

the former government, and particularly that part of it which it would be improper to abandon.

France was a monarchy; its extent, its wants, its manners, its national spirit, were invincible objections to republican forms being ever admitted into it without occasioning a total dissolution.

The monarchical power was vitiated by two causes; its bases were surrounded by prejudices, and its limits were defined by partial resistances. To purify the principles, by establishing the throne upon its true basis, the sovereignty of the nation; to ascertain its limits, by placing them in the national representation, was what you ought to have done, and you think that you have done it.

But in organizing these two powers, the strength and the success of the constitution depended on their equilibrium; and you had to guard against the propensity of your ideas. You ought to have seen that in the general opinion, the power of kings is on the decline, and that the rights of the people are on the increase: thus, by weakening beyond measure that which naturally tends to annihilation, and by strengthening beyond all proportion that which naturally tends to increase, you arrive by force at this melancholly result, **A KING WITHOUT AUTHORITY, AND A PEOPLE WITHOUT RESTRAINT.**

By abandoning yourselves to the wandering of opinion, you have favoured the influence of the multitude, and infinitely multiplied popular elections. Did you not forget that elections incessantly renewed, and the transient duration of power, are a source of relaxation in political jurisdiction? Did you not forget that the strength of government ought to be proportioned to the number of those whom it has to provide for, and whom it ought to protect?

You have preserved the name of King, although in your Constitution it is not only no longer useful, but even dangerous. You have reduced his influence to that point which corruption may usurp; you have in fact invited him to combat a Constitution which incessantly shews him what he is not, and what he may be.

This, Gentlemen, is a vice inherent in your Constitution; a vice which will destroy it, if you and your successors do not hasten to extirpate it.

I will not point out to you all the faults which may be ascribed to circumstances; of those you are yourselves aware: but why will you suffer the evil to exist which it is

in your power to destroy? Why, after having proclaimed the dogma of liberty in religious opinions, will you suffer the clergy to be overwhelmed with persecutions and outrages, because they do not obey your religious opinions?

Why, after having consecrated the principles of individual liberty, do you suffer to exist in your bosoms an inquisition, which serves as a model and a pretext to all those inferiour inquisitions which a factious uneasiness has generated in every part of the empire?

Why do not you shudder at the audacity and the success of those writers who profane the name of patriots? More powerful than your decrees, they daily pull down what you erect. You are desirous of a monarchical government, and they endeavour to render it odious: You are desirous that the people should enjoy liberty, and they wish to make them the most ferocious of tyrants: You are desirous of reforming the manners, and they command the triumph of vice, the impunity of crimes.

I will not mention to you, Gentlemen, your operation of finance; God forbid that I should increase your uneasiness, or diminish your hopes upon that subject. The public fortune is yet entire in your hands; but recollect, that where a government is neither powerful nor respected, there can be neither taxes, credit, nor an ascertained receipt and expenditure.

What form of government can stand against this new assumption of power of the clubs? You have destroyed all the corporations, and the most colossal and most formidable of aggregations is raising itself upon your heads, to the destruction of all other powers. France at present contains two kinds of people exceedingly unlike. That consisting of the virtuous and the moderate spirits, is scattered, silent and alarmed; whilst men of violent dispositions, of which the other consists, crowd together, electrify each other, and form those terrific volcanoes which vomit forth such quantities of lava.

You have made a declaration of rights, and that imperfect declaration has spread throughout the empire of France numerous seeds of anarchy and disorder.

Constantly hesitating between the principles which a false modesty prevents you from modifying, and circumstances which extort exceptions from you, you constantly do too little for the public good, and too much according to your doctrine. You are frequently both inconsequent and im-

politic at a time when you endeavour to be neither. Thus, by perpetuating the slavery of the negroes, you have not the less, by your decision respecting the mulattoes, given an alarm to commerce and exposed your colonies.

Be assured, Gentlemen, that none of these observations escape the friends of liberty: they demand back from your hands the deposit of the public opinion, of the public reason, of which you are but the organs, and which no longer possesses any character. Europe considers you with astonishment; Europe, which may be shaken to its foundation by the propagation of your principles, is vexed at their exaggeration. The silence of its princes may be that of terror; but do not aspire, Gentlemen, to the fatal honour of rendering yourselves dreadful by extravagant innovations, as dangerous for yourselves as for your neighbours. Open once more the annals of the world; call to your assistance the wisdom of ages, and see how many empires have perished by anarchy. It is time to put an end to that by which we are desolated, to stop the revenges, the seditions, and commotions, and to restore to us at length peace and confidence.

To attain this salutary end, there is but one mode, and that is by revising your decrees, by uniting and strengthening the powers weakened by dispersion, by entrusting to the King all the force necessary to maintain the power of the laws, and by particularly watching over the liberty of the primary assemblies, from which factions have driven all wise and virtuous citizens.

Do not imagine, Gentlemen, that the re-establishment of the executive power can be the work of your successors; no, they will take their seats with less power than you possess; they will have to acquire that popular opinion of which you have disposed; you only are able to create anew what you have destroyed, or suffered to be destroyed.

You have laid the foundation of the liberty of every reasonable constitution, by securing to the people the right of making their laws, and determining their taxes. Anarchy will even swallow up these important rights, if you do not place them under the protection of an active and vigorous government; and despotism awaits us, if you continue to reject the tutelary protection of royal authority.

I have collected my strength, Gentlemen, to speak to you the austere language