CHAPTER IV

THE REPUBLIC OF 1848

Perhaps there is no event in her history which has done more to lower France in the estimation of the world than the revolution of 1848. The old monarchy had a glamour and brilliancy which gave it a high place in the world's affairs as they stood then, but the evils and the injustice which it brought about furnished some excuses for the first Revolution, even in the eyes of those who most bitterly condemned that event. The first empire, though infinitely more disastrous to France than the Revolution, covered its sins in a blaze of military glory. The revolution of 1830 had its explanation, if not justification, in the inquietude and the reactionary character of Charles X and his surroundings. The errors and calamities of 1870–71 were condoned by the courage, the endurance, and the elasticity of the French people. But in 1848 France had enjoyed eighteen years of constitutional government. It had maintained peace abroad and in good measure at home, and the country had advanced greatly in wealth and prosperity. The king was humane, liberal, and well intentioned, and it seemed as if gradual reform might have remedied the moderate comparative disadvantages from which the country suffered. But all this was overturned at a blow, the country plunged into anarchy, civil war averted only by fierce bloodshed in Paris, and after a few years of hesitation and fear the nation was handed over to despotism almost as mean and contemptible as that of Louis XV.—GAMALIEL BRADFORD.[b]

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

IT was the 24th of February; the hour was half past one. The king had gone, and the dynasty had now no representative. The count de Paris was a child, with no immediate right to the throne. The duke de Nemours, invested legally with the regency, had followed the king's example and abdicated; the duchess of Orleans was not yet regent. The king, out of respect to legality, had not appointed her; and she had not been recognised by any public power. Some friends had gone with her to the chamber of deputies in the hope of renewing in her favour the election of 1830. To support this monarchy with no constitutional title, there was neither army, ministry,

nor ministers. Thiers felt himself left behind, and abandoned the struggle. Odilon Barrot alone, an obstinate minister with only undefined and temporary powers, had made himself minister of the interior. But such was the effect of the Revolution that in the midst of all the news he knew nothing; in the very centre of action, he was quite devoid of power. Influence, authority, power were elsewhere—in the open street, at the discretion of the first comer.

Moreover, Armand Marrast, thanks to his tact and quick decision, had managed for some weeks both the intrigue and the intriguers. He knew, as a true disciple of Aristophanes, that the people love to be flattered and led; that they vote and applaud, but must have matters decided for them. In a secret council, which was held a few days before the Revolution, Marie had suggested the advisability of naming a provisional government. This advice, when adopted, became the signal for order. *Le National* hastened to name those who should compose the government: Dupont (de l'Eure), François Arago, Marie, Garnier-Pagès, Ledru-Rollin, Odilon Barrot, and Marrast; a compromise list, doubtless, since Armand Marrast figured by the side of Ledru-Rollin and the latter with Odilon Barrot. But it was a list with a double tendency, favouring both the republic and the regency.

Emmanuel Arago, who brought the corrected list to *Le National*, arrived at the Palais Bourbon and went in at the same time as the duchess of Orleans. This latter placed herself in the semicircle at the foot of the tribune, having beside her the duke de Nemours and her two sons, the count de Paris and the duke de Chartres. Dupin spoke, interrupted by acclamations from the national guard, the army, and the people who had thronged round the duchess as she passed from the Tuileries to the Palais Bourbon and in the palace itself. He demanded a formal act of procuration. Cheers burst out again, while on the other hand they cried, "A provisional government!"

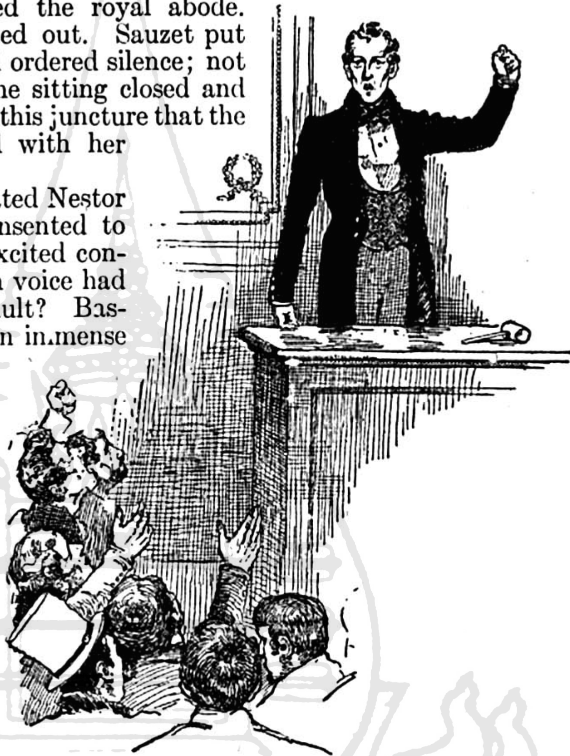
Lamartine demanded that the sitting be suspended "out of respect to the national representation and the duchess of Orleans." "It was almost the same thing," says Dupin, "as proposing to put the young king and his mother out of the hall as intruders who had no right to be present at the sitting. But this same sitting, because the king was present, was in reality a royal one." Sauzet suspended the sitting, but the duchess did not leave the hall. She only went to the higher seats in the amphitheatre. An outburst of enthusiasm in the chamber, the presence of the duchess, the concurrence of several resolute men might have determined for a regency. Like those of 1830, the barricades of 1848 might have served to support a throne. The men of *Le National* felt the peril. La Rochejaquelein demanded an appeal to the people: "You count for nothing here; you are no longer in power," he said to the deputies; "the chamber of deputies as a chamber no longer exists. I say, gentlemen, that the nation should be convoked, and then ——"

Here the nation indeed interrupted by an irruption of the crowd, which now for the first time came pouring in, uttering cries of "Dethronement! Dethronement!" The cause of the regency was lost. Crowd followed crowd, orator followed orator. Crémieux, Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin contested the tribune with invaders from the people. "No more Bourbons! Down with traitors!" they cried.

Lamartine succeeded Ledru-Rollin in the tribune. Even before he began to speak they cheered and applauded him, as if to win him over forever to the republic. In 1842 he had defended the regency of the duchess of Orleans, but he dismissed this inopportune recollection. He let fall, however, a sym-

pathetic phrase about "this august princess and her innocent son." Then fearing, from the murmurs which arose, that he would be taken for a partisan of the monarchy, he hastened to demand a provisional government. He made no distinction between "national representation and representation by citizens from the people, but accepted the competency of this multitude and drew up the programme of a government which would first restore public peace and then convoke all the citizens in popular assemblies. At these words, and as if touched by one common impulse, new combatants invaded the assembly—men from the château d'Eau, pillagers and devastators of the Tuileries, who came to soil with their presence the palace of national representation as they had soiled the royal abode. The dynastic deputies slipped out. Sauzet put on his hat, rang his bell, and ordered silence; not obtaining it, he declared the sitting closed and quitted the chair. It was at this juncture that the duchess of Orleans escaped with her children.

Dupont de l'Eure, venerated Nestor of the republican party, consented to preside over this horde of excited constituents. But what human voice had power to dominate the tumult? Bastide thought of writing on an immense sheet of paper, with a finger dipped in ink, the five names of those who should compose the government; but the sheet slipped and fell down from the rail where it was hung. The list was passed to Lamartine: "I cannot read it," he said; "my own name is there." They asked M. Crémieux: "I cannot read it," he answered; "my name is not there." At last, after many fruitless efforts, while repeated cries of "No more Bourbons! We want a republic!" arose, Dupont de l'Eure succeeded in reading out the names of Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin, Arago, Dupont de l'Eure, and Marie, which were accepted unanimously. A voice cried: "The members of the provisional government must shout '*Vive la République*' before being named and accepted." But Bocage, the democratic actor, cried, "To the Hôtel-de-Ville with Lamartine at our head!" and Lamartine, accompanied by Bocage and a large number of citizens, left the hall.



LAMARTINE DEMANDING A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

While this tumultuous proclamation was being made in the chamber of deputies, Louis Blanc in the office of *La Réforme* was holding a meeting of the editors of the journal and some political friends. He also was drawing up a list for a provisional government.

However, the provisional government wandered about the nation's palace without finding any spot where they could deliberate in peace, or where they

would be free from the importunate sovereignty of the people. They shut themselves up in a room, but petitioners hunted them out; they hid in another, certain delegates intervened with authority; with much trouble they found refuge in a third. Lamartine drew up the first proclamation to the French nation; then the members of the government disposed of the ministerial offices. Dupont de l'Eure, on account of his age, was exempted, but was given the title of president of council. Lamartine became foreign minister; Arago, head of the admiralty; Crémieux, solicitor-general; Marie, minister of public works; Ledru-Rollin, minister of the interior (home secretary). Garnier-Pagès was confirmed in his office of mayor of Paris.

Towards half past eight Louis Blanc, Marrast, and Flocon were introduced into the deliberating assembly. Louis Blanc imperiously demanded the inscription of his name and those of Marrast and Flocon on the list of members of the provisional government. He was offered the post of secretary. He refused at first; then, seeing himself abandoned by Marrast and Flocon, he retracted his refusal.

Thus the government was finally completed. Every shade of republicanism was represented: moderate opinions, by Dupont de l'Eure, Arago, and Marie; adaptability, by Garnier-Pagès and Crémieux; socialism, by Louis Blanc; communism, by Albert; recollections of the convention, by Ledru-Rollin and Flocon; republican bourgeoisie, by Armand Marrast. Lamartine, who by his past, his name, and his aristocratic connections was looked on with the least favour by the public, personified in himself the diverse characters of his colleagues. He was not exactly the adversary nor the ally of any of them, but was dominated by a superior impartiality. But this same impartiality which constituted his strength was also a source of weakness. Sometimes he resisted, sometimes he yielded —less from force of conviction than from a spirit of tolerance, and in order to evade immediate embarrassment or peril. Among the members there was one whose ideas and sentiments were totally opposed to these—Louis Blanc. According to him the Revolution ought to call itself the republic, and the republic ought to realise high ideals. He would allow no temporising, no concession. We have seen him exact the inscription of his name on the government list: we shall see him in the council oppose himself to all, supported in his isolation by the intervention of the masses, and succeed in dictating measures most fatal to the republic.

In short, from the first hour, such was the critical situation of the provisional government, which owed its origin to popular sovereignty, that it was constantly in dispute with that sovereignty. The crowd had encroached upon royalty; it now began to complain that the provisional government encroached upon its domain. First it had applauded; then it asked arrogantly by what right they had seized the power.

"By what right?" cried Lamartine, who faced the danger; "by the right of the blood which flows, of the fire which devours your buildings, of the nation without leaders, of the people without a guide or orders, and tomorrow, perhaps, without bread. By right of our most devoted and courageous citizens. Since I must say it, in right of those who were the first to yield their souls to suspicion, their blood to the scaffold, their heads to the vengeance of peoples or kings to save the nation." The provisional government, after it had acquired power, paid for it at the price of complaint, opposition, and hostility from the crowd. In the narrow place where they deliberated their electors besieged them, kept them prisoners. None of their decrees reached their destination without having passed through the hands

of strict censors who took note of their contents and their destination. It was the punishment of those who all their lives had invoked the sovereignty of the people, to be suddenly left face to face with them, with no alternative save to bow before their decrees or perish under their blows.[d]

THE FIRST PROBLEMS OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The first care which devolved upon the provisional government was to make head against the violence of its own supporters. During the three days that Paris had been in a state of insurrection, no work had been anywhere done; and as the great bulk of the labouring classes were alike destitute of capital or credit, they already began to feel the pangs of hunger on the morning of the 25th, when the provisional government, having surmounted the storms of the night, was beginning to discharge its functions. An enormous crowd, amounting to above one hundred thousand persons, filled the place de Grève and surrounded the Hôtel-de-Ville on every side, as well as every passage, stair, and apartment in that spacious edifice itself. So dense was the throng, so severe the pressure, that the members of the government itself could scarcely breathe where they sat; and if they attempted to go out to address the people outside, or for any other cause, it was only by the most violent exertion of personal strength that their purpose could be effected.

Decrees to satisfy the mob were drawn up every quarter of an hour, and, when signed, were passed over the heads of the throng into an adjoining apartment, where they were instantly thrown off by the printers of *Le Moniteur*, and thence placarded in Paris, and sent by the telegraph over all France. Under these influences were brought forth the first acts of the provisional government, some of which were singularly trifling, but very descriptive of the pressure under which they had been drawn up. One issued on the 25th of February changed the placing of the colours on the tricolour flag, putting the blue where the red had been; a second abolished the expressions *Monsieur* and *Madame*, substituting for them the words *Citoyen* and *Citoyenne;* a third liberated all functionaries from their oaths of allegiance; a fourth directed the words *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* to be inscribed on all devices and on all the walls of Paris, and changed the names of the streets and squares into others of a revolutionary sound and meaning. This was followed on the 27th by others of a more alarming import, or deeper signification. One ordered everyone to wear a red rosette in his button-hole; another directed trees of liberty to be planted in all the public squares, and reopened the clubs; a third changed the names of the colleges of Paris, and of the titles of general officers; and a fourth abolished all titles of nobility, forbidding anyone to assume them.

But the provisional government soon found that it was not by such decrees that the passions of the people were to be satiated, or their hunger appeased. Already, on the morning of the 25th, before they had had time to do anything, the well-known features of popular insurrection had displayed themselves. The Tuileries and the Palais Royal had been abandoned to the populace the evening before, as in truth, after the king had abdicated, there was no longer any government to withstand their excesses. These august palaces were sacked from top to bottom, their splendid furniture was burned or thrown out of the windows, the cellars were emptied of all the wines which they contained. The presence of the national guard and troops of the line, who were still under arms, prevented these excesses going further in the metropolis; but that only caused the storm to burst with the more fury on the

comparatively unprotected buildings in the country around it. Over a circle formed by a radius of thirty leagues round Paris, all the railway stations were sacked and burned; the bridges were in great part broken down, or set on fire; even the rails in many places were torn up and scattered about. The beautiful château of Neuilly near Paris, the favourite abode of the late king, was plundered and half-burned. Versailles was threatened with a similar fate, which was only averted by the firm attitude of the national guard, which turned out for the protection of that palace, no longer of kings but of the fine arts. But the magnificent château of Rothschild near Suresnes was sacked and burned by a mob from Melun, at the very time when that banker was putting at the disposal of the provisional government fifty thousand francs, to assuage the sufferings of the wounded in the engagements.

BURNING OF A CHÂTEAU

Imagination may figure, but no words can convey an adequate idea of the tremendous pressure exercised on the provisional government during the first days succeeding their installation. But of all the pressing cases, by far the most urgent was to pacify and feed the enormous multitude of destitute workmen whom the Revolution had thrown out of employment, and who crowded into the place de Grève, threatening the government with destruction if they did not instantly give them bread and work. They inundated the *salle du gouvernement*, and extorted from the overwhelmed members a decree "guaranteeing employment to all, and bestowing on the combatants on the barricades the million of francs saved by the termination of the civil list." Though this decree was a vast concession to the working classes, and indicated not obscurely the commencement of that socialist pressure on the government which was ere long felt so severely, yet it was far from meeting the wishes of the angry and famishing crowd who filled the place de Grève and all the adjoining streets.[e]

Hardly had they published the proclamation on the labour question, when a great uprising broke forth on the square of the Hôtel-de-Ville. New bands sallied forth firing off their muskets and crying, "The red flag! the red flag!" They penetrated into the hôtel, a red banner at their head. It was a decisive moment. It was important to know whether the flag of the Revolution and of modern France were to disappear before a factional standard; if all tradition were broken, and society plunged into an unknown abyss.

Lamartine forced his way to the grand staircase, from the top of which,

after the most heroic efforts, he made himself heard by the crowd. He endeavoured to calm this seething multitude by appealing to the sentiments of harmony and humanity which they had shown in the victory of the previous evening; he implored the people not to impose on his government a standard of civil war, not to force it to change the flag of the nation and the name of France. "The government," cried he, "will die rather than dishonour itself by obeying you—I will resist unto the end this flag of blood. The red flag has made but the tour of the Champ de Mars, bedraggled with the blood of the people in '91; the tricoloured flag had made the tour of the world, with the name, the glory, and the liberty of the country." These men, passionate but easily influenced, broke forth into cheers. Lamartine had conquered them. They tore down their red flag.

The high stature, the noble and handsome face of Lamartine, his fine gestures, his grave and sonorous voice, his serene attitude during the most violent demonstrations of the unruly populace, had, as much as his eloquent words, seized the imagination and touched the heart of his stormy audience. These scenes, which occurred many times, made of Lamartine, for several weeks, one of the most original and most majestic figures in the history of France. He resembled perhaps more the ancient orators than those of the Revolution./

THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EXPEDIENTS

But although the danger of a bloody republic was got over at the moment, yet it was evident to all that some lasting measures were indispensable in order to provide security for the government, and the employment of the idle and violent persons who were assembled in the streets. The municipal guard had been disbanded, and the whole military had been sent out of the city by the provisional government, in order to appease the people and avoid the risk of collisions, which might be highly dangerous. Thus the government was entirely at the mercy of the mob, and the only protection they could invoke consisted in two battalions formed of volunteers, who had placed their bayonets at the disposal of the authorities.

They decreed the formation, accordingly, of a new urban corps called the *garde mobile*, to be composed of those who had been most determined on the barricades; and the plan would, it was hoped, enrol on the side of the government the most formidable of those who had recently been leagued together for its overthrow. It perfectly succeeded. High pay—double that of the troops of the line—soon attracted into the ranks the most ardent of those who had been engaged in the late disturbances, and the garde mobile, which soon consisted of twenty-four battalions, and mustered fourteen thousand bayonets, rendered essential service to the cause of order in the subsequent convulsions.

Several other measures, less creditable to the authorities but not less descriptive of the pressure under which they laboured, emanated at the same time from the busy legislative mill in the Hôtel-de-Ville. Acts of accusation were launched forth against Duchâtel, Salvandy, Montebello, and all the members of the late ministry, March 1st; but this was a mere feigned concession to the passions of the people; the provisional government, to its honour be it spoken, had no intention of proceeding seriously against them. Gratuitous tickets to the opera were largely distributed among the people; but, as well observed, it was poor consolation for a man who had got no dinner to be presented with an opera ticket. The licentious mob who had plundered and kept possession of the Tuileries were at length got out March 6th, but

only by a great display of military force, and on the express condition that they were to be taken to the Hôtel-de-Ville, thanked for their patriotic conduct, and presented with certificates of good behaviour.

A fresh element of discord soon arose from the liberation of Blanqui, Barbès, Bernard, Huber, and all the political prisoners in Paris, whom long confinement had roused to perfect frenzy against authority of every kind. Their first measure was to reopen all the clubs, which soon resounded with declamations as violent as any which had ushered in the horrors of the Reign of Terror. A hundred of them were opened in a few days, chiefly in the worst parts of Paris, and every night crowded by furious multitudes. The government, in compliance with their demands, authorised the planting of trees of liberty, in imitation of the orgies of the first revolution.

But the provisional government had soon more serious cares to occupy them. Distrust and distress, the inevitable attendants on successful revolution, ere long appeared in their most appalling form. The government, having guaranteed employment and sufficient wages to every citizen, soon found themselves embarrassed to the very last degree by the multitudes every day thrown upon them. Credit was at a stand; the manufactories and workshops were closed, and the thousands who earned their bread in them were thrown destitute upon the streets. So violent was the panic, so strong the desire to realise, that the five-per-cents fell in the beginning of March to forty-five!

"Nothing," says Lord Normanby,*g* "surprised me more, in the wonderful changes of the last few days, than the utter destruction of all conventional value attached to articles of luxury or display. Pictures, statues, plate, jewels, shawls, furs, laces, all one is accustomed to consider property, became as useless lumber. Ladies, anxious to realise a small sum in order to seek safety in flight, have in vain endeavoured to raise a pittance upon the most costly jewels. What signified that they were 'rich and rare,' when no one could or would buy them?" It was melancholy to see the most civilised capital in the world suddenly reduced to the primitive condition of barter.

In these circumstances it was vain to think of the ordinary channels of employment being reopened, and nothing remained but for the government to take upon themselves, in the meantime at least, the employment of the people. For this purpose, on the 27th and 28th of February, decrees were passed appointing great workshops called *ateliers nationaux*, where all the unemployed might be set to work. As the idle were the very men who had made the Revolution, it was indispensable to keep them in good humour, and for this purpose the wages given were two francs a day. This was more than the average rate even in prosperous periods, and it had the effect of bringing a host of needy and clamorous claimants, not only from Paris but all the towns in the neighbourhood. The numbers in the first week were only five thousand, but they soon increased in a fearful progression; from the 1st to the 15th of April they swelled to 36,250, and at length reached the enormous number of 117,000! The daily cost of their maintenance exceeded two hundred thousand francs. This enormous expenditure was necessary, for the universal prostration of credit, hoarding of specie, and disappearance of capital rendered it impossible to get quit of workmen once enrolled in the brigades of the unemployed; the government were obliged to add much from the secret-service money to support them, in addition to the vast sums publicly applied to their relief; and, in truth, they were kept up as well from the desire always to have a huge army of dependants ready to support the revolutionary government as from the necessities of their situation.

In these huge workshops were collected a crowd of workmen, all of different trades; and they were all set to the same employment, which was generally that of removing nuisances, levelling barricades, or taking away dunghills. Even these humble employments were soon done: nothing remained for the enormous multitude to do; for as to making articles of luxury, or even convenience, for the public, that was out of the question at a time when no one was purchasing more than the absolute necessaries of life. Thus the *ateliers nationaux* soon turned into vast pay-shops, where idle crowds hung about all day, receiving two francs a day for doing nothing. In the latter period of their existence there were not two thousand actually at work out of 110,000 on the public rolls. There was no one concerned in the administration who was to blame for this state of things. It was unavoidable in the circumstances, just as was the employing of two hundred thousand starving labourers on the public roads in Ireland, at the same time.

When the increasing necessities of the numerous classes whom the Revolution had deprived of bread forced the subject of their maintenance on an unwilling government, the cry was for the appointment of a minister *pour l'organisation de travail;* and the public voice, expressed on an hundred banners reared aloft in the place de Grève, designated Louis Blanc, whose socialist principles had long been known, for the high office. To avoid the danger, and yet escape the obloquy of openly resisting a demand so supported, they fell upon the device of appointing Louis Blanc president of a commission appointed to sit at the Luxembourg and inquire into the condition of the working classes and the means of relieving their distresses. They associated with Louis Blanc in this commission the acknowledged chiefs of all the sects of socialists and communists. The *ateliers nationaux*, however, were not put under their direction. They remained under the orders of Marie, the minister of commerce; and in consequence of this not being generally adverted to, and the Luxembourg being regarded as the centre of the communist action and the source of communist measures, much unjust obloquy has been brought upon Louis Blanc and his socialist supporters.

Three circumstances distinguished this revolution from both of those which had preceded it. The first is the entire absence of all religious jealousy or rancour by which it was distinguished. No one needs be told that the very reverse was the case in the first revolution. The same was the case, though in a lesser degree, in the revolution of 1830. Hatred of the Jesuits, and jealousy of the influence they were supposed to be acquiring in the government and the educational establishments of the country, were the chief causes of the overthrow of Charles X. But on this occasion, this, the most deadly poison that can be mixed up with the revolutionary passions, was entirely wanting. The old animosity of the revolutionists against the clergy seemed to have disappeared. The Revolution was ardently supported by the clergy, in the first instance at least, especially in the rural districts. The priests blessed the trees of liberty which were planted in the villages and squares; fervent prayers were offered up for the republic from the altars; the priests, surrounded by their flocks, marched to the polling-places for the elections for the assembly when they came on. This change is very remarkable, and suggests much matter for reflection; but it is easily explained when we recollect that the Church had lost all its property during the first revolution, and ceased to be either an object of envy from its wealth, or of jealousy from its power. Thrown upon their flocks for support, since the miserable pittance of forty pounds a year allowed by the government barely sufficed for existence, the clergy had identified themselves with their interests and

shared their desires. The government of Louis Philippe had been so hostile to religion that they in secret rejoiced at its overthrow.

The second circumstance which distinguished this revolution was the sedulous attention now paid to the demands and interests of labour. It was the interests of capital and the bourgeoisie which were chiefly, if not exclusively, considered in the revolution of 1830. Robespierre and Saint-Just had professed, and probably felt, a warm interest in the concerns of the working classes; but they could see no other way of serving them but by cutting off the heads of all above them. The lapse of thirty-three years' peace since 1815, and the vast increase of industry which had in consequence taken place, had now, however, given a more practical direction to men's thoughts. They no longer thought that they were to be benefited by placing the heads of the rich under the guillotine; they adopted a plan, in appearance at least, more likely to be attended with the desired effect, and that was to put their own hands into their pockets. Encouraged by the conferences at the Luxembourg and the socialist declamations of Louis Blanc, as well as the decrees of the government, which guaranteed employment and full wages to all the working classes, they all united now in demanding from their employers at once an increase of wages and a diminution in the hours of labour! By a decree of the government, the hours of labour of all sorts in Paris were fixed at ten hours a day, though in the provinces they were left at twelve hours. These demands, too, were made at a time when, in consequence of the panic consequent on the Revolution, and the universal hoarding of the precious metals which had ensued, the price of every species of industrial produce, so far from rising, was rapidly falling, and sale of everything, except the mere necessaries of life, had become impossible! The consequence, as might have been anticipated, was that mostly all the master-manufacturers closed their workshops; and in the first two weeks of March, above an hundred thousand were out of employment in Paris alone, and thirty or forty thousand in Rouen, Lyons, and Bordeaux!

A third effect which ensued from the peculiar character of this revolution, as the revolt of labour against capital, was the strongest aversion on the part of all its promoters to the principles of free trade, and a decided adherence to that of protection.

But all other consequences of the Revolution fade into insignificance compared with the commercial and monetary crisis which resulted from its success, and, in its ultimate results, was attended with the most important effects upon the fortunes of the republic. The panic soon spread from the towns to the country; the peasants, fearful of being plundered, either by robbery or the emission of assignats, hastened to hide their little stores of money; specie disappeared from the circulation.

THE REPUBLIC ESTABLISHED

The time was now approaching when something definite required to be adopted by the provisional government in regard to the future constitution of the republic. With this view the government felt that it was necessary to convoke a national assembly; but before that could be done, the basis required to be fixed on which the election of its members should proceed. In these moments of republican fervour, there could be no doubt of the principle which required to be adopted. The convention of 1793 presented the model ready made to their hands. The precedent of that year accordingly was followed, with a trifling alteration, merely in form, which subsequent

experience had proved to be necessary. The number of the assembly was fixed at nine hundred, including the representatives of Algeria and the other colonies, and it was declared that the members should be distributed in exact proportion to the population. The whole was to form one assembly, chosen by universal suffrage. Every person was to be admitted to vote who had attained the age of twenty-one, who had resided six months in a commune, and had not been judicially deprived of his suffrage. Any Frenchman of the age of twenty-five, not judicially deprived of his rights, was declared eligible as a representative. The voting was to be secret, by signing lists; and no one could be elected unless he had at least two thousand votes. The deputies were to receive twenty-five francs a day for their expenses during the sitting of the assembly. This was soon followed by another decree, which ordered all prisoners for civil or commercial debts to be immediately set at liberty.

The provisional government, at the head of which was Lamartine, were at the same time labouring courageously and energetically to coerce the violent party, and direct the Revolution into comparatively safe and pacific channels. The first act which evinced the objects of this section of the government, and obtained the concurrence of the whole, was a most important and noble one—the abolition of the punishment of death in purely political cases. This great victory of humanity and justice over the strongest passions of excited and revengeful man was achieved by the provisional government in the very first moments of their installation in power, and when surrounded by a violent mob loudly clamouring for the *drapeau rouge* and the commencement of foreign war and the reign of blood. Whatever may be said of the tricolour flag making the tour of the globe, there can be no doubt that this great and just innovation will do so. To regard internal enemies, provided they engage only in open and legitimate warfare, in the same manner as external foes, to slay them in battle, but give quarter and treat them as prisoners of war after the conflict is over, is the first great step in lessening the horrors of civil conflict. On the contrary, the full merit of their noble and courageous conduct will not be appreciated unless it is recollected that, without guards or protection of any sort, they were, at the very time they passed this decree, exposed to the hostility of a bloodthirsty faction, loudly clamouring for the restoration of the guillotine, a second reign of terror, and a forcible propagandism to spread revolution through foreign nations.

Though the republic, generally speaking, was received in silent submission in the provinces when the telegraph announced its establishment in Paris, yet, in those places where the democratic spirit was peculiarly strong, it was not inaugurated without very serious disorders. At Lyons it was proclaimed at eight at night, on the 25th of February, 1848, by torchlight; and before midnight, the incendiary torch had been applied to the religious and charitable establishments of the Croix Rouge, Fourvière, and the faubourg du Paix.

Delivered over to the rule of a tumultuous mob, the condition of Lyons for several months was miserable in the extreme; and though perfectly aware of these disorders, the government did not venture to attempt their suppression. In the midst of this universal excitement and fever, a very serious run took place on the savings banks, and these establishments soon found that they were unable to pay the deposits in specie.

When such elements of discord existed, not only in the state but in the provisional government itself, it was only a question of time when an open rupture was to take place between them. It was brought on, however,

somewhat sooner than had been expected, by an ordinance of Ledru Rollin, published on the 14th of March, ordering the dissolution of the flank companies, or *compagnies d'élite* as they were called, of the national guard, and the dispersion of their members, without distinction or equipment, among the ordinary companies of the legion. The object of this was to destroy the exclusive aspect and moral influence of these companies, which, being composed of the richer class of citizen, formed the nucleus of a body which naturally inclined to conservative principles, and might impede the designs of the extreme revolutionary party. To "democratise," as it was called, the whole body, the decree ordered these companies to be dispersed among the others, and the whole to vote together for the election of the officers, which was to take place in a few days.[e]

On the 16th of March, these élite companies of the old national guard made a demonstration in a body twenty-five thousand strong at the Hôtel-de-Ville in order to test the strength of the forces at the disposal of the people. In revenge, on the following day, the workmen's corporations, the delegates to the Luxembourg, and the national workshops, excited by leaders who wished to drive them to extremes, organised a counter-demonstration in favour of the proletariat. The provisional government, whose members clung together in spite of internal rivalries, was obliged every day to deliver speeches and proclamations which gave Lamartine an ever-increasing but ephemeral popularity. In order not to leave the capital undefended in the hands of the factionists, the provisional government ordered back to Paris some battalions of the army which had left humiliated on the 23rd of February.

After a new socialistic demonstration which repulsed the national guard and a feast of fraternity on the 21st of April which reconciled no one, the electoral colleges met on Sunday, the 23rd of April. The elections were held, for the first time, by universal suffrage. This meant passing from 222,000 electors to 9,000,000—a sudden upheaval of political life which had not been expected and which would inevitably cause disaster.

The election of Lamartine in ten departments characterised this moment of the Revolution. The 4th of May the constituent assembly met and solemnly proclaimed the republic; and, despite the remembrance of the feebleness of the Directory, it imprudently placed the agreement in the hands of an executive commission composed of five members: Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Lamartine, and Ledru-Rollin.

It seemed that nothing was left but to frame a constitution. Unfortunately, every day the Revolution was interpreted in a different way. Some held that it was exclusively political and tried to restrict it to a few modifications in the form of government, while others wanted it to be social and aimed at transforming society. Many even spoke of returning to the monarchy, and some dreamed of entirely demolishing all public authority.

They began by an attack on the national assembly. The 15th of May, under the pretext of carrying to the deputies a petition in favour of Poland, a movement was made against the chamber.[h]

THE INSURRECTION OF MAY 15TH, 1848

The petitioners assembled at the place de la Bastille, and began their march about 11 o'clock. Their attitude was not hostile; but, on the boulevard du Temple, Blanqui and his club awaited their coming, quickly placed themselves at the head of the column, and moved forward with the greatest

rapidity. The assembly came forth on the place de la Madeleine much earlier than they were expected. The national guard, weary of being summoned so often in vain, had not responded in a large number to the call upon them; in spite of this they would have been able to avert the danger had they concentrated. Instead of taking this necessary measure at once, General Courtais had the unfortunate idea of overtaking this mass of people—he imagined he could stop them by kind words. In the first lines were the most violent characters; amongst them were some armed men. These paid no attention to Courtais, but passed on; the rest followed. The crowd bordered the place de la Concorde and advanced toward the bridge. In a short time it hurled itself against the gratings of the assembly.

Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin attempted to harangue the multitude from the top of the stairs where the assembly, some days before, had come to mix its republican acclamations with those of the people of Paris. The eloquence of the poet and of the tribune did not have the same ascendency at this moment as at the Hôtel-de-Ville. The multitude continued to shake the gratings and cry, "Down with the bayonets!" Courtais gave the command to a thousand of the national guard and the garde mobile to sheathe their bayonets; then he had a grating opened to admit twenty delegates: a much larger number followed Blanqui. The crowd went round the palace to the place de Bourgogne; there they joined the club de Barbès, not to invade but to observe. When they were sure that Blanqui had entered they wished also to enter; there took place, on the place de Bourgogne, a *mêlée*, a terrible stampede. The gratings on that side were forced: the multitude poured into the assembly room; others entered directly by forcing the doors. At the moment of the invasion the assembly were discussing Poland and Italy.

In the midst of the tumult which followed, Louis Blanc, with the permission of the president, began to speak; he demanded silence in order that the petition in favour of Poland might be read, and the right of petition sanctioned. In spite of the protestations of a number of representatives, Raspail, who was not a member of the assembly, mounted the tribune and read the petition. The president, Buchez, asked the crowd to leave and allow the assembly to deliberate. Barbès, seeing Blanqui at the foot of the tribune, hastened to make the first move, and pressed the assembly to carry out the wishes of the people for Poland. "Citizens," cried he, "you have done well to come and exercise your right to petition, and the duty of the assembly is to execute what you demand, which is the wish of France; but in order that she should not appear violent it is necessary that you retire."

Cries of "No! No!" were heard, and Blanqui on the other hand demanded of the assembly a decree that France should not put her sword in the scabbard until Poland had attained her independence. He added that the people came also to demand justice for the massacres of Rouen and claim from the assembly that it should see that they had work and bread. Contradictory cries broke forth: "Poland! we are interested only in Poland!" and "The minister of work, immediately!"

The struggle was, in fact, between those who wished to continue the invasion of the assembly and those who wished it to cease. Raspail, who found himself carried there without intending it, joined Ledru-Rollin and Barbès in trying to clear the assembly room; Huber himself, the promoter of the manifestation, tried to induce the people to retire before the assembly, whose representatives had held their posts with dignity in the midst of this chaos. The party of Blanqui resisted, the struggle became intense in this close atmosphere—when, from outside, was heard the sound of drums.

Garnier-Pagès had sent, in the name of the executive commission, the order to beat to arms all the legions. At the news of what had happened the national guard gathered in great throngs. The crowd, on the contrary, around the Palais Bourbon, on the bridge, at the place de la Concorde, began to thin. All those who had come with no evil intentions became disquieted, grieved; and one by one they went away. In the interior of the hall, among the invaders, many were exhausted, some even fainted. Barbès' head was turned. He, who had no intention but to defend the assembly against Blanqui, declared that it was necessary that they should vote, at that sitting, the sending of an army to Poland, a tax of a thousand millions on the rich, and that they should forbid the call to arms; if not, the representatives would be declared traitors to the country! He and those around him were delirious. The clamours redoubled at the same time for Poland and for the organisation of work. "We wish Louis Blanc," cried someone, and Louis Blanc was brought forward, against his will, in triumph; harassed, almost fainting, he protested in vain and felt that he was lost. The fury increased in a measure at the sound of the drums. Armed men with sinister faces surrounded and threatened the president Buchez, who had remained immovable on his seat, and the vice-president Corbon, who had come to join Buchez at his perilous post. The president was called on to give the order to stop the call to arms. He resisted. The commands became frantic. An officer of the national guard came to the president to tell him that the legions would be ready to act within a quarter of an hour.

The order to the mayors to cease the call to arms could no longer have any result. The refusal to give this order would inevitably have led to a catastrophe. Men of unquestioned courage amongst the representatives counselled the president to gain a quarter of an hour at any price and to accede to the wishes of the people. He signed the orders. This action without doubt prevented violent acts, but did not quiet the tumult, as the invaders seemed to be possessed by an uncontrollable fury. Amidst the stamping and howling of the crowd, Huber suddenly mounted the tribune and declared the national assembly dissolved. A group of the most frantic hurled themselves on the desk and threw the president from his seat. The president and the vice-president at last went forth accompanied by most of the representatives.

The invaders, remaining masters of the hall, commenced to argue on the candidates for a new provisional government, when the drums began echoing in the interior of the palace. "The garde mobile!" they cried; a panic seized the invaders and they fled in disorder from the hall, crying, "To the Hôtel-de-Ville!" This political orgy had lasted nearly four hours. A little after four o'clock, the garde mobile and the national guard entered and finished clearing the hall.[f]

The assembly came back and reopened the sitting. Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin, at the head of the representatives and of the national guard, marched to the Hôtel-de-Ville, where Marrast, the mayor of Paris, had seized a new provisional government which had attempted to install itself there; the agitators were sent to Vincennes. This riot, a sad and senseless parody of the too famous days of the first revolution, had the result of putting the assembly in a position of defiance against the Parisian populace. It was decided to dissolve the national workshops, which formed an army of one hundred thousand labourers having arms, officers, and discipline. This news excited the anger of the agitators who were still free, and the despair of the workmen who had been misled by dangerous utopian ideas.[h]

In June there were several new elections, and Paris returned Proudhon

and other socialist leaders.[i] Prince Louis Napoleon received a plurality of votes in no fewer than four departments. In general the socialist party did not succeed; whereas Count Molé and Thiers among other royalists, recovered seats in the assembly. Louis Napoleon received not only the support of the Bonapartists but of sundry other parties, including even certain communists. As a whole the election could not be taken as a great victory for any one party, but the ultra-democrats met with an unequitable set back, and hence were goaded to desperation. "They were plotting another insurrection," says May,[i] "when the assembly determined to disperse the idle and dangerous workmen in the national workshops, who had now risen to one hundred and twenty thousand." So good an excuse for an outbreak was not to be overlooked. The workmen were quickly stimulated to show their discontent, and in a few hours all Paris was up in arms.[a]

CIVIL WAR IN PARIS (JUNE 22ND–25TH, 1848)

Every symptom indicated the approaching movement. It broke out on the 22nd of June at ten at night. The government, warned of the rioting and clamour which attended the first steps that had been taken for distributing a portion of the workmen through the departments, assembled at the Luxembourg. In the course of the evening numerous mobs had several times assailed the palace with furious shouts of *"À bas Marie!" "À bas Lamartine!"* The government had appointed General Cavaignac commander-in-chief of the troops of the national guard, with the view of concentrating the whole plan and the unity of its execution in a single individual.

The night was tranquil; it was spent in arrangements for the attack and defence. Neither the socialists nor the anti-republican party joined in the insurrection. Everything indicated that this undecided, feeble movement, incoherent in its principle, had been organised and planned in the heart of the national workshops themselves. It was a plebeian and not a popular movement, a conspiracy of subalterns and not of chiefs, an outbreak of servile and not of civil war.

At seven o'clock on the 23rd of June, the government received information that mobs, forming altogether an assemblage of from eight to ten thousand men, had collected on the place du Panthéon to attack the Luxembourg. The occupants of the national workshops poured down from the barriers, and the populace, excited by some of their armed leaders, threw up barricades. Their leaders were, for the most part, the men who acted as *brigadiers* of the national workshops, and who were agents of the seditious clubs. They were irritated by the proposed disbandment of their corps, whose wages passed through their hands, and some of them, it was alleged, did not scruple to divert the money from its destined object, for the purpose of paying sedition. From the barriers of Charenton, Bercy, Fontainebleau, and Ménilmontant, to the very heart of Paris, the capital was almost totally defenceless, and in the power of a few thousand men.

General Cavaignac resolved to concentrate his troops (as had been determined beforehand) in the garden of the Tuileries, in the Champs Élysées, on the place de la Concorde, on the esplanade des Invalides, and round the palace of the representatives. Meanwhile, the conflict had commenced on the boulevards. Two detachments of volunteers of the 1st and 2nd legions attacked two barricades erected on that point. Most of these brave volunteers perished heroically under the first fire of the insurgents.

Duvivier commanded the central part of Paris at the Hôtel-de-Ville. Dumesne and Lamoricière, who seemed, as it were, to multiply themselves, performed prodigies of resolution and activity with the mere handful of men at their disposal. By four o'clock in the afternoon Dumesne had cleared and made himself master of the left bank of the Seine, and had overawed the whole mass of insurrectionary population in the quarter of the Parthéon.

Lamoricière, invincible, though hemmed in by two hundred thousand of the insurgents, occupied the space extending from the rue du Temple to the Madeleine, and from Clichy to the Louvre. He was incessantly galloping from one point to another, and always exposing himself to receive the first shot that might be fired. He had two horses killed under him.

A summer storm was at that moment breaking over Paris. General Cavaignac, surrounded by his staff, with Lamartine, Duclerc, and Pierre Bonaparte (son of Lucien), and followed by about two thousand men, advanced amidst flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, mingled with the applauding shouts of the well-disposed citizens, as far as the château d'Eau. After repeated assaults, kept up for the space of three quarters of an hour, and amidst an incessant shower of balls and bullets, decimating both officers and men, the barricades were carried. Lamartine felt as though he could have wished for death to release him from the odious responsibility of bloodshed which pressed upon him so unjustly, but yet so unavoidably. Four hundred brave men lay killed or wounded in different parts of the faubourg. Lamartine returned to the château d'Eau to rejoin General Cavaignac.

Accompanied only by Duclerc, and a national guard named Lassaut, who had been his companion the whole of the day, Lamartine passed the line of the advanced posts, to reconnoitre the disposition of the people on the boulevard of the Bastille. The immense crowd, which fell back to make way for him as he proceeded, still continued to shout his name, with enthusiasm and even amidst tears. He conversed long with the people, pacing slowly and pressing his way through the crowd by the breast of his horse. This confidence amidst the insurgent masses preserved him from any manifestation of popular violence. The men, who by their pale countenances, their excited tone, and even their tears bore evidence of deep emotion, told him their complaints against the national assembly, and expressed their regret at seeing the revolution stained with blood. They declared their readiness to obey him (Lamartine), whom they had known as their counsellor and friend, and not as their flatterer, amidst the misery they had suffered and the destitution of their wives and children. "We are not bad citizens, Lamartine," they exclaimed; "we are not assassins; we are not factious agitators! We are unfortunate men, honest workmen, and we only want the government to help us in our misery and to provide us with work! Govern us yourself! Save us! Command us! We love you! We know you! We will prevail on our companions to lay down their arms!"

Lamartine, without having been either attacked or insulted, returned to rejoin General Cavaignac on the boulevard. At midnight the regiments nearest to the capital and the national guards of the adjacent towns entered Paris in a mass, marching through all the barriers. Victory might still be tardy, yet it was now certain.[l]

"THE DAYS OF JUNE"

On the morning of the 24th matters looked very serious, and the assembly, which had endeavoured to ignore the danger, was forced to recognise and

take measures to avert it. The inefficiency of the executive commission and the distrust they had inspired in the national guard having become painfully conspicuous, a motion was made, at noon on the 24th, to confer absolute power on a dictator; and General Cavaignac was suggested and approved almost unanimously. The executive commission, finding themselves thus superseded, resigned their appointments, and absolute uncontrolled authority was vested in the dictator.

The effects of this great change were soon apparent. Immense was the difference between the hesitation and disunited action of five civilians in presence of danger, and the decided conduct of one single experienced military chief. The first object was to repel the enemy from the vicinity of the Hôtel-de-Ville. The task was no easy one, for the streets around it swarmed with armed men; every window was filled with tirailleurs, and from the summit of barricades, which were erected across the narrow thoroughfares at every hundred yards, streamed a well-directed and deadly fire of musketry. At length, however, after a dreadful struggle, the nearest streets were carried, and the Hôtel-de-Ville was put for the time in a state of comparative safety.

The attack was next carried into the adjoining quarters of the Église St. Gervais and the rue St. Antoine, while General Lamoricière pushed on towards the faubourg St. Denis, and then, wheeling to his left, commenced an assault on the faubourg Poissonnière. The insurgents defended each barricade as it was attacked, as long as possible, and when it was about to be forced they quickly retired to the next one in rear, generally not more than one or two hundred yards distant, which was stubbornly held in like manner; while upon the column which advanced in pursuit a heavy and murderous fire was directed from the windows of the adjoining houses.

It was not surprising that the progress even of the vast and hourly-increasing military force at the disposal of the dictator had been so slow; for the task before them was immense, and to appearance insurmountable by any human strength. The number of barricades had risen to the enormous and almost incredible figure of 3,888, nearly all of which were stoutly defended. The great strongholds of the insurgents were in the clos St. Lazare and the faubourg St. Antoine, each of which was defended by gigantic barricades, constructed of stones having all the solidity of regular fortifications, and held by the most determined and fanatical bands.

The night of the 24th was terrible; the opposing troops, worn out with fatigue and parched with thirst, sank down to rest within a few yards of each other on the summit of the barricades, or at their feet, and no sound was heard in the dark but the cry of the sentinels. Early on the morning of the 25th the conflict was renewed at all points, and ere long a frightful tragedy signalised the determination and ferocity of the insurgents. General Bréa humanely went with a flag of truce to the headquarters of the insurgents. He was overwhelmed with insults, shot down, and left for dead on the ground; his aide-de-camp, Captain Mauguin, was at the same time put to death, and his remains mutilated to such a degree that the human form could hardly be distinguished. After waiting an hour for the return of his general, Colonel Thomas, the second in command, having learned his fate, and announced it to his soldiers, made preparations for an assault. Infuriated by the treacherous massacre of their general, the men rushed on, and carried at the point of the bayonet seven successive barricades. All their defenders were put to the sword, to avenge their infamous treachery.

But ere the attack commenced, a sublime instance of Christian heroism and devotion occurred, which shines forth like a heavenly glory in the midst

of these terrible seasons of carnage. Monseigneur Affre, archbishop of Paris, horror-struck with the slaughter which for three days had been going on without intermission, resolved to effect a reconciliation between the contending parties, or perish in the attempt. Having obtained leave from General Cavaignac to repair to the headquarters of the insurgents, he set out, dressed in his pontifical robes, having the cross in his hand, accompanied by two vicars, also in full canonicals, and three intrepid members of the assembly. Deeply affected by this courageous act, which they well knew was almost certain death, the people, as he walked through the streets, fell on their knees and besought him to desist, but he persisted, saying, "It is my duty. *Bonus pastor dat vitam suam pro ovibus suis.*" At seven in the evening he arrived in the place de la Bastille, where the firing was extremely warm on both sides.

Undismayed by the storm of balls, the prelate advanced slowly, attended by his vicars, to the summit of the barricade. He had descended three steps on the other side when he was pierced through the loins by a shot from a window. The insurgents, horror-struck, approached him when he fell, stanched the wound, which at once was seen to be mortal, and carried him to the neighbouring hospital of Quatre-Vingts. When told he had only a few minutes to live, he said, "God be praised, and may he accept my life as an expiation for my omissions during my episcopacy, and as an offering for the salvation of this misguided people"; and with these words he expired.

Immediately after his decease, proposals came for a capitulation from the insurgents, on condition of an absolute and unqualified amnesty. General Cavaignac, however, would listen to nothing but an unconditional surrender. All attacks proved successful, and at last the enemy capitulated. With this the terrible insurrection came to an end. The losses on either side in this memorable conflict were never accurately known; for the insurgents could not estimate theirs, and the government took care not to publish their own. But on both sides it was immense, as might have been expected, when forty or fifty thousand on a side fought with the utmost courage and desperation for four days in the streets of a crowded capital, with nearly four thousand barricades erected and requiring to be stormed. General Négrier was killed, and Generals Duvivier, Dumesne, Koste, Lafontaine, and Foncher were wounded mortally—General Bedeau more slightly. Ten thousand bodies were recognised and buried, and nearly as many, especially on the side of the insurgents, thrown unclaimed into the Seine. At the close of the contest nearly fifteen thousand prisoners were in the hands of the victors, and crowded, almost to suffocation, all places of confinement in Paris. Three thousand of them died of jail fever; but the immense multitude which remained created one of the greatest difficulties with which for long the government had to contend.

The concourse of troops and national guards who flocked together from all quarters, on the 27th and 28th, enabled the dictator to maintain his authority, and restore order, by the stern discipline of the sword. The assembly divided the prisoners into two classes: for the first, who were the most guilty, deportation to Cayenne, or one of the other colonies, was at once adjudged; the second were condemned to transportation, which with them meant detention in the hulks, or in some maritime fortresses of the republic. But all means of detention ere long proved inadequate for so prodigious a multitude, and many were soon liberated by the government from absolute inability to keep them longer. This terrible strife cost France

more lives than any of the battles of the empire; the number of generals who perished in it, or from the wounds they had received, exceeded even those cut off at Borodino or Waterloo.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF CAVAIGNAC

The victory once decidedly gained, Cavaignac lost no time in abdicating the dictatorial powers conferred upon him during the strife. But the assembly were too well aware of the narrow escape which they had made, to entertain the thought of resuming the powers of sovereignty. If they had been so inclined, the accounts from the provinces would have been sufficient to deter them, for the insurrection in Paris was contemporary with a bloody revolt at Marseilles, occasioned by the same attempt to get quit of the burdensome pensioners at the ateliers nationaux, which was only put down after three days' hard fighting by a concentration of troops from all the adjoining departments.

At Rouen and Bordeaux the agitation was so violent that it was evident nothing but the presence of a large military force prevented a rebellion from breaking out. Taught by these events, the national assembly unanimously continued to General Cavaignac the powers already conferred upon him, and prolonged the state of siege in the metropolis. The powers of the dictator were to last till a permanent president was elected either by the assembly or the direct voice of the citizens; and in the meantime General Cavaignac proceeded to appoint his ministers, who immediately entered upon their several duties.

The first care of the new government was to remodel the armed force of the metropolis, and extinguish those elements of insurrection which had brought such desolation, bloodshed, and ruin upon the country. The ateliers nationaux were immediately dissolved: this had now become, comparatively speaking, an easy task; for the most formidable part of their number, and nearly all who had actually appeared with arms in their hands, had either been slain or were in the prisons of the republic. Those legions of the national guard which had either hung back or openly joined the insurgents, on occasion of the late revolt, were all dissolved and disarmed. Already, on June 25th, when the insurrection was at its height, a decree was issued, which suspended nearly all the journals of a violent character on either side, and even Émile de Girardin, an able writer and journalist of moderate character, was arrested and thrown into prison. These measures, how rigorous soever, were all ratified by a decree of the assembly on the 1st of August, and passed unanimously. "The friends of liberty," says the contemporary annalist, "observed with grief that the republic had in a single day struck with impunity a severer blow at the liberty of the press than the preceding governments had done during thirty years." At the same time the clubs, those great fountains of treason and disorder, were closed. Thus was another proof added to the innumerable ones which history had previously afforded, that popular licentiousness and insurrection, from whatever cause originating, must ever end in the despotism of the sword.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE PLEBISCITE

The duty of framing a constitution had been intrusted, in the beginning of June, to a committee composed of the most enlightened members. The discussion commenced on the 2nd of July, and was only concluded by the

formal adoption of the constitution, as then modified, on the 23rd of October. On the important question whether the legislature should be in one or two chambers, the debate was conducted by two distinguished men, Lamartine and Odilon Barrot.

The assembly, as might have been anticipated, decided in favour of one chamber by a majority of 530 to 289. The "sovereign power" of legislation accordingly was vested in a single assembly, and Lamartine, who was not without a secret hope of becoming its ruler, was triumphant. But the all-important question remained—by whom was the president of the chamber to be appointed, and what were to be his powers as the avowed chief magistrate of the republic? Opinions were much divided on this point, some adhering to an election by the assembly, others to a direct appeal to the people. Contrary to expectation, M. de Lamartine supported the nomination by the entire population of France.

He could not be convinced of the fatal blow which his popularity had received from his coalition with Ledru-Rollin. He still thought he was lord of the ascendant, and would be the people's choice if the nomination was vested in their hands. By extending the suffrage to all France, the revolutionists had dug the grave of their own power. The result, accordingly, decisively demonstrated the strength of this feeling even in the first assembly elected under universal suffrage, and how well founded were the mournful prognostications of Lamartine as to the approaching extinction of liberty by the very completeness of the triumph of its supporters.[1]

The formation of the constitution having been at length concluded, it was finally adopted, on the 4th of November, by a majority of 737 to thirty votes. Among the dissentients were Pierre Leroux and Proudhon, extreme communists, and Berryer and La Rochejaquelein, royalists. Victor Hugo and Montalembert were also in the minority, though no two men could be found whose opinions on general subjects were more opposite. On the evening of the day on which it was adopted by the assembly, the intelligence was communicated to the Parisians by 101 guns discharged from the Invalides. The sound at first excited the utmost alarm, as it was feared the civil war was renewed; and when it was known that it was only the announcement of a constitution, the panic subsided, and the people, careless and indifferent, dispersed to their homes.

By the constitution thus adopted, the form of government in France was declared to be republican, the electors being chosen by universal suffrage, and the president in the same way. The right of the working classes to employment was negatived, it being declared, however, that the government, so far as its resources went, was to furnish labour to the unemployed. The punishment of death was abolished in purely political offences. Slavery was to be abolished in every part of the French dominions. The right of association and public meeting was guaranteed; voting, whether for the representatives or the president, was to be by ballot; the representatives once chosen might be re-elected any number of times. The president required to be a French citizen, of at least thirty years of age, and one who had not lost on any occasion his right of citizenship. He was to be elected for four years,

[[1] An expression of the philosopher Jean Reynaud during "the Days of June" characterised the situation with poignant truth: "We are lost if we are conquered; lost if we conquer." It was too true: the Republic was stabbed to the heart. Victorious, the body politic drifted, in a few months, to a monarchic cæsarism by the path of reaction; vanquished, it had drifted, in a few days, to a demagogic cæsarism by the path of anarchy. Like the Janus of fable, Bonapartism was ready to present the one or the other of its two faces to France doomed to be its prey.—MARTIN.[f]]

and a simple majority was to determine the election. The president was re-eligible after having served the first four years; he was to reside in the palace of the assembly, and receive a salary of six hundred thousand francs a year. All the ministers of state were to be appointed by the president, who also was to command the armed force, declare peace and war, conduct negotiations with foreign powers, and generally exercise all the powers of sovereignty, with the exception of appointing the judges of the supreme courts in Paris, who were to be named by the assembly, and to hold their offices for life.

Disguised under the form of a republic, this constitution was in reality monarchical, for the president was invested with all the substantial power of sovereignty; and as he was capable of being re-elected, his tenure of office might be prolonged for an indefinite period. Though there were several candidates for the high office, yet it was soon apparent that the suffrage would really come to be divided between two—General Cavaignac and Prince Louis Napoleon.

THE CANDIDACY OF LOUIS NAPOLEON

The door had already been opened to the latter by an election which took place at Paris on the 17th of September, when the young prince was again elected by a large majority. Four other departments in the country had already elected him. On this occasion he no longer hesitated, but accepted his election for the department of the Seine. He took his seat on the 26th of September, and made the following speech on the occasion, which was very favourably received by the assembly:

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES:

After three-and-thirty years of proscription and exile, I at length find myself among you, I again regain my country and my rights as one of its citizens. It is to the republic that I owe that happiness: let the republic then receive my oath of gratitude, of devotion; and let my generous fellow-citizens, to whom I am indebted for my seat in its legislature, feel assured that I will strive to justify their suffrages, by labouring with you for the maintenance of tranquillity, the first necessity of the country, and for the development of the democratic institutions which the country is entitled to reclaim. My conduct, ever guided by a sense of duty and respect for the laws, will prove, in opposition to the passions by which I have been maligned and still am blackened, that none is more anxious than I am to devote myself to the defence of order and the consolidation of the republic.[e]

THE ELECTIONS OF DECEMBER, 1848

Both Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte and General Cavaignac had exceptional advantages: the first, that of a great name; the second, that of the immense resources with which executive power is necessarily invested. But in addition to the advantage of his name, Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte belonged to no party whatsoever. Isolated between the army of socialism and the "party of order," he offered in his very person a sort of compromise. His attitude, his remoteness from the stormy debates of the chamber rendered his conduct conformable with his situation. In his seclusion at Auteuil, he had held conferences with men of all parties. All could place some of their hopes on him, without his binding himself to any single one. He belonged at the same time to the democracy, on account of the worship of the proletariat for the name of Napoleon; to socialism, by a few of his pamphlets; and to the party of order by the religious and military tendencies of his policy: and this is what no one in those times of blindness perceived.

A serious incident of far-reaching consequences dealt a terrible blow to the candidateship of General Cavaignac—the sitting of the national assem-

bly of November 25th, 1848. As the terror of the June Days faded away, the examination of facts had, little by little, convinced many that General Cavaignac, during those terrible days, had disdained the means of quelling the insurrection in its infancy; that he had served as an instrument for the seditious mutinies against the executive commission; that, in consequence of his calculated nervelessness and inaction, the insurrection had assumed formidable proportions, and the general had been obliged to shed the blood of France in torrents. As he had greatly benefited by this same bloodshed, and owed his inconceivable elevation to it, public feeling traced in this ensemble the manœuvres of criminal ambition. These rumours soon acquired such consistency that General Cavaignac thought he ought to give an explanation in the tribune of the national assembly. The debate took place at the sitting of November 25th.

NAPOLEON III

When General Cavaignac had challenged his adversaries to declare if he had in any way betrayed his trust, Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire ascended the tribune and asked permission of the assembly to read an unpublished page of history. This statement embraced an accumulation of the most damaging evidence against the vacillations of General Cavaignac and against the faction which had striven for the overthrow of the executive commission.

General Cavaignac defended himself with the skill of a barrister. The danger of his position sharpened his wits. In spite of the affirmations of Garnier-Pagès and Ledru-Rollin, General Cavaignac came through this dangerous debate with the appearance of having triumphed. An alleged order of the day, presented by Dupont (de l'Eure), was adopted by a very large majority. The order of the day was expressed thus: "The national assembly, persevering in the decree of June 28th, 1848—thus worded, 'General Cavaignac, chief of the executive power, deserves well of his country'—passes on to the usual business of the day."

"The country will judge," many voices exclaimed when General Cavaignac ended the discussion by vaunting his devotion to the republic; and indeed the country was not slow in formulating its judgment.

In the election of December 10th, 1,448,302 votes were returned for General Cavaignac, whilst Louis Napoleon Bonaparte obtained 5,534,520; Ledru-Rollin had 371,434 suffrages, Raspail 36,964, and Lamartine, who had once been simultaneously elected by ten departments, received a dole of 17,914 votes.

The election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte greatly surprised many zealous minds; and seriously disturbed the dreamers. Like carrion crows wheeling round to seek their route and filling the air with their cries, they were seen raising their heads and scenting the wind, seeking the meaning of an event they could not comprehend. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte appeared upon the scene like Fortinbras at the end of Hamlet. Brutal in fact, his election cut the knot of a thousand intrigues. The people, by their vote, had expressed the idea of a great popular dictatorship which put an end to the quarrels of the citizens, to the subtlety of utopians, to party rancour, and guarded them against the endlessly recurring crises engendered by the parliamentary régime amongst nations with whom sentiment dominates reason, action and discussion. The poll also expressed an ardent desire for unity. The proletariat knows well that what takes place in the republic of barristers and landlords concerns it but little. It was by analogous reasons that Cæsar triumphed in Rome. Having nothing to gain from party struggles, knowing by experience that for them the only result is lack of work, imprisonment, exile, or death, the people always aspire to rise above them. Louis Bonaparte, in his electoral address, was careful to give expression to this thought: "Let us be men of the country," he said, "not men of a party!"

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was proclaimed president of the republic on December 20th at four o'clock, by the president of the national assembly. We know the political oath had been abolished by the February revolution, which thus seemed to confess its absence of belief. But by a miserable democratic equivocation, the oath was still taken by one man, by the president of the republic. The contract was not a mutual one. Each one reserved to himself implicitly the right of violating the constitution, and we shall see that the national assembly did not fail to do so; but each one desired at the same time that the president of the republic should be bound thereby as with a strait-jacket. The least fault of this vain ceremonial was its lack of common sense, the constitution being fatally and necessarily violated.*i*

VICTOR HUGO'S PORTRAIT OF "NAPOLEON THE LITTLE"

It was about four in the afternoon of December 20th, 1848; it was growing dark, and the immense hall of the assembly having become involved in gloom the chandeliers were lowered from the ceiling, and the messenger placed the lamps on the tribune. The president made a sign, the door on the right opened, and there was seen to enter the hall, and rapidly ascend the tribune, a man still young, attired in black, having on his breast the badge and riband of the Legion of Honour.

All eyes were turned towards this man. His face wan and pallid, its bony, emaciated angles developed in prominent relief by the shaded lamps; his nose large and long; his upper lip covered with moustaches; a lock of hair waving over a narrow forehead; his eyes small and dull; his attitude timid and anxious, bearing in no respect a resemblance to the emperor—this man was the citizen Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. During the murmurs which arose upon his entrance, he remained for some instants standing, his right hand in the breast of his buttoned coat, erect and motionless on the tribune, the front of which bore this date—22nd, 23rd, 24th of February; and above which was inscribed these three words—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Prior to being elected president of the republic, Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been a representative of the people for several months, and

though he had rarely attended a whole sitting, he had been frequently seen in the seat he had selected, in the upper benches of the left, in the fifth row in the zone, commonly designated the Mountain, behind his old preceptor, the representative Vieillard. This man, then, was no new face in the assembly, yet his entrance on this occasion produced a profound emotion. It was to all, to friends as to foes, the future that had entered on the scene, a future unknown. Through the space of immense murmur, formed by the concurrent voices of all present, his name circulated in connection with the most opposite estimates. His antagonists recalled to each other his adventures, his *coups-de-main*, Strasburg, Boulogne, the tame eagle, and the piece of meat in the little hat. His friends urged his exile, his proscription, his imprisonment, a well-compiled work of his on artillery, his writings at Ham, impressed with a certain degree of liberal, democratic, and socialist spirit, the maturity of the graver age at which he had now arrived; and to those who recalled his follies, they recalled his misfortunes.

General Cavaignac, who, not having been elected president, had just resigned his power into the hands of the assembly with that tranquil laconism which befits republics, was seated in his customary place at the head of the ministerial bench, on the left of the tribune, and observed, in silence and with folded arms, this installation of the new man.

At length, silence became restored, the president of the assembly struck the table before him several times with his wooden knife, and then the last murmurs of the assembly having subsided, said. "I will now read the form of the oath."

There was an almost religious halo about this moment. The assembly was no longer an assembly, it was a temple. The immense significance of this oath was rendered still more impressive by the circumstance that it was the only oath taken throughout the extent of the territory of the republic. February had, and rightly, abolished the political oath, and the constitution had, as rightly, retained only the oath of the president. This oath possessed the double character of necessity and of grandeur. It was the oath taken by the executive, the subordinate power, to the legislative, the superior power; it was stronger still than this—the reverse of the monarchical fiction by which the people take the oath to the men invested with power, it was the man invested with power who took the oath to the people. The President, functionary and servant, swore fidelity to the people, sovereign. Bending before the national majesty, manifest in the omnipotent assembly, he received from the assembly the constitution, and swore obedience to it. The representatives were inviolable; he, not so. We repeat it: a citizen responsible to all the citizens, he was, of the whole nation, the only man so bound. Hence, in this oath, sole and supreme, there was a solemnity which went to the inmost heart of all who heard it. He who writes these pages was present in his place in the assembly, on the day this oath was taken; he is one of those who, in the face of the civilised world, called to bear witness, received this oath in the name of the people, and still, in their name, maintain it.

Thus it runs: "In presence of God, and before the French people, represented by the national assembly, I swear to remain faithful to the democratic republic, one and indivisible, and to fulfil all the duties imposed on me by the constitution."

The president of the assembly, standing, read this majestic formula; then, before the whole assembly, breathlessly silent, intensely expectant, the citizen Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, raising his right hand, said, with a firm, full voice, "I swear it."

The representative Boulay (de la Meurthe), since vice-president of the republic, who had known Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte from his childhood, exclaimed: "He is an honest man, he will keep his oath."

When he had done speaking, the constituent assembly rose, and sent forth, as with a single voice, the grand cry, "Long live the republic!" Louis Napoleon Bonaparte descended from the tribune, went up to General Cavaignac, and offered him his hand. The General, for a few instants, hesitated to accept the pressure. All who had just heard the speech of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, pronounced in an accent so redolent of candour and good faith, blamed the general for his hesitation.

The constitution to which Louis Napoleon Bonaparte took the oath on the 20th of December, 1848, "in the face of God and man," contained, among other articles, these:

Article 36. The representatives of the people are inviolable. Article 37. They may not be arrested in criminal matters unless they are taken in the fact, nor prosecuted without the permission of the assembly, first obtained. Article 68. Every act by which the president of the republic shall dissolve the national assembly prorogue it, or impede the exercise of its decrees, is a crime of high treason.

By such act, of itself, the president forfeits his functions, the citizens are bound to refuse to him obedience, and the executive power passes, of full right, to the national assembly. The judges of the supreme court shall thereupon immediately assemble, under penalty of forfeiture; they shall convoke the jurors in such place as they shall appoint, to proceed to the trial of the president and his accomplices, and they shall themselves appoint magistrates to fulfil the functions of the state administration.

In less than three years after this memorable day, on the 2nd of December, 1851, at daybreak, there might be read at the corners of all the streets of Paris this notice:

In the name of the French people, the president of the republic decrees: Article 1. The national assembly is dissolved. Article 2. Universal suffrage is re-established. The law of the 31st of May is repealed. Article 3. The French people are convoked in their comitia. Article 4. The state of siege is decreed throughout the extent of the first military division. Article 5. The council of state is dissolved. Article 6. The minister of the interior is charged with the execution of the present decree.

Done at the Palace of the Élysée, December 2nd, 1851.

LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

At the same time Paris learned that fifteen of the inviolable representatives of the people had been arrested in their homes, in the course of the night, by order of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.[k]