

a curse than a blessing; he therefore sought the assistance of others, and his immense fortune enabled him to purchase it. His views then were only the gratification of his hatred and revenge against the Queen, and he thought to succeed in exciting the jealousy of the King, spreading by means of his associates in iniquity the most injurious construction on that fraternal intercourse that subsisted between the Comte d'Artois and the Queen. But whatever credit that rumour might have gained in the public, always inclined to lend a favourable ear to the scandalous chronicle, it missed its aim in regard to the King. He was too well persuaded that two persons so virtuous as his sister the Princess Elizabeth and the Princess of Lamballe were known to be, would not have countenanced the misconduct of Maria Antoinette by their intimate acquaintance with her.

But altho' so far foiled on that score Egalité was not beaten off the field, and a new incentive to his exertions was soon added to the two former ones; namely ambition,

The sect of the Economists having coalesced with the Philosophers of the day had already greatly shaken those principles of loyalty which had for so long a time been the most honourable characteristic of the French. Their united efforts had already been directed even against the person of the King, well knowing that the surest means to pull down royalty was to batter down its surest prop, namely the respect for the individual invested with it. It was therefore their interest to support the scandalous reports spread against the Queen and to attribute to an unpardonable and despicable weakness of mind the little attention the King paid to her conduct, and to imbecillity his passive submission to the criminal desilement of the Royal bed. These aspersions gained so much the more credit that, by an inexcusable excess of lenity, they were neither contradicted nor their authors prosecuted. Then it was that Egalité conceived the hope if not to succeed to the Throne at least to be placed at the head of Government as Lieutenant General of the kingdom. From that moment the monster courted and purchased popularity and his largesses and the praises of his agents soon proclaimed him the best and most patriotic of men.