

Who could have thought that the Guillotine would be able to introduce this violent law, which supported the assignats; and to maintain it, by destroying indiscriminately the new possessors of property and the old? or have anticipated the dying words of Danton, that, to prolong a little its frightful existence, *this revolutionary monster would at last devour its own offspring*? Who could have thought that an unheard-of circle of spoliations, kept in constant motion by the dreadful agency of terror, would be able so suddenly and so completely to enslave a warlike nation *which allowed itself to be menaced with the scaffold**, at the very moment when it was boasting of having broken its fetters?

I may be told that the calamities of war may possibly revive the system of terror; but this I positively deny. This infernal prodigy in the French Revolution never can be repeated; even the Nero of France, with his legion of executioners, did not make it last longer than fourteen months; and I am not afraid to assert that it would have been a thousand times more easy for him to have prolonged its existence another year, than for his successors, who owed their elevation to the abolition of it, to revive it for a single day.

I may also be told that Robespierre has left them an immense fund in the estates which, though already confiscated, have not hitherto been sold, and which are a sufficient security for new emissions of assignats. I know that such has been their boast, and that in the beginning of this year they had the assurance to assert that there remained security enough for 6 or 8 milliards (250 to 330 millions sterling) of new paper-money.

But we want no better proof of the falsehood of such an assertion than this, that precisely at the time

* *Réflexions sur le Paix*, p. 40.

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