

Fourcroy, whom he describes "as one of the most celebrated Advocates of his time, and endowed with all the talents which are necessary for a Legislator."

This gentleman, he says, was decidedly of opinion—First—that there should be no exceptions, not even in favor of women or minors—And Secondly—that hypothecs should bear date only from the day of their registration.

Such enlightened advocacy must have gained a great many converts to the cause before it could find favor with the Revolutionary Legislature. That it should have succeeded in doing so is a strong proof of the weak and perishable nature of the barriers with which mere prejudice attempts to arrest for any length of time the march of reforms which recommend themselves to the good sense and real interests of the people at large.

But in the mean time another attempt had been made to remedy the evil complained of, by the promulgation of the Royal Edict of June 1771, (on which our Provincial Statute 9 Geo. IV. c. 20, is mainly founded)—But although the preamble of this Edict stated its object to be the revival in a different form of the Edict of 1673, it was soon found by experience that the Letters of Ratification which it substituted for the former *décrets volontaires*, afforded security to purchasers only, while the proceedings taken to obtain them disclosed the creditors of the vendor to each other only when it was too late—no provision being made for the publicity of encumbrances generally. Moreover, those provinces whose systems of legislation, however imperfect were abolished by this Edict, protested loudly against its enactment. The Flemish parliament, in its remonstrance, declares "That the publicity of encumbrances on real property must be considered as the master-piece of wisdom, as the seal, the bulwark and security of the right of property, as a fundamental law, the operation of which had at all times produced the happiest effects, and established confidence as well as facility in the transactions of the Belgian people among themselves."

Things remained in this state until the meeting of the States General in 1789. Every student of history is aware of the ardent and sincere desire for measures of wholesome reform which at that time pervaded all ranks of society in France, from the King himself to the meanest of his subjects,—and which, if skilfully directed, would have produced incalculable benefit to that country. The calamities which followed are mainly referable to the fatal error of her rulers, in not distinguishing this rational desire from the mere fever of innovation into which it regenerated in the minds of the ignorant and the thoughtless. The one is a laudable aspiration, which it is comparatively safe to satisfy, or even anticipate, in all ages and in all places: the other is at all times a most dangerous disease, and doubly so in periods like the one under consideration, when the long-continued denial