

or even hanged, as they could have done two or three years ago—I recollect it well.

Those who have never seen similar changes do not know their own good fortune; all I have to tell them is to use their courage and good sense to save them from being plunged again into the state in which they were before '89. Let them reflect—there is no want of rascals whose object it is to live in pride, idleness, and all life's enjoyments at the expense of the people. But amidst this general overturning of the country, these descents of the mountain people into the flat country, these burnings of châteaux, convents, and barriers of all sorts; when seigneurs, monks, and bishops hurried away on foot, on horseback, or in carriages; and former excisemen tried to get appointed officers in the citizen guard; and revenue attorneys, presidents of their districts in the middle of this downfall—what I recollect best of all is my poor father, who dreaded losing the sale of his brooms, and my mother, who said, "The end of the world is coming, we are all lost, let us save our souls!" and my brother Claude, who came home one evening and cried out in a tone of distress, "The reverend Tiercelin fathers are gone; they have paid me off; what am I to do now there are no more cows to keep?"

I was just twenty then; I was strong and vigorous, and I was disgusted to hear my parents complain; I said to them, "What are you so afraid of? we have suffered much greater distress than this; we managed to live when we had tithes, corvées, the gabelle and other taxes to bear, when we fed monks and seigneurs by our labour; and now we are freed from them, now we can keep to ourselves the money they cost us, what have we to groan about? The cattle and sheep are not all dead, and if Claude wants a herd of cows to look after, let him wait a bit—perhaps some day I may employ him as my herdsman."

It was rather boastful on my part, but my ideas about obedience were changing every day; I thought already that one man was as good as another, and that some are only so great because others are so little, and that the time for respecting privileges was gone.

Then my mother, with her elbows on the table and her hands behind her ears, would look hard at me with her grey eyes and pinched-up lips, and begin—

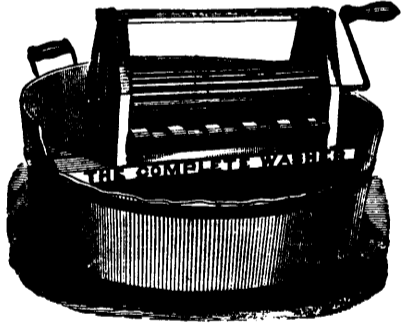
"Michel, pride will be your ruin! You think already, like Joseph, that your brothers' sieves bow to yours, and their stars dance for your greater glory; but I warn you, you will be minister to no Egyptian king; you will be hanged, and the ravens of the heavens will come and eat out of your basket."

(To be continued.)

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