable tribunal, they were speedily turned out to the vengeance of the populace. Reding was one of the first to be selected; the pain of his wounds excited cries even from that intrepid Swiss soldier as he was hurried along, and one of the assassins drew his sword across his throat, and he perished before reaching the judges. The forms of justice were prostituted to the most inhuman massacre; torn from their dungeons, the prisoners were hurried before a tribunal, where the president, Mailard, sat by torch-light; with a drawn sabre before him, and his robes drenched with blood; officers with drawn swords, and shirts stained with gore, surrounded the chair. A few minutes, often a few seconds, disposed of the fate of each individual; dragged from the pretended judgment-hall, they were turned out to the populace, who thronged round the doors armed with sabres, panting for slaughter, and with loud cries demanding a quicker supply of victims. No executioners were required; the people dispatched the condemned with their own hands, and sometimes enjoyed the savage pleasure of beholding them run a considerable distance before they expired. Immured in the upper chambers of the building, the other prisoners endured the agony of witnessing the prolonged sufferings of their comrades; a dreadful thirst added to their tortures, and the inhuman jailers refused even a draught of water to their earnest entreaties. Some had the presence of mind to observe in what attitude death soonest relieved its victims, and resolved, when their hour arrived, to keep their hands down, lest, by warding off the strokes, they should prolong their sufferings.

The populace, however, in the court of the Abbaye, complained that the foremost only got a stroke at the prisoners, and that they were deprived of the pleasure of murdering the aristocrats. It was in consequence agreed, that those in advance should only strike with the backs of their sabres, and that the wretched victims should be made to run the gauntlet through a long-avenue of murderers, each of whom should have the satisfaction of striking them before they expired. The women in the adjoining quarter of the city made a formal demand to the Commune for lights to see the massacres, and a lamp was in consequence placed over the spot where the victims issued, amidst the shouts of the spectators. Benches, under the charge of sentinels, were next arranged "Pours les Messieurs," and another "Pours les Dames," to witness the scene. As each successive prisoner was turned out of the gate, yells of joy rose from the multitude, and when he fell they rushed like cannibals round his remains.

Billard Varennes, when arrived, wearing his magisterial scarf. Mounted on a pile of dead, he harangued the people amidst this infernal scene. "Citizens," he said, "you have exterminated some wretches; you have saved your country; the Municipality is at a loss how to discharge its debt of gratitude towards you. I am authorized to offer each of you twenty-four francs, which shall be instantly paid. (Loud applause.) Respectable citizens, continue your good work, and acquire new titles to the homage of your country! But let no unworthy action soil your hands; you dishonour this glorious day if you employ any meaner work: Abstain from pillage; the Municipality will take care that your claims on the arrested be discharged. But noble, grand, and worthy of the task you have undertaken: Let every thing on this great day be fitting the sovereignty of the people, who have committed their vengeance to your hands." The assassins were not slow in claiming their promised reward; stained with blood, and bespattered with brains, with their swords and bayonets in their hands, they soon thronged the doors of the committee of the Municipality, who were at a loss for funds to discharge their claims. "Do you think I have only earned twenty-four francs?" said a young baker, armed with a massy weapon; "I have slain forty with my own hands." At midnight the mob returned, threatening instant death to the whole committee if they were not forthwith paid; with the sabre at his throat, a member of the Municipality advanced the half of the sum required, and the remainder was paid by Roland, the minister of the interior. The names of the assassins, and the sum they received, are still to be seen written with blood, in the registers of the Section of the Jardin des Plantes, of the Municipality, and of the Section of Unity.

The dignity of virtue, the charms of beauty, were alike lost upon the multitude. Among the rest, they seized on the humane and enlightened M. Sicard, teacher of the deaf and dumb, the tried friend of the poor classes. He would have been instantly murdered, though his character was known, had not a courageous watch-maker, of the name of Monnet, rushed between him and stayed the lance, already raised to be plunged in his bosom. In the midst of the massacres, Mademoiselle de Sombrieville, eighteen years of age, threw herself on her father's neck, who was beset by the assassins, and declared they should not strike him but through her body. In amazement at her courage, the mob paused, and one of the number presented her with a cup filled with blood, exclaiming, "Drink! it is the blood of the aristocrats!" promising, if she drank it off, to spare her life. She did so, and he was saved.—Mademoiselle Cazotte, of still younger years, sought out her aged parent in prison during the tumult; when the guards came to drag him before the tribunal, she clung so firmly to his neck, that it was found impossible to separate them; and she succeeded in softening the murderers, but he perished a few days afterwards with the courage of a martyr, and his heroic daughter only learned his fate upon being subsequently released from confinement.

Similar tragedies took place at the same time in all the other jails of Paris, and in the religious houses, which were filled with victims. In the prison of the Carmes, above two hundred of the clergy were assembled; in the midst of them was the Archbishop of Arles, venerable for his years and his virtues, and several other prelates. Arranged round the altar, they heard the cries of the assassins, who clamoured at the gates; a few, yielding to the dictates of terror, had escaped, and were beyond the reach of danger, when, struck with shame at deserting their brethren in such an extremity, they returned, and shared their fate. Awd by the sublimity of the scene, the wretches hastened the work of destruction, lest the hearts of the spectators should be softened ere the massacre began; the Archbishop of Arles repeated the prayer for those in the agonies of death, and they expired, imploring forgiveness for their murderers. Many were offered their life on condition of taking the Revolutionary oaths; all refused, and died in the faith of their fathers. Among the slain were several curates, who had been eminent for their charity in the dreadful famine of 1789; they received death from the hands of those whom they had saved from his horrors.

The fate of the Princess Lamballe was particularly deplorable. Tenderly attached to the Queen, she at first, at her own desire, shared her captivity, but was afterwards, by orders of the Municipality, separately confined in the Petite Force. When the assassins arrived at her cell, she was offered her life if she would swear hatred to the King and Queen; she refused, and was instantly struck down. One of her domestics, whom she had loaded with benefits, gave the first blow. Her graceful figure was instantly torn in pieces, the fragments put on the end of pikes, and paraded through different parts of the city. The head, raised on a lance, was first carried to the palace of the Duke of Orleans, who rose from dinner, and smiled at the ghastly spectacle; it was next conveyed to the Temple, and paraded before the windows of Louis XVI, the King, at the desire of one of the commissioners of the Municipality, proceeded to the window, and, by the beautiful hair, recognized the bloody remains of his once lovely friend; another commissioner, of more humane feelings, tried to prevent him from beholding it. Afterwards, the King was asked if he remembered the name of the soldier who had showed such barbarity: "No," he replied; "but perfectly the name of him who showed sensibility."

It is a singular circumstance, worthy of being recorded, as characteristic of the almost inconceivable state of the human mind during such convulsions, that many of the assassins who put the prisoners to death, showed themselves, on some occasions, feelingly alive to the warmest sentiments of humanity. M. Journiac was fortunate enough, by a combination of presence of mind and good fortune, to obtain an acquittal from the terrible tribunal; two individuals, strangers to him, pressed his foot to mark when he should speak, and when acquitted, bore him safe under the arch of spears and sabres through which he had to pass. He offered them money when they had arrived at a place of safety; they refused, and after entering a place of safety, returned to the work of destruction. Another prisoner, returned in a similar manner, was conducted home with the same solicitude; the murderers, still reeking with the carnage they had committed, insisted on being spectators of the meeting of him and his family; they went at the scene, and immediately went back with renewed alacrity to the scene of death. It would seem as if, in that convulsive state, all strong emotions rapidly succeed each other in the human breast; and the mind, wrought up as by the interest of a tragedy, is prepared alike for the most savage deeds of cruelty, or the tenderest emotions of pity.

Above five thousand persons perished in the different prisons of Paris during these massacres, which continued, with no interruption, from the 2nd to the 6th September. When the other captives were all destroyed, the assassins, insatiable in their thirst for blood, besieged the Bicêtre, containing several thousand prisoners confined for ordinary offences, having no connexion with the state. They defended themselves with such resolution, that it became necessary to employ cannon for their destruction. But the multitude were resolutely bent on blood, and continued the contest, by unceasingly bringing up fresh forces, till the felons were overpowered, and all put to death. At length the murders ceased, from the complete exhaustion of the victims. Their remains were thrown into trenches, previously prepared by the Municipality for their reception; they were subsequently conveyed to the catacombs, where they were buried up, and still remain the monument of crimes unfit to be thought of, even in the abodes of death, which France would willingly bury in oblivion.

WE ARE CATHOLICS*

(From Bishop Hall's Sermon preached before the Convocation at St. Paul's Cathedral, in 1623.)

It is a heavy crime, and of all other the most heinous, wherewith we are charged by the Romanists—that we are fallen off from the Catholic Church;—that we have rent the seamless coat of Christ, yea, broken his bones and torn his very body in pieces; wherof if we were indeed guilty, how unworthy were we to breathe in this air, how worthy of the lowest hell! But we call heaven and earth to record how unjustly this calumny is cast upon us; yea, we protest before God and men, that the envy of this so foul a crimination lights most justly upon the heads of the accusers.

May it please you to hear a short apology. A certain man invited to a feast one or two of his friends, and entertained them bountifully. They sat together lovingly, they ate together, and were merry one with another. In the second course, as the custom is, the master offered them wine, set before them an apple, and a spider by chance had fallen into the cup—the guest sees it, and says, "I will not touch this; why drink you not?" "I dare not," saith the other, "it is not safe to do either; see that no vermin in the cup and that in the apple?" "Tush," saith the master, "what so great matter is this? It was I that set this before thee, it was I that began to thee in the other; drink it, eat it, at least for my sake." "But suffer me first," replies the guest, "to take out this spider, to cut out this worm; the wine, the apple, likes me well enough, the spider, the worm, I cannot away with." 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