

tution for the old bonds of feeling which had been thus rudely broken; and while all that was useful in the feudal constitution of the army was discarded, the worst part was retained by an order that no person should hold a commission unless he could prove the nobility of his family for four generations.

CHAP.
I.



The republicans naturally went into the other extreme; and Buonaparte retained in his army the levelling principle which the revolution had introduced, because it is as congenial to a despotism as to a democracy. No Frenchman could be made an officer (except in the artillery and engineers) till he had served three years as a private or sub-officer, unless he signaled himself in action. Perhaps the conscription, in its full extent, could never have been established without such a regulation. It rendered the military service less odious to the common people, who saw the children of the higher classes thus placed upon a level with themselves, and who were deceived into an opinion that merit was the only means of promotion: it brought also into the ranks a degree of intelligence and ambition not to be found there in armies which are differently composed; and those qualities were a security for discipline and perfect obedience under circumstances in which ordinary troops might have become impatient of continual privations. But it may well be doubted, on the other hand, whether the officers derived any important advantage from being trained in the ranks; and there can be no doubt that any such advantage would be dearly purchased by the degradation to which they were exposed; for, while the soldiery were materially improved by the mixture of well-born men who looked for promotion, these persons themselves were more materially injured by the inevitable effects of a system which levelled nothing so effectually as it did the manners, the moral feeling, and the sense of honour.

*Levelling
principle of
the revolu-
tionary ser-
vice.*

CHAP.

I.

*Honourable
character of
the old
French
army.*

The policy of the old French government had often been detestably perfidious, and yet French history abounds with examples of high chivalrous sentiment; and nowhere were men to be found more sensible of what was due to their king, their country, and themselves, more alive to the sense of national and individual honour, than in the old French army. A fatal change was produced by the revolution. At a time when all persons of high birth were objects of persecution or suspicion, men from the lowest occupations were hurried into the highest posts in the army. Many of them were possessed of great military talents, and there were some few who in every respect proved worthy of their fortune. But there were others who never cast the slough of their old habits: no service was too bloody or too base for such agents; and, without feeling shame for the employment, or compunction for the crime, they were ready to obey their remorseless master in whatever he might command, . . . the individual murders of Palm and the Duc d'Enghein, or the wholesale massacres of Jaffa and of Madrid, and those other atrocious actions in Portugal and Spain, of which this history records the progress and the punishment.

*Honour not
the principle
of despot-
ism.*

It was observed by Montesquieu, that honour, which is the moving and preserving principle of monarchy, is not, and cannot be, the principle of despotism. Little did he apprehend how soon the state of his own country would exemplify the maxim. Among military bodies, honour had hitherto supplied, however imperfectly, yet in some degree, the place of a higher and nobler principle: but under the tyranny of Buonaparte, while his measures tended directly, as if they had been so designed, to subvert this feeling (already weakened by the false philosophy of the age), there remained nothing in its stead except that natural goodness, and that innate sense of rectitude, which, in certain happy natures, can never be totally extin-

guished, but which, in the vast majority of mankind, are easily CHAP. I. deadened and destroyed. The humaner studies, whereby the manners and the minds of men are softened, and the sacred precepts whereby they are purified and exalted and enlightened, had been the one neglected, and the other proscribed, during the revolution; and a generation had grown up, without literature, without morals, and without religion.

Education had been chiefly in the hands of the Jesuits till the extinction of that famous company, the most active, the most intriguing, but in later times the most useful and the most calumniated of the monastic orders. After their dissolution, the system was continued upon the same plan, though perhaps with inferior ability, and the colleges were every where conducted by the clergy, either secular or regular. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, and the *dragonades* of Louis XIV, are crimes always to be remembered with unabating and unqualified detestation. Even at a later time it was evinced, in the shocking tragedies at Rouen and Thoulouse, that the same spirit existed in the French church, and was ready to blaze out. These execrable things were known over Europe; but it was not so generally known, that in the service of that same church which had dishonoured itself, and outraged human nature, by these actions, many thousand ministers were continually employed in training the young, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, consoling the penitent, and reclaiming the sinner; uninfluenced by love of gain, hope of applause or of advancement, or any worldly motive; but patiently and dutifully devoting themselves in obscurity to the service of their fellow-creatures and their God. The knowledge of their virtues was confined to the little sphere wherein their painful and meritorious lives were passed; and the world knew them not, till they were hunted out by the atheistical persecution, and

*Education
in the hands
of the clergy
before the
revolution.*

CHAP. were found to endure wrongs, insults, outrages, exile, and death,
 I. with the meekness of Christians, and the heroism of martyrs.

Generally
 diffused in
 France.

Under these teachers, the doctrines of Christianity, according to the Romish church, and the duties of Christianity, wherein all churches are agreed, were the first things inculcated, as being the first things needful. Errors of doctrine, though of tremendous importance when men are actuated by blind zeal, are, among the quiet and humble-minded part of mankind, latent principles which produce no evil, unless some unhappy circumstance calls them into action: but the moral influence of religion is felt in the whole tenour of public and of private life. There were endowed schools and colleges, before the revolution, in every part of France, chiefly under the direction of persons who acted from motives of duty and conscience, rather than of worldly interest. The French court, in the midst of its own licentiousness, understood the importance of training up the people in a faith which tended to make them good subjects, and therefore it had provided* for this great

* In this respect, more had been done in France nearly a century ago than has yet been attempted in England. It was not the fault of the government if any one of its subjects was ignorant of what it most concerns all men to know. The declaration of the king, of May 14, 1724, contains the following article: "*Voulons qu'il soit établi, autant qu'il sera possible, des maîtres et maîtresses d'école dans toutes les paroisses ou il n'y en a point, pour instruire tous les enfans de l'un et de l'autre sexe, des principaux mysteres et devoirs de la religion catholique, apostolique et Romaine; les conduire à la messe tous les jours ouvriers, autant qu'il sera possible; leur donner les instructions dont ils ont besoin sur ce sujet, et avoir soin qu'ils assistent au service divin les dimanches et fêtes; comme aussi pour y apprendre à lire, et même écrire à ceux qui pourront en avoir besoin, le tout ainsi qu'il sera ordonné par les archevêques et évêques en conformité de l'art. 25 de l'édit de 1695, concernant la juridiction ecclésiastique. Voulons à cet effet que, dans les lieux ou il n'y aura pas d'autres fonds, il puisse être imposé sur tous les habitans la somme qui manquera pour l'établissement des dits maîtres et maîtresses, jusqu'à celle de 150 fr. par an. pour les maîtresses.*"

object from a sense of policy, if from no better impulse. The reformers, in the natural course of political insanity, plundered the church before the revolutionists overthrew the throne. The Constituent Assembly followed up this act of iniquity by requiring from the clergy an oath, which they knew the greater part must conscientiously refuse to take. The whole system of education throughout France was thus subverted, before the work of proscription and massacre began; and, to complete the wreck, the National Convention, by one sweeping decree, suppressed all colleges and faculties of theology, medicine, arts, and jurisprudence, throughout the republic.

Public instruction, however, had been one of the first blessings which were promised under the new order of things; and accordingly plan after plan was pompously announced, as short-lived constitutions and short-sighted legislators succeeded one another. The Constituent Assembly promised an establishment of primary schools in the chief place of every canton; secondary ones in the capital of every district; department schools in the capitals of these larger divisions; and, finally, an Institute in the metropolis: the whole under a Commission of Public Instruction. Public tuition was not to begin before the age of six; till which time, it was said, mothers might be trusted to put in practice the immortal lessons of the author of *Emilius*: and girls were left wholly to their parents. Religion made no part of the scheme*; and instead of teaching children faith, hope, and charity, their duties toward God and man, the Declaration of Rights was to be cast into a catechism for their

CHAP.
I.

The whole system of education destroyed by the revolution.

Public instruction promised by the revolutionists.

Talleyrand's scheme.

Religion omitted.

* Except, indeed, that there were to be seminaries for the new national clergy, where they were to be taught surveying, mensuration, the knowledge of simples, a little medicine, and a little law!

CHAP. I. use. This plan, which was the work of Talleyrand, was thrown aside when the Constituent Assembly, having completed, as they supposed, the work of demolition, made way for the Legislative Assembly, which was to erect a new edifice from the ruins. A second project was then presented by Condorcet. Revealed religion was, of course, proscribed from his scheme; and the miserable sophist said that this proscription ought to be extended to what is called natural religion also, because the theistic philosophers were no better agreed than the theologians in their notions of God, and of his moral relations to mankind. All prejudices, he said, ought now to disappear; and therefore it must now be affirmed, that the study of the ancient languages would be more injurious than useful. The physical sciences were the basis of his plan; and he advised that scientific lessons should be given in public weekly lectures, and that the miracles of Elijah and St. Januarius should be exhibited, in order to cure the people of superstition. A time, he said, undoubtedly would come, when all establishments for instruction would be useless: however, as they were necessary at present, girls as well as boys were to be received in the public schools. The orators of the National Convention went farther: they maintained, that domestic education was incompatible with liberty; that the holy doctrine of equality would have been proclaimed in vain if there were any difference of education between the rich and the poor; that, of all inequalities, the inequality of knowledge was the most fatal; and that every thing which elevated one man above another in the scale of intellect was studiously to be destroyed. All children, therefore, of both sexes, . . . the boys from the age of five till that of twelve, the girls from five to eleven, . . . ought to be educated in common at the expense of the republic; there was room enough for lodging them all in the palaces and castles of the emigrants; the boys

*Condorcet's
scheme.*

*Religion
proscribed.*

*Scheme of
the National
Convention.*

should be employed in tilling the earth, in manufactures, or in picking stones upon the highways; hospitals were to be annexed to the schools, where the children were in rotation to wait upon the sick and the aged; and they were never to hear of religion. One democratic legislator proposed, that those parents who chose to have their children educated at home should be vigilantly observed; and if it were discovered that they brought them up in principles contrary to liberty, that a process should be instituted, and the children taken from them, and sent to the houses of equality. This implied some choice on the part of the parents, though it would have made the choice a cruel mockery: but it was contended that liberty could not exist if domestic education were tolerated; and when the clause was proposed that parents *might* send their children to these schools, it was carried as an amendment that they *must* send them, because it was time to establish the great principle, that children belong to the republic more than to their parents. This, said one of their blasphemous declaimers, would complete the Gospel of Equality! It was even maintained, that education ought to commence before birth; and the philosophical statesmen of regenerated France were called upon to form rules for women during the time of gestation, and to enact laws for midwives and for nurses*!

CHAP.
I.

Domestic
education
proscribed.

* "*L'ouvrage que l'on demande,*" said Gregoire, speaking in the name of the Committee of Public Instruction, "*doit donc tracer des regles de conduite pour le temps de la grossesse, des couches, de l'allaitement,*" &c. Petit went farther back: according to him, "*l'education en general doit aller chercher l'homme dans l'embryon de l'espece; les peres, les meres surtout, doivent d'abord fixer son attention.*"—

An able writer has performed the useful task of bringing together in one work the various schemes of education which were attempted in France during the democratic tyranny and the military tyranny which succeeded it. The title of his book is, *Le*

CHAP.

I.

None of
these
schemes at-
tempted in
practice.

Follies and schemes like these were discussed by the National Convention in the intervals between their acts of confiscation and blood; and to this intolerable tyranny the fanatics of liberty and equality designed to subject the people in the dearest and holiest relations of domestic life! But proscriptions and executions succeeded so rapidly that the various projectors were swept off before their projects could be attempted in practice; till at length, when the remaining members of that

Genie de la Revolution consideré dans l'Education; ou Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Instruction Publique, depuis 1789 jusqu'à nos jours; ou l'on voit les Efforts reunis de la Legislation et de la Philosophie du Dix-huitieme Siecle pour aneantir le Christianisme. Paris, 3 T. 1817—1818. One legislator maintained that a nation which had recovered its freedom wanted none but stirring, vigorous, and robust men; it was such men that they should endeavour to form: and the revolution had already provided inexhaustible sources of instruction for them; for the best schools in which youth could receive a republican education were the public assemblies of the departments, districts, and municipalities, the tribunals, and, above all, the popular societies, .. meaning the jacobine clubs! Lequinio would have had a daily journal edited by a committee of philosophers, for the purpose of enlightening the simple country people, .. the people of Paris and the large towns being sufficiently enlightened. Lakanal required that there should be at least one theatre in every canton, where the women were to learn dancing, and the men to practise it. And Rabaut de St. Etienne, who had been a Protestant minister, proposed that the mayors of every canton should deliver moral lectures on Sundays in the national temple. These legislators confined their views to France; but Dupont, the atheist, hoped to see a school established at Paris for propagating atheism and anarchy throughout Europe. These are his words: “*Avec quel plaisir je me represente nos philosophes dont les noms sont connus dans toute l'Europe, Petion, Sieyes, Condorcet, et autres, entourés dans le Pantheon, comme les philosophes Grecs à Athenes, d'une foule de disciples venus des differentes parties de l'Europe, se promenant a la mode des Peripateticiens, et enseignant, celui-la le systeme du monde, celui-ci perfectionnant le systeme social, montrant dans l'arrêté du 17 Juin le germe de l'insurrection du 14 Juillet, du 10 Août, et de toutes les insurrections qui vont se faire avec rapidité dans toute l'Europe, de telle manière que ces jeunes étrangers de retour dans leur pays puissent y repandre les mêmes lumières, et opérer, pour le bonheur de l'humanité les mêmes revolutions.*”

nefarious assembly, after the death of Robespierre, had acquired some feeling of personal safety, the Normal Schools were established, in which the art of teaching was to be taught. And now, it was proclaimed, the regeneration of the human mind would be effected; now, for the first time upon earth, Nature, Truth, Reason, and Philosophy would have their seminary! The most eminent men in talents and science were to be professors in this institution: from all parts of the republic the most promising subjects were to be selected by the constituted authorities, and sent to the metropolis as pupils; and when they should have completed the course of human knowledge, the disciples of these great masters, thoroughly imbued with the lessons which they had received, were to return to their respective places of abode, and repeat them throughout the land, which would thus, in its remotest parts, receive light from Paris, as from the focus of intellectual illumination. Fourteen hundred young men were in fact brought from the country; and, that nothing might be lost to mankind, the conferences in which universal instruction was to be communicated were minuted in short-hand. So notable a plan excited great enthusiasm in Paris; it soon excited as much ridicule: in the course of three months both pupils and professors discovered in how absurd a situation they were placed; it was acknowledged in the National Convention that the scheme had altogether failed; and thus ended what was properly called the organized quackery of the Normal Schools*.

CHAP.
I.

Normal
Schools.

* Every thing was to be done by . . analysis:—" *Cette analyse, qui compte tous les pas qu'elle fait, mais qui n'en fait jamais un ni en arrière, ni à côté, . . elle peut porter la même simplicité de langage, la même clarté dans tous les genres d'idées. . . Les sciences morales, si nécessaires aux peuples qui se gouvernent par leurs propres vertus, vont être*

CHAP.

I.

Consequences of these visionary schemes.

Meantime the irrecoverable years were passing on, and the rising generation was sacrificed to the crude theories and ridiculous experiments of sophists in power; men whose ignorance might deserve compassion, if their absurdity did not provoke indignation as well as contempt, and their presumptuous wickedness call for unmingled abhorrence. When the subject was renewed under the consular government, the frightful consequences had become too plain to be dissembled. A view of the moral and religious state of France was drawn up from official reports which were sent in from every department, and it was acknowledged that the children throughout the republic had been left to run wild in idleness during the whole preceding course of the revolution. "They are without the idea of a God," said the Report, "without a notion of right and wrong. The barbarous manners which have thus arisen have produced a ferocious people, and we cannot but groan over the evils which threaten the present generation and the future."

Analyse des Procès Verbaux, quoted by Portalis. L. Goldsmith, Recueil, T. i. p. 282.

Attachment of the Jacobines to Buonaparte.

It suited the views of Buonaparte that his government should hold this language while he was negotiating the *Concordat*, for the sake of obtaining the papal sanction to his authority. Perhaps he was then hesitating whether to take the

soumises à des démonstrations aussi rigoureuses que les sciences exactes et physiques. . . Tandis que la liberté politique, et la liberté illimitée de l'industrie et du commerce détruiront les inégalités monstrueuses des richesses, l'analyse, appliquée à tous les genres d'idées dans toutes les écoles, détruira l'inégalité des lumières, plus fatale encore et plus humiliante. . . L'analyse est donc essentiellement un instrument indispensable dans une grande démocratie; la lumière qu'elle repandra a tant de facilité à pénétrer partout, que comme tous les fluides, elle tend sans cesse à se mettre au niveau."

Rapport de Lakanal sur les Ecoles Normales, du 3 Brumaire, an. III. (24 Oct. 1794.)