

main outlines. Gambetta and Mirabeau were alike in possessing the rare power of reducing order out of utter chaos, and we can well enough compare the great statesman, who in 1871, by dint of his extraordinary eloquence and sheer personal influence, reduced even opponents to his will, with the resistless Titan of the Assembly of 1791, a greater than he, whose voice was as a clarion call out of all that shrieking confusion and darkness sounding to the muster—whose “we shall” was the clear note, which brought chaos and tumult into silent obedience, and his “we shall not,” a mysterious barrier, which the most turbulent dared not pass. They were the two men with *eyes*—the nature's kings of their time. Whilst all other mortals were wrangling out the days in empty discord, harping each eternally on his own cracked string, they were the men who had the instinctive vision which told them what was wanted and the sublime sole power to do it. They were the “swallowers of formulas.” There is another point of less importance in which an interesting comparison may be found between these two men. They were both of Italian ancestry, and, possessed, each of them, a sort of double nature, at once Italian and French—South French at that. As Mirabeau, the descendant and last leonine flower on the worn stem of the fire-blooded Riquetti, possesses, at the same time, the eloquent and poetic spirit of the Provencal, and the astuteness and policy of the Italian; so, too, Gambetta inherited these latter qualities from his Trans-Alpine ancestors, and united them to the reckless Gascon fire and daring, which made him, in 1870, the most French of Frenchmen. He was, however, as he said of himself, more Gascon than Italian.

It is this aspect of Gambetta's history, as founder and nourisher of the Republic, which Mr. Harrison takes most pains to impress upon his hearers. He dwells most upon the broad statesmanship, the clear sense and humanity of the man. But that part of his character which strikes most deeply the imagination of the romantic lover of history, which gives to his figure the brightest poetic touch, is his patriotism—a patriotism which was his whole life and his whole religion. In this he reminds us of Danton, he reminds us of the most significant, perhaps the most memorable scene in Danton's life. At a time when the whole structure of French society was rushing down into ruin, when there was nothing but anarchy, conspiracy and apparent powerlessness within, and the banding together and heavy marching of innumerable enemies without, in an hour of rage, and fear, and distraction—one morning the gigantic figure of Danton strode from the municipality of Paris into the pale and confused Hall of the Convention and uttered there those tremendous words, which were the revelation of the man, and in the light of which his life and character are to be read, “Legislators, it is the *pas-de-charge* against our enemies. To conquer them, to hurl them back, what do we require? *To dare, and again to dare, and without end to dare!*” The

stentorian words that rang in that hour above the glowing throng of the Convention, formed the whole poetry, the main gist of the whole rude and much-stained epic of Danton's days, and whenever vehement, effervescent French hearts have risen in the time of their despair from the living death of a selfish government against the oncoming of overwhelming foes, we can imagine, as of old, that rude Titan shadow striding dimly before them, and that tremendous voice echoing among them, more or less clearly, forever. It was the great cry of the Republic out of the lips of him who understood it best, for “our little mother Mirabeau” was dead, and besides, as Carlyle hints, he was, perhaps, not so complete a swallower of formulas as Danton. It was the voice of a risen people, there was more in it than a mere truculent defiance of a gathering foe. There lay beneath it the wild hope and despair that is akin to hope, which prompted it, the deep sense of the utter falseness, hollowness and wrongness of all the existing network of authority, and the vague, but wild and intense hope and longing for something more brotherly, more human, more just—a hope which no historian or poet has ever completely expressed, or can express, which is only witnessed in the deeds which make such a time terrible, is only read in the eager faces of gathered men, heard in the murmur of a multitude. Man has never been gifted with such iron nerve to fight as when his arm has been inspired with this grand passion—the ground-work of human thought. Witness the thousand battle fields of the First Revolution and the strange heroes that won them. It was this same deep and devoted inspiration that nerved Gambetta and his scattered followers in the last dark days of 1870. It was the spirit of the First Republic devoted love of country, love of people—which followed the hero in his famous balloon escape from Paris across the memory-haunted barrier of the Loire, and told the scarred and weather-beaten veteran of the Empire, and the young fiery conscript of the Republic that there was yet another Hoche come to lead them, if not to victory, yet to honour, and that there still lingered in that hot south corner of France some remnant of the marvellous fervour, which, seventy-eight years before, had swept like a fire-tide over the host of their enemies on every cannon-girt barrier of the Republic. All rallied round him, his name became the watch-word of every patriot, known of all Frenchmen. Army after army, ill-trained and ill provided, but animated with the mighty spirit of this French Leonidas, crossed the Loire, and many of them died there, hardly ever victorious—it was impossible—but ever brave, ever ready “without end to dare” and die. Long weeks and months they marched and fought in the midst of hunger, and cold, and death, and more than once their shattered and dragging columns had to get back again, worn and beaten, over the straining bridges of Orleans through the storms of that bitter winter, but ever they had the master-spirit behind, and ever, as the fire burned pale and cold at the extremities,