

One will accuse me of not knowing the value of the liberty of the press.

Alas! I was full hope and joy when I saw you lay the foundation of public happiness, attack all abuses, proclaim all rights, and subject the different parts of this empire to the same laws, to an uniform regulation. My eyes were filled with tears when I saw the vilest and the most wicked of men employed as instruments in bringing about a useful revolution; when I saw the holy love of patriotism prostituted to villainy, and licentiousness march in triumph under the banners of liberty. Terror was mingled with my just grief, when I beheld all the resources of Government destroyed, and feeble barriers substituted to the necessity of an active and repressing force.— I have every where sought the vestiges of that central authority which a great nation deposits in the hands of the Monarch for its own safety; and have been no where able to find them; I have sought the principles whereby property is preserved, and I have seen them attacked; I have endeavoured to find under what shelter security and individual liberty reposed, and I have seen audacity always gathering strength from the multitude attending, and invoking the signal for destruction, which the factious, and the innovators, as dangerous as the factious, are ready to inflict. I have heard those insidious insinuations, which impress you with false terrors, to turn aside your attention from real dangers; which inspire you with fatal distrusts, to induce you to destroy successively all the props of monarchical government. I have particularly shuddered on observing in their new life, that people who are desirous of being free, not only disregard the social virtues of humanity and justice, the sole basis of true liberty, but receive with eagerness the new seeds of corruption, and suffer themselves

to be surrounded with new causes of slavery.

Ah! Gentlemen, what do I not suffer on seeing in the midst of the capital, and in the very focus of information, this seduced people eagerly adopt with a ferocious joy the most criminal proposals, smile at the details of assassinations, sing their crimes as if they were conquests, stupidly invite enemies to the revolution, sully it by complaisance, and shut their eyes upon all the evils with which they overwhelm themselves; for this unhappy people are ignorant that an infinity of calamities may spring from a single crime. I see them laugh and dance on the ruins of their own morality, even on the brink of the very abyss which may swallow up their hopes; this spectacle of joy is that by which I have been the most deeply affected. Your indifference with respect to this alarming deviation of the public understanding, is the first and perhaps the sole cause of the change which has taken place with respect to you, of that change whereby the corrupt adulation or the murmurs stifled by fear have succeeded the pure homages bestowed upon your first labours.

But with whatever courage the approach of my last hour inspires me, whatever duty even that love of liberty which I professed before you existed, imposes upon me, I nevertheless experience in addressing you, that respect and sort of fear, of which no man can divest himself, when he places himself in thought in a state of immediate communication with the representatives of a great nation.

Ought I to stop here, or to continue to speak to you as to posterity?—Yes, Gentlemen, I believe you worthy of hearing this language.

I have meditated throughout the whole course of my life on the ideas which you have lately applied to the regeneration of the kingdom: I me-

ditated on them at a time when, rejected by all the social institutions, by all the interests, by all the prejudices, they only presented the seductions of a consolatory wish. At that time no motives induced me to weigh the difficulties of application, and the terrible inconveniences annexed to abstractions, when they are invested with the force which commands men and things, when the resistance of things and the passions of men are necessary arguments to combine.

What I neither ought nor could foresee at the time and in the circumstances under which I wrote, the circumstances and the time in which you act require that you should keep an account of; and I think it my duty to tell you that you have not sufficiently done so.

By this sole but continued fault, you have vitiated your work; you have placed yourselves in such a situation as has perhaps rendered you unable to preserve it from total ruin, but by measuring back your steps, or by indicating that retrograde march to your successors. Ought you to be afraid of being the sole object of all the virulence with which the altar of liberty is assailed? Believe, Gentlemen that this heroic sacrifice will not be the least consolatory of those remembrances which you will be permitted to preserve. What men must those be, who leaving to their country all the good which they have been able to do, accept and claim for themselves alone the reproaches which have been deserved by real and serious evils, but of which they could only accuse the circumstances! I believe you, Gentlemen, worthy of so high a destiny, and that idea encourages me to point out to you, without reserve, those defective parts which you have introduced into the French Constitution.

Called upon to regenerate France, you ought first to have considered what you could usefully preserve of