

diplomatic office; nay, so bounded were his hopes and his wishes, that he earnestly solicited to be appointed consul, either to the city of Dantzic or Hamburgh. But happily for the interests of France, M. de Calonne either did not justly appreciate his abilities, or possessed such an envious and ungrateful disposition that he did not dare to reward them. At that period, the minister of the finances did not dream that a day of retribution would come, when he himself might be forced to solicit that protection which he then refused.

Disgusted, disappointed, and vowing eternal enmity against the ministry, Mirabeau arrived in Paris; where a great and important event soon offered a new career to his abilities; and opened a field to his genius, that flattered his wounded pride, consoled him for his unmerited misfortunes, and seemed peculiarly adapted at once to sooth and to inflame the ambition of a man, formed by nature for some great enterprize.

Propelled, on this memorable occasion, by the impulse of patriotism, and burning with a desire to distinguish himself and rescue his country from oppression, the count de Mirabeau posted to that part of the kingdom where he had received his birth, and pronounced a speech before the states of Provence; by which, while he obtained the palm of eloquence, he inspired the assembly with an attachment to liberty, and a regard to their own and the rights of their fellow citizens, that attracted the gratitude and the applause of all that heard him. This memorable oration secured him a seat in the national assembly; where, having thrown off the trammels of the passions, that had before fettered the exertions of his mind; he, at the age of thirty-nine, distinguished himself as the most able advocate that had ever appeared, in modern times, on the side of the people.

Possessed of a bold and a commanding eloquence, derived from nature, but matured by experience, he soon became the idol of France, and the organ of the states general. Nor were his talents more conspicuous than his courage; for at a time that Versailles was surrounded by troops, and the word of command seemed alone wanting to let loose the indiscriminate fury of a mercenary soldiery, Mirabeau, with a bold and undaunted voice, informed the officer who desired the members of the third estate to retire in the king's name, 'that they were sent there by the people, and would never depart till they were forced by the point of the bayonet.' In all the succeeding operations of the assembly, M. de Mirabeau acted a part equally

great and conspicuous. Although courted and beloved by the nation, he was not, however, the slave of popular opinion. Great and original in his mind, he acted from the impulse and conviction of the moment, and sometimes dared to incur the odium of a people who adored him! At one time, when he was surrounded by a mob, who threatened him with their vengeance, he turned round to a friend, and exclaimed with his usual serenity, 'I know that there is but a step from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock.'

Within the last two years, his domestic affairs seemed to assume a more favourable appearance than formerly; and this may be partly attributed to a rigid economy, of the value of which he became at length sensible, and partly to the unexampled sale of 'The Courier of Provence,' of which he was the editor; for, while discussing the rights of the people, regulating the laws of a new empire, and limiting and curtailing the usurped prerogatives of a despotic monarch, this singular man, still cultivated letters, and did not disdain to acquire a fortune by such honourable labours. He was thus enabled, about six months before his death, to purchase the monastery of Argenteuil, celebrated as the retreat of Heloise after the catastrophe of the unfortunate Abelard, until she was expelled from that asylum by the brutal violence of the abbot of St. Denis. When the library of M. de Buffon, the famous naturalist, was sold for the benefit of his family, he became the purchaser of that also; and he seems to have resolved, after having achieved and secured the liberties of his country, that the remainder of his life should be dedicated to the pleasures of friendship, the quiet of contemplation, and the calm but delicious enjoyments resulting from the pursuits of literature and science.

But while thus planning schemes for security, he was unhappily cut off from society, before he could taste the fruits of a revolution, so glorious to France and so honourable to himself. While sitting in his study, he was suddenly seized with a malady, which evinced, from the beginning, symptoms of the most fatal tendency. Immediately, on the report of his illness, all Paris flocked to his gates, to learn news of his health. His distemper, which was a rheumatic gout, brought on by excessive mental and bodily labour in the service of the public, increased every day; and so anxious were the multitude for the preservation of his life, that not content with the accounts published every three hours, they incessantly surrounded his house, and restrained their anguish,